FACING RACISM AT 30,000 FEET: AFRICAN AMERICAN PILOTS, FLIGHT

ATTENDANTS, AND EMOTIONAL LABOR

A Dissertation

by

LOUWANDA EVANS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2012

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Joe R. Feagin
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ABSTRACT

Facing Racism at 30,000 Feet: African American Pilots, Flight Attendants, and

Emotional Labor. (May 2012)

Louwanda Evans, B.A., University of Texas at Arlington;

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Joe R. Feagin

In this qualitative study, I examine the experiences of African American pilots and flight attendants with emotional labor. Integral to existing theories of emotional labor is the incorporation of voices of color and their contemporary movement into professional industries. Essentially, most all theories of emotional labor were built through the examination of low-wage service workers in gendered or racially segregated occupations, with only recent incorporations of gendered occupations within professional settings. Using the theoretical concept of emotional labor, or the labor required to reduce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others, I argue that emotional labor is much more than labor produced within the confines of a job, but is also based on identity characteristics that directly influence interactions in the workplace. Therefore, I qualitatively examine, through in-depth interviews with more than thirty African American flight crewmembers, how emotional labor is influenced and performed when people of color are introduced to professional settings.

The results of this study show that there are multiple dimensions of emotional labor that should be added to existing theory. Primarily, existing standards of emotional labor in the airline industry are a direct result of institutional structures and cultures created during a period of systematic exclusion that do not account for contemporary racism and sexism. Thus, performing emotional labor in this industry is unequally placed on those white women and people of color that had no input into its creation. The results of this study suggest that emotional labor should be inclusive of systemic racism perspectives as a method of understanding how salient identity characteristics, such as gender, race, and class, are directly connected to preconceived ideologies that influence interactions that call for emotional labor. Moreover, because African American men and women in this industry are underrepresented, emotional labor becomes a necessity in their interactions with coworkers, consumers, and management. In addition, African Americans experience highly regulated emotional labor that influence how they perform their jobs, interact with others, and formulate appropriate counter-narratives.

DEDICATION

To Norma Williams, a great scholar that planted and watered a tremendous seed of ambition and knowledge

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I have tremendous gratitude to my committee chair and mentor, Dr. Joe Feagin for kindly taking me on as a Master's student while at the University of Texas at Arlington. Joe, you have truly encouraged me in innumerable ways and have taught me that it is okay to believe in my work and myself. For this Joe, I am most grateful. Dr. Sarah Gatson, I cannot thank you enough for your deep intelligence and guidance throughout this project. Dr. Alex McIntosh, your kind words and encouragement were always right on time. Dr. Wendy Moore, a mentor and great friend, words cannot express how thankful I am to you. Thank you for your deep understanding and your ability to meet me on many levels. Finally, though no longer with us, I want to thank Dr. Howard Kaplan for keeping me on my "toes" through encouraging me to see a multitude of perspectives in my work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> The difference between being a black pilot and being a white pilot is that, if you're a white pilot the assumption is that you know what you're doing. If you're a black pilot, the assumption is you don't know what you're doing. The white pilot is to make a jackass out of himself; the black pilot is to prove he's not a jackass. You are assumed to be inept.
>
> Matt, senior pilot

The above quote exemplifies the thoughts of many African Americans currently employed in the commercial aviation industry. For much of our nation's history, African Americans have been systematically excluded from participating in many of our nation's major industries with the aviation industry being no exception. During World War II, many African American males trained at Tuskegee, Alabama to fight for a country in which they faced severe systemic racism and bigotry. To this end, serving in segregated units, these brave men pioneered, in many ways, the significant changes we witness in the airline industry presently. Though African Americans have made significant progress, systemic racism, remaining ever so present, reminds us that those of color in the aviation industry still have far to go to experience true equality in the workplace.

The changes in racial attitudes reflected in the larger society are now considered to be, at least in varying degrees, more racially tolerable. Moreover, we can now visibly see and experience the changes in contemporary racial attitudes through the slow but steady progress of people of color in many of our major institutions. Even so,

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This dissertation follows the style of *American Sociological Review*.

interactions between whites and people of color can and should be analyzed for the emotive value exchanged in everyday interactions. In this project, I will examine the everyday emotional interactions that take place "in the sky," or on the airplane. This project will specifically focus on the experiences of African American pilots and flight attendants currently employed in the U.S. airline industry. By examining these occupations, theories of emotional labor and systemic racism will serve as a backdrop for understanding contemporary racialized and gendered interactions occurring in the workplace.

The current study also intends to expand the literature on emotional labor by incorporating a systemic racism approach to understanding emotional labor, emotions, and their consequences. This piece of research is important as the gains in sociological studies of emotional labor have been slow to incorporate the mechanisms through which structural factors, namely systemic racism and sexism, influence and dominate interactions. Finally, I contribute theoretically to the current understanding of emotional labor and resistance through an extensive examination of the experiences African American men and women have in this industry in relation to passengers, coworkers, and management within the organization. This project is intended not only to extend the work on emotional labor, but will also extend the literature on racial and ethnic relations and emotional resistance to oppression by people of color.

Importance of Studying African Americans and Emotional Labor

In the late 1990s, I became a flight attendant for a major U.S. airline. It was at this time that I became inquisitive about the emotional aspects of the job. During

training, safety was the most emphasized aspect of the job, yet, during my flights, my ability to perform my safety duties often took a backseat to the needs and *desires* of passengers and coworkers. All too familiar in those interactions were the expectations others had of me both as a woman and as a racial minority.   In any given day, I would come into contact with hundreds of passengers, many of which were often not so subtle with their beliefs about women or African Americans. On one of my most memorable flights (which also happened to be my very first flight), I was told by a gentleman to, "get my f-ing panties out of my ass" simply because I asked him to stow his luggage properly. In this interaction, I was also told that "you people are always too aggressive." As I began to study sociology, while continuing to fly, I began reading Arlie Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart* and began documenting my own experiences in the air by keeping journals. From this and many other experiences, many of the formulations for this research project were born[1].

This exploratory research will examine the role of emotions and emotional labor in the airline industry. Emotional labor as a theory was examined in the 1983 work, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* by Arlie Hochschild. Hochschild conceptualized emotional labor to be the management of "feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value" (Hochschild 1983:7). Hochschild continues her conceptualization of emotional labor and notes that,

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[1] This account is included to serve as an example of the necessity of extending the literature to include race as an aspect of emotional labor.

> This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others…This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality.

One goal of Hochschild's research was to view occupations "from the point of view of understanding the relation of gender to jobs, and to understand the problems of women as workers and how they are confounded with the problems of being a minority in a given occupation" (Hochschild 1983:15). While much of the literature pertaining to emotional labor continues in this vein and focuses largely on women, the question remains, how is emotional labor handled differently by men, and in the context of the airline industry, by people of color? Because this research focuses on African Americans, what is the role of racial identity on emotional labor?

An important facet of building existing emotional labor theories is the introduction of black voices and how their performance of emotional labor in environments in which they are represented in token numbers differs from the performances of their white coworkers. To explore the dimensions of emotional labor, multiple perspectives of the intersectionality of social identity, in conjunction with the social identity of others, are in the forefront of this research. In this project, African Americans occupy delicate positions—being seen as outsiders within the airline industry. To examine flight attendants specifically, Hochschild (1983: 16) notes that one of the key roles of the flight attendant is to "do emotion work to enhance the status of the customer and entice further sales," and because women are "more accomplished managers of feeling in private life, women more than men have put emotional labor on the market, and they know more about its personal costs" (11).

African Americans working in the airline industry do engage in emotion work in gendered occupations, but how racial identity, in conjunction with gender identity, contributes to the ability to perform emotional labor is necessary to examine. Outside of dealing with irate passengers, there is much more at stake in performing emotional labor when the encounters are based on racial identity. Hochschild's work examines gender, but when factoring in race (and class); we must factor in those cases in which interactions reflect the brutal and historical reality of racism. Consider the example provided by a Sue, a flight attendant for a major airline. As she describes an encounter with a male passenger she has on the airplane

> On a flight to Reagan International Airport from Atlanta, I had an encounter with a male passenger as I moved through the aisle with the beverage cart. I reached his row, stopped the cart, and asked; 'Can I get you something to drink?' 'Would you mind getting someone else to bring me my drink? I would prefer you not touch my cup.' Initially, I thought that maybe it was something religious and based on my gender because we get that sometimes. But then, a white female flight attendant served him his coke with no problems. I was shocked and upset and as a matter of fact, I did not want him to have a drink at all!

In this case, Sue, as a woman, indeed engages in emotional labor not only by requesting another flight attendant to get the beverage, but also by admitting that she did not tell the other flight attendant the reason for his request at that particular time. As clearly reflected in this particular excerpt, Sue handled her emotions in a way that much of the existing literature states she is expected to based on her gender. However, the racial undertone of this interaction is not taken into account in the existing literature on emotional labor. In fact, it can be argued that racial identity, much as Hochschild (1983) notes about gender, can add an additional dimension to the job from the subordinate position of minority status. Research on the airline industry and the workers in this

industry is sparse at best and further research is needed in this area. This project, descriptively, analytically, and theoretically revisits prior research conducted nearly thirty years ago. Much has changed in this literature and in the airline industry that needs to be explored.

Here, I add valuable insight into the jobs of flight attendant and pilot. For many of the crewmembers in this project, interactions on the aircraft mimicked those everyday interactions that occur outside of the workplace. This bridging of workplace and societal expectations show how intersecting factors of identity can invade interactions to create unique work experiences. As the theory of emotional labor is seen as sold for a wage within service industries, this project introduces the notion that not all emotional labor is created equal. Indeed, much of what is experienced by women and men in this industry is also heavily contingent on racial identity.

With the introduction of African Americans to the airline industry in the late 1950s, an exclusionary reality remains a significant part of the organizational culture. By taking an in-depth look at the airline industry from a systemic racism approach, the emotional and cultural norms of the workplace uncover the demands for emotional labor by people of color. There will be an examination of the various encounters black flight crews have in the workplace in which race and gender identity introduce an aspect of work that falls outside company expectations for emotional labor. By uncovering the cultural norms of the work place and the reproductive nature of social exclusion, the experiences of people of color and the subsequent emotional labor they perform is unequally placed on their shoulders. Next, by delving deeply into the encounters black

crewmembers have with passengers and coworkers, a closer examination of the type of emotions occurring as a result of personal affronts will be discussed. Finally, this project adds a more general understanding of the emotional labor involved in resisting and coping with racial oppression in the workplace. All contextually within the theory of emotional labor, this project will extend the existing literature through a detailed discussion of the pervasive nature of systemic racism/sexism and the consequences for workers of color as they enter industries in which they were largely excluded. Understanding the intersections of race, class, and gender is an area that has been explored deeply in the social science literature, but will be extended to include the complexities of being employed in racialized and gendered occupations.

Much of the literature on emotional labor has only recently begun to focus on social capital, power, and status, and the effects of these characteristics on emotional labor (Thoits, 1985; Lively 2000, Harlow, 2003). Though they are usually only briefly mentioned, the cultural and emotional norms of organizations serve to introduce differential levels of emotion work to be done by different individuals. Additionally, the existing structures of organizations are reproduced in such a manner as to reify differential emotional labor and/or the need to institute significant changes. The normative emotional and cultural norms that have developed in organizations allow for the distribution of emotional resources and subsequent emotional labor to fall unfairly on the shoulders of some, while continuously missing others. It is in this vastly unequal amount of social capital that emotional labor will be examined. This research also

incorporates the environment itself and what it means to be confined with limited means of escape.

Current State of the Research on Emotional Labor

From a sociological perspective, the concepts of emotional labor and emotion management are fairly new to the discipline. Most notably, the work of Arlie R. Hochschild is associated with this research, and from this, a large body of literature surrounding emotions is now available. Pivotal gains in understanding gender and emotional labor in the context of service and professional work have been made through the pioneering studies of many researchers (*see* Pierce 1995; Wharton 1993; Wharton and Erickson 1995; Thoits 1985, 2004), but the examination of emotional labor from the perspective of racial or ethnic identity and gender remains largely unseen (*see* Kang 2003, 2010; Moore 2008; Wingfield 2010). Here, I do not argue that there are no shared experiences of women, regardless of race, but it is important to conceptually expand emotional labor to account for the collective interpretations of racial and gender identity. Racial identity is a salient characteristic—one of the first greeters of identity, even though mainstream society has moved toward a rhetorical colorblind ideology. Even with the rhetoric of colorblindness, there remain distinct and referable expectations associated with gender and race.

Emotional labor in service industries has taken many forms and is usually understood from the context of gender-segregated occupations. For instance, in Martin's (1999) work on the police force, she notes that although males have historically dominated this work, females have started to enter the force in significant numbers. In

turn, many women have found themselves with station house work, which is largely

associated with "feminine labor," such as handling issues associated with the use of

interpersonal skills. Moreover, those female officers involved in community policing are

forced to deal with a work culture that places them in a position to adopt stereotypical

male characteristics in order to achieve even limited success.

Extending beyond gender segregation to incorporate racial identity, Harlow

(2003) examines the role of race through her documentation of the experiences of

African American professors in the undergraduate classroom. Harlow states (2003: 348),

> Black professors' work in the classroom is different and more complex than that
> of their white colleagues because negotiating a devalued racial status requires
> extensive emotion management. Social constraints affect the negotiation of self
> and identity in the classroom, influencing the emotional demands of teaching and
> increasing the amount of work required to be effective.

In this work, there is an acknowledgement on behalf of African American professors that

white students hold negative perceptions of their ability to be effective and

knowledgeable professors. In some cases, this question of intellectual merit lingers in the

minds of black academics, causing them to create strategic ways to manage their

emotions as well as their job responsibilities. Though Harlow touches on racialized

ideologies surrounding the black academic, an incorporation of the race literature,

specifically, systemic racism can enhance this argument. Placing racist ideologies in

both a historical and contemporary context provides a clearer examination of the social

world in which these ideologies are born. This particular literature, as well as the

literature briefly outlined above, neglect the consequences of emotions, emotional labor,

and emotion management and neglect how the environment itself can contribute to the

perceived "mismanagement" of emotions. Because of structural norms that develop

within organizations, various emotions are deemed appropriate when performed by

specific individuals, but what transpires when those with devalued gender and racial

characteristics perform these "appropriate emotions"? This project seeks to uncover and

document the consequence of emotions when performed by those not fitting within the

normative cultural expectations of "who" are considered most likely to perform

particular jobs.

Because specific environments develop cultural feeling and emotion norms, there

are also appropriate displays of emotions in the workplace. Examining the legal

profession, Lively (2000) discusses how the emotions and emotion work of paralegals

(largely female) remain devalued, whereas the emotions deemed appropriate by male

attorneys are often valued in the profession. Attorneys have the leisure of emotional

expressions such as anger and aggression, but for women in this field, when these same

emotions are expressed, they are often perceived as weak or unprofessional. Lively

argues, the denial of female emotions and the acceptance of male expressions continue

to serve as mechanisms for maintaining both the occupational and corresponding gender

hierarchy.

Peggy Thoits (1985: 229) discusses emotions from the perspective of a variety of

roles and statuses. She states, "Some individuals hold a mixture of valued and devalued

social identities…Such combinations of statuses can create serious interaction

difficulties." In these interactions, emotions seen as normative can become "deviant" or

socially unacceptable if performed by individuals not strictly adhering to emotion norms

in the workplace. Thoits introduces the notion that statuses of power and authority in the workplace, coupled with a devalued social status, like gender, can undermine and strain social interactions. Those members of racial or ethnic minority groups and minority groups in general, often contend with this sort of status conflict—being in power within an organization while being undermined because of their group membership. Because of this, the relationship between historical ideologies and current experiences should be incorporated to understand how emotion norms contribute to emotional displays in the workplace. Understanding contemporary emotion norms and displays vis-à-vis their creation allows for a deeper understanding of their perpetuation within organizations and the consequences to minority group members and their successful emotional labor. Here, by drawing on the theory of systemic or institutional racism, emotional labor and emotions, and the way in which they are managed and/or punished is reflective of our racialized past, and arguably our current racial reality (see Chapter II for an explanation of concepts).

Reframing the Research

Entrenched in systemic racism, the commercial aviation industry for many years reflected the beliefs of larger American society—a belief in the inferior intellect and abilities of African Americans. Due to slavery, followed by the extensive Jim Crow period, the airline industry remained "off limits" to people of color. During the 1950s and 1960s, the airline industry came under attack for its lack of African American flight attendants and pilots. Subsequently, Ruth Carol Taylor was hired in 1958 as a flight attendant and following the pivotal 1963 Supreme Court Case, Marlon Green became the

first African American pilot to be hired by a major airline (OBAP 2010). Because of

systemic racism, the commercial airline industry, specifically in terms of pilots, remains

overwhelmingly white. Currently, the airline industry employs approximately 71,000

pilots with the total estimated number of African American pilots remaining under 700

with less than 20 being African American females[2] (OBAP 2010). In 2007, African

American flight attendants accounted for about 14 percent of the flight attendant

population, with whites at 70 percent (Saenz and Evans 2009). During the period of

Hochschild's (1983) work, male flight attendants were only about 15 percent of the

flight attendant population but in 2007, they accounted for approximately 26 per 100

female flight attendants (Saenz and Evans 2009).

The small but increasing numbers of African Americans in the airline industry

have historically faced an industry largely dominated by whites. Because of this, there

are residual racist and gendered practices and ideologies reflected in interactions

between managers, coworkers, and passengers. Incorporating systemic racism and

sexism can provide a distinctive opportunity to understand interactions between workers

and consumers as well as the emotional aspects of job performance. It is in the residual

racial and gendered ideologies that emotional labor will be examined by looking at a

historically excluded group from participation in a white dominated industry.

Methodological Approach to the Current Study

This current project resulted largely from my personal experiences as a flight

attendant for a major airline for several years. As my gender and racial identity were

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[2] This includes those employed by the nation's major and commuter passenger airlines and freight carriers.

always on display, I, as well as many other flight attendants of color often shared similar experiences in terms of passenger and coworker interactions. It is from these relationships that I could recruit participants from this industry. In this section, I outline the methodological approach utilized to document these interactions.

Most of the existing research on emotional labor is conducted qualitatively. For this project, I continue in this vein by conducting in-depth interviews with African American flight attendants and pilots. Though there is a new and expansive area of quantitative survey research that documents the *exact* emotion felt and managed, quantitative research cannot uncover how specific emotions lead to specific types of emotional labor. In this area, researchers have only begun to tap into the possible racial or ethnic connections with emotions, emotional labor, and emotion management or the role the racial/ethnic identity of others play in emotional interactions and subsequent emotional labor.

My research qualitatively examines several aspects of emotional labor experienced by African American flight attendants and pilots. Two interview guides were constructed to guide the interview process. It was particularly important to provide varying interview guides to pilots and flight attendants, largely due to the differing nature of their jobs. For instance, focusing extensively on passenger interactions is not appropriate for pilots since September 11, 2001. Before this period, pilot interactions with passengers were frequent, expected, and were considered an aspect of providing good service in this industry. Since September 11, the rules of the aviation industry keep pilot and passenger interactions at a minimum once on the aircraft. For flight attendants,

passenger interactions greatly contribute to their job and represent a large aspect of the interview guide. Included in both interview guides, questions concerning interactions with coworkers are also important because within a few days, crewmembers can spend countless hours with one another. In both cases, it was important to gain an understanding of the expectations from management or chief pilots, coworkers, passengers, as well as expectations of self.

In-depth interviews were conducted with thirty-one flight attendants and pilots. The large majority of the pilot interviews were conducted with African American males, due to the small number of African American females currently employed with major airlines. Interviews with flight attendants consisted of both male and female participants. This was done purposefully to understand and note the possible differences between emotional labor and gender. To gain participants for this project, I relied on snowball sampling due also to the small number of African Americans in the industry. Interviews were conducted in person, but a small number of interviews were conducted by phone due to location of home base and schedule conflicts.

In this project, I utilize the extended case method as a way of developing, questioning, and writing the data presented by African American flight crews. This method relies heavily on existing cases to expand the existing literature and theories on emotional labor (Burawoy 1998). This method is useful as it "derives generalizations by constituting the social situation as anomalous with regard to some preexisting theory leading to the reconstruction of theory" (Burawoy 1998: 280). Using this method as a means of constructing my research project as a distinctive social situation, allows a

better understanding of the complexities and thickness between the relationship of flight attendants, pilots, emotional labor, and the larger social structure in which these interactions take place. This method allows me to take the existing work of researchers like Hochschild and move the theoretical ideas of emotional labor in a direction that can encompass the experiences with race, gender, and class and how these characteristics influence emotional labor. With the data collected in this project, the extended case method allows the experiences of flight attendants and pilots to unveil the institutional and everyday experiences of people of color. In Chapter III on methodology, this method of research will be discussed extensively.

This project is not without limitations. By utilizing qualitative methods, the size of the sample for this project is small. Though this is the case, it is important to note that much can be gained from the richness of qualitative research. This project allows participants to speak at an in-depth and personal level of their experiences in their workplace. Moreover, it is important to continue with the qualitative methodology used to conduct research on emotional labor because of the nuances sometimes missed in quantitative research on emotions. In Chapter III, I will expand my discussion of qualitative methods and the specific methodology employed for this study. However, before going further, I would like to provide a synopsis of the work that will follow.

Outline of Remaining Chapters

Chapter II is the literature review chapter and focuses extensively on the works of Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* and her concept of emotional labor as well as Joe Feagin's theoretical contributions to systemic racism. With the amalgamation of

systemic racism and emotional labor, this section of conceptualization will entail several key concepts that are vital to understanding existing theory and the experiences of African Americans. By detailing the specific aspects of systemic racism, and the components of the white racial frame and resistance, I will show how emotional labor can collectively document the intersecting identities of race, class, and gender. In Chapter III, I discuss my methodological approach to recruiting a sample as well as the methods used to analyze the data on black flight crews. In this chapter, I will discuss the interview guides in more detail as well as provide discussions on my sampling methodology and the issues I had with reaching a small and dispersed population. Chapter IV is on the experiences of pilots currently working in the commercial aviation industry, followed by Chapter V on flight attendants. Chapter VI extends the existing literature on emotional labor and Chapter VII introduces the emotional labor of resistance. Chapter VIII provides the conclusion to this project.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings for my contextualization of emotional labor. Specifically, in this chapter, I will provide a detailed account of the theoretical propositions of emotional labor followed by the theory of systemic racism to highlight the experiences of African Americans in the airline industry. The work of Arlie Hochschild (1983) will serve as the primary mechanism to understanding emotion work, emotional labor, and emotional management. Furthermore, the existing conceptualization of emotional labor and emotions is one that I extend through the incorporation of systemic racism. To this end, I rely heavily on the work of Joe Feagin's theoretical contributions in *Systemic Racism* (2006). The collective incorporation of systemic racism and emotional labor provides a lens through which to understand the interconnectivity of our contemporary and historical reality of racial oppression and how these oppressive conditions contribute to an unequal distribution and need for emotional labor. Moreover, by combining the major aspects of systemic racism and emotional labor we are granted a view that combines micro-level experiences with macro-structural causes. Here too, the benefits of systemic racism allow the inclusion of critical examinations of resistance, the white racial frame, and counter framing. First, however, I will discuss Arlie Hochschild's conceptualization of emotional labor.

Hochschild's Theory of Emotional Labor

In the pivotal work, *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochschild (1983) chronicles the work experiences of flight attendants and the emotional labor associated

with this type of work. She considers emotional labor to be that type of work that embodies the management of "feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild 1983:7), calling attention to how people manage their own feelings as a way to create a particular emotional state in another person (Wharton 1993). Emotional labor is much like physical labor—it is sold for a wage in many industries where there is ongoing interaction or "service work." It is an altogether public act— moving from emotion management which occurs privately to something inherently public when it is required and "controlled" by employers as a formal job requirement (Hochschild 1983).

Leading her to the conceptualization of emotional labor, Hochschild also discusses the key differences between emotions, "feeling rules," and emotional management. Emotion, as seen by Hochschild (1979: 551) is the "bodily cooperation with an image, a thought, a memory—a cooperation of which the individual is aware." Feelings, as suggested by Hochschild, are "not stored 'inside' us, and they are not independent of acts of management. As a matter of fact, in managing our feelings or emotions, we contribute to the very creation of it" (1983: 18). Noted by Hochschild, feelings also become another method of communicating information.

In addition to feelings, there are "feeling rules." Vacillating between "what I should feel" and "what I do feel" is where we find the basis for these rules of feeling. Conceptually, Hochschild determines feeling rules to be the guides to our emotion work by "establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges…It is a way of describing how—as parents and children, wives and

husbands, friends and lovers—we intervene in feelings in order to shape them" (1983: 56-57). Another major aspect in the guidance of our emotions and feeling rules is found in our shared culture and can serve as scripts for guiding and directing our actions. Indeed these rules "describe societal norms about the appropriate type and amount of feeling that should be experienced in a particular situation" (Wharton 1993: 149).

As much of the research on emotional labor focuses on gender, Hochschild discusses how social positions can influence our individual and collective feeling rules. She notes that these feeling rules are depicted differently based on societal expectations for women and those in the middle-class. As we collectively engage in a dialogue based on these feeling scripts, this acknowledgement "reflect where we stand on the social landscape" (Hochschild 1983: 57). Our engagement in feeling rules are exemplified through the mechanisms utilized to question our own feelings or emotions as well as through the accounts we provide to others that question the emotions we present or display. In short, feeling rules are intertwined with cultural aspects, rituals, and social position. Considering these things, there is also an awareness that social power, in terms of authority, can dictate these feeling rules in the workplace, and arguably in society itself.

Inherently tied to emotions and feeling rules are the concepts of emotion management and emotional labor. In the airline industry, flight crews have to account for the different emotional perspectives of passengers, management, and other crewmembers. In her study of flight attendants, Hochschild (1983: 113) states:

> From the beginning of training, managing feeling was taken as a problem. The
> causes of anger were not acknowledged as part of the problem. Nor were the

> overall conditions of work—the crew size, the virtual exclusion of blacks and men, the required accommodation to sexism, the lack of investigation into considerable medical problems of flight attendants, and the company's rigid antiunion position. These were treated as unalterable facts of life. The only question to be seriously discussed was 'How do you rid yourself of anger'?

As emotions such as anger often arise in service work where interactions of all types are mandatory, the rules of management often serve as a method of controlling emotions. In addition to the perception of managerial awareness, there is also the knowledge that job security is tied to effective emotion management. In studying flight attendants, it was noted in *The Managed Heart* that flight attendants often enacted an "imaginative" stance; a position that allowed the visual (mental) fantasy of what they would "like to do" to particular passengers that make them angry. This imaginative stance allowed anger to be dealt with in a manner as not to jeopardize job security. Coupled together, the premise behind emotions, feeling rules, and emotion management lead to the conceptualization of emotional labor as it moves into the forefront of many occupations.

Emotional labor is not without consequences according to Hochschild. By engaging in "surface" and "deep acting," emotional labor, when performed on a regular basis through service occupations can often thrust the actor into distress. In this, Hochschild suggests that the performance of emotional labor much like physical labor has its costs. "Beneath the difference between physical and emotional labor there lies a similarity in the possible cost of doing the work: the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self—either the body or the margins of the soul—that is *used* to do the work" (1983: 7). This gap, so to speak, occurs from the need to perform emotions that are not necessarily deeply felt on behalf of the individual performer

though it is required, mainly through normative expectations of emotional displays within the context of work.

Hochschild's conceptualization of emotional labor is indeed useful for providing an explanation of the experiences of flight attendants. As noted earlier, the social position of women, and the often stereotypical beliefs about their natural emotional stance frequently influence interactions in the workplace. In this, the research on flight attendants provided a unique perspective from which to view emotional labor in gendered occupations. Quite often, gender ideologies can support employers' preferences for hiring specific genders as they deem them suitable for specific jobs (Reskin and Roos 1990). These longstanding beliefs about gender and emotionality are often one of the underlying factors of women's positions in occupations requiring emotional labor. As much of this is attached to social status, the very premise of emotional labor and normative expectations surrounding performances can be seen as a manifestation of larger structural beliefs about women.

In the theory of emotional labor, Hochschild elaborates on the experiences of women in the workplace, as well as in the home. At the same time, her analysis misses the experiences of people of color and their experiences with emotions, normative expectations of emotional display, and in turn, emotional labor. Though I follow much of her work in this project, I believe the theory can and should be extended to understand the divergent experiences with emotion work that is experienced by people of color. Hochschild does not fail to mention people of color when discussing status positions, yet an analysis of the differences or similarities were not adequately discussed. Mentioned

earlier in this chapter, people of color was largely missing (or invisible) from the flight attendant population during her initial research, resulting in their omitted perspective in this literature.

Here, I intend to extend the discussion of emotional labor to provide a detailed account of the emotional labor performed by women and men of color in the airline industry. By including multiple aspects of social identity into our understanding of emotional labor, we also introduce how gender and racial identity intersect to create different experiences and expectations of emotions. After all, many interactions that occur in mainstream society, the workplace, and many other public spheres are based on preconceived notions or ideologies associated with group membership. For African Americans, the often salient characteristic of color is indeed noticed-- even in a society where there is the mainstream rhetoric of, "I don't *see* color." Moreover, as emotional labor is a basic job requirement for those doing service work, I believe that the additional emotional labor performed by women and men of color should be placed in the forefront by realistically peering into the interactions and subsequently the minds of those passengers and coworkers in which they must constantly interact. After all, this very industry, as with many others, systematically excluded people of color for an extensive portion of its history. It is dubious and dangerous to assume that the very core beliefs used to exclude a group have disappeared simply because they have begun to penetrate the aisles and flight decks of our nation's aircraft. Hochschild's (1983) idea of managing one's heart is merely one small aspect that people of color must contend with in performing emotional labor. African Americans in the airline industry must also

navigate an environment that has been tacitly deemed a white space. This is to suggest that racist ideologies and prejudices are in many ways both conscious and unconscious responses; one not "checked at the door like luggage." In reality, emotional labor is greater than just workplace emotions as they are often ensconced in social identity— identities that have been constructed in a society operating out of systemic racism and sexism.

Gender and Emotional Labor

Over the past few decades, the research on emotional labor has been expanded to include a variety of organizations and occupations, as well as the social factors contributing to the outcomes of emotional work. In this, much of the research has failed to incorporate racial or ethnic identity as a means of understanding additional levels of emotional labor. In their work on public service workers, Guy, Newman, and Mastracci (2008) conceptualize emotional labor and include the idea that "[E]motional labor requires that workers suppress their private feelings in order to show the 'desirable' work-related emotion. Unlike physical labor, this is 'invisible' work: it is not measurable and it can rarely be seen, touched, or heard" (41). Though much emotional labor is unobservable, it indeed adds another dimension to the demands of engaging in everyday service work. Here, the importance of understanding how a visible and salient social characteristic such as race, can add to the unrecognized and unrewarded aspect of work. Though race has been largely ignored, the work on gender and gendered occupations can provide a detailed account of the experiences of women and men in gendered workplaces.

In their work on flight attendants, Steve Taylor and Melissa Tyler (2000) examine the work of flight attendants from the perspectives of the workers as well as management. Before diving into the work performed, they examine how the gendered expectations of women influence the work they are asked to perform. Based on sexual differentiation from a form of normative masculinity, women in the airline industry are assumed to be naturally more caring than men. As the work of flight attending is deemed to involve caring, both physically and emotionally for others, women are seen as capable of carrying out this work by virtue of their sexual difference from men. This ideology inherently increases the cost of the service itself. When women perform these roles and organizations continue to hire them to do so, there is a simultaneous reproduction of sexual difference.

Based on existing presumptions about gender and emotionality, the roles of men are often examined through their different expectations about emotions and emotional display. The work of Erickson and Ritter (2001) examines the emotions of men in occupations. What is significant here are connections with power—social power, as well as occupational power. In general, those occupying statuses that are more powerful "tend to have more control over their emotional labor and thus are empowered to express more negative emotions, particularly anger" (148). As this research moves in a solid direction to the understanding of the relationships with masculinity and emotional power, we are left to ponder the power differentials when factoring in things like social class and racial-ethnic identity, as these factors are not included.

Highlighting the significant differences between social power, position, and gender, Pierce (1995) documents the interactions between paralegals and attorneys and the subsequent expectations that each gender carries in terms of appropriately expressed emotions. Pierce argues that emotional labor should be understood from the gendered structure of organizations, in this case, law firms. As the legal profession has historically been male dominated, definitions and expectations of good lawyering and professional behavior have come to be expressed in masculine terms. Thus, gender becomes embedded in professional expectations for emotional labor (Wharton 2009). As many occupations remain highly sex segregated, Pierce's research is an important element to understanding how historical domination and normative structures develop within industries creating a forced conformity to emotional labor.

With paralegals in law firms, much of their work is gendered and gender identity remains the basis of evaluation in terms of professionalism. The invisible aspects of their jobs, though not present in formal job descriptions for paralegals includes "expressing deference and behaving as caregivers" in reference to attorneys. When there is a failure to perform this labor, they are perceived as less competent (Wharton 2009). Consistent with much of the research on emotional labor in gendered occupations, Pierce's (1995) research adds the often missing dimension of understanding emotional labor and performance from the structure of the organization itself. In this way, "the emotional labor of paralegals serves to reproduce the sex-segregated structure of law firms" (Pierce 1999). Because of her perspective on organizational structures, several other studies

have examined how the natures of industries contribute to the expectations of gendered emotional labor.

Similarly, Lively (2000), extends the discussion on gendered emotional labor through her examination of stratification in private law firms. Largely in agreement with Pierce's work on gender, paralegals, and attorneys, Lively incorporates power and the abilities that accompany both professional and social power to define and change the existing organizational norms of behavior. Broken into classes of workers, Lively posits that, "indeed, some classes of actors have the power and status to redefine their own emotions and behaviors in such ways as to correspond with the existing norms while defining the same emotions and behaviors among less powerful classes of actors as deviant" (Lively 2000: 55). Here, the underlying assumptions of power preclude equality in terms of emotions, emotional labor and emotional display. Positions of power indeed ensure that not all emotion work or displays are created equal. Interpretations about the work of attorneys (as real professional work) and paralegals and secretaries (as not real professional work), allow the sometimes negative emotionality of attorneys toward clients and other workers, not only to be nullified, but formulated in such a way that it does not remove any threat of professional status (Lively 2000). One major problem here is that Lively treats power and status as mutually exclusive within organizations and not from the perspective that one can have status *and* power based on various social characteristics, regardless of the position they hold in the organization. In other words, *who* has the power and status to influence existing emotion norms, and emotional labor,

in the workplace is not necessarily equally distributed even in existing examinations of classes of workers.

Moreover, much of the research on gender and emotional labor conclude with similar findings; power and gender are often intertwined and influence workplace dynamics in reference to emotional labor. The interpretations and fundamental beliefs about gender often provide the overarching guidelines in which judgments of appropriate behaviors are made. The unrewarded and unrecognized aspects of emotional labor become an aspect of the job that is expected to be performed, largely by women, in many occupations. As Hochschild has poignantly shown, "women flight attendants symbolize the heterosexual construction of *woman*; they are creations of feminine heterosexuality, 'highly visible distillations of middle-class notions of femininity'" (1983:175). Though most cases of gender and occupations do not necessarily subscribe to notions of femininity as do flight attendants, it is clear that the interconnectivity between gender and emotional labor should remain of utmost importance. Here, also, a detailed analysis of notions of femininity and middle-class normativity in the work on emotional labor remains synonymous with "whiteness" as people of color continue to be missing or relegated to the margins in the work on emotional labor. In recent years, more literature on emotional labor has begun to incorporate multiple aspects of social identity in order to understand emotional labor. Next, I discuss racial/ethnic identity and the literature on emotional labor.

Race and Emotional Labor

Much of the existing literature on gender and emotional labor does not incorporate

racialized notions of gender. In discussing the middle-class norms of behavior, it is not

apparent in much of the aforementioned research how these preset and normative rules

are applied to women and men of color. Gains by people of color in historically white

occupations indeed add a new facet to emotions and emotional labor that must be

explored. It has been well documented that gender, within the confines of emotion work,

adds a new dimension to performing emotional labor, but, I argue that in addition to

gender, racial or ethnic background can only enhance our current conceptualization of

emotional labor necessary to perform job duties.

In her succinct evaluation on the sociology of emotional labor, Amy Wharton

(2009: 152) notes:

> The deference expected of workers in front-line service jobs raises important
> issues of race and class, as well as gender…Deference—or the capacity to place
> oneself in a 'one down' position vis-à-vis others—is a characteristic demanded of
> all those in disadvantaged structural positions, including women, racial-ethnic
> minorities, and others in subordinate statuses. When deference is made a job
> requirement, members of structurally disadvantaged groups are likely to be
> overrepresented in such jobs or even be seen as better suited for the work than
> members of more advantaged groups.

This statement can best be understood through the work of Kang (2003) on the

emotional and body labor performed by Korean Immigrant nail salon workers. This

work formulates the connections and intersections between gender, race, and class that

workers encounter through working with diverse populations. Noting that many

consumers often refer to owners as "Asian or Oriental" without referencing an ethnic

identity, elicits the age-old stereotypical notions of Asian women as docile and

productive workers, "making them desirable and exploitable in an increasingly feminized, impoverished, and unprotected labor force" (Kang 2003: 824). Kang augments the literature on gendered and ethnic emotional labor and incorporates the crosscutting relationships with consumers of multiple racial and class backgrounds. With this, the expectations of service and emotion work are as much a product of the larger relationships between structural power and racial identity. Indeed, the race or ethnicity of the worker providing the service is connected with the race (as well as gender and social class) of the consumer purchasing the service and can serve as guidelines to expectations on behalf of both parties.

In the work of Macdonald and Merrill (2009), the authors examine how gendered jobs intersect with other characteristics like race or ethnicity. These intersecting identities often create what they deem the "emotional proletariat," or those "service workers who perform face-to-face or voice-to-voice service work, while having no control over the 'feeling rules' that guide their emotional labor" (Macdonald and Merrill 2009: 115). In addition, the emotional proletariat is those who "are in a subservient position vis-à-vis the customers" (115) and are often faced with how their social identities (in terms of race/ethnicity and gender) influence the likelihood that management will perceive that members with specific social identities are capable or incapable of actually performing specific jobs. The authors in this research also examine how various social identities can influence interactions. For instance, the authors note that members of certain groups may be excluded from jobs based on how they are perceived because consumers often "translate race and ethnic markers into indicators of

the nature of the service itself" (125). Though they focus mainly on "gendered" and "raced" low-wage occupations, we can presume that racial and ethnic "markers" can be carried into most all occupational environments, thereby influencing both customer expectations and interactions. Thus, as noted by the authors, "gender and ethnic identity become salient not in *whether* the worker can produce the expected emotional display, but in *how much* emotional labor this requires, and in how congruent or incongruent this display is with their sense of identity and dignity" (127).

For airline employees, the historically exclusive nature of the industry itself should be included in the evaluation of emotional labor. Pilots and flight attendants experience workplace environments that are gendered and raced, but in an opposite fashion of those examined by Macdonald and Merritt. Those flying as commercial pilots and flight attendants are not included in low-wage service work, but fit squarely within a middle-class service industry. Because the airline industry, in reference to pilots and flight attendants, remains visibly and overwhelmingly white, the experiences of people of color in this environment should also be examined to understand the differing expectations surrounding racial or gender identity. Emotional labor in such environments transcends customer interactions—as customers come and go within a matter of hours, but dominant relationships between workers add an additional dimension to the emotional labor performed. In her work on elite law schools, Moore (2008) forwards the discussion on emotional labor and the costs associated for students of color at elite, predominantly white, law schools.

