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What's love got to do with it?: Passion and inequality at work

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What's love got to do with it? Passion and inequality in white-collar work

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Abstract

Emotion has become an increasingly important aspect of work in the 21st century. In this article, we take stock of the extant literature delineating the role of emotions, especially passion as a cultural schema, in white-collar workplaces. Scholars have covered extensive ground on emotions at work, but the role of passion remains an underexplored yet significant area. Drawing from recent developments in research on white-collar work, we argue that the passion schema has become a critical marker in the labor market for sorting individuals into occupations, hiring and promotion within organizations, and assigning value to people's labor. Emergent research suggests that because the expression and perception of passion remain ambiguously defined in the workplace and varies by context, it is pivotal in reproducing social inequalities. In this review, we focus on how privileging passion in the workplace and interpreting it as a measure of aptitude impacts social inequalities by race, gender, and social class. We close by setting an agenda for further research on this topic.

INTRODUCTION

White-collar workers have long understood their work as a vocation and a devotion (Blair-Loy, 2005; Weber, 1958). More recently, these deep-seated conceptions cast work as all-consuming, on demand, and individualistic (Blair-Loy & Jacobs, 2003; Vallas & Cummins, 2015; Wynn, 2018). This has occurred as employment insecurity and labor market precariousness for white-collar workers have become enduring features of the American—indeed global—economic landscape (Kalleberg, 2011). In today's neoliberal economy, research indicates that expressions of passion convey a sense of commitment, which is necessary in a context where workers must embrace instability and uncertainty (Cech, 2018; Cooper, 2014; Gershon, 2017; Pugh, 2015; Rao, 2017a; Rivera, 2015b; Tobias Neely, 2019; Wingfield, Hordge-Freeman, & Smith-Lovin, 2017). Passion, as we explain below, has become a key cultural schema governing social interactions and an important form of emotional capital in the contemporary professional workplace that is undertheorized. Workers, however, vary in their ability to feel, express, and embody passion at work. As such, passion may help to maintain a stratified workforce in which some groups are systematically selected for higher status and higher paying jobs than others.

The "new economy" captures changes in the organization of work since the 1970s (Osnowitz, 2010; Smith, 2002; Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). Over the past 40 years, the U.S. economy has been globalized, digitized, and financialized. Firms now feature ongoing restructuring, frequent downsizing, and flexible scheduling (DiMaggio, 2001)—all of which have weakened the bargaining

power of, and protections for, workers (Davis, 2009; Kalleberg, 2011). As a result, employment is less secure, working conditions are more precarious, jobs are more polarized, and economic inequality has widened (Galbraith, 2000; Kalleberg, 2011). White-collar workers of the mid-20th century often stayed at one firm for their entire careers, but today's white-collar workers advance by changing firms (Bidwell & Briscoe, 2010). Workers are no longer expected to be committed to the firm but rather to the work. It is within this broader context that the passion schema has emerged and passion has become a marketable emotion.

After explaining what the passion schema is, and how it is becoming a form of emotional capital in white-collar workplaces, we review the extant research on emotions at work to explain how the passion schema shapes workplace experiences, career trajectories, and employment stratification. While we look at work across industries, we focus on high-status jobs because research suggests that the passion schema holds particular salience for work and career outcomes in high-status and high-paid occupations (Cabanas Díaz & Illouz, 2017; Charles & Bradley, 2009; Gershon, 2017; Rivera, 2015b; Sharone, 2013; Wingfield, 2010). We explain how the passion schema factors into sorting people into jobs and occupations, deciding whom to hire and promote, and designating value to paid work—or even acknowledging some types of labor as work at all. Throughout, we document how the cultural norms for white-collar workers to express passion reflect gendered, racialized, and classed expectations for workers, which have important ramifications for social inequality in the workplace.

THE PASSION SCHEMA AT WORK

Passion has not been fully conceptualized in the extant literature. Research suggests that passion has been variously understood as a value reflecting a worker's loyalty and commitment (Rivera, 2015b; Tobias Neely, 2019), a cultural schema about self-expression that guides career aspirations (Cech, 2018), a form of veiled privilege motivating creative pursuits (Duffy, 2017), and an expression of "love" of one's "clients" (Reid, 2015). These varying definitions of passion in the literature reflect how passion is unclearly understood in workplaces, differing from one workplace to the next. Nevertheless, defining passion is important since employers and gatekeepers agree that it is an essential characteristic to possess.

