

Symposium

Charting Futures for Sociology: Inequality Mechanisms, Intersections, and Global Change

The Elements of Inequality

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In 450 B.C., Empedocles of Akragas (Sicily) proposed that all matter was made up of four primary elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Though Empedocles turned out to be wrong, his idea was germinal. It motivated centuries of inquiry into the nature of matter and energy, leading to what we now know about subatomic particles and the forces that bind them together. To judge from much sociological discourse about inequality, we have today our own set of primary elements: race, class, and gender. We have recognized the pervasiveness of these elements of social life. But, like Empedocles, we have not yet gotten to the heart of things.

It is not that sociology is unable to get there. We are not stymied by a great enigma that resists our best theories and methods. Nor are we awaiting a Galileo or Einstein to lead us out of scientific darkness. As a discipline we are, right now, well equipped to see everything that is important to see about inequality and how it is reproduced. What we need—if the point is to change the world and not merely to document or interpret it—is the will to use the tools and truths we already possess.

Our inventory includes much information about the extent of inequality. As social accountants, sociologists have documented well the unequal and inequitable distribution of social goods—income, wealth, education, health, jobs, respect, and so on—across groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and class. With this kind of information we can convincingly attest to the imbalances of privilege and misery that characterize exploitive societies and world systems. And we can thereby help build pressure for change.

We have done less well, however, at explaining, in honest and incisive terms, *how* inequality is created and sustained both strategically and

inadvertently. A sociology that can't provide insight into these processes has little to offer those who seek to change the world in the twenty-first century. If we want to offer more, we must abandon the reifications, the misleading elemental terms, that politically neuter our intellectual work.

Suppose, to take an allegorical detour for a moment, we say "school changes people." This claim reifies school by collapsing a process that entails a multitude of actions and experiences into a single opaque word. As long as we are willing and able to unpack *school* as the need arises, then perhaps no harm is done. After all, we will inevitably use language to parse social reality into cognitively graspable pieces. But if the convenient terms of our discourse lead us to forget that *school* consists of people doing things together, and if we thus fail to examine these doings, then we will never discover *how* school changes people.

Further suppose that school not only changes people, but that, all else being equal, people with blue eyes enjoy more beneficial changes than people with green eyes. We might suspect, based on commonsense knowledge of the situation, that the problem has to do with the fact that *school is* organized and run by blue-eyeders. But will the terms of our discourse, which become our terms of thought, compel us to examine school as a form of joint action and see who is doing what to whom? Or will those terms lead us to study whether greener eyes lead to worse outcomes, and, if so, to call this a problem of chromatic irisism?

The former course of investigation, despite its empirical virtues, could get us in trouble with the blue-eyeders. To reveal that their actions yield unfair benefits for them and disadvantages for green-eyeders might spark dissent. The latter course, while perhaps exposing school's lower

payoff for the green-eyed, leaves the reification of school intact and the agency of the blue-eyed obscured. Blue-eyed thus have reason to prefer the discourse that reifies. But why should a community of inquirers get caught in this trap? Part of the answer will be found in the color of their eyes, and part in the eyes of those who sign the inquirers' paychecks.

It should be clear why, in terms of this illustration, it would be sociologically dishonest to say that "school is oppressive for green-eyed people," or "greener eyes are associated with poorer schooling outcomes," or "chromatic irisism reduces the positive effect of school for green-eyed people." No one can be oppressed by a reification or an unwielded concept. If school benefits some people more than others, it can do so only because of how the doings-together called school are done. An honest analysis would have to name the agents, actions, and patterns of interaction that yield unequal results. If we can't do this, it would be fair to say that we don't know what's really going on.

In the allegory, school can stand for *race*, class, or gender-terms that likewise can allow us to avoid naming agents, actions, and patterns of interaction, and to say a great deal without knowing what's really going on. Race, for instance, oppresses no one. To speak or write as if it does obscures social reality by masking the agency of those who use racializing strategies to create and maintain advantage over others. Knowing what is really going on would mean knowing who uses which strategies, how, under what conditions, and with what results.

One objection to the line of criticism I've taken here is that everyone-every sociologist anyway-knows how to decode the terms I claim are problematic, so I am just being fussy about language. Thus while a bit of terminological tidying-up might be in order, no conceptual overhaul is needed. This objection is akin to saying that the sloppy use of language is okay as long as, well, we sort of, like, know what we mean, roughly speaking.

It seems odd that sociologists would take a cavalier attitude toward language, since our trade consists of writing and speaking. What we do, mostly, is use language to find out what other people do with language-by way of representing the world, giving sharable form to experience, and coordinating action with others. Then we use more language to create our own representations and share them with others,

seeking to affect their thought and action. In fact, language is so central to what we do that to fail to take it seriously-far beyond mere fussiness-is to render sociology itself unserious.

Language does not dictate what we think, but it does provide paths along which thinking habitually proceeds. If our language is slovenly, as Orwell (1946) argued, it becomes easier to have foolish thoughts. And that is largely the problem with relying on *race*, class, and *gender* as the elemental terms of our discourse about inequality. These terms refer to things, and thus incline us to wonder what kind of things they are. Categories? Locations? Traits? As the language of things takes our thought down this path, it becomes harder to think in terms of doing, joint action, and process.

It might be claimed that recent construals of race, class, and gender as "interlocking systems of oppression" have freed us from static conceptions of race, class, and gender as categories, locations, or traits. But this language of systems, while helpfully reminding us to see the social world as dynamic and integrated, gets us no closer to seeing what kinds of interaction create and sustain inequality. After saying that race, class, and gender are "systems of oppression," we are still left to wonder who does what to do whom, and how they do it, to keep these systems going. To get at this, we need an analytic language that does not preemptorily reduce processes to things.

My concern for process will no doubt evoke a second objection: that the study of inequality can proceed perfectly well with a division of intellectual labor. Some sociologists, the argument goes, look at how social goods are distributed, while others look at processes of reproduction, and out of this, in the end, a complete picture will emerge. The division-of-intellectual-labor defense is, in effect, a claim that, in regard to the study of inequality, sociology is doing just fine, thank you. In which case we can all pat each other on the back and carry on as usual.

It must be said, however, that the oppressed of the world stand to gain little from more research in the current mode of normal science. We already know plenty about the extent and effects of material inequality. There are no mysteries here that must be solved to unleash change. Yes, as I said earlier, we need to keep our information up to date. It is useful to know who suffers, who benefits, and how much, and whether things are getting better or worse. If a

handful of sociologists did this kind of technical work, we would be in good shape.

Unfortunately, the division of intellectual labor tilts in the other direction. It is the social accountants—those who combine statistical virtuosity with cultural guesswork to “explain” patterns in data sets—who hold sway. In this camp are the greater numbers, resources, and rewards. Sociology as a whole, in consequence, is marked by the hegemony of an intellectual regime that thrives on reification. This is manifested, most obviously, in the pervasive language of “variables,” a language into which the sociology of doing, joint action, and process cannot be translated, a language in which it is somehow sensible to reduce race, class, and gender to boxes on a questionnaire (Blumer 1969: 127-39).

This skewed division of labor is a response to the political and institutional environments in which sociology has evolved in the last century. Reification, the language of things, the rhetoric of science, and the fetishism of variables are protective adaptations. They keep sociology out of trouble with the blue-eyed and their overseers. Sociology has thus survived, it might be said, by domesticating itself. To seriously aid progressive movements in the next century, sociology will have to go against the grain of what it has become. Which is to say that it will have to risk its cozy niche in the university.

I doubt this will happen in any large way, coziness being a powerful seduction. Even so, sociology, too, is a reification that can be unpacked and found to contain some dangerous tools, subversive impulses, and people willing to be uncomfortable. We have the language to penetrate the reifications of race, class, and gender. We also have the ability to expose and analyze the doings-together that generate inequality. So it is possible, if the will can be mustered, for sociology to get to the heart of things. A first step is to dispense with the reifications that keep us chasing shadows.

Othering and Exploitation

The kind of joint action that generates inequality is exploitation—the successful efforts of some people to gain psychic and/or material advantage for themselves at the expense of others. A prerequisite to exploitation is othering—the defining into existence of a group of people who are identifiable, from the standpoint of a group with the capacity to dominate, as inferior. Exploitation depends on rudimentary othering, which is in turn reinforced by successful

exploitation. These two generic processes (Prus 1994) underlie the creation and reproduction of inequality.

One form of othering is what I earlier called racializing. Another form is what we might call en-gendering. Long before light-skinned Europeans succeeded in othering darker-skinned Africans and Asians, humans with so-called male bodies succeeded in othering humans with so-called female bodies. In both cases, exploitable others were created by the construction of visible bodily differences as signs of superior or inferior capacities for thinking and acting in ways valued by the physically/militarily dominant group. In both cases the lingering results remain so deeply lodged in our minds and patterns of social life as to seem natural.

Racializing and en-gendering are just two possibilities. A project of othering might fix on any visible, or at least detectable, differences that can be invested with meaning. Over time, the builders of an ideological apparatus for a project of othering are forgotten and we are left with categories. Still, the categories do not maintain themselves—they must be talked about as real; people must be assigned to them and held accountable to them; challenges must be resisted. All of this is an ongoing accomplishment, on which the maintenance of any system of oppression depends.

Capitalism refers to a peculiar set of relationships into which people enter to produce things with value. A basic question to ask about capitalism or any other relations of production is How are the resulting values (in whatever forms they take) distributed? If these values are distributed in a way that is not proportionate to the labor invested in creating them, then we are looking at exploitation. The next questions to ask are How is this exploitation accomplished, and Who does what to whom and with whom in order to accomplish it? Exploitation, in other words, is a matter for empirical determination.

Given 200 years of accumulated evidence, I am willing to suppose that the exploitive nature of capitalism is not in question. Even so, we can still find capitalists devising new ways to make exploitation more efficient and resilient. We can find workers devising new ways to resist. And we can find these struggles giving rise to economic, political, and cultural consequences that the principal actors do not foresee. Even if the logic of

capitalism is well understood, there is still plenty going on that merits study and intervention.

Capitalism requires othering in the sense that *workers* must be created as a group of people whose needs can be subjugated to property rights, and whose labor and lives are held to be worth less than the labor and lives of capitalists. The same principle applies to feudal relations of production, or to any relations of production in which one group has acquired the capacity to exploit another. In looking at any exploitive relations of production we can ask How do these relations depend on othering? How is this othering accomplished? How are the categories sustained ideologically and used in interaction? The precise relationship between othering and exploitation is thus also matter for empirical determination.

What of the ties between capitalism and the forms of othering called racializing and engendering? The argument has been made (see Lerner 1997) that capitalism was built on men's exploitation of women's reproductive capacities and labor, a process that depended on the prior creation of *women* as a group of exploitable others. Indeed, any form of primitive accumulation probably depended on the creation of others from whom labor or other resources could be taken. While it remains arguable whether capitalism *requires* racializing and en-gendering, the historical links are clear: Capitalists have abetted these forms of othering as ways to weaken worker solidarity and to create groups of super-exploitable workers. This suggests that as long as capitalism persists, capitalists will have an interest in perpetuating not only *workers* as a category, but all the categories that render workers more manageable.

I would propose, as a general principle, that the desire to accomplish or to avoid exploitation is nearly always the impetus for othering. The main reason to racialize or to en-gender is to create others whose bodies and minds can be used when convenient and disposed of when not. A secondary reason to *collaborate* in othering is to avoid being mistaken for an exploitable or disposable resource. An analysis of othering, if it grasps history, will see the roots of othering in relations of material exploitation. An analysis of exploitation, if it grasps the construction of meaning, will see how othering is accomplished.

But again, these are properly empirical matters. Exploitation is a kind of doing-together, and it is no less open to study, potentially, than

any other form of joint activity. The same is true of othering. Both processes can be interrogated: What kind of exploitation/othering is going on here? How is it done? How is it resisted? And what are the psychic and material consequences? Answers to these questions will be of more use for understanding the reproduction of inequality, and for resisting it, than a lot of theorizing about the interplay among reifications.

While one can talk about race, class, and gender without naming agents, this is harder to do when talking about exploitation and othering. Now we must say how the exploiting and the othering are done by whom. As a generalization, we can say, for instance, "capitalism is an exploitive economic system." But if we are going to study inequality as a result of exploitation, and say something useful about how it is done, then we have to name capitalists-not class, not systems, not structures-as the chief exploiters. Likewise, racializing and en-gendering, though occurring in part through unreflective action, do not just happen. They are accomplished, and if we want to un-accomplish them, we have to identify the responsible actors.

I have tried, as much as possible in this sorting of language, to avoid the term *oppression*-partly because the term suggests a condition or an experience, rather than a process, and thus is not the *action* that needs to be gotten at. I would also argue that a program of oppression is never undertaken for its own sake, but for the sake of exploitation. Studying exploitation ought therefore to include studying the patterned actions that constitute *oppressing*. As for the experience of oppression, I see this experience-diverse experiences, actually-as among the consequences of exploitation and othering.

The terms *race*, *class*, and *gender*, while protective and handy for casual discourse, are analytic dead ends. These terms create the illusion that we have seen to the core of inequality, when what we have seen are our own reifications. The generative core of inequality is exploitation and its constituent processes. What we come to see as race, class, and gender are, if anything, outcomes. What they come out of are patterns of joint action, patterns created and sustained strategically and inadvertently, patterns that it is our task to discern. To do this-to show how exploitation is accomplished through joint action and how inequalities arise as consequences-is what it means to get to the heart of things.

Nets of Accountability

A sociological perspective that foregrounds doing, joint action, and process is often misunderstood to be incapable of dealing with social organization. The focus on *doing* is fine and well, it might be granted, if we care about snubs and status duels occurring between individuals. But to understand the reproduction of inequality on a societal level, the claim is made, we need to understand institutions, organizations, and systems; and for this purpose, perspectives that focus on situated action are of little use, since they cannot tell us how these macro structures operate. So goes the dismissal.

On one hand, we might dismiss the dismissal on the grounds that it just repeats the error of reification. Institutions, organizations, systems, and "structures" exist only as recurrent patterns of interaction involving large numbers of people (Giddens 1984), so they must finally be understood as negotiated order (Maines 1977; Strauss 1978; Hall 1997). On the other hand, macro-mindedness raises an important issue: If othering and exploitation are accomplishments, they are obviously not accomplished simply by isolated individuals or dyads. How, then, can we understand othering and exploitation as forms of doing that are collective, spatially coordinated, and enduring?

As a shortcut to a tentative answer, I want to build on arguments by West and Fenstermaker (1995), who try to discern the underlying "social mechanics" of race, class, and gender. Much as I have done here, West and Fenstermaker treat the hierarchies of race, class, and gender as accomplishments. These hierarchies are maintained, they argue, by the possibility of people being held accountable as members of social categories. To be held accountable, in this ethnomethodological sense (see Heritage 1984), is to stand vulnerable to being ignored, discredited, or otherwise punished if one's behavior appears inconsistent with what is ideologically prescribed for members of a certain category. Inequalities are thus maintained by using these prescriptions to hold people accountable in face-to-face interaction.

West and Fenstermaker focus on accountability-or, rather, the actual or potential holding of people accountable-as a key piece of the process whereby inequalities are maintained. Accountability, they point out, is not a matter of individual discretion. It is, rather, "a feature of social relationships and its idiom is drawn from the institutional arena in which those relationships are enacted" (1995: 24). By this, West and

Fenstermaker mean that the conduct of relationships *requires* accountability, and that how accountability is manifested, in any given situation, depends on the historical and cultural context. But exactly how we are to link accountability to larger features of social organization, West and Fenstermaker do not say.

