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Chapter 8

Labor-market Inequality: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class

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Economic processes represent a driving force behind social inequality within and between nations. Across the globe, wages and conditions of employment remain tied to gender, race, ethnicity, and citizenship (Blau et al. 1998). While many economists claim that human capital and forces of supply and demand explain differences in workplace rewards across groups, ample evidence suggests that employment opportunities also are based on the power of the dominant gender, race, and class groups to organize social institutions to their benefit (see Altonji and Blank 1999 for a review). Black and multiracial feminist sociologists stand at the forefront of developing sophisticated understandings of *how* gender, race, and class matter in generating inequality. These scholars assert that gender, race, and class *intersect* to create unique constellations of disadvantage and privilege throughout a society.

In this paper we review sociological scholarship on intersections of gender, race, and class in the labor market. Our focus on labor markets leads us to emphasize theories of intersectionality in terms of stratification systems. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, we discuss theories of "intersectionality" developed by sociologists, addressing two questions: (1) what are the broad themes and questions raised in theorizing intersectionality, and (2) what are the challenges posed for researchers who attempt to test claims of intersectional theories with empirical research?

In the second section, we ask whether there is evidence that gender, race, and class intersect in the labor market. We begin with an investigation of empirical studies of intersectionality to explain wage inequality. The "wage gap" is arguably the premier indicator of economic inequality between groups. In addition, studies of wage inequality provide an illustration of the challenges posed by intersectional theories in quantitative research on labor markets.

Next, we turn to research on intersections within power and authority within the workplace. The issue of authority provides a window into how intersections of race, gender, and class are implicated in reproducing power within organizational settings. These studies are based on both qualitative and quantitative evidence and

represent a move toward specifying the organizational contexts in which intersections of privilege and disadvantage might flourish.

Finally, we look for evidence of intersectionality within a particular occupation – domestic labor – where gender, class, race, ethnicity, and citizenship are particularly visible and salient in organizing work. While studies of intersectionality in wages and authority are centered primarily on the United States, domestic labor affords an opportunity to examine intersectionality in the context of the global economy. In addition, much research on domestic labor has taken a qualitative approach, allowing for more of a focus on the *experience* of intersections.

We argue that within the particular occupation of domestic labor, intersections are clear and undeniable and we discuss the relevance of the findings on domestic labor for other occupations and industries. Our review of the literature lays the groundwork for the concluding section, in which we stress the importance of developing "mid-range" intersectional theories that can be investigated with empirical data.

Theoretical Explanations of Gender, Race, and Class Intersections: Themes and Questions in Theorizing Intersectionality

This section covers four important themes in sociological theories of intersectionality: categories as socially constructed, the "matrix of domination," intersectionality permeating all levels of social life, and the ubiquity and contingency of intersectionality.[1] As will be demonstrated, these themes raise questions and present theoretical challenges that scholars continue to debate.

Gender, race, and class as socially constructed

Writings by sociologists on the intersection of gender, race, and class draw heavily from feminist theories of gender and Black- and multiracial-feminist theories.[2] These theoretical strands concur that, rather than reflecting "natural" differences, "gender" and "race" are socially constructed categories that are historically and culturally contingent (Espiritu 1992; Brewer 1993; Omi and Winant 1994; Mullings 1997; Glenn 1999). Like class, the social construction of gender and race is based on cultural meanings and representations as well as concrete, material practices (Glenn 1999; West and Fenstermaker 2002).

Scholars demonstrate that the meanings attached to class, gender, and race categories are mutually constitutive to uphold power hierarchies. That is, gender is "racialized" and "classed" and race is "gendered" and "classed" to create dominant and subordinate social positions (Ferdman 1999). For instance, social definitions of "femininity" that include attributes such as "passivity" and "weakness," actually are based on expectations for White, middle-class women. "Passivity" and "weakness" are not part of definitions of "femininity" within Black communities, except perhaps for certain upper-class, Black women. Nonetheless, Black women historically have been held to the White, middle-class standard of femininity within mainstream social institutions. Not fitting this social ideal, this trope maintains

Black women's subordinate status in the *race* hierarchy (Collins 2000a). At the same time, conformity to the social ideal keeps middle-class, White women in the subordinate *gender* status.

The emphasis on the ongoing creation of meaning leads some scholars to draw upon ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionist theory to focus on how gender, race, and class are created simultaneously through social interaction (Weitz and Gordon 1993; West and Fenstermaker 2002). However, an emphasis on social interaction may ignore the institutional bases of power that undergird gender-, race-, and class-relational hierarchies (Collins et al. 1995; Gimenez 2001). Gender, race, and class are enacted through a variety of social institutions that work to maintain inequality.

The matrix of domination and importance of structure

Some intersectional theorists attempt to delineate the structural bases of power through which gender, race, and class intersect. For example, Patricia Hill Collins identifies four domains of power that comprise the matrix of domination. The *structural* domain – which "organizes oppression" – involves the major social institutions and the control of economic and political resources. These institutions are regulated through the *disciplinary* domain, which includes the bureaucratic organization of institutions and "techniques of surveillance" (2001: 280). Unequal power is justified through the supporting ideologies promulgated through the *hegemonic* domain. Finally, intersectional privileges and oppressions insinuate themselves into the most intimate aspects of life through the *interpersonal* domain.

Intersectionality permeating all levels of social life

Collins (2000a) joins other intersectionality theorists in stressing that intersections of gender, race, and class permeate all levels of social life – from the relations between nation-states in the global economy, to sexual relationships, to individual identity (Weber 2001). Within each of these levels, social dominance is based on subordinating the "other" category (Glenn 1999), that is, the positions in the gender/race/class hierarchies are relational (Hurtado 1989; Glenn 1999). Through the intersection of these categories, individuals can experience both dominance and oppression simultaneously (Collins 2000a).

Sociologists concerned with stratification processes have long struggled with the difficulties of theorizing about the relations between levels of social organization and interaction, particularly between structural processes and social-psychological dynamics. Intersectional theories have not solved this question, but have added an important dimension to the debates and a critique to existing theories of social inequality that examine only one axis of oppression.

