Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities*

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In this article we ask what it means for sociologists to practice intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological approach to inequality. What are the implications for choices of subject matter and style of work? We distinguish three styles of understanding intersectionality in practice: group-centered, process-centered, and system-centered. The first, emphasizes placing multiply-marginalized groups and their perspectives at the center of the research. The second, intersectionality as a process, highlights power as relational, seeing the interactions among variables as multiplying oppressions at various points of intersection, and drawing attention to unmarked groups. Finally, seeing intersectionality as shaping the entire social system pushes analysis away from associating specific inequalities with unique institutions, instead looking for processes that are fully interactive, historically co-determining, and complex. Using several examples of recent, highly regarded qualitative studies, we draw attention to the comparative, contextual, and complex dimensions of sociological analysis that can be missing even when race, class, and gender are explicitly brought together.

Recent feminist scholarship increasingly presents race, class, and gender as closely intertwined and argues that these forms of stratification need to be studied in relation to each other, conceptualizing them, for example, as a "matrix of domination" (Collins 1990) or "complex inequality" (McCall 2001). Scholars have referred this nonadditive way of understanding social inequality with various terms, including "intersectional" (Crenshaw 1991), "integrative" (Glenn 1999), or as a "race-class-gender" approach (Pascale 2007). Feminist scholarship has embraced the call for an intersectional analysis but largely left the specifics of what it means indistinct, leading Kathy Davis (2008) to call intersectionality a theoretical "buzzword" with as yet unrealized analytic bite. Moreover, whether such feminist appeals have practical consequences for sociology is hard to estimate without more precisely defining what this agenda implies for the conduct of research.

This article addresses the question of what it means to practice intersectionality sociologically as a theoretical and methodological approach to inequality. Despite the significance of intersectionality for feminist scholars, it has not become a key concern for the many sociologists not directly working on gender issues. Our argument advances in two distinct steps, first clarifying the differences in how scholars who have explicitly worked with the concept of intersectionality have employed it and then turning to consider how intersectional analysis could be more widely used to inform understandings of core sociological issues, such as institutions, power relationships, culture, and interpersonal interaction. We emphasize the underutilized potential in the concept of intersectionality for the discipline as a whole, and therefore in our second step select four empirical studies situated in areas outside the sociology of gender and widely familiar across fields of specialization to serve as illustrations of the analytical purchase that intersectionality can offer. Not all empirical studies are equally well served by any one type of intersectional analysis; we consider the three types of intersectionality as tools that can be useful in different circumstances. For those sociologists substantively concerned with multiple inequalities, being clear about which specific style of intersectional analysis they prefer will help to define their theoretical research agenda. But we hope to show that for the discipline as a whole, all three tools can complement and enhance the specific purposes of the researcher by making analysis more effective.

The initial stage of our argument focuses on the implications for choices of subject matter and style of work that follow in practice from specific conceptualizations of intersectionality. Drawing on a wealth of feminist theorizing on intersectionality (e.g., Hancock 2007; McCall 2005; Walby 2009), we review and categorize the styles of intersectional practices that exist as being group-centered, process-centered, and system-centered. The first emphasizes including multiply-marginalized groups in the content of the research; the latter two focus on explaining intersectional dynamics through the way that the analysis of the data is done.

This primary argument builds from the many recent reviews and critiques that highlight the nonspecific nature of feminist intersectionality as a theoretical approach (e.g., Davis 2008; Prins 2006). As an open-ended concept, it is being filled with multiple meanings that may be more or less desirable. On the one hand, scholars such as Lombardo et al. (2009), Ferree (2009), and Kantola and Nousiainen (2009) consider how this still-vague concept is given form as it is translated into legal and political practices. Kantola and Nousiainen (2009) in particular emphasize the ways that new laws, especially in Europe, are institutionalizing an interpretation of intersectionality as multiple forms of discrimination and thus encouraging an "oppression Olympics" for scarce state resources. On the other hand, sociologists such as Ken (2008), Yuval-Davis (2006), and McCall (2005) and political scientists such as Weldon (2008) and Hancock (2007) try to make the concept more usable for researchers by pointing to how its different meanings reflect different kinds of theoretical concerns. Their argument is that increased theoretical coherence would improve the analytic payoff, but they offer only very general suggestions for what such work would look like.

After laying out more specifically how particular methodological practices are associated with alternative theoretical meanings of intersectionality, we then turn to consider how these practices of intersectional analysis offer insights missed in even excellent sociological work. In this second step, we select four outstanding works of qualitative research that are engaging with multiple inequalities at a conceptual level and use them as our data for considering the methodological implications of

bringing in particular styles of intersectional analysis. We organize our exploration of the methodological strengths and weaknesses of these works around three defining aspects of intersectionality: inclusion, analytical interactions, and institutional primacy. First, we raise the issue of "giving voice to the oppressed" as an expression of intersectionality. This is defined in practice as a focus on *inclusion* of the experiences of multiply-marginalized persons and groups. Second, we focus on intersectionality as defined in practice as an *analytic interaction*: a nonadditive process, a transformative interactivity of effects. This captures methodologically what intersectionality theorists mean by moving beyond the enumeration and addition of race, class, gender, and other types of social subordination as separate factors. Third, definitions of intersectionality differ in how willing they are to give *institutional primacy* to one or more sites for producing social inequalities, whether as main effects or as interactions. Approaches that see intersectionality as segmented—with certain institutions primarily associated with one type of inequality or another, such as class with the economy and gender with the family—in practice apply intersectional analyses to explain the "extra" oppressions and "secondary" contradictions for nondominant groups.

By tracing the specificity of interpretive practices across these four highly acclaimed "intersectional" studies, we attempt to show how and when each of these three meanings becomes deployed and what facets of an intersectional analysis are neglected when they are. Our purpose is less to criticize these authors than to use a critical reading of their methodological choices to reveal their underlying theoretical concerns. In our conclusion, we also draw on these examples to argue for using a more contextual and comparative methodology to study intersectionality itself in a process-centered, institutionally complex way.