We suggest that passion captures a cultural schema for workers, as it does for prospective workers (Cech, 2018), that guides social interactions in workplaces and reflects a set of underlying cultural beliefs, values, and ideals that work should be meaningful, fulfilling, and stimulating. By culture, we refer to a collection of symbolic meanings through which people interpret their everyday lives (Swidler, 1986). Schemas refer to a set of shared expectations, ideals, beliefs, and values (Blair-Loy, 2005; J. L. Martin, 2009; Sewell, 1992). In other words, cultural schemas serve as ordering principles governing how we think, behave, and interact. For workers, cultural schemas pattern interactions and, as a result, have important consequences for who gains access to opportunities and rewards.

The expectation for passion in the workplace is directly connected to Blair-Loy's (2005) concept of work devotion. The work devotion cultural schema refers to a value-laden orientation that frames how people understand the significance and meaning of work in their lives. As an extension of Weber's conception of work as a vocation, the work devotion schema frames a career as a calling that requires "single-minded focus and allegiance" (2005, p. 6). While love and enthusiasm characterize the expectation for both devotion and passion, loyalty distinguishes the two cultural schemas. The expectation for loyalty is part of the work devotion schema but not the passion schema. Rather than expecting a sense of loyalty from their employees, employers perceive passion—the expectation to have an intense drive, enthusiasm, or even infatuation—as a demonstration of the employee's commitment. This distinction is key in an economic context featuring insecurity, uncertainty, and instability.

The passion schema has emerged as integral to work, especially in elite, white-collar occupations, in the new economy. By focusing on the passion schema, we limit our attention to the expectations for

the cultural expression of passion, including the embodied performances that adhering to these cultural expectations may entail. The passion schema captures how workers are required to engage in an emotional performance that signals their devotion to work to a particular audience, e.g., an employer. This performance is required because of the contemporary uncertainty of white-collar work. The dimension of performativity provides a missing link to understanding how work devotion is conveyed, expressed, and perceived in the new economy, which is characterized by instability.

Extrapolating from the extant research, we suggest that the passion schema can be parsed into two cultural ideals, which are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. We refer to the first ideal as the *work-specific passion ideal.* Work-specific passion captures how white-collar workers frame a job's daily responsibilities as intellectually stimulating, intrinsically meaningful, and personally fulfilling, even when the individual tasks themselves may be unsatisfying, tedious, or even boring. Emphasizing enthusiasm for the minutiae of work is a way to express passion for an industry or occupation and convey the intellectual fit of the worker. This expectation for enthusiasm is especially prevalent in high-status, high-paid, and time-intensive work such as among management consultants, bankers, and corporate lawyers (Reid, 2015; Rivera, 2015b; Tobias Neely, 2019; Wynn, 2018; Wynn & Rao, 2019).

We refer to the second ideal as *generalized passion.* According to this ideal, embodied performances of passion, excitement, and enthusiasm correspond to a generalized personality characteristic and outlook on life. In this understanding, passion is not necessarily linked to the work at hand but typically refers more to a deep enthusiasm for life. Thus, this joie de vivre is assumed to carry out throughout the worker's life, bringing a sense of passion to any activity the person undertakes whether at work, home, or play. Employers may perceive generalized passion as a proxy for commitment and reliability. That is, workers who express enthusiasm for all activities they undertake, whether it be lifestyle blogging or ultramarathons, are perceived to be more reliable employees who will transfer this sense of passion to their paid work (Rivera, 2015b).

Generalized passion is particularly evident in the research on lifestyle occupations, for example, hipster cafes, boutique hotels, and digital lifestyle influencers. In these occupations, typically populated by White, middle-class, and attractive young men and women, employers tend to hire for gregarious personalities who immediately embody the industry—whether that be luxury for boutique hotels or an edgy style for boutiques and hipster cafes (Duffy & Hund, 2015; Ocejo, 2017; Sherman, 2007). In upscale retail jobs, clothing boutiques require workers to "look good and sound right," which demands considerable esthetic labor to achieve carefully curated dispositions of class-privileged workers, often expressed through sartorial self-presentation (C. L. Williams & Connell, 2010, p. 350). Company brands privilege workers who embody White-dominant and heterosexualized beauty standards (Walters, 2018). While these types of jobs feature degraded working conditions, they prioritize workers with class and race privilege perceived to correspond to that of customers and catalog models. High-end retailers hire based on the applicant's ability to capture a "look," express enthusiasm for the work, and demonstrate an amiable personality (Gatta, 2011). Performing the expected esthetic labor—which includes generalized passion—communicates commitment to the job in a context where the company provides low pay, irregular hours, and unpredictable schedules for workers (Misra & Walters, 2016; C. L. Williams & Connell, 2010).

