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Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organization Studies

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This article argues for a reconceptualization of the intersections of race, gender and class as simultaneous processes of identity, institutional and social practice in order to redress the lack of attention to these intersections in feminist organization studies. Grounding my argument on a brief critique of white liberal feminism from the perspective of women of colour, I examine other feminist frameworks beyond the dominant liberal paradigm and identify their possible contributions to the study of intersections in organization theory and practice. Specifically, I propose theoretical and methodological interventions for researching and practicing more forcefully and intentionally the simultaneity of race, gender and class in organizations, including researching and publicizing the hidden stories at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, class, nation and sexuality; identifying, untangling and changing the differential impact of everyday practices in organizations and identifying and linking internal organizational processes with external societal processes. I conclude with some reflections on the possible implications of these proposals for each of us, scholars and practitioners of gender and organization.

Keywords: intersections, race, gender, class, organization studies and change

The intersections of race, class and gender are an accepted reality in the fields of women studies, feminist theory and literary criticism (Bannerji, 1992; Belkhir, 2000; Bhavnani, 2001; Bredström, 2006; DuCille, 1994; Friedman, 1998; Knapp, 2005; Ludvig, 2006; McCall, 2005; Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006; Weber, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2006).[1] In fact, intersection, or intersectionality, has become such a popular subject that scholars who pioneered and contributed to its status as a topic of academic scholarship are now concerned

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about how this conceptualization has been taken up, as, for example, in the 'commodification of Black womanhood' (DuCille, 1994, p. 603) — Black women having become the preferred representative of gender and race intersections in the USA (Christian, 1987, 1989a, 1989b; Collins, 1986, 1989, 2000a; DuCille, 1994; hooks, 1984, 1989, 1994). Others argue that work at the intersections of race, class and gender is still underdeveloped (Belkhir *et al.,* 2000; Kalantzis, 1990; Meisenhelder, 2000).

In the field of organization studies and organizational change there is little evidence that the importance of these intersections is acknowledged. Few scholars, in particular in the USA, advocate the inclusion of race in mainstream organization theorizing (for exceptions see Alderfer, 1990; Alderfer and Thomas, 1988; Cox, 1990; Cox and Nkomo, 1990; Nkomo, 1992), even though the inclusion of more sophisticated perspectives on gender has gained ground (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Calás and Smircich, 1992a, 1996a, 2006; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Ely, 1999; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Ely *et al.,* 2003; Martin, 2001; Martin and Collinson, 2002; Mills and Tancred, 1992). Fewer scholars still address the intersections of race and gender (Bell and Nkomo, 1992; Bell *et al.,* 1993; Nkomo and Cox, 1989, 1996; Proudford and Smith, 2003; Turner and Shuter, 2004); race, ethnicity and gender (Ferdman, 1999) or race, class and gender (Acker, 1999a; Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Calás and Smircich, 1996b; Holvino, 1993, 1994b, 1996; Marks, 2001; Munro, 2001). In the field of organization development and change, the silence on these intersections is outstanding, even within the discourse of managing diversity (Cox, 1993; Cross *et al.,* 1994; Thomas, 1991, 1992, 1999).

Why has it been so difficult to take up the intersections of class, gender and race as a matter of course in organizational theory and practice? My point of departure is the experiences of women of colour and the women of colour's critique of white feminist theory, a critical stance with a long history of advocating and studying these intersections. I use the term 'women of colour' to focus on the commonalities among Native American, Latina, Asian and Black/African American women, who share a status and an experience as racio-ethnic minorities in the USA.

As a woman of colour born and raised in Puerto Rico, educated in the USA and practicing organization development globally, I have a personal and professional interest in the topic as 'there is no better point of entry into a critique or reflection than one's own experience' (Bannerji, 1992, p. 67). I re-member and re-deploy this critique in order to revisit organization theory and practice and draw new conclusions about its (in)ability to address all women. My purpose is to reconceptualize the intersections of race, gender and class as simultaneous processes of identity, institutional and social practice, suggesting ways in which this reconceptualization can support new theory-making, research and practice in organizational studies, including bringing to a close the modern impulse to search for a meta-narrative that attempts to integrate race, gender and class (Sacks, 1989).