THEORIZING INTERSECTIONALITY

Feminist overviews of the concept of intersectionality have multiplied in recent years as theorists have attempted to grasp what this "buzzword" actually means to those who use it (Davis 2008). In addition to Davis, McCall (2005), Prins (2006), and Hancock (2007) all provide useful historical reviews that emphasize both the different theoretical needs that led to the emergence of the concept of intersectionality in the first place and the variation that remains in how it is understood and applied today. We build on their comprehensive reviews to highlight three dimensions of theorizing that have become part of what "intersectionality" signifies: the importance of including the perspectives of multiply-marginalized people, especially women of color; an analytic shift from addition of multiple independent strands of inequality toward a multiplication and thus transformation of their main effects into interactions; and a focus on seeing multiple institutions as overlapping in their co-determination of inequalities to produce complex configurations from the start, rather than "extra" interactive processes that are added onto main effects. We point out how each of these studies could become richer in their empirical findings than they already are: if they had emphasized the inclusion of perspectives, not only persons, from the margins of society; if they had problematized relationships of power for unmarked categories, such as whiteness and masculinity; or if they had treated inequalities as multiply-determined and intertwined rather than assuming one central institutional framework.

Inclusion-Centered Interpretations: Intersecting Identities

Important landmarks in the development of intersectionality as theory are the early articulations of a sense of exclusionary theorizing about gender in women's studies in which "all the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave," as the title of an important reader so aptly stated (Hull et al. 1982). Statements expressing a distinctive "woman of color" standpoint (e.g., Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Combahee River Collective 1986; hooks 1981; Ladner 1973) joined with Patricia Hill Collins's (1990) own influential articulation of standpoint theory as "black feminist thought" to emphasize the nonadditive effects of multiple forms of oppression experienced in particular social locations. As Deborah King (1988) put it, thinking in terms of "multiple jeopardy" challenges the idea that "each discrimination has a single, direct and independent effect on status, wherein the relative contribution of each is readily apparent" as well as the "non-productive assertions that one factor can and should supplant the other" (1988:47).

By emphasizing the differences among women, these scholars not only countered the unwarranted universalizing of white, middle-class, American women's experiences as "women's" but began a highly productive line of theorizing about how lived experiences of oppression cannot be separated into those due to gender, on the one hand, and race, on the other, but rather are simultaneous and linked (Brewer 1993; Espiritu 2000; Glenn 2002). Moreover, this analysis highlighted the implications of such intersections for practical politics, since "women of color are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas" (Crenshaw 1991:1246).

Part of the utility of an intersectional analysis, therefore, was to give voice to the particularity of the perspectives and needs of women of color who often remained invisible *as women* even when they were organizing "on separate roads" to express feminist demands (Roth 2004) and invisible *as blacks* despite their significant leadership in the American civil rights movement (Robnett 1997). Because women of color argued that their oppression was experienced in a *qualitatively* different way, their experiences required distinctive attention in order to see "how race, gender, and class, as categories of difference, do not parallel but instead intersect and confirm each other" (Espiritu 2000:1). These qualitative differences made achieving "voice" a significant political as well as intellectual demand, since only by inclusion of the perspectives of these groups could the political issues emerging from their experiences be addressed by movements, law, or policy-relevant scholarship.

Inclusion is therefore hardly a trivial concern, and a long line of path-breaking studies by women of color developed this version of race-gender analysis (see reviews in Hancock 2007; McCall 2005; Prins 2006). In an influential law review article, critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) gave this concern the now internationally recognized label "intersectionality." While this tradition never offered a merely categorical notion of social positionality, it emphasized locating distinctive standpoints that could reveal complicated and contested configurations of power. The woman of color perspective that was to be included was not necessarily formulated only by researchers who belonged to these marginalized groups, but it privileged a political and social standpoint that actively moved their experiences "from margin to center" of theorizing (Collins 1990; hooks 1984).

The emphasis on giving "voice" to those who are in positions of oppression encouraged in practice what Hancock (2007) calls a "content specialization" interpretation of intersectionality: a substantive focus on the study of multiply-marginalized

groups. This methodological emphasis on what Hancock calls "multiple intersections" and McCall defines as an "intracategorical" approach focuses especially on differences of experience for subgroups within a category, and often generates lists of groups to be included as well as debates over the priority to be given to one or another intersectional location (Andersen 2008). However, if one theorizes intersectionality as a characteristic of the social world in general, intersectional analysis should offer a method applying to all social phenomena, not just the inclusion of a specifically subordinated group (McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Indeed, the voice approach to intersectionality also exists in tension with other insights arising from the tradition of women of color scholarship. First is their claim that no one is ever just privileged or oppressed (Jordan-Zachery 2007; McCall 2005). Understanding the conflicting dimensions of inequality also demands studying the unmarked categories where power and privilege "cluster" (Staunaes 2003). Following such pioneers as Connell (1995) and Frankenberg (1993), studies of masculinity and whiteness become additional subspecialties. Second, there is a long-standing critique of inclusion that reduces inequality to diversity, where "instead of using difference to rethink the category of women, difference is often a euphemism for women who differ from the traditional norm" (Baca Zinn and Dill 1996:323). Methodologically, merely including difference often substitutes an implicit norm of whiteness or heterosexuality for concrete examination of the "mainstream" or includes "nonnormative" groups in a comparative analysis that reproduces the notion of the dominant group as a standard (Brekhus 1998; Danby 2007).

In sum, intersectionality defined as inclusion offers a "content specialization," but points to a need for more than this. Drawing from its origins in standpoint theory and in the self-mobilization of women of color to claim recognition in law and politics as well as scholarship, this version of intersectionality analytically foregrounds the rhetoric of voice. While the theory calls for critical consideration of the normative cases as well as the excluded or marginalized, a methodological emphasis on inclusion sometimes fetishizes study of "difference" without necessarily giving sufficient attention to its relation to unmarked categories, especially to how the more powerful are defined as normative standards.

Process-Centered Models: Interaction Effects and Multilevel Analysis

In distinction to studying the multiple "main effects" of inequalities, theories of intersectionality are by definition alert to the need for analysis of interactions. Since the inclusion model approaches intersections as locations like "street corners" where race and gender meet and have multiplicative effects, any "street" (a social process, such as sexism or racism) can be seen as "crossing" any other without being transformed itself (Crenshaw 2001). But some theories of intersectionality argue for more of a transformation of the substance of the processes themselves through their interaction with other forces in a particular context, on the analogy of "digesting" sugar and making it into new bodily substances (Ken 2008). Weldon (2008) makes a distinction between what she calls an "intersection-only" approach in which the main effects of the separate processes are set aside in favor of a focus on interaction effects and an "intersection-plus" model in which uninflected main effects also remain important. We would emphasize the latter as a "process-centered" understanding, where interaction effects come to the fore, but only in selected cases.