Several published responses to West and Fenstermaker's article evince a classic confusion about how to "build upward" using a perspective that begins with interaction. In a follow-up symposium (see Collins et al. 1995), the authors are criticized for "erasing" race, class, and gender (Collins), and for ignoring material conditions (Maldonado) and "macro social structural processes" (Weber). Two commenters are vaguely positive (Takagi; Thorne), and only one-whose work treats racializing as a historical process-seems to understand what West and Fenstermaker are up to (Winant).

Most of the critics miss the point because they presuppose the very things-race, class, gender, structure, systems-that West and Fenstermaker are trying to get to the interactional root of. Still, West and Fenstermaker's language feeds the problem. On a single page (1995: 9), they refer to gender as an accomplishment; a doing; a property of situations; an out-come of social arrangements; a rationale for social arrangements; and a mechanism for producing inequality. Later (1995: 22), they refer to gender in a way that implies it is an attribute. No wonder their critics are confused.

One reason West and Fenstermaker get into this mess is that they do not go far enough. Instead of trying to explain what the process of en-gendering might entail interactionally, cognitively, and emotionally, and what all this might have to do with exploitation, they are still trying to say what kind of *thing* gender is. It is clear that West and Fenstermaker do not see gender as merely a thing. Yet sociology's habitual reification of gender tugs their thinking in this direction. And most of their critics succumb even more to this tendency.

What I want to suggest here, for illustration, is how West and Fenstermaker's argument can be extended to deal with matters of "structure," material conditions, and the durability of social arrangements. There is a way out of the mess, or at least a way into a more fruitful one.

Consider the following tale of capitalism. A worker reads about the record profits made by the company that employs her. She reads that

the company's CEO is paid \$10 million a year, while she, at \$7 an hour, lives on the edge of poverty. So one day she goes to the accounting department and tells the comptroller to raise her wage to \$12 an hour. "You can do that by punching in a few numbers," the worker says. "And if you're a nice person, you'll do it." The comptroller says he can't do that, because the worker has no authority to raise her own wage, and, besides, if he did it, he would lose his job. When the worker persists and refuses to leave his office, the comptroller calls security. An armed guard arrives and the comptroller explains the situation. The worker tells her side and asks the guard to force the comptroller to raise her wage. Despite a pang of sympathy, the guard takes the worker away. When the comptroller tells the worker's boss what happened, she is promptly fired. The plant manager calls the police, who arrive to make sure the worker leaves company premises without further incident.

In this story the worker is, as West and Fenstermaker might say, "held accountable to class category." As a worker, she is not taken seriously and in fact discredits herself by showing up in the comptroller's office demanding a raise in pay. Her bid to hold the comptroller accountable as a "nice person" is trumped by his accountability to his bosses. As an executive, he can also hold the security guard accountable in the same way his bosses can hold him accountable.

But capitalism is not preserved merely by the comptroller's holding the worker accountable in his office. It is preserved by a set of relationships in which people are held mutually accountable as workers, bosses, executives, guards, cops, judges, elected officials, mortgage payers, spouses, parents, and so on. These relationships are sustained by nets of accountability. In the story above, the comptroller uses one such net-tightly woven in the case of a corporation-to resist the worker's demand to raise her pay. He thereby protects his own interests and simultaneously does his part to reproduce capitalism (regardless of his intentions). His capture in the capitalist net of accountability ensures that he will do his part.

Such nets have a dual reality: as symbols and as lines of joint action. When the comptroller says "If you don't leave now, I'll call security to remove you, and then you'll be fired," he symbolically invokes a probable unfolding of a line

of joint action that will defeat the worker's purposes. He thus hopes to put her back in line and avoid further trouble. Later, if need be, the net of accountability can be manifested as joint action. This requires communication across venues. If the comptroller could not communicate, sooner or later, with people outside his office, the capitalist net of accountability would lose material force.

We see here that accountability depends on othering, since categories must exist and people must be identified as belonging to them before they can be held accountable. The holding of people accountable in turn reinforces the social reality, and the consequentiality, of the categories. Exploitation is accomplished, as a program of joint action, by using nets of accountability to compel others to behave in ways defined as proper according to the dominant ideology. Noncompliance, which is always a possibility, carries the risk of being cut out of the relationships through which one's psychic and material needs are met.

The durability of any social "structure"-from a world system to a schoolyard clique-depends on the creation and regular use of nets of accountability. As conditionable creatures, we come to rely on these nets because they work; they allow us to render social life sensible, predictable, and reasonably accommodating, most of the time. Depending on how well these nets work for us, and whether we see any alternatives, we become invested in preserving them. In this view, nets of accountability are shared resources that people use to sustain satisfying patterns of interaction. Of course, patterns that satisfy some people may degrade others.

There remains the alleged problem, one that West and Fenstermaker are accused of evading, of how, given a focus on situated action, to account for material conditions. But of what do such conditions consist? Tools, machines, buildings, roads, land, minerals, food, water, animals, and trained human bodies. These are all resources that either can or cannot be used to make things happen. Likewise, symbolic resources, such as language, knowledge, and information, are either available and usable, or not, to get things done. Conditions outside a situation thus can be taken into account by asking how they enable and constrain the actors within it.

By implication of putting action at the center of an analysis, the main problem of how to

account for material conditions becomes an empirical one. Instead of theoretical puzzles, we have questions: Who is able to access, use, and create which resources, and how do they actually use them, to create and sustain certain pat-terns of interaction? We can also ask How are nets of accountability, as symbolic resources, used by whom to mobilize other resources, especially people, at a distance? From a perspective that focuses on doing, joint action, and process, many of the theoretical problems arising out of sociology's tangle of reifications either dissolve or transform into empirical ones.

My point has been to suggest how an analysis capable of dealing with material conditions, action coordinated across situations, and the durability of "structure" can be built from the foundations proposed by West and Fenstermaker. This entails no erasing of race, class, and gender as moral or political concerns. Rather, there is a shift to understanding these phenomena more accurately and fully by trying to get at what they really are: patterns of joint action that constitute othering and exploitation. The reason for doing this, as I see it, is not just to do bet-ter critical sociology, but to develop analyses that are more useful for aiding resistance to othering and exploitation.

For this, the concepts of accountability and nets of accountability are starting points. We also need more attention to how categories are created and sustained; how people are identified categorically; how the ideologies that prescribe behavior for members of categories are created and propagated; how accountability plays out under various conditions; and how accountability is used to accomplish othering and exploitation. We also need to study how accountability is used to resist othering and exploitation. All this requires a close look at who does what to whom and with whom, and how they're doing it, using what kinds of material and symbolic resources. This is sociology from the ground up.

Thinking about nets of accountability underscores sociology's dilemma. We would like to hold ourselves accountable as good people whose work serves the political goals of justice and equality. But dependence on the university for material support means that we are ultimately accountable as apolitical actors, as disinterested social scientists. Even as we purport to want major social change, we stand to be held accountable, most consequentially, not by those who might benefit from such change, but by the

elites who resist it. That is the net in which academic sociologists are caught.

Getting out won't be easy (it might not even be possible without sociology as we know it ceasing to exist). Perhaps we can begin by imagining what sociology would be like if we were accountable not to the overseers of universities but to the victims of othering and exploitation. At the least, we would be expected to say something clear and useful about how the damage is done and how it can be countered. We would be expected to dispense with mystifying terms and to speak plainly about who does what to whom. The usefulness of what we had to say would then be tested in action. All this is a recipe for trouble, of course. But that's inevitable if we are serious about getting to the heart of things and changing what goes on there.

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Relational Studies of Inequality

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Let us begin with a perverse, manifestly false, assumption: that every argument in my 1998 book, *Durable Inequality*, is correct. This brief paper will then draw inferences from such an absurd hypothesis for twenty-first-century studies of inequality. The absurdity offers several advantages: It keeps me honest, requiring me to spell out the book's implications for future work. It forbids my devoting precious pages to repairs of the book's mistakes. Finally, it allows me to show that the next generation of researchers faces vivid challenges. If theorists and investigators take the book's teachings seriously, they will change the direction of their inquiries into inequality.

Durable Inequality sketches a set of explanations for persistent social inequality whenever and wherever it occurs. Its stipulations and explanations run as follows:

- Inequality is a relation between persons or sets of persons in which interaction generates greater advantages for one than for another (e.g., a landowner lets out plots to multiple sharecroppers, who yield half of their hard-won product to the landlord).
- Inequality results from unequal control over value-producing resources (e.g., some wildcatters strike oil, while others drill dry wells).
- Paired and unequal categories, consisting of asymmetrical relations across a socially recognized (and usually incomplete) boundary between interpersonal networks, recur in a wide variety of situations, with the usual effect being unequal exclusion of each network from resources controlled by the other (e.g., under apartheid many of South Africa's Asians made their livings by running retail shops in black settlements where they had no right to reside).
- An inequality-generating mechanism we may call *exploitation* occurs when persons who control a resource a) enlist the effort of others in production of value by means of that resource, but b) exclude the others from the full value added by their effort (e.g., before 1848, citizens of sever-

al Swiss cantons drew substantial revenues in rents and taxes from noncitizen residents of adjacent tributary territories who produced agricultural and craft goods under control of the cantons' landlords and merchants).

- Another inequality-generating mechanism we may call *opportunity hoarding* consists of confining use of a value-producing resource to members of an ingroup (e.g., Southeast Asian spice merchants from a particular ethnic-religious category dominate the distribution and sale of their product).
- Both exploitation and opportunity hoarding generally incorporate paired and unequal categories at boundaries between greater and lesser beneficiaries of value added by effort committed to controlled resources (e.g., the distinction between professionals and nonprofessionals—registered nurses and aides, scientists and laboratory assistants, optometrists and optical clerks, architects and architectural drawers, and so on—often marks just such boundaries).
- Neither exploitation nor opportunity hoarding requires self-conscious efforts to subordinate excluded parties or explicitly formulated beliefs in the inferiority of excluded parties (e.g., mutual recruitment of migrants from a given origin to connected sets of jobs creates ethnic niches within firms).
- Emulation (transfer of existing organizational forms and practices from one setting to another) generally lowers transaction costs of exploitation and opportunity hoarding when the transferred forms and practices install paired, unequal categories at the boundaries between greater and lesser benefits (e.g., a merchant setting up a new delicatessen adopts the gender, age, and ethnic division of labor—and of corresponding rewards—already prevailing in other delicatessens).
- Adaptation (invention of procedures that ease day-to-day interaction, and elaboration of valued social relations

around existing divisions) usually stabilizes categorical inequality (e.g., enlisted men build valued friendships in the presence of mistreatment and danger, thus committing themselves to the army despite their shared resentment of officers' privileges).

- Local categorical distinctions gain strength and operate at lower cost when matched with widely available paired, unequal categories (e.g., hiring women as workers and men as bosses reinforces organizational hierarchy with gender hierarchy).
- When many and/or very influential organizations adopt the same categorical distinctions, those distinctions become more pervasive and decisive in social life outside those organizations (e.g., in mining towns, distinctions among engineers, hewers, and haulers pervade a wide range of social life).
- Experience within categorically differentiated settings gives participants systematically different and unequal preparation for performance in new settings (e.g., police who treat people differently according to race and ethnicity predispose those people toward different relations with authorities elsewhere and later).
- Most of what observers ordinarily interpret as inequality-creating individual differences are actually consequences of categorical organization (e.g., gender differences in school performance result largely from cumulative effects of differential treatment of males and females by parents, teachers, and peers).
- For these reasons, inequalities by race, gender, ethnicity, class, age, citizenship, educational level, and other apparently contradictory principles of differentiation form through similar social processes and are to an important degree organizationally interchangeable (e.g., in different hospitals of the same country and period divisions of labor resemble each other, but which social categories predominate among physicians, nurses, technicians, cooks, cleaners, and clerks varies greatly from locale to locale).
- Mistaken beliefs about categorical differences play little part in the generation of inequality, indeed tend to emerge after

the fact as justifications of inequality and to change as a consequence of shifts in the forms of exploitation or opportunity hoarding as well as in the parties involved (e.g., when substantial numbers of women enter previously male-dominated trades, beliefs and practices generally change rapidly as a result of that entry rather than preceding and causing that entry).

- Changing unwarranted beliefs about categorical differences has little impact on degrees and directions of inequality, while organizational change altering exploitation and/or opportunity hoarding has a large impact (e.g., a given investment of energy in sensitivity training generally has much less influence over organizational inequality than a comparable investment of energy in recruitment from previously excluded categories).

Of course, it took a whole book to clarify, amplify, illustrate, and connect this argument. The book itself applies different elements of the argument to example after example. Examples occupying a page or more include statures of English youths around 1800, disputes generated by Herrnstein and Murray's *Bell Curve*, monetary transfers in the twentieth-century United States, family feeding patterns, stigmatization of paupers in late medieval Europe, ethnic relations in South African mines, categorical divisions among the nineteenth-century Tshidi, South African apartheid and its transformations, Rosabeth Kanter's *Indsco*, treatment of female cadets at the Citadel, Italian migrants to Mamaroneck, migration of my mother's family to the United States, European nationalism since 1559, professionalization of American medicine since 1850, oppression of African Americans, Catholic Emancipation in Great Britain (1688-1829), and development of citizenship in western countries. Dozens more occupy less than a page.

Even the schematic summary offered here, however, suffices to show that the book's argument depends on a dynamic, relational account of inequality-generating mechanisms. It differs from prevailing accounts of inequality, in which powerful agents or institutions—employers, rulers, schools, the market, and so on—sort individuals whose attributes and performances vary significantly into positions whose rewards differ

greatly. In such standard accounts, sorting principles vary among merit, marginal product, personal connection, symbolic value, and agents' prejudices. But they all operate through individual-by-individual triage. Such individualistic accounts have done us the great service of specifying what analysts of inequality must explain, especially when it comes to waged work in capitalist firms. They have not, however, so far yielded compelling explanations, especially with regard to other forms of inequality than wages, and other settings than capitalist firms. Static individualism sets serious limits to their explanatory power.

My counterargument is not only dynamic and relational, but also weakly functional. (Strong functional arguments say that social arrangements exist because they serve overarching systems. Weak functional arguments say that social arrangements exist because they simultaneously serve particular actors and produce effects that in turn reproduce the social arrangements.) Exploiters, runs the counterargument, expend some of the gains from exploitation on reproducing the command structure that maintains the exploiters' positions. Similarly, opportunity hoarders invest some of their gains in maintaining boundaries that separate them from other persons who lack access to the opportunities in question. Neither exploiters nor opportunity hoarders need extract gains or reproduce their structural advantages self-consciously. Nor need they hate, condemn, or persecute the disadvantaged. All the argument requires is differential gains from production by means of controlled resources, plus feedback reinforcing the control system. Both can occur through a taken-for-granted division of labor as well as through deliberate design. Through emulation and adaptation, indeed, exploited and excluded persons often collaborate in reproducing inequality.

Here is the sort of causal story this account of inequality implies. Broad similarities exist between inequality-generating processes and conversation: Parties interact repeatedly, transferring resources in both directions, bargaining out provisional agreements and contingently shared definitions of what they are doing. That interaction responds partly to available scripts, but interaction modifies the scripts themselves, and only works at all because participants improvise incessantly. Nevertheless, available scripts crucially include paired, unequal categories.

Controllers of valuable resources who are pursuing exploitation or opportunity hoarding commonly invent or borrow categorical pairs, installing them at dividing lines between greater and lesser beneficiaries from products of those resources. Explanation of inequality and its changes must therefore concentrate on identifying combinations and sequences of causal mechanisms—— notably exploitation, opportunity hoarding, emulation, and adaptation-within episodes of social interaction.