Because work in creative, boutique, and other service-oriented industries tends to be less stable and lower paid relative to other high-status jobs, generalized passion serves the specific function of retaining workers. Duffy (2017) explains that the "aspirational labor" of striving to become an Instagram influencer "pairs passion with (worker) profit to glamorize labor conditions that are far less remunerative and gratifying than hyped" (p. 11). In the new digital creative economy, generalized passion becomes a way of justifying free or underpaid labor, particularly given that only a small fraction of those striving to become influencers are actually able to live off their activity on Instagram.

These broad conceptions of ideals of passion outlined above do not constitute a comprehensive list of how the passion schema may be understood and enacted in the workplace. Nor are these ideals, or indeed the passion schema, clearly demarcated as such in the literature we review. The research we outline typically mentions passion tangentially rather than theorizing it as a central component of neoliberal workplaces that shapes unequal rewards as it intersects with other dimensions of the workplace. We use work-specific passion and generalized passion ideals as heuristic devices to demonstrate the expectation for workers to convey an intense commitment to their work. Both ideals are indicative of an underlying neoliberal ideology that casts workers as rational, self-interested actors whose interests and pursuits reflect individual choices (Du Gay, 1996; Vallas & Cummins, 2015).

PASSION AS EMOTIONAL CAPITAL IN A NEOLIBERAL ECONOMY

The passion schema has material consequences for workers. In her 1983 book, *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochchild laid out a path-breaking feminist agenda for a sociological study of emotions. As the U.S. economy transitioned into a service-based economy, ideas of "service with a smile" and "the customer is always right" prevailed. Hochchild explained that work in a service-sector capitalist economy entails the commodification of workers' emotions. She termed this "emotional labor." Emotional labor is conducted for a wage, subject to the employer's control, and prioritizes the client's emotions rather than those of the worker. Furthermore, Hochchild identified how workplaces have feeling rules to guide how workers behave and interact in their daily lives. These rules help to solidify workplace social hierarchies that are typically gendered, classed, and racialized (Hochschild, 1983; Kang, 2010; Leidner, 1991; Sherman, 2007; Wingfield, 2010). Research has since identified how emotional labor is crucial in shaping workers' experiences within and beyond the service sector (Craciun, 2017; Gershon, 2017; Hochschild, 2011; Pierce, 1996; Rivera, 2015a; Sharone, 2013; Wharton, 2009; Wingfield, 2010).

Since the publication of Hochschild's book, employment insecurity has become an enduring feature of the American workforce, heralding a new emotional landscape of work. Emotional labor at work has become expansive, taking on different forms, especially evident in esthetic and style labor (Besen-Cassino, 2017; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). In this era characterized by a neoliberal economy where the individual has become a marketable product (Vallas & Cummins, 2015), passion is emerging as an important cultural schema for adjudicating opportunities and career trajectories. The passion schema at work coincides with employers largely abandoning a sense of commitment to workers (Vosko, 2009). Instead, employers are downsizing, restructuring, and outsourcing labor to raise the bottom line (Davis, 2009; Kalleberg, 2011; Osnowitz, 2010). Work has become more precarious, and employment is no longer secure (Kalleberg, 2011). Technological advances have brought new and entrepreneurial occupations such as data scientists, market research data miners, application developers, and social media influencers. A new "portfolio" ideal for white-collar workers has emerged that reflects a value for individualism, entrepreneurship, and risk taking—all necessities for weathering employment insecurity (Tobias Neely, 2019).

There is a consequent double standard in the relationship between employers and employees: while employers no longer guarantee long-term employment, they expect their employees to demonstrate dedication and commitment to the work. In a context where job insecurity looms large, the passion schema is becoming an important avenue through which workers communicate a sense of commitment to the job (Gershon, 2017; Pugh, 2015; Rivera, 2015b; Sharone, 2013; Tobias Neely, 2019).

Workers in the neoliberal era have thus become independent economic agents and self-entrepreneurs or *homo economicus* (Du Gay, 1996; Foucault, 2007; Vallas & Cummins, 2015). As a result, emotional labor has the potential to be an individual asset at work. Cottingham (2016) developed the theory of emotional capital to explain how emotions serve as interpersonal resources through which individuals and groups can maintain privilege and power in contemporary society. When deployed strategically, the raw material of emotions is transformed into emotional capital or "one's trans-

situational, emotion-based knowledge, emotion management skills, and feeling capacities, which are both socially emergent and critical to the maintenance of power" (Cottingham, 2016, p. 454). As Cottingham suggests, emotional capital can be gendered, racialized, and classed in various contexts. The activation of appropriate emotional capital in the arena of work can translate into accruing rewards such as being hired and promoted.