Dealing with the experiences of students of color and the existing relationships between faculty and other students, Moore (2008) notes that students of color must constantly engage in an ongoing daily struggle against institutional spaces with deeply racialized (white) norms. The high costs of this emotional labor is one that students of color are required to pay in the pursuit of their education—one that is not equally shared with their white counterparts. A variety of significant consequences can be noted here. The belief in suppressing emotions of anger and frustration is something that students of color in this environment have become all too familiar with. In similar vein, many of the students understand that if they provide a retort based on emotion, they are seen negatively with an image that coincides with already negative perceptions of people of color. Consequently, people of color remain either estranged or in a perpetual state of emotional turmoil (Cose 1993). In her work on elite law schools, Moore (2008: 27) begins her etiology of white space in the following way,

> The white institutional space of elite law schools has as its foundation a history and legacy of white racist exclusion of people of color. Not only did this result in the white accumulation of economic and political power reaped from these institutions, but it also permitted an exclusive white construction of the norms, values, and ideological frameworks that organize these institutions. This resulted in the development of a white frame that organizes the logic of these institutions.

Analyses of emotional labor in white institutional spaces must be continued in order to shift the focus solely from how emotional labor is performed and incorporate how those in positions of power force differential levels of emotion work on workers of color. Currently, much of the literature on emotional labor examines white workers in rather white homogenous environments (Wingfield 2010) or workers of color in so called "raced" occupations. Here, it is important to examine emotional displays (as a

result of emotional labor) when enacted by African Americans. Building on the literature

in this area, Wingfield (2010) examines emotional displays by African Americans in

professional settings and determines that some emotional displays, when committed by

African Americans are deemed inappropriate, even though these emotions are sometimes

performed by whites. Take the following example provided in Wingfield's (2010: 259)

study of black professionals:

> Respondents suggest that a different set of feeling rules apply to them altogether wherein they are not permitted to show anger under any circumstances. They cite numerous examples of white workers who have openly expressed feelings of frustration or annoyance in ways that they believe are simply unavailable to them as black employees. Respondents argue that as black professionals, they would be punished for displaying anger in the same ways their white colleagues do.

This information coupled with the work of Moore (2008) suggests that emotional

labor performed by people of color is indeed heavy in many respects. African Americans

carry an awareness of the often negative stereotypes surrounding them. Therefore, they

are likely to rely on various mechanisms to ensure they do not display emotions, though

often appropriate, in specific environments. Working in professional settings, where they

are likely to be one of only a few "token" black professionals, the emotions displayed by

African Americans become gendered, racialized and are hypervisible. The intersecting

identities of race, gender, and class influence experiences with emotional labor and

emotion work, suggesting that feeling rules are also tied to our social identities. Because

of this, emotions, emotional displays, and the emotional labor that ensues are deeply

connected to what we are *allowed* to feel and display. Because these feeling rules and

emotional displays are connected to social power, we must go beyond intersectional

perspectives to first paint the picture of why intersecting identities remain of significance in the workplace.

Relying on Michael Burawoy's extended case method (*see* Chapter III on Methodology) I will extend the work on emotional labor by incorporating the experiences with emotions, feeling rules, and emotional labor of African Americans in the airline industry. Here, the experiences of people of color cannot be understood without fully recognizing the social context in which they occur—both inside and out of the workplace. Placing these experiences within a broader framework will allow us to contextualize the additional labor performed by people of color in various occupations. Here, I rely on the theory of systemic racism to describe what shapes our interactions, our expectations, and in future chapters will rely heavily on this theory to discuss the consequences for people of color performing jobs requiring emotional labor. After all, the "dual and systematic discriminations of racism and sexism remain pervasive" (King 1988:43).

To introduce the idea and extreme importance of utilizing systemic racism, I think it is fitting here to detail an account provided by a flight attendant in Hochschild's book, *The Managed Heart,*

> There was one time when I finally decided that somebody had it coming. It was a woman who complained about absolutely everything. I told her in my prettiest voice, 'We're doing our best for you. I'm sorry you aren't happy with the flight time. I'm sorry you aren't happy with our service.' She went on and on about how terrible the food was, how bad the flight attendants were, how bad her seat was. Then she began yelling at me and my coworker friend, who happened to be black. 'You nigger bitch!' she said. Well that did it. I told my friend not to waste her pain (1983: 114).

In this account, it is essential to briefly examine the black woman that this passenger was referencing. Though this scenario was told from an observer (a white female flight attendant), it is important to note the language, connotations, and the emotional consequence of this interaction. To be yelled at, in such a negative and derogatory manner, in front of coworkers and passengers alike, suggests a deeper connection between gender, race, and the emotional labor performed by African American workers in their everyday interactions. For this African American woman, as well as many others, the fact that "two innate and inerasable traits, being both black and female" (King 1998: 72), are elicited, reminds us of existing statuses in society. Contemporary examinations of race and gender suggest that stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination remain a significant problem faced by many African Americans.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism provides a necessary framework in which to understand the backdrop of this interaction and the many others that occur between crewmembers of color and passengers or coworkers. By thinking of the aircraft as a "mini-society" in the air, we can learn much from these interactions by delving into the intricacies of racialized and gendered norms grounded in U.S. social structure. In the case of the U.S., racial oppression has been demonstrated to be both foundational and systemic and the oppression of people of color is one part of our deep social structure (Feagin 2006, 2010). The encounter recalled by the flight attendant above to describe the passengers' verbal attack toward the black flight attendant as merely a negative attitude or emotion, does not do justice to the experience of the African American flight attendant in which

this negative verbiage was aimed. For many middle-class African Americans, such as those pilots and flight attendants in this study, "white racism is not an abstraction generated by a militant ideology but rather a matter of ordinary experience" (Feagin and Sikes 1994: 75). Accordingly, it is important to examine here, the nature of racism in the United States in order to understand how and why these accounts remain recorded.

To understand systemic racism, Feagin (2006) posits that the nature of racial relations go far beyond individual bigotry. Racism, along with oppression is systemic; that is, it is a "social, material, and ideological reality that is well-imbedded in major U.S. institutions" as well as in the minds of our many citizens (2). Moreover, by taking a historical glimpse at the conditions in which our country was founded—one where people of color and women were relegated to subordinate positions, the contemporary picture of gender and racial inequality becomes clearer. With white women and people of color assigned to inferior and subordinate positions, deeply framed stereotypical notions of their character, propensities, and abilities were also created as a means to justify white-male oppression. Within U.S. culture, "racist and sexist ideologies permeate the social structure to such a degree that they become hegemonic, namely, seen as natural, normal, and inevitable" (Collins 2000). By systematically excluding white women and people of color, the foundation of sexism and racism was deeply embedded into this country at the very onset of the development of most all major institutions.

Over time, the ideologies of the inferior nature of white women and people of color remained reinforced through various outlets. From the founding of our country, the belief in the inferiority of black intelligence, work ethic, and general character were

devised as a method of control and as a rationalization for oppression. Intrinsic in language, a color-coded ideology and discourse materialized early on through everyday interactions and had a "trickling" effect on larger society. As Feagin notes (2006: 29-30),

> Consciously or unconsciously, a majority of whites have long extended language and understandings to discuss, defend, or prescribe the hierarchy in which whites are generally dominant and people of color are generally subordinated. They have accented and honed the common folk model of a 'natural' social order, what has historically been called the 'great chain of being.' This perspective views men as superior to women, Westerners to non-Westerners, and whites to people of color (2006: 29-30).

The intrusive nature of racial and gendered ideologies on interactions is a primary focus in this research. An aspect of systemic racism—the white racial frame, is also necessary to comprehend racial and gendered ideologies. The white racial frame is indeed useful in this analysis as it can serve as the "glue" that melds together our historical and contemporary racial realities. Because interactions are often guided by preexisting ideologies, I believe it fitting here to provide a brief analysis of the white racial frame. Much of this will be discussed and expanded in later chapters.

The White Racial Frame

The white racial frame is an old white created frame that provides an overarching and destructive view on racial matters. Feagin (2010) notes that in this broad racial frame, white Americans have historically combined at least these important features: "racial stereotypes (a belief aspect), racial narratives and interpretations (integrating cognitive aspects), racial images (a visual aspect) and language accents (an auditory aspect), racialized emotions (a "feelings" aspect), and inclinations to discriminatory action" (10-11). Over centuries of operation this strong racial framing has encompassed

both a strong positive orientation to whites and whiteness and a negative orientation to those racial "others" who are exploited and oppressed. Today, as many whites move through their everyday lives, they often combine these features in their every actions and decisions in regard to Americans of color.

The white racial frame has been in existence for the bulk of our history and was often used as a method of highlighting white virtue and morality. Ultimately, this frame was the primary mechanism used in the exploitation of people of color and ultimately served as a catalyst for the rationalization and continued exploitation and oppression that is all too familiar in our history. For the frame to exist and survive, prepackaged notions of race are passed on not only through familial networks, but are encompassed in every major institution from politics to religion. From the first century of European colonization "the class and patriarchal (gender) frames of oppression have been linked to the white racial frame or even nested within it" (Feagin 2010: 15).

By receiving such strong support in our major institutions, the white racial frame has remained, albeit reworked in some ways. Aspects of the white racial frame have been reworked and reworded, but has consistently remained a dominant frame of reference for many whites. As Feagin (2010) notes, the white racial frame "is an 'ideal-type,' a composite whole with a large array of elements that in everyday practice are drawn on *selectively* by white individuals acting to impose or maintain racial identity, privilege, and dominance vis-à-vis people of color in everyday interactions" (14). In this, the centuries-old negative perceptions of people of color, and positive perceptions of whites, is recalled, relied upon, and often influence face-to-face interactions. Moreover,

the white racial frame does not exist apart from our everyday experiences—in truth, it is essentially a part of our larger system of racial oppression.

The contemporary racial frame not only encompasses cognitive-verbal stereotypes and articulated values--concepts about what is racially desirable and undesirable—but also important nonlinguistic elements such as racialized emotions and images (Feagin 2010). As we have moved beyond a society that was openly racist during slavery and Jim Crow, the nature of race relations, though changed, continues to reflect just how far we have to go. Significant elements of the white racial frame, though they have been refurbished, continue to be "commonplace in whites' everyday thinking and actions" (Feagin 2010: 95). Foremost, the racialized images, ideologies, and emotional aspects remain a major aspect of the white racial frame. Moreover, though our country has made some significant changes over the past fifty years, the racist ideologies and practices that extend to the very establishment of our country cannot simply be erased from the minds of whites or people of color simply with the signing of the Civil Rights Acts.

Other Theoretical Contributions

When thinking about emotional labor in general, the perspective that this process encompasses both soft (feminine) and hard (masculine) emotions (Mastracci, Newman, and Guy 2006) should indeed be considered and should lead to the understanding that there will also be variations in the perspectives embodied in racialized emotional labor. Those characteristics deemed "soft" are those usually associated with feminine gender ideologies; being "nicer than natural" while also having the ability to be hard or "nastier

than natural" (125). This idea is of significance because African American women are seen to be somewhat more aggressive than other women while African American men are likely to be seen as aggressive and dangerous at the same time (Feagin 2006). As seen throughout the literature in this chapter, the relationships between individual power and institutional structures are important aspects of emotional labor. Feeling rules and other normative cultural structures developed in institutions have persisted through a collective social reproduction of racial power, privilege, and racialized emotion norms. Much is done through contemporary framing of racialized and gendered "others," while there are also institutional pressures that actively reproduce inequality by forcing conformity at institutional and individual levels. For African Americans in institutionally white spaces, the discursive reproduction of white-male privilege is as much an aspect of performing emotional labor on the job as those pre-existing expectations of emotion work found in job descriptions.

For instance, in his research on the social reproduction of sexism and white-male privilege through anti-feminism, Hough (1998) notes that men construe feminism as in conflict with notions of equality by inserting the emasculating nature of feminism. In turn, males in particular environments collectively seek methods in which to exclude and objectify women, contributing to the reproduction of sexist behaviors. Indeed, much similarity exists between the reproduction of racism and sexism—much of the oppression experienced by subordinate group members is done so with institutional support (Feagin 2006). Because there is overlap in men and women performing the same or similar jobs in the airline industry, it is plausible to close the gap in the literature to

understand how African American men and women deal with the cumulative effects of racial and gender identity in these work spaces. Moreover, the collectivity of emotional labor, systemic racism, and the reproduction of racial framing and oppression will be considered in more detail in Chapter VI. The experiences of black flight crewmembers and the emotional labor performed is often a consequence of interactions based on race and/or gender in the workplace causing emotional labor to be ongoing. Because much emotional labor is reciprocal in reaction to insensitive encounters, the inclusion of several other crucial concepts will be used to facilitate this discussion.

To expand on the concept of emotional labor and emotions, I will also examine resistance, as discussed by Patricia Hill Collins (1993, 2000) and Joe Feagin. Here, it is useful to extend the idea of resistance, and collective resistance, to understand just how African Americans deal with emotional situations, emotional labor, and emotion management. This concept, along with coping will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VI.

Something as noticeable as a person's race and gender can often influence and facilitate interactions. For instance, Hochschild (1983: 174) notes, "Given this relation between status and the treatment of feeling, it follows that persons in low-status categories—women, people of color, children—lack a status shield against poorer treatment of their feelings. This simple fact has the power to utterly transform the content of a job." For African Americans, specifically those in white workspaces, their interactions with passengers and coworkers are often racialized and gendered. Feminist scholars have been interested in exploring the relationship between the interlocking

categories of race, gender, class and oppression, but the experience of African Americans must be understood as a consequence of a systemically racial, gendered, and classed based system of stratification. For African American women and men in particular, understanding their experiences involves more than just exploring how characteristics such as race and gender can lead to inequality but there also has to be an adequate examination of how race is itself gendered and gender is racialized (Harvey 2005).

Moreover, many of the issues faced by African Americans in the airline industry are direct consequences of sexism, classism, and racism. As these conditions combine to create an altogether unique experience for African Americans, these multiple jeopardizes can lead African Americans to form multiple consciousness (King 1988). Patricia Hill Collins (2005) explores the issues faced by African Americans and notes that many African Americans "deny the existence of sexism, or see it as a secondary concern that is best addressed when the more pressing problem of racism has been solved. But, if racism and sexism are deeply intertwined, racism can *never* be solved without seeing and challenging sexism" (5). The connections between race, class, and gender are key dimensions that shape the context within which African American women and men build their lives and are increasingly significant in the employment sector.

Foremost, "[F]or African Americans, the relationships between race and gender is intensified, producing a Black gender ideology that shapes ideas about Black masculinity and Black femininity (Collins 2005: 6). This gendered and racial ideology not only affects individuals but is often used as a means to justify different patterns of

opportunity and discrimination that African American women and men face in most social institutions (Collins 2005). Stereotyped notions of black identity remain ever present in interactions in the workplace and these gendered and racialized notions are usually coupled with ideas about a person's social class because this additional characteristic has indeed also become racialized (Collins 2000).

In the daily lives of African Americans, the *emotional energy* associated with racist and sexist encounters have consequences that, coupled with an environment in which one cannot escape, should also be considered here. For many African Americans the costs associated with counter measures to survive a racist system can be crippling in many ways. "No matter how hard African Americans work, they still face high levels of discrimination, and this discrimination usually leads to additional life stress, stress-related health problems, and the development of a necessary repertoire of counter-responses to deal with the problems of everyday racism (Feagin and McKinney 2003: 7). To deal with the realization that mistreatment has occurred on the basis on race, class, or gender can lead to feelings of resentment, disappointment, anger, and frustration; in short, African American women and men often experience racial battle fatigue. This battle fatigue is largely associated with race-related "stessors at the societal, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels" (Smith, Allen, and Danley 2007: 553) when maneuvering society. Focusing on the energy lost by African Americans in historically white environments, racial battle fatigue suggests that African Americans undergo undue physiological and psychological stress.

Coping, Countering, and Resistance

"Racism is a stressor that contributes to racial/ethnic disparities in mental and physical health" (Brondolo, Brady ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, and Conrada 2009). Experiencing racial and sexist encounters in the workplace and in everyday life is another aspect of African American experiences. Because of the connections that can be made between experiencing racism and mental health, it is important to understand how African Americans cope with emotional labor and emotions in a structurally racist society. Dealing with and countering these types of encounters has been something that African Americans have methodically had to deal with due to centuries of oppression (Feagin and Sikes 1994). The sharing of messages through oral histories has become an important aspect of resistance that is often utilized to thwart negative instances with oppression and exclusion. Even in environments like the workplace, African Americans can possibly dismantle this experience by walking away from uncomfortable situations, yet the aircraft produces boundaries that make private locations unavailable.

Many avenues to cope with the existing racial and sexist hierarchy are used by most African Americans. Strong activism through attempts to legally change the structure of society, to familial factors such as socialization is used as mechanisms to fight against and change the existing social system. As noted by Collins (2000), many African American mothers place a strong emphasis on protecting their children from the consequences of their devalued social status. This comes either through being taught to be self sufficient and to stand for what they believe in. Though many African Americans do not engage in open activism as a method of resistance, many do rely on existing

relationships as a cathartic method of *surviving* racial and gender oppression (Collins

2000,2005). To fight racial barriers, resistance from African Americans can take the

form of "withdrawal, confrontation, humor, and sarcasm" (Feagin 2006: 143).

Summary and Introduction to Research Questions

African Americans in the airline industry consistently deal with interactions with

members of diverse groups. In this, there is an excessive amount of emotional labor

connected with work in the service industry. Differing from much work in the service

industry, African American pilots must navigate an environment that remains

overwhelmingly white and male. These pilots have spent countless hours (and money)

perfecting their craft, yet, they are often perceived by passengers and coworkers, to be

less qualified than their white-male counterparts. Flight attendants, as front-line

employees, engage in countless interactions with coworkers and passengers, calling

extreme importance on the emotional aspect of their jobs. Before developing the ideas

introduced thus far, I seek to answer the questions below. Following these questions,

Chapter III will detail the methodology used to expand the literature on emotional labor

and African American flight crews.

(1). What is the significance of gender and race in terms of emotional labor and emotion

management?

a. What is the significance of gender and race in reference to a passengers'

gender and race and how do these characteristics influence interactions, how

interactions develop, are maintained, and coped with?

(2). In terms of the intersections of race and gender, what is the relationship between African American flight crews, other workers, and passengers?

    a. What is the significance of gendered and systemic racism on shaping the experiences of African American female and male in-flight service workers?

(3). In terms of emotions and emotional labor, what are the normative expectations of emotional labor for flight crews?

    a. What is normative in the expression/suppression of emotions? How might the normative aspects of being African American in the workplace contribute to dealing with emotions?

(4). Because emotional labor requires the suppression of emotions and feelings, what methods are used by African American crewmembers to suppress emotions?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I lay out my methodological approach to examining emotional labor. I am guided by Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labor suggesting that this form of paid labor operates through gender expectations and norms in gendered service occupations. I am also guided by systemic racism because it explains how inequality is deeply ingrained in social institutions. Combining these two theoretical orientations are indeed appropriate as Feagin (2006) documents that "systemic racism has a huge impact even beyond the more obvious and overt racial discrimination that we see every day, for there is also much subtle and covert discrimination" (266). This research places the everyday encounters in the workplace in the forefront and provides a thorough examination of the processes in which emotional labor is engaged. Emotional labor performed in response to racist and sexist encounters is indicative of much more than the environment—it is inclusive of organizational structures.

Much of the work on emotional labor discusses gender differences and emotion work, yet the research often fails to incorporate the role of larger social systems for interactions occurring in various work settings. To delve into the structural factors contributing to interactions on the aircraft, it is appropriate to extend the existing literature through the extended case method of Michael Burawoy. Extending the literature appropriately and remaining consistent with current methods of examining emotional labor, I utilize in-depth interviews. For this project, in-depth interviews were the appropriate method and provide an opportunity to understand the everyday realities

of systemic racism (and sexism) and how they contribute to emotional labor. In the remainder of this chapter, I provide a brief discussion of the key differences between relying on quantitative versus qualitative approaches, methods of data collection, and detail how the data was analyzed. First, I provide a brief justification for using qualitative methodology.

Justification of Research Methodology

Overwhelmingly, researchers of emotional labor utilize qualitative methodology and this research project continues with this avenue of research. However, many social scientists have recently used quantitative methods to study emotional labor. As much of the qualitative research on emotional labor seeks to understand the emotional as well as psychological hazards for workers, much of the survey research work "shifts the focus from occupation-based analyses to emotions themselves" (Wharton 2009). Determining the exact emotions are likely to be expressed or suppressed in emotional labor have been most of the key findings. For example, as summarized by Wharton (2009), Sutton and Rafaeli conducted several studies to understand the expressed emotions of store clerks (see Sutton and Rafaeli 1988; Rafaeli and Sutton1989) and found that women and those employees wearing uniforms "were more likely to display positive emotions than were men or nonuniformed employees" (156). Much other survey research studies follow in this order and they generally attempt to understand the effects of specific variables on

customer/employee emotions and their assessment of quality service. As Wharton (2009: 157)[3]synthesizes much of the literature engaging in quantitative scholarship, she notes:

> These researchers are more interested in understanding the behaviors associated with expressing emotion and complying (or not) with display rules than they are in the underlying processes that may have produced those behaviors. Hence, this line of research does not consider the effort workers expend to produce a particular emotional display. It examines neither the processes of deep or surface acting nor any attempts by workers to regulate their emotions.

Much of the survey research on emotional labor seeks to shift our understanding to the specific emotions in the workplace while maintaining the integrity of emotional labor theories. Subsequently, it is inappropriate to use quantitative methods to understand the overarching social relationships contributing to social interactions at work. This research is inclusive of specific emotions but also highlights the nuances provided through engaging in qualitative research. Qualitative analysis allows voice to be given to the voiceless through the expression of personal thought and ideas. Because this research focuses on the relationships between structure, identity, and emotional labor, qualitative methodology allows the respondent to provide meaning to interaction that is missing from quantitative research. Moreover, as this project seeks to understand how external surroundings (and structures) influence our interactions and our production of emotional labor, in-depth interviewing best serves this endeavor.

Making the direct connections between emotions, feeling rules, emotional labor, and social identity, qualitative methods were most appropriate for this project. Dealing largely with something that cannot be easily quantified, it is important to allow the

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[3] Here, Wharton argues that emotion focused approaches to emotional labor are the second major area of research and the majority are exclusively quantitative (2009: 155).

voices of those interviewed to be heard by providing them with the opportunity to interpret and respond to their lived social experiences. Through their interpretations of interactions, themes emerge to indicate cultural norms, feeling rules, and the influence of social identities in ways that can be missed through quantitative or more positivistic approaches. For example, in her work on emotional labor, Hochschild relied heavily on in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observations. While extending her theory of emotional labor, I engage similar methods in order to be consistent with the original intent of the theory.

Much social science research interested in understanding the intricacies of emotional labor have also relied on qualitative methodology. In her most recent work, Kang (2010) relied on ethnographic methods to explore the ways in which ethnic identity, global history, and service occupations interact to create situations in which Korean nail salon workers engage in both body and emotional labor. Kang's research, much like Hochschild's is successful in reaching the unspoken and nuanced meanings attached to emotion work and the emotional labor produced in the process. Through these methods, both researchers were allowed to observe ethnic and gendered differences in the expectations consumers carry for emotional labor. Survey research could indeed uncover several of these issues, but understanding the individual and collective meanings associated with social experiences are both something that qualitative methodologies would best explain. Because of the complexities of gendered and racial identities, I believe this method is indeed justified.

The Extended Case Method and Sampling Design

My methodological orientation in this project is guided by Michael Burawoy's (1991) extended case method. Emotional labor, as I have argued, cannot be understood apart from the social situations and structures in which the labor is performed. Moreover, I seek to expand the theoretical ideas of emotional labor through the incorporation of conceptual frameworks missing in the existing literature. The extended case method will indeed allow for the examination of how this particular social situation is shaped by external forces (Burawoy 1991). As presented through the literature and the proposed theoretical foundations, I contend that the by examining the "micro" processes of emotional labor performed by African American flight crewmembers, we can indeed get a glimpse at the larger "macro" processes that shape our behavior, namely the existing gender and racial hierarchy and organizational structures of the environment. By utilizing the extended case method, I focus mainly on the "theoretical gaps or silences" in the current literature (Burawoy 1991: 10).

This project seeks to understand emotional labor as performed by African American flight attendants and pilots currently employed in the airline industry. Taking into account the existing literature on gendered emotions and emotional labor, I seek to expand these preexisting ideas to incorporate how emotions and those performing them become racialized, gendered, and in many ways, classed. Following the present literature in the field of emotional labor, a solid foundation in which to view emotions has been laid. By using the extended case method, I am allowed to utilize large aspects of this theory while viewing emotional labor performed by African Americans as an extension

of the larger sociocultural processes and historical contexts (Chong, Um, Hahn, Pheng, Yee, and Auerswald 2009) of the aviation industry. The major theoretical components of emotional labor should not be discarded as irrelevant, yet, there are aspects of the theory that does not account for the racial, gendered, and classed experiences of workers of color in professional settings. The current project relies on the existing arguments of emotional labor theory and explores new facets of emotional labor.

Participants and Sampling

In order to extend the existing literature and add to a reformulation of theory, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with thirty-one male and female African American flight attendants and pilots currently employed with major airlines. These interviews were conducted between March and December of 2010. Eleven in-depth interviews were conducted with flight attendants; three were male while the remaining eight were females. Geographically, these flight attendants were located in Dallas, Atlanta, Colorado, and Houston. The most junior flight attendant had been employed for seven years with senior flight attendants having more than twenty years with their airline. All of the flight attendants interviewed in this project were over the age of thirty. Later in this chapter, I will discuss how these interviews were actually conducted.

Twenty-one airline pilots were interviewed for this project, three of which were women. The vast majority of pilots were in the Houston area, while several were located in other parts of the country, primarily in the southwestern region. The most junior pilots have been flying commercially for five years, while senior pilots have been employed for more than thirty years. One differing feature of flight attendants and pilots pertained

to rank in the airline. Pilots in the "left seat" (captains) were approximately half of those interviewed. This important detail will be expanded in the analysis section of this work. Another distinguishing feature of the work with pilots was their age at the time of interview. Several of the pilots referenced in this project were under the age of thirty. This characteristic indeed adds an additional dimension to their jobs as well as to their interactions.

Because of my distinctive position as a past flight attendant[4], I used snowball sampling to recruit participants for this project. As mentioned earlier, African Americans make-up a small proportion of those working in the airline industry and considering the expansive nature of the U.S. aviation industry, snowball sampling proved the best approach to reaching this population. This method is useful in reaching difficult populations, understanding better their social networks, and reaching pertinent sensitive information that may be missed by using other methods (de Jong and van Ommeren 2002). Because a specific population was needed for this project, their location, schedules, and nature of the questions all lend themselves to snowball methodology. Lending to its usefulness is the fact that snowball sampling is often employed as an inherently useful means of reaching often hidden populations and is indeed one of the most widely used methods of qualitative research (Noy 2008). In the process, I had multiple "chains" that were used to gather an appropriate sample. To eliminate a certain

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[4] I worked as a flight attendant for a major airline from 1999-2004 with an official resignation in 2007. This prior position provided access to introductions to currently employed flight attendants and pilots in the industry.

degree of similarity in the sample, these chains were formed with only two participants selected from each chain. The logic here is to achieve a level of variety in the sample.

Data Collection

Now that I have discussed the methodology used to gather a sample, I now turn to the interview guides as well as the interview process used to collect the data. The interview guide constructed for flight attendants was devised to go through several stages of the experiences of front line service workers. In this, several categories were constructed to guide the interview process (see Appendix A). The interview itself was semi-structured and informal to allow a more conversational tone with participants. The semi-structured nature of the interview also allowed me to "probe" for additional information as necessary. The purpose of the interview guide was to provide a script to ensure that participants were indeed asked the same questions. Several sections were created in the interview guide that touched on key aspects of the job. Here, I will discuss the major sections of the interview guide.

First, flight attendants were asked to discuss their experiences with flight attendant training. In this, gauging ideas about appropriate methods of "professionalism" as discussed by respective airlines were open for elaboration. The interview then guided flight attendants into a discussion of interactions with passengers. Key conceptual ideas of gender, class, and race were incorporated to engage an in-depth discussion of how these factors, from the perspective of the flight attendant, contributed to their interactions with passengers. Emotions, in the form of feelings was added here, with pertinent information sought on the emotions they felt as well as if they felt it

appropriate to display those emotions. In this process, it was important to understand what type of action or interaction was perceived as worthy of emotional display or suppression.

The next subsection of questions pertained to interactions with coworkers. In the course of several days, passengers come and go, but crewmembers often remain the same. Moreover, those interactions occurring between coworkers were somewhat lasting and indeed impressionable to the work environment during the course of a trip. Those factors mentioned earlier in interactions with passengers were also applied in reference to coworker interactions. Management also played a pivotal role here as they are seen as "never present, but ever present." What this signified for workers was that though management is not present on the aircraft, they were still undoubtedly aware of their presence and what it means to have managerial contact within the airline. Finally, flight attendants were asked to discuss the environment of the aircraft itself and how this contributes to the display, suppression, or coping mechanisms used in emotional interactions. The aircraft is unique here as you are indeed in a *sealed tube* with no ability to escape.

Pilots, because of the differing nature of their jobs were given a different yet similar interview guide (Appendix B). Many of the existing sections were used, with some exceptions being made to passenger interactions. Post September 11, 2001, the interactions occurring between passengers and pilots have been significantly limited[5]. Interactions with passengers are limited to preflight terminal interactions or those

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[5] Only one pilot mentioned he maintains significant contact with passengers in a way similar to those interactions before September 11, 2001.

occurring after flights have ended. Because of this, a heavier focus was placed on coworker and terminal interactions. Even more limited than that of flight attendants, pilots indeed work in close quarters, often only interacting with the other person in the cockpit. Unlike flight attendants, pilots cannot retreat to a nearby galley to vent or "cool off;" they are likely to remain in this enclosed and isolated environment until the flight has ended. Pilot interviews were concluded in the same fashion as flight attendants and they were questioned about their display and/or suppression of emotions on the aircraft.

Before officially conducting the interviews, a series of pre-tests were done. As I remain in contact with several flight attendants, I conducted informal interviews allowing for their feedback on the interview process and nature of the questions. Based on my previous position in the industry as well as their comments and suggestions, the interview underwent several revisions before being used in the field. Each interview ranged from thirty minutes to two hours, with this largely depending on the responses provided by the participant. All of the interviews were tape recorded and detailed notes were taken from the moment of meeting until the end of our interaction. This was done as often useful information would be obtained during our meeting or concluding conversations. Extensive notes were taken during each interview to record mannerisms, additional thoughts and comments, as well as any commentary that could not gained through recorded interviews. Most of these interviews were face-to-face, with many pilots and flight attendants meeting me at a neutral location such as restaurants or libraries.

Mentioned earlier in this chapter, not all pilots were available for face-to-face interviews. In all, five interviews were conducted by phone, due to strenuous schedules and locations of the participants. Before these interviews were conducted, an informed consent letter was mailed, along with a return envelope, gaining their permission to audio record the interview. Though telephone interviews are not typically used in qualitative research, they are indeed effective when gathering data in various geographical locations. Moreover, there were cases where this was the only viable method (Berg 2009).

As previously mentioned, all interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. From these interviews, the data was then coded, themed, and subsequently analyzed. To maintain confidentiality in this project, all participants were given a pseudonym to protect their identity as much as possible and some locations and company names were changed. Changing names and locations was done in particular cases in which the pilot interviewed could be easily identifiable. Consider that only three participants in this project were black female captains and only twenty are currently working in the entire industry. Finally, I turn to the limitations of my methodology along with a summary of the methods used in this project.

Limitations of Current Study

I can recall when discussing my ideas surrounding this project with various academics, one of the first questions asked pertained to the use of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is associated for many, with homogeneity in sampling. Because this method of sampling relies heavily on the recommendations or social networks of

participants, one common criticism is that those in close contact are likely to have similar views. To eliminate much of this concern, multiple chains were started throughout the process and existing chains did not go beyond two to three individuals. This provided me the opportunity to thwart or limit as much similarity as possible. Another possible limitation of this type of research concerns the representativeness or generalizable nature of this project. However, I posit that this project is not intended to serve as an overarching, generalizable project depicting the entirety of the airline industry, but is indeed intended to understand the similarities and differences between already conducted studies on emotional labor and extend the existing literature in this area.

With the sample size represented here, many may question the validity of such a small sample. Foremost, I argue that the commercial aviation industry, in reference to pilots remains overwhelmingly white and male, with African American men and women constituting a small fraction of those employed. Because of this, the numbers represented in this project constitute a small but significant portion of African American pilots. The same can be deduced for flight attendants.

I also believe it is appropriate to address the issue with conducting interviews by phone. The ability to engage in "nonverbal" communication was missing in these interactions, but this was reduced partially by having informal phone conversations before the interviews were conducted and a time was set-up for a future call. When soliciting the interview and address for mailing consent forms, I provided the participant with some background information on my experiences in the airline industry and

provided the opportunity for the respondent to ask questions as well. Here, there was a familiarity of experience that was developed with the respondent in that I had the ability to understand their jobs and some of their language—in a sense, I was not an "outsider" looking in. One final limitation of the project is my social relationship with the participants. As an African American female and past flight attendant, there was an underlying assumption on behalf of some participants that I would have a shared language of the aircraft as well as similar experiences with race and gender issues. To offset this, participants were asked to explain their responses in detail and all aircraft jargon was detailed similarly. Here, it was appropriate to "probe" respondents as though I had no existing knowledge or understanding of their experience. I argue that my connection with participants, through previous flight experience, was not a limitation because it provided me with an opportunity to reach a very small population that would otherwise be difficult to reach.

Chapter Summary

To provide a brief summation of the contents of this chapter, I introduced the theoretical backdrops of emotional labor and systemic racism as a lens through which to gauge interactions in the workplace. Because this research is exploratory, using the extended case method worked well for the content of this project. I continued with much of the emotional labor literature and used a qualitative approach and conducted in-depth interviews. Finally, I provided a detailed account of the sample and interview guides used, followed by a discussion of the possible limitations of this project. In the remaining chapters, I present the findings of the current research through the

examination of pilot experiences in chapter IV, flight attendants in chapter V, followed

by an extension of the literature on emotional labor and resistance in chapters VI and

VII.

CHAPTER IV

TRAPPED AT 30,000 FEET

The airline industry, like most major industries in the U.S., has yet to fully incorporate diversity in any significant form. Examining the big picture of the airline industry, African Americans and other people of color still find themselves only partially visibly represented. The overall prevalence of white males in this airline industry is one result of the longstanding discrimination in hiring, and a culture that indeed gave heavy emphasis to the white and male nature of flying (Hansen and Oster 1997). In this chapter, I will examine the work experiences of African American pilots in the commercial aviation industry. After chronicling the experiences of pilots, I will then turn to flight attendants in chapter V. Important in this analysis is to differentiate the unique experiences of these two sectors of the airline industry. Research has indeed been conducted on the experiences of flight attendants (Hochschild 1993; Taylor and Tyler 2000), but not much has been conducted to date on African American pilots. Because of this, this project seeks to tell the story of African Americans in the industry by grounding their experiences in systemic racism followed closely by a more inclusive theory of emotional labor. Of significant importance herein is my goal to develop and add to the existing works on emotional labor by focusing on the often racialized and gendered experiences of these flight crews, specifically racialized emotional labor. In order to do this, I first examine the role of systemic and contemporary racism, followed by an analysis of the importance of incorporating the systemic racism perspective within

the theory of emotional labor. This will serve as a contextual lens through which to view the emotional perspectives and labor performed by these individuals.

Gaining professional entry onto the aircraft and into the flight deck is indeed a rather recent achievement, though African Americans were among the numerous pioneers of flight (Hansen and Oster 1997). In this, African Americans are a unique group to study in reference to the airline industry. Many of the longstanding politics of exclusion remain strictly in place. Also, as much of the research on emotional labor involves industries that are gendered and/or racialized, African American pilots are entering an industry that is both gendered, in terms of masculinity, and racialized, in terms of whiteness. The experiences of African American pilots, illustrate the interlocking nature of oppression because the industry is designed for white males. When examining specific occupations in which emotional labor is performed, much of the literature examines industries in which groups of people may be "typically" found or stereotypically expected through gender or racial identity. For instance, much work has been done to examine gender and emotional labor in the work of flight attendants, nail salon workers and paralegals, and more recently some have added the dimension of race in low-wage service occupations and entrepreneurships (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Pierce 1995; Wingfield 2007; Kang 2010; Romero 2000). African American pilots pose an altogether different situation; they do not "fit" the description of what has historically or contemporarily been representative of "pilot." Those black women and men working in this industry also have to contend with the longstanding ideology surrounding the occupation of pilot—one largely held by the mainstream white public to be an

occupation largely performed and better performed by white males, while also dealing

with racialized understandings of what is thought to be representative of appropriate

"black" work and/or positions. Outside of racial identity, women in this industry have

faced large scale discrimination based on systemic sexism and the ideology that aviation,

in terms of flying, was not an appropriate sphere for them (Hansen and Oster 1997).

Resulting from court cases in the 1960s, American Airlines became the first major

airline to voluntary hire a black male pilot in 1964. There were no women hired

commercially until 1973 and the first African American woman was hired in 1978, some

15 years after the pivotal 1963 Supreme Court case where Marlon Green challenged the

hiring practices of commercial airlines (Hansen and Oster 1997)[6].

In Confined Spaces: African Americans on the Flight Deck

Here it is important to briefly discuss the existing hierarchy on the aircraft. As

understood by those working on the aircraft, the captain has the ultimate authority to

make decisions. Widely acknowledged by those in the industry, the rank of captain

indeed carries a tacit and explicit level of power, prestige, and authority. In the flight

deck, this is followed by the first officer (FO) and/or flight engineer. Though operating

differently, flight attendants also have a positional hierarchy on the aircraft (discussed in

chapter V), but contextually, flight attendants are also bound under the authority of the

captain as are all others on board, including passengers[7].

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[6] See *Colorado Anti-Discrimination Commission V. Continental Air Lines, Inc.* March 28, 1963. See also *Rogers v. American Airlines* 1991.

[7] Like most other organizations, there is also a hierarchy in place outside of the aircraft. This involves chief pilots (overseeing pilot operations) and management. In this dissertation, discussions of the roles of these individuals will remain in the background as the majority of this project involves the daily operation

In this chapter, I focus on both interactions with passengers as well as interactions involving coworkers. The nature and set up of the aircraft itself serves as a rich location for understanding social interactions. As one respondent mentioned, "the airplane is like a mini-society inside. You have different representations of people and all their attitudes in a *confined* space." Surely, this space is more confined when looking into the cockpit, specifically when factoring in many of the changes that have taken place since September 11, 2001. For instance, before this time, pilots could step outside of the cockpit and engage in conversations with flight attendants and passengers much more easily than with the new regulations in place. Thus, pilots are not only confined to a small space, but one in which there is no clear or easy escape. Following closely the research of Hochschild (1983), I add the perspective of coworker interactions as another aspect of performing emotional labor , as this is a large part of functioning as a pilot or flight attendant—one that is often missed. The relationships of male-pilot, female-flight attendant mirrors other coworker emotional labor situations such as boss-secretary, where the secretary is often described as the "office wife."

