Intersectionality

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In this chapter we take up a concept that has become fundamental to understanding inequalities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: intersectionality. We begin by reflecting on why this concept has become foundational and devote considerable attention to its historical roots and to the various extant definitions. As our discussion emphasizes, multiple “intersectionalities” circulate within the academy. We identify four core tenets shared across most of these intersectional models. We then take up what is specific to social psychological perspectives on intersectionality and discuss how each of the key theoretical perspectives within social psychology addresses, deploys, or fails to take full advantage of this concept. We argue that social cognition, social exchange, and symbolic interaction each have much to gain from a more sustained engagement with intersectionality; synthesizing the intersectional framework’s theoretical insights and methodological contributions with these theories takes social psychological analyses of inequality beyond normative models limited to the experiences of unmarked, typically hegemonic, categories.

Intersectionality in Practice: An Introductory Example

The election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States was a defining moment in U.S. history, characterized as it has so often been as the first time an African American has been elected to the highest office of the country. This deep sense of historical achievement is based virtually entirely on Obama’s race; he is labeled as Black. His racial categorization is more complicated, however. His father was Kenyan and Black; his mother was American and White. He is described as Black because of a system—historically referred to as “the one drop rule”—that labels anyone as Black who has any hint of Black birth. He is, however, what the census now labels “mixed-race.” Another status characteristic that his media staff attempt to communicate is his social class. He often refers to coming from a modest socioeconomic background. The White House website notes that his grandmother “worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle management at a bank.” It adds that Obama worked “his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans.” Compared to many politicians, Obama does come from a modest class background. Yet Obama earned a law degree from Harvard and taught at the University of Chicago Law School, achievements that suggest a considerable degree of class advantage. Turning to a third major status characteristic, sex, Obama is clearly a male, with masculine gender. His masculinity is not a

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macho type, though; some have characterized him as effeminate (professorial!). He is Black, but not fully Black. He is of a lower-middle class background, but his contemporary lifestyle suggests greater class advantages. He is male, but in a somewhat feminized way.

In other words, Barack Obama's historical significance reflects his membership in primary categories—race, class, gender; but it also reflects two forms of complexity. Category memberships are not as straightforward as they may seem, and categories intersect. The full import of this chapter in American history cannot be understood without relying on the principles of intersectionality. It is all of Obama's characteristics, together, that explain this moment. Importantly, these characteristics and their intersections have profound interactional consequences. Several stunning moments of what seem like profound disrespect, primarily from members of the U.S. Congress, have occurred. Congressman Joe Wilson called out to Obama during a speech: "You lie!" Speaker John Boehner demanded that Obama reschedule a speech on the economy because it conflicted with a scheduled Republican primary. What enabled such behaviors? Is it because Obama is Black? Is it because he tried to "reach across the aisle," instantiating his femininity? Is it because he is not (as) monied? It seems plausible that behaviors such as these, behaviors one would not expect to be directed toward a U.S. President, were made legible both to the actors and to some of the American public, through the complex combination of President Obama's status profile. We cannot understand this historical moment without using intersectional analyses.

Defining Intersectionality

To understand intersectionality, one must understand a core social psychological principle that lies at its heart: social categorization (see Wilkins et al., this volume). Social categorization follows from the principles of social cognition. Human cognitive capacities are limited. We cannot pay attention to all the stimuli around us; we cannot use all available information in forming inferences; we cannot remember everything. In order to be able to manage the demands of everyday interaction, we have to be efficient, to use information selectively. Categorization is a key mechanism for streamlining information. We organize information into categories, reducing a larger number of items into a smaller set to attend to, to use, to remember. To the extent that one can assert generalities, it appears that categorization is a process fundamental to human action and interaction. However, costs accrue. Categorization is a reduction of information; information is set aside, potentially lost. Such information may turn out to be valuable in other contexts. Moreover, the categories themselves may become associated with information that is then applied to specific instances in which those associations are inaccurate. Thus, categorization can lead both to the loss of important information and to the use of incorrect information.

Further, categorization seems always to be accompanied by differential evaluation. That is, a given system of categorization could be neutral; the categories could be equally valued. In practice, this appears not to happen, at least not with socially significant categorizations. From the micro to the macro levels, some races, some genders, some socioeconomic positions, some sexualities, are highly valued; others are not. These differential values guide the differential allocation of both material and symbolic resources. Thus processes of categorization and differential evaluation provide ideological and structural foundations for social stratification. These dynamics become all the more complex when we consider together the multiple systems of human categorization, that is, their intersections.

Socio-political awareness of social categories, and hence, somewhat later, of intersectionality, deepened markedly during the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Social psychological research on gender, although present to some degree in earlier years, became prominent in the 1970s, presumably due to the broader societal influence of the second wave feminist movement. Social psychological research on race also intensified during the 1970s, associated with the civil rights movement that began in the 1960s. Importantly, the nature of the research shifted as well, moving from an orientation on gender or racial difference to a focus on inequalities associated with these systems. Presumably the emphasis on inequalities is attributable in part to the ideologies that underlay these social movements.

Early Conceptualizations

The concept of intersectionality originated in nineteenth century articulations of the relationship between race and gender by anti-racism activists such as Anna Julia Cooper and Sojourner Truth (Harley 1978; Truth and Painter 1998). Shared concerns inform Du Bois' (1903) concept of double consciousness, which describes the dilemma of an identity as both American and Black, an intersection associated historically with negative consequences, but for which Du Bois foresaw the possibility of positive associations.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991, 1993), a critical race legal scholar, first explicitly named the concept of intersectionality when referring to the interweavings of multiple categories of oppression. Her emphasis on the interwoven nature of oppression was a direct response to the then-prevalent emphasis among feminist scholars on the primacy of gender oppression. In contrast, Crenshaw asserted the fundamental ways in which race and gender discrimination compound and complicate each other. She opened a space to recognize that various oppressions work together to produce a discrimination distinct from that based on either race or gender alone (Dhamoon 2011).

Working in the substantive arena of rape and domestic violence, Crenshaw (1991) identifies three forms of intersectionality: *structural intersectionality*, the ways in which the location of women of color in macro-level systems of race and gender qualitatively distinguishes their experiences of sexual violence from those of White women; *political intersectionality*, evident in the ways in which meso-level anti-sexist and anti-racist politics can erase the experiences of women of color; and *representational intersectionality*, the cultural imagery of women of color, micro-level representations that often elide the intersection of race and gender.

The need to explain—and hopefully then to reduce—inequalities motivated the concept of intersectionality from the outset. In this sense, intersectionality is a core orienting concept for the social psychological study of social inequalities. It is important therefore to define what we mean by inequality, an idea fundamental both to intersectionality and to this volume. We suggest that inequality is less the issue for intersectional scholars than is injustice. Taking into account pre-existing differences in available resources, cultural histories, and/or degrees of need may mean that unequal allocations of resources or provisions of opportunities in particular instances will better forward social justice than will principles of equality. Crenshaw (1998, p. 285) phrases this eloquently: "treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently." Equal does not necessarily equate to just (see Hegtvedt and Isom, this volume). Recognition of intersectionality highlights that there are multiple statuses and systems scholars must address in proposing routes to justice.

As scholars applied the concept and historical circumstances unfolded, a number of variations have followed. Patricia Hill Collins uses the concept to refer to "particular forms of oppressions, for example, the intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nations" (2000, p. 18). In her early works she emphasizes how Black women develop worldviews, how Black feminist thought is generated and communicated. Collins' focus on knowledge production of cultural images and the circulation of this knowledge is clearly consistent with Crenshaw's notion of representational intersectionality. Collins conceives of intersectionality as micro-level, as expressed in interpersonal perceptions and biases, exchange behaviors and symbolic exchanges, cognitive expectations, and so forth, paralleled by interlocking processes among macro-level structures, instantiated in systems of race (white supremacy), gender (patriarchy) and other dimensions of inequality (capitalism). These multi-level systems work together to shape oppressions, creating a "matrix of domination," (1990, p. 238) the organization of intersections. Both Collins (2000) and Razack (1998) emphasize their interdependence; these systems literally secure one another. (See *Gender & Society* special issue on the contributions of Patricia Hill Collins, 2012, Vol. 26, p. 1.)

Deborah King (1988) (echoing Du Bois; see Jeffries and Ransford 1980) highlights the dimension of multiple jeopardy. By this she means the multiplicative, as opposed to additive, character of oppressions: "racism multiplied by sexism multiplied by classism" (p. 47). She argues that Black women, in particular, define and sustain a multiple consciousness essential to challenge the interstructure of these oppressions. Casting this in social psychological terms, social identities of race, of gender, of class position, are simultaneous and multiplicative. Critiques of the concept of multiple jeopardy caution that it can too readily be applied as additive rather than multiplicative (Epstein 1973; West and Fenstermaker 1995) and is in danger of essentializing identities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983; Yuval-Davis 2009) rather than seeing them always as contextually embedded.