As a type of emotional capital, passion has the capacity to transfer work-related rewards such as employment, promotions, and bonuses more readily to some workers than to others. Below, we explain how the passion schema—broadly conceived by gatekeepers and workers alike—shapes pathways into occupations, entry into organizations, and trajectories throughout careers. At each point, we explain how and who is recognized as having passion, essentially who is able to deploy passion as emotional capital, and in which contexts are shaped by and shape axes of social inequality, especially at the intersections of race, class, and gender.

PATHWAYS INTO OCCUPATIONS

Ostensible passions for occupations and industries are not innate but shaped by a host of social factors including gender, racial, and social class status. The contemporary U.S. economic landscape is characterized by extensive inequality and uncertainty (Kalleberg, 2011). The reverberations of these economic shifts are keenly experienced within families, with affluent families preparing their children to prepare for a changing economy as they make occupational decisions from an early age onwards. Nelson (2012) finds that affluent parents have heightened expectations for their children, encouraging children to pursue paid work that is deeply meaningful beyond financial stability and security. The notion of pursuing a "vocation" is becoming prevalent among these parents and aligns with the expectations of white-collar employers, as we will review later.

Additionally, Nelson (2012) and Pugh (2018) both note that affluent parents are responding to economic shifts by raising their children to consciously, and strategically, cultivate passion as they consider future occupations. Pugh shows that rather than dabbling in many extracurricular activities, parents are counseling children to identify activities that they are passionate about and dive deeply into one or two extracurricular activities. This parenting approach aligns with the work-specific passion ideal. Affluent parents appear to be keenly apprised of the passion schema and find it important to encourage their children to align with it. Later on, as these children commence careers, this class orientation may place affluent children at an advantage relative to their less class-privileged peers (Rao, 2019).

Affluent parents also encourage their children to develop a generalized sense of passion by cultivating an orientation that prioritizes new experiences (Weinberger, Zavisca, & Silva, 2017), especially global travel (Pugh, 2015). This type of expansive orientation upholds an expectation for a deep enthusiasm for the unknown and a generalized sense of passion for life, which are also prioritized in many elite industries, such as management consulting (Rivera, 2012).

Other social institutions also play a role in fostering the passion schema. Beginning in the school system and early stages of their careers, people are socialized into rules about how to express their feelings in a professional manner and to suppress their emotional responses to stimuli at work (Cahill, 1999). This learning process is most apparent in the work of professional actors who receive in-depth training in emotion management and expression (Orzechowicz, 2008). Inciting intense emotions at will, as actors do, requires work and preparation. Even in business and law, for example, workers must perform their roles with appropriate emotional displays (Pierce, 1996). What appears natural or instinctive is actually learned through patterned social interactions over time and reflects the internalization of cultural expectations. Vocational passions are cultivated through socialization processes akin to how students develop interests in specific fields of study. Although shaped by social influences throughout childhood such as those shaped by social class status, what one is passionate about is understood as a personal preference or aptitude (Cech, 2018; Rivera, 2015b). This assumption

that passion is innate rather than socialized naturalizes how ostensible passions influence social disparities.

In their research on gender and academic interests, Charles and Bradley (2009) identify how cultural norms for gendered self-expression shape how students form academic interests, which then leads to gender segregation in schools and workplaces. Students are encouraged to express themselves through gendered norms, which are later perceived as personal "choices." For example, a young girl is encouraged to play with a baby doll and then later pursues a career in nursing. Her initial doll playing, encouraged by adults, is seen as an innate passion for nurturing. Yet other processes in the education system, workplace, and labor market actively sort women into these types of professions (see also Schilt, 2011). Moreover, what is often recognized as a socialized "passion" for an academic pathway is directly shaped by a profession's culture, making girls and women less interested in pursuing careers in industries with masculine cultures such as the STEM fields (Cheryan, Ziegler, Montoya, & Jiang, 2017; Wynn & Correll, 2017). Neither conveying a work-specific nor a generalized sense of passion is equally available to all.

Studying how college students prepare for careers, Cech (2018, p. 2) identifies what she calls the "passion principle," defined as "a morally-laden elevation of self-expression as the central guiding principle in career decisions." Across three universities, Cech finds that the "passion principle" is consistent among students across gender, social class, race, ethnicity, and school. All students embrace the passion principle, but well-educated parents often influence the intellectual pursuits of students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Thus, these students have an advantage in pursuing higher status careers. Cech concludes that class privilege provides a financial safety net allowing these students to pursue their passions rather than careers out of necessity. Pursuing a passion distinguishes class-privileged students from their peers from lower class backgrounds who may seek social class mobility. The passion principle frames passion as an individual choice, which makes unequal outcomes in student majors appear to be the product of innate preferences, obscuring the salience of class privilege in shaping these preferences. Sociologists tend to question personal choice explanations for labor market outcomes and instead identify how social structures shape these outcomes (see, for example, Schilt, 2011). The passion principle casts professional drive as an individual accomplishment and thus conceals the cultural and social capital required to find a job—let alone one that inspires passion.