Race as a Dimension of Emotional Labor

Much of the literature on emotional labor indeed examines the experiences of women in the workforce, specifically in those industries providing some sort of services. More recently, the work of Kang (2010) has been pivotal in our understanding of the interlocking systems of race and gender in the examination of the interactions and

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of the aircraft by the workers on the "front-line;" those dealing with the traveling public, before and after the boarding door has closed.

emotional labor of nail salon workers. Though there are many factors contributing to Asian American women working in this industry, including pervasive and erroneous stereotypical ideals of Asian American women as "industrious and service oriented," consumers have developed an overarching expectation to continue to find this industry dominated by Asian American women in particular (Kang 2010: 47). Similarly, with African Americans working in the airline industry, the vast majority continue to find themselves employed in low-wage, unskilled positions (Hansen and Oster 1997). Indeed, this remains the larger expectation of African Americans specifically when examining the industry (and other industries as well)—to be working in those unskilled positions and not in the flight deck. This ideology, based largely on our history of systemic racism, is pervasive and resides in the minds of passengers as well as airline workers. In addition, much of what African American airline workers experience emotionally and the emotional labor that they perform often hinge on social identities, particularly those salient factors of race and gender. These factors carry both internal and external meanings for individuals and groups, and the consequences of deploying and experiencing these hierarchically-grounded social identities are real and have an emotional, physical, and mental cost. Here, I argue that in order to fully understand emotional labor as performed in the airline industry, that labor must be first understood in the context in which it is developed. As posited by Feagin (2006), there should be recognition of the big picture—"the reality of this whole society being founded on, and firmly grounded in, oppression targeting people of color now for several centuries. Given that deep underlying reality of this society, all racial-ethnic relationships and

events, past and present, must be placed within that racial oppression context in order to be fully understood" (7).

To introduce the general idea that all emotional labor is based on social identity is not the sole intent here. Because of the nature of the airline industry, there should be an understanding of the overarching emotional labor expectations that most all face in this industry that are grounded in the nature of the industry itself. There are those cases in which flight crews have to deal with a variety of emergencies from mechanical and/or medical issues, to weather and passenger-related issues. Thus, I will examine the everyday ordinary workings and interactions calling for distinct emotional labor on the aircraft. I include the various emotional dilemmas faced by pilots that go beyond customer service needs, and include those aspects of maintaining appropriate relationships with coworkers.

This research adds a broader understanding of the emotional labor performed by African American women and men in roles where they are observably and numerically underrepresented. Because of this, there is a visceral reaction by passengers of simultaneous hypervisibility and invisibility. Hypervisibility is to be observed (and pointed out), as an anomaly, consistent with being on display. Invisibility works in an opposite way—to be invisible is to experience the visceral reaction of rendered to a position of subordinate status. It is created to reiterate the ill-acknowledgement of presence. As many of the participants in this project noted, this idea of black visibility extends beyond those working as pilots and on the aircraft, but also includes the component of the traveling public itself. Interactions in the terminal and on the aircraft

are unique for these pilots—they are constantly 'noticed' and commented on making them hypervisible, but they simultaneously somehow become invisible to those around them as well.

This chapter introduces the idea of the interconnectivity of emotional labor and systemic racism and sexism. Many aspects of emotional labor cannot be understood apart from the experiences that call for emotion management. In this regard, though a relatively small proportion of respondents discussed flight emergencies as an aspect of the job that calls for emotional labor, the overwhelming majority openly discussed racialized and/or gendered experiences as a frequent occurrence that called for emotional labor and emotional suppression. For those participating in this project, emotions that arise in the workplace indeed cannot be understood fully outside of the mechanisms that produce them; in performing emotional labor, aspects of identity such as race and gender often facilitate and dictate how emotional labor is performed and expressed. As I mentioned above, African American flight crewmembers' experiences dealing with racial and gendered identity extend well beyond the scope of being on the aircraft itself and they incorporate these experiences into their workplace identities even before they reach the aircraft or primary work environment. Because of this, much emotional labor is performed before the start of the first flight.

More Than Just a "Look"

The idea that the position of pilot is one occupied and appropriate for white males serves as a backdrop for the experiences of women and people of color throughout the airline industry. Pilots are highly educated, trained, and many have prior military

experience. As this position is one that carries a level of prestige and power, African American pilots become noticed by passengers and coworkers alike. Thus, the idea of hypervisibility becomes an aspect of the job that these pilots have to contend with in their daily interactions. In her work on elite law schools and students of color, Moore (2008) noted that the experiences of "students of color reveal that a major hurdle they encounter in negotiating the white space of the law school is living within a contradictory location of simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility…Negotiating this location becomes a major source of struggle for many students of color" (126). The experiences of students of color in her project are evocative of the connection between the racialized nature of an industry and the normative structures that contribute to the maintenance of these industrial norms. One major response from these pilots pertaining to experiences in the industry deals directly with hypervisibility as insinuated through "looks" and the direct connection to the larger ideology of black positionality as one not belonging in the front of the aircraft. This contemporary method of racist expression is one that is subtle and often unspoken. Take the following example of Tina, a black female copilot as she describes what the average day is like for her,

> You know I really used to want to conform for the business side of this and the people I have to work with, but I work in this environment and I am so conscious about how I look because I'm walking through the terminal and everybody stares at me. So, I don't want them to stare at me any more than necessary. (laughs) I get the big eyed look. I get the head like the exorcist. The funny thing is, I don't even notice it anymore. When my coworkers come and walk with me they constantly tell me. I know it's there but they think it's funny and they really, really see it. They tell me about all these looks I keep getting. I usually walk through the airport with my head down so that I don't have to make eye contact. When I do look at people, some smile, but most don't know what to do.

In Tina's description above, African Americans have and maintain an awareness that they are seen as "different" and not fitting well with preconceived, stereotypical images of what represents airline pilots—the typical white male. Though African American pilots have this idea of their difference, it is largely the result of white insistence that they somehow do not belong in the uniform, not to mention the flight deck. Though usually downplayed in significance by whites, these expressive looks have an emotional consequence for the African Americans experiencing them. In the above quote, this female pilot notes that she now walks through the airport with her head down so that she does not have to meet the stares of those around her. The frequency of these stares has caused many of these pilots to create ways to maneuver their environment, one that has a consequence—here the consequence is a loss of confidence. For many, understanding the notion of emotional labor as one performed within the context of jobs should also note those aspects of emotional labor resulting from unspoken experiences. Like many of the other African American respondents in this project, the idea of a hostile or questioning look is indeed one that is usually not counted as a racial experience, but indeed those in the project discuss these looks as though they are partially driven by racial identity.

Though most all of the pilots in this project shared experiences with stares, they often note that they were left wondering *why* these stares occur. Many perceive it to be based on gender, while others note both race and age. Important in this idea is that there is involved a level of conscious thought that takes place on behalf of these pilots that occur outside of those other significant aspects of job performance. In context, the time

and energy given to analyze these experiences also contribute to the amount of

emotional labor these pilots perform. Lisa, a female pilot shares her experiences with

looks in the following manner.

> For the most part you just kind of deal with it and after a while it becomes second nature…you go, "yea, you're looking…I get it." I remember coming into Pittsburg with my uniform on and it was like Oh my God I landed from Mars… I mean everybody was staring (laughs). I mean I understand why everybody is staring. It's like oh my god, she's a pilot—she's black—she looks so young. Or, she's a woman… I mean, you know it still gets to you even after a while.

Here, she confirms the idea of an African American pilot as anomaly in the idea that she

landed from mars. As she discusses the looks she gets from passengers, she easily

references her gender, race, and age. These intersecting aspects of her identity

collectively create a unique experience. Though she does not explicitly state a singular

reason people are staring, she does note that it becomes "second nature" to deal with

these pervasive and unspoken methods of exclusion. Even unspoken, I argue that there is

more to such a look than is usually examined in the literature. As developed here, many

of these pilots not only designate these looks as experiences important in their daily

interactions, but they also designate meaning to these interactions. Take for instance

another example of "the look" as expressed by a male pilot.

> I do get funny looks and when I do they are obvious. It's not like a glance or a slight double take. The hatred sets in so I would say that out of maybe every hundred people I see, one of them can't stop staring at me with a frown on their face like, "*what the hell is that*?" They'll stare for minutes and minutes. You know how people usually will look away when you catch them staring? Well, they are so into their stare that it takes them a few moments to realize that you have caught them staring at you.

In this one account, more detail is provided concerning the perceived meaning behind the stares that he receives. The longstanding notion that there are no significant meanings to a look is indeed untrue to these black pilots. To them, they understand that these stares are a tacit method used to insinuate that they do not belong in this particular space. Though often attributed to paranoia, these African American pilots have conceptually described and argued that there are meanings as well as feelings conveyed in a look. The idea that stares are a covert method of exclusion is also coupled with the idea that there is awareness that they are indeed noticed, in a way their white counterparts are not. Note too that the first excerpt provided by the female pilot notes that not only do her coworkers "see it, but they also find it funny." The notion that these stares are somehow humorous indeed involves a level of power on behalf of her coworkers as they can find humor in experiences deemed very uncomfortable for her. This also suggests that it is largely downplayed and deemed insignificant to those whites around her. The recollections of these pilots provide an implicit understanding that though largely seen by outsiders as insignificant experiences, they indeed deserve more discussion.

Increased Hypervisibility: the Politics of Navigating White Space

Because words are not exchanged in these interactions, it is possible that many outsiders will assume that the analyses provided by these pilots are mere imagination, one that they themselves have provided meaning to. Be that as it may, it not only carries meaning, but consequences for these pilots. While many have the privilege for looks to go unnoticed and analyzed, these pilots, much like many people of color note that they

do not have the luxury as it is a large aspect of their job. As an African American

woman, the respondents spoke in a language that suggests that I would understand what

they mean when they discuss looks or as the pilot noted above; "the look of hatred."

This usually occurred in the comment, "*you know* what look" comments. In attempts to

remove my identity in their discussion, I would inquire how they have come to

understand racial meanings found in unspoken interactions. When asked to develop the

idea of how meaning is derived from looks, one pilot, Marcus eloquently states,

> You can tell when a person sees you and likes you. I think, you know, you can tell when a person is pleasantly pleased by what they're looking at.
>
> [[Give me an example.]]
>
> …So I was standing by the door and I would greet people and kind of take a look and see what's going on or who's coming on. And it's normally when folks are already on the plane and they're getting in their seats and there's a line that's backed up, backed up into the jet way. And they're about the second or third or fourth person about to get on the plane, and then they notice me. And they notice my stripes. And it tends to be a woman, a white woman, and it tends to be an older woman. And she will look at me—she's like wait a minute. What the fuck? And it hits them; it's like… oh shit! He's flying me today. But they won't say anything…Sometimes they do, but many won't. They will look at me, I have my uniform on, I have my ID on, I have my badge on and it's right in front of them and they're reading it. It's like they want to burn a hole through my ID so I can't fly and then I'll look at them, and they'll look away. They don't want to make direct eye contact with me...And if I look away and I keep half an eye on them, they're right back to checking me out…They're judging me from the top down. And I get that as a Captain all the time. And the minute I look at them to engage them, "welcome aboard, how are you"—they look away. So it's like they don't want to engage me directly but they want to judge me when my back is turned or I'm looking away or whatever. You can tell when there's contempt.

This captain, with many years of experience talks about the methods he uses to

distinguish looks received from passengers. The idea of contempt, or what many other

participants described as disgust, is something these African American pilots have a

great awareness of. As with those accounts mentioned earlier, most note that one method of differentiating meanings in looks involve the concurrent facial expressions. As noted in these above accounts, many of these looks are accompanied by frowns and are considered "hate stares" (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Additionally, these stares are connected to white backstage behavior and clearly, whites in these examples are shocked into putting now-backstage appropriate racism into frontstage behavior (Picca and Feagin 2007).

The idea that there is more to a "look" than meets the uninitiated eye is indeed important in our understandings of contemporary racial experiences. Recognizing the notion that the nature of oppression and exclusion have changed to more covert and subtle mechanisms than in the pre-1960s era is important here. The idea of racial change often allows these racist practices to be dismissed and difficult for those not experiencing this to recognize (Feagin 2010). Looking deeper, the reality of race and racism for these black pilots is reaffirmed in these white subtle emotional expressions and their hypervisibility. Deeply examining what these pilots experience through covert racism has meaning for the larger profession and those that occupy these positions. Much of this suggests that not only is the position of pilot continuously racialized as a white profession, but also that the uniform itself represents whiteness. For example, Ronald, a senior captain with over twenty years experiences notes:

> Well, there are those people who will see you in uniform and want to give you their bags if you are standing anywhere near the front of the airport. The thing that I notice the most is whenever I am in uniform and near the traveling public, people will tend to look, especially white males, will tend to look you up and down. It becomes kind of obvious that they're asking the question, "What is he doing in a uniform?"

Moreover, another senior pilot commented:

At the hotel, I can be standing there waiting for the van to take us to the airport and passengers have come up and dropped their bags at my feet on more than one occasion. I was flying with a black captain and we were waiting in the lobby, in full uniform, and a white guy walked up to him and said, "Can you get my cab for me?" The captain looked at him and said, "The only thing we know how to do is fly airplanes." The man said, "I understand that, but can you get my cab for me?" He just couldn't get it through his mind that he was talking to a pilot.

Contemporary racism relies heavily on the mechanism of refurbished ideas of African American inferiority. Though these pilots are men and women in uniform, African American pilots find themselves in the situation of having to deal largely with the perceptions of others – their pilot's uniform becomes a skycap's, a doorman's, uniform. Thus, most become aware that many in the white travelling public see them as not fitting the appropriate icon of what constitutes airline pilot. One recurring theme in my interviews was that often interactions with passengers extended beyond 'looks' and included the spoken idea that African Americans should be in a position of servitude or low-wage service work. Several interviewees mentioned the commonality that they were often given luggage as though they are baggage handlers. For instance, when discussing her experiences in uniform, one female pilot commented: "On a flight, there was this one particular time that I was standing at the door with my uniform on and this passenger came over to me as though I was the cleaner. I kinda went off, in a professional way, and I reiterated to her that I was the pilot. I mean, it happens sometimes. *They just don't see us."*

There are racialized factors at play in these cases; factors associated with underlying assumptions of black positions and skill sets. Outside of what it means for

those African American pilots, the racialization of what constitutes appropriateness for the position of pilot is also evident here. In these encounters, the uniform and position represent whiteness and in this representation, the underlying assumption is that African Americans are not granted full participation or recognition in this role. Also, the racialization of black males and females ensures that they are 'mistaken' for those in low-skilled positions and are challenged with the position to counter those ideologies. In fact, one aspect of understanding these subtle interactions is the idea that in many contemporary settings, African Americans often "meet negative beliefs about and interpretations of their abilities, values, and orientations" (Feagin 2010: 137). The removal of power, position and recognition of pilot is one example that these African Americans face in their daily interactions on the job. Because there is inherent privilege associated with not having to notice the racialized experiences of others, these black pilots often find themselves faced with the duality of experiencing racism firsthand while also having to teach others that it continues to exist.

Here, it is important to note that though black flight crews are hypervisible to the travelling public; their white colleagues often downplay the significance of these looks and other subtle experiences. In these cases, African Americans use these experiences as a method of 'teaching' whites about their experiences. As I will discuss below, many white coworkers often laud the airlines and whites as making significant progress in achieving racial equality. For instance, Tony used such a discussion as an opportunity to show his white co-pilot just how much things remain the same for African Americans in this industry,

I was flying with an older white captain that wanted to have a racial discussion on how things have changed and are better for African Americans…He kept saying, "Don't you see the difference?" I was thinking, I'm not going to say anything but I did say, "I'm going to ask you to do me a favor. Walk behind me through the terminal when we get back to the airport." And he's like "huh?" "Just walk behind me, just a few feet behind me and see the way other people look at me." And then we walked toward our other plane; we got on our other plane and I'm like "did you see anything?" And he couldn't believe it. Because he could see from an older black person who had watched me and said, "Oh my god. I've never seen one before!" So, it went from an old black person saying "Oh my God I never seen one before, *thank you* Lord" to an older white person that said, "Oh my God, I hope they're not flying my plane." I had to tell him, you get that; you get those reactions—and sometimes it's just within the eyes, I mean, their eyes will lock on you and they will express it through their eyes, that contempt of, you know, he doesn't know what he's doing.

Because many of the African Americans believe whites do not 'see' racism from their perspective, this pilot used an opportunity to counter the broadly held idea that African Americans no longer encounter any racial issues. This longstanding belief that 'racism is dead' is one that is found in the continual denial of black experiences; one that seeks to maintain white innocence and reduce racist encounters to a few 'bad' individuals. Never included in this is that these bad individuals are encountered on a regular basis or the fact that these individuals are a part of the outer, more inclusive society that allows for the constant reproduction of racist ideology through a variety of venues. Understanding that racism is systemic allows a deeper connection between the racial experiences of African Americans, white expectations about black pilots, and the institutionalization of racism within the aviation industry as being those organizational things created *within* a racist system. As I move on to those experiences where African American pilots experience invisibility, keep in mind that these encounters in the

terminal (and even before) begin before any work is to actually take place, thereby contributing to the overall amount of emotional labor to be performed.

The Emotions of Invisibility

In the previous section, I examined the hypervisibility African American pilots experience in their initial interactions with passengers and coworkers. Though many of these interactions are unspoken, they nonetheless involve a level of emotional labor that should be recognized. As the industry seeks to provide good customer service and safety, aspects of social identity also contribute to the performance of emotional labor that is outside of these boundaries. In this section, I introduce the subtle and nuanced interactions that take place with white coworkers. Continuing with the idea of the subtleties of racialized interactions, I now turn to the other side of visibility; what many of these pilots note as being invisibility. Take for instance the following account of a senior pilot:

> I guess I have this technique of fading in the background and so people don't realize I am there. I was in the crew room one day and the conversation was on rolling cigarettes. This one guy says, "Well you need to nigger lip it." I was there and I glanced back at one of the other guys and he was trying to tell him not to say that. I didn't react. I think it was an embarrassing moment for him. I think they were expecting me to make some equal opportunity protest or some shit like that but I said nothing about it.

In this account, there is a spatial reality of race and racism. Keep in mind that this encounter occurred in a common room used by multiple crewmembers. To examine this idea from the perspective of the African American pilot, he notes that people are often unaware of his presence (or possibly they simply ignore his presence). For many in this industry those things associated with being a pilot are also associated with whiteness,

even by coworkers. The comfort to speak and engage in behaviors that are often considered to occur in backstage or more private settings indicates the longstanding notion that this occupation is one that is occupied and maintained for whites, specifically white males. As a method of maintaining white superiority, many whites engaged in blatant language against African Americans. The flight deck as well as crew rooms and other areas associated with being a pilot serves as a safe space for these white pilots--a space where they are free to use racist language. For this pilot and other African American pilots, because they are in an industry dominated by white males, they have to contend with the fact that a great deal of these spaces are unsafe spaces--spaces in which they are not free to counter many of these racist interactions. When on the aircraft, the idea of being invisible, specifically when in positions of authority is often manifest in a number of ways. The perception that they do not belong on the aircraft is often reiterated by coworkers in a way that suggests that they do not fear any verbal or physical backlash. As the hierarchy in the flight deck is well established, one captain laughs and mentions: "This one guy who was flying as my copilot tried to confront me by saying, 'So you think you're in charge?' I don't know what his problem was, but he wasn't too bright. Most people I fly with understand the power relationships and they know not to cross that line."

This first officer mockingly stating, "so you think you're in charge" is indicative of how he views not only the hierarchy on the aircraft, but also indicates his larger views of social power dynamics. For various reasons, this first officer found it appropriate and necessary to outright challenge the authority of the captain while insinuating how he

disregards his power. This is also a method that reaffirms the idea of the flight deck as a space which remains largely as a white space. The senior pilot in this narrative notes that this was one of several instances in which his authority was challenged, further noting that, "this one time, I had one of my first officers use the N-word and he thought he was going to get a reaction out of me but I didn't react." Within the confines of the flight deck, many of these African Americans understand that it is not the appropriate space to react and so do the many white actors that take part in this blatantly racist behavior. Thus, we have to consider how this weighs heavily on the part of recipient while also understanding the emotional process of the actor. Consider also the following example from Anthony,

> Just before the plane closes, one of the agents from the gate will come down and bring the final paperwork. Tell us how many people we have on board, that kind of stuff. Normally, their job is to give it to the captain, ask the captain if he needs anything, wants anything, if it's okay to close the door. Heard from a number of black captains that the same thing happens to them…They are sitting in the left seat [captain's seat], they'll give it [the paperwork] to the white first officer. "Is there anything else you need?" And they'll hand it to them. They try to get approval from the white first officer to close the door and they have to get stopped.
>
> Being a former commanding officer, retired commanding officer, I will very quickly and very easily get into that aristocratic I'm in charge mode… But that natural way of thinking; you know…white is right, brown stick around, black get back mentality—it's just natural because they were raised with it. So, when you call them on it, they have to think twice. Like I just mentioned when the agent tries to avoid that black captain by giving the paper work to the white first officer… You know your left from your right; you know the difference between three and four, so there is no doubt in your mind which one of these shoulders has four stripes. And, you do this every day; you hand the paper work to the captain every day. The only difference in this cockpit today is the guy with four stripes has a sun tan.

Resulting from a history of systematic exclusion, the airline industry, specifically the flight deck, has developed as a white space – a space in which whites, especially white males, created and continue to maintain the ideological and normative frameworks of who belongs and doesn't belong in the cockpit (see Moore 2008). As can be seen, this overarching ideology is reiterated by white coworkers and passengers alike. Note here too the extended and cumulative effects of racial experiences occurring for these flight crews. Many of these racialized experiences occur before the start of the workday and continue long after the day ends. Racism to those experiencing it is a never-ending story of sorts, one that greets them when they step outside and is not shut off when the workday begins and ends. By examining their collective experiences in the workplace, we can explicate the mechanisms of systemic racism and the overarching white racial frame that facilitate the reproduction of racism in this institutional setting. Systemic racism has produced (and maintained) a larger societal system that in many ways normalizes racism and racist encounters. That racism has become normative can be found in the denouncing of its continued existence. This is somewhat evident in both negative reactions of whites to only minimal social change in the airline industry and also normalizes the expectation held by many blacks that they will indeed encounter racial affronts at one point or another while at work.

The actions of white actors should also be discussed as it pertains to the labor performed by African American flight crews. In these accounts, whites serve as usurpers of black authority, skills, and emotional expressions. Given the process of engaging feeling and performing emotional labor, whites in this environment feel free to engage in

inappropriate behaviors suggesting that they have a freedom to insinuate the old familiar adage of African Americans in lower status positions. In this, whites often attempt to remove the power given to African Americans in rather collective attempts to reaffirm white privilege and white space.

Through these interactions, both spoken and unspoken, the spatial reality of the flight deck as a white space serves the larger purpose of reaffirming the normative expectations of power, privilege, and emotional expressions. Through their dealings with whites on the aircraft as well as in their daily lives, African Americans have had to undergo the process of learning to not only engage in emotional labor in terms of managing their own emotions, but have learned through systemic racism and white framing how to effective manage the racist emotions of others.

Within the context of U.S. history, African Americans and white women have only recently been allowed entry into the airline industry. Entry into this industry was not an easy feat, but was hard won through a variety of court cases. As mentioned in this section, African Americans are simultaneously invisible and hypervisible in this contextual space they occupy on the aircraft (Moore 2008). In this, they often engage in emotional labor that carries a significant cost. For the most part, African Americans expend considerable emotional energy to maneuver their social worlds--one outside of work that recognizes and acts on their racial identity and another at work that reiterates their position as outsiders. One large aspect of emotional labor is to produce in others a particular feeling, while also being protective of self. Missing from much of the literature is the idea that interlocking identities add an entirely new dimension to

emotional labor – one that has severe consequences when performed by African Americans in this context. The consequence to self is often staggering.

Outside of performing this emotion work pertaining to visibility, African Americans also face and deal with larger, more blatant racist practices of exclusion. In many respects, African American pilots often deal with the blatant idea that they do not belong or "fit" as many describe. Whites in the workplace use various tactics to reaffirm the cockpit and the position of pilot as one reserved for whites only. From training to actual job performance, these black pilots contend with how passengers interact with them as well as how fellow crew reaffirm their positions as one whites are only fully capable of performing. In the following section, I will now discuss the experiences of pilots by recounting their experiences from training to employment and how whites serve as a catalyst of reaffirming white space.

For Whites Only

When discussing what it means to be a pilot, one African American immediately states,

> The difference between being a black pilot and being a white pilot is that, if you're a white pilot the assumption is that you know what you're doing. If you're a black pilot, the assumption is you don't know what you're doing. The white pilot is to make a jackass out of himself; the black pilot is to prove he's not a jackass. You are assumed to be inept.

As I mentioned earlier, for many decades, the commercial aviation industry was one that excluded African Americans as both pilots and flight attendants. This exclusion resulted from systemic racism coupled with white framing that deemed African Americans intellectually inferior. African Americans have only begun to make any noticeable

strides in entering the industry, and even so, this progress has been slow. Though

African Americans are represented currently, albeit in small numbers, the commercial

aviation industry is one that remains very spatially segregated by type of occupation,

with those working on the aircraft being reminded that the airplane is indeed a white

space and reserved largely for whites. In her conceptualization of white space, Moore

(2008:28) notes,

> Set in motion by the history of exclusion but remaining relevant today, racially
> disparate demographics of a space become a relevant (though neither necessary
> nor sufficient) aspect of white institutional space. Just as the racial makeup of
> segregated neighborhoods signifies racial space, so, too, in institutions…, the
> vast underrepresentation of people of color becomes a signifier…Because most
> people in these institutions fail to make the connection between historical racist
> exclusion and contemporary institutional norms, much of the white frame
> remains tacit, thereby reifying whiteness within the space without need for
> intentional action to do so.

The spatial reality of racism and the idea that specific spaces remain designated

for whites is crucial in my analysis largely because this is indicative of the experiences

many African Americans face even before becoming commercial aviation pilots. In their

research on the aviation industry, Hansen and Oster (1997: 117) note,

> The most far reaching, longest running, and highest profile court case ended only
> in 1995; it involved United, which was sued, along with five of the unions with
> which it bargained collectively by the U.S. attorney general in 1973…The
> lawsuit charged United and its unions with 'a pattern and practice of
> discrimination in hiring, termination, and other job related practices, based upon
> race, national origin and sex in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of
> 1964.

The significance of this and other court cases shed light on the discriminatory

and often prejudicial experiences African Americans face in this industry. Many of the

exclusionary practices of the airlines are often perpetuated at various levels, not merely

only from management. Many white actors, those serving as instructors in flight schools as well as those that are currently flying in the flight deck, serve as active carriers of the message and ideology of the flight deck as one reserved for whites. Often this is done in both subtle and overt ways. These interactions serve as constant reminders to these African Americans that their work environment can be seen as an unsafe space, one where these workers do not feel free to be emotionally expressive. Here, it is important to highlight how the aircraft itself plays a role in the emotional labor performed by African Americans in this white space. Consider that once the aircraft has left the ground, pilots are indeed confined, with limited options to remove themselves from difficult and strenuous encounters. The confined aspect of the environment is even more pronounced for pilots as leaving the flight deck is not always a viable option. A more accurate and vivid way to understand the confined nature of the aircraft is that, once you take off, there is no getting off until you land! Time spent in this confined environment can indeed range up to several hours when flying internationally.

Early Accounts of White Normativity

The idea of the aircraft as a white space starts well before being hired for an airline and many of these black pilots note that even their experiences with training were emotionally trying. The process of emotional labor involved in expressions of exclusion aimed at their intellect and skill evokes frustration, anger, and disappointment. Even so, these flight crews maintain an awareness that because of their racial identity and the longstanding negative stereotypes as black Americans, emotional expressions of most all

sorts are seen as inappropriate. Consider the following example of Martin, a pilot in his

early thirties, as he recounts his experiences in training to become a commercial pilot,

> When I graduated from college, I was an intern for a regional carrier; one of the first interns from a historically black college and there was also another black guy from my school. I was at the training center at the airport. Basically, I was responsible for learning all the intricacies of training and flying aircraft. Now being an intern, I was guaranteed an interview with this regional carrier and I was also given the opportunity to take a training class with all of the pilots. Keep in mind that I am an intern and everyone in the class was already pilots. I was the first one in our group to go through the training class. There were only four black people, including myself, in the building. There was a brother that worked there and two sistas that worked in scheduling. Other than that, it was no black people. There were no Asians and there were very few females.

> There was a guy named Dale that was over the classroom and he kept all of the books. Well, when they told me it was time to go to training, they told me to just show up to class and I would get everything I needed in there. Well, when I get to class, all the pilots had books and training materials and he didn't give me any. So, I thought maybe they just want me to sit here but I took notes and all that. I'm trying to follow as best I can but I don't have any books. Well, the day before the final exam for the class, the guy Dale comes up and says that "Your internship success is based on how you do on this exam." I said, "Dale, I don't have any books and I haven't had any for the entire class." So he says, "Here you go."

> Overnight I studied all night long and I didn't go to sleep at all and I got up and took my exam. I passed. He was clearly upset that I passed. The other interns got their materials before so that they could study. That's how the companies do it for interns so that they can know the stuff because it is so much information. I was interning so there wasn't a whole lot I could say. I did tell some people but nothing happened. To me it was clearly racist.

> [[What do you mean he was clearly upset? How was he upset?]]

> When the instructors came back with the tests, they did say we had one failure and everybody thought it was me but it was a pilot that was working there had failed. The look on his face; he did not hide it. He was disappointed that it wasn't me that had failed. I'm sure he wanted the chance to say, "See we wasted our time bringing this black kid in here." Even before then, our first day there was one other black intern and he was in the chief pilot's office in the terminal. We both showed up the night before the first day and we got an e-mail from this guy stating that orientation started promptly at 8 o'clock. Well, we got up that

morning and were both driving over. When we got to the parking lot, the *one* black guy that worked there; he came running outside. He said, "All the Caucasians are already there! And we were like; it's 7:45, we're fifteen minutes early. "NO, the orientation started at 7! Luckily, the other guy had printed out the e-mail and that saved us. They sent all the other interns an e-mail stating that it started at 7. We had to show the e-mail that was sent to us. Now, the only conclusion I can draw from that was that it was racially motivated. They tried to make it look like we couldn't show up on time.

In this account, there are several examples on one method often used by whites to reiterate the ideas of white space and black inferiority – sabotage. The first example can be seen in the fact that the necessary training materials that would help to ensure success were not given to Martin in a timely fashion. In this way, it was assumed that the flight instructor would provide those materials, and when this was mentioned by Martin, a simple 'here you go' was provided. Moreover, the correct time to report for training was not provided to the two black males in this particular orientation class. In this account, it is clear that this pilot had given these facts considerable thought as referenced by his idea that he could not help but think these incidences were racially motivated. There is much that can be gained from this excerpt. To sabotage their possible progress in this program is but one aspect of this interaction. But, regardless of the trainer's motivation, his actions produced a sabotage that would likely reaffirm to all others involved the longstanding stereotype of black inferiority (blacks are lazy, unreliable, and will not show up on time).

As this conversation continued, Martin noted that they made a complaint, but nothing ever happened, which suggests that there is no punishment of discriminatory treatment and no purpose of speaking up against it. In many respects, the existence of both perspectives suggests that those things associated with flying--from training to the

actual job--are normative structures maintaining these white spaces. Also included in

this account is the idea that Martin had a racial awareness that he was indeed only one of

a 'handful' of African Americans at this particular location. The idea of being racially

aware, specifically in terms of racial diversity or lack thereof, is one that most African

Americans note in terms of their surroundings. It can serve as an indication that a level

of preparedness is involved when in an environment deemed a white (unsafe) space.

In another example of the various methods used during training, Rob notes his

experiences when he was initially hired by National freight, a worldwide freight carrier

and his experience with being given multiple instructors in a short amount of time. Also,

in this particular case, training materials were provided sparingly,

> I went through ground school, finished top of the class and got ready to go into what they call FTD, Flight Training Devices, where you go through a mockery of what you're going to do in the actual simulator, and went through 4 instructors— actually two instructors during that period, and as I was doing things exactly from chapter 3 in the normal procedures of the book, and the emergency procedures in chapter 2, but they would say you're going too fast. Or you're going too slow. And I said would you demonstrate for me? And it got to the point where I was reluctant to speak back. But when I made up my mind, like this ain't making sense, I'm doing exactly what the book says on page 13 from the top to the bottom; I'd memorize it; I had two tablets… and it was right during Christmas season when the instructors at NF would leave to go fly the line... So that guy would leave and I would get a new one and he says "that's not the way you do it!" So well, "Bobby showed me this is how you do it." He says "that's not the way you do it." And every time they do that they write it on paper and they have these long dissertations. And I kept thinking I know I can do this, cause what I didn't mention before is I was already rated on the 737. I'd won a scholarship earlier and walked into the U.S. Airway training course and got a Captains check out of them. So I know I'm capable of absorbing and learning. I know I can memorize things. What am I doing wrong?
>
> And I went through it and I go back in it the next day, and I remember the day I got my uniform; I tried it on, looked at myself in the mirror with it and knew I would never wear that uniform at work. I didn't fit their culture, I didn't fit the

thinking… So I went to the next level in the simulator, did the same thing, and Stan was the last instructor and I stood up to him, I said, "something ain't right. You guys are not, you know, I'm doing this exactly"—and then they put me with Chris. Chris, the guy that actually designed the interior of [one of the large aircraft]… And, I remember it… there was a board as long as this wall and I did all of them…the 727 QF, the 727-100, 727-200, and the 727-300…I did every system on that board…the electrical systems, the hydraulic systems on each airplane.… And he said, "I don't know what your problem is," I said, "it ain't me, it's them!" And at that time you didn't point fingers at someone, tell somebody else how to train you. And they brought me to the fleet manager of the airplane, and he yelled at me, and I told him, you know what, whatever it's going to take. So they put me in the simulator for a check ride with *another* Senior Pilot that came to fly the simulator with sunglasses on and he turned around in the simulator and said, "Give me long range cruise, give me LRC…and I looked at him and said, "I don't know what you're talking about." He says, "what do you mean?" I said, "I've never been told what LRC is," because I hadn't gotten to that point in normal training. So he shut it down and said "this guy hasn't been trained." So they gave me another training session, then I went in for the check ride, the check ride was being given by a white female for American, she was ex American, and I walked into the sim [simulator] and was getting everything ready, but something was broken. I wrote it up in the log book, and simulated calling maintenance to come and fix it, and he walked in and said "we don't do it that way at National Freight; your check ride is over with!" And about an hour and a half later I was sitting in a board room similar to this, signing resignation papers, and my job was done. The thing is I already knew this… The airlines had to start tip toeing a little better and *refining their racism* so they were in a better position…You know, put you in difficult situations where you're destined to fail. Multiple instructors in a short period of time. It's also a recipe for disaster, you know, set him up to fail… Little underhanded things like that.

In this account, there is an awareness of the various methods used to influence outcomes in training sessions. For instance, in his discussion of being hired by National Freight, Rob noted that he knew he would never wear his uniform in a full work setting. In noting that he would never fit their culture or way of thinking, this captain understood that there were aspects of his identity that was different from others--his identity as an African American male. Also important in his discussion is his hesitancy to speak out anymore against things he perceives to be wrong because there is a negative

consequence. As he continues his discussion, he notes that he perceived those in higher

positions as not wanting to listen or understand the validity of his claims.

Many of these methods used by instructors and those in management are

underhanded and subtle ways to sabotage those in training. This process of "weeding

out" potential black pilots during training is also an added dimension of maintaining

white spaces. To place this in better context, consider the following example provided by

a young male pilot with less than ten years of commercial flying experience. This

example takes place as he prepares to enter a new company:

> During the training, we had an instructor for the ground school, we had 6 weeks
> of ground school in Tulsa and then we went to Atlanta where we used the
> simulators of another airline, and there was myself and my partner who was also
> black. He pretty much told us, point blank, he didn't think we'd do a good job
> because we were black."
>
> [["What did he say?"]]
>
> "That. Pretty much."
>
> [["He just said it that way, like 'yall didn't do a good job because you were
> black?'"]]
>
> No, well, the thing is we started with him, we met on day 1, we couldn't quite
> read him because what we do is we brief about an hour before we do a session,
> so say those sessions are in a cockpit just sitting in a room, where all the switches
> are; you can fly with autopilot, but it's just so you can learn where switches are.
> So day 1 he's going over stuff that is really basic and we didn't understand why
> he was breaking it down in such small bites, but he was the instructor, we were
> just listening, you know maybe he had some point he's building towards, and we
> couldn't quite read him. I would ask questions and I'd ask him in a very direct
> way. I'd say "hey I read this another way; I read in the book that it's like this."
> And he like "I don't know, I don't know, you could be right, I don't know, I
> don't know." He just seemed like real insecure like he wasn't quite sure, we
> couldn't read him yet. But then, I'd say a week into this, my partner and I are in
> my room, and we're studying together, and he calls me asks if I wanted to have a
> beer, which we didn't but we were like, you know, we'll just go. So we met him,

we met him downstairs like 15 minutes later and he was already drunk; like wasted; sitting over there by himself. So we're walking over and making conversation and we go to this bar and it's so busy that we have to put our names on the list to reserve a table. And while we're sitting outside waiting he just says "I want to clear something up; just cause I'm white and your black I hope this doesn't cause a problem." And my partner goes "Oh I'm black, really?" And he's like "Yeah, yeah, you are," and he's drunk so he's not really getting the sarcasm, you know, and he's like "Yeah I just don't want there to be any problems, I hope there's nothing wrong with that." I was like "I don't understand why there would be a problem…" I was like "Have you had a black student?" He was like "Well no, you guys are my first." And I was like "Well did you think this was going to be a problem having two black students?" And he was like "'well honestly, yeah. I did. Nobody told me you guys were black, I saw you guys come out the elevator, I was like aw shit; black guys. These guys aren't gonna know anything." So we're just kind of looking at him like for real? And then he goes on to say, "It's crazy because I thought you guys wouldn't know anything and that I was going to have to lower the bar to get you through…I didn't know black people could learn like that."

In this particular example, the flight instructor relied heavily on the age-old stereotypes and white framing of African Americans and their intellectual skill and abilities. One important aspect of this interaction is that the instructor felt comfortable sharing his opinions as though he believed not much would be said in return. The privilege found in the freedom to be vocal about prejudices in a period of stress to these young students indeed served as a sort of racial catharsis for this instructor. Not included here, this instructor continues in his discussion of why he did not want there to be any problems. He noted that he and his close white friends sometimes use the N-word as a joke to each other but he doesn't mean it in a negative way. He did not want there to be a problem if it slipped out. In his disclaimer, he states; "I am sure you use derogatory language when talking about whites sometimes." As I continued my conversation with this young pilot, he noted that he was in disbelief at the actions of the instructor and was also disappointed in his language. He notes; "Honestly, I was like man you know, I know

white people think this but they never tell you. I was thinking like wow this is honest." There is much to be said concerning the comfort and privilege provided to this instructor through the belief that he can speak freely in such a racist manner. "Stereotyping and prejudice are part of a much larger social scaffolding. Antiblack stereotyping and prejudice are part of an expansive racial framing and are rooted in the everyday defense of white power and privilege" (Feagin 2010: 98). This defense of white power and privilege comes at a direct cost to those African Americans in this industry and serves as a consistent reminder that they are not fully accepted as intellectual equals. In the aforementioned racialized accounts, these African American flight crews suffer the emotional costs of having to simultaneously balance their love of flying with the consequence of being black in an extremely white environment.