This account of social inequality also has implications for studies of social mobility. We should not imagine mobility as taking place in an abstract two-dimensional space, with the vertical axis representing hierarchies of income, wealth, power, prestige, and/or well being, and the horizontal axis representing social locations at various distances from each other. Instead, we should be following the analogy of migration streams, with specific flows of persons from site to site, each stream having a distinctive structure and modifying continuously as a consequence both of its internal dynamics and of its interaction with environments at origin and destination. If we construct origin-destination matrices, we should recognize that each cell of such a matrix contains a distinctive set of causal processes and life histories.

What agenda follows for twenty-first-century studies of inequality? Let us continue the absurdity, assuming not only that the arguments just reviewed are true, but also that they amount to a comprehensive explanation of all inequalities everywhere. What should future students of inequality do? Without filling in all the necessary connections, let me lay out the program as a series of injunctions:

Conduct separate studies of different combinations among mechanisms, settings, and categories. For example, examine how emulation——transfer of existing organizational forms and practices from one setting to another——operates with respect to gender relations when the settings are religious congregations, retail stores, military units, and college dormitories. Make the same comparisons in distinct times and places. Both similarities and differences will specify what we have to explain and clarify to what extent exploitation and opportunity hoarding can plausibly figure in our explanations.

With similar controls, examine *variation in the operation of mechanisms by scale of social relations.* For example, ask whether the relations of emu-

lation and adaptation to exploitation work differently when all parties are intimately connected to one another (as within households) or when most do not even know the others (as within transnational firms).

Conduct mobility studies by tracing site-to-site channels and their social operation. For example, examine how specific sets of households place their children in particular schools, then how those schools channel their graduates to various economic niches.

Within organizations, compare mobility systems and their barriers with daily social relations. For example, determine to what extent sociability clusters within job ladders, and how the presence of mobility barriers among interacting co-workers (e.g., mobility barriers between nurses and doctors) itself affects the quality of social relations among them.

For hierarchies posited a priori, substitute matrices of relations among positions derived from empirical observation. For example, study mobility, social interaction, and flows of resources among jobs to identify closely connected or structurally equivalent jobs. Let asymmetries in these regards measure inequalities among jobs.

Move studies of inequality away from wages to other varieties of advantage and disadvantage. For example, document and explain inequality in nonmonetary perquisites, health, information, security, nutrition, material possessions, land, political influence, and financial wealth. Then investigate causal connections (in both directions) between these advantages and wages.

Study creation and transformation of boundaries and categories directly. For example, investigate how effective boundaries among racial and ethnic categories are changing in different republics of the former Soviet Union.

Clarify causal relationships between individual and categorical variation in performances and advantages. For example, inquire to what degree and how membership in distinctive ethnic-religious

categories a) homogenizes experiences, propensities, and capacities, b) governs inequality-generating interactions with members of other categories, and c) thereby affects subsequent performance and rewards for performance in ostensibly open competitions.

Trace interdependencies between political systems and nonpolitical inequalities. For example, study how much material inequality is compatible with maintenance of democratic institutions, under what conditions, and why.

Integrate studies of inequality and of political contention. For example, compare and contrast the forms of bargaining that occur within relations of exploitation with those that occur in legislatures.

Crack the problem of historical-cultural particularism. For example, establish whether distinctive mechanisms and processes generate racial inequality as a function of variation in racial categories' previous histories or embedded beliefs, representations, and practices.

Informed readers will immediately complain that this program doesn't look very new—that students of inequality have been pursuing one or another of these concerns for more than a century. They will be both right and wrong. The program actually returns to major concerns of such old-time greats as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, and Max Weber, all of whom looked at inequality in categorical and relational terms. In that sense, the program is reactionary. It reacts to the static individualism of more recent work on inequality, and yearns for long-lost dynamic, relational thinking. Let us take it dialectically: That earlier body of thought serves as our thesis, the individualism of recent investigations as our antithesis, a renewed relational realism as our synthesis. Searching for just such syntheses, students of inequality can move much more confidently into the twenty-first century.

Inequality in Social Capital

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Recently, social scientists have used notions of capital (e.g., human capital, cultural capital, and social capital) as organizing concepts to understand the mechanisms that affect life chances of individuals and the well-being of communities

(Schultz 1961; Becker [1964]1993; Bourdieu 1980; Lin 1982; Coleman 1988; Burt 1992; Portes 1998). While the basic definition of capital employed in these theories is consistent with that in Marx's "classic" analysis (Marx 1867),

the orientation and, therefore, theoretical attention have moved from a class-based perspective (where capital is invested and accrued by the bourgeois only) to an actor-based perspective (where the actors, whether individuals or communities, invest and accrue such resources). We may call these theories of capital the *neo-capital* theories, in contrast to the Marx's classical capital theory (Lin 1999a; Lin 2000).

The principal explanation shared by the various capital theories posits that investment and mobilization of capital will enhance the outcomes desirable to individuals or communities. Analysis can be conducted at the macro level (for groups, organizations, and communities) and at the micro level (for individuals). Here, I focus on inequality among social groups; the proposition may be stated as follows: that *inequality in different types of capital*, such as human capital and social capital, *contributes to social inequality*, such as socioeconomic achievements and quality of life.

Among these neo-capital theories, social capital has gained much attention for its intriguing potential to explain a host of performance and satisfaction outcomes, ranging from participatory democracy and community cohesion to organizational persistence and socioeconomic status attainment (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981; Burt 1997). I focus here on social capital, and on one type of instrumental outcomes-inequality of socioeconomic standings among social groups. I begin with a brief summary of how social capital may be defined and measured.

Social Capital: Definition and Measurement

Social capital may be defined as *investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns* (Lin 1999a, 2000). Social capital is conceptualized as (1) quantity and/or quality of resources that an actor (be it an individual or group or community) can access or use through (2) its location in a social network. The first conceptualization of social capital emphasizes resources-the resources embedded in social relations, or *social resources*. The second conceptualization emphasizes *locations in a network or network characteristics*. The general proposition is that social capital enhances the likelihood of instrumental returns, such as better jobs, earlier

promotions, higher earnings or bonuses, and expressive returns, such as better mental health.

Empirical studies have strongly confirmed the proposition that social resources affect action outcomes (e.g., job search, promotion, earnings), and recent reviews of the literature on the effects on attaining socioeconomic statuses of social capital can be found elsewhere (Lin 1999b; Burt, forthcoming; Marsden and Gorman, forthcoming). The proposition that a better position of origin promotes access to or use of better social resources has also received confirmation (Campbell, Marsden, and Hurlbert 1986; Lin and Dumin 1986; Green, Tigges, and Browne 1995). Most studies also have confirmed the less clear-cut hypothesis that the strength of network (weak) ties or locations tends to be associated with better social resources (Lin et al. 1981; Bian 1994; Bian and Ang 1997; Lin and Dumin 1986; Sprengers, Tazellar, and Flap 1988; Lai, Lin, and Leung 1998; Volker and Flap 1999). Some evidence also shows direct effects of network characteristics on socioeconomic standings (Campbell et al. 1986; Huang and Tausig 1990; Lin and Dumin 1986; Bian 1994; Campbell 1988; Burt 1998).

A substantial body of literature thus confirms the effects of social capital (as measured by embedded resources and network characteristics) on socioeconomic attainment. Given these conceptual understandings and empirical confirmations, we can examine why inequality in social capital should exist across social groups, what empirical evidence shows that inequality may exist across gender and racial/ethnic groups, and what agenda should guide future research.

Inequality in Social Capital: The Theory

Obviously, not all individuals or social groups uniformly acquire social capital or receive expected returns from their social capital. While scholars have warned about possible negative effects of social capital (Portes and Landolt 1996), a cohesive and systematic approach to understanding and appreciating the positive and negative effects of social capital is needed. Why do we expect that social groups experience differential capital deficits and/or return deficits? I offer an explanation based on two principles: Inequality of social capital occurs when a certain group clusters at relatively disadvantaged socioeconomic positions, and the general tendency is for individuals to associate with those of similar group or socioeconomic characteristics

(homophily). The first phenomenon reflects a structural process: Social groups differentially occupy socioeconomic standings in a society. Depending on the processes of historical and institutional constructions, each society structurally has provided unequal opportunities to members of different groups defined over race, gender, religion, caste, or other ascribed or constructed characteristics. The second principle, homophily, suggests a general tendency in networking: the tendency for individuals to interact and share sentiment with others with similar characteristics (Homans 1958; Lazarsfeld and Merton 1954; Laumann 1966; Lin 1982). Thus, members of a social group tend to form networks involving other members from the same group.

These two principles, when operating in tandem, produce relative differential access by social groups to social capital: Members of a certain group, clustering around relatively inferior socioeconomic standings and interacting with others in the similar social groupings, would be embedded in social networks poorer in resources as well-poorer social capital. Resource-rich networks are characterized by relative richness not only in quantity but also in kind-resource heterogeneity (Lin 1982, 2000; Lin and Dumin 1986; Campbell et al. 1986). Members of such networks enjoy access to information from and influence in diverse socioeconomic strata and positions. In contrast, members in resource-poor networks share a relatively restricted variety of information and influence.

Any given social group reflects degrees of group demarcation and variation of network resources among members. Cognitive awareness of these resource restrictions may motivate some members of disadvantaged groups to establish social ties with members of advantaged groups, to gain better information and influence. Such ties are facilitated by such institutions as kin and family ties and bureaucratic mentor-protégé ties. And the advantaged may have some in making such ties available—they afford a certain degree of social mobility across socioeconomic strata and reduce the likelihood of class consciousness, class conflict, and social upheaval (Lin 1982). Cross-group ties facilitate access to better resources and better outcomes for members of the disadvantaged group. Nevertheless, such ties are the exception rather than the rule; homophily and structural constraints reduce the

likelihood of establishing such ties for most of the disadvantaged members.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity Inequality in Social Capital

The literature supports the general understanding that social capital is differentially distributed across different social groups. Here, I focus on gender and racial/ethnic groupings in a brief review of the evidence.

Significant differences appear in the social networks and embedded resources between females and males. Moore (1990) shows that men's networks, when compared to women's, consisted of fewer kin and more nonkin, and included fewer neighbors but more co-workers, advisors, and friends. Women's networks, in contrast, incorporated a larger proportion of kin overall as well as more different types of kin, but fewer different types of nonkin. Most gender differences in network compositions disappeared or diminished when variables related to employment, family, and age were controlled. However, some gender differences remain: Women had a larger number, higher proportion, and greater diversity of kin ties in their personal networks than did men, even in social structural positions similar to those of men. Campbell and Rosenfeld (1985) confirmed in their study that males had larger networks than females.

The gender differential in network diversity and size is due partly to the fact that males and females participated in organizations with different embedded resources. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) showed that men belonged to larger organizations when compared with women in similar categories, whether in work status, age, education, or marital status. They also found that men were located in core organizations which were large and related to economic institutions, while women were located in peripheral organizations which were smaller and more focused on domestic and community affairs. Men and women had almost exactly the same number of memberships, but the dramatic differences in the sizes and types of their organizations exposed men to many more potential contacts and other resources than women. Men's positions in the voluntary network were much more likely to provide access to information about possible jobs, business opportunities, and chances for professional achievement. Women's positions were more likely to expose them to information about the domestic realm.

Beggs and Hurlbert (1997) also found that males tended to be affiliated with associations with mostly male members. Brass (1985) found that women were not well integrated into men's networks, including the organization's dominant coalition, and vice versa. Women whose immediate work groups include both men and women were exceptions.

Gender-based differential associations reflect structural constraints, at least in part. Munch et al. (1997) showed that society's definition of child rearing as a female activity placed men and women in different structural positions with respect to flow of information and other resources in social networks. Having a child had no statistically significant effect on men's network size, but was a significant negative effect on women. In particular, women whose youngest child was age 3 or 4 displayed significantly smaller networks than do their counterparts with adult children.

Thus, the effect of child rearing on network size is significant and gendered. The reductions in women's network size and contact volume ranged from social support to access to information. During child rearing, the proportion of men's networks that consisted of contacts with friends declines, while the proportion of contacts with women and kin increased. During early child rearing, men's social contacts were redirected toward women and family. Child rearing affected men's networks primarily by temporarily increasing their kin composition. It draws men into greater contact with other family members, especially spouses and female kin.

Such gendered differential associations and networks may explain why males and females have different access to different hierarchical positions in society. Consistent evidence shows sex segregation in occupational contact networks—males associate in networks with other males and females associate with other females in the occupational networks (Hanson and Pratt 1991; Green et al. 1995; Marx and Leicht 1992; Straits 1998). Campbell (1988) documented differences between the job-related networks of women and men in a sample of recent job changers in four white-collar occupations. Women knew persons in fewer occupations than did men; their networks were negatively affected by having children younger than six; and they often changed jobs in response to their spouses' mobility; men's networks were unaffected by these constraints.

Marsden (1987, 1988) similarly suggested that women use networks less because women's networks have more kin, fewer co-workers, and more other women.

It is quite clear, then, that males have larger networks, are affiliated with larger associations, and enjoy the benefits in associations with other males—gender homogeneity, since males occupy higher positions in hierarchical structures (Moody 1983). In contrast, females are affiliated with disadvantaged networks—smaller and less diverse networks, more female ties, ties lower in hierarchical positions. Since their associations and networks also tend to be homogeneous, there is likewise a network closure and reproduction of resource disadvantages among females.

The exception is that family ties tend to be gender-heterogeneous (Marsden 1990; Hanson and Pratt 1991): Family members consist of both males and females. Thus, family ties may help overcome some network disadvantages for females because they may access male family ties. However, family ties also tend to be homogeneous in resources. Thus, depending on the resources embedded in a family, these family ties may or may not actually provide better access for females.

Inequality in social capital is also evident across racial and ethnic groupings. Martineau (1977) analyzed survey data drawn from a heavily (85%) black neighborhood in South Bend, Indiana. The findings demonstrated that blacks in the urban area had a higher rate of informal ties with relatives (78% if respondents have relatives in the city), friends, and neighbors. Marsden (1988), using 1985 GSS data, found that network diversity and size decreased from whites to Hispanics and to blacks. Sex diversity is highest in the networks of whites, and this difference persists when kin/nonkin composition is controlled for (1988: 129). He also found that whites had the largest networks (mean size 3.1), blacks the smallest (mean size 2.25), and Hispanics and others were intermediate. Notably, black respondents cited fewer kin and fewer nonkin than whites did, and their networks had a lower proportion kin than those of whites.

Even among blacks, this hierarchical differentiation remains. Black elites tended to form social ties through participation in churches and social clubs. The black upper class (Drake 1965), composed mainly of professionals and well-to-do

businessmen who have got higher education, create a closed social world of their own. Their specific universe of "discourse and uniformity of behavior and network are maintained by the interaction on national and local levels of members of Negro Greek-letter fraternities and sororities, college and alumni associations, professional associations, and civic and social clubs" (1965: 782). Although they expected to integrate into the mainstream white society, they rarely totally succeeded. However, the upper-class blacks maintained "some types of contact—though seldom any social relations—with members of the local white elite; but whether or not they participate in occupational associations with their white peers depends upon the region of the country in which they live" (1965: 781). The black middle class covered a wide income range, and the cohesion of this class "came from the network of churches and social clubs to which many of their members devoted a great deal of time and money" (1965: 782). Although they did not expect to integrate into mainstream society, they did not want to send their children to ghetto schools, either.

Similarly, Portes and associates have advanced the enclave-economy hypothesis arguing that ethnic economic enclaves afford opportunities for entrepreneurs and laborers to gain a foothold in the economy and labor market (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes and Stepick 1985; see also Breton 1964). While the hypothesis has been challenged and revised (Sanders and Nee 1987; Portes and Jensen 1987), the basic premise that such a market is largely built on kin and ethnic networks has been generally acknowledged. More recently, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) have linked ethnic ties to mutual assistance to illustrate the utility of social capital in the context of an ethnic community.