As McCall (2005) argues, a core element of this approach is comparative analysis, since seeing how the interplay among different structures of domination varies will

demand a methodology that insists on comparisons above the level of the individual. Such comparative analysis should also be interaction-seeking, that is, it would assume important interactions across contexts as the default position. McCall calls this "intercategorical" because it seeks dimensions of variation in the intersections across categories, however defined, while Glenn (1999) stresses this as "relational" because it highlights the material and cultural relations of power that structure societies. The process model of intersectionality places primary attention on context and comparison at the intersections as revealing structural processes organizing power.

The structural type process-centered analysis is not without its limitations. It runs the risk of focusing on abstracted structures in their intersectional configuration, thus turning the persons who are experiencing the impact of macro- and meso-interactions into incidental figures, underplaying their agency in these complex constellations of forces (Prins 2006; Staunaes 2003). Responding to this potential limitation, theorists have stressed cultural meanings and the social construction of categories as central processes in their own right. Both McCall (2005) and Davis (2008) argue that this latter, more constructionist version of intersectionality appeals to those who doubt the stability of identity categories at the micro level. Many theorists interested in a process-centered model of intersectionality followed the discursive turn in sociology by turning from categorical identities to examine how individuals are "recruited to" categories and yet have choices in the "subject positions" they adopt in these complex locations (Adams and Padamsee 2001). This echoes a wider move in cultural studies, critical race studies, and gender and women's studies to treat the formation of political subjects as a contested process of self-creation in a field of power relations (Ken 2008; Staunaes 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006). Thus process models can be sensitive to the issue of identities or social locations, by considering these as being constructed through (Adams and Padamsee 2001), or co-constructed with, macro and meso categories and relations (Prins 2006).

Social constructionist understandings of intersectionality, although "anticategorical" in McCall's terms, share the focus on process of what she calls "intercategorical" analyses. They highlight dynamic forces more than categories—racialization rather than races, economic exploitation rather than classes, gendering and gender performance rather than genders—and recognize the distinctiveness of how power operates across particular institutional fields. Because of its interest in mutually transformative processes, this approach emphasizes change over time as well as between sites and institutions (Yuval-Davis 2006).

The methodological demands of a process model are greater than those of an inclusion model, since explicit comparison, attention to dynamic processes, and variation by context are all understood as inherent in intersectionality. Insofar as the research embraces some notion of social construction, it also calls for data that are multilevel, capturing both the agency of individuals in making the world they inhabit and the enabling and constraining forces of the world as it has been produced.

However, the multilevel aspect of this approach poses a particular challenge to those who associate gender with microlevel group or individual social psychological-level processes, race with mesolevel structures of social organization, particularly exclusion, segregation and group conflict, and class with macrolevel processes of societal development and differentiation (Ferree and Hall 1996). Although calling for an assumption of intersection within as well as across levels, therefore, methodological practices may tend instead toward "subcategorization" where processes are conceptually "stacked" from the macro level "down" to "individual differences." Although often granting class primacy as the society-determining relationship, the

process model can also apply when gender or race is taken as "the primary" form of oppression in a particular institutional context (e.g., Kantola and Nousiainen 2009 locate family as the institution where gender and sexuality are primary, nation as a primary site for race and ethnicity). Because it focuses on dynamics producing "subcategorizations," its methodological approach is to be "asking the other question": that is, taking whatever one identifies as the primary form of oppression in a situation and asking how that dimension of inequality is itself subdivided and crisscrossed with other axes of power and exclusion that are less well articulated (Yuval-Davis 2006).

In sum, the process model does not just add groups, it adds intersectional relations to what are typically conceptualized as persistent, untransformed "main effects." This approach demands a more explicitly comparative and contextual field for the study of intersectionality, but by connecting particular levels of analysis or institutions with different inequalities, it tends toward separating primary from secondary contradictions. This may be a reason many intersectionality theorists debate the lists of "priority" inequalities—whether race, class, and gender suffice, or if the list should include sexualities, age, nationality, religion (see symposium led by Andersen 2008).

Systemic Intersectionality: Institutional Interpenetration

What Weldon (2008) calls an "intersection-only" model reflects a view of intersectional transformations in which no process is given hierarchical primacy in an institution. Starting by considering how inequalities span and transform structures and activities at all levels and in all institutional contexts makes it harder to imagine any social process as a singular "main effect" for anyone. Walby (2009) calls such a fully intersectional model of the societal institutions that produce inequalities "complex" and contrasts this system-spanning model with what she calls "segmented inclusion," in which the economy is seen as so "saturated" with class, the family with gender, and the nation with ethnicity that within each institutional area all other forms of inequality can only be seen as "additional."

Instead, the account of intersectionality as a complex system sees gender and race are fundamentally embedded in, working through, and determining the organization of ownership, profit, and commodification of labor, for example, by fixing which types of work and types of people enter the market at all. By calling this process "capitalism" and defining it in terms of class as "the" relationship characteristic of this institution, even with attention to the specific ways that "it" uses race and gender to support itself the "main effect" is prioritized over the intersectional processes by which race and gender are integral to any account of the appropriation of labor and formation and circulation of wealth. The account of intersectionality that Acker (2006) gives, for example, places the process of capitalism at the center, while Peterson (2005) offers an account of a political economy that is simultaneously and dynamically constructed by gender and race relations just as fundamentally as it is by class.

Walby (2009) focuses on this system-level of intersectionality, building out from class-gender interaction processes of the sort both Acker and Peterson describe, and systematically decentering any one process as "primary." She looks to the feedback models of modern computational dynamics and complexity theories of environment-system interactions in the biological sciences to reconceptualize interaction effects as inherent in the nature of the processes of stratification themselves. This is more challenging methodologically than just locating empirical interaction effects of

separate dimensions in discrete comparative contexts, as McCall (2001) does. Societies are theorized as historically constructed, arbitrarily bounded systems in which each system that can be identified is also the environment for all other systems to which they are constantly adapting. Stressing the mix of positive and negative feedback effects in the actual functioning of such historically constructed systems of inequality, Walby argues for both their fragility and stability: since small changes may have large effects, there are many potential points of intervention for those who seek change, but also many reinforcements for the status quo embedded in multiple, mutually dependent institutions.

Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2002) exemplifies this complexity approach in her study of the historically specific intersections of labor and citizenship in the United States as institutions that are co-constructing class, race, and gender as systemic inequalities. Glenn also argues that each dynamic force of inequality operates as analytic concepts that share three main features: "They are *relational* concepts whose construction involves both *representational and social structural processes* in which *power* is a constitutive element" (Glenn 1999: 9, emphasis in original). Her emphasis on relationality, in particular, cautions against the use of differences, such as racial and gender categories, as mere descriptors; her balanced combination of representational, social structural, and power dimensions of these stratification processes undercuts the tendency to assign institutional primacy to one or another level of analysis or mode of stratification across the board, rather than in the particular patterns at different locations and moments.

In sum, this view of intersectionality as a complex system assumes a methodology that sees everything as interactions, not "main effects." The challenge is to identify the local and historically particular configurations of inequalities, since every system is contingent and path dependent. Although we are clearly suggesting that the potential of intersectionality would best be realized by a methodology that centers on such dynamic and decentered effects, we also argue that not all sociologists need to share our priorities to benefit from a clearer understanding of which ideas about intersectionality implicitly guide their analysis. Even studies that are not institutional in focus and do not use comparative or historical methods can be improved by closer attention to how inclusion, interaction, and institutions are being treated analytically.

INTERSECTIONALITY AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS

In order to demonstrate how theories of intersectionality can illuminate the methodological choices that analysts make, we turn now to consider four highly regarded sociological monographs on social inequalities—*Promises I Can Keep* (Edin and Kefalas 2005), *Sidewalk* (Duneier 1999), *The Dignity of Working Men* (Lamont 2000), and *Unequal Childhoods* (Lareau 2003). We use their data and analysis to highlight how more attention to system-level complexity can enrich microlevel analysis, tightening the connections among power relations, institutional contexts, and lived experience.

All four of these prize-winning monographs rely on qualitative methods, are deeply concerned with social justice, and offer insightful analyses of multidimensional inequality. Yet while each is strongly inclusive, and some attend to the processes of inequality as having intersectional effects, none adopts a complex view of mutually constitutive intersectional processes in the setting they study. Rather than revealing a process by which each relationship of inequality works on and through the others,

each of these books offers a look at particular social locations marked as outside the mainstream, obscures the relationship of the unmarked categories to the highlighted group, and sets the power relations that create these processes outside the picture. By making use of the rich data presented in these exemplary studies, we point to where an intersectional analysis could move to reveal more of the complex, contextual, and comparative relations in the data that the authors themselves present.

The four monographs we analyze take class as the central dynamic of inequality but incorporate other axes, particularly race and gender, with a more or less explicit comparative agenda. *Sidewalk* limits the focus of the study to poor black male street book vendors, whereas *Promises I Can Keep* (*Promises*, hereafter) studies poor single mothers from different ethnic neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Examining the cultural logic of childrearing for middle- and working-class parents, *Unequal Childhoods* directly compares variation by race, gender, and class by including boys and girls, poor, working-, and middle-class, and black and white families in its sample. *The Dignity of Working Men* (*Dignity,* hereafter) is the only cross-national comparison, looking at how working-class men, both black and white, in the United States and France, draw moral boundaries, especially along racial and class lines.

In the sections to follow, we apply the themes identified above to the four studies to illustrate some limitations that derive from their implicit theories of intersectionality. The first section lays out problems associated with the rhetoric of *giving voice* to the multiply-marginalized. In particular, we point to how the voice model contributes to overemphasizing the differences of the group under study from an assumed middle-class readership and obscuring the norm-constructing operations of power. The second section examines how implicit assumptions about institutional primacy shape comparative research design. We highlight the significance of including unmarked categories not only in the data but in the analysis to draw out power processes. The third section challenges the presumed priority of class as the most macrolevel determinant of social contexts, and shows how gender, race, and class can be seen as working together to draw boundaries and reproduce complex inequalities in the system as a whole.

INCLUSION AND THE RHETORIC OF VOICE: *SIDEWALK* AND *PROMISES I CAN KEEP*

Sidewalk and *Promises* share the purpose of delving into cultural logics in the lives of disadvantaged groups in the United States. Both do so using the rhetoric of voice; the authors claim to mediate between the silenced voices of the marginalized group and the "mainstream" public. By telling stories of poor black vendors, scavengers, and panhandlers on the sidewalks of New York, Duneier claims in *Sidewalk* that he is "committed to the idea that the voices of the people on Sixth Avenue need to be heard" (p. 13). Similarly, Edin and Kefalas state that "our goal was to give poor single mothers the opportunity to address the questions so many affluent Americans ask about them: namely, why they so seldom marry, and why they have children when they have to struggle so hard to support them" (p. 25), and thereby "we give a voice to people who are seldom heard" (p. 196).

Attending to the perspectives and experiences of those who do not have power to make their "voices" heard is undeniably an important step for understanding social inequality. Indeed, these groups are often the objects of political debates, rather than participating subjects of democratic politics, and stereotypes about them are rife. The poor black men in Duneier's study and poor single mothers in Edin and Kefalas's

have been rendered deviant by policymakers—to borrow Duneier's term, stigmatized as "indecent." Yet, the authors' attempt to represent the voiceless by speaking for them takes the form of explaining their "particular" and distinctive cultural logics and lives for "mainstream" audiences. The cultural logics by which the mainstream itself lives are thereby naturalized and homogenized. Combined with the books' lack of structural analysis of how distinctive ways of life are created in and for a wider system of class, race, and gender privilege, the rhetoric of voice leaves intact the notion of the fundamental differences of this group from the mainstream.

In *Sidewalk*, Duneier offers a moralized picture of the sidewalk particularly when he is most eager to assure readers that the ways of these poor black men, despite apparent differences, should be interpreted as resembling those of "mainstream" society and that therefore the disdain and even disgust society offers them is unmerited. He claims: "Not only do the vendors and scavengers, often unhoused, abide by codes and norms; but mostly their presence on the street enhances the social order" (p. 43). As part of this effort to portray people on the sidewalk positively, Duneier tells the story of Marvin, a black magazine scavenger who has "had drug issues" and is now taking care of his aunt. Expressing his surprise at Marvin's returning to his aunt's place because he left a hot plate on the stove in the morning, Duneier thinks to himself: "I thought about how far Marvin has come since the days when he said, 'Fuck it!' The work [as a scavenger] has provided a structure that exerts a pressure not to give up. His behavior, like Ron's, indicates that they care about society and wish to be a part of it" (p. 79).