Much of the discourse concerning African Americans in the airline industry is that they are incapable of being good pilots. Nevertheless, one of the biggest challenges here for these pilots is the larger idea that they must return to studying and training with this particular instructor after this interaction. The deflation that takes place during and after interactions such as this is indicative to these pilots' understandings of what is to come. The idea that negative attitudes end once training has been completed is something most of these black pilots understand to be untrue. Pilots of color realize that there is a normative discourse concerning black inferiority from a very old white racial frame, here as it pertains to flying airplanes. As these high positions on the aircraft have been historically held by whites, there is the consequence of white backlash towards these African American pilots. One such characteristic of white backlash is outright

exclusion. One common method of exclusion mentioned by these African Americans comes through the failure of their coworkers to engage in conversation with them while at work. Many note sitting in the flight deck for hours with *no* conversation of any sort (see Pierce 2003). Take the following example from a male pilot as he discusses his experiences with coworkers.

> Yeah the stereotype is you don't know how to handle an airplane. For some strange reason, somehow you slipped through the cracks and you got in this seat. It's not because, you know, you're talented, it's not because of all the experiences and skill you bring, somehow, I don't know how, but somehow you got in the seat. And I don't know how it is but it starts out as skepticism in your abilities and doubt and they're always, you know, doing stuff—"well did you do this, did you do that?" "Yes sir, no sir." I did everything that I'm required to do for all the checklist and you'll sit there and over the next few days you will see that I will *always* do everything in accordance with the procedures and the guidelines and regulations so don't ask me did I do this or did I not do that." Um, yeah. I got mad once the *first time* a Captain didn't shake my hand. Cause I'd been here like two years and I pride myself on doing my job very well, I like to think I do it very well, and for him to just get up, get his stuff, no goodbye, no great job—cause you're kind of looking for that as a first officer, you're looking for some feedback. Hey how did I do, you know, is this okay, you didn't like this, well okay, I'll work on that. You know, what can I do to get better is what I'm really looking for, you know. But to have someone just get up, walk out, no goodbye, I mean, one it's rude right, but two, it's borderline disrespectful and insulting on a certain level. So we can work together but you can't shake my hand?
>
> You're kind of in shock because the checklists are all done and I'll usually wait for the Captain to leave so that I can make sure the cockpit is back where it needs to be for the next person. And I am sitting there looking at him, waiting and; "Oh, ok, well he's just getting his luggage but he's coming right back…and then he has his luggage and is walking out into the jet way and I am thinking, "did this mother; wait (grunts), I can't believe this shit just happened! I do not believe this just happened; I can't believe this mother…just did that. So then you go through your stuff and you're just pissed off!

Here, we must imagine the difficulties of the confines of the flight deck and what this means for these pilots. The idea that there will be cordial conversation along with mutual respect is not too much to ask for these pilots. More than that, it is this common social element of the job that African American pilots are excluded from (Pierce 2003). In fact, this pilot had the expectation that at the end of a successful trip, a handshake would take place. Indicative here is the idea and desire of these pilots to be accepted and belong in the flight deck. Though a covert method of exclusion was used in this example, it was apparent to this first officer that he was not fully accepted by his colleague. This method of exclusion was a common one among those participating in this project and many first officers noted the commonality in the dismissive behavior of captains (and first officers) after flights have concluded. Again this is indicative of the larger white racial framing of African Americans.

Another detail that shapes pilots' experiences is questions concerning the amount of training and education they have received. For most, there is the awareness that in many cases, they have indeed received extensive training, even more so than their white counterparts. Even so, with these years of experience, many African American pilots are often questioned in their abilities from their fellow coworkers. As explained briefly by one pilot:

> I can remember when I first checked out as Captain of a 737, I had a First Officer practically quiz me on my background and I was as kind as I could be. I made him ask the questions; I wouldn't give answers unless he asked questions. And when he realized I'd been through these different airlines and all these different experiences… I mean eating particularly anything and everything you could just to get through the day cause you had enough money to survive for that night, tomorrow night, maybe a hotel room, head back home, and that type of stuff and

this guys going to quiz *me* on what I had to do to be a Captain and be qualified and I started telling him about the jobs that I went through, you know, the flight instructing job where I got the first check for 4 dollars and 75 cents to the corporate job that was paying $45,000. Then I quit to go to Express to make $17,000 a year; back to the airline industry going through the hardships and the ups, and the downs. So what's your background? After he went over his whole litany of picking [on] me; he says, he came right out of high school, straight through college, daddy paid the money and got him a job because he was one of the senior pilots here at the time. He had no idea all I had been through—flying on airplanes where I had to put my hat on the dash to keep the rain water from shorting out the radios and such. And he has the *nerve* to question me and what I'm capable of. But, I didn't get mad or confrontational. I kept my composure, stayed focused, and said, "here's how we are going to run the cockpit; here's how we gonna run this airplane.

The idea of being re-interviewed is something most all of the pilots in this project mentioned going through. In this, there is an implicit assumption that most blacks in the industry have received their positions, not through skill, but through affirmative action programs. Also here, the hierarchy of power relationships in the flight deck that usually come with a certain level of respect is not provided to this captain as seen in the questions of his qualifications. In this example, this young first officer feels it is both appropriate and necessary to question this senior captain on his abilities to fly the aircraft. The insinuation of black incapability reaffirms white space and the creation of a different narrative of blacks undeservingly entering the industry has indeed become a normative aspect in this space. As noted above, there is also the challenge faced by those African Americans in this industry that their racialized experiences are minimized and seen as invalid. A major aspect of white space is that there is an overarching power dynamic that serves to hinder and silence the voices of people of color and their experiences with prejudices, stereotypes, and racist experiences. Much of this social

power evident in the industry is also found in the larger society in which this industry is placed. There are those individual actors that perpetuate racist notions and ideologies, and most of these ideologies are found in the larger society in which they were created. Many of these contemporary examples of exclusion are but refurbished mechanisms used throughout history.

Don't Close the Boarding Door!: Moving Beyond Perception

Implicit in this chapter is the idea that economic institutions and the emotions that regulate them are a component systemic racism and that the racial framing of African Americans is an important element in the performance of emotional labor. Too often, the daily experiences of African Americans in professional and often white normative settings are viewed in a way that suggests that the historical underpinnings of our racialized society ended with the pivotal civil rights laws of the 1960s. As the passage of these laws was of extreme importance toward making racial progress, they in no way suggest that contemporary experiences with racial discrimination and oppression no longer exist. In many occupations in which people of color remain underrepresented, the aspects of the white racial frame get passed around through these social networks thereby becoming a dominant frame informing interactions with African American colleagues. As Feagin notes in his discussion of the white racial frame, there are several aspects that are included in this dominant frame. "The features of this frame include racial stereotypes, racial narratives and interpretations, racial images, racialized emotions, and inclinations to discriminatory action" (Feagin 2010: 10-11). The stereotypes and images found of African Americans in this frame supersede those

interactions in which many of these racist beliefs and ideologies are disproven by those successful African Americans with many years experience in the industry. For many whites, inside and outside of the airline industry, this dominant frame continues to permit the dismissal of black experiences with racial oppression as coincidence, perception, and over exaggeration. This is done in a way that problematizes black voices as collective misrepresentations of whites and white racism. One consequence of this denial is that racial oppression is allowed to persist.

During my interviews with pilots, I discussed the idea that some of their experiences with racism might be seen by whites as mere *perception*. The idea of perception exists because it is believed that in many cases in which African Americans perceive interactions to be based on race, it is possible that there is no malicious intent[8]. Though problematic in itself because it is an element of the white racial frame (Feagin 2006, 2010; Moore 2008), I introduced the idea of 'perceiving' racialized experiences to these pilots during the official interview process to get their reactions. The first pilot to face this question, Anthony responded in the following way:

> Fuck it….Let me give you something more candid...since you want to hear it out of somebody's mouth." I flew the Beech 99 for an Express Airline. There's no flight attendant on a Beech 99. Two pilots, so I'm on the Beech 99 and people are getting on—and this is New Orleans, Louisiana. People are getting on the airplane and I'm standing at the bottom of the steps. And people are getting on and they look at me kind of strange, but this white lady looks up and she sees the

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[8] This ideology (and suggestion) was relayed to me by a senior sociology professor as I discussed some of the excerpts that I received during the initial testing of my interview guide. This professor asked how those African Americans know what whites "mean" in those interactions. His question was, is it possible that African Americans perceive racism because without knowing the thought processes of white actors, it is speculative. Though many in the academy discuss the racism and discrimination faced by African Americans to be 'perceived' somehow diminishes the 'reality' and validity of racism and the voices of those that experience it firsthand.

white Captain sitting in the seat. So you see the pilot there, and I guess she's thinking, "well he's got to be flight attendant"… So she gets on the plane, I get on the plane and I close the door… I close the door and then you address the people; tell them about the different rules; buckle your seat belt, walk through—and then I walk up to the front and climb into the front. (In an elevated voice) "OH NO! OH NO! I can't fly on this plane!" She gets out of the seat. "Oh no!" And she gets off the plane, you know, I had to let her off. And she went to this particular guy I do not like but, this one instance he made me proud. Because she went, "what's *he* doing here, I'm not flying on this plane!" "Well ma'am, he's our pilot and he's more than capable of flying this plane, if you don't want to fly, I guess you're not going." I was so proud that he actually didn't try to placate her and sooth her.

[[Thank you for sharing that experience with…]]

Now, oh I'm not finished, oh no! Fast forward about 40 years (pounds the table). I'm flying a Beech 1900 for an airline. We had a flight attendant. She's in the back and I'm getting another copy of the release, so I hop off to go grab it, and bring it back to the plane. I come up the steps and the Captain is in the cockpit and the flight attendant is by the door and I'm talking to her [the flight attendant], and this lady is basically scolding me for interfering—cause I'm talking to her [the flight attendant] and I'm talking to the cockpit, giving him the information that he needs from me, and I'm answering her questions also. And this [white] woman she's scolding me, telling me well "don't follow them boys; them boys are busy up there!" As, you know, I'm a flight attendant so I shouldn't be bothering them. So yes ma'am, yes ma'am I'm saying to her. So finally, I'm getting into the cockpit. And I could hear her, I didn't dare look back. "**What the hell**!" It dawned on her, this young lady, who happened to be white, was the flight attendant, and the guy sitting to the left, who happened to be white was the pilot, and the guy getting in the cockpit to the right, who happened to be black, was also a pilot. And it dawned on her. "What the hell!" You know, she had an epiphany. And we heard "oh shit!" She was moving so fast to get off! *Now I don't how much more blatant you want! Do you want some more?*

"What the dominant racial framing ignores or suppresses is critical to the continuation of oppression" (Feagin 2010: 17). One major aspect in the continuation of oppression is to reframe the methods and meanings attached to racial experiences. One dominant way of viewing racial experiences is that they no longer exist or are now insignificant. This can be found in the revamped rhetoric of colorblind ideologies. This language, as an aspect

of the white racial frame allows and creates a situation in which those that openly complain of racism are the problem, not racism. In the above account, this pilot easily referenced those cases in which there was a public display based on his racial identity and the emotional aspects of these interactions are more than apparent. Likely based on the longstanding stereotypes and imagery of African Americans as intellectually inferior, these passengers made the conscious decision to leave the aircraft. This was also done in a manner in which all those on the aircraft were involved. In the first encounter, the female passenger actually went to a supervisor to attempt to have the black pilot removed from the trip. The privilege here is one that has historically been granted whites; for many decades, African Americans were not allowed on the aircraft. Coupled with the overarching stereotypes of people of color, there is a tacit level of fear on behalf of the many whites that 'see' an African American in the flight deck of their airplane. Even in these blatant accounts, the underlying yet visible emotional pressure and pain placed on these pilots must be considered as a major component of their daily work interactions.

These public acts of deplaning are an act that also reaffirms the flight deck and the position of captain as a white space and white occupation. The normality and belief that certain segments of the aircraft as inappropriate for people of color is one that goes beyond coworker interactions but also involve the overarching belief of passengers. These racially arrogant actions suggest that many in the traveling public as well as many of those working for the airline that the flight deck is somehow marked "for whites only." Moreover the accounts of passenger interactions with black flight crewmembers

go beyond a few racial stereotypes and include a level of arrogance and power to disrupt without a concern that the police will be called. This power and arrogance and the ensuing emotional backlash faced by black flight crews are a part of a structural (white) worldview in which racist expressions are not only acceptable, but a right. Though great strides have been made by women and men of color in accessing the flight deck; "in a racist society, members of racial ethnic groups are not readily rewarded or appreciated for memorable actions. Instead, negative stereotypes of target groups persist even in the face of contradictory evidence" (Higginbotham 2001: 73).

Another young male pilot noted an experience he had with a passenger and his (in)ability to fly the plane:

> For a second example, I was in Tulsa and we were standing at the gate, waiting on the airplane to arrive so that we could get on the plane, load the passengers up and fly to Houston. Well as the airplane was pulling up, a woman walks up to me and she says, "Are you one of the pilots?" And I said, "yes ma'am I am." She said, "I'm really, really scared." I said; "you don't have to be scared. Everything will be fine and the airplane is very safe. We'll get you to Houston and it will be a really quick flight; about an hour and a half at the most." She said, "Oh, it's not that; you see, I saw this movie and that is why I'm scared." So, I'm thinking that maybe she saw a movie where the airplane crashed or something. She said, "it was this movie and the airplane was goin up and down and in circles and the pilot was smoking weed and the pilot was a rapper." Then I said, "Oh, you talkin about Soul Plane? So, you think that all black pilots smoke weed and are goin to have the plane going up and down and in circles and we just gonna run this ghetto airline? You think that is going to be your flying experience on this national airline?"

In the second account, the interlocking systems of gender and race are apparent in this female passenger's imagery and ideology of the black male. She relies heavily on white-framed negative stereotypes purported through the mainstream media and feels comfortable discussing this negative ideology with the pilot involved and in a public

space. The early developing of the airline industry during a period of widespread Jim Crow exclusion continues to have devastating consequences for the men and women of color currently employed in this industry. Due to systemic racism and a continual framing of the industry as one that white males are more apt to perform, there are tremendous emotional costs for pilots of color. These examples illustrate the ideology that blacks somehow do not belong in these environments, and this racist reality is largely supported in the normative structures that continue to encourage these interactions between black flight crews and their coworkers and passengers. To engage in emotional labor for these crewmembers is beyond the scope of what is to be expected during the course of a 'normal' workday, but suggests that emotional labor cannot be removed from the context in which it operates.

What has been shown through these racialized interactions with coworkers and passengers is the larger racial ideology and that there remains a racialized discourse and ideology on what constitutes a pilot. Implicit too in this are the positive notions of the skills and intellect of whites. This is not to suggest that white pilots do not have negative experiences throughout their workday, but it is to suggest that in terms of what is perceived to be normative, in reference to the occupation of pilot, remains largely white and male. One significant consequence of these beliefs is the reality of tacit and negative stereotypical views of African American pilots and their ability to fly airplanes. These stereotypical views are not new, but constitute a larger discourse and framing of African Americans in general as well as in the flight deck. In the cases provided previously, there is an overarching racialization of African Americans and their stratified positions both

on and off the aircraft. This is an important aspect of emotional labor and emotion management. The understanding that there is not only a spatial reality that should be included in this theory, but also one that factors in the larger societal reality of racial oppression.

Why are you Here?: Affirmative Action and Empty Kitchens

In the larger societal understandings of African American success is the important narrative that many successful people of color are often undeserving, and they often find themselves engaged in discussions in which they have to defend their accomplishments. Much of this follows the overall societal pattern of racial discussions through the idea of white victimology--the idea that they are now victims of a system in which they now face oppression, largely because of people of color. One such narrative involves the larger belief that African Americans are entering the industry, with lesser qualifications, because of affirmative action or larger race based policies. In this particular narrative, there is never the consideration that those African Americans hired to be pilots are aptly qualified nor that those whites not hired lack the appropriate qualifications (Bonilla-Silva 2006). As many whites usually share these narratives in various settings, there has become a collective and broader narrative concerning unfair treatment of whites that spills over into their interactions with African Americans. This is suggested in the many interactions in which whites openly challenge black authority and pose questions concerning their qualifications.

In interactions with their coworkers, pilots report much animosity by whites resulting from the narrative of affirmative action. In many of these cases, whites do not

mask their discomfort with black pilots, but instead openly discuss the general idea of

airlines' hiring those that are less than fully qualified, all the while insinuating that a

qualified white person did not get hired due to 'racist practices.' During a hearing based

on the airline industry, a report was presented to Congress by the Government Activities

and Transportation Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations

and found that many major airlines failed to "institutionalize and incorporate affirmative

action into corporate policy" (Hansen and Oster 1997: 118). Be that as it may, the

narrative that unqualified African Americans are given positions continues to be a

mainstay in the airline industry.

> I was on the jump seat one time on National airlines trying to get home from
> Newark and the Captain and FO (First officer), they were having a conversation
> and the FO said something like "You know I was flying with this guy and you
> know he was one of those guys I could tell got his job from affirmative action."
> And I just kind of sat there…I'm getting a free ride home, but I could just tell the
> Captain like he got uneasy like right away, he kind of just looked back over his
> shoulder and I had my head down I was looking like this [demonstrates with his
> head down]. I could tell he was kind of like… his face was saying, "man shut
> up!" and the FO didn't catch it right away; he just kept talking and stuff.

Note that this first officer did not need to provide any concrete evidence for his claim of

affirmative action, but felt free to voice his opinions even in the presence of his black

colleague. In this case, the actions of the white actor insinuate his ideology of the

inferior nature of people of color by suggesting that the person he recently flew with was

a product of affirmative action and not merely a qualified pilot. In this, there is the

dismissal of success and a reification of white racial rhetoric.

On another occasion, with pain in his voice, a young male pilot shared a somewhat

similar story:

> Well, I was flying with one guy, and it is rare that I agree with the guy that is sitting next to me. Most of the guys I fly with are between the ages of forty-five and sixty, white males, so, we don't agree on a lot and that's understandable. Many of the guys are very professional; we listen to each other's opinions and agree to disagree. But it was one guy that was very condescending and insulting with his opinions. We kinda went back and forth. I thought it was over with when the trip was over. On one of his off days, he went into a store that one of my friends was working at. I have been knowing this girl for many years so when he told her he was a pilot for the airline, she asked if he knew me. We had just flown together the week before. He says, "yea, I know him." He had the nerve to tell her that he felt that the only reason I was hired was because of affirmative action; that I was unqualified to do my job and that there were many other white pilots still at regional carriers that have been there longer that should have been hired here ahead of me… For him to go and do that; to tell somebody that I'm just benefitting from affirmative action and that they only let me fly an airplane because I'm black…it kinda disappointed me and shocked me that he would say that, even if he felt that. I knew he felt that way, but to verbalize it was something different.

Here, it is important to highlight the connections many whites make to the skill set of

African American pilots. The notion that positions were not earned remains indicative of

how a great many whites *feel* about and *perceive* black pilots. Many of the participants

in this project noted the common assumption held by coworkers that they are unfairly

given opportunities to become pilots. In this is an expression of white anger and

backlash at the growing numbers of women and men of color in the flight deck. For

many whites, the overestimation of the numbers of people of color and women in the

industry is but one way to rationalize the narrative that the airline industry is treating

whites unfairly. The encompassing ideology that African Americans are entering the

flight deck with subpar qualifications continues to place these flight crews in the undue

position of defending their abilities. This defense has an emotional dimension, including

feelings of disappointment, anger, and frustration at the thought that there is not much

that can be done to change this frame created by whites.

Discussions of the Racialized and Gendered "Other"

In the many narratives that take place behind the confined walls of the flight

deck, there are also conversations of the racialized "other" and of women. In many ways,

this can be seen as an attempt to bond with these African American pilots as though

there is a common and shared perception of other racial ethnic groups and of women.

Though these opinions are usually openly discussed, many African American pilots

noted their discomfort with these conversations, yet they were conducted in a way to

discourage counter narratives. The frequency in which African American pilots

mentioned these conversations is staggering. For instance, one pilot noted:

> In the cockpit, there is also talk of other races. They love to make comments
> about Mexicans and immigration and all of that and it's the same thing. I try not
> to engage in it and if it gets too out of hand then I will say something against it.
> When they get too aggressive with it, I just say, "This was Mexico anyway. This
> was their land. Just get used to it." When you are sitting there and all of your
> duties are done, race comes up a lot. But, there are many times that I am sitting
> there and the person doesn't ever say a word to me. I mean, we probably don't
> have anything in common; we come from different backgrounds. They stay on
> their side of the airplane, I stay on mine. Let's just get the job done.

Discussions of various racial and ethnic groups and also discussion of women often take

place behind the closed door of the flight deck. In many ways, these attempts to engage

in these various dialogues can be seen as a method of male bonding over common

assumptions about "other" people of color and white women, but they serve to widen the

gap between these pilots. These black pilots take these conversations to heart with a

stealth awareness of, "if I weren't here, what would the conversation be about?" In another example, a young male pilot noted,

> It's generally in the context of somebody readin' the paper and some story is on there about, let's say for instance, this Arizona stuff that's goin' on. Somebody will make a comment like "yeah, we do need to secure the border from these people," you know, that kind of talk. When I hear stuff like that, you just listen to them and just look at them, and just ignore them. If it's not someone that's not a total idiot you can say something with an opposing view and they get the hint there. So, they can be talking about women or other people and I have said; "well men do that too." And then they look at me as to say, "I almost forgot—you're not one of us."

For many of these pilots, discussions of other racial and/or ethnic groups serves as a reminder that these racialized discussion are not limited to interactions between them and their white colleagues. It places them in the position of 'imagining' what conversations are about when they are not in the flight deck or when there are only white pilots having these discussions. Because these conversations are open discussions, they have an awareness that there is a high likelihood that negative commentaries concerning members of their racial group may very well be the topic of conversation when they are not around. It is very likely they are correct; much racist dialogue on African Americans is discussed outside of their presence—in those hidden backstage places.

Freedom to discuss the racial other has also been expressed through the open naming of white women and people of color in the industry. As a blatant method of calling attention to the white women and African Americans working for the company, one pilot discussed the ways white pilots differentiated women and African Americans the following way:

> It wasn't sanctioned by the company and it was not well known. We are a smaller airline and people hire their friends and they protect their friends and you

can get away with a lot of things because the higher ups are friends. So, there is a bunch of insensitivity there. They thought it was funny and they thought they could get away with things. So, they titled people to say that I am better than you like; "I'm flying with C2" "Oh I flew with her a few weeks ago and she didn't give up anything"… So, they also named the few black pilots that were there at the time N1, N2, and N3 to signify Nigger 1 Nigger 2, and Nigger 3. For women, that C1, C2, and C3 was for Cunt 1, Cunt 2, and Cunt 3.

In this example, this pilot shares an unofficial method many pilots used to talk about the few women and African Americans that were employed at his airline. This language is indicative of a larger understanding of how some white males engaged in discussions that would cement not only their perceived superior status, but also to allow those women and African Americans to be aware of their perceived inferior status. Collectively, many of these conversations that take place in the work place, whether about other racial or ethnic groups, women, or African Americans is simply another mechanism to claim the space as well as the position as white, and many note the "old-boy" network as one that they cannot enter. Take for instance the account of this "bonding conversation" started by a white captain,

Well, in the cockpit there is often talk about women. We have a common frequency that we use on the radio for transactions. I remember this time that a woman came on the frequency and the man next to me said, "Another empty kitchen." But the thing is, I'm thinking; why would you say that? So, when you are flying with another white guy and you hear my voice do you say; another empty jail cell? I mean, why would you say that? That doesn't even go through my mind when I hear a woman's voice on the radio…it is never any thought that she shouldn't be there.

As discussed in the previous sections, the rhetoric of affirmative action, of racialized others, and of women reveals important aspects to consider as we move into a more inclusive discussion of emotional labor (Chapter VI). In this racialized and gendered

occupation of airline pilot, African Americans and other racial groups are indeed not the only groups that face discriminatory actions. As white women and women of color continue to move into this industry, they too pose a concern for white males that consider the space to be for white men only.

Gender, Race, and Class in the Flight Deck

In the existing social science literature on emotional labor, gender has been a longstanding lens through which to understand emotional labor, management, and performance. Even in this, those women in the airline industry, specifically pilots, are also faced with the added dimension of being in a position in which they are significantly underrepresented. Over the years, women have made significant efforts to gain entry into this industry through various legal means. Still, there is the remaining larger ideology that they do not belong in the flight deck. Intersecting experiences of race and gender must also be placed in context in order to fully understand emotional labor. Much like the dimension of race and the historical and systemic foundation of racial oppression in our country, sexism too has deep, oppressive roots that should be taken into account when examining the experiences of flight crews. Instances involving gender, much like race, should not be separated from the theoretical propositions and foundation of emotional labor.

As noted earlier, women are often the subject of numerous conversations that take place in the flight deck. As most all of the pilots interviewed for this project mentioned, the various stereotypical views of women were often done in a way that these pilots were able to connect to the similarities in language surrounding them. Much

like the opening comment above, the interlocking nature of race and gender is often

evoked in such a way that cannot be separated. For instance, in my discussion with

Rachel, a black female pilot, she noted,

> The weird thing is that passengers always think I'm a flight attendant. I show up
> in uniform and the gate agents even think I'm a flight attendant. In my uniform,
> with my hat and everything, they still assume I'm a flight attendant. For them, it
> just doesn't make sense. They are programmed to see pilots as grey haired guys
> and here I am and they are like, I don't see your name here. I have to point it out
> to them. When I'm not in the cockpit, passengers think I'm a flight attendant
> also.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V, there is an assumption that the

occupation of flight attendant is one that has been gendered as seen in the above account

of Rachel. Interestingly, she notes that it is not only passengers making the assumption

of her position on the aircraft, but those that work in this environment on a regular basis.

To simply examine the job of flight attendant as being gendered misses the idea here that

much of this assumption about her position also has much to do with her racial identity

as well as her gender; it is in the idea that she does not belong in the flight deck.

Similarly, Adam, a young male pilot noted having similar experiences:

> With coworkers, I often wonder if my race is a factor. I have talked to other
> black pilots about this to see if they have had similar experiences and they have.
> There is always separate paper work; there is paper work for the flight attendants,
> and paper work that is to be given to the pilots. Now, for those that work for the
> company, pilot and flight attendant uniforms look nothing alike. But, in some
> places, they will give me the flight attendant paper work. There is nothing I can
> do with that. I have never seen flight attendants given pilot paper work. The only
> pilots I have heard of getting flight attendant paper work has been blacks and
> women. I have gotten on the airplane in full pilot uniform; hat, tie, flight bags.
> Then, the caterer will ask me if I am working first class. But it is something to be
> mistaken for a flight attendant by your own coworkers who do this every day.
> This happens to blacks and to female pilots.

Similarly, Jordan notes similar experiences:

I've seen that where uh… I'm flying with a female captain and they automatically think I'm the Captain or think she's a flight attendant. Or the other thing that happens is they think I'm security! Before TSA changed their shirts to blue they used to be white. I was always mistaken as security, so I mean that was a big thing, like when I was in L.A; "yeah, alright the bathroom's right there" (laughter) you know what I mean?"

These cases of "mistaken identity" go far beyond being innocent mistakes but are suggestive of greater ideologies concerning the appropriate positions of women and people of color manifested through these miscues. Longstanding notions that women are relegated to more caring and service roles are also connected to the ideas of these individuals being racialized and gendered in such a way to reduce their positions to those of invisibility. The view that women, in many respects regardless of race, and men of color do not belong in the flight deck continues to show the interconnectivity between racialized and gendered industries, larger society, and those systemic perspectives of women and people of color in general. This shows too that within spaces that are disproportionately male and overwhelmingly white, those not fitting this description are often ideologically placed in inferior positions. With this, there is also a racialization of people as well as particular locales that occurs, as in the above example of a pilot "always mistaken as security."

In a similar vein, several of the black male pilots noted other ways in which gender identity contributed to their interactions in the flight deck. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, black males, even when they fly as captain, often deal with those that work for the company entering the flight deck and automatically speaking with their

white colleague, but there are those occasions in which a different pattern emerges. For

instance, there were a few pilots that noted an interesting story:

> Well, I am sure I would notice it more if I was a woman, but I have seen how this industry treats women. I try to be protective because of that. It's not nice. I've seen the jokes that males make about women and every female that I have flown with has been excellent, just a joy to be around. Now and then people will come up front and there are certain things that you have to get approved from the captain—you can't just ask either pilot. They've asked me and I am quick to say, "That's the captain." I try to correct them as quickly as possible. But, I think black women have it the worst. There are just so few of them. I mean there are more white females than blacks' period.

Another pilot working for an altogether different airline noted a similar experience he

has had when flying with female captains:

> The closest I have seen is when I have been flying with a female captain before and what I have seen people do is—and it's disrespectful—they will—in general when something is wrong with the plane they will just go to the captain [like maintenance for instance]. Well there have been several instances when there will be some type of maintenance issue and they come up and pretty much always talk to the captain. Well they come up and they see the two of us sitting there and there is a female sitting there they will immediately turn to the male FO and start talking and totally ignore the captain. That would never happen under any other circumstance…its only because it's a female that they would do something so disrespectful. It's happened when I've been sitting there and I am like, yes, I am up here, but she is the one that is responsible. We have the joke that three stripes stand for not my responsibility.

In the above examples, the significance of gender identity in the flight deck is apparent

through the invisibility experienced by female pilots regardless of racial identity.

Though a majority of the pilots interviewed in this project did not note this occurrence,

several provided insight into the intricacies of the role of gender. As we saw earlier,

black captains often experience these slights to their position when flying with a white

male first officer, but when flying with female captains, though race was not mentioned,

they are often excluded from the position of captain. There is a larger connection of sexism at play in the experiences of these women in the gendered framing of women and the appropriate positions they are to occupy. In these cases, those working for the company reify the masculine nature of flying, even when taking into account racial identity. In these instances, the flight deck is not only a context with the normative structure of whiteness, as in the case of black pilots, but there is also the normative ideology that it is also structurally a male space. What should also be noted in these accounts is the frequency in which black male pilots spoke up on behalf of their white female colleagues—a benefit not afforded them by their white male copilots. Building on the idea that the occupation of pilot is seen as a male space, Tina noted her experience when she decided to have a baby,

> I was pregnant for the first time; that is something I want to tell you about. I was the first black female there and something as simple as getting a uniform, they had no idea what to do with me. They were all, "I'm not sure where you would go." That was kind of weird to me, you know. I have to have a uniform, but they didn't have anything in place. I was commuting and I went and asked for the jump seat and I am in the jet way waiting and this guy from my airline comes down the jet way and he makes this comment. He said; "you need to read what it says in the ops [operations] manual about uniform attire." At first I was smiling but then my face changed. So, as I get on the airplane, it hit me what he said. He didn't even know that I was wearing a maternity uniform. He sits up here and thinks that I'm being sloppy with my shirt out. Dude, that pissed me off to that point and I'm emotional and I guess the flight attendant sees this on my face and she asks, "What did he just say to you." I said, "He thinks I'm being sloppy and he didn't even consider that I am pregnant." And, so the flight attendant gets pissed off and she tells the captain. Well, when I get on the plane, I go over to him and say, "I'm pregnant and this is the maternity uniform." He just looks at me. He doesn't apologize or nothing.

In this account, there are larger connections between the ideology of women, the role of those higher up in the organization, as well as gendered interactions. As noted

here, there is a mention that those in the company did not "know what to do with me." There were no particular measures in place to adequately deal with pregnancy, thereby implying that this is indeed a male industry. Even though women entered this industry in the 1970s, the idea that a maternity uniform posed a problem notes that, though regulations changed, the input and needs of women were not fully included. In this interaction, this female pilot was sanctioned by her coworker for being "sloppy" and not fully understanding what the policy states about uniform attire. In this, there is the inherent privilege of masculinity through his direct confrontation of her uniform and the notion that he did not have to take the time to recognize her uniform as a maternity uniform fitting well within the guidelines provided by the company. This privilege also allowed the acting pilot the larger idea that it is appropriate to "call out" the female pilot without taking the time to have a conversation with her. In the end, no apology was given, indicating that her mere presence was wrong, not his ideology. As many of the male pilots interviewed for this project noted the frequency in which women are discussed in a sexist manner behind the closed door, it is apparent that women are still considered outsiders that happened to slip into one of the front seats. Indeed, all of the women in this project, much like the men, discussed the frequency of the interactions in which they are "reinterviewed" and told; "I don't think you are ready to fly this aircraft…I would like to see you in something smaller." This shines light on the role of sexism on the aircraft. Here too, all noted they felt "scrutinized" because of their gender and there were those cases in which they were ignored, much like their black male counterparts:

> I'd say being a woman; you are more scrutinized from day one. When I was 21, I worked at a hotel near JFK and I would talk to the corporate pilots a lot and tell them that I was learning how to fly and some of them would just make nasty comments like, "Well, you're too old." They'd talk to me like I'm a piece of dirt you know… When I was a commuter pilot there was actually one guy that refused to talk to me because he thought I was going to get on with a major airline before him because of my sex and race. He just despised me. It's amazing.

Connected to the larger narratives insisting that African Americans are receiving unfair advantages in the industry is also the connection with important example of exclusion. These narratives, along with many others, are done in a way that rationalizes large scale exclusion and scrutiny. The airline industry, as it has been historically grounded in larger U.S. society with specific hierarchies of race and gender, still maintains those remnants through contemporary methods of sexism and gender discrimination. Collectively, gender and racial identity offer a unique experience for these pilots, one that should be included in our social science understandings of emotion work and emotional labor. These interlocking systems of oppression facilitate a working environment with gendered and racialized experiences similar to those experienced outside of work. For many of these individuals, the ability to escape gendered and racialized experiences becomes quite difficult and there is an inability to be protected from experiences based on race and gender in the workplace; indeed, the work environment proves to be a large part of the problem.

There are also those subtle representations of race and gender that creep into the interactions between these pilots. Although many pilots discussed blatant discriminatory behavior during training, there were also those instances in which "cultural differences" were important. Tina notes,

Yes, there have been those times. But, I guess I try to learn something from it. I noticed that when we are in training they would put these metaphors or jokes in the power points that deal with golf and everyone else was getting it but I didn't get it. So, I had to learn about golf. I don't know what you would call that. Would that be cultural differences? I said, "Well, this is the environment I'm in, let me go learn about this so that I can better relate." In the end, I know a lot about airplanes and that is important.

Here, this pilot notes the use of metaphors during training that she did not understand and often found herself having to go an learn more about golf so that she could better relate to her coworkers as well as understand the relationships between golf and flying airplanes. Though subtle, there are implications of class and gender, and as she believes, "culture." This is not to say that African Americans do not play golf, but it is to say that in an area such as training, metaphors pertaining to the job should be something that all can relate to. There is the incorrect assumption that all those present would be aware of golf analogies. Another pilot mentioned similar experiences with his coworkers:

There were a lot of times I just couldn't relate to some of my coworkers, people that are from the same background, you know, they have a lot in common already; you know just kind of a good ole' boys club that I didn't get in. Like they would discuss music and people would talk about their favorite bands, I just never heard of these people. I mean, they are talking to each other like, "Aw man, don't you just love Ted Nugent [laughs] and they would just say all these names of bands and play the music and I would just be like—I have no idea. They'd talk about hunting and their favorite deer stand and what kind of gun they use and I don't know. I can't really relate.

For these black pilots, there is a level of exclusion that they feel based on the conversations that take place in training and the flight deck that they feel that are disconnected from. There are those larger connections between gender, race, and class in many respects that serve as dividers between these pilots and their coworkers.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the idea that systemic racism, as a theoretical foundation of emotions, emotional management, and emotional labor, should be included as a backdrop to understanding interactions in the workplace. African Americans in the airline industry find themselves facing an industry that was developed during a period in U.S. history in which the racial and gendered framing of women and people of color relegated them to inferior positions. In this, there has been a systematic exclusion in the airline industry and it has been only recently that African Americans and white women were allowed to enter the industry. Though contemporary methods of exclusion have changed in a number of ways, these ideas must be situated within the larger context in which contemporary notions of racism and sexism have developed as a result of their systemic nature.

Many existing theories on emotional labor examine the current interactions in the workplace without directly connecting industries to their formation in a system that largely excluded certain peoples from participation. Emotional labor, the weight it carries, and how it is performed can be better understood by connecting it to the larger systems in which it operates. As a representation of how society once functioned to exclude individuals, the airline industry serves as but one location documenting the normative structures once representative of larger society. This industry, and the position of pilot, have expectations of emotional labor that would likely be missed if experiences based on racial and gendered identity were excluded. Emotional labor and emotion work in those interactions based on race and gender are performed *in addition to* the emotional

labor that is required to be performed as an aspect of the job. There are those expected areas, such as passenger and safety concerns that call for the performance of emotional labor, yet what should be included in this is the way in which emotional labor must also be performed even when based on those salient racial and gender features that cannot be changed to induce appropriate feeling in others.

The occupation of pilot has been racialized and gendered in a way that reinforces normative expectations of whiteness and maleness. In this, there are also expectations concerning appropriate emotions, methods of interaction, and subsequent emotional labor that are performed by these people of color in what is considered a white institutional space. This poses an altogether different set of expectations and boundaries; maneuvering through notions of superiority and privilege which they are not granted has implications for all involved. For the African Americans interviewed here, emotional labor is not simply relegated to the work required once the boarding door has closed, but is work that actually starts as soon as they are in uniform. The simple ideas of leaving the hotel, walking through the terminal, and getting through the gate agents, are proven not simple, but provide a multitude of areas in which emotional labor is performed. As representatives of their companies, there are standards in place for customer and coworker interactions that are an aspect of the job. Specifically when working in an industry and occupation in which there are stereotyped notions of what a pilot "is" and "does" that these individuals do not "fit," there are those intricate details of emotional labor that should be understood within the context of the industry, the society in which it was created, and the role identity plays in the performance of emotional labor.

Continuing with this, in the next chapter I examine the role of gender, race, and class

with a deeper look at the experiences of African American flight attendants.

CHAPTER V

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

In the previous chapter on African American pilots, I focused on the connections

between systemic racism and sexism to lead into a discussion of the deeper connections

between social identity and emotional labor. In this chapter, I examine the similarities

and differences experienced by flight crews to show that there are several factors that

should be in the forefront when discussing how emotional labor is performed in

environments that are structurally white spaces. Since the work of Hochschild was

published in the 1980s, there have been many demographic shifts in those working in the

job of flight attendant. Not only has the workforce gotten older generally, but it has also

gotten more diverse in terms of the number of racial/ethnic group members and white

males entering the industry (Saenz and Evans 2009). Much earlier, this occupation

allowed the flight attendant "the upper-class freedom to travel and participate in the

glamour" attached with the notion of flying (Hochschild 1983:5). Since the 1980s, the

industry has changed to one that provides easier access to those passengers that, in the

past, might not have had the opportunity to fly due to cost. In many ways, changes in the

nature of the industry have removed a great deal of the glamour earlier attached to the

job of flight attendant. In turn, demographic shifts have occurred not only for workers,

but passengers as well. Even with these changes, there remain specific expectations of

the flight attendant in terms of passenger interactions and company standards. In this

chapter, I examine not only their interactions with passengers, but also examine the

interactions that occur with coworkers. As argued in earlier chapters, the connections between emotional labor and service workers should be inclusive of the emotional labor performed outside of those interactions with passengers. Much like pilots, flight attendants spend considerable time in the company of other flight attendants, pilots, and other company personnel. This creates many interactions in which the intersections of race, gender, and class play a major role. The environment of the aircraft is also significant in this analysis because though there have been many demographic shifts, the expectations of flight attendants are in many ways contradictory to the white expectations of people of color.