Contemporary Conceptualizations

Since the original statement of intersectionality, a number of theoretical extensions and expansions have emerged, many of which forward (not always intentionally) the integration of sociological with social psychological approaches to understanding both intersections and inequalities. Part of the challenge in offering an overview of the concept of intersectionality is that the concept has become so foundational for feminist scholars in particular that the term has been characterized as a theoretical "buzzword" (Davis 2008) and "hot topic" (Saltzman Chafetz 1997), present everywhere, but whose meaning is so varied that it lacks precision and analytic bite. Similarly, Knapp (2005) asserts that the triad of race/class/gender is often mentioned without meaningfully addressing the concerns that generated this triad. Butler (1999) notes that this triad is often followed by an "embarrassed etc." which simultaneously acknowledges and then ignores other important identities and social locations. Yet, an intersectional analytic has not become anywhere near so foundational among social psychologists, so articulation of what it does and does not mean, and what it can and cannot do, does require specification.

We touch on a number of these contemporary conceptualizations below; we begin with what we see as four key tenets that are central to intersectionality. First, intersectionality is about the perspectives of people shaped by the multiplicity of categories to which they belong, some marginalized, some privileged. In its emphasis on perception and experience, intersectionality is of great relevance to social psychologists. Second, the different systems of inequality that come together are transformed in their intersections; intersectionality is more than the sum of its parts. Third, intersectionality is not simply a statistical phenomenon. The transformations of unidimensional systems of inequalities that are instantiated in intersections merge micro and macro levels of analysis. In this sense, intersectionality encourages—indeed, requires—that social psychologists attend to the sociological—structural, institutional, organizational—contexts in which the relevant actors live. Fourth, an intersectional analytic reveals the simultaneous experience of oppression and privilege, complicating the analysis of inequality. Scholars are divided on the question of whether intersectional analyses should focus on privilege; some worry that greater attention to privilege will lead to lesser attention to the experiences of marginalized individuals and thus undermine the emancipatory potential of intersectionality (Levine-Rasky 2011). We argue, however, that shining light explicitly on the privileges associated with certain social positions is important to furthering the goal of social justice.

These tenets are evident in several of the more recent articulations of intersectionality. Choo and Ferree (2010) offer a scheme for organizing intersectionalities that is based in part on levels of analysis. One approach focuses on inclusion of the experiences of multiply-marginalized people and groups, our first tenet. A second focuses on intersectionality as an analytic interaction, a non-additive, transformative interactivity of effects—our second tenet. A third addresses institutional primacy, moving beyond sociological approaches that associate certain societal institutions primarily with one type of inequality or another, e.g, family with gender, then applying intersectional analysis to explain the "extra" or "secondary" contradictions for nondominant groups. This is one aspect of our third tenet.

Dhamoon's (2011) schematic is similar; she distinguishes the identities of an individual(s) or social group that are marked as different (e.g., Black women), the categories of difference (e.g., race and gender), and the systems of domination (e.g., racism, patriarchy), but she adds an important fourth aspect, the processes of differentiation (e.g., racialization and gendering). She makes the important point that each emphasizes something different in our understanding of difference and power, that they do different analytic work. Translating Dhamoon's model into social psychological terms, we see that she identifies personality/identity, social categories, structural systems, and in adding process, highlights the importance of interaction, representation, and social construction, as well as temporality.

One critical contribution of intersectionality is that it can illuminate how intersecting forms of domination produce locations of both oppression and privilege within a single actor or community (Zinn and Dill 1994; Dhamoon 2011), our fourth tenet noted above. Co-incidences of privilege and marginalization have been under-theorized, yet are likely ubiquitous in social life (e.g., our example of Barack Obama). Wadsworth (2011) offers an insightful analysis of such complexities in discussing California's 2008 marriage protection ballot initiative, Proposition 8. She foregrounds the potential tension between simultaneously existing identities: in this empirical case, race and sexuality. A significant number of people of color whose views were otherwise on the political left voted to restrict marriage to opposite-sex couples. In attempting to explain this apparent contradiction, Wadsworth introduces the concept of *foundational intersectionality*, analyzing the historical development of the relationships among these socially constructed categories. Wadsworth observes that people in subordinated positions (here, people of color) can "reflect and uphold certain privileges [here, heterosexuality] while simultaneously performing a location of innocence that masks other power relations from which they benefit," (2011, p. 204). She notes: "As the nation's first African American president was being elected, significant percentages of left-leaning people of color stepped to the political right on Proposition 8…" (2011, p. 201). (Indeed, President Obama came in for much criticism for his caution about undoing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and his then ambivalent position on gay marriage.) Wadsworth stresses that unitary category analysis cannot explain these political behaviors; foundational intersectionality is critical to understand the effects of these secondary marginalizations (Cohen 1999). Intersectional scholarship has tended to focus analyses primarily on the stigma of the marginalized and the power of the dominant, avoiding analysis of the operation of power within and between stigmatized communities.

Wadsworth's stress on historical contexts of particular intersections is a telling reminder of the temporal dimension of categories and their intersections. This adds depth to a number of the other approaches to intersections we have reviewed thus far. So, for example, Choo and Ferree's (2010) point that institutions may be associated with particular types of categories and inequalities can be extended by observing that such associations themselves may well experience historical change. The association of family with women and paid work with men, for example, has changed significantly in the past decades. Similarly, the institution of higher education, once associated primarily with male students, has become an institution populated more by women students than by men, a change that has aroused significant concern on the part of some (Jacobs 2002; Sax 2008; Vincent-Lancrin 2008). Another telling contemporary example is how the intensification of transnational flows complicates racial and ethnic profiles; Purkayastha (2010) notes that the presence of transnational lives, in which people live both within and beyond single nation-states, makes it possible for them to be simultaneously racial majorities and minorities.

Locating Intersectionality in Social Psychological Concepts and Theories

In this section, we locate the concept of intersectionality explicitly in the language and theories of social psychology. The terms of intersectionality are closely related to social cognition, as we have discussed, most evident in the concept of social categories. Some of the core concepts of social exchange, particularly power and status, are theoretically related to intersectionality, but the empirical work in this tradition has not typically taken up the kinds of questions that intersectionality informs. Explicit connections could certainly be made with some subfields within social exchange, however, especially work on justice and equity. Symbolic interaction has tended to emphasize interactional rather than structural dimensions, but clearly illuminates some of the micro-level symbolic aspects of intersectionality through concepts such as social stigma.

Social Cognition

We have already introduced the key principles of social cognition, because the process of categorization and the operations of social categories are fundamental to intersectionality. The statuses associated with social categories, the indicators of the differential evaluations we have noted, and beliefs about status, inform the valence of intersections. Considering the processes of social cognition may shed new light on some aspects of intersectionality; three key processes are attention—how we direct our cognitive awareness; information processing—how we make a variety of judgments, from predictions to decisions to attributions; and memory—how we store and retrieve (or forget) information. Theories of attention may help explain what intersections are especially salient in certain social contexts; theories of information processing may help explain the kinds of judgments and inferences that follow from intersectional identities and group memberships; and theories of memory may help explain the persistence of associations with particular intersecting categories and identities. Similarly, attention to intersectionality could clarify how categories are created and potentially transformed, as well as lead to an expansion of the repertoire of categories. Intersectionality suggests that the combined categories in any given situation become a new, distinct identity at the individual level and possible category at the group level. Interestingly, the implicit association test (IAT) (Greenwald et al. 1998), one of the most popular contemporary measures of associations among mental representations of concepts, continues to use uni-dimensional concepts, e.g., sample tests are sexuality (gay-straight); skin-tone (light skin-dark skin); disability (disabled-abled), despite the fact that the tool could easily be used to assess associations among multidimensional concepts. Intersectionality also highlights the affective valence of categories, an aspect of social cognition that could profit from greater attention (see Foy et al., this volume).

Social Exchange

Social exchange theory applies economic models to everyday decision making, postulating that interaction takes place when it is mutually rewarding to the parties involved. Interaction occurs because people depend on each other for valued resources. Power, conceptualized in this perspective as one actor's ability to achieve a favorable outcome when desired resources are finite, is a quality of a relationship (Emerson 1962; see Thye and Kalkhoff, this volume). This explicit attention to power could have led social exchange theorists to focus closely on inequalities associated with membership in social categories, as well as their intersections, but for the most part, this has not been the case. Most social exchange theorists do not address the influence of social categories, and where they do, they tend to focus on category differences, rather than on inequalities associated with category membership. More generally, exchange research assumes a self-oriented motivation and does not often pursue the possibility of generosity; assumes that rationality, not emotion or affect, guides behavior; and tends to operationalize social positions and social contexts rather narrowly.