Intersectionality as ubiquitous or contingent

Given that the combination of gender, race, and class permeates all interactions and institutions, some scholars conclude that intersectionality is "ubiquitous" (Weber 2001). Adams asserts that while gender, race, and class "may be analytically

distinct relations," they are "inseparable in practice" (1998: 581), and Yoder and Aniakudo refer to gender, race, and class as "omnirelevant, inseparable and confluent" (1997: 325). Similarly, Himani Bannerji (1995) argues that rather than trying to separate gender, race, class, and nationality analytically, we must take into account the simultaneity of these social relations.

However, some scholars developing intersectionist theories argue that under certain conditions, one social identity will take precedence over the other identities in influencing behaviors and outcomes (King 1989; Glass 1999; Collins 2000a: 280). That is, intersectionality is contingent upon particular historical and local conditions. It is then the formidable task of theory to specify these conditions (Browne and Misra 2003).

For example, in their study of gender and ethnic differences in employment opportunities and wages among Israeli immigrants, Raijman and Semyonov (1998), show that ethnicity and gender together are salient in producing labor-market advantage and disadvantage for recent immigrants. However, after five years, ethnicity no longer matters in determining occupational prestige, but gender remains important.

Thus, intersectional theorists agree that class, race, ethnicity, gender, and so forth all shape the experiences of individuals. Some see these intersections as varying in their impacts on a range of outcomes, while others argue that each element is always equally important. As will be discussed, some of these differences may reflect differences in conceptualization, epistemology, and method.

Challenges in Testing Claims of Intersectionality with Empirical Research

The theoretical contributions of intersectionality have shaped the way many researchers understand the social world profoundly. Much of the theorizing on intersectionality is interdisciplinary, drawing from traditional humanities fields, such as philosophy and English, as well as newer interdisciplinary fields, such as African American studies, women's studies and queer studies (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Butler 1990; Guy-Sheftall 1995; hooks 2000). Given the legacy of excluding women of color from academic positions and grounding feminism in activism, many of the ideas of Black-feminist theory and multicultural-feminist theory have developed outside academia (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Lorde 1984; Collins 2000a).

The rich and diverse sources for theorizing intersectionality pose challenges when sociologists attempt to apply these ideas to design their research. Conceptualizations that work well in the humanities – such as the notion of gender, race, and class as fluid, unstable, and constantly contested (Butler 1990) – are often difficult to translate into empirical studies of human behavior (Bettie 2003).

This section considers two main challenges in testing claims of intersectionality with empirical research. First, conceptualizing intersectionality, and particularly concepts of class, may be very difficult. Second, as alluded to previously, differences in epistemologies and methodologies may lead to very different interpretations of intersectionality.

Conceptualization and measurement

In order to use empirical evidence to test the claims of intersectional theories, it is necessary to define race, gender, and class before collecting the data. Indeed, researchers cannot test the claims of intersectionality unless there are clear definitions of class, race, and gender – or a clear delineation of competing definitions for the theory.[3]

Conceptualizations and definitions of race and gender are by no means easy to develop because, as social constructions, they vary considerably by context (King 1989; Glenn 2002). However, while theorizing about and conceptualizing gender and race in the intersectional literature is detailed, rich, and nuanced, definitions of "class" appear much more incomplete and ambiguous (Acker 1999). Indeed, the complexities of defining class have sparked a heated debate among sociologists. Some argue that "class analysis" and an attempt to create useful class categories should be abandoned (Pahl 1989; Pakulski and Waters 1996), while others call for redefining class to capture the complexity – suggesting that occupations are constitutive of class categories (Grusky and Sorensen 1998).

Although the problem of defining class is not unique to intersectional theories, our concern is that most intersectional theorists do not even engage in debates regarding how to define class. If "class" intersects with gender and race, then presumably differences between classes matter in important ways. Yet, the intersectional literature has not developed a comprehensive theory delineating the specific criteria for distinguishing *between* class categories and determining the *boundaries* between the classes (Acker 1999; Gimenez 2001). Kennelly (2004) contends that many intersectional analyses consider class only in terms of how race and gender may combine to shape class outcomes, rather than recognizing that class may shape race and gender outcomes as well.

Current scholars advocating an intersectional perspective rely on a hodgepodge of categories to describe social class. Some use the Marxist or socialist-feminist language of "relation to the process of production and reproduction" when discussing class (Brewer 1993; Collins 1993; Weber 2001; Romero 2002a), not necessarily articulating what types of production relations differentiate one class from another beyond the worker/owner distinction. Instead, they tend to invoke the categories "poor; working class; middle class; and elite" to identify distinct classes.

Simply relying on broad categories of classes, without explicitly theorizing class, is problematic. For example, class may be defined as simply a "position" in a stratification system or as a contested relation between groups (Gimenez 2001). The former definition of class is consistent with "functionalist" theories, which see "class" position as corresponding with an individual's efforts and talents and necessary for the smooth functioning of society (Davis and Moore 1945). Most intersectional theories would refute these meritocratic assumptions and be more inclined to view class as a contested relation between groups. However, without explicitly developing a class analysis, or discussing how class relates to race and gender, empirical intersectional research is limited. For instance, if a researcher fails to find an intersection between class, gender, and race, it is possible that the problem lies in the definition of class. What one researcher might identify as two, distinct, class locations, another researcher might see as a single class position.