Similarly, the passion schema paints later career outcomes as the result of enthusiasm and aptitude rather than privilege, such as the social capital provided by having an upper–middle-class or upper-class background and attending a high-status college or university. Examples of these include industries that involve risk taking, such as entrepreneurial endeavors and creative industries. The key similarity among entrepreneurs is not some innate motivation spurred by raw passion for innovation but being highly educated and from affluent backgrounds (Levine & Rubinstein, 2017). People with financial safety nets and those who inherit family businesses find it easier to become entrepreneurs since they incur less financial risk (Byrne, Fattoum, & Thébaud, 2019; Tobias Neely, 2018). Thus, in practice, social capital provides access to lucrative networks—usually White-male dominated—that have job and investment opportunities (Bielby, 2012; Sterling, 2014). Research on industries such as financial services and oil and gas suggests that networks are the key determinants of success, accounting for why high-status White men more easily advance (McGuire, 2012; Roth, 2006; C. L. Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). The ideal for generalized passion conceals how social capital is necessary to navigate the riskiness of entrepreneurial work in the new economy.

The creative industries demonstrate how the pursuit of passion is usually borne by those with class privilege and with other means of sustenance, such as family subsidies. Historically, creative work— art, writing, music, acting, and filmmaking—has been understood as a labor of love or a "vocation" (Weber, 1958) Work in creative industries, such as the music (Frenette, 2013), new media (Neff, Wissinger, & Zukin, 2005), and craft industries (Ocejo, 2017) hinges on the passion schema to legitimate acute uncertainty. In their study of new media workers and fashion models, Neff,

Wissinger, and Zukin (2005) explain that these workers view their jobs as exceptionally high status since they are in "cool" jobs in "hot" industries. Young workers can pursue careers in low-paying industries with cachet because they typically have financial support from their families. In these industries, the generalized passion ideal serves to align the worker's personality and skill with the cultural requirements of the industries, including creative and artistic expression. But this alignment is often contingent on social class status.

Akin to creative workers, nonprofit workers also justify their work's uncertainty and low pay with the value of service to others, compassion, and policymaking (Benditt, 2015). In other words, the work-specific passion ideal legitimizes the precarious conditions. In her study of international development work, Rao (2017b) contends that young professionals may accept the highly uncertain terms of their jobs—leading to an unreliable stream of income—because of the meaning gained from this work.

In this section, we have shown that beginning in schooling, the passion principle means that in social institutions such as families, schools, and universities, future workers are encouraged to make professional decisions based on individual passions rather than on economic or employment concerns, with implications for social class and gender inequalities. Meanwhile, both workers and workplace gatekeepers use discourses associated with the passion schema that legitimizes the exploitation of educated workers in a variety of fields, including the music industry, international development, and management consulting (Frenette, 2013; Rao, 2017b; Wynn, 2018).

HIRING IN ORGANIZATIONS

Beyond occupational pathways, the passion schema also shapes how powerful institutional gatekeepers make hiring decisions. Getting hired in the U.S. workplace, especially for professionals, involves complying with an expectation for either work-specific or generalized passion for a job they do not yet have (Ehrenreich, 2006; Gershon, 2017; Sharone, 2013; Smith, 2002). In her research on job searching in the Silicon Valley, Gershon (2017) finds that employers reported valuing passion above and beyond potential employees' skills. One hiring manager told Gershon why he privileged a sense of passion in potential recruits: "This is what guarantees that the employee will work the long hours necessary to get the job done" (p. 214).

In a comparative study of unemployment, white-collar tech workers in the United States and Israel, Sharone (2013) finds that U.S. job seekers are expected to exude passion as they endeavor to move forward in the interviewing processes. As if on a date, U.S. employers expect job seekers attempt to inspire in potential employers a sense of tripartite "chemistry" among the employer, the job, and the job seeker. Israeli job seekers, meanwhile, strive to match the job specifications—playing the "specs" game—and understand the labor market as achieving optimal matching. While U.S. job seekers blame themselves for unsuccessful interviews and ignore the structural factors shaping unemployment, Israeli job seekers are far more attentive to structural factors. The passion schema may contribute to this self-blame and the ensuing emotional responses, such as feeling shame and stigma, in the U.S. context.