Particular exceptions exist within the social exchange literature, however, notably the considerable body of work on justice and the distribution of resources, and research on status. The literature on justice addresses perceptions about the allocation of resources. Defined this way, justice is subjective. A variety of possible principles guide resource allocation (e.g. equality, need, etc.). Where the justice literature touches more explicitly on perceptions of inequality is that membership in particular social categories affects the perceptions of which rules are fair and lead to just outcomes. People in advantaged or powerful positions are likely to perceive an unequal distribution as just, for example, while those in disadvantaged positions are more likely to feel it is unjust (Cook and Hegtvedt 1986; Molm 2006; Hegtvedt and Isom, this volume). The vast majority of exchange research is done in laboratory contexts, so the advantage and power created there are artificial. But studies conducted outside laboratory settings find parallel perceptions; people in lower social classes are less likely to perceive inequality to be fair (Robinson and Bell 1978). Kluegel and Smith (1986) report that Blacks are far more likely than Whites to doubt the fairness of the American stratification system. These are not intersectional analyses, but one can imagine that incorporating intersectionality would offer a profile of perceptions about justice that is both more complex and more accurate. For example, intersectional analyses of the perceptions of societal inequalities held by those among the rather vast population of the 99 % of the 2012 Occupy movement would likely reveal many dimensions of social positions and statuses, rather than a monolithic group.

Expectation states theory, an offshoot of social exchange, could also connect to intersectionality, in theory if not in practice (Correll and Ridgeway 2003). This theory holds that individuals form performance expectations by assessing observable status characteristics and comparing among group members (see Ridgeway and Nakagawa, this volume). Individuals look to status characteristics to evaluate their own and others' potential performances. Status characteristics are closely associated with membership in social categories. Numerous studies investigate sex category (Balkwell and Berger 1996; Foschi 1992) and the effects of other diffuse statuses on performance expectations (Cohen 1982; Foddy and Riches 2000; Webster and Driskell 1983; Webster et al. 1998). Taken as a whole, this line of research does illuminate one mechanism through which micro-interactions facilitate the performance of social inequalities. However, even these recent studies do not adopt an intersectional perspective, considering the real-world coinciding of various social positions. Intersectionality would enable more accurate predictions of the effects of expectations on behavior.

Symbolic Interaction

Fundamental to symbolic interaction is the meanings that social objects hold (Blumer 1969). Meaning emerges in interactions; interpretation is central to the processes through which meanings influence interactions (Snow 2001). Interpretation entails situational assessment, negotiations of meaning among actors, and agreement on lines of action. Negotiation, rather than individual action, is central to this interactionist perspective. The symbolic interactionist parallel to social identities is role-identities, identities generated through ties to others (McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 2002). In some strands of symbolic interaction, role-identities have an almost functionalist feel, but in others, particularly Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analyses, emphasis is on the processes of identity construction and impression management (see Schwalbe and Shay, this volume).

One core symbolic interactionist concept, stigma, facilitates recognition of the affective depth of inequalities associated with intersections among identities (see Link et al., this volume). As defined by Erving Goffman (1963), stigma is disapproval of people on the basis of characteristics that differentiate them from others in a particular group. Goffman thought of stigma as a process by which the reaction of others spoils an identity. For stigmatization to occur, systems of social, economic, and political power that identify difference, categorization, and the differential evaluation of those categories must exist (Garcia Bedolla 2007). What symbolic interaction adds to these cognitive components of stigma is recognition of the power of social interaction in creating and, in a sense, implementing the stigma. Garcia Bedolla notes that it would be useful to assess the relative stigmatization of multiple potential (or actual) group memberships. She asserts this would help promote understanding of the interrelations among identities and the relative degree of attachment individuals have to particular group identifications.

These symbolic interactionist principles are central to one relatively recent theoretical contribution that has been highly influential to work on the social construction of gender and of inequality: "doing gender." West and Zimmerman (1987) borrow insights from phenomenology and from symbolic interaction to assert that gender is an accomplishment of everyday interaction. Individuals literally "do" gender through the ways they talk, how they dress, how they move, how they interact. Subsequent to West and Zimmerman's original articulation of the concept, West and Fenstermaker extended this approach in their 1995 article "Doing Difference" by addressing the accomplishment of other key social categories, specifically race and class. Although this essay addresses multiple categories, the analysis is not intersectional; how these categories interlock is not a primary focus. "Doing Difference" was followed by a symposium of responses, many of them critical of what they perceived as an emphasis on difference as opposed to inequality (Collins et al. 1995). Among the key points of critique were the failure to focus on the interlocking relationships among systems of inequality, failure to take the specific historical circumstances and systems of power into account, failure to attend to the constraints that material power and institutions pose on processes of social construction, and the apparent failure to recognize that perceptions depend on one's location in social structures. Integrating an intersectional approach more fully into the "doing" perspective would clearly address many of these critiques; intersectionality is fundamentally about the interlocking systems of inequality, and is deeply attentive to systems of power and the differential allocation of both material and symbolic resources. Empirical work in this vein is beginning to take shape (see Utrata 2011; Warren 2009).

A more recent direction is to theorize the "undoing" of gender and other forms of inequalities (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009; Sullivan 2004). A synthesis of these two lines of work would promote the broader social goals of intersectional analyses, helping to reduce societal inequalities and promote social justice.

How Intersectionality Advances the Social Psychology of Inequalities

The intersectional framework offers both conceptual and methodological contributions with the potential to advance the social psychology of inequalities. Foremost among these, the intersectional framework guards against three limitations within mainstream social psychology. First, the intersectional framework holds the potential to identify the social mechanisms that produce both social inequality and social change (Weber 2007). Acknowledging that differences associated with race, class, and gender exist is not the same as showing how power relations are co-constructed, maintained, and challenged (Anthias 2005). The intersectional framework is explanatory, not just descriptive; it takes social psychology beyond accounts—often ideographic descriptions—of individual motives to better understand what acts produce inequality, and which acts produce more equitable outcomes.

Second, the intersectional framework is mobile, not static; it takes social psychological analyses of inequality beyond examinations of social categories themselves (e.g., race) and recasts them as dynamic social processes (e.g., racialization) that link individuals to free standing systems (Hancock 2007; Ken 2008). Rather than engage in a poststructuralist rejection of social categories, the intersectional framework insists that group membership matters in two very real ways: first, attributions of group membership (e.g., labeling processes) impact one's social position and how one appraises and finds meaning in this position, and second, group membership partly determines one's ability to claim and harness this position for political, cultural, or social change (Anthias 2005; Spivak 2008). Explicitly acknowledging that social categories are contextually embedded, relational, and contingent insulates social psychological research from reducing difference to the level of identity alone and from reifying social categories as the field has done in the past (Cole and Sabik 2009; Higginbotham 1997). Moreover, the intersectional lens explicitly acknowledges and explores variations within social categories, which destabilizes essentialist assumptions about these groups (Hurtado and Sinha 2008; Ramazanoğlu 2002). When deploying social categories, this approach analytically distinguishes between "social position," one's position in relation to social, economic, cultural, or political resources, from "social positioning," the way one articulates, understands, or harnesses these positions (Anthias 2005; Levine-Rasky 2011). Thus, the intersectional framework forces analyses to move beyond social psychology's historic fascination with "difference" as a set of static positions to interrogate the interrelated and mobile processes of social differentiation and differential evaluation.

Third, the intersectional framework guards against social psychology's tendency to give primacy to a single identity, group membership, or social system when providing an account for social inequality. Intersectional studies require that research move beyond "master" categories to consider the ways that "emergent" and hybrid categories produced in everyday interactions complicate social psychological processes (Fotopoulou 2012; Warner 2008). For example, Doan and Haider-Markel (2010) use the concept of *intersectional stereotyping* to describe the joint impact of sexual orientation and gender in shaping respondents' evaluations of gay and lesbian political candidates. Studies not informed by intersectional sensitivities—those that fail to consider the multiple groups to which targets belong—miss the way cross-cutting positions act as resources in some contexts, but liabilities in others. Cross-cutting locations and systems produce qualitatively distinct patterns, which may not translate into quantitative variations. Thus, as we discuss in more detail later, attention to intersectionality requires more than testing for statistical interaction effects (see Methodologies and Challenges below).