Because immigrant groups or enclaves tend to be poorer, these groups are thus disadvantaged in social resources. That these disadvantages are embedded in the social capital resource of white and black networks can be seen more clearly from the fact that black children adopted by whites tend to access better social resources, which produced higher achievement outcomes (Moore 1987). Blau (1991) pointed out that social isolation of blacks from whites contributed much to the poor performance of black children in a society in which whites dominate and determine the content and standard of mainstream culture. Similarly, Montero (1981)

found that education and occupational attainments weakened ethnic ties among Japanese Americans. Breton (1964) found that years in residence made a difference in the likelihood of immigrants in Canada to use ethnic ties and embedded resources. Longer residence reduced such ties among immigrants.

Besides these structural constraints, people in lower socioeconomic status tend to use local ties, strong ties, and family and kin ties. Since these ties are usually homogeneous in resources, this networking tendency reinforces poor social capital. Green et al. (1995) found that poor job seekers were more likely than the nonpoor to call on communal ties such as friends and relatives. Portes (1998) shows that ethnic immigrants tended to use kin and ethnic ties to access resources. To the extent that these immigrant networks contain less resources than nonimmigrant networks, the immigrant group members are disadvantaged in the resources they can access.

Research Agenda

While the evidence is consistent and significant that minority groups and females tend to be embedded in social networks deficient in resources or in social capital, several issues demand greater research attention.

Lack of Evidence for Return Deficit. Individuals with better socioeconomic origins (e.g., parental socioeconomic status or previous job standings) are more likely to access better social resources in social networks and/or find contacts with better social standings. Thus certain gender (female) and racial/ethnic groups, occupying inferior positions in the social hierarchy and accessing worse resources in social networks, should attain lower statuses in their careers. However, few studies provide direct data to assess relative returns of social capital for males and females or for different racial/ethnic groups.

Ensel (1979) found that male job seekers were much more likely to reach higher-status contacts than were females. Further, women were more likely to use female contacts in job searches whereas males overwhelming used male contacts. When women did use male contacts, their disadvantage in reaching higher-status contacts as compared to men was significantly reduced. Males, being positioned advantageously in the hierarchy, had better social capital. Second, female disadvantages in mobilizing male contacts—and thereby accessing better

social capital-accounted partly for their inferior status attainment.

However, other studies have found no significant difference between men and women of the effects of social capital on job search outcomes. Moerbeek and others (1995), using father's occupation as the indicator of social capital when the father was mentioned as the social contact, found it exerted a positive and significant effect on the statuses of first and current/last jobs for both men and women. Wegener (1991), studying a sample from Germany, found that contact status significantly affected the prestige of the job found for both men and women. Bian (1997), examining an urban city in China, found that helpers' job status (measured by the hierarchical level of his/her work unit) was strongly associated with attained work unit status in the job change. Bian and Ang (1997), studying men and women in Singapore, also confirmed that social resources (contact's status) had significant effects on obtained job statuses. And Volker and Flap (1999) found that in the former German Democratic Republic, the occupational prestige of the contact person had strong and significant effects on the prestige of both first job and current job for men and women.

Thus, then, little evidence supports a relative return deficit for women. And little theory is being advanced to account for the lack of expected return deficit for women. However, clues appear in a recent study conducted in 18 urban cities in China (Lin 2000: Chapter 7). The study found that Chinese women were deficient in social capital (e.g., range, heterogeneity, and ability to rise in network resources) compared to Chinese men. However, social capital was equally significant for men and women in affecting their earnings and income. Further analysis found that women benefited from their accessibility to political social capital (party cadres), and their accessibility was enhanced through kin ties (i.e., spouses, and spouses of siblings). Thus, through kin ties, some Chinese women were able to overcome capital deficit and gain better economic returns. Therefore, family ties and hiring practices (most couples work in the same work unit) afforded some women the advantage of accessing important social capital, which generated better economic returns. These social connections compensated somewhat for the social capital deficiency among women.

No studies have directly examined the effects of social capital on status attainment for blacks or other minority groups in the United States. Some clues can be gleaned from studies of the use of social ties and social networks among the socially disadvantaged. Green, Tigges, and Diaz (1999), analyzing MCSUI data, found that the use of strong ties was negatively associated with annual earnings, significantly for Hispanics. Green, Tigges, and Browne (1995) showed that incomes were lower for those who used within-neighborhood ties or ties to relatives. Elliott (1999) found that the use of nonwhite rather than white contacts was linked to lower wages for his sample of less-educated workers, and that this was accentuated when nonwhite neighbors were the source of job information. Thus, we may hypothesize that certain racial and ethnic groups, due to their disadvantaged social positions, should suffer return deficit from their social capital relative to job-related outcomes.

However, as demonstrated by studies on the return of social capital for men and women, we should not assume that social capital deficiency translates directly into return deficit. Possibly, for a similar level of social capital deficit, returns of social capital remain different for different social groups; or for different levels of capital deficit, social groups obtain similar level of return. On the other hand, a similar-level return does not negate the original disadvantage of capital deficit. If two groups possess differential levels of social capital, a similar level of return of social capital simply indicates persistent disadvantage of one group (i.e., in statistical terms, the intercepts differ while the two slopes may be similar). Again, the hypothesis regarding racial/ethnic differential return of social capital must be examined with rigor.

Capital Deficit and Return Deficit. Clearly the number of studies examining the proposition that inequality in social capital affects social inequality is limited, and the literature suffers from inconsistent findings. Future studies may benefit from several conceptual clarifications: We must examine, first, whether different social groups possess different amounts or quality of social capital; second, whether they gain different return from what social capital they have; and third, whether it is possible for members of disadvantaged groups to act to overcome such deficiencies. Inequality in capital among social groups may be due to capital deficit or return deficit or both (Lin 2000). *Capital deficit* refers to

the consequence of a process by which differential investment or opportunities produce the relative shortage (in quantity or quality) of capital for one group as compared with another. For example, families may invest more in male children's human or social capital than in those of female children. Or different social groups may be embedded in different social hierarchies or social networks that facilitate or constrain their members' capital acquisition. *Return deficit* is the consequence of a process by which a given quality or quantity of capital generates differential returns or outcomes for members of different social groups. For example, males and females, or blacks and whites, with a similar quality or quantity of social capital, may receive differential returns in status attainment—such as positions in organizations, occupational prestige, or earnings.

The capital deficit explanation focuses on the differential acquisition of capital. One process may be *differential opportunities*: Prevailing social structure and institutions differentially afford opportunities for members of different social groups. Male children are encouraged and rewarded for extensivity and heterogeneity of social ties, while female children are constrained or even punished for doing so. Another process may be *differential investment*: For example, families may differentially invest in capital for male and female children. In most societies, families in anticipation of a labor market and economy that provide differential returns for males and females are likely to compete by investing more capital in males than females. Likewise, due to homophily, members of a racial and ethnic group tend to interact with other members of the same group and cultivate and reinforce capital deficit. These two processes create differential capital deficit: Members of certain gender and racial/ethnic groups will acquire less capital in terms of quality and quantity. Capital deficit, in this formulation, is expected to account for the differential placements and rewards received by different social groups.

Return deficit, on the other hand, focuses on the return to social capital—in the labor market, for example. In this case, even when members of different social groups (males and females) have relatively equal capital (quality or quantity), they have different status outcomes in the labor market: Given the same quality or quantity of capital, males will generate greater rewards than

females in the labor market, such as positions in the organization, occupational titles or prestige, and earnings.

Three explanations may be offered. In one, females may not use or mobilize the “appropriate” capital for the instrumental action of attainment in the labor market. For example, they may not use the “best” social ties and thus the best possible social capital in the attainment process, either because they are cognitively unable to identify them or because they hesitate to mobilize such social capital because of perceived lack of resources or capacity to return the favor. Alternatively, the appropriate social ties are mobilized, but for real or imagined reasons, these ties are reluctant to invest their capital on the female's behalf. These ties may suspect that employers might resist female candidates, and thus not take their recommendation or influence seriously. Such wasted influence would be a cost rather than prize for their investment in the candidate. Not “putting out” may also be the cultured or institutionally expected understanding, because even for females and their families less effort is expected from social ties on behalf of females. A third explanation may be the differential responses from the labor market's structure itself: Employers respond differentially to male and female job/promotion candidates even if they present similar human and/or social capital—a bias shared by organizations in an institutional field (a social community in which the organizations share a set of prevailing values and practices [Lin 2000: Chapter 11; and Lin 1994]).

Finally, despite these structural and investment patterns, making connections from ordinary patterns of interaction (among homophilous actors) may overcome some of these deficits. Females may benefit from net-working with males, and members of minority racial/ethnic groups may benefit from linkages with members of majority/dominant groups. These connections require nonroutine efforts, perhaps at the cost of reducing one's identity with his/her own group and recognition from group peers.

The Invisible Hand of Social Capital. Another puzzling finding regarding return on social capital concerns the effect of mobilizing informal social ties in job searches. Active mobilization of social ties does not seem automatically to enhance better career outcomes. Little research evidence shows that those embedded in resource-rich networks are more likely to active-

ly seek out such resources for job search, job promotion, or other status enhancement actions. In fact, the reverse may be more valid. Consistent evidence demonstrates that disadvantaged social group members may be more likely to use informal methods in job searches. This tendency is found for those less educated (Ornstein 1976; Corcoran et al. 1980; Marx and Leicht 1992), among blue-collar employees (Rees and Shultz 1970; Corcoran et al. 1980; Hilaski 1971; Marx and Leicht 1992), among laborers and construction workers (Falcon 1995; Manwaring 1984; Lee 1987), poorer job seekers (Green et al. 1995), and among African Americans (Corcoran et al. 1980; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985; Ornstein 1976; Datcher 1983; Holzer 1988; but see Marx and Leicht 1992; Green et al. 1999).

This tendency does not indicate that better-positioned workers do not use informal methods. They do—for example, among professionals (Gottfredson 1979), managerial and technical workers (Granovetter 1974), and Dutch managers (Boxman et al. 1991). Significantly, in job search outcomes nonsearchers seem to do as well as or even better than seekers.

Obviously, certain jobs can be matched to applicants with a greater degree of certainty if the jobs require largely technical skills and knowledge (such as programming or gene analysis). Thus, we should expect that candidates with documented training, knowledge, and experience in technical fields might apply directly to announcements of jobs requiring such skills and knowledge, accounting to some extent for use of formal applications or response to formal media in the matching of jobs and applicants, and by-passing the use of informal methods and evocation of social capital.

However, evidence also shows the following patterns in job searches: that those embedded in resource-rich networks or having more social capital are not more likely than those in resource-poor networks to actively mobilize personal contacts in job search; and that non-searchers (those who do not actively mobilize social resources) seem to do as well or even better in status attainment compared to searchers who use informal methods (e.g., [higher income] Granovetter 1973; [better job status] Lin et al. 1981; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985; De Graaf and Flap 1988). These patterns suggest differential effects of social standings and social networks on active mobilization of contacts in job

search. If social capital implicates resources embedded in social networks, why then do individuals or social groups who seek out others (in the informal methods) in a job search not gain added return?

This seemingly puzzling lack of patterns about effects of informal methods (or use of personal contacts) in the job search may be explained by the general nature of information and influence exchanges in social networks. As mentioned before, if resource-rich networks are associated with greater heterogeneity of resources, then we can also assume that a greater amount of useful information is routinely exchanged among members: The greater the valued resources are embedded in a social network, the greater the amount of useful information is circulated among members. One consequence is that embeddedness in resource-rich social networks increases the likelihood of receiving useful information, in the *routine exchanges* and without actively *seeking* such information. Granovetter (1985) found that non-searchers had used networks in locating previous jobs, had had experience in managerial (rather than professional or technical) work, and had attended high-prestige colleges. "It stands to reason, then that persons having networks yielding access to substantial job information will be more apt to be presented with opportunities to change jobs without an active search" (Marsden and Gorman, forthcoming). Thus, we may hypothesize that embeddedness in resource-rich networks is associated with routine flow of useful information—the invisible *hand* of social capital. If this hypothesis is true, it explains why nonsearchers, especially among those positioned in resource-rich networks, attain better jobs. Only when such useful information is not available and not forthcoming would activation of social capital become necessary. This occurs when one is embedded in resource-poor networks and, thus, less likely to receive useful information.

Therefore, the active mobilization of social ties in a job search or other instrumental actions is more likely to occur among minority group members and those in socioeconomically disadvantaged networks. This principle also explains why strong ties are less effective for minority group members (Green et al. 1999; Green et al. 1995) and why cross-gender ties are more useful for females and cross-race ties more useful for

blacks (Elliott 1997; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985).

Future studies should explore the operations of the invisible hand of social capital. For example, we can hypothesize that, after taking into account the technical skills and knowledge of the jobs and applicants, individuals embedded in resource-rich networks should routinely receive information useful in improving their life chances and routinely provide influence (i.e., promoting each other's credentials to third parties) for one another. In contrast, individuals in resource-poor networks are less likely to routinely exchange such information and influence. Note that it is not hypothesized that individuals in resource-poor networks do not routinely exchange information and influence. Rather, what is expected to be different is the usefulness of information and influence that they routinely receive. Such relative effects should be found across different social groups, if they are clustered in different structural positions.

Summary and Discussion

Social groups (gender, race) have different access to social capital because of their advantaged or disadvantaged structural positions and associated social networks. Situated in different positions in the social hierarchy, and given the tendency to interact with other members of the same social group (homophily), members of a disadvantaged group may find themselves deficient in social capital. Inequality in social capital, therefore, can be accounted for largely by structural constraints and the normative dynamics of social interactions.

The research literature, by and large, confirms the disadvantages of females and minority group members in social capital. However, direct studies on the return of social capital for these social groups are very limited, and the results ambiguous. It would be helpful to examine the mechanisms of underlying capital deficit and return deficit separately. Understanding and measurements of the operations of social capital are essential because the usefulness of information and influence in routine exchanges differs among social networks.

For the disadvantaged to gain a better status, strategic behaviors require accessing resources beyond the usual social circles (Ensel 1979) and routine exchanges. Finding sponsors in the firm (Burt 1998); joining clubs dominated by males (Beggs and Hurlbert 1997); finding ties outside the neighborhood (Green et al. 1995); and find-

ing ties across ethnic boundaries (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995; Stanton-Salazar 1997) generate better returns for members of disadvantaged social groups. While these actions are exceptions rather than the rule, they do point to the utility of action in overcoming inequality in social capital for some members of a disadvantaged social group.

The research agenda outlined and the empirical study explored here suggest that systematic empirical investigations equipped with specific measures and designs to flush out institutional and cultural variations can advance understanding about capital inequality and social inequality for different social groups, on different social inequalities, and in different communities and societies.

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“Your Blues Ain’t Like My Blues”: Race, Ethnicity, and Social Inequality in America

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Introduction

Our charge is to reflect on the study of social inequality in sociology. The breadth of this assignment is virtually overwhelming, encompassing as it does the wide range of hierarchical systems and relationships in society based on factors as varied as social class, gender, race, education, ethnicity, age, income, language, and region—to name but a few indicators. To make the task more manageable, we restrict our attention to racial and ethnic inequality. Interestingly, as we reviewed the research record, evaluated key statements and anticipated future directions in the study of race and ethnicity, we found ourselves led inexorably to consider connections across and between the various hierarchical systems operating in modern society. It became apparent that race and ethnic inequality reflected, and were in turn reflected in, the broader reality of social inequality in modern society. However, while we recognize the interconnections between race/ethnicity and other stratification systems in society, we also recognize the unique significance, status, and power of race/ethnic identity as “anchor” or “master” factors in the U.S. system of “racialized” social inequality. America’s unique racial and ethnic reality was shaped by a history that included the enslavement of Africans, the conquest of Indians and Mexicans, the exploitation of Asian and other nonwhite labor, and past-and continuing—racial/ethnic discrimination. More generally, a fundamental aspect of the American experience (and some would argue, the American character) has involved commitment to, embrace of, and engagement with the philosophy of White Supremacy (Takaki 1990; Mills 1997; Lubiano 1998; Zia 2000).