Similarly, in a study of hiring professionals at elite firms who recuit students from elite universities, Rivera (2015b) too finds an ideal for glorifying work as a passion. The passion schema guides how hiring recruiters in her study expect students to express their academic and professional interests and search for markers of an ambiguously defined sense of passion, which they nonetheless use to filter candidates. Recruiters seek out candidates who frame their high-status achievements as evidence of "inner drives, loves, and values" (p. 152). Recruiters also cite the importance of a candidate who expresses intellectual curiosity and demonstrates personal growth, which they perceive to indicate passion and drive. Finally, while recruiters want to be emotionally moved and inspired by the candidates' personal stories, recruiters do not find all personal stories equally moving; they express more empathy for candidates whose biographies closely resembled their own. Cloaked in the passion schema, recruiters reproduce homophily in their workplaces. Recruiters do not often recognize how

the "choice" to pursue one's passion may only be available to students with socioeconomic privilege. Rivera concludes that a rhetoric of drive and choice may bolster a more middle- and upper–middle-class, and specifically the United States, worldview.

ADVANCEMENT WITHIN ORGANZATIONS

Once hired, the passion schema has implications for people's career trajectories. White-collar organizations tend to feature gendered, racialized, and classed expectations for workers, including requirements for emotional labor, that shape who advances in the workplace. These social expectations are the result of deep-seated assumptions, called status beliefs, that gender, class, and race reflect different innate aptitudes, qualities, and propensities (Ridgeway, 2011; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). On the basis of these beliefs, organizations and industries sort people into different jobs and departments, usually with unequal pay and status. In white-collar occupations, White, and usually elite, men are predominantly sorted into the positions with the greatest power and authority (Kanter, 1977; Roth, 2006). Workers of color tend to get tracked into specific careers and assigned to tasks that reinforce racialized hierarchies and segregation at work (Collins, 1996; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). These beliefs influence the distribution of tasks, responsibility, authority, and pay. In this way, gender, class and race, as social structures, become embedded into the norms, policies, and practices organizing the workplace (Acker, 2006; P. Y. Martin, 2003; Ray, 2019; Risman, 2004).

A key to understanding these processes lies in a pervasive ideal worker norm that requires complete dedication to work and expects workers to be unfettered from responsibilities at home, as demonstrated by constant availability to fulfill workplace demands (Acker, 1990; Blair-Loy, 2005; Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, & Moen, 2010; J. C. Williams, 2001). Expectations may include long hours of face time at the office, being accessible through electronic means, frequent travel for work, and overwork into the evenings or weekends. While this norm reflects an ideal, research identifies how workers who comply with these demands are more likely to advance (Cooper, 2000; Michel, 2011; Reid, 2015; Stone, 2007). The ideal worker norm is a key reason why women—who hold primary responsibility for caregiving—are less likely to be rewarded with promotions, evaluations, and compensation. Moreover, this conception of the ideal worker is explicitly predicated on assumptions about both masculinity and Whiteness (Thistle, 2006; Wooten & Branch, 2012). In these organizational contexts, Whiteness is a credential for accessing organizational resources, status, and opportunities (Ray, 2019). Because of this persistent norm, White men continue to dominate many white-collar workplaces in status, power, and numbers.

Emotional labor is one avenue through which white-collar occupations apply unspecified racialized, gendered, and classed criteria for advancement and apply an additional burden on tokens. This pressure stems from how the emotional climate of a workplace is perceived differently by workers in the dominant status group relative to those in marginalized or tokenized positions (Pierce, 2003). For example, in a study of the leveraged-buyout industry, Turco (2010, p. 899) identifies an emotional requirement for social bonding through a shared enjoyment of sports. In this study, women report a greater sense of exclusion and acute tokenization. The women's experiences stood in stark contrast to the Black men in this study, who described their workplaces as "supportive" and "warm." Other research, however, has shown that Black professionals, including men, are required to uphold the racialized hierarchy of White-dominant organizations by performing emotional labor such as laughing at racist jokes to please White colleagues (Wingfield & Alston, 2014). Racial minorities face double standards when they comply with Whites colleagues' emotional expectations (Ray, 2019; Wingfield, 2010). As Wingfield (2010, p. 265) writes, in these settings, "black professionals are scrutinized not only for what they *do*, but what they *feel*" (author's emphasis). Thus, interracial interactions in White-dominated organizations—and within a broader structural system of racial inequality—create an additional emotional burden for people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).

Complying with the expectation to demonstrate passion matters because it impacts who advances in a work organization (Michel, 2011; Reid, 2015). In one study of jobs with excessively long hours, the

authors found that most workers complied with expectations for work-specific passion by expressing "love" for their jobs, wearing their commitment and long hours as a badge of honor (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Studies of fields with hypermasculine cultures—such as financial services, information technology, and professional consulting—identify how the ideals for workers are closely tied to generalized passion conveyed through an intense, driving, or overwhelming feeling, e.g., passion for accumulating money (Roth, 2006; Tobias Neely, 2019). The passion schema may be labeled as such or expressed as a calling, vocation, conviction, or mission, as Turco (2016) finds in a technology firm.