Epistemologies and methodologies

Related to the problem of conceptualization and measurement, a second overarching problem involves the epistemological and methodological understandings researchers apply. Key among these understandings is differences between the underlying assumptions of some quantitative and qualitative approaches. Feminist approaches to methodology generally critique standard ("positivist") models of methodology. They argue that it is essential to begin from women's experiences, rather than using taken-for-granted categories and discounting experience as a source of knowledge (Smith 1987; DeVault 1996).[4] Epistemologically, these approaches reject the attempt to develop universalistic theories that explain social life. They also reject the notion that research should be "objective," instead arguing for reflexivity in methodology (Smith 1987, 1990; Harding 1987; Mann and Kelley 1997; Collins 2000b).[5]

Indeed, many Black-feminist theorists reject the positivistic approaches and, instead, highlight Black women's experiences as a valid basis for knowledge (Brewer 1993; Collins 1999). Patricia Hill Collins (1999) argues for an epistemology that recognizes all knowledge is based on "partial truths"; thus, knowledge that admits it is partial is more trustworthy than knowledge that presents itself as simply true. As Collins notes, "The overarching matrix of domination houses multiple groups, each with varying experiences of penality and privilege that produce corresponding partial perspectives, situated knowledges, and, for clearly identifiable subordinated groups, subjugated knowledges" (2000a: 234).

Intersectional researchers are committed to viewing the world not simply through the categories and understandings created by the dominant groups in society. Instead, intersectional researchers attempt to reconceptualize society by taking into account the perspectives and experiences of those in marginalized groups – whose voices and experiences have been ignored or do not "fit" with standard accounts. Indeed, multiracial-feminist perspectives draw attention to the problems in feminist approaches that neglect the particular situations of men and women of color (Collins 2000a).

Many researchers view qualitative methods as much more effective in reconceptualizing and excavating the experiences of marginalized groups (Cancian 1993). These researchers argue that qualitative approaches, particularly those based on ethnography and interviewing, may open up understandings by beginning from the perspective of those being studied. Yet, some researchers point out that biases also may be inherent in these qualitative approaches (Cannon et al. 1988; Stacey 1988; Wolf 1996).

Others argue that quantitative methods may be as effective as qualitative methods, particularly when researchers do not simply reproduce existing quantitative measures, but consider how measures may be biased and used to reproduce certain inequalities (Sprague and Zimmerman 1993; Smith 1990). Indeed, some researchers argue that quantitative approaches may be more convincing to policy makers as well as others and may lead to significant empowerment for marginalized groups (Narayan 1989; Reinharz 1992).

As shall be demonstrated, the answers – to the questions of how to test the claims of intersectionality and what these tests reveal – depend upon the epistemological

Table 8.1 Median annual earnings among individuals employed full-time, full-year, by gender and race or ethnicity, 2002

	Gender	
Race or ethnicity[1]	*Male*	*Female*
White (non-Hispanic)	43,696	31,602
African American	31,495	27,005
Asian	41,843	31,724
Hispanic	25,921	21,963

Source: 2003 Current Population Survey (CPS).
[1] Race/ethnic groups include only those individuals who listed a single category. Including individuals listing multiple categories of race on the CPS does not substantially change the numbers.

and methodological assumptions of the researchers and the particular labor market arena under scrutiny. Paid domestic work represents an arena in which class differences between women are unambiguous and intersections of gender, race, and class are ubiquitous. However, domestic work is only one particular occupation. As the following section on studies of wage inequality demonstrates, not all research projects identify triple intersections of gender, race, and class.

Empirical Evidence Regarding Intersectionality

Wages

Both economists and sociologists focus on wage gaps as an essential element of labor-market inequality. Most intersectional research on wage inequality is quantitative in approach and provides measurements of wages and salaries. Intersectional researchers then examine how wages differ by racial/ethnic, gender, and class groupings, primarily using survey data. The researchers try to explain the differences that emerge.

Looking at wages for full-time workers, there is a clear hierarchy of wages by gender and race that illustrates intersectionality (Tables 8.1 and 8.2). Within each race/ethnic group, men earn more than women (the gender gap in pay). The gender gap is widest for the groups earning the greatest income (Whites and Asians) and narrower for some of the lowest-earning groups (African Americans and Latinos). However, comparing across groups, the gender gap breaks down. For instance, White women earn more than most Latino men, and Asian women earn more than White women and African American men (Table 8.2). Additionally, the "Asian" category should be interpreted with caution, as it includes high-wage earners (e.g., Japanese) and extremely low-wage earners (e.g., Hmong). Similarly, the "Latino" category includes very different groups (e.g., Cubans and Dominicans).

Education, one indicator of class, appears to be key in explaining much of the wage inequality across race and ethnic groups (England et al. 1999). Research on

Table 8.2 Earnings gap, by gender and race or ethnicity, 2002

	Earnings as a ratio of the earnings of	
Gender, race or ethnicity	*White men*	*Coethnic men*
Women		
White (non-Hispanic)	.72	.72
African American	.62	.86
Asian	.73	.76
Latina	.50	.85
Men		
White	–	–
African American	.72	–
Asian	.96	–
Latino	.59	–

wage inequalities tends to find a consistent and strong pattern of the intersection of gender with education and race with education, respectively. The processes affecting the shape and extent of inequality are different for workers with high educational attainment compared to low educational attainment. This is consistent with the claims of many multiracial feminists – if gender and race intersect, then this could take different forms depending on social class.

However, the finding that education "intersects" with gender and race, respectively, supports two conflicting theories of labor-market inequality. While intersectional theorists would interpret "education" as an indicator of social class, education could be an indicator of human capital also – that is, "ability and skill." Human-capital theory runs counter to intersectional claims that "class" embodies relationships of domination and subordination infused throughout society. Rather, the human-capital perspective views educational attainment as the result of individual decisions to invest in labor-market skills (Becker 1956). Thus, evidence for the *triple* intersection of gender, race, and "class" is less well established. Few scholars have looked at wage inequality by all three of these social categories in combination.

Morris et al. (1994) map separately the changes in the distribution of wages from 1967 through 1987 for Black women, Black men, White women, and White men. In this study, "class" can be inferred by position on the wage distribution, comparing those at the top with those at the bottom. The authors tested two predominant theories of increasing wage inequality. The "skill-mismatch" thesis posits that there will be an increase in workers earning high wages as improved technology expands the need for highly skilled workers. The "polarization" thesis predicts an increasingly "U-shaped" distribution of wages for each group, as both high-wage and low-wage jobs grow with the "new economy," while jobs in the middle diminish. The authors found that the patterns of change in wage distribution were distinct for Black women and that neither theory explained trends for this group. In

the 1980s, Black women saw a rise in the proportion of low-paying jobs without the concomitant increase in high-paying jobs.