Race and ethnicity are socially constructed identities that vary across time, space, situation, and perception. It is this particular quality that introduces ambiguities into the debate on the significance of these identities in contemporary societies. Ultimately, the debate revolves around questions about which aspects of modern society provide the structural and cultural basis for the persistence of race and ethnicity, and whether or how such determinants continue to operate

today. Inevitably such debates require that we examine whether race and ethnicity continue to hold significance for a person’s life chances and life outcomes in contemporary America. An emerging orthodoxy answers an emphatic “No!” (Wilson 1980; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997). In this worldview, race is neutral and *ceterus paribus*—“all other things being equal”—(e.g., social class), the woes or “blues” of a black person are the same as those of her white counterpart. Yet we contend that such perspectives originate from narrow and simplistic conceptualizations of social inequality on a broader level.

Historical Perspectives on “Social Inequality”

The study of social inequality has been the “stock and trade” of sociology since the discipline’s earliest days. Each of the acknowledged “fathers” of the discipline puzzled on some level about the origins, form, and consequences of social inequality in society. Karl Marx emphasized economic inequalities, drawing sharp distinctions between the classes that owned the means of production and those who sold their labor. Like Marx, Max Weber saw economic class as a key marker of social inequality. However, Weber also argued for the importance of status and power as additional hierarchical factors that determined social inequality. Emile Durkheim mobilized these early sociological views of social inequality to investigate and understand empirically the consequences of social inequality for human outcomes. His research on suicide, religion, and social organization examined how structured, hierarchical relationships produced patterned and distinct outcomes—read unequal outcomes. Thus it is that a noncritical reading of foundational perspectives in sociology could lead one to conclude that the discipline, from its earliest years, has adequately addressed the concept of social inequality. Marx, Weber, and Durkheim each speak to aspects of social inequality; taken together, their perspectives provide useful, although not sufficient, lenses on the phenomenon. It is striking to note the relative absence of attention paid by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim

to race as a key aspect of social inequality. Where these founders did deign to address race, they did so generally to dismiss its significance (e.g., Marx characterized race/ethnicity as superstructure; Weber believed that race/ethnicity's significance would fade away in the "light" of modernization).

The omission or dismissal of race by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim in discussions of social inequality is startling alongside the writings of their contemporary, W.E.B. DuBois, who boldly declared that "the most significant problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." DuBois's conclusion certainly encompassed the national experience of the United States, a country founded on racial slavery, racial conquest, and White Supremacy. However, DuBois also clearly believed this conclusion held international relevance in a world where white, European nations were in that exact moment engaged in imperialistic conquest and colonization of nonwhite, non-European people in the far-flung corners of the world—Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America (Hochschild 1998). One cannot help but wonder why Marx, Weber, and Durkheim gave so little attention to race-based social inequality at a time when Europe was in the midst of such racialized encounters. Indeed, this was a time when Europeans employed the concept of race to differentiate among themselves, judging some European nations and peoples to be of inferior racial stock (e.g., Mediterranean group, the Irish). Moreover, Europe and the West were strongly invested in ideas of racial supremacy, codified in theory (e.g., Social Darwinism) and in practice (e.g., colonialism, Manifest Destiny). Interestingly, some European artists and writers were compelled to wrestle in their creative expressions with the meaning and place of race in their society (e.g., Shakespeare's *The Tempest* [1611], Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* [1719], Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* [1907]). In a related vein, rank-and-file Europeans turned out in droves from 1810 to 1815 to gaze upon the so-called "Hottentot Venus," a captured South African Khoi Khoi woman. Distorted popular notions of the African woman's physique and sexuality were widespread, leading to the creation of a style of dress with bustles that exaggerated the proportions of European women's derrières. The question remains Why did the founders of modern sociology fail to address the critical "social fact" of race when race was at the

center of forces that were changing the very face of their worlds—both at home and abroad? Why, then, this curious silence about the concept and its expressions/consequences in late nineteenth-century Europe?

At the other extreme from the "silence" of sociology's three acknowledged "giants" was DuBois, who emphasized the primacy of skin color and racial identity as a basis for social inequality. In *tour de force* works such as *The Suppression of the Slave-Trade* (1896) and *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), DuBois's perspective ultimately cross-cut and overlapped the other social hierarchies (e.g., social class, culture, gender). He explicitly rejected biologically based, Social Darwinistic arguments that viewed blacks as innately inferior to whites. Instead, like Durkheim, DuBois argued that the explanation for human outcomes was best sought in cultural and social structural factors, rather than in individual, biological characteristics. Like Marx, DuBois acknowledged the power of economic factors to shape human reality; like Weber, he also saw economics as working in conjunction with social status and power to shape human reality. However, writing from the *situs* of a black man in racist America and drawing from his international experiences with colonialism and global capitalism, DuBois could not ignore the significance of race among the combination of factors that defined, created, and perpetuated social inequality.

The Contemporary Debate on Race

A historical analysis of race relations in the United States generally underlines the significant role that race has played in structuring relations among different groups. However, explanations for such sentiment may vary considerably—whether it be theories on class conflict, ethnic adaptation, nationalist hegemony, or racial formation (Omi and Winant 1994). In recent decades, however, social experience and the sociological literature on race have diverged over the continuing significance of race in the lives of the nation's racial minorities. One strand of thinking, with William Julius Wilson as its most widely recognized proponent, emphasizes how class conflict and economic restructuring has led to the "declining significance of race" in contemporary American society (Wilson 1980). The other camp, with Michael Omi and Howard Winant as notable advocates, argues that structural and cultural changes have only reconstructed racial

meanings as demonstrated by the rise in racial/ethnic identity and tensions. In their view, race continues to hold great significance in American life.

In the United States, the contemporary debate on race has been affected largely by major cultural and structural transformations that have occurred since the 1960s Civil Rights era. Among other things, these changes include dramatic shifts in the class structures of nonwhite communities, the growing presence yet continued invisibility of Asian and Latino/a Americans, and the changing nature of racial attitudes and social relations among various ethnic/racial groups. The early Civil Rights movement of the 1960s brought many substantive gains to communities of color, in terms of knocking down legalized forms of segregation and racial discrimination. While a small but nonetheless significant number of middle-class people of color have taken advantage of these changes, the elimination of legal barriers has done little to improve the welfare of the larger majority of more marginalized people of color who continue to be mired within the historically enforced grips of poverty, broken families, and resource-deprived urban communities. The participants in the contemporary debate over race are thus divided over whether such class differences naturally portend deeper class divisions and conflicting socioeconomic interests (thus leading to the decline of race) (e.g., Wilson 1980) or whether the socioeconomic fates of the middle class are still intertwined with the fates of the "underclass" due to the persistent significance of race in the public mind (e.g., Omi and Winant 1994).

Within the context of these changes, a new debate on the significance of race began to take form, captured in Wilson's widely debated works *The Declining Significance of Race* (1980) and *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987). According to Wilson, the period of progressive modernity between the post-World War II era and the present has witnessed a number of significant transitions, which led to the "declining significance of race" and the consolidation of class divisions in the economic sector. During the 1960s, the state, which had in the past supported or ignored racial inequalities, became a powerful and independent actor in promoting the dismantling of discriminatory laws due to the increasing political empowerment of the black community and the onset of the Civil Rights movement.

However, Wilson argues that these political changes have primarily served the interests of the black middle class and have done little to improve the declining conditions of the growing black "underclass" (1987). He argues that the occupational differentiation of the black community in the post-1960s era closely resembles that of the white community, such that racial conflict no longer exists in the economy but rather resides in the political arena. Thus, says Wilson, the life chances of blacks are determined primarily not by racial differences, but by economic class position.

Contrary to Wilson's interpretation of American politics in the post-Civil Rights era, other scholars argue that racial contest in the political arena reasserts the privileges of white Americans over racial minorities and also affects policies that shape the economy (Bobo and Smith 1998; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Omi and Winant 1994; Sears 1988). Inner-city neighborhoods continue to suffer from chronic poverty, declining standards of living, high rates of unemployment and criminal activity, and underfunded schools due to the absence of substantive federal aid programs since the 1980s (Darity and Myers 1998; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Farley and Allen 1987; Wilson 1996). The dissolution of leftist politics since the 1960s has paved the way for the Far Right and neo-conservatives to attack social services and pro-minority programs (Gitlin 1993). With the elimination of legal barriers to integration and mobility, white Americans backed by the neo-conservative wing have used the image of a "colorblind" society to block legislation based on so-called "reverse discrimination (against whites)" that are directed at improving the still marginal status of the nation's racial minority populations (Klinkner 1999; Bobo and Smith 1998; Omi and Winant 1994). Under the Reagan and Bush administrations, these new "rearticulations of race" were accompanied by cutbacks on welfare programs, affirmative action policies, social services, education, health care, and pro-minority business branches—the effects of which have yet to be remedied (Omi and Winant 1994).

As an alternative to the monolithic approach to race, numerous works have begun to delve into the changing nature *and* continued significance of race in the present day. According to Omi and Winant (1994), the meaning of race arises in ideological and discursive practices

around which both the macrolevel social structure and microlevel everyday situations are organized. Omi and Winant, as well as other leading scholars in this field, acknowledge the increasing significance of class in contemporary stratification systems, yet argue that such transformations have merely changed the ways in which racism is manifested, structured, and sustained. For instance, while the social movements of the 1960s facilitated the emergence of a new "racial state," the disintegration of the New Left and the strengthening of the Far Right (and their counterparts, neoconservatives and neoliberals) have deleted race from public discourse, despite the endurance of racial inequalities across class lines. Omi and Winant are confirmed in this judgment by scholars such as Mary Patillo-McCoy (1999), Dalton Conley (1999), Philip Klinkner (1999), Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (1995), Mia Tuan (1998), Yasuko Takezawa (1995), and William J. Wilson (1996). Hence, a comprehensive analysis on contemporary stratification systems must incorporate a more sophisticated and dynamic approach to race and ethnic relations.

Reconceptualizing Race at the Crossroads of Multiple Hierarchies

The underlying assumption in many traditional works on social inequality is that race is a fixed trait that may be measured and used as an "additional" variable for understanding social inequality. Furthermore, race itself is defined, conceptualized, and measured with limited techniques within a dichotomous framework, leaving little room for understanding the complex nature of today's diverse society. Moving beyond such unidimensional conceptualizations of inequality, recent works on intersectionality and multiple oppression politics have advocated a different approach that emphasizes the dynamic, independent, yet intersecting quality of race in relation to other systems of oppression (Cohen 1999; Crenshaw 1989; Collins 1998; King 1988). The insights and methodological techniques derived from this new field of inquiry offer an improved framework within which to understand the complexities of social inequality.

The fundamental premise for this new field of multiple intersectionality is that social inequality, like the socially conceived bases upon which it is built, should not be perceived or measured as a singular, fixed object but instead as an evolving, multidimensional process that is constantly adapting to the different contexts in

which it is embedded. This process is organized upon multiple, intersecting hierarchies of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, religion, nativity, and other hegemonic systems, which determine and pervade the status, lived experiences, and collective dynamics of both marginalized and empowered groups. Not surprisingly, the first theoretical articulations of this theory originated from the voices of the "marginalized within the marginalized"—that is, women of color, especially black feminists and lesbians.

Within this framework, each hierarchical system is conceived as both autonomous and overlapping with other systems, yet the degree to which each system may influence the material lives of social actors is not linear, homogeneous, nor universal. That is, depending on the context and the way in which they are organized and applied, different stratification systems are themselves hierarchical and diverse in effect. King (1988) reveals that the significance of race, class, and/or gender in determining the socioeconomic status of black women varies, depending on which group to which they are being compared (e.g., black men, white women) and how status is being measured (e.g., income, education). Furthermore, each system of hegemony operates in different ways within other systems of stratification. For instance, Collins (1998) compares gender subordination within racial and class hierarchical systems with racial subordination within class and gender hierarchies, discussing how such differential exploitation affects possibilities for cross-structural collective mobilization. In the former case, the strategy of control relies on the dependency and close proximity of women with men, which is reinforced by the historical exclusion and separation of women according to race, class, and nativity, among other things. In the latter case, the "ghettoization" of races shapes the experiences of individuals in ways that increase the likelihood of racial solidarity across class and gender. Particularly in the case of the "marginalized within the marginalized," subordination within multiple political spheres leaves such groups with only four options: accept their subordinate status within a single-axis sphere (e.g., race only, gender only), create their own small niche at the risk of disempowerment within the broader realms of mainstream politics, negotiate among multiple political spheres, or refrain from participating in politics altogether. Thus the dif-

ferential modes of exploitation are relevant to understanding the dynamics of collective solidarity and mobilization specifically and the exercise of power in America more generally.

On one hand, hierarchies built on race, gender, class, and other political identities may operate and affect social actors independently from other hierarchical systems, depending on the context and variable being examined. On the other hand, the multiple systems of inequality are also interdependent: First, the different hierarchical systems may work together to shape the experiences of dominant and subordinate actors. Second, the multiplicative effects of marginalization is such that subordinate status within more than one hierarchical system will not only add another dimension to disempowerment, but also increase and intensify one's marginalization overall. Finally, marginalization in one hierarchical system may indirectly affect one's status within other hierarchical systems. Thus, darker-skinned blacks and Latino/as have both lower in- and out-group socioeconomic status. (Allen, Telles, and Hunter 2000). As another example of how these interrelated systems work, Espiritu (1997) shows that historically U.S. capital has benefited from the racial division of labor, which decreases the worth of Asian-American labor. Racial and class exploitation and discrimination work together to enforce the impotence of Asian-American males, who in turn compensate for their disempowerment by exercising their power over Asian-American women. Thus, Asian-American women (like other women of color) must struggle not only with their subordinate status in race, ethnic, class, gender, nativity, and nationality-based hierarchies within the dominant society, but also with their marginal positions in respect to the Asian-American community (Thompson 1994).

The multiple systems of stratification lay the foundation for the uneven distribution of power and scarce resources, creating greater competition for diminishing resources among disempowered communities and the use of dominant-society binary conceptions in legitimizing internal hierarchies. In her recent work on AIDS in the African-American community, Cohen (1999) explains how political agendas and the allocation of resources are shaped by hierarchical relations among the privileged and marginalized within both indigenous communities and the larger context of dominant society.

Crenshaw (1989) also argues that the distinct intersectionality of race and gender in black women's experiences has been the basis for their exclusion from legal protection in court cases, which focus on white women's experiences to define gendered discrimination. The means and strategies by which dominant groups exercise their control over underprivileged groups are contingent upon the nature of the marginalized group as well as the broader context. In this vein, Takaki (1990), Almaguer (1994), Morris (1999), and Foley (1997) offer a historical overview on the differential experiences of cultural and structural oppression among America's minority groups, including blacks, Asians, Mexicans, and Native Americans. Groups within racial communities also encounter differential means of oppression, as argued by Pattillo-McCoy (1999) on the African-American middle and underclass in Chicago, and by Waters (1994) on Caribbean-born and native-born blacks in New York City. Hence, it would follow that different forms of exploitation produce distinct patterns of adaptations, responses, and challenges from exploited or targeted communities (Thompson 1994; Cohen, 1999).