But this account begs the question of what Duneier means by the "society" of which people on the sidewalk supposedly "wish to be a part," and of which, in this framing, they are not already a part. Underneath Duneier's account are his assumptions not only about the fundamental difference between the "normal" members of "society" and these poor black men, but of the resonance that readers will feel, seeing money-earning work as redemptive and normalizing. Duneier suggests that the sidewalk's informal economy turns a person with an unfortunate past into a "deserving" member of society:

> When alcohol and drugs, once central to a person's life, are no longer a part of that life, what does the recovering person substitute for them? He may not be ready to enter the formal economy. What might he put in place to become a self-respecting, productive member of society? It seems to me that the entrepreneurial activity Marvin is engaging in on the sidewalk a few days a week fills that void. (p. 79)

Throughout, Duneier neither problematizes the notion of "a self-respecting, productive member of society" nor questions whether the "voice" he offers is authentically that of the sidewalk vendors—he does not report asking Marvin himself what sidewalk vending means for him. His imagined readers' concerns become the center of his account; he asks "whether and how the persons I am with are or are not struggling to live in accordance with the standards of 'moral' worth" (p. 341), without interrogating this standard of moral worth. In this sense, *Sidewalk* fails to meet the locational standard of intersectionality by which the perspectives of the oppressed move from margin to center.

But this seems less a failure of empathy on Duneier's part than an outcome of the absence of an analysis of either structural or cultural *processes*—particularly the conditions under which late 20th-century American "society" could effectively

recognize Marvin, a poor black man, as "a self-respecting, productive member." Duneier's recognition that the power relations he observes on the sidewalk are situated in broader social structures—"the sidewalk was also 'in' Pennsylvania Station, the City Council, the Farrar, Straus and Giroux lawsuit against the Strand, and the Business Improvement District, among many other places" (p. 345)—remains theoretically underutilized in explaining how race and class intersect in constructing morality.

Edin and Kefalas's way of telling the stories of poor single mothers also privileges the view of middle-class readers concerned with morality and unfamiliar with poverty. Examining the cultural logic of poor women who put motherhood before marriage, Edin and Kefalas find that these single mothers put a high symbolic value on marriage as a luxury to be enjoyed after they achieve a successful livelihood but they see children as necessary to bring meaning and value to their lives right now. They present this cultural logic of motherhood with rich ethnographic detail, but make comparisons only to a thin and stereotypical version of a middle-class moral standard. If, when, and why middle-class women of a similar age group value children and why they (oddly?) put marriage before childbearing appear only as unquestionable norms against which these women are implicitly measured. For example, Edin and Kefalas conclude: "It is the perceived low costs of early childbearing and the high value that poor women place on children—and motherhood—that motivate their seemingly inexplicable inability to avoid pregnancy" (p. 171). Since the authors do not raise the question of what makes the decision "inexplicable," the women's choices are converted invisibly into an "inability."

The point is not that these authors need to do a comparative ethnography, but rather that an intersectional perspective on the women's decision making as a process would place their structural location into relation with others, eliciting counterfactual questions that disturb the naturalness of existing arrangements—such as what is absent in middle-class, college-aged women's lives that would lower the cost of early childbearing for them? What motivates their "inexplicable" decision to wait to marry first and risk later infertility?

If not to meet a middle-class norm of respectability, why should poor women try to "avoid pregnancy"? This is actually the unanswered question. When directly asked, "what would your life be like without children?" their interviewees say: "I'd be dead or in jail," "I'd be in the streets," "I wouldn't care about anything," "My child saved me," and "It's only because of my children that I'm where I am today" (p. 184). Edin and Kefalas argue that even if mothers are better off by having children, their choice is harmful: "although having children early may not affect a young mother's life chances much, it may diminish the life chances of her children" (p. 216). But this framing of the problem places "the children" on one side of a moral divide, where the readers' desire to care for them is assumed, and frames poor mothers (and fathers, p. 217) as potentially dangerous parents, whose own interests are less significant. Despite Edin and Kefalas's intention to "give voice" to these poor mothers, their own needs are discursively marginalized.

INTERACTIONS AND THE LOGIC OF COMPARISON: POWER AND PROCESS IN *UNEQUAL CHILDHOODS*

Unequal Childhoods by Annette Lareau offers an insightful analysis of the cultural logic in American childrearing in middle-class and working-class families through a systematic comparison across class, race, and gender. Yet, despite its merits, the

methodological approach that guides Lareau's data analyses is intersectional only in the static sense of street-corner-like locations where the different forces of inequality cross.

Unequal Childhoods claims that there are highly significant social class differences in childrearing with distinctive cultural logics that influence children's sense of self in relation to society, and successfully shows that the categorical approach to social class, rather than a continuous variable such as mother's education, better explains differences in the childrearing logics of these families. Lareau then points to gender and racial differences as an "addition" to these core differences by class:

> To be sure, other things also mattered in addition to social class. Gender differences were particularly striking. Girls and boys enjoyed different types of activities. Girls had more sedentary lives compared to boys. They also played closer to home...Race also played a role, particularly as racial segregation of residential neighborhoods divided children into racially segregated informal play groups (although race did not influence the number of activities children had). (p. 36)

There are two interrelated analytic problems that arise from treating gender, race, and class as separate variables and trying to find which has the "biggest" effect. First, because the "main effects" of gender, race, and class are studied as essentially unaffected by each other, the interaction among them is not apparent as a *process,* even when the families that populate each intersectional *location* are examined in a type of "multiple jeopardy" analysis. Second, the effects of class, race, and gender are primarily seen in the experiences of those in the subordinated or "marked" category in each dimension. We take up each of these in turn.

In the subsection titled "the intersection of race and class," Lareau goes into detail about the particularity of the middle-class black families as compared to their white counterparts. Yet despite these rich descriptions, the analysis suggests a choice must be made between race and class as "the" primary dimension. She frames this as an analytic decision between two variables, rather than unpacking any interaction between them:

> Still, the biggest differences in the cultural logic of child rearing in the day-to-day behavior of children in this study were between middle-class children on the one hand... and working-class and poor children on the other. As a middle-class black boy, Alexander Williams had much more in common with white middle-class Garrett Tallinger than he did with less-privileged Black boys, such as Tyrec Talyer or Harold McAllister. (p. 241)

Making a comparison between the amounts of inequality by class or race to see which has more effect means defining them as independent and separate "main effects" while limiting the visibility of dynamic intersections of these processes. More attention to how each process, as a process, is inflected and transformed by its intersection with the other might draw out some richer consideration from the same data.