The intersectional framework enriches the social psychology of inequality by allowing—no, insisting—that researchers employ a reflexivity that goes beyond "giving voice" to those whose experiences are often excluded in scholarship (Choo and Ferree 2010; Cole and Stewart 2012; Perry 2009). Intersectional studies position the researched as subjects and authorities in their own right. Moreover, the intersectional framework insists that researchers cast their scholarly gaze upon themselves to explicitly acknowledge the myriad ways in which the researcher and the research context impact the production of knowledge. For example, Bettie's (2003) ethnography of marginalized young women (e.g., smokers, cholas, "las chicas," skaters, and hicks) at Waretown High in California's Central Valley documents their struggle to find their place and a sense of authenticity through intra- and intergroup encounters and comparisons. While "giving voice" is an important intersectional goal in itself, Bettie's study goes beyond providing an account of *intersectional invisibility* (see also Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). Her commitment to an intersectional analysis requires Bettie to be explicitly self-reflexive. She is aware of and reminds the reader of her own subjectivity as a raced/classed/gendered sociologist to avoid providing what Bordo (1990) calls the "view from nowhere." Bettie's multiple social locations impact her ability to gain access to field sites, to establish rapport, and to understand and represent accurately what she observes (see also Wilkins 2008). Adopting intersectional methodologies offers social psychologists the ability to theorize and investigate social inequalities in ways that acknowledge and embrace the full complexity of lived experience—including their own (Fine 2007; Hesse-Biber and Piatelli 2012; Weber 2007)—as well as making transparent the ways that intersections shape representation and the production and dissemination of knowledge (Collins 2000; Smith 2007). In short, the intersectional framework requires social psychologists be committed to producing "situated knowledge" (Haraway 1988).

Perhaps most important, the intersectional framework advances our understanding of the social psychological foundations of power. While much of the earlier theorizing focused primarily on oppression (see Early Conceptualizations above), more recent formulations emphasize the relational nature of power: privilege and oppression are co-constitutive (Steinbugler et al. 2006). Morris' (2006) study of Matthews Middle School, where White students and teachers make up the numerical minority, for example, explicitly analyzes white privilege rather than allowing it to remain unmarked. Morris describes in rich detail multiple ways that constructions of middle-class whiteness shape the experiences of students of color—their attitudes toward and behaviors at school, as well as the school's expectations for and responses toward them.

The intersectional framework advances the social psychology of privilege/oppression in a second way. Its attention to multiple social positions recognizes that cross-cutting social locations reinforce systems of domination and subordination, particularly in terms of resource allocation. Yet contradictory patterns sometimes occur. Given one's specific cross-cutting social locations, the same individual may simultaneously experience advantage—whether material or symbolic—by some positions and disadvantage by others (Shields 2008). These "translocational positionalities" offer a fruitful site for social psychological explorations of both the dynamics of social stratification and social integration (Anthias 2005, p. 44) and hold the potential to uncover important contradictions and unintended consequences that may produce or deepen significant inequalities, even by well-meaning individuals or institutions (Morris 2006). This approach rejects uni-dimensional models of social inequality (Browne and Misra 2003). Consequently, the intersectional framework's conceptualization of power challenges static or essentialist perspectives on social inequality, those Keating (2009) refers to as "status quo stories" that normalize difference and its effects.

The intersectional framework also holds the potential to inform enduring concerns within social psychology at large. Social psychology attempts to clarify the relationship between individuals and society, and thus, social psychologists devote considerable attention to the ways that individuals' life experiences reflect both human agency and external social forces. Numerous studies attempt to integrate the two, yet most are unproductive because they give primacy to either agency or structure. The intersectional framework destabilizes the assumed and taken-for-granted social psychological binaries of individual/society and agency/structure by requiring scholars to conceptualize race, gender, and social class not only as identities but also as organizing principles of social systems (Perry 2009). As a result, intersectional analyses allow social psychologists to observe agency's limits and social structure's flexibility.

Similarly, the intersectional framework points to the utility of and need for theoretical synthesis within social psychology. Despite calls for integration from sociologists (Hollander and Howard 2000; House 1977) and psychologists (Ryff 1987), social psychology remains theoretically, methodologically, and institutionally fragmented. Although more than 30 years have passed since House's impassioned call to abandon intellectual and institutional tradition to establish "new interfaces," social psychology remains largely unintegrated. Recent intersectional studies offer a glimpse of hope. Moore's (2008) mixed-methods study of Black lesbian stepfamilies, for example, finds that exchange models designed to explain power relations within heterosexual couples do not adequately account for these biological mothers' higher levels of household work and increased decision making power. Moore argues that social meanings associated with particular social roles (i.e., mother) and identities (i.e., lesbian), and the meaning of the work itself complicate these exchanges. Synthesizing social exchange with key principles from symbolic interaction to explain this particular experience brings each theory into conversation with the other to illuminate theoretical blind spots.

The ideological underpinnings of the intersectional framework—the commitment to social justice and improving the lives of those who live on society's margins—dovetail with recent movement toward the development of a critical social psychology that traces power relations through the construction and application of social psychological knowledge, and aims for progressive social change (Cherry 1995; Fox et al. 2009; Ibáñez and Iñiguez Rueda 1997). The activist conscience of the intersectional framework enables scholars to develop "holistic, humane, and justice-oriented" understandings of social inequality (Perry 2009, p. 230). Thus, intersectionality not only produces knowledge to aid our understanding of social psychological phenomena, but also to identify strategies that can help produce a more promising future for individuals and their communities.

Methodologies and the Challenges of Doing Intersectional Research

We turn our attention now to how intersectional research is actually done. The methodological decisions that guide social psychological research are considerably more than technical issues. Harding (1987) distinguishes three elements: epistemology, method, and methodology. Epistemology is a theory about knowledge, about who can know what and under what circumstances knowledge is developed. Methods are techniques for gathering and analyzing "data." Methodology delineates the implications of an epistemology for implementation of a particular method (Sprague 2005). The technical details are located in their social and political context. As we have noted, intersectionality emerged as a product of feminist and critical race theorists' critiques of the neglect and misrepresentation of marginalized experiences within mainstream social science. While social psychologists (like social scientists more generally) have tended in the past to see their work as value-free, neutral, and objective, many intersectional scholars (and contemporary social psychologists) question whether objectivity is possible and/or desirable. In this section, we interrogate the social psychological literature in order to identify the methodological limitations of the past, clarify the challenges of the present, and speculate about the potential for the future.

By and large, social psychological (as well as sociological and psychological) research rarely deploys intersectionality, for reasons that are both conceptual and methodological. Luft and Ward (2009) offer an insightful analysis of several conceptual challenges. They are certainly relevant for, but not specific to, social psychologists. First, they note the tendency to emphasize some systems (especially gender and race) over others, and remind scholars of the importance of a truly intersectional historiography. Certain deeply significant categories, social class being a key example, are constrained in how they can be studied; although there is considerable sociological work on socioeconomic status, interactionist analyses are challenged by the normative silence about social class, at least in the U.S. Social class is noticed, but not discussed. Second, they stress that intersectionality is not limited to "multiple jeopardy" (King 1988). Intersectionality is more fluid, more about mutual constructions of identities and oppressions, not only a coexistence of several, simultaneous oppressions. This observation speaks to the importance of interactionist perspectives, of putting interaction into cognition and moving the study of exchange processes from the lab into real world situations. Acker (2008) states this challenge articulately: there is "a continuing problem with the analysis of intersectionality: how to escape thinking about race, class, gender, and sexuality as separate categories while, at the same time, recognizing that they have particular material, ideological and historical specificities" (citing Andersen 2005).

Third, and echoing Wadsworth, Luft and Ward (2009) highlight the importance of simultaneous analyses of both oppression and privilege. Fourth, they suggest that the most effective approach to intersectionality is what they call “not yet/that’s not it.” In a sense, this is a profound recognition of the ways in which social context, societal circumstances, the current histories and the histories about to be created, mean that an understanding of intersectionality, and perhaps also of inequality, is always provisional. This assertion may well be discomfiting to social psychologists and social scientists more generally, but it is an approach that does avoid misidentification. A closely related point is that as intersectionality has acquired intellectual capital, it has also become vulnerable to appropriation, that is, to being used to forward ends that have little to do with intersectionality or with the understanding of inequalities. The language of intersectionality can be used to fend off charges of racism or sexism; intersectional goals can be claimed without using intersectional methods—so, for example, when ostensibly intersectional analyses slip back to the additive, centering one system, then looking at additions of others.

Looking at this from an institutional perspective, the use of intersectionality is analogous to the history of the use of diversity. The recognition of difference does not, in and of itself, change structural inequalities. This is a point on which we might critique Luft and Ward, in that the “not yet/that’s not it” conceptualization of intersectionality could imply that the moment for institutional change will itself never quite be at hand. In thinking through these challenges, though, Luft and Ward pose some excellent questions. We quote at some length: “Form and context, or the *how* and *why* and *for how long* of intersectionality, also matter. They draw attention to questions of motivation and ownership, but especially sustainability: Where did this effort come from and who is invested in it? Who owns it, funds it, and why? Does it address only the symptoms (poverty) or also the causes (economic policies) of intersectional problems?” (2009, p. 24) To echo this latter question in a social psychological arena, “Does it address only the symptoms (attitudes and stereotypes about poverty) or also their causes (the societal narratives about social class and its determinants)?” (2009, p. 24)

Luft’s (2009) experiences as an anti-racism activist point to a final challenge to incorporating intersectionality into social psychological practice: knowing when and where its deployment is and is not likely to produce social justice outcomes. Scholars continue to question whether intersections are ubiquitous or contingent and whether and when the intersectional framework is the most appropriate lens to deploy (Browne and Misra 2003). Luft (2009) argues that failure to attend to the unique logics underlying systems of gender and race can flatten opportunities for social change. For example, the much lauded “color-blindness” of the post-civil rights era has yielded new forms of subtle racism, which must, according to Luft, be dismantled with race-only rather than intersectional interventions, in order to force individuals to confront racial inequalities head on. Consequently, social psychologists, educators, and activists aiming for social justice outcomes must seriously consider the logics underlying specific systems of inequality to assess the framework’s usefulness in particular contexts, rather than deploying it indiscriminately.