Organized around socially constructed bases of hegemony, the multiple structures of social inequality reflect shifts in various hierarchical formations as well as the contexts of time, space, situation, and structure. We suggest that the multiple hierarchical systems of social inequality have undergone several major transformations since the Civil Rights era. Wilson's theorizing about the "declining significance of race" may give us only a limited perspective on racial hegemonic structures, but his insights into the increasing significance of class provide a useful starting point for understanding the new dynamics of racial inequality in postindustrial America. However, as Cohen (1999) reminds us, it is not merely that the structures of class stratification have expanded, but that greater weight has also been placed on other structures of hegemony, such as gender, sexuality, and nativity. Ironically, the essentialization and culturalization of identity politics have been accompanied by the increasing awareness of previously marginal identities rooted in dual or multiple hegemonic structures. Perhaps one of Wilson's greatest weaknesses lies in his substitution of one form of essentialism based on race for another based on class.

Indeed, with the 1965 passage of the Harts-Cellars Act, the "race problem" in the United States has been complicated further by the massive influx of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America into primarily urban areas. The complexity of contemporary hegemonic structures may be attributed partly to the diversification of America's population, characterized by the spatial expansion of social networks and communities, greater heterogeneity in the internal structures of racial communities, differential modes of empowerment from native minority or dominant groups, and increasing sophistication in how racial/ethnic groups are excluded from or incorporated into mainstream society (Vigil 1998; Tuan 1998; Zhou 1992). In the present era, issues of racial or national loyalty, oppression, and collective solidarity are intertwined with questions of multiple identities, transnational and global networks and processes, distinct forms of empowerment and marginalization, and new strategic ways of reinforcing "racial" domination (Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994). Given the shifting meaning and structures of race, contemporary scholars must focus less on which forms of stratification do or do not exist, and more on how these forms may predominate in certain contexts while continuing to be intertwined with other systems of stratification in others.

Because social inequality in the contemporary era is becoming more complex and ambiguous, scholars must seek new ways of defining, theorizing, and measuring social inequality in its many forms. We must begin to expand our knowledge about the intricacies of stratification systems-how these operate separately and jointly depending on circumstances and context (Allen, Telles, and Hunter 2000; Thompson 1994). The effects of any given hierarchical system cannot be measured by relying solely on traditional quantitative techniques that employ dichotomous understandings of social inequality. Even though advanced quantitative research has long dominated the field (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967), race is an ideal example of how such approaches may produce limited perspectives, misinterpretations, and erroneous conclusions. Despite the more tolerant attitudes of whites in recent decades, Bobo and Smith (1998) find that racism has not been eradicated, but rather transformed from blatant ideologies about black inferiority (Jim Crow Racism) and into more subtle ideologies that attribute their

condition to cultural deficiencies (Laissez-Faire Racism). While the specter of *de jure* segregation has been eradicated, the long-term, cumulative effects of past racial segregation and the continued *de facto* segregation of urban minority communities compel us to reanalyze traditional notions of racism (Bonilla-Silva 1996). An analysis of residential segregation, social separation, and mobility must consider the heterogeneity of today's communities (e.g., immigrant suburbs, the black middle-class "buffer" areas), the way different hierarchical forces interact (e.g., race, class, gender, and space), the intricate and multilevel nature of social relations and interaction, and the social ties that connect the fate of racial groups (Feagin 1991; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Waldinger and Bailey 1991; Waters 1994; Zhou 1992; Massey 1990; Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Omi and Winant 1994; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Thompson 1994).

With the introduction of new racial groups that do not fit easily into the black-white framework of racism, the various manifestations and effects of racism become increasingly complex and less clear-cut (Takaki 1990; Foley 1997; Tuan 1998). Such heterogeneity cannot be captured in traditional quantitative measures that ask direct questions about views on racial issues based on the blatant racism reminiscent of the pre-Civil Rights era (Bonilla-Silva 2000). In addition, the subtleties of racism, changing orthodoxies, and the new etiquette of race mean that social relations can be understood best through intensive, participatory observation of social interaction and experiences that shape individual and collective status, self-perceptions, social relations, and workplace and institutional experiences (Bonilla-Silva 1996). Indeed, a growing body of empirical research confirms what "mother wit" and experience had long since revealed to many blacks and other people of color: Racism and racial discrimination continue to shape their day-to-day interactions with whites and white-dominated institutions (e.g., Carroll 1998; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Vera 1995; Feagin and Sikes 1995; Hochschild 1995; Cose 1993; Gwaltney 1993).

To demonstrate how this plays out, we must examine how race continues significantly to shape class and economic structures. In terms of the African-American community, studies continue to show prevalent income disparities based on race (Darity and Myers 1998; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Farley and Allen 1987), work-

place discrimination (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991), educational discrimination (Stanton-Salazar 1997; Allen and Jewell 1995; Solórzano and Villalpando 1998), occupational segregation and mobility (Farley and Allen 1987; Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Waldinger and Bailey 1991; Woo 1985), and differential wealth (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Conley 1999; Oliver and Shapiro 1995). Dependent on black-white paradigms and methods, particularly in the case of Asian Americans and Latino/a Americans, contemporary research often fails to uncover new and enduring racial disparities in class and economic structures, choosing instead to herald the coming of a new and assimilated "Model Minority" (Zhou 1992; Tuan 1998; Zia 2000). In the case of nonblack and nonwhite groups, scholars must expand their framework to consider how these growing racial populations are bound by diverse mechanisms of control (e.g., "glass ceilings" and cultural attacks on racial self-esteem), different economic strategies and structures (e.g., unpaid family labor and dual wage-earning households), inconsistencies in status and occupation (e.g., occupational segregation and disparities between education achievement and occupational/income status), heterogeneous modes of incorporation (e.g., segmented assimilation), cultural stereotypes that shape public perceptions and behavior (e.g., Model Minority and illegal aliens), international systems of dominance (global capitalism and geopolitical relationships), and new racialized standards in education and employment (e.g., Asian quotas and ideologies of meritocracy used to pit Asians and Latino/as against blacks) (Portes and Zhou 1992; Zia 2000; Vigil 1998).

In addition, the endurance of racial hegemonic structures cannot be determined by examining "race-only" variables. Race materializes, evolves, and takes effect in interaction with other hegemonic systems. As a result, different combinations of variables (e.g., race and gender) may affect different features of political, economic, social, cultural, and spatial inequality. For example, Xu and Leffler (1992) find that the effects of race and gender vary with the type and combination of occupational characteristics examined (i.e., occupational segregation, prestige, or earnings). In a related vein, Cohen (1999) attests to the marginalization of groups within racially oppressed communities in the perception and treatment of AIDS and HIV-positive African Americans. Similarly, Dawson

(1995) reveals the complex ways that black political attitudes converge-and diverge-at points dependent on social class and at other points independent of these characteristics, while Thompson (1994) shows how gender, sexual orientation, social class, race, and national origin combine to produce women's subordinate status and to shape their responses. Because the effects of race on other systems (e.g., gender) are multiplicative, scholars must begin to conceptualize and operationalize race within its proper context.

Your Blues Ain't Like My Blues: The Death of Universalism and the Birth of Situated Analysis

This essay reached backward to the nineteenth century and the beginning of sociology as part of an effort to project forward to sociology's future directions in the treatment of race, ethnicity, and inequality. The founders of sociology—Marx, Weber and Durkheim—were largely silent on the specific question of racial inequality. Instead, each preferred to subsume any consideration of racial (and, to a lesser extent, ethnic) inequality under more generalized or "universal" frames for the interpretation of inequality. DuBois, writing from his unique perch as a German-trained sociologist and a black man in the United States, challenged their premises. He vigorously proclaimed in response to these colorblind theoreticians, "Your Blues Ain't Like My Blues!" More specifically, DuBois argued that to be truly authentic, the study of social inequality must incorporate race, skin color, and the historical relations between Europeans and nonwhites. DuBois therefore offered a modified perspective that incorporated not just class, status, and power, but also skin color, nationality, and race.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the dominant paradigm guiding the study of social inequality shifted dramatically, driven by the engines of quantitative methods and statistical analysis. Blau and Duncan's (1967) "Occupational Attainment Model" became the gold standard, the accepted orthodoxy, the dominant paradigm for the study of one aspect of social inequality—social stratification. This model provided a parsimonious and empirically testable reflection on the origins of a person's social class status. Supported by powerful statistical machinery, this model "trumped" the field, pushing other theories to the margins. Much like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim before them, Blau and

Duncan (1967) assumed away the relevance of race. We were to believe that the patterns identified would hold equally across race, gender, class, and nation. Theirs was touted as a universal explanation of occupational attainment—even though the model had been tested using data that foregrounded white male experiences and gave insufficient attention to how being a poor black woman in America profoundly con-strained one's possibilities.

At the very moment when Blau and Duncan were reasserting the claims of universalism based in the experiences of European-American males, the voices of other Americans-Americans of different hue, gender, and circumstances—were being raised in protest. On dusty country roads in the South, on gritty urban street corners in the North, and on pristine campuses all across America, blacks, Latino/as, women, and other marginalized groups demonstrated to reject paradigms that attempted to subjugate their differences and their authenticity to so-called “universal” frames—frames that, in fact, sought to validate the experiences of white males as a proper lens for reading the realities of groups as diverse as black women, poor Latinas, and white lesbians. Simultaneously, scholarship was being produced that also challenged the new orthodoxy of race neutrality (which, in many respects, was little more than the old wine of universalism in new bottles). As we noted, the writings of black women, feminists, and other scholars from marginalized communities proliferated, offering well-considered, thoughtful, provocative rebuttals to the unidimensional worldview of universalism (Ladner 1973).

As we look forward, we must also look backward, taking lessons from history. It is simply not acceptable to gloss over or attempt to wish away five centuries of European imperialism and colonialism on the international scene, and two centuries of racial slavery followed by a century of Jim Crow segregation/discrimination on the American scene. We must continually be reminded that the exercise of power in this society—indeed, the society's foundational system of social inequality—is tied up in and shaped by multiple systems of stratification, as demonstrated by the persistence of race as the bedrock of our nation's past and present. Certainly, some progress has been made to diminish racial inequality specifically, and the concentrated power of white males more generally. In this respect, the most dramatic and visible progress

has been made by white women, various Asian-American groups, and middle-class African Americans. However, progress does not signify full liberation—these groups remain mired within more subtle and complex structures of domination that link their fate to the communities and histories from which they emerged. Concealed amid these patterns of sporadic progress is the essentially unchallenged, persistent dominance of white males as power brokers in society, located at the pinnacle of the ladder of social inequality.

The challenge confronting the discipline from this point will come in the search for ways to capture, comprehend, and convey adequately the *Zeitgeist* whole and the specific pieces of racial inequality in America. More to the point, how can we combine the broader view of universalist perspectives on racial inequality with the richer, more textured and specific perspectives provided by situated analysis? The most creative theorizing about social inequality will likely occur at the point where top-down, deductive theorizing about presumed universals meets bottom-up, inductive theorizing about individual worldviews and experiences. Despite its many layers, recursive relationships, and just plain messiness, this extremely complicated space holds the greatest promise for advancing our understanding of the origins, dynamics, and persistence of racial inequality in twenty-first-century America. One can only hope that, once armed with this information, sociologists will recognize the continuing significance of race and move to help abolish racial and ethnic inequities in society—in keeping with the example provided by W.E.B. DuBois, one of the discipline's earliest activist scholars.

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Space Matters! Spatial Inequality in Future Sociology*

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Thirty years ago as a struggling student, I found cheap housing in a rundown apartment complex in old Greenbelt, Maryland. Cramped and shabby, our small apartment was nevertheless remarkably well-designed. Even more revealing was the design of the neighborhood in which it was located. The original Greenbelt had been a WPA project whose physical layout was designed to embody principles of community, cooperation, and egalitarianism in a "green" or park-like setting. It stood in stark contrast to the

ever-expanding suburban sprawl that enveloped the surrounding areas. In those heady days of mobilization for new social movements, we were enthralled to discover a community plan that seemed to incorporate similar ideals deliberately in its architecture and design. About the same time, an unconventional sociology instructor reinforced this impromptu lesson on the importance of environmental design by claiming that he could construct living space guaranteed to break up any relationship. He further elaborated aspects of the design of the campus and surrounding areas that facilitated or impeded the demonstrations and organizing efforts that were an ongoing part of the landscape in that season of anti-war protests, women's liberation, and earth day mobilization. Space mattered!

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Three decades later, the notion that the natural and built environment, the design of space and place, shapes social relations remains peripheral to the sociology curriculum, reflecting its poorly specified place in sociological theory and research. Even less apparent then and now is the reciprocal idea that human agency shapes space and place; environments are socially constructed, often to embody the same principles and processes as other social institutions. Different settings create and reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities, reinforce or under-mine ideologies, and enable and promote some practices over others. Sociology, despite its deep stake in understanding spatiality, has been inconsistent in its efforts to analyze this component of social life, and has made little forward progress in systematically incorporating it into its central projects. The reasons can be found partly in the division of labor among the social sciences and partly in internal developments within sociology.

Here I first briefly specify the meanings of space and place and then examine the state of spatial analysis in sociology, particularly for the sociology of inequality. I discuss ways that spatiality permeates the study of power and inequalities, yet lacks explicit and systematic theoretical development or sustained empirical research. Finally, I consider how spatiality should be integrated into the sociology of the twenty-first century to create a robust spatialized sociology of inequality.

The Meaning of Space and Place

Space can be conceptualized in three ways: as *place*—the particular locale or setting; as *relational* units that organize ideas about places and implicitly or explicitly compare locations; and as *scale*, or the size of the units to be compared (Lobao 1996; McDowell 1999). These can be viewed as context, cause, or outcome for other social processes. From the smallest unit of the human body through multiple aggregate and collective examples such as household, community, neighborhood, city, region, state, nation, or global system, particular places provide a locale that may operate as a container and backdrop for social action, as a set of causal factors that shape social structure and process, and finally as an identifiable territorial manifestation of social relations and practices that define that particular setting.

Each setting may be expressed in units that imply comparisons with other units of similar or differing scales and that incorporate characteris-

tics of that kind of locale. For example, locations can be defined and compared in terms of their population-size, distribution, density, social and demographic characteristics; types of economic activity; distance from other places; and physical, cultural, and political features. One or more of these may be delineated separately and specified for particular places, or they may be summarized and generalized in broad spatial concepts such as *rural* and *urban* or *developed* and *developing*, ideal types that have the appearance of “natural” constructs. In fact, they are the products of conceptual and operational decisions, encoding a multitude of comparisons that are measured through some combination of the above criteria. *Rural* and *urban*, for example, usually include population size and density, land use, and economic base. Once classified, locational units may be compared on a variety of social forms and processes.

Finally, places defined at different spatial scales may be stacked, overlapped, or nested, sometimes by design, as counties constitute states and states in turn partition nation-sometimes more haphazardly as overlapping and even competing jurisdictions that characterize local government and quasi-governmental agencies (e.g., school districts, utility districts, law enforcement jurisdictions). The articulation of units at different spatial scales, particularly the local and the global, has become one of the central problematics of contemporary social science (Lobao 1996; Lobao, Rulli, and Browne 1999).

Regardless of which dimension is examined, places (hence space) are “contested, fluid and uncertain . . . made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries . . . [that] are both social and spatial” (McDowell 1999: 4). The ability to control the timing and spacing of human activities is a key component of modernity (Friedland and Boden 1994: 28, after Giddens) and reflects the distribution of power and the control of resources. Relations of power, structures of inequality, and practices of domination and subordination are embedded in spatial design and relations. Thus spatial arrangements are both products and sources of other forms of inequality. They can be studied as the context for better scrutinized systems of race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual privilege, as a formative factor in such systems, and as their outcomes. As such, they constitute part of the opportunity structure, shaping and shaped by its constituent parts and an obvious

target for investigation for the sociology of systems of inequality.