While this study provides strong support for the "intersectionality" thesis for changes over time in distribution of wages between high and lower earners, cross-sectional studies with geographic comparisons of gender and race wage gaps present more mixed results. Cotter et al. (1999) find little evidence for "intersectionality," concluding that race and gender represent two independent systems of inequality. In their study, when the gender wage gap is high in a metropolitan area, it is high for all racial/ethnic groups. This result is particularly robust for those at the low end of the income distribution. While Cotter et al. report some evidence for intersectionality at the top of wage distribution, these results are unreliable due to small sample sizes for women and men of color.

McCall contests the blanket assertion of "separate systems." Her analyses of gender and race wage gaps, across local-labor markets, also takes education into account. McCall (2001a,b) finds that the "race-stratification system" and "gender-stratification system" are neither completely independent nor completely interacting. Some economic conditions have similar effects on race inequality regardless of gender. For both men and women, industrial structure (unionization, casualization of work) is the main source of Black/White wage inequality, while the percentage of immigrants in a local-labor market has the strongest effect on Asian/White and Latino/White inequality. However, she also finds that there are economic conditions uniquely influencing a particular gender and race group. The "both independent/and intersecting" conceptualization of class, race, and gender is consistent with the claims of multiracial-feminist theory, which refute the dualistic either/or approach to understanding gender, race, and class (Collins 2000a).

Overall, studies of individual-wage processes support McCall's findings that there are some distinct patterns for women of color, but also similarities to coethnic men (the "race-stratification system") and to White women (the "gender-stratification system") (Kilbourne et al. 1994; Bound and Dresser 1999; Corcoran et al. 1999; England et al. 1999). In two of the few studies addressing the question of gender and race intersections in determining individual-wage rates, Kilbourne et al. (1994) and England et al. (1999) compare Whites, African Americans, and Latinos. They find that education and experience explain a large portion of the race gap in earnings for both men and women, although the size of the effect is larger for women than for men. None of the gender gaps in pay for any race/ethnic group can be explained by differences in education and experience. Instead, across race/ethnicity, the male–female pay gap is produced by the gender segregation of occupations (England et al. 1999). However, occupational segregation appears to hurt Black women more than White women in terms of wage inequality (Kilbourne et al. 1994) and Black women receive lower increases in their wages with greater experience and seniority. As a result, experience and seniority explains much less of the gender gap in pay among African Americans than it does among Whites or Latinas (England et al. 1999).

Studies that aggregate diverse groups at the national level miss important processes that are specific to particular labor markets and particular groups (McCall 2001a,b). The specific configuration of opportunities by gender and race are influenced by local patterns of residential segregation by race and class (Massey and

Denton 1993), occupational segregation by gender and race/ethnicity, the industrial mix of the local economy and the demographic composition of the local labor force (McCall 2001a). Therefore, economic restructuring would be expected to affect each group uniquely within particular labor markets. For instance, studies of how the decline in manufacturing led to the deteriorating position of Black men in the United States relative to White men assume that women's concentration in services protected them from economic restructuring (Wilson 1996). While this generalization holds for all White women and Black women in *some* regions, young Black women living in the Midwest experienced a drop in wages when manufacturing jobs left these central cities (Bound and Dresser 1999). Similarly, Puerto Rican women in New York and New Jersey lost jobs and wages with economic restructuring, while recently arrived female Mexican immigrants in California were incorporated into low-wage factory jobs (Myers and Cranford 1998). Studies that move beyond the Black–White framework to incorporate other people of color show the importance of immigration and citizenship for some groups, which adds greater complexity to the race/class/gender nexus (Kibria 1990; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 1997). For instance, Cintron-Velez (1999) shows that within the same city (New York), Puerto Rican women with similar skills encountered different labor-market opportunities depending on when they arrived in New York.

In sum, much evidence supports the claim that race and "class" (education), and gender and "class" (education) intersect in the labor market, although the interpretation of this finding is disputed. Research evidence also points to *some* amount of race/gender intersections and race/gender/class intersections in wage inequality. However, the existence and degree of intersections depends on how wages are measured, which groups are compared, and how the relationships are modeled. To arbitrate between these mixed findings, better theories are needed that identify the conditions under which class, gender, and race will intersect to produce wage inequities (Brewer 1993; Cotter et al. 1999).

Class, race, gender, and workplace authority

Differences in wages also can be attributed to differences in levels of and returns to authority. Workplace authority can be defined, following Weber, as legitimate power within the workplace. Such authority is related to higher levels of job satisfaction, autonomy, and income, as well as a variety of psychological rewards and political behaviors (Smith 2002).[6] As with wages, little scholarship directly and explicitly examines whether the intersection of class, race, and gender explains variation in workplace authority. Studies focused on workplace authority use both quantitative methods (measuring differences in authority) and qualitative methods (examining the experiences of workers in different workplaces and their perceptions about opportunities for advancement).

Class is related centrally to authority at work; those with higher-class backgrounds are more likely to find themselves in positions with authority. At the same time, workers who advance into jobs with higher levels of authority may increase their class standing (Kraus and Yonay 2000). Therefore, class status is both a cause and consequence of workplace authority. While Marx emphasized the conflict between owners and workers, Dahrendorf (1959) argues that in a postindustrial

society, authority is indeed the most central influence on class divisions and relations.[7] Earnings inequality appears to be deeply related to differences in authority.