As I continue to examine the micro-interactions flight attendants deal with, I combine this with the larger macro processes that directly influence these interactions. Thus, though much has changed to reflect changes in gender and race ideologies, even more remains the same. The longstanding stereotypical notions concerning gender, class, and race are continuously reflected in the interactions of these flight attendants. Much like the pilots I discussed in an earlier chapter (*see* Chapter IV), flight attendants also contend with racialized and gendered interactions that contribute largely to their performance of emotional labor. For flight attendants, "the smiles are a *part of her work*, a part that requires her to coordinate self and feeling so that the work seems effortless. Similarly, part of the job is to disguise fatigue and irritation, for otherwise the labor would show in an unseemly way, and the product—passenger contentment—would be damaged" (Hochschild 1983: 8 emphasis in original). Here, it is important to provide inquiry into what it means for workers and passengers when many of the interactions are

heavily influenced by preconceived ideologies and framing based on race, gender, and class, all within the context of corporate expectations of professionalism. Flight attendants, unlike pilots, spend a majority of their workday interacting with passengers and are seen as those representing the airline as front-line employees. But much like those pilots, there is a limited escape from adverse interactions. They are literally trapped in a confined space from which they cannot escape for hours at a time, no matter how difficult their interactions with passengers and coworkers may be. This should also be considered significant even in those interactions between coworkers. In these multiple interactions, there is a deeper connection between emotion work and racialized and gendered stereotypes. As discussed in this chapter, these connections between identity and interactions are but one aspect of a bigger, broader stratified system that contributes to how emotional labor is performed in the workplace.

Much like the pilots I discussed earlier, flight attendants experience multiple types of exclusion. As described by these flight attendants, there is an invisibility to their positions on the aircraft and an insensitivity undergirding their relationships with passengers and coworkers. In performing this job, there were particular expectations concerning passengers that were seen as a large part of being a flight attendant. Luggage concerns, weather delays (and turbulence), along with passenger expectations with beverages and/or food were significant areas of work where emotional labor is needed, but there are also those experiences that are discussed in more private circles, among friends and family--those interactions based on the unchangeable features of race and gender that also contribute greatly to everyday emotion work.

While many of their experiences are similar to those mentioned in the work of Hochschild, there are also distinct differences. One such difference occurs when passenger interactions with flight attendants are based on the collectivity of their gender and racial identity. In addition, flight attendants in this project spend much time considering how to counter these interactions in the course of their workday. In this chapter, I focus on the unspoken or unacknowledged interactions that occur for between flight attendants, passengers, and coworkers as a means of contributing to the literature on emotional labor. Here, I connect the contextual significance of the environment (the aircraft), systemic racism and sexism, and the relationship of the "actor" to flight attendants in order to argue that emotion work and emotional labor should not be disconnected from the structural systems creating, constricting, and contributing to how emotional is performed.

Colored "Girls," Germ Carriers, and Sex Objects

In Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labor and flight attendants, an examination of the gendered interactions that take place between flight attendants and passengers was understood from the perspective of the flight attendant and the expectations of management in terms of customer service and professionalism. In this idea, flight attendants were expected to wear smiles and learn effective ways to handle irate passengers (Hochschild 1983). During those years in which Hochschild conducted research, there were indeed expectations of what was representative of flight attendants that contributed to the overall nature of the industry. Sexualized ideologies of flight attendants were often enhanced by airline advertising insinuating the nature of those

women in the industry. For instance, Hochschild (1983:93) notes that advertising during this time had sexual overtones. Continental Airlines ran an ad; "We really move our tails for you to make your every wish come true…National ran the ad; Fly me, you'll like it." These ads, coupled with the fact that most flight attendants during this time were young women led to an image of the sexualized flight attendant and reified their subordinate position to men. Outside of the 'created' sexualized image of flight attendants, there was also the racialized image of the flight attendant as white.

Discussing the process airlines used to select applicants, attributes such as friendliness and a warm personality were often used by airlines, but when discussing what this meant to the flight attendants, "[O]ne United worker explained: 'United wants to appeal to Ma and Pa Kettle. So it wants Caucasian girls—not so beautiful that Ma feels fat, and not so plain that Pa feels unsatisfied. It's the Ma and Pa Kettle market that's growing, so that's why they use the girl-next door image to appeal to that market" (Hochschild 1983: 97). Here, the "girl next door" ideology is directly connected to a particular race, gender, and class identity. In this notion of the girl next door, where do African Americans fit and how did the systematic exclusion of African Americans contribute to the development of an industry in which whites (women) were seen as the "ideal type?" Much like African American pilots, African American flight attendants only gained entry into the industry through a series of court cases and the first African American flight attendant was hired in 1958. In an industry set up and advertised as white, there were not many direct connections to African American women in the

industry. Because of this, there was a longstanding notion of what a flight attendant should be and how they should perform.

At the time African Americans entered the industry as flight attendants, the civil rights movement was introducing many new opportunities but the racial framing of African Americans as inferior was deeply embedded in the minds of many white Americans. In this negative racial framing were also specific ideologies of gender that led to forms of gendered racism against women and men of color. These structural creations of gendered and racialized beliefs indeed transition into the workforce contributing to emotional labor. At this juncture, it is important to insist that though much mainstream understandings of race and gender suggest we have achieved equality, the experiences of people of color in the workplace show this 'improvement' to be superficial. For instance, in an interview with Cindy, a senior African American female flight attendant, she discussed a recent encounter on the aircraft with a passenger as follows,

> The one that stands out for me was I was working first class and there's a lady in the back that was having some problems with the flight attendants in the back. It was three white flight attendants back there and I was the only black woman on the plane. She gets upset with them for whatever, so they come and tell me about this lady in the exit row in the back. Well, the woman says, "I don't want to speak to any of ya'll; I want to speak to the colored girl." I didn't hear this, but one of them came up front and says; 'There is woman who is really upset back there and she wants to talk to you only. She only wants to talk to the colored girl.' I said, Oh really? Colored girl huh? Well tell her the ***colored girl*** will be back there in just a minute.

In this account, the white female passenger made direct connections to gender and racial identity. As this passenger states she wants to speak with the "colored girl," she assumes

a position of superiority, power, and domination by calling on a distinct and painful past in which African Americans were referenced as "colored" and as "girl or boy." This implies she is not seen as a woman, but is placed in a subordinate position by this passenger (and many of those hearing this characterization). This distorted language also references a much more dominant ideology that is a characterization of the larger society (St. Jean and Feagin 1998). As a black woman, this flight attendant must not only contend with those things connected to being a flight attendant (irate passengers), but must also handle the expectations held of her as a person of color. In this particular account, there are larger implications for interactions that are based on what it means to be a "colored" flight attendant.

Here too, it is important to note the actions of her coworkers. Not only did they relay this racist language, but Cindy, the flight attendant affected noted that they "snickered" when telling her that a passenger in the back wants to speak with the colored girl. In this case, they did not correct the passenger on her flawed reference to their coworker, but left the flight attendant to deal with the passenger that insulted her as well as with the consequence of correcting her. In these types of encounters, the direct connections to gender and race, along with the systemic connections to U.S. history, are indeed outside of the scope of much of the work on emotional labor. Here, the interconnectivity between systemic racism and sexism and emotional labor shows how they cannot be dissected and reduced to an either-or scenario, but that the consequence of systemic racism/sexism is one fundamental dimension of performing emotional labor. Additionally, the awareness of this flight attendant that she was the only African

American on the entire aircraft is of extreme significance. To relieve pressure, vent, or engage in a discussion with someone about this hurtful and offensive act is limited as she is 'racially alone.' Her coworkers in this case contributed to her racialization by relaying the message as though it was a laughing matter. Indeed, many of the participants on this project spoke of being racially alone on the aircraft and this contributes to feelings of alienation.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, there are those connections between gender and race and what constitutes flight attendant. As flight attendants are seen as providing the greatest amount of customer service to passengers, there are those inherent connections to the idea that this is what women *are supposed to do*. In many cases, both those women interviewed in this project, as well as those in Hochschild's work, connect larger ideas of sexism and images of women. In an interview Hochschild conducted with a flight attendant, the flight attendant notes,

> Now, if a man calls out to me, "Oh waitress," I don't like it. I'm not a waitress. I'm a flight attendant. But I know that sometimes they just don't know what to call you, and so I don't mind. But if they call me "honey" or "sweetheart" or "little lady" in a certain tone of voice, I feel demeaned, like they don't know that in an emergency I could save their chauvinistic lives (1983: 28).

Using this example provided by Hochschild, it is clear that in this case, there are also direct connections between gender and the historical context of how women were viewed by larger society. Those males in these cases that use language of "little lady" suggests that women are viewed from a subordinate position and treated as such. As this flight attendant makes a direct connection to sexism, there are also differences seen from the flight attendants in Hochschild's work and those interviewed for this project. Again,

when factoring in racial identity, African American flight attendants experienced an altogether different racialized language and broader framing directly connected to their gender. "Little lady" and "colored girl," though both derogatory and sexist, also carry vastly different historical meanings.

Many of the flight attendants in this project noted connections between race, gender, and the much larger assumptions of servitude that are often influenced greatly by these intersecting identities. Granted, many flight attendants, even those included in Hochschild's earlier work noted their distaste of the term "waitress." But these black flight attendants extended those views of white flight attendants as waitress, and connected them with much broader themes of African American flight attendant as servant. Though passengers often use the terminology of waitress to black flight attendants, waitress to them is done in such a way that carries the implicit meaning of servant,

> As black flight attendants, some of them look at you as a real servant. But it goes beyond this. People have a sense of entitlement. It's usually white women between the ages of 25 and 60. Every last one of them! Especially from us; we're supposed to do every last thing they ask us to. It's like I'm a personal servant or something. I call it the jump, snap and roll. I had a young white girl throw her bag down and tell me to stow it. I just said, "No baby; we don't do bags sugar. You pack it, you stow it." I'm looking at her and thinking; I'm twice her age. How you gone talk to me like that. The young ones are really bad; they're rude to their own mothers so I can't expect them to be nice to me. The older business women do it maybe because they are used to telling their employees to do this [respondent is snapping her fingers and pointing]. So, they get on the plane and look at us and we at that same level as the person that runs and gets their coffee according to them. So, that's their entitlement. They can tell us when to hop, skip, and jump… They expect us to be the mother, the nanny, the maid, and the doctor. All of that.

Here, this flight attendant recognizes the expectations of her that are outside of the scope of what constitutes being a flight attendant. As she notes that she believes she is seen as a real servant, she also attaches this to the actions of others. In one case, a young woman insists that she stow her bags as though this is how it is supposed to be. This flight attendant did not fully know if she gets ordered to stow luggage because she is perceived to be a servant or because she is seen as *strong*. Perhaps both explanations are likely and both are racialized. There are connections to class through the mention that many of these encounters are based on a sense of entitlement and the idea that black flight attendants are seen on the same level as the person that "runs and gets their coffee" placing them in this position of "the help." These longstanding racial and gendered ideologies are a part of a deeper structure that subordinates women of color to those roles of servitude. There are also those historical connections to the perceived physical strength of African American women (Collins 2000; Feagin 2006).

Indeed, there were those cases in this project in which African American female flight attendants were demanded to stow the luggage of men. One flight attendant openly discussed a case in which on an aircraft with two isles (a 767), a white male passenger wanted to pass "his large roller-board to me over the heads of other people from the other isle. He said; put this in the overhead bins for me." Here, much like the examples above, there is a historical reality in the relationships between these whites and African American women. As those old stereotypes of race and gender place black women in a seemingly inferior position to white women (though the latter are inferior to white men), much of this is seen in this contemporary example. As Collins notes in her research on

African American women; "Within U.S. culture, racist and sexist ideologies permeate the social structure in such a degree that they become hegemonic, namely seen as natural, normal, and inevitable. In this context, certain assumed qualities that are attached to Black women are used to justify oppression" (2000: 5). Note too those deeper connections with age in the mention that even young women continue to see black women in a particular role or position. As Feagin (2010) has noted about the white racial frame, much of these overarching ideologies of African Americans, specifically black women, are indeed continuously passed through generations through various networks. Another flight attendant Monica, provides a similar example,

> They see us like a waitress—an upscale waitress, [laughs] or a servant. Because they think we're suppose to do everything; giving me their booger tissues. [laughter] Well, trying to give me, you know, tissue. You know, bodily fluids, clean up my vomit…Sometimes snapping at you, you know, snapping a hand. Just like you're, you know, somewhere on the field back in the day. And *that's* the part of the job I can't handle!

Much like the earlier account, this female flight attendant also notes those larger connections to servitude and associates this with being "somewhere on the field back in the day." Again, this flight attendant extends the idea of being a waitress and includes a more historical understanding of what being an African American in this environment sometimes can mean. These experiences were not limited to female flight attendants; those African American male flight attendants in this project also noted having experiences in which there is a historical significance to their current interactions with passengers. For instance, one male flight attendant (John) recalled an experience with a white male passenger as the passenger loudly stated; "Boy, can you get me some more

coffee?" John replied; "Boy? Ain't no boys on here, I'm over 30." Here too, the interconnectivity of race and gender is apparent with this passenger referencing him as "boy." In this, there was a direct connection with notions of subservience— understanding that the term boy removed not only a level of masculinity, but was also reminiscent of a Jim Crow past in which African Americans were openly called boy and there was nothing they could do about it. In many of these cases of attempted subordination, there is also the flip side; the elevation of whites. In many of these cases, the racialized and gendered language was blatant, in the example of the colored girl and the references made to the male flight attendant as "boy." But, there are also those deeper understandings provided by these African American flight attendants. The understanding that though it is often deemed that the past is the past and there is a larger societal separation of the past and present, these African Americans "recognize how historically rooted present-day racism and gendered racism both are" (St. Jean and Feagin 1998: 29-30).

These interactions call for much emotional labor to be performed. Recalling the ideology that flight attendants are expected to remain friendly and professional in spite of irate passengers misses the significance of these racialized experiences. Also significant is the frequency in which these encounters occur. Truly, it cannot (and should not) be assumed that African American participants only have these encounters while on the aircraft, but we should recognize that these racial encounters are one more example of the racially patterned interactions taking place in larger society. These accounts on the

aircraft are but one location in which these crewmembers face attacks as women and men of color.

In her discussion of emotional labor and the workforce, Hochschild (1983: 85-86) states,

> But in the public world of work, it is often part of an individual's job to accept uneven exchanges, to be treated with disrespect or anger by a client, all the while closeting into fantasy the anger one would like to respond with. The customer is king, unequal exchanges are normal, and from the beginning customer and client assume different rights to feeling and display. The ledger is supposedly evened by a wage.

There is much truth to this statement with regards to public service work. Those ever working in a public industry providing customer service are quickly taught by management that the customer comes first and is always right. But there is also something to be said about these unequal exchanges; where is the line drawn between consumer rights and the civil rights of the white women and people of color that face a level of sexism and racism from the customers they are expected to serve? Those working during Hochschild's research and these women and people of color in the industry currently are forced to comply with racial and gendered affronts in such a way that implies that these encounters are a normative aspect of a much larger structural system. Problematic for those doing emotional labor is the larger rule in which the customer assumes the rights to feelings and display. Even outside of "ordinary" emotional labor performed on the job, when race, gender, and class characteristics are involved, much of what is seen as appropriate in the workplace is simply a reproduction of what is appropriate in larger society.

The relationships of these flight attendants to the passengers they serve can be bipolar when examined from the larger context. As many note they are seen as servants--there to provide all the service needs of passengers--they are also sometimes seen as not capable of providing a service to passengers. As one example of this, several of the flight attendants in this project noted the frequency with which passengers want them to do the heavy work (as in lifting luggage) but prefer them not to serve their drinks. Consider the following examples,

> I have had people refuse to take a drink from me and I know it's because I'm black. Like this one time, I was working with this white guy on the cart and I asked this man if he wanted something to drink and he just said, 'No.' So, I said, I'm done and I asked if I can make anything to the guy that I was working with and he said, "No, I'm ready to move." Then, the man that I'd just asked if he wanted something to drink said to the white guy on the cart, "Excuse me; I'd like something to drink." Now, he tells the white guy that. I said, "Oh really; so you didn't want anything from me." Well, he just ignored me and continued to talk to the white guy about wanting something to drink.

Though these are more often unspoken encounters, they do not fail to have a racial meaning to those flight attendants involved. As most would initially assume, there was the possibility that those passengers refused a drink because they did not want one at the time. But in this particular account, this flight attendant directly connects this to her racial identity because this passenger immediately asked for a drink from her white colleague and ignores her when she notes that he asked her colleague and not her. It is important to note that flight attendants in this project easily differentiated between those that do not accept drinks for other reasons, namely, various religious reasons. They also noted that these racialized incidents also occurred at an alarming frequency. Another flight attendant, as did many others, noted that passengers would decline allowing them

to make their drinks. Reasons here ranged from; "I don't want you to touch my cup" to "I just don't want anything." We also have to consider the public nature of these denials as they are usually done in the presence of others. The thing for these flight attendants is that though they notice this behavior, those around them do not and do not have to. This makes these flight attendants both hypervisible--their blackness is noticed so they refuse the drink and invisible because their experiences as black women is not noted or validated. Another flight attendant also notes the frequency in which passengers do not accept drinks from her. She states; "the one thing that I do notice is a lot of times when we do a service, somebody that wanted a drink often times will not take a drink from me and they will wait until the other flight attendant, particularly if they're Caucasian, will come by and stop them and take the same drink from them." The statement "A lot of times," in this case implies that this is something that happens with regularity and is a racialized pattern experienced by African American flight attendants. We should also recognize that in these particular cases, flight attendants are expected to continue service as though nothing happened and with no immediate escape.

Mentioned earlier in this chapter is the connection between company advertising and the sexualized nature of the job that soon followed. In this, airlines placed various restrictions on flight attendants that contributed to this sexual ideology. Earlier, many employees, as cited from Hochschild's work, noted that this was largely associated with the image of a young, single, white woman. Because of this, the airline industry effectively created an image of the flight attendant that was white, attractive, young, and sexually available. Even as the industry changed, the image of flight attendant stayed

much the same. As we include African American women in the discussions of what is

expected of them, they often find that they too are sexualized, but much of this

sexualization is connected to their racial identity, calling forth those stereotyped

ideologies of black sexuality. Interestingly, passengers were not the only actors making

those sexual advances. One flight attendant recalled this account,

> Now, the pilots are something else…They want to court you on the road. They
> say stuff about how pretty my skin is and they just try you. I just tell them, "I
> don't do white meat baby." They usually get a kick out of that, but I think it
> makes them try harder...The famous line is, "I like my coffee black; just like I
> like my women." I think this is a line that they have passed around to each
> other. They say this all the time. Or they just say, "I like my coffee black… *you
> got any sugar to go with that*?" They would never marry you... There is one pilot
> that would send me flowers on all of my layovers after he invited me to dinner
> one night. The next day, I asked the other flight attendants why they didn't show
> up and they said they weren't invited. He would send all of these exotic flowers
> and I had to tell him to stop or I would report him to the chief pilot and he
> apologized and stopped. The thing is, most of them are married and they know
> that many of us are married. They just flirt! They just want to see if they have a
> chance at it.

Again, women of all racial and ethnic groups can be targets of sexism. Couple this with

those stereotypical images of the flight attendant that was created through past

advertising sometimes sets up the expectation that flight attendants also provide this

service. "However, black women endure a special kind of racialized sexism. Myths

about wanton black women abound in this society…African American women have long

been sexual targets for these men, particularly those with power" (St. Jean and Feagin

1998: 101). In the above example, these advances were made by a pilot, the person seen

as in charge of the aircraft. Here, there are deeper connections between the sexualized

natures of "flight attendant" and racial identity as referenced through the coffee analogy.

These pervasive images of black female sexuality are seen in many of the white male,

black female interactions in this project. These female flight attendants knew well the

stereotypes of flight attendants and mentioned that this is one area that is in need of

change. A large consensus of flight attendants was that the tacit belief that one can enter

the "mile high club" with a flight attendant is offensive, disrespectful, and oppressive.

As one flight attendant adamantly states,

> There is some stereotypical stuff with flight attendants that needs to be gotten rid of. We are normal and go home to families. We have personal lives outside of flying. I have been told by men all the time that they want to sleep with a flight attendant. They think we get busy with passengers. They want to try you like it's a fantasy.

Many flight attendants noted a similar sexualization by passengers. Another flight

attendant recounted the following account,

> The public perception of a flight attendant is a waitress in the sky and some guys see us as being promiscuous. I had one guy, white guy again, who I gave drink, he rang his call light, I gave him a drink and then he said, "Here, here's a five dollar tip." Well, I said, "That's quite nice of you sir," "Well, here, you can sit on my lap." I mean he had the five dollars up in his hand and said, "Here's a tip for you" and I told him no thank you and then he is "well, ok, you can sit on my lap."

Moreover, another flight attendant noted,

> One insult recently I had was a guy putting a paper and a pen; a white guy, business guy, in a suit, and handing it to me, and I'm putting it in the trash and he was like; "no I want your number." That's an insult to me. You don't want my number dude [laugher]. He just assumed I would give it to him… Isn't that something? Isn't that something? And, he looked at me like I should feel lucky. There was also another guy that did that recently…an artsy LA guy in the music industry. He was very gutsy. But the truth is its annoying and it makes me want to throw up. It's usually those white guys…everyone thinks they're entitled to things like uh… just everything on the flippin' plane. I mean it's just that they're

greedy these days. They really think they're entitled to the whole… the aircraft belongs to them. Everything. Every and anything. Even you and your stuff.

In all these cases, passengers made advances based on those preconceived ideas of the actions of female flight attendants, specifically those African American flight attendants. In the earlier account, the flight attendant made note that this sexual advance was also connected to money and the larger idea that money would make her more apt to give in to those unwanted sexual advances. There is a much higher level of social power and privilege contributing to this interaction and many of those stereotypes of black women are located in this account. As Collins (2000) shows in her research on the experiences of black women, the controlling images of "jezebel, whore, or 'hoochie'" is a function of a much larger system that seeks to rationalize treatment of African American women (81). In the second account, the flight attendant in this case connects these actions to a sense of "entitlement" that includes "everything on the flippin plane…even you and your stuff." This sense of entitlement is connected to social power, subordination and ownership. This ownership is not only of feelings but also ownership of black female bodies.

In the above cases, flight attendants experience being seen as servants as well as being spoken to in racially derogatory language and can simultaneously be denied the ability to provide certain aspects of the service. These seemingly different desires from those white passengers mentioned in these accounts are but one part of a larger framing of African American women and men and those interlocking systems of oppression in larger society. Within the context of work, there are many ways being a flight attendant

calls for emotional labor. From handling those everyday scenarios with passengers involving luggage, service, and boarding/deplaning issues, to issues relating to their gender, race, and perceived class background. Conscious and unconscious ideologies of passengers enter into these interactions generating additional emotional labor requirements. In their interactions with passengers once on the aircraft, there is also a power dynamic that occurs in give and take interactions that leaves these flight attendants taking much more than they give. With a sense of entitlement, passengers view all things contained on the aircraft as up for grabs, including the right to voice inappropriate beliefs and the expectation that no counter will be offered. Those passengers that board the aircraft enter with preconceived notions of what is representative of a flight attendant as well as those preconceived notions about people of color and often seek out ways to reify a privileged and superior position. Here too, it is important to note that dealing with passengers is only one aspect of the job, there is also the aspect of dealing with coworkers in confined spaces.

Who's in Charge?: The Invisibility of Black Authority

Much like the African American pilots in Chapter IV, flight attendants reported to a great extent how those around them usurp their earned authority. One such way this is consistently done is through the lack of respect to those positions they work on the aircraft. Here, it is important to remember the historical set-up of the industry as one in which flight attendants were usually female and white. This has created an important aspect of the job in which this is usually reiterated in a number of ways, namely black invisibility on the aircraft. Like the earlier discussion of pilots, the flight attendants also

recognize a hierarchy in the cabin. Though there can be many flight attendants on any given flight, there is one flight attendant designated as the "lead" flight attendant. In this, there is a level of authority given this attendant and they are briefed directly by the captain and agents. Flight attendants recognize that many major decisions, as they pertain to customer interactions are in the hands of the lead. But as mentioned earlier, the industry itself created another hierarchy—one not recognizing African Americans in any capacity in the industry, let alone leadership positions. This dominant ideology of black subordination, portrayed mainly through advertising and company "standards" effectively transitioned into the more mainstream ideal of black visibility and sense of belonging on the aircraft. In her earlier work, Hochschild picked up this pattern and noted: "a black female flight attendant, who had been hired in the early 1970s when Delta faced an affirmative action suit, wondered aloud why blacks were not pictured in local Georgia advertising. She concluded: 'They want that market, and that market doesn't include blacks. They go along with that.' Although Delta's central offices were in Atlanta, which is predominantly black, few blacks worked for Delta in any capacity" (1983: 93). Missing largely from advertising as well as from the aircraft there developed a pattern not only in the minds of passengers but also from coworkers. In this section, I seek to highlight some of the interactions that occur with coworkers on board the aircraft. Passenger failure to recognize those in power is indeed something these flight attendants noted, but in this section I focus on how how those with the company, who should recognize and know better, usurp the authority of African American flight attendants.

Though not often verbally spoken, the disregard for African Americans working on the aircraft, specifically as pilots and flight attendants, serves as a reaffirmation of white authority and the idea that blacks remain somewhat isolated and invisible in this environment. In the encounters with coworkers, African American flight crewmembers note the complexities of dealing with other members of the company and the idea of their invisibility on the aircraft. Take the following example provided by a flight attendant with more than twenty-two years of experience,

> I can be sitting on the airplane with my badge on that says, "flight service coordinator," and the gate agent will come in, look at me, and then go to the white girl, give her the paperwork and then say, "Are you ready?" They make the assumption that I can't be in charge; you're black so you can't be the one in charge. And I'm sure it probably happens to the captains. It happens so many times that I just ignore them when they come on. I look at them because they look dead at me and they see my badge but they don't see *me*. They go right to the white girl. The white girl could be at the back of the plane or they go to the white guy. In other words, *they go right to the white person* and give them all of the paperwork. It happens so much that I just let them walk all the way back there. It's just terrible…

When asked to discuss these experiences in detail, this flight attendant noted the implications of racial identity as well as the significance of gender in this context. When she steps back to examine these interactions she notices that when white flight attendants are present on the aircraft, the assumption is that they are in charge, regardless of their gender. Seen largely as a female space, this idea also shows that it is a whitespace, in which whites are generally assumed to have power and be in charge and African Americans are not. This idea that African Americans are not in charge is one that should be placed in a much broader context. Much like larger society, there is a longstanding belief that whites hold superior positions in many industries, even those that have been

racialized spaces. Establishing that the aircraft is a white space for pilots should also be extended to flight attendants. Even though several African American male pilots noted that in instances when flying with a female captain, they are usually seen as the one that is possibly in charge, the same is not so for flight attendants. The idea here is that the airplane outside the cockpit is foremost a white and largely female space. For most flight attendants, they discuss the historical reality that the airline industry remained largely white for decades, with increases in black flight attendants being a fairly recent phenomenon, and use this as a method of understanding this behavior. Nevertheless, these flight attendants involved find this as a blatant form of disrespect, especially because it comes from those they work with,

> The other night I did a trip where I deadheaded to Bogotá and it was a crew of 5 flight attendants and one Captain. And I was not in uniform, there was only one flight attendant that *was* in uniform and the rest of us weren't so there really was no identification as to who was who and the Captain got on the plane and introduced himself to the two white women, who were seated behind me, never acknowledging me, or that I could potentially be part of the crew. And I can't lie to you and say that it didn't' piss me off, because it did. You know and I was like, I'm not only a flight attendant but the flight attendant in charge! And he has not acknowledged me."

As this flight attendant mentions that the pilot failed to even recognize that she could potentially be a flight attendant, let alone "the flight attendant in charge" is something that many of their white colleagues do not have to deal with. It was assumed that they were flight attendants, contributing to the significance of the larger images associated with what is indicative of being a flight attendant. This position, much like the one of pilot, is racialized and gendered in such a way suggesting that though there are

significant and increasing people of color entering this position, it is still normatively construed and structured as white.

It is important to note the frequency of these interactions as they occur as a standard part of work. On any given day or over the course of a multi-day trip, consider the fact that in many cases multiple briefings and boardings can and will occur. Also important to recognize is that much of this happens *before* work and interactions with passengers. This bigger picture perspective lends to the idea that emotion work should be extended to include those frequent, steady interactions with coworkers that can occur multiple times throughout the course of the day. As mentioned in an earlier account by a flight attendant the assumption that the "white person is in charge" paints a picture of the unique experience of African American male flight attendants. One African American male flight attendant (Don) recalls,

> I'm standing right there and many times they bypass me and go to someone who is not black and just assume that that's the one who's in charge; just not even ask and just assume and I just sit there and nine times out of ten my crewmembers will say, "well, you have to speak to Don or he's the A" or whatever the case may be and I just want to just take a pie and squish it in their face. Even pilots, the same way; I'll be standing at the boarding door, you know, "How you doing?" and they keep on going and not even introduce themselves like "hey, I'm such and such" and that doesn't happen often but it happens enough to where it's noticeable and then they walk pass you and go, "Well who's in charge?"… You have a lot of people who when you speak and say, "Hey, how you doing?" they just keep on walking and don't even think anything of it

In this account, the intersectionality of gender and race can be seen in the idea that even though masculinity in many cases calls for the assumption of authority, this is not always the case when examining males of color. Equally important are the actions of the pilots

and other airline personnel and their open treatment of Don. The broader cultural

understandings of social power and privilege openly contribute to the normative nature

of these interactions with African American flight attendants and their white coworkers

and contribute to the level of exclusion they experience. Having to experience those

public interactions in which you are not acknowledged is heavy and should not be taken

lightly as it pertains to emotional labor. In the context of flight attendants, black males

will be treated as having less power than white women—this is different than the

experiences of pilots and their gendered male occupation. Through systemic sexism,

males have been granted a particular position of authority, even when they are in

environments that are heavily gendered. This is one of the reasons Hochschild decided to

study flight attendants. In providing a justification for studying flight attendants in her

earlier work, Hochschild states,

> The choice to study flight attendants was also good from the point of view of understanding the relation of gender to jobs…To study secretaries is to study almost only women; to study pilots is to study almost only men…The male flight attendant, however, does the same work in the same place as the female flight attendant so that any differences in work experience are more likely due to gender…In many studies, the problems of women as workers are confounded with the problems of being in a minority in a given occupation. In this work at least, the shoe is on the other foot: males comprise only 15 percent of flight attendants. They are the minority; and although being part of a minority usually works against the individual, this does not appear to be true in the case of male flight attendants (1983:15).

As she examines the experiences of white male flight attendants more in later

chapters of her work, here it is important to recognize that these interactions with

coworkers while on the job are not seen as "work." For these African Americans,

however, it is seen as work as they discussed much of this when discussing "the job."

Those white males included in her work do not account for the interconnectivity of being

a numerical minority and being a member of a racial/ethnic group, nor do they account

for the historical position of subordinate status forced on African American males. Even

being in a minority status as male flight attendants, they are not always granted the

authority of their white-male counterparts. This is not to argue that there were no

occasions in which being a black male on the aircraft provided a measure of authority.

Consider these divergent experiences of what a flight attendant in Hochschild's work

experiences as compared to a male flight attendant in these more current interviews,

> I told a guy who had a piece of luggage in front of him that wouldn't fit under the seat, I told him, "It won't fit, we'll have to do something with it." He came back with, "Oh, but it's been here the whole trip, I've had it with me all the time, blah, blah, blah." He gave me some guff. I thought to myself, I'll finish this later, I'll walk away right now. I intended to come back to him. A flying partner of mine, a young man, came by this passenger, without knowing about our conversation, and said to him, "Sir, that bag is too big for your seat. We're going to have to take it away." "Oh, here you are," the guy says, and he hands it over to him… (1983:178-179).

In contrast, here is the narrative of an African American male flight attendant with a

similar experience with luggage,

> I had one lady who was travelling internationally. They have a tendency to have a packing their whole house as far as luggage and they were one of the last few to get aboard the airplane and we totally didn't have any more space, I mean I even used the closets that I have to accommodate as long as it doesn't go over the weight limit. She argued up and down for about at least 5 or 6 minutes about she wasn't going to check her bag and this is starting in the aisle, she was holding up the boarding process and I finally said, "Ma'am come out, bring your bag out of the aisle here to the jet way so we can talk." I don't want to put people on front street and embarrass them so I kind of tend to bring them out where they are away from everybody, not listening to their business. At that point once I had her out in the jet way letting her know that there's no space at all for any carry-on bag; as you can see this line right here behind you everyone's having to do the same thing. "Well, I bought my ticket 5, 6 months ago, I should have space."

And I was like, "Ma'am I understand where you're coming from and I'm not trying to go out of my way to not accommodate you but at this point the only thing we can do is check your bag or the other option you have is to stand-by for the next flight where you may be able to be accommodated with your carry-on bag but at this point we have to check your bag." This lady was persistent then finally got to the point where I had to just basically say, "Ma'am at this point the conversation is over. The option you have is either catching the next flight or checking your bag," and I just went on to the next person…

There are key differences in what it means to be a male in this "female space" versus what it means to be a black male in this space. As much authority in any given situation is offered to males, simply because they are men, this is not always granted to African American males. In the example provided by the male flight attendant here, this female passenger continued to argue and challenge his authority to the extent that he recommended she take another flight. Though many females, much like those included in Hochschild's work, experienced similarities when it comes to authority, so did those African American males. It shouldn't be taken for granted in the larger examination of emotional labor that masculinity and the rewards it provides are not created equal. The position African American males occupy as subordinate group members indeed translates to how they are seen and challenged on the aircraft. This inequality in what it means to be a black male flight attendants is indeed a significant aspect of emotional labor and the necessity to maintain a sense of professionalism.

In addition to a lack of recognition of authority in these interactions on behalf of passengers and coworkers, many of the flight attendants also experience a level of exclusion when looking at the relationships between coworkers. Recall the earlier account provided by a male flight attendant that there are those times when he says,

"How you doing," and receives no response from his coworkers, in this case, pilots. Connected to a position of power, many of these pilots reify their perceived superior position by openly denouncing the significance of these African American workers. In this next section, I examine another aspect of work that is not usually considered a part of the job but nonetheless influence the manner in which subsequent work is conducted.

Slam-Clickers and Harlem Bashers

When dealing with coworkers, the idea of being invisible is one that was noted by flight attendants and pilots alike. Though manifested in a variety of ways, one such way this occurs for flight attendants is through the failure of coworkers to acknowledge their presence and/or their positions of authority when flying in the lead position. Most flight attendants in this project easily recounted cases in which they were blatantly ignored by coworkers as well as passengers. In some of these cases, the emotional consequence derived from the alienation of invisibility is apparent. In addition to the failure to recognize their positions of authority, African American flight attendants also find themselves experiencing alienation and exclusion by being blatantly ignored by their coworkers. Take for instance the example provided by Mel, a flight attendant for a major airline, as she recounts a recent interaction with a coworker,

> A couple of days ago we were leaving Pittsburgh and they had had ice problems so earlier flights had been delayed. When we left the hotel there were three sets of pilots including the pilots who were taking us back and three flight attendants and you know I'm the only black flight attendant on board and there are two pilots in the back and a flight attendant in the back and the flight attendant was just talking and she told this one pilot, she just asked him something and he started, "Yeah, I commute from Dallas," and I turned around and I looked at him and I said, "Oh, I commute from Dallas," and he just looks at me and doesn't say, "Oh, yeah, tough commute?" Nothing, he just looks at me, didn't say anything, didn't respond.

I don't know. I mean I think, and I hate to harp on and say its race but that's the only thing I can think of because I see them relate or converse with flight attendants of other persuasions. There's not, at least from what I've seen, they've always been nice and responsive but I don't know, I think it's race. Because I mean he was talking to the white flight attendant, no problems, and when I turn around and say "I commute from Dallas" he just looks at me, doesn't respond or say anything, and I'm like ok, the only difference I can see is that she's white and you're talking to her and I'm black and when I make a comment to you, you just look at me.

Some of them tend to just totally ignore you. For example, we were on a 757 and there were four flight attendants, I was the only black one. We were all sitting in the middle of the airplane by the two left door; we were sitting, pilot comes on, introduces himself, looks at every white flight attendant totally ignores me and I say "I'm Mel by the way" and he just kind of looked at me funny and kept on with his briefing. Now I've had that happen more than once.

[[What goes through your mind when that happens?]]

What goes through my mind is am I invisible? I know I'm of a darker hue but you know what…you can still see me.

It is important to note that interactions such as this one by Mel happens before

passengers even began to board the aircraft. Also important in this interaction is that Mel

has an awareness of her invisibility. Moreover, as Mel recounts, accounts such as this are

often experienced in front of others as though there is a blatant disregard for her

presence, leaving her to deduce that this is based on her racial identity. In this one

conversation, she easily recalls two examples, out of many in which she was ignored.

Once when trying to make casual conversation with the pilots on the way to the airport

and another time during a briefing. In terms of emotions, the consequence is that she

expends both time and energy deflecting the demoralizing experience of being ignored

in front of her coworkers. She goes on to note, "Like the incident I was telling you

about, and I said 'Oh, I'm Mel by the way' and they [the flight attendants] just kind of

looked at the pilot…ok…did you not see her? I even had one flight attendant even make a comment…she's like, 'He acted like he didn't see you.' 'Yeah he did act like he didn't see me.'"

Several flight attendants noted that they were not acknowledged by their coworkers and that this sometimes happens in front of others. This public act serves as a method of alienating those African Americans on board the aircraft. It is similar to the alienation faced by the African American pilots discussed in the previous chapter. In many ways, their experience is that of an outsider-within—they must simultaneously perform their job in a space they are not fully allowed to be a part of. The invisibility experienced in reference to authority is extended to include the invisibility imposed on them by others, namely coworkers. This creates an environment that is not only alienating but also serves as a larger mechanism of symbolically excluding them from this white space. The fact that they are excluded by passengers *and* coworkers should be factored into the existing theories on emotional labor and emotional display.

One other area that must be included in theories of emotional labor performed by flight attendants is the labor they must perform once off the aircraft. Though the workday has officially ended, layovers are also a time when there are often extensive interactions with coworkers. For many of the flight attendants in this project, the ability to relax after a day of constant interactions with passengers and coworkers is often hindered by the knowledge that this is also another area in which they are excluded. As noted by many of these flight attendants, many of their coworkers are "slam-clickers." Slam-click, in this case represents the recognizable sound of the hotel room door

slamming and locking as though they are in for the evening. But as many flight attendants discover; "They went out to eat, didn't ask me to go. They went to have drinks, went to the movies, didn't ask me to go and then the next morning they ask me, 'Oh, how was your layover? This is what we did.' They call everybody but then don't call me." This was a major theme in the accounts provided by these flight attendants. Most all in this project noted that on morning conversations after a layover the common question is; what did you do? This is usually followed by a detailed description of what "they" did and is done in a manner that leaves no room for speculation. They were not included.