Shields (2008) points to several methodological reasons for social psychologists’ neglect of intersectionality. First, social science favors parsimonious models over complex ones. The “best” models have the fewest variables and pathways; however, these models often gloss over the messiness of social life. Second, social scientists are deeply concerned with research controls, whether through statistical controls holding variables “constant” across cases, randomly assigning participants across experimental and control groups, or removing social processes from real-world contexts. Third, scholars often fail to measure and include “extraneous” variables. As a result, most research designs define intersectional processes as “noise” that must be eliminated or, at a minimum, reduced. When researchers include race, gender, and social class measures, they tend to conceptualize and operationalize each as “demographic variables” whose meanings are self-evident rather than contingent, temporary, and contextual. Last, most social psychological research is designed to identify differential outcomes across social groups or experimental conditions. All too often, social psychologists interpret difference as explanation, failing to realize that difference is descriptive and not necessarily explanatory. Further, this emphasis on difference often overlooks the possibility of similarity. Each of these failures is associated with and exacerbated by quantitative methodologies' dominance (i.e., both normative and in frequency of use) within social psychology.

As these shortcomings illustrate, standard methods for "doing science" inhibit the development of a fully intersectional social psychology. That said, there are examples of quantitative studies of inequality that adopt a fully intersectional perspective. McCall (2001) conducted an extensive multi-group examination of gender, class, and racial inequalities across geographic/regional and economic configurations guided by what she calls *intercategorical complexity*, the adoption of existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple, sometimes conflicting, dimensions.

McCall poses the critical question: can a categorical approach respect the demand for complexity? Such multi-group studies must analyze the intersections of the full set of dimensions of multiple categories and thus examine both advantage and disadvantage explicitly and simultaneously. She addresses the growing earnings inequality between the rich and the poor and between the college educated and the non-college educated (inequality that has deepened considerably in the decade since she published her study). Because gender inequality appeared to have declined in the same period, the new inequality was seen as afflicting White men. She examines the roots of several different dimensions of wage inequality—gender-based, educationally-based, racially-based, intersectional—and then synthesizes these as configurations of inequality in varied regional economies in the U.S.

McCall concludes that patterns of racial, gender, and class inequality vary across geographic, regional, and economic configurations; deindustrialized regions such as Detroit are ripe for comparable worth and affirmative action approaches to reducing earnings inequality, whereas in postindustrial and immigrant-rich regions such as Dallas, more universal or non-gender specific strategies such as minimum wage campaigns would be more effective in reducing inequalities.

McCall's research is unusual in the care with which she deploys quantitative methods to identify the impacts of intersectional social positions. Intersectional scholars remain divided on the usefulness of quantitative methods for assessing intersectional processes. While factorial designs are useful in describing differential outcomes across primary and emergent categories (i.e., the "what"), these analyses do not always produce insight into intersectional processes (i.e., the "how" and "why"). Similarly, critics argue that multivariate analyses are not able to adequately provide an interactive model of race, gender, and social class because these identities/positions are confounded within individuals. Moreover, there is a danger of reducing an intersectional analysis to statistical interaction effects, which may assess quantitative impacts of race, gender, and social class but often miss qualitative impacts. These shortcomings do not point to inadequacies with statistical procedure itself, but rather, to scholars' lack of attention to intersectional processes in interpreting study results. Perhaps most important, using social categories primarily as independent variables (as distal rather than proximal causes) often prevents scholars from asking questions about the social contexts and systems of power that give rise to these social constructs.

These critiques lead Shields (2008) to conclude that "the theoretical compatibility and historic links between intersectionality theory and qualitative methods imply that the method and the theory are always already necessary to one another" (p. 306). Proponents of qualitative methodologies and methods argue they are better suited for intersectional analyses because they are less concerned with testing a priori hypotheses; they tend to be more flexible and can deal with unanticipated results; and further, they let informants provide information that they believe is significant, and they can isolate individual identities while also assessing their simultaneous impact. Cole (2009) and Covarrubias (2011) take the middle ground and argue that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be useful so long as researchers are careful in considering intersectional processes when interpreting their data. Warner (2008), however, cautions proponents of methodological integration to remember that these approaches may not be perfectly compatible given their divergent assumptions regarding the nature of reality and their stance on who can know what and how one does so (see Sprague 2005; for a critique of this argument, see Stewart and Cole 2007).

Mapping these critiques of quantitative and qualitative approaches onto the methodological preferences of the three primary social psychological perspectives suggests that symbolic interaction, which is more likely to rely on qualitative methods, is better suited methodologically to an intersectional perspective. Both social cognition and symbolic interaction, however, can and do draw on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Social exchange relies heavily on laboratory experimentation, and thus on quantitative methods, which could make inclusion of an intersectional perspective all the more challenging. We stress, though, that the issue is not so much method as it is how scholars in any of these traditions think about the social contexts and systems of power that shape cognition, exchange, and interaction.

Cole (2009) and Cole and Sabik (2009) offer three guiding questions for social psychologists who want to incorporate intersectional insights into their research First: *Who is included within the social category under examination?* Second: *What role do power and inequality play?* Third: *Where are the similarities across social categories?*

Which categories we use and how we treat these categories within research designs (i.e., if and how they are collapsed) hold implications for both our findings and the interpretations of those findings. This question encourages scholars to address issues of invisibility, and the associated misrepresentation, marginalization, and disempowerment (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). Explicitly asking "*who is included*" helps to identify which groups have been overlooked and whose experiences have been misrepresented, and to offer the opportunity to repair these misrepresentations. For example, in an early study of attributions about victims of sexual assault, Howard (1984) deliberately included male victims, a group of possible victims of sexual assault that had been completely ignored. She found that female victims were held more accountable than male victims when the assault occurred when they were hitchhiking, and women were blamed more in terms of stable personality traits, whereas men were blamed more for behaviors. In a study we describe in greater detail below, Moore (2008) examines lesbian stepfamilies and discovers power dynamics that differ markedly from those in heterosexual middle-class couples. Asking who is included also leads to consideration of who is the appropriate comparison group, in order to guard against referencing dominant group norms as benchmarks. At a minimum, Warner (2008) adds, researchers should explicitly provide rationales about *why* they made particular decisions, rather than just reporting *what* they did.

Answers to the question about who is included have implications for each stage of the research process. They transform sampling by enabling us to consider neglected groups. They transform our manipulations and the measures that operationalize constructs by enabling us to consider them from the perspective of the group being studied. As a result, research is more likely to produce a nuanced understanding of understudied groups that can lead to the generation of altogether new hypotheses. Moreover, researchers may gain insight into the ways that one category impacts another or uncover social interventions that may provide benefits across groups.

What role do power and inequality play? Considering the role that inequality plays in social processes impacts the generation of hypotheses and the interpretation of results. Hypotheses must attend to the social and historical contexts in which inequalities are produced and sustained. Differences must then be interpreted with awareness that groups occupy both unique and complex structural positions. In a study of perceptions of attractiveness described in further detail below, Goff et al. (2008) explore how intersections of race and gender effectively erase Black women. Experimentally manipulating targets' skin color, the researchers find that Black women are miscategorized as effectively *being* Black men, particularly when their skin color is dark. Their focus on intersections and inequalities reveals perceptual processes that underlie privileges of Whites and men, and oppression of Black women. Focus on inequality also encourages social psychologists to consider causes that are "upstream" (i.e., external social forces), not only "downstream" (i.e., internal to the individual) (Weber and Parra-Medina 2003). Thus, attention to inequalities facilitates a better understanding of the mechanisms through which difference operates and holds the potential to identify useful interventions. Movement in this direction may offer an effective response to sociological criticism that social psychological research is "reductionist" and "trivial" (Sprague 2005).

Where are the similarities across social categories? As we have noted, social psychological research often relies on hypothesis testing, which emphasizes differences between groups. A focus on similarities discourages an overly determinative view of identity. Moreover, attention to this question has the potential to transform each stage of the research process. Social psychological researchers may pursue exploratory research rather than test a priori hypotheses. Samples may include diverse groups that are connected through shared social locations vis-à-vis power structures. Social categories may be conceptualized and operationalized as individual and group practices rather than as stable individual characteristics. As one general example, a prevailing cultural conception of people with various forms of disability treats them as distinct from "able-bodied" and/or "able-minded" individuals. Yet, we are reminded all the time of commonalities. Pregnant women can need more room to get in and out of a car; older people shopping with a cart (and youth with skate boards) are appreciative of curb cuts; office workers with carpal tunnel syndrome need to take frequent work breaks. Perhaps the greatest potential for methodological transformation lies with analysis and interpretation, if researchers do not allow group differences to overshadow similarities across groups and differences within groups.