Class also intersects with race and gender in interesting ways regarding work authority. Research consistently has shown that there are differences in both authority attainment and returns to authority. Human capital – that is, education, training, skills, and experience – do not explain these differences adequately (Smith 2002). Minority men and women and White women appear to require higher levels of human capital than White men to reach the same levels of authority (Kluegel 1978; Wolf and Fligstein 1979; McGuire and Reskin 1993). In addition, as Ryan Smith summarizes, "Minorities and women receive a lower income return than do Whites and men for occupying similar positions of authority, and such disparities are more acute at high levels of authority and among those who exercise control over monetary resources and control over personnel" (2002: 535).

Controlling for human-capital levels, women are less likely to attain positions with significant decision-making power and receive lower authority returns than men (Kanter 1977; Wolf and Fligstein 1979; Jaffee 1989; Jacobs 1992; Reskin and Ross 1992; McGuire and Reskin 1993; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993a,b; Wright et al. 1995; Rosenfeld et al. 1998; Baxter and Wright 2000; Kraus and Yonay 2000; Smith 2002). Women also receive lower authority returns to education and experience than men; indeed education has the most positive effects for women at the lowest levels of authority, while men benefit most from education at the highest levels of authority.[8] Some research suggests that women are more likely to attain authority positions at the bottom of the hierarchy and they have more difficulty moving into top positions (Jacobs 1992; Reskin and Ross 1992; Smith 2002). This phenomenon, often termed the "glass ceiling," argues that it is progressively more difficult for women to advance to higher levels of authority. However, some cross-national research suggests that while there *are* fewer women at the top of organizations, difficulties in attaining authority do not intensify at higher levels of the hierarchy (Wright et al. 1995; Baxter and Wright 2000).[9]

Occupational segregation also affects workplace authority by gender. Jobs dominated by women often are intrinsically devalued, but also are characterized by lower levels of authority (Wolf and Fligstein 1979; Maume 1999a; Kraus and Yonay 2000). Interestingly, authority gaps between men and women appear to be least in jobs dominated by men (Ranson and Reeves 1996; Kraus and Yonay 2000).[10] High levels of women in an occupation suppress opportunities for advancement for both men and women (Smith 2002). However, men are much more likely to achieve decision-making authority than women in jobs dominated by women (Maume 1999b; Kraus and Yonay 2000; Smith 2002). Christine Williams (1992, 1995) effectively shows in her study of men in traditionally women-dominated occupations, that men in these fields benefit from a *glass escalator*, which pushes them upward into management positions.[11]

Significant research exists on questions of workplace authority and race, though much of this literature focuses on the experiences of Blacks and Whites (Kluegel 1978; McGuire and Reskin 1993; Smith 1997, 1999, 2002). Minorities are less likely to be in positions of authority (Kluegel 1978; Mueller et al. 1989; Smith 1999; Smith and Elliott 2002), while the racial gap in authority has actually increased since the 1970s (Smith 1999, 2002; Wilson 1997a). Indeed, Wilson (1997a,b) and

Ryan Smith (1997) argue that the larger racial gaps at higher levels of authority suggest a "glass ceiling" effect for middle-class African Americans. Pathways leading to authority are more circumscribed for Blacks than for Whites; African Americans depend more heavily on their experience and human-capital skills for opportunities for advancement, while Whites advance through more informal channels, including social networks (Wilson 1997a). Collins (1997) notes that minorities are tracked into racialized management assignments, as in community relations, and locked out of mainstream and higher management jobs (see also Maume 1999b). Racial differences in authority also are more pronounced in the private sector (Kluegel 1978; Mueller et al. 1989; Wilson 1997a).

Blacks additionally receive lower returns when they attain authority (Wright and Perrone 1977; Kluegel 1978). Racial differences in returns to authority are most pronounced at the highest levels of authority and are not explained by racial differences in educational attainment (Smith 1997, 1999; Wilson 1997b). Disturbingly, Wilson (1997b) and Ryan Smith (1997, 1999) show that since the 1970s, there has been *no change* in these differential returns to authority. Counter to assumptions that middle-class Blacks have escaped racial inequality (Wilson 1978), such research suggests that middle-class Blacks continue to suffer from limited opportunities for advancement.

An increasing number of studies attempt to explore the intersection of race and gender in attainment of and returns to authority, but there is a less explicit focus on class (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993a,b; McGuire and Reskin 1993; Maume 1999b; Browne and Tigges 2000; Smith and Elliott 2002; Browne and Rauscher 2004). For example, a number of studies have shown that White men are more likely to attain authority and receive higher returns to authority than White women, African American men, and African American women (McGuire and Reskin 1993; Maume 1999b; Browne and Tigges 2000). Indeed, African American women appear to be the least likely group to hold managerial and decision-making positions. As Wilson notes, "African American females are segregated into jobs that offer the fewest opportunities for authority attainment and its attendant rewards" (1997b: 610). This research clearly supports an intersectional approach that claims that class, race, and gender intersect to shape experiences in the labor market.

Yet, many of these studies simply compare differences between race and gender groups, rather than theorizing how class, race, and gender jointly condition these processes. As McGuire and Reskin (1993) note, gender and race simultaneously structure access and returns to authority. These intersections are not merely additive; there are distinct differences between White men and White women, which may not hold between African American men and women; there are, similarly, differences between White men and African American men, which may not hold between White women and African American women. Maume's (1999b) fine-grained study shows that while African American men, White women, and African American women advance to authority positions at slower rates than White men, this is due to different causes. White and African American women are more likely to suffer from being in jobs segregated by race and gender, while African American men suffer from other blocked mobility opportunities, such as low evaluations from their supervisors. Maume (1999b) also shows evidence for a glass escalator, which does not benefit men, per se, but *White men*. Browne and Rauscher (2004) similarly argue that the race and gender composition of jobs may directly affect oppor-

tunities for authority. In their study, they find very different patterns for supervisory positions for White men, White women, African American men, and African American women, based on the gender and race composition of the jobs.[12] As they forcefully state:

> The analyses show that race and gender must be studied in tandem. For instance, if we only had looked at the relation between gender and supervision, we would find that White women are only slightly more likely to be supervised by women than by men, but we would completely miss the pattern that White women are only supervised by *other White* women and men. If we only considered race differences in supervisory hierarchies, we would see that White men are more likely to be supervised by Whites, but we would overlook the pattern that *women* – White or Black – only rarely supervise White men. (2004: 31)

These different patterns in authority and returns to authority by class, race, and gender may be explained by theories of homosocial reproduction or social closure. Homosocial reproduction suggests that managers recruit managers that are like themselves (Kanter 1977; Maume 1999a; Kraus and Yonay 2000). Managers do not explicitly discriminate against other groups, but subconsciously gravitate toward and reward those that are most similar to themselves, in part because rapport is easier to establish. Social closure argues instead that White men try to protect their dominant positions within organizations (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993a,b; Wilson 1997a; Maume 1999a). It may be seen as a combination of discrimination and preservation of privilege (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993a; Browne and Rauscher 2004). Either perspective may help explain how class, race, and gender combine to create inequality by class, race, and gender. Whether through homosocial reproduction or social closure, as Browne and Rauscher argue, "maintaining the status hierarchy would mean that as a *direct result* of their race and gender combined, Black women would be restricted to supervising other Black women" (2004: 18).

While all of the research on workplace authority makes an important contribution, the research that attempts to understand the complex intersections between class, race, and gender is the most precise. Race and gender may all have particular effects on workplace authority; but this cannot be generalized from the experience of White women to fit all groups of women or be generalized from the experience of African American men to fit all African Americans or all minorities. As intersectional research shows, recognizing the subtle patterns by race and gender may help explain previous contradictory research findings. In addition, while many researchers explore workplace authority having implicitly theorized class – by examining the "high" and "low" ends of the hierarchy in different firms or occupations or education's influence on authority – a more explicit analysis of class would surely lead to even better explanations of variations in workplace authority.

Domestic Work: Embedded in Hierarchies of Gender, Race, and Class

While gender, race, and class may shape labor-market experiences differently in diverse settings, domestic work is a site in which intersections of the hierarchies of gender, race, and class are particularly evident. Indeed, scholarship in this area tends

to be qualitative in nature and emphasizes the intersections among gender, race/ethnicity, class and nativity, language, and citizenship status in the experiences of domestic workers and their employers (Rollins 1985; Glenn 1986, 1992; Dill 1988; Kousha 1995; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Milkman et al. 1998; Momsen 1999; Romero 1999, 2002a; Anderson 2000; Ibarra 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001). By focusing on domestic workers' experiences, this research helps reconceptualize relations of power (between employers and their workers) and shows how race, gender, class, nationality, and citizenship inequalities are reproduced, maintained, and reinforced through the labor process (Romero 2002a). While some of the research on domestic work has taken a social-psychological approach to understanding the power dimensions in these relationships (Rollins 1985; Dill 1988), other research focuses attention on the fact that these are employee–employer relations in workplaces (Romero 2002a).

Class differences are evident in domestic work. Employers, who are reluctant to distinguish their own homes as workplaces, may not recognize the power relations of domestic work (Rollins 1985; Glenn 1986, 1999; Romero 1999, 2002a; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Due to the nature of their work, workers witness class differences in experiences and opportunities on a daily basis.[13] Employers enjoy higher-class status than workers, although employers may vary from the very wealthy – with a staff of domestic workers – to even some working-class families – who may employ monthly or biweekly help (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). At the same time, the class level of domestic workers varies significantly – a highly paid nanny may earn twice or three times the amount of a babysitter working the same number of hours a week. Yet, the class differences between employers and workers drive the system of domestic work. For example, in their quantitative study, Milkman et al. (1998) show that the cities with the highest level of household-income inequality are those with the highest growth in domestic work.

Domestic workers also illustrate the dynamic nature of class relations, particularly for immigrant workers. Many immigrant domestic workers come from more privileged class backgrounds in their home countries, as the poorest workers do not have the money needed to emigrate (Ibarra 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001). These workers may have worked in professional positions in their home countries and face contradictory class mobility by emigrating and entering into domestic work. Workers experience downward status mobility, even as they may experience upward financial mobility (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001). Indeed, immigrant domestic workers may employ servants to care for their families in their home countries, creating complicated hierarchies of privilege (Anderson 2000; Parreñas 2001). Employers may ignore or not respect the education and background of workers, in order to maintain their sense of authority and the exploitation of their workers (Rollins 1985; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Romero 2002a).

Class also intersects with gender, particularly in the gender relations between women who supervise domestic workers and the workers themselves (Rollins 1985; Glenn 1986; Romero 1999, 2002a). While the employers reflect gender inequality, insofar as women remain responsible for ensuring that the work is done, these women benefit from class inequality by hiring other women to handle the work assigned to them. As Rollins (1985) noted in her groundbreaking study, women employers may deploy a type of generous, protective, and even loving maternalism.

Yet, this maternalism is as disrespectful to the autonomy of the worker as a paternalistic relationship is.

Workers and employers also wrestle with different and changing gender norms. Employers may feel a sense of guilt or loss, because they are not providing care for their families directly. Such emotions may be channeled into complicated relationships with their workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). At the same time, domestic workers often must transgress gender norms, by caring for families other than their own (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Glenn 1999; Chang 2000; Parreñas 2001). These workers may criticize women employers for *choosing* to work outside the home, even as they themselves are forced to work outside the home to support their families (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997).

Class and gender also intersect with race, ethnicity, and nationality. Employers develop hierarchies of racial and ethnic preference, for example preferring to employ White nannies or Latina maids, while also having different expectations based on race/ethnicity (e.g., White nannies watch children, while Latina nannies also clean) (Wrigley 1995; Ibarra 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Romero 2002a).[14] Indeed, employers often prefer certain racial/ethnic groups based on stereotypes about these groups' submissiveness.