As another flight attendant describes a time in which she offered to take another flight attendants' room because of smoke allergies, she goes on to state,

> I decided to go get something to eat and as I was leaving my room I saw her and another flight attendant coming back from getting something to eat. And I was like wow they didn't even invite me to come with them. And I gave her my room. You know I was like damn. You know there would be trips that I'd fly on and we have a long layover, we get to the hotel and then nobody would call but the next morning, they're all like 'What'd you do? We did this.' They did stuff together.

In these accounts, black flight attendants have an awareness that they are excluded by their coworkers. This pattern of exclusion was one that was present for both male and female flight attendants in this sample. This larger pattern of exclusion contributes to the atmosphere on the aircraft in that they often feel alone and as though they have no one to socialize with. Consider these instances, coupled with passengers' and other airline personnel interactions, and how these experiences influence not only the amount of emotional labor that is performed throughout any given day, but how this influences how

the job itself is performed. The experiences based on racial and gender identities are not factored into how these flight attendants perform emotional labor.

As but one aspect of social life and social interactions, these flight attendants deal with the exclusionary methods of their white colleagues on and off the aircraft. The cumulative nature of these interactions contributes greatly to the volume of emotional labor that is performed by these flight attendants of color. I have noted some of the many exclusionary methods practiced by white coworkers, but they were not limited to being excluded and/or being ignored on layovers. One primary method of alienation is found in the immense quantity of racial and/or cultural insensitivity they encounter.

White perceptions about people of color or minority group members and dominant white ideologies guide interaction on the plane for African American flight attendants and this becomes another component of their invisibility and exclusion. Similar to the accounts of pilots, these flight attendants often encountered a level of insensitivity from their coworkers in their regular conversations. Take for instance the following example provided by a senior female flight attendant,

> I remember sitting, you know how you land and have a few minutes of sit time before you turn that plane around, and um… this white pilot just decided he wants to chat: 'So where you from Michelle?' I said; 'I'm from New York. 'Where in New York? 'Harlem.' He said 'Wow nothing ever comes out of Harlem but basketball players.'

This comment was one with racial meanings. The deeper connection here between race, geographical location, and sport is but one aspect of a larger racial understanding of the skills and expectations of black Americans. But the pilot did not consider how this commentary would affect Michelle. In this particular example, as with most involved in

this chapter, the conversation and interaction was public and Michelle was placed in a position to have to manage their emotions and the emotions of those around her. Noting that nothing ever comes out of Harlem except basketball players is a failure to acknowledger her immediate position in the airline industry as well as her human worth as a woman from this environment. In this particular case, she was left with the all too familiar position of many African Americans in their professional and personal interactions with whites. Many often find they are in the position to "school whites" on their often incorrect racialized assumptions. In this case, Michelle said; "I beg to differ. And I just started naming, I said 'out of six kids we have a school teacher, a doctor, a lawyer, engineer, dadadadada—I said I was an accountant, I just went on and on and on…" A clear message of exclusion, interactions between flight attendants and their coworkers were often based on this level of racial insensitivity, with whites failing to be reflective about their own privilege. Truly, many whites do not *have* to see the full implications and meanings of their comments. In another case, a flight attendant recalled a recent insensitive conversation with a coworker,

> Just the other day, we were looking at the back of this candy or something that was sold in [another country] and it had like… the lady on the back she looked black but she was from like… you know, another country with a darker descent, a darker complexion, and um.. I said 'oh this is owned by this person'—wherever it was, I think it was owned by this company, but I said 'I wonder if this is the person who owns it' and she said 'uh how about the person that's picking it…picking the stuff to make it!

These conversations with coworkers involving racialized language and imagery are often done in a way that reiterates black feelings of alienation. As many were done directly, there were also those cases in which this insensitivity spilled over into

discussions of other groups that made these African American flight attendants uncomfortable. Like the African American pilots in the previous chapter, discussions of other oppressed groups left them with a deeper perspective that causes them to wonder what the topic of discussion would be if they were not there. For example,

> There are those times where members of the crew will talk about other races of people or other groups. Like this one time we were in the van in Florida and the pilot turns around and says, "So how many gays were in the back?" I'm thinking that this is inappropriate at work. For all he knows, I could have a gay brother. Better yet, he doesn't know my status. I said, "Excuse me?" He says it again: "This is the gay capital of Florida; how many gays did you have in the back?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." The reason I said that is because I feel like if I wasn't in the van, his question might have been, "How many niggers were in the back?" That's how I felt based on the way that he said it.

There is a larger understanding on behalf of these African Americans that discriminatory comments directed at others can easily be directed towards them. The consequences of these conversations between flight attendants and coworker serve as a constant reminder that in performing the job there remains a rift between job performance and being recognized as appropriate for performing the job by their coworkers and passengers. Also of importance in this interaction is the comfort of the pilot in making such an inappropriate comment to those around him. This suggests that a normative aspect of the work environment is one that recognizes the social power and privilege of white heteronormativity. Those not fitting this ideal are barred participation and in many ways relegated to the margins. The implications of emotional labor in these many interactions should not be taken for granted, but understood as a collective experience in which outside factors contribute to how emotional labor is performed.

Chapter Summary

For flight attendants, a large portion of the job is spent interacting with passengers and coworkers in close quarters. Recalling the accounts provided in this chapter, the connections with the spatial aspects of racist expressions and the more general connections to the structural nature of racism should also be encompassed in the emotional labor literature. Many of the interactions that take place between African American flight attendants and white passengers and company personnel originate from the broader framing of black positions, intellect, and bodies. Though there is indeed greater diversity within the ranks of flight attendants, especially when compared to the African American pilot population, there still remain significant barriers to gaining full inclusion and acceptance on the aircraft. Whether introduced through interactions with passengers or with coworkers, these black flight attendants are also reminded that a disconnect can sometimes occur when addressing their acceptability in the white space of the aircraft.

Extending the notion that the flight deck remains largely a white (male) space should encompass the idea that the aircraft itself as well as the job of flight attendant are in many ways also largely connected to the ideology of a white (female) space. White framing of blacks as being in inferior positions or 'not belonging' becomes evident through the various ways flight attendants interact with one another as well as with passengers. On the other hand, flight attendants, while spending much of their time with passengers, also deal with blatant racist expressions that reaffirm the position of flight attendant as one reserved for and performed best by whites. In the above cases, flight attendants experience contradictory expectations from passengers. On one hand, they are

seen as 'servants' while on the other, they are denied the ability to perform a large aspect of the job they were hired to do in providing good service. Situated in the larger ideology of African American women, many of the female flight attendants here also found themselves dealing with unwanted sexual advances from coworkers and passengers alike. These accounts, like those of the pilots in the previous chapter, should be included in the literature on emotional labor as these cases occur while in the workplace.

White coworkers often engage in the subtleties involved in racist displays by usurping authority through mechanisms of exclusion and alienation thereby reifying the invisibility of African American flight attendants. Though many white males in Hochschild's work were with an elevated sense of authority based on their masculinity, this was not always granted to the black male flight attendants in this project. How our identities intersect and interact with the environment contributes to the performance of work and emotional labor. Though considered by some to be outside of the scope of work, layovers and down time between flights were also included when these flight attendants discussed their jobs. There was a level of racial insensitivity towards these flight attendants as well as a level of exclusion that was not always apparent to their coworkers. This should also be situated in the context of how larger U.S. society and how our history of racism and sexism influence these interactions as well as how the constricting environments in which these workers perform labor. All of these elements must be considered in theories of emotional labor.

In the existing emotional labor literature, there is much information on how notions of gender and race contribute to the performance of emotional labor. But one key

difference in examining African American flight crews is that there are racial and gendered images associated with particular positions as well as with members of particular groups that are contradictory. In the larger society, due mainly to systemic racism and sexism, these crewmembers find themselves in racialized and gendered positions in which they do not fit. This often elicits an emotional response of abject resistance on behalf of those viewing them. Note too that African Americans as a group have historically and contemporarily faced significant negative stereotyping and framing that carries over into how others perceive them. To move into a deeper analysis of emotional labor and emotions, it is important to show how underlying larger structural processes influence smaller everyday interactions. In chapter VI, I seek to situate emotional labor within the framework of systemic racism and white framing of black Americans and also show that much of the emotional labor they perform is in direct response to those around them and is in addition to the normative emotional expectations contained in work.

CHAPTER VI

EMOTIONAL LABOR AND SYSTEMIC RACISM

The experiences of black flight crews in the airline industry provide a unique lens through which to view the structural mechanisms in which racism and sexism operate, as well as the deeper connections with performing emotion work and emotional labor. In the previous chapters on black crewmembers, I explored how the underlying connections between racialized and gendered experiences and systemic racism/sexism contribute greatly to those aspects of the job that are undervalued and under-analyzed. In their daily experiences in the workplace, the concept of emotional labor and what is within the normative expectations of what it means to be a pilot or flight attendant do not fully capture the amount of emotional labor that these professionals *actually* perform. Using their collective experiences as a backdrop, the previous chapters serve as an introduction to the intersectionality of systemic racism/sexism and emotional labor and how these concepts form a maze through which the actions of white actors and the experiences of black flight crews are all intertwined, and through which these people have to navigate on a day-to-day basis. The actions whites take to maintain social power and privilege in this environment and the power removed from black flight crewmembers to engage in aggressive counter-narratives are a part of the conundrum created by systemic racism and those company expectations of emotional labor. Indeed, I showed in the previous chapters that emotional labor encompasses more than those interactions with passengers, but is also inclusive of the daily interactions with coworkers. Note too that organizations hold responsibility by enforcing emotional labor standards.

In this chapter, I introduce a broader social science theory of emotional labor and seek to fill the gap between emotional labor and the specific contexts in which workers perform it. The airport and aircraft, along with the uniforms and positions of pilot and flight attendant, are but pieces of a broader system that make up the spatial reality of racism and sexism. Before (and arguably after) the civil rights movement and the legislation that followed, hegemonically African Americans were those not capable of performing particular types of jobs within the airline industry because of deep-seated racial framing of African Americans as inferior beings. In order to create a more inclusive theory of emotional labor—one that fully incorporates the weight of emotional labor, how it is performed in various environments, and how social identity contributes differently to how and when emotional labor is performed, we must keep the many previous examples from earlier chapters fully in mind.

Systemic Racism, Racial Framing, and Emotional Labor

For black flight crews, they are faced with the difficult task of managing their emotions and the emotions of others they come into contact with. Outside of this emotional labor, there are those expectations provided by the company and passengers that dictate and confine the methods in which emotions are performed. For instance, in their research on pilots in the airline industry, Hansen and Oster (1997) note that "the most effective flight crew performance is associated with captains who exhibit both high achievement, motivation, and interpersonal skill. The least effective crew performance is associated with captains who are below average in achievement motivation and have a negative expressive style, such as complaining" (145). These dimensions of personality

as developed by psychologists, place African Americans in the position of limiting their complaints against racist and other inappropriate expressions and discriminatory actions by those they are in close contact with. Even as this method of self-inventory has been used by several airlines and military personnel to determine successful flight crewmembers (Hansen and Oster 1997), many of those participating in this project went against this idea of limiting complaints and challenged white expressions, but often did so within the cultural boundaries of the industry.

Emotions in White Spaces

There is a contextual reality to emotions and emotional labor that we should not separate from the institutional processes that govern them. Here, I juxtapose emotions and emotional labor within the confines of historically and contemporary white spaces. In these contexts, there are emotion norms that have developed, and the structural organizations of these institutions have allowed them to persist. In her extensive work on emotions, Peggy Thoits (2004: 360) notes that feeling norms "indicate the range, duration, intensity, and/or targets of emotions that are appropriate to *feel* in specific situations." With the performance of emotional labor, Hochschild (1983:56) conceptualized feeling rules as guiding "emotion work by establishing a sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges." Together, feeling and emotion norms are embedded processes that are subject to rules and control. Thoits (2004:360) provides a deeper understanding of the contextual significance of feeling norms and posits:

> Because emotion norms (like all norms) are social constructions, they will vary in content over time, cultures, and contexts, both reflecting and sustaining the

social structures in which they develop…. Because emotion rules (like all rules) are learned, children and adults undergo emotional socialization and are subject to pressures to conform….Because individuals are motivated to seek approval and avoid sanctions, they will hide, transform, or otherwise manage emotions that occasionally violate, emotional expectations….Such efforts at emotional conformity have social consequences…Because some individuals fail to obey emotion norms, 'emotional deviants' will be labeled, stigmatized, and subjected to social control, or under some conditions, they may become agents of social change.

As some social science literature continues to examine specific feeling rules, norms, and emotional expectations, much of the literature treats the context of emotion norms and rules as contemporary manifestations of difference, not as a result of longstanding *structural* inequality. For instance, as much of the literature examines how feeling rules and expectations vary by race and/or gender, it should also be contextualized that these differences are a direct consequence of systemic inequality. Indeed, the gendered component of emotions and feeling rules have become a part of workplace assumptions placing women largely in positions to do "people work" in part "because of existing assumptions about men's and women's emotionality: specifically, that women excel in emotional labor calling for the suppression of negative emotional displays and the presentation of positive emotions, while men are better suited to the opposite" (Erickson and Ritter 2001: 148). Listed as one reason many occupations remain segregated by gender, service occupations fit well in these analyses. Only recently has social science literature begun to incorporate how emotions and feeling rules differ by racial/ethnic identity in a variety of settings (*see* Pierce 1995; Kang 2003, 2010; Moore 2008; Wingfield 2008, 2010).

Acknowledging that there are feeling norms in particular work spaces, such as institutionally white spaces, calls for a deeper analyses of these norms by first understanding the spaces in which they develop. In this, the acuity of normative feeling rules are governed by well-established hegemonic ideas of white middle-class male and female emotions. In her work on emotional labor in professional settings, Wingfield (2010) introduces the idea that emotions and emotion norms created in many white settings have developed within a culture in which white middle-class norms dictate this normativity. For black professional workers in this setting,

> the racial dynamics of the workplace (and of the larger society) make it more difficult to adhere to the feeling rules that are equally applied to workers of all races; and perceived that black workers are held to different emotional standards than their white colleagues…Instead of being neutral, black professional workers experience feeling rules as largely racialized in ways that constrain their available avenues for emotional expression (Wingfield 2010: 256).

The idea here is that some emotional expressions are deemed inappropriate based on the *actor* performing the emotion, not necessarily the emotion itself. In many professional and historically white environments such as the flight deck and aircraft, the emotional expressions of anger and frustration are often granted to those whites in positions of authority, but African Americans in these environments note they are not to show anger under any circumstances, leading to the idea that some emotions are marked for "whites only" (Wingfield 2010). In spite of the insidious experiences African Americans face in white workspaces when they represent only token numbers, there are restrictions on how emotional labor is performed, but the bigger question is why.

Angry Black People: Stereotypical Notions of Black Emotions

As I mentioned in the earlier accounts of African American flight crewmembers, they encounter both blatant and subtle racism and sexism that contribute to emotional expressions of anger and frustration. Yet within the confines of the aircraft, they are prevented from expressing anger though that is the emotion they directly experience. Take for instance the following account by Darnell as he discusses the emotion of anger and frustration,

> I try to voice my opinions and give my information in the calmest way that I can because I don't want them to think that I am the angry black man and be afraid cause then they will tell on me. White guys will tell me; 'You can't present yourself as the angry black person.' If you are not just accepting how everything is – everything they do, everything they say, everything that's American, i.e. white—and you speak about it too much then you remind them of what they see on TV. You are just angry – angry for no reason.

Martin noted a similar encounter with expressing emotions such as anger,

> You can't be seen as having angry black man syndrome.
>
> [Which is what?]
>
> Every time your emotions are being—some people take greater offense if they've never been ordered or told to do something by a woman or a person of color. And since our industry is mostly white, there are a lot of white people that's never been told what to do by a black person. And so you tell them what to do and they question it and it's not really their job as a First Officer to question everything you do, especially when it's pertaining to safety or the access of flight and then you realize they're not questioning it because your decision making is bad, they're questioning it just because you're black… Even when they are wrong you can't be angry. Because what are the passengers gonna expect from you when you confront someone like that? They're gonna think that oh sooner or later the head is gonna shake, the fingers gonna point, you gonna start showing black angry tendencies. And then you might actually scare the passengers cause now you're a black angry man—even though you're not even 6 feet tall you've completely overshadowed everybody and they get scared so.

In these two accounts, both of these male pilots understand the implications for expressing anger in the workplace. Often faced with the all too familiar racial perspectives of their white colleagues (not to mention passengers), they are hindered by the societal reputation of being black and expressing anger. Even in these cases, these pilots understand that there is an explicit connection with black male anger and "danger" and these pilots connect this with the stereotypical notions of black masculinity. In these cases, whites are granted the freedom to question and attack these pilots, but many of these black pilots have learned through a variety of sanctions that their voices, frustrations, and cases of ill treatment are not heard or valued.

Because emotion norms do not explicitly acknowledge or factor in social identity and status, whites attempt to reify their beliefs about African American emotional expressions. These negative emotional ideologies are not limited to black males, but there is a gendered component when examining the differences between male and female flight crewmembers. For instance, one female pilot noted "I have to suppress my emotions when I am flying with someone that is a jerk. I always try to play the very safe card. That's how I am at work. I cannot be that black female that's very vocal."

One can imagine the emotional aspects of suppressing emotions of anger against racial affronts and the emotional labor that accompany these events. These flight crewmembers often note that though they experience anger as a real and appropriate emotion, they are not granted the ability, like their white counterparts, to openly express anger even when they feel it is justified. As part of the normative structures of the aircraft, whites have a normative ability to openly and often angrily discuss the various

problems they have with people of color without fear of verbal retaliation. This suggests that in these white spaces, because they are developed and maintained as such, those that counter this perspective are seen as the problem—not racist expressions or the white actors. This raises the significant question—in institutionally white spaces, are racism, prejudice, and discrimination normative? Consider that many whites (passengers and coworkers) openly and freely express their negative ideologies of African Americans as well as angrily argue against black entry into the industry. What is the consequence for them?

Many of the comments in the pilots' accounts herein suggest an awareness of the stereotypical images of African Americans found in mainstream society (Feagin 2010) and in the workplace. Here, these ideologies prohibit these black flight crewmembers from expressing anger for fear of serious reprimand. One aspect of white framing places people of color, specifically African Americans, in the position of dealing with the negative stereotypical imagery surrounding them as dangerous. Through the mainstream media and other socialization agents, the ideology of black anger as problematic and pathological has persisted and infiltrated the workplace and other public spaces.

Recall earlier the discussion of emotion and feeling norms that have developed and persisted in society and the workplace. The experiences of these black flight crewmembers with everyday racism place them in a position in which what they feel is contrary to what they are in many cases allowed to show. In developing this further, this research suggests that *racism* and the expressions of racism in these white spaces are aspects of the normative structure of this particular work culture and environment. In

these cases, African Americans are seen as "the problem," not the highly discriminatory actions of the white actors. Anger as an emotion is largely connected to masculinity and masculine jobs (Lively 2000; Pierce 1995), but anger, and the ability to show it is limited to white males in the workplace, not African American males within the same space (Wingfield 2010). The transparency in white emotion norms does not translate into appropriate emotion norms for African Americans in this environment. Their emotion norms in this environment involve *suppression* of anger for fear of retaliation. As Thoits (2004) terms those that fail to comply with emotion norms "emotional deviants." Being such a deviant in these settings is a much bigger problem for these African American flight crewmembers. Even when complying with conventional emotion norms, their very presence is seen as an anomaly in this space. Therefore, their emotions and their identity as black Americans are frequently outside of the normative structures of the airline industry, causing many emotions attached to them to be seen as deviant emotions. Consequently, this reaffirms the aircraft as white space and the manifestation of white racism as normative. Those that go against this ideology are punished, not racism. In this space, whites (not people of color) have the institutional wherewithal to develop emotion norms deemed appropriate for African Americans—those emotions being passivity, conformity, and deference.

The Consequence of Anger

When placing this in the perspective of emotional labor, African American flight crewmembers have come to understand (but not necessarily accept) that racism is a part of the job. This is not to state that they are in agreement with racism or white racial

expressions, but they are aware of the costs of speaking up against it. Take for instance

the following account by a young pilot, Michael,

> You know, I've been evolving. I remember the first experience I had with that. I pretty much told him how I felt about it. And a lot of them [Captains], especially with race… you can't deny you got the race factor, you tell them how you feel about it well, you have to take it to account that they aren't use to hearing it, they're use to kind of barking out some of it but they're not use to getting some of it back; even though it's not disrespectful or anything…you not cussing anybody out or anything or yelling or anything. But they don't take too kindly to you telling them anything.
>
> I remember the first experience I had with that, I told the guy how I felt about it. And at that point he tried to apologize: "I thought about it yesterday and I was wrong." and I said 'it's cool'…We finally got it kinda worked out where I was like alright, put it all aside start over from here. The rest of the trip was pretty much non-eventful or uneventful. At the end of the trip we kinda said hey sorry about everything; shook hands, let bygones be bygones, just kind of all is said and done. Well I thought all was said and done, a few weeks later I get a notice to appear to the chief pilots' office and to bring a union rep because it might result in termination. And so I'm like what can this be about? What did I do, okay who did I fly with? I'm really pissed off, so I'm thinking, thinking, thinking, and I'm thinking John… no I mean we got into it but he pretty much agreed that everything was cool…Sure enough when I went to go talk to the chief pilot, and he asks me why I think I'm here and I told him. And to make a long story short, they just called me in to find out my side of the story and find out what happened and to tell me how *I* can better avoid this stuff in the future.
>
> [What exactly had that guy reported on you, do you know?]
>
> He turned the computer screen around and he showed me the report he wrote. Something to the effect that I was not respecting the Captain's authority and I was trying to undermine his authority or something like that. That is why I understand that you have to be careful of what you say. I had told him that I had never felt so disrespected in my life and he put a different spin on it to the chief pilot. Like he said, 'he hasn't been around long enough to say he has never felt so disrespected in his whole life.' He said I was trying to undermine his authority and that I need to understand this is not a democracy and that I need to understand that what he says goes!
>
> [Why do you think he took such offense to that?]

> Still a lot of people, because of their own personal egos, take offense to that [telling them something back]. And I've had people say stuff like 'you're really aggressive,' and I think that's kind of a racist—that whole you're acting really aggressive! Folks say that when they get intimidated or what-not. It's like no I'm just letting you know I don't appreciate what you just pulled and if that's how you want to spin it, you know, go right ahead. You know when I get mad now days and think about telling somebody something, I just think about *all my visits to the office* and it's like you know what, let me think of a better way to do this so I don't end up back in the office trying to explain it and why I got into it with somebody, you know. I just think about the consequences.

In this account, it is clear that frustration and anger are real emotions that are felt in performing the job when encountering those that are racially insensitive, yet they are also emotions that carry a different consequence for the African Americans experiencing them. They have come to understand that there is a cost to expressing emotion, even though many encounters call for an angry expression. One such cost is to be reprimanded even when they are speaking against racist behaviors. In this account, there was no mention of the white captain engaging in racial language being called into the office nor was there mention that the captain would be asked what *he* could do to ensure this never happens again. This assumption places the responsibility of managing and suppressing emotions solely on the African American pilot being offended and disrespected. This is truly a sort of *forced* conformity that African Americans contend with. Note here the social reproduction of racism and privilege in white institutional spaces. Racism and white privilege is socially reproduced at the micro-level through the actions of white workers through their attacks of black flight crews, but it also socially reproduced at the structural macro-level when those higher-ups *backed* up the discriminatory behavior of whites.

In her work on emotional labor, Hochschild (1983: 173) states,

When a man expresses anger it is deemed 'rational' or understandable anger, anger that indicates not weakness of character but deeply held conviction. When women express an equivalent degree of anger, it is more likely to be interpreted as a sign of personal instability…That is, the women's feelings are seen not as a response to real events but as reflections of themselves as 'emotional' women.

Moreover, Hochschild (1983: 174) goes on to state,

Given this relation between status and the treatment of feeling, it follows that persons in low-status categories—women, people of color, children—lack a status shield against poorer treatment of their feelings. This simple fact has the power to utterly transform the content of a job…A day's accumulation of passenger abuse for a woman differs from a day's accumulation of it for a man.

The emotional puzzle facing women in the workplace should also be applied to people of color on the aircraft, specifically when encountering racism. Much of the authority granted men in the masculine occupation of pilot is not inclusive of people of color, but is indeed limited to white-male masculinity. In these white spaces, retorts against the racial framing of black Americans is intolerable—intolerable in everyday interactions between coworkers and passengers as well as from those in higher positions of authority. Factoring in the longstanding exclusionary practices of the airline industry and the institutional structures that were in place to protect these racialized processes, a clear path of socially reproduced notions of the aircraft as "white" persists through the subordination of black emotional labor.

Many of the pilots in this project noted concerns of the consequence of speaking out too loudly against racial prejudices and discriminatory behavior. Noting that the nature of racism is such that it is more difficult to prove, they also note that there is

much in the way of *energy* involved in filing claims. For instance, when one pilot

discussed a flight he had with other pilots he noted,

> I flew with one of the biggest assholes in the company this one time and the thing is, I'd never heard of him but on the way back he started talking racial questions and topics. And I just maintained, you know, guys are guys, just like we're talking about now. We landed in Houston on the redeye. I'm leaving, the chief pilot, senior chief pilot, came up to the group, and I was telling him, Chris was pretty, you know—cause he knew I was flying with him and he was interested to see how it went. I didn't know what was going on with the big picture at that time. And I said we had a good trip and stuff and this and that, we did kind of talk about, you know, some of the racial implications of, you know, why it was black pilots were recently getting hired and all this kind of junk, and went on with my business. Two weeks later, the head of human resources calls me up: Chris filed a charge against me, said that I called him a nigger. That *I* had called *him* a nigger.
>
> [[Was he a black guy?]] No, he was a white guy!
>
> Now I write it all out, dropped it off, go in for the hearing. I had the union present, the union rep, and I had 17 other crewmembers that had problems with him. And he was just sitting there and they just kept slapping him on the hand. He wasn't in any trouble.

In this account, this pilot was faced with being reported for using a racial epithet against

a white male colleague. Consider the amount of time involved to contact the union,

formulate a case, attend a hearing, and await the results only to find that this person was

not punished for making false claims (or for using racially derogatory language). Also

here, we have to account for wages and time lost due to the time involved in formulating

a case. This pilot was also subjected to the understanding that there is not a negative

consequence involved in using racial epithets on the job. Moreover, several

crewmembers in this project noted that to file claims and make open complaints can

mean the end of your career in some respects. One pilot in his discussion of facing

racism noted, "You can't let it depress you, you can't let it bring you down, you can't

even bring it to the company's attention most the time cause they're not gonna

understand. They're probably gonna look at you like a problem child or you're trying to

start a history to file suit. So you don't even bring it to their attention." Here it is

instructive to recall the earlier chapter on pilots, where those that spoke against

mistreatment did in fact lose jobs, particularly the one pilot who, upon looking at himself

in the mirror with his uniform on, knew he would never have the opportunity to wear it

at work. Indeed, after speaking against mistreatment, he was "let go," confirming the

social reproduction of micro-level of racism and privilege through institutional

enforcement.

Dealing with racism inside and outside of the workplace poses a challenge for

people of color due to the systemic and persistent nature of racism in American society.

For these black flight crewmembers, much of what is experienced outside of the job

becomes a large aspect of what they face while on the job. Placing this in context, there

is no visible escape provided in this context—they cannot leave the situation, they are

not supported by those in positions of authority, and they are sanctioned for speaking

against racism. The tacit assumptions of white superiority remain firmly in place in this

industry through the reaffirmation of white male normativity in the flight deck. Though

some would say that not speaking against these racial affronts enhances the existing

white structures, here it is important to showcase how racism persists in white spaces

through the individual and institutional silencing (and punishing) of black voices. Again,

workplace and other social conformity in these cases are not merely a choice—it is often forced.

By outlining normative structures of feeling and emotions in the workplace, this section introduces the idea that African Americans are in the unsettling position of being "outsiders" within this structure. Represented and seen largely by their racial identity, the normative emotions provided by a (white) masculine status is not provided to these people of color even when they occupy positions of authority on the aircraft. Indeed not only are their emotional expressions of anger and frustration seen as a problem, truly they, as African Americans and their presence on the aircraft is seen as the problem. In this section, it is important to clearly show that there are consequences involved when there is nonconformity to feeling rules. As we move into a broader conceptualization of emotional labor, recall how many encounters based on racial and gender identity are deeply intertwined with the company expectations of engaging in emotional labor. Also significant are the ways in which black emotional labor is hindered through the social reproduction and institutional backing of white framed norms, workplace rules, and methods of expressing emotion.

The Emotions of Systemic Racism and Sexism

As we saw in chapters IV and V, and in the discussion immediately above, the connections between racial experiences and systemic racism contribute to emotions and emotional labor. Historically white institutions often present racial climates that are "replete with gendered racism, blocked opportunities, and mundane, extreme, environmental stress" (Smith, Hung, and Franklin 2011). This environment is also

complete with feeling and institutional norms that keep African American flight

crewmembers in positions of performing emotional labor outside of what is expected

when performing the job. Much of the emotional labor performed in this industry occurs

in interactions between coworkers and are based considerably on racial and gendered

identity. Many in this project confirm their knowledge that they understand this to be

part of the job—an aspect they wish would dissipate.

In this section, I introduce a deeper understanding of the emotional processes that

take place in the performance of emotional labor. By combining those existing aspects of

emotional labor and dimensions of systemic racism, the interconnectivity of emotional

labor and identity introduce the notion that "who we are" cannot be separated from the

amount of emotional labor we perform. Much of this is not considered in professional

settings to account for the performance of emotional labor. Indeed, within the airline

industry, emotional labor is just considered a necessary part of the job occurring between

crewmembers and interactions with passengers. But, this view misses the astonishing

amount of emotional labor performed in interactions with passengers and coworkers that

is based on salient racial and gender identity factors that cannot be changed. For these

African Americans performing in historically white spaces, operating and performing

emotional labor in a space that constantly reminds them that they do not "fit" is

daunting.

Emotions in Context: The Cumulative Dimension

There is a *painful* reality to experiences of racial prejudice and bias in

interactions in the workplace. Carving out a safe space within the confines of the aircraft

is an aspect of work not granted to African American flight crewmembers. In addition to racist experiences, flight crewmembers in this project noted that they often had the awareness that they were the *only* African American on the entire aircraft and often felt "trapped" (at 30,000 or so feet). In this, there was this silent acknowledgement that they were alone, contributing to those feelings of isolation and alienation. This is one aspect of working in white spaces that is often taken for granted by others in these environments and in management. Even in these silent, personal observations, there is a certain amount of emotion work that takes place to prepare for the possibilities of what is to come. Indeed, there is a deep connection between private feelings and the performance of emotional labor that should also be included in the analysis of emotions.

Recall the daily interactions in the workplace that face African American pilots and flight attendants. Many interactions that occur in the workplace are based on preconceived notions of black Americans found within the white racial frame. The consistent interactions in the workplace, based on skin color and gender, are integral parts of systemic racism—parts that contribute to the (in)stability of workplace relationships. The emotions that are produced as a result of racialized and gendered interactions go beyond performing emotional labor as a commodity, but should also be understood from the personal emotional labor that results from interactions based on things that cannot be changed. Much of the emotional labor performed by flight crewmembers involve a tacit understanding that even if their behavior is altered to reflect the dominant feeling norms and culture in the workplace, there are still those unalterable aspect that cause them to stand out.

When examining emotional labor in the workplace, it has to be understood that much of what crewmembers face in their interactions with passengers and coworkers cannot be viewed as a unique experience occurring at only *one* specific time. There is a cumulative emotional experience that is built into emotional labor that is based on events over time in the workplace. Consider in those interactions in the previous chapters the words of flight crews when they noted that particular situations happen "all the time" or "on a regular basis." Though each encounter represents a particular place in time, they also *accumulate* to create a distinctive experience in the workplace. Take for instance the following emotionally charged account by Charles, a senior pilot, as he discusses his experience with being overlooked as captain in the flight deck,

> I mean that happened [not given the paperwork] and I was like, Call him back here! Then, I said, where is my paper work? I didn't receive any paperwork! I mean, I make them squirm…You are not gonna piss down my throat. This is my goddamn airplane and I *earned* the right to be here and I'll be goddamn I'm gonna let you come here and degrade my position that I've earned.

> I know that sounds harsh to say and think like that but you have to understand…It has been *twenty years* and I have gone from being in the military to being an officer to flying jets and each step along the way has been *excruciatingly* painful.

As evidenced in this account, Charles notes that his experiences have been excruciatingly painful suggesting that it is not only this instance that is bothersome, but the entirety of those things he faced on his journey to become a commercial pilot. In perceiving that his treatment towards those deeming him invisible to be "harsh," he also directly connects this harshness to the collective racial experiences he endured throughout his *twenty year* tenure to become a pilot. Too in this account, there was a

very real and observable aspect of pain and frustration as he attempted to personally explain to me his tactics. In stating, "you have to understand," Charles engages in emotional labor with me as a method to comfort and ease my perceptions of him, his tone, and the fact that he was pointing his fingers at me and pounding the table with his other fist. It was also a method of saying that his emotions were justified and should be heard.

Those participating in this project also discuss the connections between racialized encounters and both physical and psychological wellbeing. Ranging from "physical exhaustion" to replaying encounters "over and over," these flight crewmembers in their encounters face countless interactions based on flawed assumptions about them and their culture. As Tina, a female pilot explains in a recent interaction with a white coworker, "It really wasn't enough to just offend me to *sickness in my stomach* but it was like…there are people that in their ignorance don't know any better…They only know the stuff they see on television." Sam connected racialized experiences with illness in the following way,

> Seriously, I don't have time for the bullshit because I look at it and I weigh it all and I say in the grand scheme of things, how is this going to affect my life? Are their words going to affect my life tomorrow? May I think about it maybe later, yeah I may think about it, maybe I'll think 'I should have said this or said that' but the reality of it is, 'well what would have been the result of that?'
>
> [Why do you think you ignore it?]
>
> You can make a big deal out of it but you're not going to beat it (breathes out deeply)…Well because there's not a lot of 'me' in this industry and some people are ignorant. Usually I don't have the time to worry about it. *If I really took it to heart and gave time to think about it, I would be calling in sick and hardly ever coming to work if really took it to heart.*

In these accounts, the various emotional experiences of dealing with racialized encounters are in the forefront and can vary according to the context in which it occurs. Both encounters are representative of the emotional build-up experienced when working in white spaces. Though some encounters are subtle in nature, there is still an emotional "sting" that comes from the interpretation of events as being based on racial identity (Wang, Leu, and Shoda 2011). Tina also brings to light the physical connections to racially insensitive encounters. Though she believes no real harm was intended in the interaction that caused her to have sickness in her stomach, the consequential effects were present nonetheless. In these cases, it is important to connect the repetitive nature of experiencing racism and the emotional consequence that follows. Positions as pilot or flight attendant in this environment provides the added stress to black flight crews that result from threatened, perceived, and actual racism in the workplace (Smith, Hung, and Franklin 2011).

The daily and cumulative effects of racialized experiences have been conceptualized as microaggressions. "Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, and Esquilin 2007: 271). As mentioned in previous chapters, these racial microagressions contribute to the daily amount of emotional labor performed by these crewmembers in their interactions with others as well as the amount of emotion management that results from the managing of one's own emotions in interactions. Recall too the interactions

detailed in the previous chapters on racialized encounters. In these cases, the emotional severity of encountering both subtle and blatant racism in the workplace is to the detriment of these African American flight attendants and pilots. The severity of these experiences to crewmembers is also apparent in the easy recollection of specific locations in which racist incidents occur. Imagine the often silent suffering endured by these crewmembers when faced with racial encounters. Sandy, a senior flight attendant discusses her emotions in the following way,

> I don't know. I don't know if they made me cry because they hurt my feelings or if I cry because I was so angry and you want to just tell them, "Shut the fuck up. I don't give a fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck." I don't care. I get paid a descent wage but other than that I would get fired and tell you to go fuck yourself. But you can't say that but you want to.

The amount of anger in this excerpt suggests that there is a heavy internal dialogue that takes place as a result of interactions in the workplace. The idea that she wants to say these things, but feels she can't is indicative of the amount of internal angst these flight crewmembers face in addition to the demands of workplace emotional labor. In this account, Sandy notes that she cries, yet is not sure why but connects them to anger and/or hurt feelings. The reality of racism is that it is painful and takes "pieces of self" away from those having to endure it. Again, there are not many avenues available in this work space that lends to venting. In addition to the inability to vent while on the aircraft, many of the respondents note that they usually wait until the conclusion of a trip to speak to others about racial incidents, suggesting the longevity in which black flight crews are *forced to carry and relive racial interactions.*

Positive Emotions in the Workplace

As we have clearly seen, Black flight crews engaged in emotional labor based on racialized and gendered interactions in multiple ways. One particular way came through the creativity in which these flight crewmembers chose to highlight those positive interactions with passengers and coworkers to offset the negative and often hostile interactions they had based on race and/or gender[9]. Notably, when I asked about positive incidents on the aircraft, pilots specifically identified interactions with passengers as a way to indicate that all experiences with passengers were not negative. This form of emotion work provided them with an outlet to express why they continue to endure the daily battles they often face on the aircraft and in the terminal. Not to mention, many of these crewmembers, specifically pilots, have dreamed of flying airplanes for an extended period of time. For example, Robert, a young pilot recalled several encounters that stand out to him in the following way,

> But, I can always go home and forget about that stuff when a seventy or eighty year old black woman comes up and just tells you that she is proud of you. She doesn't know me, but they say, 'Excuse me young man I'm so proud of you. You just keep doin' whatever you're doin.' I'll show up to work and deal with those racist folks any day just to make the woman that probably went through hell growing up—a hell I can't even imagine—just to make her smile.

This young pilot juxtaposes his racist encounters in the workplace with those of older African Americans enduring a racist past that in many ways he cannot connect to. In this, this young pilot notes that dealing with racism is worth it in reference to those that

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[9] After having discussions of racist encounters, pilots specifically wanted to point out those positive interactions in order to soften racial incidents. Ironically, when asked of positive experiences, all pilots noted interactions with other African Americans.

have endured many more hardships in their lifetimes. The painful reality of racism is one

that connects history with contemporary experiences of racism. Robert does not discount

his racist experiences in the workplace, but notes that it is for the purpose of continuing

to fight, not only for him, but for those that have come before him as well as those to

come after. Another young pilot, Phil noted similar experiences the following way,

> I've had it happen not actually on the plane but I've actually had it in the airport
> where people have come up to me and shaken my hand, asked how old I was and
> what was my name. It's mostly likely men…It's 100% minorities that do that but
> most of them have been men, about 80% of the people that have done that have
> been men.
>
> [[Black men?]]
>
> Yes.
>
> [[Why do you think they do that?]]
>
> Because they're proud. They're proud to see someone of their race in an industry
> that is dominated by white men. And that makes me feel so proud. I had a black
> guy that was a veteran and he almost broke down in tears and he just kept
> shaking my hand with both his hands. He was a really old guy and he said, 'I
> remember when you weren't up there….you weren't up in the front—they
> wouldn't let guys like us in the front. It is so good to see you up there.' I was so
> proud and I walked around with my chest poked out for the rest of the day.