Identifying points of commonality also dissuades dialogues about "whose oppression is worse" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981) or what Martinez (1993) calls "oppression Olympics." Most significantly, it makes room for groups to forge coalitions and partnerships, which can be an essential element for the development of social policy aimed at reducing societal inequalities.

Choo and Ferree (2010) offer a number of recommendations for constructive use of intersectionality, moving forward. They argue for approaching intersectionality as relational rather than locational; as transforming the processes affecting the mainstream as well as identifying select intersections for "special cases" (see also Berger and Guidroz 2009). They recommend that scholars adopt an even more complex view of intersectionality, focusing on feedback loops among processes at multiple levels that create interactions among them, as inherent parts of how they are constituted (see also Winker and Degele 2011). This echoes a message often asserted by social psychologists: the complexity of social institutions is obscured when macrostructures of inequality are separated from the microstructures of the social construction of meaning. Indeed, this could be viewed as a 2010 restatement of Jim House's legendary "three faces of social psychology" essay, arguing as did House (1977) for stronger interfaces among these strands. As we stressed above in articulating the third key tenet of intersectionality, this approach requires examination of interlocking oppressions from macro to micro levels.

Implementing these recommendations is a tall order. Comparative data are necessary as a first step, but they are not necessarily sensitive to context. Methodological advances have identified interaction-centered analytic strategies appropriate both to quantitative (from exploratory data analysis to hierarchical linear modeling) and qualitative (multi-sited ethnographies, multi-level coding programs) methods. Statistical programs, such as Mplus, permit researchers to conduct multiple group analyses (e.g., Harnois

2009). Mixed method strategies can enable high quality simultaneous qualitative and quantitative analyses (Griffin and Museus 2011), although as we have noted above, their divergent assumptions about the nature of reality suggest an underlying incompatibility.

Another major challenge lies with the statistical techniques currently available to social scientists. Statistical power is inversely related to the number of factors included within a model; thus, the number of identities or social statuses that researchers can bring into their analysis is limited. More common today, however, are claims that the data necessary for intersectional analyses simply are not available. Scholars assert that while an intersectional approach is desirable, we must reserve these analyses for when adequate data become available (e.g., Shields 2002, p. 25).

That day may be close at hand. One promising development is the explosion of attention to what is being called the age of "Big Data" (Hardy 2012; Lohr 2012a). Trends in technology are generating dramatically more data at rates that are unprecedented. A flood of digital data is rising from many sources including the Web, biological and industrial sensors, and of particular importance to social psychologists, video, email, and social network communications. Computer tools for gleaning knowledge from this vast trove of unstructured data are increasingly making possible analyses at a scope heretofore unimagined. In March 2012 the U.S. federal government announced a major research initiative in big data computing, an initiative that includes agencies such as NSF and NIH, both of which fund a good deal of social psychological research (Lohr 2012b). Advances in this arena may well enable analyses of a complexity that will facilitate far more nuanced research on intersectionalities. We should add a word of caution, however. The exponential increase in digital data is generated in part by an intensifying culture of surveillance; the age of Big Data could generate new types of inequalities.

More fully incorporating insights from intersectionality into social psychology does not require scholars to abandon traditional methods. What is central, however, is that social psychologists reconsider the meaning and the consequences of social categories and reevaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their methodological choices. Significant change will require the efforts of researchers across the quantitative/qualitative divide. Shields (2008) frames intersectionality as "an invitation to move beyond one's own research comfort zone" (p. 309). We agree.

Empirical Examples

Thus far, we have defined intersectionality, connected it explicitly with other orienting concepts and theoretical traditions within social psychology, and discussed intersectionality as a form of methodology. We now turn to three streams of scholarship within the social psychology of inequalities that we treat as extended case studies to illustrate the ways that this framework can enrich social cognition, social exchange, and symbolic interaction respectively. In keeping with the theme of this *Handbook,* we have selected studies from research agendas that we believe showcase the usefulness of the intersectional framework in clarifying our social psychological understanding of the creation, contexts, dimensions, and outcomes of social inequalities. These scholars' careful attention to intersectional theoretical insights and methodological concerns takes each of these analyses beyond normative models based on hegemonic categories. Despite limitations—and in some cases only marginal applications of the intersectional framework—each piece makes strides toward a critical social psychology guided by the goal of social justice.

Social Cognition: Compound Categories and "Seeing Race"

For the past 100 years, anti-racism and feminist scholars and activists have posed the question "Ain't I a woman?" to critique the concept of "global sisterhood," which assumes that all women—by virtue of being women—share a common experience (Mohanty 1988; Spelman

1988). Originally posed by Sojourner Truth in 1851, this enduring question acknowledges the unique dilemma experienced by women of color, who through their dual membership in two societally significant and marginalized groups, frequently find themselves confronted by competing interests (Truth and Painter 1998). Being women has meant that they are excluded from race-based social movements; being Black has meant that they are excluded from gender-based social movements. The effect of equating womanhood with whiteness and blackness with manhood is the erasure of Black womanhood. How does incorporating the intersectional framework advance our understanding of the processes of person perception in particular and social cognition in general?

Goff et al. (2008) explore these questions in a pair of experiments assessing the accuracy of respondents' initial impressions and higher order judgments (i.e., attractiveness) of White and Black male and female targets, as represented through visual stimuli (e.g., images of faces or videos depicting body movement) where skin tone was digitally manipulated to vary from light to dark within and across target type. Intercategory comparisons (McCall 2005) reveal three patterns, which together clarify the way intersections of race and gender contribute to the erasure of Black womanhood. First, respondents made more errors when categorizing Black women *as women* than when identifying the sex of all other groups. Second, respondents rated Black men and women as more masculine than their White counterparts. Moreover, respondents viewed racially stereotypical Black targets (e.g., darker skin) as more masculine than less stereotypical targets. Third, respondents rated Black women as less attractive in proportion to their perceived masculinity. Taken together, these results suggest that how respondents "see race" shapes how they "see gender." As Goff et al. (2008) conclude: "Rather than being seen as *similar* to men, Black women were miscategorized as *being* men—which may constitute an altogether different form of social comparison. Instead of escaping the gendered harms that women frequently endure, Black women may face unique harms that can effectively erase their womanhood" (p. 402).

Adopting the intersectional framework complicates existing theories of person perception, which theorize the ways that our initial categorization of another person influences which details we attend to and the judgments we make about this person. Person perception is a function of the way information is cognitively organized and interactively applied. Previous studies treat race and gender—both central to forming impressions, because all people are assumed to have an identifiable race and gender and because both are thought to be quickly and accurately ascertained in an encounter—as singular, discrete "base categories" into which we sort others and upon which we construct higher order judgments. The literature has concentrated on assessing the accuracy with which we categorize individuals, specifying the sequence of events in this process, mapping these processes onto areas of the brain, and connecting impressions to real-life outcomes. Findings from Goff et al. (2008), however, suggest that respondents treat race and gender as intersectional or "compound" categories rather than as discrete base categories. Moreover, their deployment of measures for racial stereotypicality elicits meaningful empirical variation within social categories and therefore destabilizes the assumption of a singular Black woman experience. Additional research is needed to specify which other compound categories shape person perception, to clarify when and under what conditions intersectional versus singular base categories matter, and to explore how one's level of familiarity with particular groups may enhance or inhibit these processes (see also Groom et al. 2005).

The "seeing race" literature advances social cognition by clarifying how intersections complicate social categorization (e.g., Eberhardt et al. 2004, 2006). First, results confirm prior cognition research: cognitive structures organize information about race and gender into group level schemas; however, the co-constitutive nature of race and gender produce intersectional subtypes (see Deaux 1995; Stangor et al. 1992; Thomas et al. 2004). Building on this observation, the study finds that particular configurations (i.e., subtypes) carry normative expectations about which groups are likely to overlap. Pairings consistent with social expectations facilitate categorization (e.g., blackness and manhood, or whiteness and womanhood), while contradictions (e.g., blackness and womanhood) complicate social categorization. The streamlining of social cognition through the use of intersectional subtypes comes at a cost: miscategorization. Second, the study clarifies the way race/gender intersections influence cognitive processes such as attention. In this study, skin tone provides a highly salient indicator for race, and thus race guides further cognitive processing, including the way individuals "see gender." Third, this study contributes to our understanding of the cognitive foundations of "doing difference" (West and Fenstermaker 1995). This analysis of intersectional cognitive structures and processes—those conflating racial stereotypicality and masculinity—suggests that race and gender are better conceptualized as social productions rather than as biological givens. Such intersectional cognitive structures and processes hold implications for real-world outcomes. Future work must identify which contexts facilitate or interrupt intersectional cognitive processes.