The Place of Space in Sociology

History claims time as its domain, and geography theorizes space (Friedland and Boden 1994). Sociology, in its alternation between arrogance at being the "queen" of social sciences and confusion about its scientific status, has a checkered history relative to both of these analytic concepts. In its most positivist modes, and at particular periods in its historical development, its practitioners have slighted both the historical and spatial contexts of social structure and process and totally ignored the social construction of space and time. More recently, historical time has come into its own among sociologists. The rapid growth of historical sociology and sociological history, closer attention to periodization, and widespread use of methods and theories sensitive to historical variation by practitioners of both quantitative and qualitative methods have established temporal factors as central to the sociological enterprise. Space and place are still struggling to find their voice in sociology. With notable exceptions,¹ the task of directly theorizing space has been relegated mainly to geography.

The neglect of explicit spatial theory and research is a peculiar deficiency in a discipline whose early and central projects have been as much about spatial variation as about temporal change. Whether focused on grand theories of social evolution and revolution, ecology, modernization, development, and political economy or developing the data and methods for empirical study of micro and macro social processes and practices, sociology from its outset investigated and theorized differences between different types of places. Central oppositional concepts such as modern/pre- and postmodern, developed/developing, *gesellschaft/gemeinschaft*, urban/rural, core/periphery, and more recently, global/local attest to the interest in spatial variation and the meaning of place.

Social theorists Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu explicitly theorize time and space together. Other analysts draw from history and geography, theories of Foucault and Lefebvre and the work of geographers Harvey (1996), Massey (1984), Soja (1989), and others. See Friedland and Boden (1994) for a useful review and map of the issues and ideas.

Similarly, virtually all the fundamental concepts identifying social institutions have an important spatial component. It is not possible to think about community, neighborhood, environment, household, work, school, state, or labor markets, to name a few, without at least implicitly assuming their spatial character. Households, for example, may be abstractions that describe sets of social relationships and networks of interactions, but they also have physical manifestations and boundaries that are important for understanding their meanings and practices. Communities commonly are assumed to have defined locations that create and limit individual and collective opportunities and outcomes. Liberation movements prosper in their discovery of the chinks in repressive structures—the free spaces—that permit organization and mobilization (Evans and Boyte 1986). Nation-states are defined by their control of territory and their ability to defend these boundaries.

Even aspatial concepts typically are described in spatial terms—social landscapes, class locations, segmented labor markets, embedded institutions, career ladders, status hierarchies, and cyberspace—metaphors that provide familiar spatial imagery to ground notions of how these operate. Gender is theorized and analyzed in terms of spatial segregation and differential access to public and private domains, social goods, and resources and has been enriched by spatial scrutiny that demonstrates ways that space contains, creates, and is constructed around gender relations (Gilman [1898]1996; McDowell 1999; Spain 1992). Labor markets and economies are localized, transforming abstract social relations into observable exchanges within defined boundaries (Lobao 1996; Killian and Tolbert 1993). Families are situated within domiciles and households of varying forms and structures, embedded in local labor markets (Tickamyer and Bokemeier 1993). Personal encounters are conditioned by whether they involve face-to-face interaction (Boden and Molotch 1994) and by whether they are conducted in "front" or "back regions" (Goffman 1959). Organizations and social structures are defined by the nature of ties within and across their boundaries (Tilly 1999). The body becomes a site for the exercise of power and status display (McDowell 1999) Even academic disciplines

have borders that present opportunities and threats (*Contemporary Sociology* 1999).

Finally, entire subspecialties are predicated on spatial distinctions. Most notable are the explicitly spatially defined subspecialties of rural, urban, and community sociology, each with its own organizations, literatures, and scholarly traditions. But other areas also are noted for their attention to spatially defined processes. These include human ecology and evolution with their focus on the social organization of human environments, demography with its enumeration and documentation of the movement of human populations within and across political and geographic boundaries, various development paradigms that examine industrialization, restructuring, and state formation in different locales and regions, political economy and uneven development within nation-states, and the relatively new area of environmental sociology. Studies from these and related areas provide numerous empirical examples of spatial analyses. Thus, sociology can be faulted less for its failure to recognize spatiality or to study differences across space and place than for its failure to theorize space explicitly, to analyze it systematically, and to weave it into the fabric of other social processes. Nowhere is this clearer than in the study of inequality. As the discipline has advanced in its understanding of the sources and consequences of different stratification systems and factors, as the processes that construct gender, race, and class difference, privilege, domination, and subordination become increasingly well understood, and as the practices that shape everyday experience of these social facts are unveiled, spatial processes and variation take a back seat to other sources of inequality and other means of producing and reproducing these systems of power and privilege. Why do we routinely recognize that gender, race, class, and a variety of other "categorical" sources of inequality constitute material social relations and inequalities, but fail to give equal recognition to spatial categories. If anything, spatial categories and relations are more grounded, more material. In short, the problem of space is not its lack of relevance or interest for sociologists, nor its absence from classical theory or current exemplary research. Rather, the issue is to "mainstream" spatial concepts and approaches and to extend our boundaries to incorporate spatial processes as part of the fabric of social life and its construction.

Integrating Space and Place into a Sociology of Inequality

As sociology enters a new millennium, the imbalance in time and space will need to be reconsidered. Spatial relationships between different social systems and actors continue to sort themselves in an increasingly globalized economy, coexisting with growing spatial inequalities that mirror and reproduce better scrutinized structural inequalities. Future studies of inequalities must incorporate spatial sources and outcomes. I would like to suggest three ways that spatial concerns should be incorporated into studying inequalities: issues of scale and measurement; issues of comparative advantage and disadvantage; issues of meaning, control, and construction. These mirror the three dimensions of space described at the beginning of this essay, but organize them somewhat differently to emphasize fruitful avenues for future development.

Scale and Measurement. The appropriate spatial scale and the ways to measure it are enduring problems in current sociological analysis. Issues of scale include selection (and neglect) of the appropriate scale for analysis, segregation of empirical research at different scales in different research traditions and literatures, development of good measures, especially for smaller-scale units, and need to develop and elaborate multi-level or multiscale models.

There is a tendency to emphasize national, cross-national, and urban scales and to segregate work at other scales within specialty literatures. The most widely read and disseminated areas of research focus on national populations and processes. Research that employs national samples to study inequality processes and outcomes, such as status attainment, mobility, and earnings models, often ignores spatial effects completely or settles for crude and error-prone measures of regional or residential variation that serve as proxies for social and economic differences. For example, throwing dummy control variables into statistical models to indicate South-non-South region or metropolitan-nonmetropolitan residence to act as proxies for complex socioeconomic processes is as close as many studies come to incorporating spatiality. Even this gesture to space is often of dubious value, since the amount of measurement error introduced in this process may undermine the beneficial effect.

Studies at other spatial scales are segregated to a greater or lesser degree within subdiscipline and specialty literatures. There are journals for

urban sociology, rural sociology, development sociology, community sociology, and environmental sociology. Although this pattern may be changing, they typically operate with surprisingly little dialogue or cross-fertilization. This is not a criticism of the existence or content of these research traditions and publications. Quite the contrary, these and similar sources often provide the only dependable outlets for research that examines social processes at non-national scales. Rather, it is their isolation from each other and from the journals and topics of "core" sociology that is called into question.

Their relative obscurity along with lower interest and priority for subnational and peripheral places masks the problems of measurement and data production that are frequently at issue for small-scale spatial concepts. Available measures are often the by-products of other political, economic, and measurement agendas. There is little pressure either to systematically produce data or to refine measures for marginalized places and groups who wield relatively little political power.

A related problem lies in the tendency to confuse, conflate, or ignore spatial processes at different scales. For example, poverty in both research and policy analysis is often assumed to be a national problem that is analyzed with an urban bias. National and urban poverty analyses are often conflated, while the real, severe, and frequently quite different problems of rural poverty are relegated to the back regions of social analysis and public policy or are ignored completely, even though rates of rural poverty equal or exceed urban figures (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993). This is especially ironic because poverty is one topic where spatial effects are given serious theoretical expression and empirical scrutiny at all spatial scales—in the rapidly growing literature on urban poverty, segregation, and neighborhood effects (Jagorksi 1997; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1996; Wright 1997) and in a rural tradition of labor market analysis, regional, and community studies of uneven development and inequality (Lyson and Falk 1993; Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993).

Poverty analysis, while not unique, provides an exceptionally transparent example of the importance and power of spatial analysis, both negatively in the dangers of failing to examine variation by place and space and positively in the benefits gained from such investigation.

Poverty is gendered, raced, and spaced. The processes that impoverish and disempower poor women in rural areas often differ from those in urban locales, as do the resources and options available to them (Tickamyer et al. 1993; Tickamyer 1995-96). It is not just that different contexts have different outcomes that require documentation, but spatial processes construct social relations through sets of contingencies that modify these processes. Thus causal factors implicated in poverty, such as labor force attachment, are themselves the outcomes of spatial processes that construct place variation (Brown and Lee 1999).

Finally, the nested character of social processes corresponds to the nested spatial domains of varying scale that they inhabit. For example, two key social structures for understanding inequality are households and labor markets. They each operate as both economic and spatial units and have mutual influences on each other's composition and practices (Tickamyer and Bokemeier 1993). They inter-sect at their margins, blurring distinctions between different forms of work: waged and nonwaged, formal and informal, productive and reproductive, and how these are gendered, raced, and spaced. While advances have been made in methods to analyze social processes that operate simultaneously at multiple spatial scales, they are as yet infrequently implemented. Future work needs to push ahead to investigate the ways socio-spatial processes are embedded in nested and overlapping institutions and spatial scales.

A sociology of inequality that incorporates issues of scale has both more local and more complex models of social-spatial processes. In other words, how do systems of inequality operate in different locales? What is the appropriate scale for studying a particular social form or practice? How do nesting and overlapping jurisdictions separately and mutually influence these processes? How does the articulation of spatial units reinforce or undermine relations of power, domination, and subordination, ranging from those located in households and communities to those in national and global systems? How do global processes affect local places? How does the local constrain or encourage globalization and its agents?

Comparative Advantage. The study of inequalities investigates sources of comparative advantage and disadvantage. Simple, single-factor

models of status transmission and class privilege have given way to more nuanced accounts of the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age to form shifting and dynamic systems of domination and subordination in different institutional and organizational realms. Often lacking in these accounts is spatial context, both as setting and as yet another dynamic component of stratification.

Here the complexity of space is most apparent. Relational constructs of space such as *urban* and *rural*, however they are explicitly operationalized, typically provide the settings for comparisons across different types of locations. They are used to discover variation in the operations and interactions of social forms and relations such as gender norms and practices, race relations, and the acquisition and performance of sexual identities. Similarly, these locations provide the means for comparisons of social-spatial structures such as households and labor markets in different places. Such comparisons facilitate understanding of how these differences are hierarchically ordered and valued.

At the same time, relational settings can be understood as more than just containers for other social forms and practices; they are also configurations of social, political, demographic, and economic practices that provide people and places with varying degrees of power, opportunity, and advantage and that combine and intersect with other systems that construct privilege or deprivation. The more carefully and elaborately specified the processes that take place within the setting, the more nuanced the understanding of sources of comparative advantage and disadvantage. Thus, demonstrating simple rural-urban differences in labor market inequalities at both supply and demand sides has less explanatory power than elaborating differences in economic base, industrial mix, links to other markets, human capital factors, and population characteristics that constitute different places. Examining whether informal economic activity is more apparent in rural versus urban locations is important, but ultimately less informative than elaborating the conditions under which it takes place and the relations to the formal economy (Tickamyer and Wood 1998).

The important questions to ask are not just How do urban and rural, metro and nonmetro, developed and developing places compare and differ, but How do these differences develop? What is it about each type of place that influ-

ences opportunity and power structures? What are the unique configurations of the other social forms that constitute types of places and provide comparative advantage or disadvantage?

Meaning, Construction, and Control. Spatial relations have both symbolic and practical meanings whose construction and control are integral parts of systems of inequality. Places are defined by power relations that also define boundaries that "are both social and spatial—they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience" (McDowell 1999: 4). While the most commonly acknowledged and incorporated meaning for space in social research is as setting, backdrop, or context, the relationship between spatial and other social factors is, in fact, dynamic, with space both constituting social relations and also constituted by them. Space is continually constructed and reconstructed, most reflexively in urban planning and architectural design, quite deliberately in the territorial conquests of warring states or the political and economic incursions of colonizing political and economic powers, but also inexorably (if less intentionally) in complex multidimensional interactions whose spatial outcomes nevertheless reflect, reinforce, and recreate power structures and relations. Regional identities and cultures, such as Southern or Appalachian, often the center of heated academic debate over their meaning and existence, pass the W. I. Thomas test—they are believed to be real and are therefore real in their consequences—consequences that include structures of inequality. Crux events intertwine with their locations to attain symbolic meaning and both coercive and liberatory power: Chernobyl, Watergate, Stonewall, and Wounded Knee attain new meaning with powerful ramifications for social action.

Explicit theorizing of space as a social construction emerges from diverse theoretical and empirical traditions, ranging from human ecology and growth machine analyses (Logan and Molotch 1987) to critical and postmodern geographies that postulate a socio-spatial dialectic that constrains and shapes social and spatial relations and activity simultaneously and reciprocally (Soja 1989). The project has been particularly productive for feminist geography, whose objective "is to investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and spatial divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution and problematize their

apparent naturalness” (McDowell 1999: 12). Multidisciplinary research has demonstrated how spatial arrangements condition the gender division of labor, access to resources and allocation of time and labor in public and private arenas ranging from occupational sex segregation and industrial location to household and urban geography (Hanson and Pratt 1995; Hayden 1980; Spain 1992). The example of gendered spatial divisions provides models for the ways to extend spatial analysis to other forms of stratification and inequalities.

The questions to be asked are Who controls the natural and built environments? Whose designs are adopted and naturalized? Whose meanings gain prevalence and whose benefits are maximized? What parties are in contention on these issues, and what are the stakes for these struggles as well as the outcomes? What processes empower or disenfranchise different groups in these processes. Finally, how do these differ across space and place for different locations and at different spatial scales?

An Agenda for Exploring Spatial Inequality

What would be the impact of more systematic incorporation of spatial factors into theory and research on inequalities? Pursuing the approaches described above would have implications for studies that vary in scale from the processes of globalization to impacts of devolution; from topics ranging from the rights of citizenship, ownership, and residence to control and representation of the body; and from the construction of personal space to global divisions of labor. Every area of social inequality can benefit from more scrutiny of spatial dimensions, but the main results would be the mainstreaming of currently peripheral areas of study, greater success in the ongoing project to elaborate the spatially contingent nature of social relations and practices, and more scrutiny of how spatial practices and environments are themselves structured through unequal social exchanges. An agenda for ways to bring spatial inequality into the study of social inequality would include:

- Increased study of spatial inequality *per se* at varying spatial scales and for all institutional realms (the economy, the state, the family, the media), and how these intersect with gender, race, class, sexuality, and other sources of social identity, groups, and hierarchy.
- Direct investigation of how spatial distinctions link to other differences and hierarchies, and how these in turn reveal spatial uses and inequalities and structure differential access to space and place.
- Greater scrutiny of peripheral, poor, remote, and exploited places at multiple scales, both separately and in their relationships and linkages to more central and global locations at similar and larger spatial scales. In other words, scrutiny of both the least and most powerful places and the connections between them.
- Better measurement and collection of data for peripheral locations at marginal scales, especially as they intersect with social processes that are inherently spatial such as households and labor markets. Rural places, less developed countries, and other marginal locations suffer from inadequate data sources and collection efforts.
- Specification of appropriate units and scales for analyzing specific social practices and forms: What units of analysis should be used to investigate particular forms of inequality? How are those units constructed and measured? What are the limits of using different units and measures of space and place?
- Direct investigation of the spatial properties of constructs that are normally viewed as aspatial or transcending space. The effort to spatialize labor markets, household, and gender should be extended to other social constructs.
- Movement beyond binary spatial distinctions to reformulate constructs such as rural and urban, developed and developing, public and private into social and spatial continua with variable and permeable boundaries defined by careful delineation of their properties and their relations with other social forms.