Consider how gender and race dynamics actually interact in the stories of mothers' carework in the middle-class black families. Although Lareau presents white and black middle-class parents' active intervention in school as similar, her data suggest their motives for and nature of intervention vary in important ways. Both mothers

of the two middle-class black children, Alexander Williams and Stacey Marshall, provide the intensive attention for which the class logic of "cultivation" calls, but what they do and how they do it is deeply intertwined with race. Alexander's mother monitors every activity in which her son enrolls to make sure he is not "the only black kid." Stacey's mother is concerned about whether teachers might have lower expectations because of her race and worries about how to deal with the school bus driver who makes all black children sit in the back of the bus (p. 179).

Lareau recognizes this burden of black mothers' carework: "This vigilance meant that Black middle-class parents, mothers especially, undertook more labor than did their white middle-class counterparts, as they worried about the racial balance and the insensitivity of other children, and framed appropriate responses to their own children's reactions" (p. 181). However, this is framed as an added burden ("more labor"), not a qualitatively distinctive logic of race-aware childrearing in a racist society. Lareau makes this explicit: "Nevertheless, race did not appear to shape the dominant cultural logic of child rearing in Alexander's family or in other families in the study" (p. 133). In this succinct statement, the complexities in the black middle-class mothers' antiracist work are subsumed under the "big picture" of "class-based advantage" of middle-class parents (p. 180), and a chance also to look for if and how race-aware parenting transforms class logics and vice versa is lost.

Unequal Childhoods also allows its emphasis on inclusion and difference to divert attention from the *unmarked categories*. Even though there is systematic comparison with middle-class experiences, which are themselves theorized, each comparison in *Unequal Childhoods* is formulated to explain only the difference of the nondominant groups from the dominant. For example, the effect of race is elaborated in case of blacks, but there is no theoretical account given for the workings of race for whites. Similarly, for gender, only the girls' differences from boys are pointed out. The opportunity for a gender analysis of masculinity and femininity for both boys and girls that might expose a process producing and reproducing gender advantage in class and race specific ways is squandered.

Instead, consider the structure of *Unequal Childhoods*, where detailed stories of one specific family are told each chapter. Only in the accounts of black families is there a race-related subsection (entitled "role of race" for Harold's and Alexander's families and "race: constant worries, intermittent interventions" for Stacey's). This analytic design implicitly theorizes race as a particularity added only to black lives, as if whiteness is not racial and its relationships meaningful in the lives of parents and children. Yet the data themselves point in another direction, as in the following example of a mention of varying degrees of racial segregation as a "fact of life" for white families:

> Billy Yanelli's home is in an all white neighborhood, but the street demarcating the beginning of an all-Black neighborhood is only a few blocks away . . . his third-grade teacher, Ms. Green was African American, as was the school counselor . . . . at home, he mostly plays with white children . . . . (p. 224)

The implications of race for the cultural logic of childrearing for white families is undermined by failing to consider how it could be that Billy's home is "only a few blocks away" from those of Black children but nonetheless he "mostly plays with white children." Is there parental work, and if so, of what sort, involved in creating and maintaining such segregated experience for white children?

If race were explicitly theorized as a more fully intersectional process of the exercise of power, it would be easier to ask about the ways that racialized relationships are being formed through cultural logics of childrearing as well. How is racialization and racial segregation understood by white parents and how do they succeed or fail in transmitting these expectations of differences in status and social distance to their children? Leaving the unmarked category of whiteness uninterrogated in racial terms makes the conclusion that race "has less effect" than class almost a foregone conclusion, since class is the only relationship viewed as effective for all families. Similarly, gender also emerges in the data more than it does in the analysis. Consider the story Lareau tells of Wendy, a working-class white girl. Possibly having a learning disorder, Wendy is seriously behind in her reading, and her teacher laments the insufficient attention paid to Wendy's needs, using racialized and gendered language to do so:

> Wendy, I think, slipped through the cracks...I firmly believe that if Wendy was a little Black girl that she should already have been in a special education type of situation. A kid in fourth grade who can't read a first-grade reader, something is dreadfully wrong here...And Wendy is so cute and so sweet. She has a smile for everybody, and I think somehow or other, I think they did her a terrible disservice by just letting her go forward. (p. 213)

What does the teacher mean by "if Wendy was a little Black girl" she would have been helped? Is he implying that the assumption of academic competence that comes with whiteness hindered recognition of Wendy's special needs? Is it the pervasive racial tracking in the schools that makes him call this help "special education type of services" rather than simply "special education"? What does the perception of Wendy as "so cute and so sweet" and having "a smile for everybody," invoking the people-pleaser image of good white girls, have to do with this? Although Wendy's case is analyzed in the book by focusing on her class, an intersectional analysis would also question how her experience is also racialized and gendered in the structure of the school, creating issues for her parents to respond to (or not).

Since we can see in the data that issues of segregation and academic expectations arise for both white and black families, both sets of parents must have some ways of dealing with race, but these do not emerge as a "logic" that shapes their process of parenting intersectionally with the logics of class and gender. Identifying and comparing dynamic processes as such, rather than families that simply sit at the crossroads of intersecting inequalities, would tend to make the unmarked categories more useful for explaining power structures and relational experiences, which is Lareau's goal.

COMPLEX SYSTEMS: INTERSECTING STRUCTURES IN *THE DIGNITY OF WORKING MEN*

The Dignity of Working Men by Michèle Lamont highlights the socially constructed nature of symbolic boundaries in relation to the structures of inequality, using a cross-national comparative research design. Lamont offers a rich account of working-class men's worldviews in the United States and France, particularly the ways in which they draw moral boundaries against people "above" and "below" them, drawing on the stories of black and white working-class men. Thus this study makes visible the macrolevel political context in which these relationships are interpreted

and makes it difficult to treat each culture's assumptions as "the norm" to which the other can be compared.

Even without women, *Dignity* offers an insightful gender analysis that focuses on the unmarked category of masculinity. Using the men's accounts, Lamont examines "the gendered aspects of the workers' discourse, that is, whether historically dominant conceptions of masculinity permeate how they assess worth" (p. 13). She identifies gendered nuances in the way that working-class men understand themselves as superior to those who work at more "feminized" occupations, reporting how an interviewee saw the situation as "I'm out there working and they're complaining about 'I was in the bakery today and we had to make six batches of cookies'" (p. 23). The validation of masculinity, Lamont shows, is an integral part of class identity for working-class men and permeates their boundary-drawing. Lamont also demonstrates that notions of normative masculinity in the protector role are utilized by white American working-class men to defend nationalist ideologies. Thus self-representations of both class and nation are conceptualized as being shaped by gender in an intersectional way that is dynamic and structurally grounded.