In a study of hedge funds, a high-wage industry in financial services where stock market volatility makes employment insecure, Tobias Neely (2019) finds that work-specific passion has replaced the ideal worker's devotion to their firm. Work-specific passion, rather than a commitment to one's firm, is assumed to motivate workers to carry out the intellectual effort and long hours needed to succeed. Similarly, in consulting, an occupation where overwork is a norm, Reid (2015) finds that consultants justify commitment through a language of love and passion. One participant explains why she makes personal sacrifices to meet workplace demands: "I really love my clients. I wake up in the morning and wonder whether my clients are awake, whether they've emailed me, whether I need to do something for them" (Reid, 2015, p. 6). Thus commitment and work-specific passion are inextricably intertwined. Conversely, consultants who are not constantly available are understood to have a lack of passion and commitment to the work—with consequences for performance evaluations. Reid finds that the consultants who most successfully presented themselves as committed and passionate received the highest performance ratings, directly impacting their promotions and bonuses.

Demonstrating either work-specific or generalized passion is neither equally accessible to all workers nor universally interpreted as passion by leadership. For some workers, upholding the ideal for expressing work-specific passion is considered suspect. For example, mothers are believed to be more passionate about mothering than their jobs (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007), and pregnant women and mothers report their commitment being questioned because of this (Blair-Loy, 2005; Turco, 2010; Wynn, 2018). In Turco's (2010) study of the leveraged-buyout industry, pregnant women reported working before scheduled caesarian sections, taking calls in delivery rooms, and forgoing maternity leave altogether to prove their enthusiasm and commitment to work. These extreme measures counteracted the "mommy path" stigma, a derogatory term for working mothers who prioritize their children over work.

Gender and race interact to shape how colleagues respond to expressions of passion. Wingfield (2007, 2010, 2013) identifies how Black professionals face a double standard in how their enactments of the dominant feeling rules of their occupations are received. This double standard is evident in the emotions of anger and frustration, which are often recognized as part and parcel of white-collar work, especially in law and finance (Pierce, 1996; Zaloom, 2006). When White professionals display these emotions, it typically demonstrates drive, passion, and commitment to the work. Black professionals in Wingfield's research, however, report needing to be "more poised" than White colleagues, especially to combat an "angry Black person" stereotype. The Black professionals Wingfield interviewed identified negative consequences for expressing outrage or anger, which may well stem from their very investment in the work at hand, and felt the need to suppress irritation and frustration. To counter the stereotype, Black men performed emotional labor to appear emotionally neutral, which Wingfield explains may lead colleagues to interpret them as indifferent, unconcerned, or dispassionate. Racist stereotypes thus preclude Black professionals from being seen as upholding the expectation for passion in the workplace, a valued trait touted by recruiters.

Yet passion may be recognized and validated when it aligns with stereotypes of racialized jobs. Wingfield, Hordge-Freeman, and Smith-Lovin (2017) find that diversity managers in companies and higher education report a sense of fulfillment, satisfaction, and work-specific passion. In their study, Darla, a Latina diversity officer at a college, said, "Because when you do this work you have a passion for it and that's why you're in it, not just to collect a paycheck" (p. 206). The authors conclude

that these positive emotional responses help to buffer the toll and stress of doing this hard work, which involves enduring racism and other pressures of tokenism.

Race, migration, nationality, class, and gender status interact to influence who embraces the ideal for having passion for specific occupations. In Ocejo's (2017) study of male-dominated craft industries, the men he interviewed were not equally viewed as "craftsmen" in their fields, nor necessarily perceived themselves as such. Race, class, and gender shaped these perceptions and largely determined who advanced. For example, one butcher identified how he is penalized because of his status as a Mexican immigrant. This social position perhaps explains why he called butchering "just a job," rather seeing it through the passion schema as many of his White, United States-born colleagues did. Work-specific passion may thus transform low-wage service sector jobs into higher status professional crafts, but this is typically driven by and available to White, middle-class men entering these occupations, who are more likely to identify and be recognized as craftsmen.

In Hochschild's (1983) terms, upholding the "feeling rules" of the workplace, including the expectation for expressing generalized or work-specific passion, may be especially difficult for workers who experience tokenism, such as the Mexican butcher in Ocejo's (2017) study or Black professionals in Wingfield's (2007, 2010, 2013) research. Gendered and racialized tokens, such as women in male-dominated workplaces or racial minorities in White-dominated workplaces, often feel isolated, excluded, and exposed (Kanter, 1977; Turco, 2010; Wingfield, 2013). Complying with feeling rules for amiability and passion may thus be more burdensome for them, as they may be focused on the basic level of getting colleagues' respect (Wingfield, 2010).