In both accounts, there is a bigger connection vis-á-vis black passengers and

pilots of a shared and collective history of the reality of oppression. This reciprocal

encouragement occurs in this environment because of the reality of the racial

demographics of the industry and because of a shared knowledge of racism. In these

accounts, passengers encourage black pilots through expressing "pride." Resistance and

coping in these cases is done on both parts, through an understanding of the painful past

of those elder passengers and through passengers encouraging pilots to stay strong. This

gives them the desire and strength to endure what happens in the workplace. The idea here is that their progress is bigger than them—through individual accomplishments, black progress is something that is shared.

While conducting research on the experiences of black flight crews, respondents express gratitude toward those passengers that encourage them in their jobs. For these pilots, these small interactions contribute greatly to their emotional wellbeing and give them the ability, "even if only for a moment" to continue working. Much like those whites that recognize black pilots and call them out through deplaning or exclusion, black passengers also recognize them and as one pilot notes, "make a b-line to the cockpit to shake my hand." This is an aspect of coping through the recognition that they do not experience racism alone, and this gives them the desire to continue to resist racial oppression.

Emotional Labor Revisited: Chapter Summary

In this section, I briefly revisit the theoretical foundation of emotional labor. Largely developed by Arlie Hochschild (1983), I suggest that the existing theory should incorporate the interconnectedness of systemic racism, white framing, emotional labor, and the context of the environment in which interactions occur. Because the airline industry represents an organization in which gendered (and racialized) occupations are present, this atmosphere provides a great lens through which to analyze emotional labor and it is within this context that emotional labor and emotion management will be examined.

As defined by Hochschild, emotional labor is "labor requiring one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others—in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe space" (Hochschild 1983:7). Emotion management, on the other hand, focuses on controlling private emotions for personal benefit. Emotional labor is performed in a work setting and is directed towards others, while emotion management is performed in any setting as a part of daily life, but is usually done in private settings where there is use value (Hochschild 1983; Peterson 2006). In this conceptualization, there are distinct differences between emotional labor and emotion management and how/when they should be performed. In the context of work, specifically for black flight crews, they engage in various amounts of emotion work and emotional labor simultaneously.

As I discussed in this chapter, there are aspects of feeling rules and emotion norms that are specific to particular work environments. Indeed, various institutions will have different feeling rules according to the structure of particular environments. In this, emotional labor and emotion management should incorporate the typology of the work environment as one aspect of examining emotion work and labor. Here, this will allow for a deeper understanding of emotional labor and the extent to which it is performed and regulated for and by different workers. In the case of black flight crews, the typology of the airline industry and the aircraft is one that has developed overtime to structurally incorporate white normative structures of emotions and emotion performance. This contributes to the various ways in which people of color in these environments can and "do" emotion work. Second, because there are pre-existing

emotion and feeling norms, emotional labor will be performed differently by those deemed "outsiders" because they are not within the normative "prototype" of the environment. Finally, even though emotional labor is performed within occupational boundaries and manipulated by management, this occupational environment inherently places differing regulations on how emotional labor is performed and monitored. Moreover, because this particular environment is structured around white cultural and feeling norms, people of color in these environments experience "hyper regulation" of emotion work—they are under the microscope of the organization and customers, but their emotion work is also regulated by coworkers. Even in occupations where people hold "equal job status," intervening factors of gender and race demand different amounts of emotional labor and the manner in which it is performed.

Foremost, emotional labor is contextual in that the environment itself calls for a specific type of emotional labor. Both positions represent gendered occupations but they are also racialized occupations. In the case of flight attendants, Hochschild (1983) noted that males are granted a special power and authority simply because of their masculinity in a female environment and because of the social power afforded males. Pilots on the other hand represents a masculine occupation, but females, because of their social position as women would not be afforded the same authority when entering this environment. Missing here is how racial/ethnic identity can increase or reduce authority and power in both occupational positions when coupled with gender identity. For instance, recall the experiences with black male flight attendants and how their authority was challenged by passengers and coworkers. This experience was altogether different

from the white males included in Hochschild's analysis. In this particular environment, though they have masculinity, which provides a level of power in female occupations, they are also black males, which reduce masculine power to one of racialized difference in white female occupations. For black female flight attendants also experience differential treatment based on what is perceived as white "femininity" versus what womanhood represents for black females. There is a similarity between the experiences of black male and female flight attendants because of what gendered racism brings to interactions.

For pilots, though considered a masculine occupation, black males in this environment contend with gendered racism and white framing in that much of what is perceived about black identity is counter to the "expectations" of the job. An occupation requiring high skill sets, levels of education, and training, is outside of the scope of the racial ideology surrounding African Americans as a group. Because of this, white females and African Americans find themselves faced with the added pressure of performing these duties while fighting the stereotype of pilot as white male only. Because of this, the first aspect of understanding emotional labor and emotion management should be from the perspective of understanding the dynamics and structures of particular occupations and the foundation from which they are built. In this, there are levels of social power and prestige granted or constrained based on social identity. Even though the industry has changed considerably since the 1960s through a variety of legal means, the understanding of emotional labor in particular white spaces cannot be examined as though it is free-floating apart from this history, culture, and

structure —for this misses the significance of the foundational and therefore structural significance that has led to the current picture.

Those African Americans that have entered this industry encounter obstacles with fitting in and fighting a system structured in way that calls for emotional labor but also limits the methods in which this labor is performed. Coinciding with feeling rules and emotion norms, emotional labor and emotional displays are interconnected with perceived expectations based on gender and/or racial identity. These ideologies not only guide interactions, but also limit the path in which emotions are expressed. As masculine identity and therefore emotions of anger are deemed appropriate in specific positions, anger as an aspect of emotion management is not a masculine expression on the job, but a white male expression. Anger expressed by African Americans in this environment is seen as pathological—not a valid emotion to be displayed in the workplace. Moreover, this leads to the idea that though feeling rules are in place, these rules are not applied equally to all. As mentioned in the work of Thoits (2004), those not adhering to the structured feeling rules of an environment are deemed emotional "deviants," here I argue that in the case of the airline industry, even when African Americans adhere to the prescribed emotion norms that are in place, their emotive expressions are classified in such a way that is inherently attached to their identity, therefore classifying not only their emotions as deviant but it classifies them as deviant also.

There are limitations to understanding emotional labor without understanding the development of the industry in which it is performed. As mentioned throughout this chapter, there is a distinct difference in emotional labor performance in the airline

industry that is a result of the how the industry developed and how it is maintained. Differential feeling rules contributes to how emotional labor is performed. With different expectations surrounding different occupational positions, and gender and racial identity, there is a level of power granted to some that is not granted to others. In the organization, all service workers perform some aspect of emotional labor, yet it is monitored differently. Because African Americans experience hypervisibility in this environment, their emotional labor is monitored more closely from management, passengers, and coworkers. In this, emotional labor should be inclusive of the labor performed on the job that comes from interactions based on social identity. It should go beyond of those normative expectations of what is expected to be performed on the job in reference to specific occupations and include the vast amount of emotional labor that is also performed based on racist and sexist interactions. This type of emotional labor, much like the emotional labor sold for a wage, should be included as it is a major aspect of the job for people of color in institutionally white spaces. Emotional labor for African Americans in this environment, and many other white workspaces, remains constant, not something performed occasionally.

African Americans in this environment are subject to emotional regulation through the company as well as from their coworkers. Consider the example mentioned above when the young male pilot was told by a white colleague that "you cannot show yourself as a black angry person," or the accounts in which passengers publicly deplaned at the sight of a black person in the flight deck. What of the case of the flight attendant being called a "colored girl" in front of all passengers on board the aircraft? There is an

inherent power granted to some to control and regulate the emotions of others because the structures of the environment support it. Examples of company regulations come into play through reprimanding black employees that express that they felt "disrespected by white colleagues" by asking the question, "What can *you* do to ensure this does not happen again?" Collectively, there is more than one type of emotional labor involved in service work. There is the emotional labor apparent in dealing with consumers and there is the emotional labor performed to thwart inequality. In these environments, racism done by passengers and coworkers is rarely spoken of from the perspective that it is wrong, but to speak against it is wrong. How can one suppress feeling to produce a proper state of mind when that which causes much discomfort is your identity?

Hochschild (1938: 190) states, "as a culture, we have begun to place an unprecedented value on spontaneous, 'natural' feeling. We are intrigued by the unmanaged heart and what it can tell us. The more our activities as individual emotion managers are managed by organizations, the more we tend to celebrate the life of unmanaged feeling." With the increasing value placed on authenticity, the emergence of the opposite has "fully emerged—the managed heart" (Hochschild 1983:190). What emotional labor in my data shows us is that not everyone is faced with the task of managing their hearts. Indeed, some more than others manage their hearts and the hearts of those around them. In addition, even emotional expressions and how emotional labor is performed is hindered because emotional ownership has been usurped by cultural norms that grant unequal power to whites in this corporate space. What should remain a managed heart becomes a managed life. Yet, within the confines of the aircraft, these

African Americans engage in emotional labor and most do so by understanding the reality of their environments. They understand the reality of racism and know all too well the how to cope with it. Through a variety of coping mechanisms, black flight crewmembers engage in dialectical methods of survival—perform the emotional labor needed for work (and to keep your employment) while maintaining a sense of self.

The data I have presented in this project suggests that emotional labor is much larger than engaging in emotion work in reference to others, but extends the literature in a way that incorporates the structural boundaries in which this type of labor is performed. There is a great deal of differential emotional labor performed when an examination of the context in which emotions and the norms of display are created, structured, and maintained. Indeed, the social reproduction of racism and privilege in this environment contribute to the overarching ways in which individual actors perform emotion work through the institutional backing some versus others receive. This also allows the continual forced conformity and hyper-regulation of emotional labor on workers of color in the workplace. Providing whites with impunity to act in racist ways and the institutional support this behavior receives adds another dimension to emotional labor that can be missed through observation—the added emotional labor of coping and resistance experienced by African Americans in this environment.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMOTIONAL LABOR OF COPING AND RESISTANCE

There is a painful reality to experiencing and resisting racial oppression and there is much emotional labor involved. This form of emotional labor, often invisible and unrecognized by workers and organizations, is marginalized. Working in institutional spaces that reproduce discriminatory behavior at micro and macro levels, one emotional consequence for workers of color is that to be a part of the organization, they have to work excessively hard to engage in active resistance within organizational boundaries. In this chapter, I extend the discussion of emotional labor as an aspect of work by introducing the ways in which African Americans perform emotional labor through resistance in order to negotiate and survive often hostile work environments. This form of emotional labor is an aspect of the job that remains hidden from view, yet it is a form of labor that results from interactions with passengers and coworkers.

In historically white spaces, African American workers contend with the added stressors resulting from both subtle and overt forms of racism (Feagin and McKinney 2003; Smith, Allen, and Danley 2007; Moore 2008). Here too, we must recognize and call-out the pervasive nature of racism in white spaces and the subsequent added pressures of being a minority in particular environments. These forced pressures on workers of color, become a reality through which they heavily rely on emotion work, management, and labor in order to create a counter-narrative in the workplace. Counter-narratives and methods of resistance used by those participating in this project include:

1. Deconstructing white racism
2. Resistance through the defense of "others"

3. Planned and active resistance
4. Going above and beyond
5. Standing up to racism: the denial of white privilege
6. Resistance through networks.

Deconstructing White Racism

Essential to all types of resistance is the ability to deconstruct white

racism. Moving beyond understanding stereotypes, African Americans also note the

reality of racism, and understand that many of the blatant methods used by whites in the

past to express racist beliefs have changed. To formulate an effective counter-narrative,

black flight crewmembers deconstruct race and racism. Throughout the interview

process, I engaged crewmembers in a discussion of why they feel they have problems

with stereotyping and racism in the workplace, one young pilot, Adam gave the

following comment:

> It's hatred…it's uh, they don't want you to have anything. I think a lot of us need to understand that people like that—and this is *not* all white people—but some, they hate you. They have made up in their minds that they hate you. They hate everything about you. They hate you simply because you exist and they don't want you to have anything. I mean, he's [a white captain that recently made negative remarks about him] making twice as much as I was making; he has the captain prestige and he's the boss on the airplane. Yet and still, he hates to see me there and it's as simple as that. No offense, you can get all the sociologists and all these psychologists and stuff to kinda delve into the psyche of what's going on in their head. But, if you want to just keep it simple, it doesn't take a genius to figure this out…they (pause) just (pause) hate (pause) you. We can give them all the facts we want, but they just hate you, they hate to see you. You can tell them that the sky is blue and if it is contrary to their racist views, they will disagree with you because they hate you. That's it.

Foremost, there is a collective understanding that racism is pervasive and exists, albeit

changed in some ways. There is much emotional labor involved in resisting and coping

that occurs primarily as a result of interactions in normatively white workspaces and

society in general. To induce or suppress feeling of comfort in others is not always possible, nor should it be, yet African Americans engage in emotional labor with coworkers and passengers and also within their group. The emotional labor that is produced as a result of racist expression remains constant for these African Americans. They perform this labor to resist racism, and they perform it through the expectation that racialized encounters will occur. Note too the considerable amount of time and energy used to give a careful thought analysis of the persistence of racism. There is also something to be said of the longevity of racist experiences that create a situation in which these young African Americans develop their own theories of white racism. This is not something created momentarily, but developed over time through collective experience.

Thus, one part of this coping is developing a clear understanding of how, when, where, and why whites do the racist behavior that creates the need for emotional labor and resistance. One way that African American flight crewmembers situated resistance was through a collective understanding of the changing nature of racism, and the systemic nature of racist expressions. As one young pilot poignantly states; "I know that racism has changed. It isn't so much in your face now…It's subtle, it's underneath, and it's sneaky…We no longer have to worry about Jim Crow. Now we have to worry about James Crow Jr. Esquire!" This idea of James Crow Jr. Esquire situates the façade of racial equality, available in American discourse, in the forefront. Referencing surface policy changes promoting racial neutrality, those I interviewed in this project posit that with the changing laws and discourse, it is much more difficult to prove the existence of

racism. This creates an altogether different limitation—how do you fight something most deny exists? Take for instance the perspective of Jerome, a senior pilot of thirty years,

> In the past 30 years many things have changed on the surface. As a result of the lawsuits that happened to correct the racial imbalance, companies have tried to maintain a colorblind workforce where they try to keep race out of the equation. This is a good thing *on the surface*, but you are dealing with individuals and individuals are going to be who they are. People still might not like you based on what they see and they might do things to negatively affect you but then you would be hard pressed to characterize that as something associated with race. You really have no provable foundation to say that this was racially motivated. If you did think that, say that, or suggest that, they can come back and say you are paranoid; obsessively paranoid based on race.

While this pilot notes the legal changes that have taken place over the years, he also notes that no real structural change has occurred. These surface changes have also introduced a new white language surrounding making formal complaints about racial discrimination. The idea of blacks as paranoid, complainers that "play the race card" (a common and white-created phrase) has become a prominent white tactic to keep African Americans in their place. In the above assessment of the situation, this young pilot equates white racism to deep-seated feelings of hatred against African Americans. Through collective memories shared with other African Americans and the personal mistreatment experienced on a consistent basis, the realization that hatred is not based on anything you have done, but on who you are, is an emotional challenge requiring much energy.

Because of this, many forms of resistance factor in the new boundaries in which they must engage in a racial dialogue. Recall the common methods of resistance that are

utilized by crewmembers in this project and note there are also boundaries and

limitations that prevented some more than others to engage in open forms of resistance.

Engaging in resistance is contextual in the sense that what can be done in the workplace

is subject to the normative structure of organizations, possible disciplinary action, social

stigma, and backlash. Consider the examples in previous chapters in which black flight

crewmembers recounted the consequences of formally speaking against racism/sexism.

The consequences of engaging in open resistance in many cases can have the

consequence of job loss. Outside of formal complaints, these crewmembers engage in

forms of resistance that fit well within the boundaries of the organizational structure.

There are situational variables that contribute to the likelihood of engaging in active

resistance that often coincide with the severity of the racist incident. Subtle forms of

racism are often met with subtle resistance, and those more blatant forms of racist

expression are often met with active and sometimes public resistance.

Resistance Through the Defense of Others

Much social science research focuses on public and visible activity in resistance,

yet there are many invisible, micro-level methods of resistance that are equally important

(Collins 2000). Many of the more formal, institutional transformations came through

legal proceedings brought against the airline industry in the late 1950s and 60s. Indeed

most in this project credited the black pioneers as paving the way for their ability to fly

on the aircraft and/or serve as flight attendants. Though most are not pioneers in the

sense of filing legal claims against the airlines, many engage in the frontline day-to-day

more personal, private levels of resistance in their interactions with white passengers and

coworkers. The difficulty of resisting racism in an environment that structurally promotes it is one cost to working in the airline industry. Here, the cost of performing emotional labor is one that is not shared equally in the industry, yet it is performed on a regular basis by black flight crews. Consider that "most whites are able to go to work without having to ponder deeply how to relate to others in their workplaces as one of only a few member of their own racial group" (Feagin and McKinney 2003: 51). In this specific environment, whites make-up the racial majority of workers and are supported by a culture and institutional structure that reinforces their dominant cultural ideologies.

Even outside of what it means for passengers to see them on the aircraft, black flight crewmembers actively engage in resistance because of what it means to others currently in the field and also those yet to enter the industry. Consider the example provided in chapter IV when the flight instructor told the young black gentlemen he didn't think they would do a good job because they were black. This pilot countered this ideology and justified doing so in the following way,

> I said what I felt right there. I didn't actually go need to talk to HR or talk to anybody in the office because I told the guy what I thought. He told me he liked to use the N-word. I told him—I looked in his eyes and I told him, 'Don't you *ever* in your life say that around me…you understand!' It was the same when he said he thought we wouldn't do good because we were black—indeed we did. So you need to change your thinking okay… I confront it and move on. *I wouldn't want the guy to get fired.* He has a family to feed, but that kind of thinking is incorrect.

> [So usually to cope with it, you just go ahead and confront it? Why?]

> Because I think that, I think it's going to make a difference for the people coming behind me. He had preconceived notions but he was willing to empty the cup once he met us and saw that we were something different. Hopefully his perception is now changed. If there is a black pilot in the hiring pool, hopefully he won't think he has to lower the bar.

In this account as well as many others, black flight crews continuously expressed that they do think of the possible outcome of the white actor, even though they have expressed racial sentiments. This level of sensitivity, in the idea of "I wouldn't want him to lose his job" is one that is widely shared by African American crewmembers, even if this same sort of humanizing consideration is not granted to them. Black crewmembers also attempt to understand racism from an individual perspective, through their constant note that this is "not all white people." Here, an aspect of coping is done in the attempts to examine racial experiences on a case-by-case basis and not to attribute white racism to cultural pathology. This internal analysis, though seemingly brief in nature, engages emotions of a collective understanding of black experiences in white environments. To engage in emotional labor in this example is evident through the thought processes involved in confronting racist actions, while remaining within the boundaries of white controlled ideas of "professionalism."

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, resistance in structurally white environments can carry significant costs for black flight crews. Much of the emotion work and emotional labor is invisible, yet black flight crews find subtle ways to engage in resistance through the defending of racialized and gendered "others." Because there are gendered stereotypes in place of the African American male as "aggressive and angry," and of black females as "loud and aggressive," they often engage in resistance in ways not to reify white stereotypes of them. One such way they resist racist and sexist talk is through the defending of others. In many cases, white males in the flight deck discuss other racial groups and women in a way that suggests an opportunity to bond

against racial and gendered groups, yet African American pilots see this not as an opportunity to bond, but as a reality of their racial and gender prejudices. In those specific cases in which whites engage in racial discussions, they counter black arguments from the perspective of being "paranoid," taking things too seriously, or the notion that they were not being serious. On the other hand, when discussing other racial groups, intent to engage in racial and gendered discussions is implicit. Bobby, a young pilot uses the following method to insert the absurdity of racial prejudice in the following way,

> I flew with a couple guys who have real stereotypical views on Muslims. And I mean I'm a Christian, but a lot of pilots—there have been two guys specifically that have been outspoken, saying that we should profile Muslims. And being a black man and going through some things coming [growing] up, I'm all against profiling. So their argument was that Muslims are the only one's carrying out terrorist acts or whatever. And I was like, 'Alright, that may be the case lately, or whatever, but if that's the case then we should profile all white men.' They're like 'for what?' I'm like 'for being serial killers.' You know? And he completely looked at me, I was like 'That's how absurd you sound to good Muslim people who are just as upset, if not more upset, about acts or things that have gone on by a few Muslim extremists.

In this particular example, as well as many others presented in Chapter IV, pilots engage in a form of defensive resistance on behalf of others. First, this is done in order to say that discrimination, in any form and against any group is unacceptable. Secondly, this is done because there is an awareness that if whites hold these views of others, they are also likely to hold racist views of African Americans. For instance, when sexist and racist discussions are involved, black pilots often retaliated with, "well men do that too" or "this was Mexico anyway." This active resistance provides the opportunity for black flight crewmembers to speak up against racism and sexism of any kind, while passively

introducing the idea of "that is how absurd you sound." Done in this way, black flight

crews can attack insensitivity because it is not directly connected to them. Again, it is

important to consider the proximity in which these pilots work with one another and the

methods in which African Americans attempt to engage in discussions on race while

seemingly being non-confrontational. To do this, emotional labor is engaged in such a

way as to create a counter-narrative about inequality while suppressing emotion.

Even in those accounts in which white coworkers blatantly ignored white female

captains in the flight deck, African Americans also used this opportunity to correct white

coworkers on their behavior. By stating, "I am not in charge, she is" calls out

inappropriate and disrespectful behavior aimed at women. Though this is something that

was not done for them by their white counterparts, black pilots spoke up against this

simply because it is an injustice, even if not theirs. There is a collective sympathy to

injustice, largely because of the deeply developed understanding that what is aimed at

others—sexism and racial prejudice is also usually aimed at them. For instance, in a

discussion of affirmative action in the flight deck between a white first officer and

captain in which a black male pilot was jump-seating, the captain did not end the

conversation with the first officer when the officer stated, "You know I was flying with

this guy and you know he was one of those guys I could tell got his job from affirmative

action." In this case, the black pilot spoke up by stating,

> I couldn't help it and I had to say something. I said, I told him I was like 'look,
> obviously you don't understand, you're talking to a guy who has been through a
> lot more experiences than you have… you haven't been discriminated on because
> of your race. Yeah you may think affirmative action is reverse racism, but it
> ain't. I don't know the guy you're talking about but I guarantee you, he's been

through a lot more shit than what you've been through. I would respect that!' At that point, the captain changed the subject (laughs)

This account provided an opportunity for resistance. In this particular example, the white first officer used a passive method to talk about race and African Americans in such a way to reference an entire group. The idea here for the black pilot that "he could not take it" and had to speak up also lends to the intensity of engaging in emotional labor to resist racism. For a great deal of time before speaking up, this pilot sat with his head down, "weighing" the costs of speaking up versus not speaking up. This requires much thought, energy, and time to have a cost-benefit analysis in terms of engaging in racial dialogues with white coworkers. Much like the pilot in this case deciding to speak against inequality, many others also resist racism in active ways. In these accounts, an internal discomfort arises from the mistreatment of others that produces frustration and anger. In retort to these emotional expressions, black crewmembers, even to their possible detriment, actively resist oppression.

Because of the way the aircraft is structured, flight attendants and pilots have different opportunities to resist racism. Flight attendants are provided various avenues to resist because the environment is structured in a way that multiple people can observe an interaction that would otherwise be a private event. Pilots on the other hand, often engage in racist dialogues and resistance behind closed doors, in a more private setting in which they have to contend with the "your word against mine" mentality. Much of what happens with flight attendants occurs on the "frontstage" (Goffman 1959). Because of this, resistance is often public.

Active and Planned Resistance

Many pilots and flight attendants engage in active forms of resistance in reference to racist interactions. Active forms can be through ideas of using racism as motivation as well as calling out racist expressions. In chapter V on flight attendants, one such case of active resistance is present in the interaction in which a [white] female passenger proclaimed that she wanted to speak with the "colored girl." In this case, this flight attendant engaged in active resistance to counter the representations of her as "colored" and as "girl,"

> So, I finished my service in front and I got my lipstick on and I went to the back. I started right there at the front of coach cabin and I looked from side to side; I walked all the way back there. And I was saying as I'm going, 'Who wants to talk to the colored girl?' It wasn't no black folks on there but me. And girl, she sitting there with her arms folded and I'm walking all the way back saying, 'Somebody wants to talk to the colored girl; who is it?' And I put my hands on my hips and I'm just kinda going along and I get to the exit row and I said, 'Somebody wants to talk to the colored girl!' I just kinda stood there 'cause I knew it was someone in the exit row. I said, 'Somebody wants to talk to the colored girl; who was it?' Everybody around there had put their head down and I'm looking at the poor lady and she kinda had her head down, but she raised her hand to say that she wanted to talk to the colored girl.
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> I'm thinking to myself how I had not heard that saying in years. So, I look to her and I said, "Now ma'am, before we get to what your problem is, you tell me what color I am. I leaned close to her and said, when I smile, I'm brown. When I'm pissed off, I'm brown. When I die, I'm gonna be brown. So you tell me what color I am." I just went into this whole thing and she was sitting there like, 'Oh my God!'

In this account, the flight attendant used a public forum to resist this form of gendered oppression. By starting at the front of coach cabin and making her way back to the exit row, this flight attendant involved all of those around her to point out the fact that someone used language toward her that is unacceptable. In this, she also reminds all

other passengers that this is not tolerated by introducing what was done privately by one passenger to the entire aircraft. After hearing that the passenger didn't want the flight attendants in back to serve her, this flight attendant says to the passenger, "don't worry, momma gonna give you a good service, just relax." There are several forms of resistance in this example. The black flight attendant resists the position of oppression by lecturing the passenger about the inappropriate use of the description "colored," yet she also relies on gendered resistance to do this. By placing herself in a position of authority (momma) she not only uses the term to note the fact that she disciplined the passenger, but she softened this by referencing herself as mother. This form of resistance is gendered in the sense that this flight attendant relies on her gender as woman (momma) to resist the passengers reference of "girl." It is also important to look deeply at the planning involved in this example of resistance. The flight attendant notes that she finished what she was currently doing, put on lipstick, and proceeded to walk to the back of the aircraft. Inherent in this is the idea that this flight attendant used a good deal of time thinking and replaying the incident in her head before openly confronting the behavior. When looking at gender and resistance, male flight attendants are not often granted the opportunity to confront passengers in a public forum.

Flight attendants also relied heavily on involving others to call out racism. As mentioned from several flight attendants the avoidance of whites to accept drinks from them, most flight attendants countered this by informing the other flight attendants on the aircraft that this particular passenger "does not want anything to drink." This causes those passengers that would not accept beverages from them to account for "why" they

did not want a drink. For instance Linda, a senior flight attendant noted, "When passengers refuse to take a drink I usually point out to the other flight attendant that that person did not want anything to drink so we can move on. If they ask the other flight attendant for something I usually say, 'so you didn't want anything from me?" This causes the passengers to account for the particular behavior and acknowledge the reasons they did not want a drink from the black flight attendant. Other flight attendants rely on similar methods to resist this subtle form of discrimination. As passengers usually feel comfortable expressing they do not want to be served by black flight attendants, flight attendants also use this opportunity to publicly call them on it or "put them on front street" about their behavior. We must look also at the emotions involved in being openly discriminated against. To be denied openly in front of others can cause significant emotional pain and there is much time and energy included in devising plans to counter this behavior within acceptable company boundaries. This invisible emotional labor provides black flight crewmembers with a way to resist racism without causing too much discomfort in others. Apparent here is the consistency in which these interactions, or interactions similar to these, have occurred. Much in their methods of resisting suggests that they have had *numerous* accounts in which to consider and know how they would handle the next one.

Active resistance against racist interactions was also done in those interactions with coworkers. As many flight attendants and pilots recalled openly racist encounters with coworkers, they also spoke of the various ways to handle this. Gwen, a senior flight attendant recalled an interaction in which pilots boarded the late aircraft during a time

they were working on getting coats from first class passengers and demanded coffee (even before making formal introductions). The encounter went as follows,

> So the pilot gets on and he never spoke to me, I don't know if he spoke to Jimmy, but he never spoke to me, and then he asked Jimmy 'is there coffee?' Jimmy said 'Well it's not on but he'll put some coffee on.' So I'm standing near the door and it was about 15 minutes after that, and he's [the pilot] looking at me and shouted, 'IS THE COFFEE READY YET!?' And I just froze right there and piercingly stared. I said 'It's still brewing YET!' and Jimmy's standing there. I said 'Jimmy, does he think I'm Kizzy?' You know, making all these remarks, I didn't do it directly to him because that's when I can get in trouble, but I'm telling Jimmy so that he can hear me. I said 'does he really think I'm Kizzy or something? Am I on the plantation?'

In this account, the reference to Kizzy, a slave character from Alex Haley's 1974 novel, and 1978 miniseries, *Roots* is done in a way to insinuate the fact that the pilot is being demeaning in his yelling at the flight attendants for coffee. Including references to "the plantation" implicitly tells the captain that she is not in a position of servitude, even if he thinks so. This method of resistance was also done in a way as to not directly attack the pilot but allows the flight attendants to openly resist those demands by suggesting she will get him coffee in her own time. There is also a collective involvement present here as she discusses the notion of Kizzy with Jimmy, another black flight attendant. It is in this moment that both flight attendants engage in a form of resistance through the collective understanding of who Kizzy is and what this figure represents.

Flight attendants in this project often relied on active resistance to deal with racism as it happens, specifically when happening with passengers. Gwen stated, "I nip it, I usually nip it right away. Doesn't bother me after." When asked why she does this, she replied, "Just so they can be aware. I feel it's a teaching mechanism. Just in case

you're ignorant of this, and don't know you're doing it, let me let you know." However, while flight crews stated they always attempt to handle racist encounters in "professional" ways, they are not always very successful. In active resistance, those extreme encounters are sometime met with extreme resistance. For instance, one male flight attendant mentioned one encounter in which he was not proud of. "A white lady said she'd spit in my face. I did say, 'Ma'am excuse me, if you spit in my face I'll be spitting back in yours.'"

Going Above and Beyond: Active Methods of Resistance

African American pilots continuously engaged in forms of resistance in which they used racism as motivation to succeed. As one pilot notes, he does his best to perform well because "it ruins their day," most other pilots performed well to show the insufficiency in white perceptions of black skill. To engage in this form of emotional resistance, African Americans spend considerable time devising ways to counter the overarching narrative of the deficiency of black skill. As Donna, a female pilot noted,

> Well, in 2005 we had just started hiring again since September 11th and the [white] captain, after I said hello and introduced myself, he didn't say hi back, he just started saying; 'What's your background; where did you fly before this?' I said, 'I was flying for the guard; I was flying C130's and prior to that, I was a commuter captain.' Then he said, 'Well, the last C130 puke I flew with tried to scare the shit out of me. You know this is not a C130 right?' Now, I'm thinking; you just met me and this is what you're saying to me. So I said, 'Yes, I know this is not a C130; it's a 737 and I'm gonna go do my walk around.' So, I did my walk around and I'm thinking because I was so upset; I guess this is the kind of day we are going to have huh?' I was upset! I came back and he was rude to the flight attendants and he was so obnoxious. By the time we landed, none of the flight attendants were talking to him. I was the only one near him and so I decided I wouldn't talk to him either. When he asked me any questions, I'd answer them and that was it. I didn't hold a conversation with him. When we were flying into Newark, I clicked off the autopilot to hand fly and I was very confident because I'd been hand flying the C130's. So, he starts with the loud

> 'OH GOD HELP US' routine; he was being a wise ass and I'm laughing in my head as I made a *beautiful* landing. I landed and I showed him.

In this case, Donna did not let the negative attitude of the captain stop her hand flying the aircraft but instead took this opportunity to show the pilot that his judgment of her was uninformed. Also, she took great pride in this and noted that she "laughed" in her head as she made a beautiful landing. Instead of disengaging in the interaction, she took an active part in resisting his racist and gendered ideology of her and other pilots. Initially, Donna recalls the negative stereotypes of her abilities and notes that she was "upset" and she spent considerable time thinking of the actions of the captain. Silently engaging in emotional labor, through resisting the attitudes of the captain, Donna provides a way to also provide some satisfaction to herself. Jimmy, a young pilot also noted that he "shows them" his skills by openly resisting racist ideology through skill. He states:

> That's why I out fly them and I find it comical. [I] turn that auto-pilot off and hand fly this bitch. I mean when you just grease a landing in…man. I mean, I hand fly the hell out of a plane.
>
> And so, what fuels that? It's not fear of what someone else thinks or what my Captain might think, it's because I love my job. I think each of us would tell you how lucky we are, how fortunate we are to be doing something that we love and to make a great living doing it. So we're actually very lucky, *but it comes at a high price,* and the price you pay, is in the effort and the time and the determination that you all put forth. And we all do it. We all pay our own cost, we all go through our own hell to wear our wings and now that we're here we're going to work doubly hard to make sure that we stay here. So that's the challenge.

The high cost the pilot mentioned in the above example provides clarity to the amount of time spent resisting racism. Here, it is also important to note that while many have the opportunity to go to work and enjoy the work they perform; it comes at a cost for black flight crewmembers. Much of the pleasure they seek in performing their duties is reduced through their experiences with racism and racial prejudice. Indeed, one common ideology found in interviewing black pilots is the idea that flying is something they have always wanted to do. Yet, much of the desire and comfort received from obtaining goals is stolen through their negative experiences and the ensuing time spent devising strategies to resist it. To "go through hell to wear our wings" is truly indicative of the struggles facing these crewmembers and also lends credence to the emotional energy and labor necessary to succeed.

An aspect of going above and beyond is connected to understandings of the effort and triumph it takes to make it into the industry. Because of this knowledge, African American pilots find ways to engage in emotion work to preserve the intensity and integrity of what they have worked for. In this, they resist negative interactions by preserving their overarching knowledge of what it takes to make it and what it takes to ensure that passengers and coworkers do not have the power to reduce or take away those efforts. This form of resistance is done through the protection of self and position and pilots rely heavily on this method to resist white racism.

Standing up to White Racism

As noted in previous chapters, many passengers often openly exited the aircraft when African American pilots were visible. This painful reality of having others publicly

leave the aircraft should be highlighted as one that is much more than a public act, for it also involves a significant amount of personal emotion management. In these cases, there is also the task of engaging in emotional labor to all those witnessing this interaction. Donna also recounts an experience with a passenger in which the passenger openly attempted to reject her position as captain.

> I have had a lot of rude comments from passengers. But this one time out of Westchester, NY, I had one passenger show up one night and she saw that I was flying the plane and she didn't want to get on. So, I told the gate agents, 'Close the door; I'm getting out of here and she can take the greyhound.' They were getting ready to close the door and she saw that I was serious so she got on.

In this case, Donna called the passenger on her inappropriate behavior by stating that the passenger "can take the greyhound." This form of active resistance was one shared by many black pilots when passengers openly deplaned or refused to enter an aircraft in which they were flying. Another pilot, Tim noted that a passenger deplaned when she "noticed" him in the flight deck. As the captain of the flight attempted to go and try to calm the white female passenger down, the young black first officer noted, "He was going to stop her and I remember me putting my hand on him telling him 'If you stop her, *I'm* getting off this plane too.' If you try to comfort this lady that doesn't want to be on this plane because she saw me, I'm off! So, yeah we got her off the plane and that was it."

In the accounts of Donna and Tim, both took active approaches in resisting racism against passengers. Much like flight attendants, pilots actively find ways to engage in resistance against racist expressions that are both within and outside of the boundaries of the normative culture of the industry. In these active cases, African

Americans resist racism by engaging in emotional labor that allows iteration of main points and principles but in a non-confrontational way. In this, they engage in the emotion work of maintaining a sense of self, while also engaging in emotional labor resulting from the reproduction of racist interactions. Those participating in this project carefully evaluated situations on a case by case basis and found it necessary to actively engage in resistance when they believed the "costs" associated with not openly resisting outweighed those benefits. In this, most noted that if blatant racism was at stake, "they had to speak out against it." In those cases in which passengers openly deplaned, black flight crewmembers also actively and publicly resisted this form of prejudicial treatment by openly denying access to the aircraft. In an earlier chapter on pilots, a female passenger associated the young black pilot with the movie Soul Plane. In return, he notes,

> So I always thought that there are white people out there that don't see us unless they turn on the TV and that's what they see. So she saw Soul Plane and that is her perception of black pilots. Now, the alcohol brought out her true tongue and she told me exactly what she thought of my black ass as I stood there in my uniform, on my job. And that's why she had to sober up and wait on the next plane!

Resisting racism is a process that should not be taken for granted. Those posed with the necessity of resisting racism are often put in the forefront, whereas the racist *actions* of others are relegated to the backburner. In these accounts, African American pilots use a public space to engage in emotional reactions, yet they are done within the boundaries of company standards. These crewmembers have to simultaneously engage in a protection of self while engaging in emotional labor for the benefit of others.

Resistance Through Networks

African Americans in aviation have instituted formal networks to form relationships with others in their fields. By providing comfort to those with collective experiences, these networks formed through friendships and more formal avenues allow black flight crews with the ability to vent frustrations, provide encouragement to one another, and also provide an avenue to "pass the word" on who to watch out for. In order to resist racist encounters, African American crewmembers actively seek out and engage in lasting relationships with others in the field as a method of "surviving" the industry. In this, they actively relay various tactics that provide methods of coping and resisting racism. By giving voice and validity to the experiences faced pertaining to race, these flight crews share examples of their experiences and this often allows experiences to be placed in context and provide the knowledge that they are not alone in their experiences on the aircraft. But, there is also an emotional cost to these networks. By discussing the racist encounters on the aircraft, these issues become bigger than individual experiences, but serve as a method of engaging in emotional labor due to the experiences of others. In other words, dealing with racism becomes a burden for all those involved in the discussion—they too now carry the effects of racism, even if they did not experience it firsthand.

> My mentor is a black pilot and he tells me that you always have to be ready cause they are going to always throw it at you when you least expect it. I mean you can be at work just lollygagging and hanging around and then, out of the blue, someone makes a racist remark or will do something out of line and you weren't expecting it. So, he says you have to always be ready so that you can deal with it right then and there. So, I can deal with something immediately if it is serious enough. That way, I don't have to take it home and think that I should have said

something. But really, it is just another day. I will call someone up and say, 'Guess what happened to me at work today?' By the time I make it home, it's a joke.

Engaging in networking with other black flight attendants and pilots provide an environment in which those flight crews feel they are not being "judged" or hypersensitive. One flight attendant mentions that after trips in which she has difficult interactions with passengers and crewmembers based on race, she gets with other flight attendants and "we'll just sit down and have bitch sessions, and just bitch bitch bitch bitch bitch about what's goin' on."

Successful networks also provide an opportunity to clue in other crewmembers on what to expect in the industry. Indeed, many note that this is more than encouragement, but also a form of "cheerleading" used to encourage other pilots to endure those difficulties they face,

> We spent a day and a half just explaining to them [other African American pilots] different things they can expect—how to successfully go through an interview because when a question is asked, it's not even what they're looking for, its games they play. And once you understand the mentality, it's very easy to be successful but the mentality is not natural.

When discussing his relationship with another black pilot, Evan goes on to state,

> I was his cheering squad. I was his cheering squad. Marvin, you can't quit. You're going to make it; you're going to make it. He would send me the questions, I would ask him questions, and he'd give me the answer. 'Well you left off this word because you got to give the answer exactly as it is in the book, word for word, not because that's required, it's because you can't give them any excuse, any excuse—you're under the microscope. Remember what I said, word for word. To this day that boy can draw a system out blind folded, and white boys they don't even know this—he can draw it out blind folded and not even leave out a word;' because we used to stay up until two or three in the morning.