This dynamic analysis does not carry through to the intersections with race. Theoretically posited as the major boundaries, nation and class are set out as the defining features of the study and their structural effects are explained first. Then all other differences are treated as extra rather than as intertwined, intersecting, and inflecting them. The dominant racial category in each country is also allowed to exercise unexamined normative authority, exemplified in the structure of the book. The moral boundaries of white working-class men in each country are examined first, and so implicitly treated as the "norm"; the black men's stories follow and their differences are pointed out in "addition" to the shared features of class and nation, represented by whites. For instance, a subsection on "the specific challenges of blacks" (p. 33) appears after the case of white workers.

This makes the transformational complexity of the gender-class intersection dominate the more static, categorical, and reified use of race in the analysis of how moral boundaries are drawn. This occurs despite the attention paid to the gendered form of racialization, in which dependency and power carry strongly gendered connotations and focus attention on gendered family relations as marks of racialized belonging. Lamont shows that, in the United States, white working-class men draw moral boundaries against blacks, associating blacks with the poor and emphasizing their welfare dependency. In France, white working-class Frenchmen morally exclude North African Muslim immigrants, blaming their cultural incompatibility with French values and lack of work ethic for their exclusion. These are ideas that by no means emerge only in the discourses of these working-class men. But there is no institutional analysis of the racial context that provides these vocabularies of gender-laden evaluations of morality as an "environment" in which a gendered construction of masculinity works as a "system." Still, the book provides evidence that nationally specific gendered forms of racialization are structurally embedded in family relations and politically mobilized to defend class inequalities.

First, consider the case of the United States. Drawing the moral boundary along racial lines, one white working-class man laments: "I think [blacks] have less family values. If you don't have a family, how can you have family values?" (p. 63). His assertion that African Americans "don't have a family" is based on "controlling images" of African Americans, including black matriarchy and single motherhood,

that have been central to arguments about government interventions into black communities at least since the Coleman report (Mayer 2008). The normality of the patriarchal family, where the head of the household is a male wage earner and women are dependents, provides him with the acceptable cultural ammunition to dismiss the normality of blacks as a group and to justify racial inequality. Collins (1998) raises exactly this point, by demonstrating how the patriarchal nuclear family ideal is a gendered system that is linked to racial ideas and to the notion of a proper American citizen. In this account, men who are not "in charge" of a family "don't have" one.

Second, note how the opposite gendered rhetoric is used in France by white Frenchmen against North African immigrants, but to the same effect. Muslim religion and its gendered aspects are framed as discreditable in language that resonates with European media scripts about civilization and progress in which gender equality, rather than patriarchal control, appears as an objective of EU membership (Roth 2008). At the center of the "incompatibility" between French and Muslim cultures lies the notion of Muslim men as the oppressors of "their" women. One white French working-class man in *Dignity* says: "Women in the Muslim world have no place. Whereas here in France, I have washed dishes" (p. 179). In his account, Muslim men are contrasted with civilized French white men who share domestic work. This intriguing dynamic, where gender inequality is used as an ethnic marker to reproduce racial inequality, goes underanalyzed in Lamont's account. Yet, such gendered racialization stands out in her data, for instance, in the way that Islamic veils on the street epitomize in French eyes the gender oppression of Muslim community and so symbolize the "invasion" of immigrants and the collapse of French working-class culture (p. 179).

Why unmarried motherhood, on the one hand, and veiling, on the other, should rise to the level of familiar, shared, cross-class tropes in which the inappropriateness of family relationships can be morally deplored is not a question that Lamont's analysis asks (but see Choo 2006 on the practice of using gender "backwardness" for national boundary-drawing). Moreover, the use of fertility as an issue of threat to "the body politic" that is an integral part of the relation between gender and nation goes unexplored. Muslim women's fertility, supposedly higher than their families can economically support, becomes framed as a physical attack on the health of the nation, as this white Frenchman says about Muslim immigrants: "Parasites... I hate all of them.... When you go to welfare offices, it is not Galois who take advantage of it. French families with fourteen children, I have not seen many. Two or three, maybe. And we break our backs for these people." (p. 169)

Although the denigrations are different, when they actively deny African-American or Muslim women respect for their motherhood, both white American and white French men reinforce the moralized racial boundaries of their country in gender terms. By taking nation as an a priori significant but static category, Lamont loses the opportunity to see how gender equality and inequality alike can be made matters of national identity and class pride. The multilayered complexity in which nation, class, gender, and race are actively reproduced in the thinking of these white working-class men is revealed by Lamont's data, but their perspectives are not linked across sites and levels to system processes, such as the cultural institutions regularly feeding these images to the men, or the changing structural relations that they look for tools to interpret.

Neither in *Dignity* nor in *Promises* do we even glimpse the structures of media and politics that are involved in placing such racial ideas in circulation and taking them up from the grassroots after the seeds have sprouted. As Lamont shows, images of masculinity are applied not only to place "others" outside a moral boundary but to recruit individual men of all racial groups into "subject positions" where they struggle to assert their own value as men. But racialized gender norms are similarly effective in producing and reproducing racial self-doubt and stirring resistance in people of color.

Such effects of moral exclusion on men of color can be seen in part if we return to racialization as a process, only hinted at in the data of *Promises I Can Keep,* which typically mentions race and ethnicity only descriptively. Yet the data suggest more cross-institutional complexity. For example, 35-year-old Nell, an African-American mother of three, reports that her African-American male partner does not keep a job for long because of issues related to respect: "Some of the jobs he can get don't pay enough to give him the self-respect he feels he needs, and others require him to get along with unpleasant customers and coworkers, and to maintain a submissive attitude toward the boss" (pp. 76–77). What does it mean that men of color in particular have more difficulty in securing and holding onto employment that offers "respect?" Perhaps it is a matter of "the inequality regime" (Acker 2006), where the structure of the lower-level labor market offers better employment opportunities for the unskilled labor of women of color compared to men of color (Espiritu 2000). It could also be an issue of racialized masculinity in that the "submissive attitude" required in the workplace for lower-level positions, such as disproportionately filled by people of color, conflicts with notions of how to "be a man" in American society. For people of color as well as for white working-class men, the larger structures of "moral exclusion" in the economy and in the organization of neighborhoods echo in their discourses about worth and self-respect. A complex intersectional approach that looks for such multilevel systems and situates them in local relations of power might help to expose the processes that both create and transform inequalities over time.