Social Exchange: Egalitarianism in Invisible Families

Intimate relationships are often arenas in which one partner exercises power and control over another. Social exchange theory's explicit attention to power makes it particularly well-suited for exploring the micro-foundations of inequalities in this context. Moreover, its conceptualization of power as a relationship makes it consistent with the intersectional framework. However, the exchange literature's failure to decenter the experiences of White, middle-class families—those social psychology (and sociology) generally uses as its benchmark—renders diverse families invisible. Even the few extant studies of power relations within lesbian households, for example, tend to focus narrowly on White, educated, middle-class feminists with a commitment to an egalitarian ideology rooted in second wave feminism. Consequently, we know little about power relations within multiply marginalized families. Is a commitment to egalitarian ideology a defining feature of lesbian households, or are there variations within the lesbian experience? Moreover, do studies assess ideological preference or actual practice? Are observed patterns artifacts of exchange researchers' over-reliance on quantitative methodologies? Moore's (2008, 2009, 2011) intersectional research qualifies our understanding of exchange processes by providing insights from otherwise "invisible" Black lesbian families.

Moore (2008) triangulates survey data with interview data from 32 lesbian stepfamilies in which at least one partner self-identified as Black and in which a partner brought one or more children into the relationship. She uncovers three patterns regarding power relations. First, although both partners view one another as co-providers and survey data suggest they express verbal support for an egalitarian division of household labor, actual practice does not reflect these expectations. Interviews reveal that biological mothers place more importance on economic independence than on an egalitarianism conceptualized through the equal distribution of household chores; in practice, these Black lesbian mothers give priority to self-sufficiency and autonomy (Moore 2009).

Second, the role of "mother" exerts considerable influence in structuring power relations within these families. The children within lesbian families often come from prior relationships, usually heterosexual relationships. Moore suggests that the temporal primacy of the mother's identity as a mother as well as her biological tie to the child(ren) have a significant impact on the amount and type of household work she does. Many women identified as "mothers" before they identified as "lesbians." Thus, the mother identity is more salient and central to their sense of self. By doing more of the household chores, biological mothers simultaneously gain influence over decisions that impact the children and engage in work that provides evidence that they are "good mothers." These responsibilities give biological mothers more power within the relationship. The biological mothers within these families willingly take on more household duties; a more powerful partner does not assign this work to them as we might expect to see in heterosexual families.

Third, the presentation of a gendered self is linked to the types of household tasks that partners do. Despite the absence of men in these relationships, gender still matters. Biological mothers and their partners can find themselves in a conundrum. Both partners expect to share the provider role. Yet considerable stigma is associated with same-sex unions, increasing incentives to do gender in traditional ways. Through the type and amount of work that these women contribute, they are able to prove to others and themselves that they are appropriately gendered, good mothers. As biological mothers claim responsibility for household management and childcare, their partners have less access to power and the ability to do gender. Unfortunately, a biological mother's efforts at being a "good mother" by assuming authority over household management and childcare may position the biological mother between the children and her partner. Investigating these power relations within lesbian families with adopted children would be a useful next step, enabling examination of these dynamics in families in which neither partner is the biological parent.

The importance of Moore's work extends well beyond intersectionality's call to give voice to experiences that are largely ignored. Her research suggests that power relations within Black lesbian stepfamilies do not emerge because of earnings differentials but rather through trade-offs that biological mothers make in order to have more say in decisions connected to their children's well-being. For these mothers, these are the decisions that matter. Moore's point is clear: social psychological accounts must go beyond specifying the type and amount of household chores that partners do. The meaning associated with household tasks, identity processes, and social expectations associated with roles are central in understanding power relations within intimate relationships. On these points, Moore's findings hint at the potential for social exchange theory to benefit from more fully incorporating symbolic interactionist insights. Her work also illustrates how an intersectional analysis can deepen points of connection across the three prevailing social psychological theories. Moreover, her mixed-methods approach finds that straightforward interpretations of quantitative data may be misleading. Through her focus on intersections of race, gender, and sexual orientation, Moore provides a nuanced and intersectional view of the power dynamics in intimate relationships, which extends social exchange theory's reach beyond an understanding of resource differentials, partner dependence, and the transferability of resources to new exchange relationships to more fully consider the way social meanings profoundly impact how social actors define and enact power.

Symbolic Interaction: Reproducing and Resisting Identities

Divergent approaches within the symbolic interactionist tradition tend to emphasize either the structures of identity or the processes of identity construction. The latter explores strategies that individuals employ to manage others' impressions, highlighting the dramatic, performative nature of everyday encounters (Schwalbe et al., this volume). An assumption of human agency underlies key concepts of negotiation and impression management. Unfortunately, the lion's share of theoretical and empirical work concentrates on the management of a single spoiled identity. Can incorporating the intersectional framework enrich our understanding of privilege (and oppression)? How do intersections complicate identity processes—particularly those aimed at resistance?

Analyzing data from 80 interviews and participant observation in clubs, malls, and online forums, Wilkins (2008) documents three distinct strategies for "doing" whiteness in a northeastern college community. Although they appear to share little in common, each emerges from the same dilemma: the standards for teenage "coolness" reside outside of the White, middle-class mainstream. As an unmarked category, whiteness appears cultureless and, other than an association with conformity and "goodness," without identifiable content. By contrast, a nonwhite position provides marginalized teens with a salient identity, a strong moral position because of historical and political context, and associations with "badness" and (sometimes) coolness. Complicating matters further for White teens, self-presentation that produces a sense of cool among peers in the present is strikingly different from the "geekiness" required for material success as an adult in the future. Consequently, normative whiteness and the temporality of cool fuel a search for "badges of dignity" (p. 11). Goth, Puerto Rican wannabe, and evangelic Christian develop as individual and collective oppositional identities. Each provides White teens with membership within a peer group organized around shared cultural tastes and a sense of moral superiority.

Goths reject mainstream fashion and style in favor of the dark—in both literal and figurative senses—in order to shock White, middle-class peers and adults. Puerto Rican wannabes are White, middle-class women who date Black or Puerto Rican men, speak Spanish, and "propel their own white bodies into [B]lack and Puerto Rican cool" (p. 251). Highly-stylized self-presentation permits these groups to cross into racial and class marginality for the sake of being cool. By contrast, evangelic Christians narrow the parameters of middle-class whiteness and opt out of coolness in favor of goodness. Each of these identity projects trades on the teens' middle-class standing and a certain degree of impermanency. Class standing enables goth teens, for example, to acquire the expensive accoutrement necessary for their "oppositional" performance. Moreover, numerous markers of goth identity (e.g., clothing, hair color, make-up, piercings, etc.) are impermanent, offering these young people the ability to blend in and out of the mainstream during the course of their everyday lives. With time, many goths age out completely. While the immediate costs associated with goth can be substantial, the long-term costs can be minimal as teens' future middle-class position remains secure.

Wilkins' examination of sexual practice uncovers an unspoken truth: a gender double standard circulates within all three groups. Goths experiment with polyamory and bisexuality; each serves as a marker for "cool" because they buck mainstream values. Yet, this freedom of sexual choice favors men. They stand to gain more intragroup credibility because their bisexual encounters challenge a hegemonic, straight masculinity, and such acts could be offensive to outsiders' sensibilities. The boundaries of femininity are more flexible. Furthermore, goth men are able to deploy the groups' shared discourse positioning polyamory as an "enlightened" approach to explore their sexual desires without regard for those of their girlfriend(s). Although goth women appear to share this freedom through fashion and sexual experimentation, their acceptance as goth requires such displays. For them, sexiness is compulsory. Puerto Rican wannabes' overt sexuality provides men of color with potential sexual partners and White men with "fallen women" to save. These stigmatized women serve as foils for the identity projects of men and women of multiple races. Evangelic Christians abstain from sex; yet once again, males are more highly rewarded for their declarations of abstinence than are females because of cultural expectations that associate traditional masculinity with sexual prowess and conquest. These identity projects require considerable boundary work guided by intersections of race, gender, social class, and sexuality. Often these teens transgress one identity boundary in order to stabilize another (see also Bettie 2003; Renfrow 2004).

Attention to intersections allows Wilkins to make numerous contributions to our understanding of identity processes. First, the narratives she offers suggest that gender, race, and social class not only produce "invisible competencies" and a naturalized way of seeing and operating in the social world, but each is also a strategic performance—an act of social positioning—teens use to either claim or disavow group memberships (Wilkins 2012a, b). Through their acts of passing, Puerto Rican wannabes, for example, transgress racial and class boundaries and raise questions about how "authentic" group membership is defined. Wilkins' approach destabilizes categories themselves, suggesting they are often less absolute and more contentious than we assume. Second, Wilkins' focus on boundaries is significant because she finds that they not only delineate one group from another, but boundaries also internally stratify groups. Moreover, the boundaries themselves are local, contingent, and temporary. Third, these White teens occupy "translocational positions" such that their borderwork reproduces their long-term advantage while permitting small acts of resistance by moving in and out of marginality as necessary to navigate social interactions in the present.