This form of bonding, often on the basis of race is one major avenue African American flight crews engage in a collective resistance. Acknowledging that they are "under the microscope," these crewmembers provide safe spaces in which to have discussions on the similarities and differences on being black in a predominately white environment. Delving deeper into the experiences of black crewmembers and the usefulness of forming lasting relationships also lends to the larger idea that African Americans often feel they have to "be better than" their white counterparts. Passing along methods to perform well on exams and training, on ways to hand fly the aircraft perfectly, the over arching idea here is that black crewmembers strive extremely hard to be the best they can be just to be seen as *acceptable*.

Messages of performing well permeate black thought in the industry. The idea of being "watched" and studied on a consistent basis caused for a continual type of emotional labor to be engaged. Performing exceedingly well at all times is a cost to bear while working in white environments. As many called it, "you have to be superblack" in order to be a part of the industry. This notion of "I'll show you" comes at the great cost of always seeking perfection and acceptance based on skill, not negative stereotypes attached to their race. These methods of success and coping are passed on in these informal networks as well as from family members,

> My mother and father raised me and they grew up in the south—in Jim Crow Texas and the way they raised us was like it [racism] was always going to be there. You were always going to have to deal with it. If you want to succeed, you had to be well above average. You know, you can't just be average—average is for them, not for us. My dad used to call it supernigga. You want to do anything in life, that's what you got to be. He'd always say, you gotta be supernigga, you gotta know everything. So, to me that was just part of being supernigga; that I gotta think about how I'm gonna deal with this person when I see him at work. I

had to think about it. And, if I let that bother me, I need to be doing something else cause those folks aren't going anywhere and they are not gonna change their disposition on the issues.

Another crew member explains it in the following way,

There's just some things that are just unacceptable and it's not contingent on him to adapt to you, it's contingent on you to adapt to him. So you almost have to be super black. You have to be flexible enough to adapt to the appropriate norms of behavior in that cockpit and then be able to revert back to what is considered acceptable or comfortable on the street corner should you remain in that environment, and many of us do. We don't turn our back on where we came from, if anything, we're looking for opportunities to grab one of them and pull them up.

In these accounts, both pilots note the necessity of being highly trained, skilled, and adaptable. The ability to survive in multiple environments is one method of coping that many African Americans engage in to survive a painful racist reality (Feagin and Sikes 1994; Moore 2008).

Though formal resistance has often been called upon in making significant legal and policy changes, the reality of racism indicates that the everyday reality of and necessity of resistance is extremely valuable to crewmembers. As they understand that there is a collective need to make changes to the industry, they also note that structural norms make it difficult to formally make claims against racism. Moreover, there is a heavy cost to engaging in formal accusations that is largely missed when understanding resistance. As mentioned by several in previous chapters, significant costs to speaking out against racial prejudice include being reprimanded, labeled as a trouble maker, and the amount of time required for following through with those claims. Overwhelmingly, these crews understand this to be a "fight you cannot win." Truly, in this environment, racism isn't seen as a problem, to complain against it is.

Understanding Resistance

Because resistance is a necessary part of life and an everyday part of life in the workplace, crewmembers must decide if an encounter warrants resistance. This is done by "picking your battles" as it is commonly referenced by participants in this project. Picking your battles lie in the gravity and frequency of racial encounters. To pick your battles insinuates that you cannot fight every battle, but those that are most significant at any particular time. One way pilots and flight attendants chose battles to engage in depends largely on the severity, frequency, time, and the perceived intent of the instigator (ignorance or blatant intent). More severe or blatant encounters were often met with resistance. Those encounters that were frequent often called for resistance or there was the risk of "cosigning on it." Black flight crews noted that if the encounter was repetitive, they felt the need to speak up against it, even if the behavior was not in reference to African Americans, but against white women and other groups of color. As poignantly stated by one pilot, but echoed by many,

> It's frequency. If it is something I feel is just really too much. There is this line that I cannot verbalize, but when they cross that line, is when I say something. With me, it is how incorrect you are in your stereotypes or racist remarks. If your statement is just too false, I can't take that. It is unacceptable. I don't fight all of the battles because it is not worth it. Some people may not realize what they are saying and it may be innocent. I don't want to have that angry black man view…I don't want to be seen as the problem child with HR. I can't fight all the battles.

Another factor contributing to the likelihood of resistance is the amount of time spent in the company of those making racist remarks. Unlike many other industries, flight crews do not have to interact with the same people on a daily basis as crewmembers are constantly changing. So, as one senior pilot noted,

> For the most part, I just don't talk about race or racial issues in the cockpit. Ever since I have been pilot in command, I avoid talking about these things because the purpose of conversation is to give information or affect behavior change. And, there is nothing that I can say about race that is going to cause anybody to change within the span of time that they are near me in the cockpit. So, I really avoid conversations about race.

Time in interaction was a constant reference in which crewmembers used to gauge the necessity of resistance. One other pilot noted something similar, "You can't control ignorance and you can't control someone's bigotry in the amount of time you have with them." For this reason, many were standoffish to engage in heated discussions of race. This notion of changing someone or controlling bigotry is indeed indicative of how these flight crewmembers interpret the depth of white racism. In these cases, white actors are not receiving a pass based on "they didn't mean it or it is based on ignorance," but there is a tacit knowledge that it takes much more than a few hours to alter beliefs and deep-seated bigotry. We also have to account for the emotional labor that comes through the visceral reaction of experiencing racial prejudices and contemplating the appropriate "battle to pick."

Chapter Summary

The necessity of understanding the complexities of doing emotion work and emotional labor in the workplace is bigger than engaging in this form of labor with passengers. For black flight crewmembers, the weight of emotional labor is heavy in the sense that social identity cannot be removed from interactions, specifically those interactions in which others engage in behavior based on identity. The structure of the environment and the demographic make-up of workers and consumers contribute overwhelmingly to the type and frequency of emotional labor that is engaged in by black

crewmembers through resistance. Emotion work is therefore outside of what is systematically required by employers to induce emotion in others, but often remains "invisible" labor to those not experiencing constant affronts against them based on race and/or gender. We also have to account for the amount of emotional energy expended to experience discrimination and engage in any and all types of resistance. Evident in these accounts of emotional labor and resistance is the *traumatic* nature of experiencing consistent racism and racial oppression and the effects on people of color.

Emotional labor is not created equal, but is indicative of larger structural inequalities found in workplaces. Flight crews have the demands of performing in an atmosphere that largely excludes and alienates them on the basis of appearance as well as devalues the emotions they actually feel. By relying on longstanding gendered stereotypes of black anger, crewmembers are forced to perform emotional labor within the normative emotional structures reflective of white emotional norms. In this, those avenues granted to white male flight attendants and pilots to express emotions of anger and frustration is not granted their African American counterparts. This creates a situation in which people of color have to devise an altogether different set of strategies to engage in effective emotional labor and resistance.

Perhaps the idea that emotional labor as sold for a wage should cause organizations to question how much emotional labor is worth. For African Americans, emotional labor in white environments is constant and does not begin and end with the start and subsequent end of a flight. These crewmembers engage in emotional labor from the moment the uniform is on until well after they take it off. It continues through the

recounting of stories to other black coworkers and becomes a burden that is collectively shared. Emotion work however continues because these crewmembers are left to cope with heavy and often painful interactions based on their race. Having to constantly be "on guard" while in the workplace presents workers with the obstacle of maintaining a true sense of self in a space where that "self" is not welcomed.

Placing this all in context, even resisting racism does not lessen the "sting" of the event and black crewmembers resist and cope with these experiences by performing emotional labor. Recall too the cumulative nature of experiencing racism and consider the preparation in the form of emotion work that is required of workers of color in white structural environments. This causes people of color to always be "on" and "ready" for the possibility of being stereotyped, rejected, and/or discriminated against. Indeed this aspect of silent emotion work remains largely invisible and unacknowledged in the workplace, yet it remains a significant aspect of the type of labor performed by black flight crewmembers. This labor, when placed in the larger context becomes much more than managing the hearts of others – it is much deeper and involves much more than managing hearts, for it is much more like managing lives.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

> For lack of a better term, to succeed, you have to be a chameleon. I don't care what your personal habits are, your personal speech patterns, your behavior differences—when you walk on that property with that uniform you have to be a chameleon—you have to be almost whitewashed. That doesn't mean you change your thinking, but your behavior has to comply with that corporate culture…. You have to comply or you will not survive because they can let you go for any reason whatsoever without explanation and you're done…. You have to just adapt to your surroundings and imitate. There are forces that do not want to see the status quo overturned. It is the mentality that you don't belong here and we're going to do what we can to make sure you don't get here. The airlines' culture was built around that.   Anthony, senior pilot

The above quote made by a senior pilot captures well the experiences of African American men and women in the airline industry. To be whitewashed in order to fit into a corporate culture and survive in the industry is indicative of the daily struggles of going to work and performing a job in which black identity and subsequent labor is not respected. This quote exemplifies the connectivity of emotional labor, corporate culture, identity and the disproportionate ways African Americans engage in emotional labor in this environment. This project has repeatedly shown that African Americans have an altogether different experience in the industry than their white counterparts. Much of their experiences of engaging in emotional labor are a direct consequence of being racially and sexually "different" in a white environment.

In this final chapter, I summarize the main findings of the current study of emotional labor followed by solutions and areas for future research. There is a great deal of complexity to emotional labor and much work still needs to be done in this area. As discussed in the opening chapter, the experiences of African Americans in the airline

industry remain invisible in the literature and this project advances and problematizes much of the existing literature on emotional labor. The following conclusion addresses the invisibility of black voices by advancing our current understanding of emotional labor. First I conclude by providing a brief summation of the current threads of emotional labor and gender, race, and systemic perspectives. In closing, I provide solutions and policy implications and areas for future research.

Gender and Emotional Labor

The current research on emotional labor relies heavily on the theory developed by Hochschild in the 1983 work, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. In this research, Hochschild introduces the concept of emotional labor as the engagement in a form of labor designed to suppress or induce feelings in others. This form of labor is also sold for a wage as it represents a major aspect of the job. By researching service occupations, Hochschild looked at the connectivity of gender and this form of labor by examining flight attendants. In this, she documented well the differential expectations associated with gender and emotions to underscore how service occupations often elicit and reify the expectations of emotional labor through the gendering of occupations. Because of this, the standard of emotional labor yields different experiences for men and women, placing men in these "feminine" occupations in higher positions of power, providing them with higher levels of authority and social status.

There is much research that continues to document the differential experiences of men and women in a variety of occupations. Moving beyond service occupations, there

is now a wealth of literature engaging the role of gender and emotional labor in professional occupations. This literature situates emotional labor and emotion work as consequential to gendered representations within specific occupations and occupational cultures (see Pierce 1995; Lively 2000). Indeed, as this research has provided great insight into the advancement of emotional labor, gender, and organizational structures, there is still much to be done in the examination of how gender intersects with other aspects of identity and social status. My research has added tremendously to this body of literature by showing that even within gendered categories, racial identity also influences outcomes. In short, though gender is indeed a significant aspect of understanding emotional labor, there are also longstanding racial representations that promote different outcomes for women and men of color. Within gendered occupations, we also have to bring in those tacit ideologies that depict women and men of color and their emotions as altogether different.

Race and Emotional Labor

A new line of emotional labor research has emerged that incorporates racial identity and emotion work. Much of this work returns to mostly low-wage service occupations to uncover the role of race in the structuring of occupations. For instance, in her work on emotional labor, Wharton (2009) notes that in service occupations requiring emotions of deference, people occupying lower status positions—women, people of color, or those in structurally disadvantaged positions, are usually overrepresented in these occupations. Moreover, those in these positions are seen as more suited to perform this type of low-wage service work. Much of the research in this area examines race and

gender as two distinct categories producing differential amounts of emotional labor, but considering how gendered experiences can be different when factoring in racial identity is a lot less clear.

It has only been recently that researchers have begun to uncover how intersecting identities contribute to emotional labor. The work of Kang (2003, 2010) looks at ethnic identity through her thorough examination of Korean nail salon workers. In this type of work, there are expectations of both body and emotional labor that create a distinctive situation in which consumers of different racial/ethnic identities interact based on preconceived notions of one another. Similarly, Wingfield (2010) examines how African Americans in professional environments engage in emotional labor with coworkers in professional settings. Here, she shows how these preexisting expectations of different racial groups contribute to the extensive emotional labor performed by African Americans in professional settings. Moore (2008) also examines the emotional labor performed by students of color in elite law schools. In addition, she introduces the added dimensions of emotional labor through institutional structures. In line with these researchers, my current research utilizes systemic racism/sexism perspectives as a method through which to engage and extend the discussion on emotional labor. My research also uncovers the methods through which the emotional labor of people of color in professional settings occur in multiple ways. First, there are those expected consumer interactions that are seen as the only area in which emotional labor is counted as valid. This research uncovers the validity of the argument that emotional labor in the workplace extends beyond interactions with consumers and incorporates interactions

with coworkers, management, and the labor that is produced solely from being a part of the environment itself.

Systemic Racism and Emotional Labor

What emerged through my research with black flight crewmembers suggests that emotional labor has many more dimensions than that proposed by the original theory. To get a more accurate view of emotional labor, this project relied heavily on the rich accounts of African Americans working in two distinct environments within the airline industry. For commercial aviation pilots, specifically those flying for major airlines, there is much education, time, skill, and training involved to entering this field. This contributes to the idea that this position is highly professional. Within this notion of professionalism, there is the overarching ideology that whiteness represents what is professional and indeed what is pilot. Here, this location serves as a distinctive location from which to view the intersections of race and gender. African American flight attendants are also in a specific location in which to view the ways social identity characteristics interact to create differential access to performing emotional labor. Because this position within the airline industry was and continues to be dominated by white women, African American males and females, like their pilot counterparts, must contend with emotional labor based on those dominant social characteristics. For this reason, I suggest systemic racism and sexism should be incorporated into the theory of emotional labor in order to examine the experiences of people of color in white spaces.

Because both occupations were formed during a time of widespread exclusion of people of color, an occupational environment representing white cultural norms

developed. When African Americans entered this industry, those normative structures were already firmly in place and through time have received significant support from those in management. This reproduces those occupational structures that allow for the mistreatment of people of color. Moreover, this research shows that emotional labor does not occur in a vacuum, but is contingent on multiple factors. First, the pervasive nature of racism and the white framing of African Americans contribute to their treatment from coworkers and passengers. These interactions based on racial and gendered stereotyping are but refurbished versions of those found in years past. Next, this research shows that experiences in the workplace cannot be viewed as a specific moment in time, but should be inclusive of how the past meets and influences the present. This research bridges micro-level interactions in the workplace with macro-processes. Indeed racism and sexism are systemic with many in mainstream America continually circulating perceptions of the appropriate emotional displays of racial groups. From this perspective we see emotional labor being unequally placed on people of color within racist systems, while forcing them to engage in emotional labor with racist perpetrators.

The overall necessity of emotional labor being inclusive of systemic racism is found largely in the continual and documented experiences of African American flight crewmembers. Chapters IV and V documented the consistent interactions between African American crewmembers, coworkers, and passengers to show that in order to understand "how" people engage in emotional labor, we should also look deeply at "who" they are and what this means in particular environments. This research shows that

even though professional status has been achieved, travelers and coworkers do not enter interactions with a blank slate, but rely heavily on preconceived ideologies of what "black" women and men represent. Here, we begin to appreciate the structural mechanisms influencing behavior and the need for emotional labor. Systemic racism and white framing allows the literature to move beyond examinations of the surface interactions that influence emotional labor and peer deeper into much of the emotional labor that can be missed—that labor produced as a result of *forced* or perceived social location.

Emotional Labor Revisited

Found in the extensive interviews conducted for this project, emotional labor is much more than what is expected from performing a job and is outside of the scope of what is paid in wages. While the earlier literature only relies on one facet of interactions to understand emotional labor, I suggest emotional labor occurs in multiple ways in the service industry. Black flight crewmembers engage in emotional labor that is required of them from management in their professions through interacting with passengers, yet they also engage in emotional labor with coworkers. This aspect of worker-to-worker interaction is largely missed in the literature, yet it is a major aspect of the labor produced and performed on the aircraft. Too, emotional labor for these crewmembers also involves much more than getting on the aircraft and performing a job. Recall the opening quote in this chapter—it begins the moment the uniform is placed on and they arrive at the airport. Even here, it does not end—flight crewmembers in this project also

note that they continue to engage in emotional labor on layovers and even during their rides to the airport after layovers.

Next, African American flight crewmembers engage in an altogether different type of emotional labor than their white heterosexual counterparts. Many of their interactions are based on their positions of being African American men and women. Interacting and engaging in emotional labor and emotion management when attacked based on physical characteristics is a burden that African Americans carry through their invisibility and/or hypervisibility on the aircraft. Much of this emotional labor remains unrecognized and undervalued yet should be highlighted if we are to truly understand the costs of performing emotional labor and render this labor visible. Recall, that many of the crewmembers that spoke against racist and/or sexist behaviors were often sanctioned by coworkers and also by management. They experience emotional labor that is also regulated heavily by passengers and coworkers through their attempts to force conformity.

Through forced conformity, emotional labor becomes much more than a "managed heart." Consider that in much of the literature on emotional labor it is posited that masculinity provides power and authority to men working in "feminine occupations," or the notion that the emotion of anger is usually associated with masculinity in professional occupations. This research argues that emotions are racialized and in this particular occupation, the freedom to be emotionally expressive through authority and power is removed for African Americans. Anger becomes seen as pathological and problematic and is seen as downright aggressive. Foremost, they do not

only manage their hearts, they manage the hearts of those around them. The emotional

burden lies in the fact that feeling norms and cultural standards reify whiteness in this

occupation. Through the assumed and supported power of whites, *ownership* of black

emotional labor takes place. Thus, *Emotional labor and emotion management becomes*

managed and regulated.

Emotional Labor of Coping and Resistance

Moreover, much of what is experienced by black flight crews in the workplace

adds another major component to emotional labor—that emotional labor produced

through coping and resistance. There is much information on the coping and resistance

strategies of African Americans, but not much is included *within* the emotional labor

literature (see Moore 2008; Wingfield 2010; Kang 2010 for exceptions). Being a person

of color in an environment that represents whiteness to the workers and travelers

produces the necessity to engage in strategies of coping and resistance. Coping and

resistance is significant here because it not only adds pressure to black workers, it also

takes away much occupational satisfaction. There is considerable time involved in

deconstructing racism, accumulating counter-narratives, and actively or subtly resisting

racism. Much of this emotional labor remains invisible, except to those that perform it

on a consistent basis. Experiencing racism is cumulative and uses an extreme amount of

emotional energy, both physical and emotional. Even so, African Americans in this

project actively resist racist and sexist affronts through a variety of methods, while

keeping in mind that they must actively consider the appropriate occasion to engage in

resistance. This dimension of emotional labor is not included as an aspect of the job and it is unrewarded.

Uncovered through this project, African American flight crews must operate and resist carefully or suffer severe consequences. Mentioned in great detail in Chapter VI, there are consequences for making claims against racial discrimination that should be considered as an aspect of coping. Here, these flight crewmembers do not seek to disengage from resistance and reproduce the racial structure, but because many whites deeply adhere to the existing structure, whites reproduce the racial structure, not their black counterparts. In this way, African American flight crewmembers recognize that racism is not seen as a significant concern by those in management--their complaints are seen as the problem. Much of this is based on a mainstream discourse that African Americans are complainers that "play the race card." Within this framework, African Americans collectively fight against the deep-rooted polemic of white management and coworkers.

Solutions and Implications

> Change has been gradual but one issue that comes back is that the numbers aren't there. They are not there for blacks and Hispanics but the women are coming up. So part of the issue with diversity will always be exposure and hiring practices and we need to do better in that regard.
> > Tim, senior pilot

In this account, Tim, like many others note a distinct reality of the airline industry. Mainstream accounts of employment equality is represented through rhetoric only, but "the numbers aren't there." Tim removes the façade of surface equality by implicitly connecting the lack of diversity in the airline industry with institutional hiring

practices. Though African Americans experience hypervisible in this industry, it is an extreme exaggeration. One such area for improvement is through actively seeking and hiring qualified people of color. Indeed, it has been only recently (in 2012) that the *second* African American chief pilot was recently named to a major airline, with the first being promoted in 1992 (Taylor 2012). The token numbers of people of color in the industry coincide with the findings here that much institutional discrimination is occurring and this can only be remedied with institutional practices.

Secondly, monitoring any and all claims of discrimination should also be investigated. As mentioned throughout this work, discrimination remains largely unpunished causing the organization structure to be reproduced. In another example, a flight attendant mentioned a case in which several flight attendants made a formal complaint against a captain and asked to be removed from the flight when the captain said to black flight attendants that he wished somebody would "blow up Obama." She continues with, "he's still flying." Formal investigations should be conducted and all those victimized in these cases should be provided with updates on decisions.

Many of the African American crewmembers working in this industry often mentioned the desire for more formal networks within the company to mentor young African Americans entering the industry. Indeed, there are outside agencies, such as the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals and the Black Flight Attendants of America, but many openly cite a need for more avenues to formal mentorship within the industry. Those informal mentoring networks that have developed through a collective understanding of experience should also occur in more formal and organizationally

represented ways. Another implication in this research is the need for airlines to get on board in actively engaging in a dialogue with African American crewmembers. It would suggest recognition of their voices, needs, and suggestions for solutions.

African American crewmembers must be actively involved in creating solutions for a more inclusive work environment. This involvement should be more than surface involvement as our nation's airlines seek an environment promoting equality. There should also be a dismantling of existing organizational structures promoting inequality. It is not until structural changes take place on a large scale that real change can be made. First, there must be a grand acknowledgement that racial inequality is a major concern in the industry. This acknowledgement will allow much of the invisible labor performed by African Americans to be noticed and would also provide them with much needed support.

Future Research

During an in-depth interview with Tina, a female pilot, she recalled an encounter in which there were *three* black female pilots in the same training class with two of them paired together (they were officially numbers 2, 3, and 4 for the company). During this time, Tina noted the following experience:

> There are things that they will let slide for others but not for us. I know this for a fact and I know for a fact because of personal experience because me and my training partner, who is also a black female, were in the training department at our initial training for the 737. We had this one instructor and we went in the sim (simulator) and we did our thing for the day and he commented and critiqued us. So, I was like, okay, and I asked him if I could go and sit in another sim and observe. I was thinking I could maybe pick something up or something…. I went and invited my training partner. So, we go in there and it was crazy and she and I kept looking at each other for the whole two hours of the flight. They were just joking around and if they missed something, they were like, 'Oh, I missed

that'—'yea you missed that.' The instructors were like, 'Oh that's okay, just make sure you get it next time.' The intensity level for them, not that they weren't safe, but the standards that they had were so much less than the standards they had for us. We missed this little button that was not going to cause the flight to end unsuccessfully but it was something that could have been perfected. They were told, 'No big deal, you can do it next time.' But for us, it was like you missed this button, you have to do it again. I know for a fact that there is no way that they are going to let me go up there through [captain] training. If that was my experience as a first officer, I'm not going in there trying to upgrade to captain and not be on top of everything.

When I interviewed Tina for this project, she had been working for this airline for several years, with numerous years of experience before this job working as a commuter captain. Here, she discusses her experiences with training and the likelihood she will go up for captain in the near future. This particular experience, along with many others, has left Tina feeling as though she has to achieve *absolute perfection* before attempting to go up for captain. She also notes that she witnessed other white males in training that did not have to adhere to these strict standards. Noteworthy in this interaction is the idea that this experience has *discouraged* her attempts to move up the ranks. Consider the absolute numbers of black pilots that have been institutionally discouraged from attempting promotion or discouraged from entering this industry. This is indeed an area that should be pursued in future research. Another female pilot noted the following comment from her male instructor during training as he tells her; "You know, we have to make sure that you all are better than these guys when you go out on the line because everybody's gonna be staring at you." Making a mental note, she knew, "the standards were a little bit tougher for us [African Americans]."

In this commentary of both female pilots, there were unequal standards in the workplace that can influence outcomes. Though it appears this latter instructor was

trying to be "helpful" by ensuring her skills were perfect, the additional pressure placed on African American flight crews can influence the likelihood they are even hired on after training. An area to be examined in future research relies heavily on these differential standards of performance and could be examined through gender as well as racial/ethnic identities. In addition, this research suggests there are many more avenues to understand emotional labor and people of color in the airline industry. As mentioned throughout this project, the commercial aviation industry remains overwhelmingly white. This project could easily be extended to examine the experiences of all underrepresented and marginalized groups. This research uncovers the various ways in which people of color remain invisible in the industry and this perspective would fit well through understanding the experiences of Asian Americans, Latinos, and white women. The experiences of these groups with the performance of emotional labor would cement the differentiation of emotional labor in institutionally white spaces. Recall that women, various racial/ethnic groups, and religious groups were a prime source of conversation in the flight deck.

Much more is needed in reference to African American experiences in commercial aviation. The current sample can be expanded to more of the African American pilots to build upon existing theory. This vein of research must not be limited to the airline industry but should be inclusive of major industries in which people of color are severely underrepresented. Moreover, by entering a variety of organizations, this line of research, by uncovering differential emotional labor in professional organizations could begin the process of instituting appropriate policies to make

changes. This literature would also fit well in a variety of disciplines ranging from the social sciences to business literatures.

In Conclusion

African Americans have made significant progress by entering various industries in which they were historically excluded. Entering this particular industry has its costs—both mental and physical. Shown clearly throughout this project, the experiences of African Americans in this industry cannot be fully understood without a closer examination of the organization structure. Because this industry remains dominated by whites, there are differential expectations for emotional labor that are beyond gender identity to one that intersects clearly with racial identity. The invisibility of the emotional labor performed by workers of color in white industries should be removed if advancements are to be made. Recall those accounts provided in this chapter and note that African Americans have to contend with being "whitewashed" by company standards or are encouraged to seek perfection. These institutional standards, quite unequally placed, remain firmly in place by those with institutional power.

In summation, this current research advances the literature on emotional labor in professional and service occupations. The experiences of African Americans working as pilots and flight attendants for the nation's aviation industry maneuver strict cultural norms that directly contribute to the types of emotional labor they perform. This emotional labor is heavily influenced by racism and sexism that is systemic at the societal and institutional levels. All this labor is performed in addition to the emotional labor required to work in this industry. In spite of these negative experiences, the

crewmembers interviewed in this project take great pride in their jobs and actively seek those personal and collective rewards for remaining in the industry. Of all the painful encounters contained herein, these crewmembers are resilient, strong, and continue to demand the equal right to keep flying.

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APPENDIX A

FLIGHT ATTENDANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What airline are you currently working for, and how long have you been working for them?
2. Tell me about how you ended up being a flight attendant (probe).
3. On average, how many hours would you say you fly per month?
4. Are you on-board leader trained (lead flight attendant)? For how long?
   a. Do you normally fly in the A position?
5. In what year did you attend flight attendant training?

Experiences:
6. What are some of the things that you like or appreciate about being a flight attendant for your company?
7. What, would you say, are some of the things you dislike about being a flight attendant for your company?
8. What do you think your airline means when it says you should be and look "professional?" (probe)
9. If I asked you to describe a difficult passenger, how would you describe them?
   a. Have you ever had to deal with difficult passengers?
   b. How do you feel after dealing with difficult passengers?
   c. What do you normally do when you have a difficult passenger?
10. How do you think the public sees the job of flight attendant? Do you think it is a highly respected job or an undervalued job?
    a. What makes you say this? (probe)
11. Now, what are some things that you dislike about your job (probe).
12. Can you tell me about some memorable experience that you had on the job that upset or disappointed you? (probe)
    a. How do you normally handle these situations (what do you do and where do you go)?

Gendered experiences:
13. Would you say that most of your coworkers are women or men?
14. Do you ever feel your job is emotionally draining? When? (probe)
    a. What does the term "emotionally draining" mean to you?
15. Do you think that being a flight attendant is "women's work?" What makes you think that? (probe)
16. Now, to talk about passengers, how would you rate your overall experiences with them? (probe)

17. In your opinion, would you say that it is easier for you to relate to male or female passengers?
    a. Tell me a bit about why you feel that way (probe)
    b. Can you share some stories as examples?
18. Have you ever been flying as the on-board leader and was asked by a passenger "who is in charge?"
    a. Why do you think they asked?
    b. Do you think they assumed you to be in charge because of your gender (probe).
    c. Do you think it is ever assumed you are not in charge because of your gender
19. Do you ever feel that men treat you a certain way on flights because of your gender? (probe). What are some examples?
20. Do you ever feel that women treat you a certain way on flights because of your gender? (probe). What are some examples?
21. In what ways do you think your gender influences your interactions with passengers?
    a. Can you share some experiences with me about this?
    b. What about with your coworkers?
22. Have you ever felt that you had to manage or suppress your emotions while at work? (probe)
    a. Do you have any stories that you could use as an example?
    b. Do you believe that managing your emotions is an easy thing to do?
    c. How would you say you have learned to manage your emotions?
23. Has there ever been an occasion where you felt you did not successfully manage your emotions?
    a. What happened and what did you do?
24. Do you think that male flight attendants are expected to manage their emotions differently than female flight attendants?
    a. Why do you think this is?
25. Have you ever been really angry or upset with a passenger?
    a. What type of passenger usually upsets or angers you? In other words, do you notice any commonalities between the passengers that tend to upset you? Can you tell me about these commonalities?
    b. How did you handle these situations?
26. Do you think that passengers ever expect you to act a certain way because of your gender?
    a. What makes you say that (probe)

b.   How do you typically handle these situations?

27. Do you think male flight attendants are confronted by passengers less than as much, about as much, or more than female flight attendants?

a.   What makes you say this?

28. Do you ever feel passengers interact with you based on gender stereotypes?

29. Do you ever think assumptions are made about your sexuality?

a.   What makes you say this?

b.   Can you give me some examples?

30. Do you think assumptions are made about male flight attendant sexuality? If so,

a.   What makes you say this?

Racial Experiences:

31. In your interactions with passengers, have you ever had any memorable experiences you perceive to be based on your race? (probe)

32. Have you ever felt that a passenger treated you a certain way because of your race

a.   Please share some examples with me.

33. In your experiences, have you ever felt that your race mattered to passengers you were interacting with? (probe)

a.   Can you share some stories with me about this?

34. Do you think it is different being an African American flight attendant? Why?

35. Have you ever been flying in the A position and was asked by a passenger "who is in charge?" Do you ever think it is assumed you are not in charge because of your race?

36. Based on the amount of time you have been flying, would you say that things have changed in terms of how passengers relate to you because of your race? (probe)

37. Do you think passengers interact differently with you because you are African American or because you are white?

38. Can you recall any experiences in which you believed your race was a significant factor?

39. Have any other flight attendants ever shared a racial experience they've had with you?

a.   If so, what happened?

b.   Do you agree that their experience was based on race? (probe)

40. Have you ever had passengers talk about your race in a negative way? What did they say?

a.   How did you feel about that?

41. Based on any experiences you have had based on your race, can you tell me what type of passenger you feel it has mattered to most?
    a. Why do you think that is?
    b. How do you feel about that?
42. Do you interact most with passengers of color or mostly white passengers?
43. Based on the things you have already mentioned, how do you manage your emotions when you feel mistreated by a passenger because of your race? (probe)
    a. What do you do?
    b. Do you share your experiences with others? Who do you share them with?
44. Do you ever think passengers interact with you based on racial stereotypes?
    a. Which stereotypes (provide examples)?
    b. How do you handle that?
45. Do you think it is a different experience being a flight attendant of color? Tell me why you feel the way you do (probe)
46. Do you think that because you are African American, there are things that you have to worry about at work that other races of people don't have to worry about? (probe)
47. Have you ever been discriminated at work because of your race? You can think of this in terms of the airline as well as passengers.
    a. If so, how did you handle this? What did you do?

Social Class:
48. Do you ever feel that passengers perceive you to be in a certain social class? (probe)
    a. What makes you say that and can you share some examples?
49. Have you ever felt that a passenger has treated you a certain way because they feel they are in a "higher" social class?
    a. Can you share some examples?
50. Do you ever feel that passengers feel they are entitled to things because of their social class?
    a. What makes you say this?
51. In your opinion, do you think that male or female passengers are more likely to act this way?
    a. What makes you say this?
    b. How do men usually act that gives you this impression?
    c. How do women act that gives you this impression?
52. Have you ever felt that assumptions were made about your social class based on your race? (probe)

53. Have you ever felt that assumptions were made about your social class based on your gender? (probe)

54. Giving me your opinion, would you say that passengers have a sense of entitlement?
    a. Who would you say normally behaves this way? Tell me some things about them
    b. Why do you think they have a sense of entitlement?

55. How do you manage your own emotions when passengers behave this way?

56. So, if I were to ask you to give me your opinion, do you think that flight attendants of other races/ethnicities are perceived to be in a certain social class?
    a. What makes you say this?
    b. What social class do you think they are perceived to be in?
    c. Do you think that passengers treat them differently because of this?

Experiences with Co-workers:

57. How often would you say you fly with African American flight attendants or pilots?

58. Do you think that when you fly with crew members of color it changes to mood of the trip? Can you explain?

59. Have you had any experiences with other flight attendants and pilots that you perceived to be based on your gender? (probe)
    a. Based on your race? (probe)
    b. Based on what they perceive to be your social class? (probe)
    c. Based on what is perceived about your sexuality? (probe)

60. Do your coworkers ever ask you personal information?
    a. Do you normally share personal information with your coworkers? Why?

61. Have you ever felt that your race influenced how you interact with your coworkers?
    a. Your gender?
    b. Your sexuality?
    c. Your social class?

62. Have you ever felt your coworkers have a sense of entitlement? (probe)
    a. Who do you think is likely to feel this way and why?

Work Environment:

63. Do you ever feel "trapped" on the airplane? Do you ever want to escape from passengers or coworkers? (probe)
    a. Where do you normally go if you feel this way?

64. During what type of occasions do you hate the airplane environment (probe)

65. Is there a place on the airplane that you feel safe enough to display your emotions?
    a. Do you feel there is a place on the airplane where you are safe from angry passengers?

Coping: (Resistance)
Earlier we talked about how passengers relate to you based on your social class, your gender, race, and sexuality. Now I want to talk to you about your race again;
66. In your experiences, how do you feel when you have experiences that are based on your race? (probe)
    a. Tell me about your emotions?
67. Do you think that having to deal with race adds an extra dimension to your job? (probe) If so,
    a. Why, and how do you handle this extra dimension?
    b. Do you think other flight attendants of different races have this to worry about?
68. How do you cope with racial experiences?
    a. What do you do?
    b. If you had to explain in detail what it feels like to experience something based on your race, how would you explain your emotions to me? (probe)
69. What sorts of things do you do to deal with racialized experiences?
70. Do you find you think about these incidents even after they are over? (probe) If so, how do you get past these experiences?
71. How do you deal with experiences you feel are based on your gender?
    a. Your sexuality?
    b. Your social class?
72. In terms of your emotions, what emotions do you feel when someone says something to you about your race and/or gender?
    a. Do you ever express them verbally?
73. When you have a surge of emotions, what do you normally do?
74. When people talk about your race and/or gender, do you say anything back to them?
    a. If not, does it bother you that you don't say anything back?
    b. If so, does it bother you that you said something? (probe)

APPENDIX B

PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What airline are you currently working for, and how long have you been working for them?
2. Tell me about how you ended up being a pilot. (probe).
3. On average, how many hours would you say you fly per month?
4. Do you fly as a Captain or a First Officer?
   a. On what type of aircraft?
5. What are some of the things that you like or appreciate about being a pilot for your company?
6. What, would you say, are some of the things you dislike about being a pilot for your company?
7. When you first attended training, did the airline have expectations of what is appropriate for women and men (dress and hair)?
8. If I asked you to describe a difficult passenger, how would you describe them?
   a. Have you ever had to deal with difficult passengers?
   b. How do you feel after dealing with difficult passengers?
   c. What do you normally do when you have a difficult passenger?
9. Can you tell me about some memorable experience that you had on the job that upset or disappointed you? (probe)
   a. How do you normally handle these situations (what do you do and where do you go)?
10. Would you say that most of your coworkers are women or men?
11. Do you ever feel your job is emotionally draining? When? (probe)
    a. What does the term "emotionally draining" mean to you?
12. Have you ever been flying as the captain and was asked by a passenger "who is in charge?"
    a. Why do you think they asked?
    b. How did you respond?
13. Have you ever felt that you had to manage or suppress your emotions while at work? (probe)
    a. Do you have any stories that you could use as an example?
    b. How would you say you have learned to manage your emotions?
14. In your interactions with passengers, have you ever had any memorable experiences you perceive to be based on your race? (probe)
    a. Can you share some examples?
    b. Any interactions with coworkers?

15. In your experiences, have you ever felt that your race mattered to passengers you were interacting with? (probe)
    a. Can you share some stories with me about this?
    b. Any experiences with coworkers?
16. Do you think it is different being an African American pilot? Why?
17. Can you recall pilots in which you believed your race was a significant factor?
18. Have any other flight attendants ever shared a racial experience they've had with you?
    a. If so, what happened?
    b. Do you agree that their experience was based on race? (probe)
19. Have you ever had passengers talk about your race in a negative way? What did they say?
    a. Have coworkers ever talked about your race in a negative way?
20. Based on any experiences you have had based on your race, can you tell me what type of passenger you feel it has mattered to most?
    a. Why do you think that is?
    b. How do you feel about that?
21. Do you ever think passengers interact with you based on racial stereotypes?
    a. Which stereotypes (provide examples)?
    b. How do you handle that?
22. Do you think it is a different experience being a pilot of color? Tell me why you feel the way you do (probe)
23. Do you think that because you are African American, there are things that you have to worry about at work that other races of people don't have to worry about? (probe)
24. Have you ever been discriminated at work because of your race? You can think of this in terms of the airline as well as passengers.
    a. If so, how did you handle this? What did you do?
25. Giving me your opinion, would you say that passengers have a sense of entitlement?
    a. Who would you say normally behaves this way? Tell me some things about them
    b. Why do you think they have a sense of entitlement?
26. How often would you say you fly with African American flight attendants or pilots?
27. Do you think that when you fly with crew members of color it changes to mood of the trip? Can you explain?

28. Do you ever feel "trapped" on the airplane? Do you ever want to escape from passengers or coworkers? (probe)
    a. Where do you normally go if you feel this way?
29. During what type of occasions do you hate the airplane environment (probe)
30. Is there a place on the airplane that you feel safe enough to display your emotions?
    a. Do you feel there is a place on the airplane where you are safe from angry passengers?
31. In your experiences, how do you feel when you have experiences that are based on your race? (probe)
    a. Tell me about your emotions?
32. Do you think that having to deal with race adds an extra dimension to your job? (probe) If so,
    a. Why, and how do you handle this extra dimension?
    b. Do you think other flight attendants of different races have this to worry about?
33. How do you cope with racial experiences?
    a. What do you do?
    b. If you had to explain in detail what it feels like to experience something based on your race, how would you explain your emotions to me? (probe)
34. When people talk about your race and/or gender, do you say anything back to them?
    a. If not, does it bother you that you don't say anything back?
    b. If so, does it bother you that you said something? (probe)

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Research and Teaching Interests

Racial and Ethnic Relations, Race, Class, and Gender, Criminology, Deviance, Qualitative Methods, Social Problems