CONCLUSION: OUTLINING A RESEARCH AGENDA ON PASSION AT WORK

The shifting organization of work is heralding a new emotional landscape, one where passion—broadly conceived—is becoming a primary cultural schema adjudicating labor market rewards such as being hired, promoted, and paid. We identify five avenues for further scholarly attention.

First, research should more explicitly examine how passion is understood, perceived, and defined in workplaces. Items for consideration include how do different stakeholders in the realm of work conceptualize, define, and understand passion? Does the passion schema factor into employers' promotion criteria and how? During hiring, or performance evaluations, how do employers discuss workers' physical, facial, and vocal demonstrations of passions or lack thereof? How are criteria combined and weighted as gatekeepers and colleagues alike determine whether, and to what extent, a worker has passion? These questions require a nuanced consideration of how supervisors read worker's demeanor, comportment, and embodiment, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone, and posture. Research should attend to how race, class, and gender interact in the embodiment of passion at work, specifically whose bodies are read as passionate and whose are not, and how this interplay constructs social hierarchies in the workplace and labor force. A related question involves how workers spend time outside of work. For example, a software developer who spends their free time coding may be seen as passionate, whereas a developer who watches television or knits during free time may be seen as less so. Understanding how and why some people are read as passionate and others are not remains an important task for scholars.

Second, while research on hiring and promotion finds that passion matters, we need to better understand how and under what conditions the passion schema has salience. Sharone's (2013) research demonstrates how comparative studies provide a fruitful avenue for parsing out these questions. Comparative studies—across industries and national contexts—could explain when, how, and why the passion schema mediates workplace experiences more powerfully in some contexts than others. Relatedly, is passion an informal consideration or it is formalized through hiring and promotion criteria? If formalized, how is this done, and in what contexts is this more likely? These are important questions since the expectations for passion vary, as this literature suggests, and potentially contributes to gender, class, and race bias. Identifying industries and occupations in which passion is

more salient, especially at the pivotal points of hiring and promotion, would help to further our understanding of inequality.

Third, another underresearched aspect of passion regards pay. In some sectors, such as creative and not-for-profit work, expectations of passion may be linked to lower pay. However, the role of the passion schema in hiring and promotion in other industries, especially White male-dominated ones, such as financial services and information technology, implies that passion may also be rewarded monetarily. Just as perceptions of passion play a nebulous role in whether one worker is hired over another, passion may influence how bonuses and benefits are determined. Demonstrating passion, and having decision makers recognize a person's passion, may be crucial to career progression.

Fourth, scholars should further examine how the passion schema shapes social inequalities, such as those organized by gender, race, class, immigration, and citizenship status. While research has clearly identified occupational gender sorting, especially in male-dominated fields, we need additional scholarly attention to these other dimensions of occupational sorting. How do racist stereotypes interact with the passion schema to shape the careers of people of color? Moreover, how does this vary across racial statuses, as well as those delineated by immigration, nationality, and citizenship? Social class also merits more research, especially with respect to the social and cultural capital needed to pursue one's passion. Scholars should further consider how certain groups are systematically held back from higher status and paying roles due to either a perceived lack of passion or too much passion. Perhaps most importantly, research should interrogate how these social positions interact to shape how passion is pursued, enacted, and perceived.

Finally, the new economy requires workers to weather uncertainty and instability. Additional research is warranted on how passion may becoming a proxy for a worker's devotion and commitment in this context of labor market precariousness, such as in the financial services industry (Tobias Neely, 2019). Manufacturing firms and other large employers used to reward committed workers with lifelong employment, generous benefits, and incremental promotions and raises. Today, employers remain emotionally detached from workers, yet workers must convey a sense of passion and commitment to their jobs, even when workers may be downsized or restructured at a moment's notice. More research is needed to explore this paradox, or what Pugh (2015) terms the "one-way honor system," to understand why the passion schema appears to have become more salient during an era of employment insecurity.

As recent research suggests, an expectation for expressing passion, ambiguously understood yet extensively referenced by various stakeholders, appears to be a key mediator for advancement in the new economy. Our review suggests that analyzing the conditions under which the passion schema influences workplace advancement, and how gatekeepers adjudicate passion, is an important aspect of workplace inequalities. Applying an intersectional lens exposes the underlying power structures and emerging social hierarchies at play that determine whose labor is recognized, valued, and compensated.

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