Conclusion

In a more crowded and connected world, control of space and place will become more contested and thus more obviously the source and measure of struggles for power and resources. As new technologies continue to shrink distance and the barriers of physical space, easily linking the most peripheral to the most central locations, new meanings of space emerge, and new

power struggles for its control. The potential for contact and networks of social interaction previously unknown and unlikely increases while simultaneously eliminating the need for direct physical encounter. The meaning of space becomes more problematic and more sharply etched in struggles for control of both physical and metaphysical space. As communication and information technologies provide the means to transcend space, they will put a premium on control and access to real and virtual place and space. A sociology of inequality must direct its scrutiny to these struggles for space and the spatial dimensions of other social hierarchies.

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Analyzing Social Inequality in the Twenty-First Century: Globalization and Modernity Restructure Inequality

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Introduction

What are the key sociological ideas on social inequality that we should bring forward into the twenty-first century, and what are the new ideas, theories, research topics that should be developed? Social inequality will enter the twenty-first century in new forms, but many of these will recapitulate themes that have been traditional to sociology for longer than the last century.

The key to understanding the twenty-first century is the analysis of two processes: globalization and modernization. Globalization is led by new information and communication technologies that are reshaping not only financial and capital markets but political and cultural processes. Globalization is fundamentally restructuring social institutions and their inter-relationship, with consequences for the degree and forms of social inequality. Modernization is still ongoing, as the gender regime is slowly transformed from a domestic to public form and women enter the public sphere of employment and the state. While modernization is often considered the completion of a transition from traditional to industrial society in the South of the globe, here I mean the modernization of gender relations around the developed world, as women emerge into more public arenas. Globalization and modernity should not be conflated, but rather seen as separate processes, with combined and uneven effects. I explore these processes in relation to new forms of working, the World Wide Web, and the restructuring of welfare and of politics.

Global Restructuring

In the twenty-first century, as in the past, social inequality will be globally structured, but the nature of the connections will be different, more intense, the linkages more speedy, the significance of physical distance less important. The global hierarchy itself will be restructuring as a result of new economic, political, and cul-

tural relations. The information age will mature and new computer-based technologies will become more powerful, facilitating even faster links. This global restructuring will be key to new forms of social inequality in ways we have yet to conceptualize.

We will need to develop new concepts to capture the new spatial and temporal forms of restructuring of inequalities. Current concepts, such as "space-time compression" (Harvey 1989) or "glocalisation" (Robertson 1992), will become outdated because of new types of space/time restructuring, and need to be replaced.

The restructuring of space and time will have different implications for different social groups. Concepts of diaspora (Cohen 1997) and hybridity (Gilroy 1993) will become increasingly relevant in a globalizing world. We will investigate whether ethnic diaspora, which straddle nation-states, may be empowered by their global linkages, facilitating trading and economic networks previously stymied by nationalist concerns, or whether they are victimized by a backlash from the majority members of their countries who fear their success. We will debate the nature of new forms of hybridity, of the creative ways in which identities emerge and are re-formed, split, merged, and changed.

Modernization of Gender Regime

Taking place simultaneously with globalization is the modernization of gender regimes. Gender relations are being transformed with women's entry into the public spheres of employment and of the state, with a consequent reduction in their dependence on individual husbands or fathers. The transition in the form of gender regimes from domestic to public started in some Western countries in the nineteenth century and will continue into the twenty-first. For some groups of women the transition reduces inequality, as for some young educated women

who gain well-paid employment in the formal sector; for others it merely changes the form of the inequality as they replace housework with low-paid employment. For some women this transition means new opportunities; for others it merely means new patterns of limited options. This varies particularly by ethnicity and class.

Education is transforming the position of many young women in the information age, though it is not available to many older women. As many younger women increase their education and employment, they narrow the gap between themselves and their male peers. However, older women are increasingly left behind, with biographies developed for a previous era when domesticity was the norm for women. This opens up new inequalities among women that are often correlated with age. These changes cross-cut those traditional divisions between women based on ethnicity and class, producing yet further diversity in the patterning of inequality (Walby 1990, 1997, 2001).

New Forms of Working

Globalization is creating new forms of working, but in highly uneven ways as it cross-cuts other processes, such as modernization. On one hand, the development of a knowledge-based economy privileges those with high levels of education, such as are found in many Western countries. On the other hand, the new flexibility and new forms of working can be precarious and poorly paid. The balance between these two developments is shaping the structure of social inequality at work and hence in many other aspects of social relations.

Education, knowledge, and information are becoming increasingly important as factors in production in the "information age" (Castells 1996, 1997, 1998). Education is thus becoming an increasingly significant new basis of income and wealth. It is the "wealth of nations" (Reich 1993). Access to education in information skills is going to be even more important than was education in the past. One question will be whether access to education reflects other patterns of social inequality or cuts across them. In some ways it appears to reflect them, especially in terms of class. But the patterns in relation to ethnicity are varied_____ some minority ethnic groups do better than the average and some do worse. The emerging gender pattern, connected to the modernization of gender relations, is significant because young women are now overtaking young

men in education throughout the Western world. Women are becoming better equipped for the information economy in the future. The extent to which this will affect gender hierarchies in employment and governance will be key to gendered patterns of inequality in the future.

However, other aspects of the global labor market may increase rather than reduce inequality. The rise of global labor flexibility is restructuring patterns of social inequality (Standing 1999). New types of working arrangements are increasingly temporary, part-time, subcontracted, and self-employed. However, this varies among countries: For instance, self-employment is highest in the United States, rising in Europe, but low and stable in Japan; part-time work is rising everywhere, though the extent to which it is a female ghetto varies_____ less in the United States than in the United Kingdom. While some of these new forms of working and contractual forms will be at the cutting edge of the new economy, facilitating a creative, high-productivity, high-pay sector, in many other cases they are primarily precarious, relatively poorly paid, and relatively poorly protected by employment law. New forms of inequality are likely to entail new combinations of precariousness and reward, not just the traditional ones.

A key issue is where the jobs created by the information economy are positioned. Some will be highly skilled and require highly educated and trained workers. But others will have poor, factory-like conditions, such as those in call centers. Another issue is whether the education-rich jobs will be autonomous, in the traditional way of many male professionals, or whether they will be highly regulated, as in the manner of nurses.

These new forms of working, implicated with globalization, restructure not just forms of class inequality but also the intersections of class, gender, and ethnic relations. In particular, the modernization of gender relations is increasing women's participation in education and employment. Changing patterns of access to education are part of the repositioning of women and other social groups within patterns of working. The process and resulting configurations may be new, but they still engage with the old forms of divisions involving class, gender, and ethnicity.

The World Wide Web

The World Wide Web is a new terrain that is partly constitutive of the process of globalization. It will influence patterns of social inequality.

ity in the real world, as well as creating its own patterns of inequalities within its own domain. It will interact with existing forms of social inequality, modifying them in the process, as well as generating new forms within the world of the Web itself.

These processes will become increasingly important as the Internet becomes more important, taking an ever-larger proportion of our time, and increasingly the medium through which social transactions will take place. A whole new social world is being created within the Web, with distinctive forms of freedom and regulation. It is inherently different because it is disembodied, though not unrelated to the embodied world. Its forms of regulation are different because of states cannot easily regulate transnational communications. A range of related technologies, especially those in telecoms (mobile phones, voice, visual and data transmission), will become highly interconnected—for instance, as phones send emails—thus expanding hyperconnectivity.

The whole range of inequalities is involved. Access to the Internet itself depends on income, education, and social and physical location. In this sense the Web might merely reflect existing inequalities. But the Internet might help ameliorate other kinds of social inequalities, such as those that have developed around physical impairment. Increased information technology (IT) will help overcome some of the difficulties with mobility deriving from a society constructed around the needs of the able-bodied.

The Internet will change the patterns of inequalities in access to political influence. Groups who cannot afford to travel will be able to lobby, although differential access to the Net will exacerbate, and create new, forms of inequality. The Internet is increasing the dominance of English and the English-speaking, reproducing and exacerbating linguistic and related ethnic inequalities. However, eventually new technology may facilitate translations, making this a less important concern.

The Internet will have complex effects on class and gender inequality. Currently computing is more associated with men, so its expansion has privileged men. However, keyboard, linguistic, interpretive, and text-based skills are more often associated with women, and may give some women some advantages here. The modernization of gender relations, involving the greater education of young women, means that

women may see a disproportionate increase in the skills needed to use the web. Currently the Internet is a relatively expensive technology to which the rich have disproportionate access, with consequent benefits. However, if near universal access were achieved, similar to television and telephones in most houses, the Internet could become a mass, popular technology.

The Restructuring of Welfare

Globalization and the modernization of the gender regime create two contradictory tendencies at work in shaping redistributive state welfare provision. On one hand, global competition among nation-states and the erosion of the power of the traditional working class will continue to curtail welfare state expenditures. As states compete to encourage footloose capital to locate in their countries, expenditures not supported by such capital may decline (Martin and Schumann 1997). On the other hand, women voters are emerging as the new political champions of welfare, especially when it is directed toward child care, health, and education. Young women are increasingly voting left, compared with men and older women, while women generally are more likely than men to support state expenditure on health and education. We should expect to see debates on whether women will replace the working class as the new champions of the welfare state. This is this more likely to develop in countries where women are more established in parliament, such as the Nordic countries, although the pressure of women's (especially young women's) votes may be felt increasingly in most Western democracies. In short, women will become the new champions of state welfare provision, and the working class will decline as a distinctive political force (Walby 2001). The redistributive welfare state may survive globalization because the gender regime is modernizing.

The Restructuring of Politics

Nation-states will continue to lose their salience as units within which social inequality will be structured, with increased levels of global coordination and increased significance of regional states such as the European Union. The role of the nation-state in maintaining social inclusion and social inequality will change probably, but not necessarily, weakening. The provision of redistributive welfare regimes by nation-states is challenged by neoliberal politics that attempt to draw legitimation from globaliz-

ing economic competition, but defended by young women's new-found political voices—an example of the tension between globalizing and modernizing processes.

There will be increased levels of global coordination, if not actually global governance. International bodies, such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, as well as organizations not yet created, will play an increasingly dominant role in regulating trade and financial allocations, and thus restructuring forms of global inequality. Inequalities within countries are increasingly affected by conditionalities attached to international trade and aid, both increasing as a consequence of structural adjustment programs and reducing as a result of human rights initiatives. Changes in the economic theories adopted by the World Bank and IMF have worldwide repercussions on patterns of inequality. This may alter the high levels of income inequality found in some regions, such as Latin America, or the lower levels in others, such as South East Asia.

The current regional divisions will be exacerbated. The European Union will broaden (with new member states) and deepen (with a more integrated market, financial, and monetary system as well as increased policies to combat social exclusion), although the extent and implications will be subject to debate. The growth of regional hegemony (Hettne, Inotai, and Sunkel 1999) will affect the social relations both within their own areas and on each other. The EU is the most developed example (Liebfried and Pierson 1995; Walby 1999). Others, such as ASEAN and NAFTA, may also seek to develop a similar degree of political unity, although the form and the extent of the impact cannot be known yet; and in some regions, such as Africa and Latin America, such regional collaboration may remain weak. At the moment, the EU has much more ambition to achieve political cohesion than the others do. This is probably unique, though it may be emulated. Whether its particular combination of regulated markets and policies to combat social exclusion is unique or will be emulated is a further question.

The End of Social Inequality in One "Society"

Traditionally sociology has understood social inequality to be contained within a given society. Social inequality—whether class, gender, or ethnic inequality—has been understood as a social relation between people within a specific

society. In practice we have assumed that the concept of "society" mapped happily onto the concept of "nation-state" or at least of "country." Globalization calls these assumptions into question. A global elite now developing does not base its privilege primarily in one country, but rather garners resources from many. It has a different relationship to "the working class" than did the capitalist class of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the working class is also hard to define within a country because the owners of the factories and offices in which they work may well be the pension funds from another country. This blurs the relevance of the unit "country" in some analyses of social inequality. It is becoming increasingly less relevant to speak of social inequality as if it were constructed and could be regulated within a single society. There are crucial overlaps and commonalities among social classes, genders, and ethnic groups in different countries.

Standards for Measuring Equality

A full analysis of social inequality requires an account of what would count as equality, to ascertain how far the current situation deviates from it. In the context of competing standards based on different social practices, this can be difficult to achieve. For instance, the standards used by the United Nations Development Programme to judge progress for human development in relation to gender have been subject to criticism by some who did not regard women's employment as an indicator of women's emancipation (UNDP 1999). Nevertheless, participants at the UN conference at Beijing have agreed on a common platform of action in order to achieve justice for women.

The rapidly changing complexity of gender and ethnic divisions and inequalities potentially makes traditional forms of politics around simple agreed-upon standards of justice and equality hard to achieve. Yet the development of the politics of "recognition" (Taylor et al. 1994) is not a solution to this dilemma of a mosaic of already existing standards, because it requires commonalities within the group seeking recognition, which may not exist.

The development of a global political arena seems to be facilitating the development of politics based on the rights tradition, using the rhetoric of human rights (UNIFEM 2000). This has been built in the context of worldwide coalitions and alliances, which live with the complexity of people's varied identifications. This is

transformative politics, in that the standards are not those of any actually existing group. It returns to the notion of universalistic standards against which claims to equality can be judged, albeit newly and contingently constructed standards.

Conclusions

Are the traditional vocabularies of social inequality up to the challenge of the twenty-first century? Are these new forms of social inequality fundamentally changed, demanding totally new forms of conceptualization and theorization, or are they merely modifications, secondary revisions of traditional theories?

The challenge to the relevance of equality has also been made by those who have argued that "recognition" is at least as important as "redistribution" (Taylor et al. 1994). This point is made especially in analyzing the pursuit of justice for social groups whose culture is considered different from that of the majority. Clearly, sociology needs concepts that engage with a cosmopolitan multicultural society; but, again, these may be considered additional rather than alternative to those of social equality.

What of *gender*, *race*, and *class*? The investigation and theorization of class both as overt and as underpinning other forms of inequality will remain a key idea, even as it takes new forms. The task of operationalizing the concept class in a new era is more complex than before; for instance, we require answers to questions about the unit or state within which class relations are to be established in a globalizing world. But the core of the concept, inequalities related to work and production, is as pertinent as ever. The theorization of gender and ethnicity as analytically separate from but practically enmeshed with class may be expected to continue to develop in sociological theory, since class alone is insufficient for understanding the key forms of social inequality. The types of interconnections and the ways in which these forms of inequality transform and mutate will remain a central and long-lasting concern of sociology. We should expect other traditional social fissures, which sometimes overlap and sometimes are independent, to be relevant to analyses of new social conflicts over inequality. Fissures based on religions (Huntington 1998), language, and culture may or may not overlap with these.

The core concepts of social inequality will not cease to be relevant in the twenty-first century. There will still be inequalities based on

class, on race/ethnicity, and on gender. But the forms will be new, and there will be new intersections. There are two main sources of transformation: The transition of gender relations from a domestic to a public gender regime will continue to reshape family inequalities as well as those in the workplace; globalization and the information age will reshape space and time and the terrain on which social inequality operates.

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