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In the first section I offer a framing for these arguments. I review four themes representing the experience of women of colour and the difference that attending to these experiences has made in feminist theorizing when posing challenges to liberal feminism, whose claims — to speak for all women — had silenced, even to the present, the fundamental simultaneity of gender, race and class in work and other social processes. My own history as a woman of colour, told through the voices of others before me, is part of this framing, because there is no place where women of colour can enter that does not consider the intersections of race-ethnicity, gender and class (Giddings, 1984).

In the second section I draw from other feminist theoretical frameworks that are explicit in considering intersections of gender, race, class and beyond. I explore each of these frameworks — socialist, poststructuralist and transnational feminism — to gather their insights and identify possibilities for intersectional organizational analyses. Drawing from these insights, in the third section I propose a theoretical and a methodological intervention for researching and practicing the simultaneity of race, gender and class in organizations more forcefully and intentionally. I conclude with some reflections on possible implications of these proposals for each of us, scholars and practitioners of gender and organization.

The critique of feminism by women of colour: intersectionality's long history

As early as 1974 the Combahee River Collective recognized that the struggle of Black women was a unified struggle against race, gender and class inequality articulated in 'A black feminist statement':

> [W]e are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking … we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face. (Hull *et al.*, 1982, p. 13)

But, as Sandoval documents, a hegemonic feminist theory based on the experience of white women had developed. This theory, liberal feminism, suppressed, intentionally or not, the theorizing and practice of women of colour and the recognition of the contributions of 'an original, eccentric and coalitional cohort of U.S. feminists of color' (2000, p. 42). One outcome of both 'first wave' US feminisms in the 19th century and the 'second wave' women's movement, which grew during the 1970s and 1980s, was that women of colour were rendered invisible and their concerns and experiences were disappeared. Barbara Smith (Smith and Mansbridge, 2000, p. 32) points to a

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variety of factors that contributed to feminism becoming 'all white': a lack of consciousness in white women's organizations, fears of breaking ranks in the Black community, the lack of support for Black lesbian leadership and political conservatism, which weakened the power of Black feminism.

Important differences between white women and women of colour's theories emerged, which led to different paths in the theorizing and practice of gender at the intersection of race and class. The scholarship documenting these differences is extensive, particularly from Black and Chicana feminists (Collins, 1986, 1989, 2000a; Garcia, 1989; Hull *et al.*, 1982; King, 1988; Sandoval, 2000; Walker, 1983). While some, in particular socialist feminists, tried to respond to this critique, the white feminist movement overall failed to successfully address it (Breines, 2002). This failure, in turn, overdetermined the lack of attention to the intersections of race, class and gender in organizational theory and research, even when feminist analyses have been deployed, for most of these analyses were drawn from white women's feminist theorizing. Below I summarize four themes articulating major differences between white women and women of colour theorizing — 'the signs of a lived experience of difference' (Sandoval, 2000, p. 46).

A different consciousness and a different way of knowing

The distinctive set of experiences that arise from their political and economic status — living in the interstices of complex subordinate positions on dimensions of race, gender and class — create the conditions of possibility for a 'different standpoint' for women of colour (Collins, 1989, 2000a): not white, not male, not economically privileged — an 'in between'. Others have referred to this unique perspective of women of colour as a third gender category (Sandoval, 1991), multiple consciousness (King, 1988), triple jeopardy (Ward, 2004), oppositional consciousness (Sandoval, 1991, 2000), *mestiza* and borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), a bridge (Rushin, 1981), a crossroads (Rojas, 1989) and interstitial feminism (Pérez, 1999).

I liken this position to a kind of belonging and not belonging, a 'both/and' orientation that allows women of colour to be members of a particular group (of colour, women) and at the same time stand apart from it as the 'outsider within' (Collins, 1986, p. 40). Hurtado calls it a

> shifting consciousness … the ability of many women of colour to shift from one group's perception of social reality to another and at times, to be able simultaneously to perceive multiple social realities without losing their sense of self-coherence. (1996b, p. 384)

This position, in turn, creates a specific relationship to knowledge and knowledge production. It is informed by knowledge that expresses and validates oppression, while, at the same time, it also documents and encourages resistance to oppression (Collins, 2000b; Hurtado, 1996b). This places women of

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colour in a unique position to document 'the maneuvers necessary to obtain and generate knowledge … [a] unique knowledge that can be gleaned from the interstices of multiple and stigmatized social identities' (Hurtado, 1996b, p. 375). 'Successful marginality' (p. 376) gets converted into knowledge by various mechanisms: learning to use anger appropriately; finding a voice in a balancing act between silence and outspokenness; gaining strength by withdrawing from men; tactically shifting one's consciousness to interpret the world from multiple identities and expressing oneself in multiple tongues with the ability to talk to different audiences and in different genres (Hurtado, 1996b).