Citizenship and nationality also play a central role in the labor process for domestic workers. With the surge in the global economy, there has been a significant expansion of immigrant domestic workers in North America, Europe, the industrializing countries in Asia and oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. Domestic workers are drawn from various parts of the globe, creating an "international division of reproductive labor" (Anderson 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001). In addition to exploitation of workers based on racial or ethnic differences, immigrant workers may be particularly exploited on the basis of nationality or citizenship status.

Employers of domestic workers may prefer immigrant workers, perceived as more "docile" and willing to work for lower wages (Momsen 1999). Indeed, some studies suggest that employers are more hesitant to employ immigrant domestic workers that speak the dominant language (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001). Such hierarchies devalue immigrant workers while also blocking native-born, minority women from access to these positions.

Employers also use nationality and citizenship status to rationalize paying immigrant workers less than native-born workers. They argue that immigrant workers would live in much greater poverty in their home countries (Hossfeld 1990, 1994; Romero 1999; Ibarra 2000). Wages may even be based on wage potential in the worker's country of origin, rather than fair wages within the host country (Heyzer and Wee 1994).[15] The vulnerability of noncitizen workers, particularly illegal immigrants, allows employers greater latitude to exploit their workers. Private employers often disregard employment laws for pay, taxes, working conditions, and benefits (Heyzer and Wee 1994; Romero 1999, 2002a; Chang 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Rosales 2001).

Employers use intersecting ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, and gender to justify exploiting women of color; these processes then help maintain and reinforce an inequitable system of employment. The experiences of domestic workers provide a stark example of the matrix of domination. The employers of domestic workers are at an advantage directly from their ability to hire domestic

workers; freed from the need to do this labor, they have greater opportunities for leisure and for earning (higher) wages in the labor market (Glenn 1999). Romero highlights this process, emphasizing that the link between privilege and disadvantage is most clear in the way that "the higher quality paid reproductive labor the employers' families receive produces as a direct consequence lower amounts of unpaid reproductive labor in their own families" (2002a: 21; 2002b). The intersectional approach illustrates that the higher living standards of White middle- and upper-class women have depended on the lower living standards and exploitation of lower-class, racial/ethnic minority and immigrant women (Glenn 1999).

Domestic work illustrates the omnipresent nature of the intersection of gender, race, and class within a particular labor-market sector. In part, the qualitative nature of most of the research has helped identify how gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and citizenship are all relevant and interconnected in explaining the labor-market experiences of domestic work. Class cannot be measured simply, as the class status of workers may vary, for example, as they immigrate. Similarly, measures of race and ethnicity and nationality and citizenship rely on specific contexts. This research reflects the complexity of considering these intersections analytically, while also demonstrating how carework is devalued and workers' devaluation is linked to their statuses in a hierarchy of gender, class, race/ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship.

Conclusion

Labor-market research, incorporating an intersectional perspective, has enriched our understanding of economic inequality by calling into question studies of gender that fail to account for race and class as well as studies of race that fail to account for gender and class. Generalizations based on a single, social category or identity (e.g., gender) should be established empirically rather than assumed. However, we also advocate more research in which the simultaneous interplay of gender, race, and class is *demonstrated*.

To assess the claims of intersectional theories empirically, scholars need to develop more precise theories of class and to specify conditions under which intersections are most likely and least likely to occur (Browne and Misra 2003). This is a tall order. The assumptions of intersectional perspectives that gender, race, and class intersect at all levels of social life presents a difficult challenge for social theorizing. Intersectional research runs into a number of inherent problems in both conceptualization and analysis. Conceptualizing and measuring class (Dahrendorf 1959; Wright 1978; Acker 1999; Gimenez 2001), as well as race/ethnicity, gender, and citizenship (Glenn 2002); the structure/agency question (England and Browne 1992; Wrong 1999); and the relations between identity, interactions, and institutions (Ridgeway 1997) have plagued sociology for decades.[16]

Indeed, looking at the triple intersection of gender, race, and class creates the same theoretical dilemmas that sociologists encountered when attempting to understand dual gender/class and race/class intersections. Empirically, many scholars have found it difficult to theorize class and gender, when women's class status is so tightly related to marital status and unpaid labor at home (Acker 1999). Similarly, it is difficult to untangle race and class; there are few very wealthy African Americans and

few extremely poor Whites whose conditions resemble those of extremely poor African Americans (for instance, poor Whites are more likely to live in rural areas rather than urban neighborhoods of concentrated poverty).[17] Many other scholars have attempted to understand the importance of "race" and "class" in determining the life chances of different groups (Wilson 1978; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Omi and Winant 1994).

In addition to the challenges associated with theorizing "dual intersections" and "triple intersections," methodological dilemmas appear as well. Our review suggests that evidence for "intersectionality" is much more apparent with qualitative studies, such as the analyses of domestic work, than with quantitative research. Assessing dynamic intersections of class, race, and gender may be difficult to do through quantitative measures, though reflexive quantitative researchers have made some headway in this regard (see, for instance, McCall 2000).

Intersectional scholarship continues to develop. While there are a number of important examples, the research of Miliann Kang serves as an excellent model for intersectional studies (1997, 2000, 2003). In her work, Kang observes Korean-owned nail salons in three neighborhoods in New York, including a predominantly White, middle-class, commercial neighborhood; a racially mixed, middle-class, residential neighborhood; and a primarily African American, low-income neighborhood. Combining participant observation research and interview research, Kang explores service provision in a global, postindustrial economy, considering the interactions and relationships of Korean immigrant workers, Korean immigrant owners, and a variety of customers in different settings. As Kang argues, "by understanding the lived experiences of specific individuals and groups, in specific sites, in particular historical moments, the broader context of race, class, and gender oppression and their forms of intersection can be more concretely documented and more meaningfully conceptualized" (2000: 7–8). By taking a comparative approach to understanding the complexity of race, gender, and class intersections, Kang is able to develop thoughtful conceptualizations of the intersection, by empirically demonstrating rather than assuming the shape of those intersections.