CONCLUSION

Although being critical of the four studies we selected, we do so not to diminish their contributions but to concretize the potential that more attention to complex intersectionality could offer analytically. We have tried to take the authors' own theoretical goals seriously in each case, while also suggesting ways in which their undertheorization of what intersectionality means in their case limits the power of their analysis. By first charting the somewhat confused theoretical landscape in which intersectionality has become a "buzzword," we attempt to add more usable specificity to how thinking intersectionally happens and what specifically different styles of intersectional analysis would add to sociological analysis in practice. While we are sympathetic to the need to include the voices of the marginalized in mainstream sociological thought, we take these studies as evidence that it is still easier to include multiply-marginalized groups than to analyze the relationships that affect them intersectionally. We suggest that seeing the hardly touched opportunities for intersectional analysis in even strong studies—particularly in seeing stratification processes nonhierarchically and understanding the multilevel co-determination of racialization and gendering processes with those of class—will help sociologists think about how their work might better address these challenges.

We have highlighted the specific losses in these studies that can be attributed to adopting a rhetoric of voice, a locational rather than process understanding of intersectionality, a strategy of comparing main effects with "additional" interactions, an implicitly hierarchical understanding of social processes, and a single-level analytic focus. Our own theoretical preferences lead us to believe that if intersectionality is approached methodologically as relational rather than locational, as transforming the processes affecting the "mainstream" as well as identifying select interactions for the "special" cases, and as implying a flow of knowledge and power across levels of social organization rather than a nested hierarchy of stratification processes, sociology as whole would profit. Yet it is also clear to us that not all the studies we selected could have used all the different styles of intersectional analysis equally well. For designing research that takes advantage of intersectionality most effectively, researchers need to consider what kind of conceptualization of intersectionality makes sense to them and why, and try at least to take the most advantage—and avoid the specific pitfalls—associated with that approach. For example, if inclusion and voice are priorities for a specific study, then the issue of how much the mainstream itself is problematized needs to come to the fore and be as explicitly addressed as possible. If the design calls for considering interaction effects, the question of the interactions among the unmarked categories should be made explicit. When systems of interactive processes are considered, the environments in which these systems operate should be considered, too.

Overall, we believe that attention to intersectional inequalities in future studies could become more methodologically appropriate and theoretically productive if the specific assumptions that the researcher makes about intersectionality were made more explicit. We do not suggest that doing studies aimed at "giving voice" to often-excluded groups are misguided, but we do think that theoretically considering the challenges of intersectionality would direct attention to methodological choices that might avoid placing an unmarked standard in the position of exercising normative power, for example, by questioning the values that readers might bring to the account of these "different" groups. A good example of this can be found in Hays's (2003) discussion of the ways in which college students are prone to the drug use and sexual activity that are so strongly condemned among poor teens. A research project that compares main effects and interactions as processes in a particular setting might examine how interactions appear for the dominant as well as for the subordinate groups and what assumptions about the hierarchical relationships among these processes are being made. A good example of this is can be found in Roth's study (2004) of the "separate roads" to feminism taken by women in the social movements of the 1960s, in which white women and white-central groups are analyzed as no less race specific than Latina and African-American organizations and gender dynamics.

However, we also suggest that many studies would benefit from adopting a still more complex view of intersectionality, in which the focus is on the feedback loops among processes at multiple levels that create interactions among them as inherent parts of how they are constituted. We argue that the complexity of multiple institutions that feed back into each other—both positively and negatively—can become obscured when the macrostructures of inequality are separated from the microstructures of social construction of meaning. Putting intersectional theory into practice suggests some caveats about our existing methodological habits as sociologists, whether quantitative or qualitative in our preferences for data.

First, comparative data facilitate but will not automatically provide an analysis of the processes of inequality that is interaction-seeking and context-sensitive. A

stress on ideal types or on parsimonious models works against seeing or seeking complexity. Ingrained habits of reductionism, above and beyond any concern with data management issues, often drive conceptual analysis rather than the reverse. For example, the analysis of variance approach in a general linear model assumes interactions and works backward toward more simplified main effects compared with a regression approach that begins with main effects and only adds interactions as absolutely necessary. Sociologists who want to use interaction-centered analytic strategies have both quantitative tools (from EDA to HLM) and qualitative ones (multisited ethnographies and multilevel coding programs) available. Moreover, it is increasingly possible to draw on "mixed method" strategies that refuse the qualitative/quantitative classification altogether and facilitate looking at interactions across levels of social organization (Axinn and Pearce 2006).

Second, it might be part of a methodological strategy to consider how a design will denaturalize hegemonic relations, particularly by drawing attention to the unmarked categories where power and privilege cluster (Brekhus 1998; Staunaes 2003). Displacing the theoretical center—whether the American-ness of "society" or the whiteness of "class"—can bring attention to nonhegemonic cases. But, as we have seen, this approach will be too limited if it only leads to including the marginalized other as an object of study rather than reconceptualizing the power relations of the center and margins. Methods of studying these multiple and intersecting hierarchies more relationally call for critical understanding of the workings of the discourses and networks where power circulates throughout societal institutions at different "scales" (Hancock 2004; Valentine 2007). The diversity of these interactions argues against making intersectionality any sort of "content specialization" defined by a list of inequalities.

Finally, static theories lead to debates about establishing the direction of causality with longitudinal data but not to dynamic models that prioritize feedback effects and interactions methodologically. While it seems evident that positive and negative feedback loops exist among the relations of power and privilege that stratify society, the implicit assumption that there will be a hierarchy of effects and a desire to identify "the" most important one diverts attention from developing additional tools that will focus on the interactions across levels and over time for their own sake. Dynamic analyses would consider how national and transnational structures of inequality are produced and reproduced in multisited processes such as gendering, racialization, labor exploitation, and generational succession. The improvement in studies we seek is found less in refining methods within the conventional division between quantitative "hypothesis testing" or qualitative "pattern seeking," than in bringing a more a dynamic, process-oriented, nonhegemonic intersectional analysis to enhance the "normal science" of static, categorical comparisons to a normative-standard case (Landry 2007).

Although we have attempted to be as specific and constructive as possible in drawing out these methodological implications, we do not wish to imply that our own theoretical and methodological preferences should drive the field as a whole. We are well aware that sociologists as well as their research designs are diverse, and we see similarly diverse routes that can be followed toward more clearly and explicitly making any style of intersectionality part of the analytic framework being used. In the end, the better sociology we seek will be constructed by those scholars who take the theoretical challenge of intersectionality as a spur to improve how their own research is designed.

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