All three lines of research advance recurrent themes in the extant scholarship on the social psychology of inequalities. Synthesizing intersectionality's theoretical insights and methodological considerations with social cognition, social exchange, and symbolic interaction takes analyses of social inequalities beyond models limited to normative experiences. Social cognition attends to the structures and processes of thought and to the links between cognitive structures, cognitive processes, and behavioral outcomes such as discrimination. Goff, Thomas, and Jackson find that the way we "see race" has implications for the way we "see gender." Social exchange theory examines the conditions under which individuals make choices about allocations of resources. Moore finds that power within Black lesbian stepfamilies does not look like power in other types of relationships. Symbolic interactionism examines the ways that meanings are negotiated and at times resisted through interaction. Wilkins' examination of race/gender/class identity projects among White, middle-class teens finds that multiple, intersecting social locations offers them the flexibility to fashion their performances in ways that feel authentic and to make connections with others without forgoing the advantages of white privilege. These contributions and insights would not have been possible without the intersectional framework.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have argued that the intersectional framework offers us as social psychologists the potential to capture the complexity of social life and the social inequalities embedded within it, to clarify the proximate factors producing injustices, and to work toward social change. The many examples we have discussed rely on processes of social categorization, which lead us to treat race, gender, and social class categories as if they were stable, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive. These assumptions, however, belie a central aspect of the Obama example with which we began this chapter. Although often self-defined (whitehouse.gov) and defined by others (Nagourney 2008) as African American—perhaps because of the legacy of the "one drop" rule—Obama does not easily fit into the prevailing racial classification scheme. Competing claims that he is "too Black" or "not Black enough" point to the insufficiencies of such rigid social categories in the twenty-first century context. This extended example allows us to draw attention to the challenges facing intersectionality and other social psychological perspectives that rely on processes of categorization. In concluding this chapter we consider how major contemporary shifts in systems of social categorization may affect social psychologists' conceptions of categorization, and the effects of these shifts on the future social psychology of inequalities.

According to demographers, Obama's biography mirrors recent trends within the U.S. U.S. Census data indicate that the rate of racial/ethnic intermarriage has risen from .7 % of all married couples in 1970 (Lee and Edmonston 2005) to an all-time high of 8.4 % in 2010 (Wang 2012). Following these trends, one in 40 Americans now self-identifies as multiracial; estimates project that this ratio will reach one in five by 2050 (Bean and Lee 2002). Along with these changes in domestic racial composition, Lee and Bean (2004) report that immigrants and their children currently make up 23 % of the population. Over the past 30 years, a majority (85 %) of these "legal" immigrants came from Asia, Latin America, or the Caribbean. Immigrants from Europe and Canada—although the largest group historically—are now the numerical minority (12 %). By the year 2050, Latina/os and Asians will make up approximately one-third of the U.S. population. As these demographic trends continue, social psychology (and sociological racial analyses more generally) will be forced to move beyond its historic focus on the Black-White divide.

Research has only begun to investigate how these demographic shifts are influencing social psychological processes. One strand focuses on individuals from racially-mixed families and finds these multi-racial individuals have considerable variation and flexibility in their racial identities. Rockquemore and Brunsma's (2007) typology for biracial identities includes four distinct patterns: a *singular identity* as exclusively White or Black, a *border identity* that lies between existing categories, a *protean identity* that varies depending on social context, and a *transcendent identity* that is raceless. These varied racial identities destabilize the concept of race as individuals' sense of self and social context interact to blur or erode the boundaries between existing racial categories or to propose new ones or even the absence of racial identity altogether. Findings such as these raise fundamental questions about the usefulness of race as an orienting concept within social psychology (see also Harris and Sim 2002; Nobles 2000; Saperstein and Penner 2012). As social psychologists interrogate the concept of race in the historical context of significant shifts, we must consider: Who defines race and for what purpose? When and where is race operative? How does race and its use—inside and outside of the academy—enhance or reduce societal inequalities?

Similarly, recent scholarship traces the destabilization of the distinct but interrelated concepts of gender and sex. Sociologists conceptualize gender as a multi-tiered system—individual, interactional, and institutional—that sorts women and men into two categories, female and male, and uses these categories to create and then to justify the unequal allocation of rewards and resources (Risman 1998, 2004). Most people in our society think of sex as dichotomous and unchangeable. Sexual classification, therefore, appears straightforward: biological characteristics, such as reproductive organs and chromosomes, distinguish males and females. However, these assumptions are not always correct. *Intersexed* individuals have sex chromosomes, internal organs, genitals, and/or secondary characteristics that are both male and female (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Money and Erhardt 1972). Estimated at 2 % of all live births (Blackless et al. 2000; Fausto-Sterling 2000), intersexed individuals defy classification into a simplistic sexual binary.

Transsexuals pose another challenge for sexual classification. These individuals surgically and/or hormonally alter their bodies so that they appear to be a sex different from that as which they were born. Because transsexuals have the genetic structure of one sex, but the body type and gendered appearance of another, they are not easily classified as female or male. Classification is further complicated by the fact that transitions take multiple forms and can take years to complete, and that individuals may never fully transition. Consequently, transsexuals often view themselves as occupying an emergent or hybrid category (Dozier 2005; Halberstam 1998). The cultural resilience of the dichotomous construction of sex means that others tend to categorize them as "really" one sex or the other. At a minimum, individuals who live as male at one point of their life and as female at another—whether through a sex change of his/her choosing or whether through medically prescribed "corrective" surgery—disturb assumptions regarding the "natural" correspondence between sex and gender (Halberstam 1998; Namaste 1996; Prosser 1998; Schrock et al., this volume).

Recent scholarship also highlights the destabilization of the related concept of *sexual orientation*, or the match between one's sex and the sex of one's (desired or actual) sexual partners. This unsettles assumptions that sexual orientation is dichotomous (Rust 2000) and demonstrates instead fluidity in desire, practice, and identity over the life course (Diamond 2008)—fluidity that also includes the possibility of asexuality (Bogaert 2012). Out of the need for language to describe these and other diverse experiences, *transgender* has emerged as an umbrella concept widely used to describe individuals who "cross over, cut across, move between or otherwise queer social constructed sex/gender boundaries" (Stryker 1994, p. 251). These identities and experiences become all the more complex as they intersect with race, class, and other statuses (de Vries 2012).

While race, gender, and other statuses are more malleable than previously considered, social class categories appear more rigid than we have assumed. Many Americans accept the ideological position that social mobility is possible—that is, anyone can "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" if they simply try hard enough. However, empirical studies report that one's class position is determined as much by current and historical family circumstances, structural barriers, and discrimination as by individual ability or effort (Domhoff 2009; Feagin and McKinney 2003; Lareau and Conley 2008; Massey 2007). Consequently, McNamee and Miller (2009) refer to the assumption of social mobility embedded within the American Dream as the "myth of meritocracy." Social psychologists have traditionally considered race and gender to be ascribed statuses (i.e., relatively fixed characteristics of individuals), while class has been considered an achieved status (i.e., relatively flexible). Taken together, these streams of literature are leading social psychologists to reconsider previously held assumptions about the ascribed and achieved nature of these social categories. If race and gender remain socially significant as the twenty-first century unfolds, it will be because people continue to believe that they matter. As the apparent clarity, social meaning, and material correlates of these categories change, race and gender may become less relevant (see Bobo and Sampson, this volume, for a contrasting view of the future relevance of race). In this sense, they will shift from being ascribed to being achieved. Social class, by contrast, is in many ways ascribed. Although individuals may have flexibility in constructing class identities, material and structural realities continue to shape lives in ways that are not fully controllable by perception and symbolic meaning alone.

Given these challenges, what is the future for intersectionality as a foundational framework within the social psychology of inequalities? Race, gender, sexuality, and social class are all core concepts whose stability and immutability have been increasingly challenged. Will intersectionality disappear? We argue that intersectionality will not disappear until categorization itself, and the unequal allocation of resources that accompanies it, disappears. As we have noted, social categories evolve and the meanings associated with each continue to change; yet, processes of categorization continue to shape social life. Given that resources are most often finite, we expect social inequalities to persist because of processes of social differentiation and differential evaluation. Which statuses will emerge as the most important in the twenty-first century remains to be seen. The way social psychologists choose to use the concept of intersectionality may be neutral, descriptive, or deeply politicized. While each approach can make important contributions, we encourage social psychologists to continue to pursue intersectional theory, method, and practice that not only advances our understanding of social inequalities, but that strives to interrupt the social psychological foundations of these systems of inequality.

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