While Kang (2003) focuses on an urban US setting, the work of Laura Raynolds (2001) demonstrates how an intersectionality perspective can be useful in understanding labor-market processes in a quite different setting: agricultural production for a transnational corporation in a developing country. Relying on field research and analysis of company employment records, Raynolds examines changes in production relations between 1989 and 1995 within a pineapple firm in the Dominican Republic. In 1989, the non-Dominican ("foreign") management in the pineapple firm hired mostly women for the full-time work on the pineapple plantation, paying them extremely low wages.[18] Although agricultural work was defined as "men's work," the women needed the income for their families.

With the decline in pineapple exports in the mid-1990s, the firm shifted its production strategies to cut costs. Wages were now paid at piece-rate, and work crews were recruited through Dominican "contractors" relying on local patronage systems. The local contractors preferred men and so women were excluded from the jobs. With the piece-rate system, agricultural work on the plantation was recast as a "masculine proving ground" (Raynolds 2001: 22). The patronage systems were based on race/ethnic ties within the community as well as gender. By relying on

Dominican contractors to hire and regulate labor, the non-Dominican management fostered loyalty to the company.

The work of Kang (2003) and Raynolds (2001) highlights the relevance of intersectional perspectives to understanding how class, race, and gender are implicated in the global economy in diverse economic sectors. We argue that it is important to continue to theorize and analyze the intersections of class, race, and gender – both qualitatively and quantitatively. While qualitative-methodological approaches may allow us more complex and dynamic models of the intersections, quantitative research on labor-market inequality must be further specified to consider the intersections of class, race, and gender. Quantitative studies provide empirical leverage on changes in the level and extent of inequality over time or across geographic areas (McCall 2001a). These data are necessary for developing and evaluating effective policy measures (Aldridge 1999; McCall 2001a). As sociologists, we must strive to develop better understandings of these processes of inequality and our analysis suggests that research that specifies these intersections is more precise and accurate.

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Notes

1 We take these themes from our companion paper, "The intersection of gender and race in the labor market," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29 (2003): 487–513.

2 Intersectional approaches also may examine how other statuses – sexuality, ability, age, ethnicity, nationality, and so on – intersect with gender, race, and class. While we focus upon gender, race, and class in this chapter – with some discussion of nationality and citizenship – we recognize the importance of considering these more complex intersections.

3 Without clear definitions, it is nearly impossible to interpret research results. Are the results simply an artifact of a particular way of "measuring" a construct or a valid test of the theory (Stinchcombe 1968)?

4 We view epistemology as the study of how and what we can know; methodology as theorizing about research practices; and method as the specific tools used by researchers (Harding 1987; DeVault 1996).

5 For example, Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990) argues that researchers must make their own experience the starting point for all investigations, in order to subvert positivistic-research structures that serve the interests of the ruling groups in society.

6 While there are multiple approaches, many studies emphasize differences between formal authority, supervisory authority, and decision-making (or managerial) authority. Different measures of authority lead to significant variations in how class, race, and gender matter to authority (see Smith 2002).

7 Wright (1978) similarly conceptualizes class to include authority.
8 As Ryan Smith claims, "education has a much stronger effect on authority chances of men than women . . . each additional year of education has upwards of two to three times the effect for men as for women on authority outcomes" (2002: 531).
9 Baxter and Wright claim that women face greater disadvantages in acquiring authority at lower levels of the hierarchy; they also suggest that "removing gender-related obstacles to getting into the authority hierarchy would appear to be a more pressing task than removing obstacles to promotions in the upper reaches of authority structures" (2000: 289).
10 However, Maume (1999b) found that men's promotion chances increase in jobs dominated by men, while women may be more likely to experience blocked opportunities and are more likely to leave their jobs when working in jobs dominated by men.
11 Another question asked by researchers focused on gender and authority attainment is whether women choose jobs with less authority (e.g., mommy-tracks) due to greater family responsibilities or because they value workplace authority less – perhaps due to differences in gender socialization (Smith 2002). Yet, cross-national research provides very little evidence that women self-select out of positions of authority (Wright et al. 1995; Smith 2002). In addition, research on family relationships suggests that while women that are mothers are less likely to attain authority, men who are fathers are *more* likely to attain authority.
12 Smith and Elliott's (2002) study explores the effects of ethnic concentration on authority hierarchies for White, Asian, Latino, and African American men, as well as White, Asian, Latina, and African American women. Their findings reinforce Browne and Rauscher's (2004), but suggest that rather than a "glass ceiling," women and minority men suffer from the effects of a "sticky floor." Smith and Elliott argue that authority chances are shaped by whether one's ethnic group dominates only entry-level positions or also higher-level positions within an organization. These patterns vary by gender and ethnic group, although their study does not fully develop the implications of their findings from an intersectional perspective.
13 For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo notes, "Unlike the working poor who toil in factories and fields, domestic workers see, touch, and breathe the material and emotional world of their employers' homes. They scrub grout, coax reluctant children to nap and eat their vegetables, launder and fold clothes, mop, dust, vacuum, and witness intimate and otherwise private family dynamics" (2001: ix).
14 Domestic workers themselves may absorb hierarchies of racial and ethnic preference – often preferring to work for Whites rather than racial or ethnic minorities.
15 For example, Heubach (2002: 172) notes that in Germany, Polish household workers may earn twice as much as Bulgarian workers, reflecting the wage discrepancy between the two nations. Heyzer and Wee (1994) present similar data for workers from a variety of Asian countries in Singapore.
16 For labor-market processes in particular, a more rigorous theorizing of class is essential. As Acker notes, "Capitalism cannot be deconstructed away. . . . [W]e need an analysis of capitalism to comprehend what is happening [to people]. Class is a linking concept that can mediate between the generalized and global expressions of capitalist processes and the concrete experiences of ordinary people who are simultaneously with these processes and producing a changed reality" (1999: 53).
17 This tight interweaving of race and class led Milton Gordon, in 1964, to suggest that the concept "ethclass" be used.
18 Raynolds does not specify the country of ownership of the management, presumably to maintain confidentiality of the firm and respondents.

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