Theory itself comes to be questioned, partly as a challenge to the apparatus and institutions of theory-making that silence the perspective of women of colour (Christian, 1987; Crenshaw, 1991; DuCille, 1994) and partly as a way of connecting to their communities of origin, which are in many instances working class and non-academic (hooks, 2000). Feminist writing by women of colour is different in style and content. For example, there is a mixing of different genres such as poetry, critical essays, short stories, letters, memoirs, and the production of knowledge itself is less tied to the academy (Lorde, 1984; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981/1983; Morales, 1998). The call is to create theory that uses 'race, class, gender, and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders [and] blur boundaries — new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods' (Anzaldúa, 1990, pp. xxv–xxvi).

Women of colour have always worked

African American, Asian, Latina and other women of colour have always worked and been seen as workers. African American domestic servants, Chinese immigrants sold as prostitutes, Puerto Rican union organizers in the early 1900s, slavery, indentured, agricultural, factory work and low paying work are just a few examples (Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Collins, 2000a; DuBois and Ruiz, 1990; Glenn, 1985; Higginbotham and Romero, 1997; Segura, 1989). Thus, for many women of colour, white feminism's division between a public and a private sphere does not represent their reality. For example, the demands by white feminists to have the role of housewife in the private sphere recognized and to gain access to work in the public sphere (outside the home) have not been a priority for women of colour. On the contrary, being able to stay at home and being supported by a husband's paycheck is considered a luxury that only affluent white women have (Glenn, 1988; Romero, 1992, 1997a; Williams, 2000). Instead, women of colour's demands have focused on improving their working conditions and opportunities, as they have been generally confined to secondary labour markets and to positions at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. After World War II, for example, Black women experienced economic gains even when they were employed in the worst paid jobs in the war industry and in the more

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dangerous and monotonous jobs in factories and offices that white women rejected. These new jobs allowed them to leave the world of domestic service and increase their autonomy and wages (Amott and Matthaei, 1991).

Another illustration of the different relationships that white women and women of colour have to their material and economic realities is the complex interaction between paid and unpaid work in the lives of women of colour and how it plays out in their communities. For example, because poor and working class women of colour do not have the same political and economic means as white middle-class women, their reproductive labour frequently extends outside the boundaries of the nuclear family into the larger community — the 'third shift' (Romero, 1997b, p. 241). Community work becomes, for many women of colour, a way of meeting a variety of needs for the welfare and safety of their families such as sharing resources, improving inadequate public services and accessing networks for paid work. But because conceptualizations of 'community work', 'volunteerism' and 'activism' have been dominated by the circumstances and experience of middle class and affluent white women, the leadership roles, contributions and reasons for engaging in community work of working class women of colour have often been relegated and remained unexplored (Hardy-Fanta, 1993; Pardo, 1997).

This different relationship to the material world also produces a different way of thinking, because there is a 'connection between what one does and how one thinks' (Collins, 1989, p. 748).

> If you eats these dinners and don't cook 'em, if you wears these clothes and don't buy or iron them, then you might start thinking that the fairy or some spirit did all that.… Black folks don't have no time to be thinking like that (John Langston Gwaltney, in Collins, 1989, pp. 748–9).

Because of the prevalence of people of colour in lower echelon jobs, which restricts their economic opportunities and status, it is difficult to clearly separate the racial story from the class story in the lives of women of colour. The experience of class for women of colour is not separate, but an integral part of their experience of race and gender and vice versa. As DuBois and Ruiz (1990, p. xiii) remind us, the 'history of women cannot be studied without considering both race and class … [and] working-class culture cannot really be understood without reference to gender and race'.

Men are not the enemy and family is not necessarily the problem

The role of the family in sustaining women of colour against racism has meant that women of colour do not define men as the oppressor and do not experience family as the most oppressive institution in their lives. While many women of colour critique the nuclear family and its patriarchal and heterosexual structure and ideologies, Black women and Latinas have also come to regard the family as a space where the values of their community are

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transmitted and strategies to survive a racist system are taught. Instead of being experienced as oppressive, family is experienced as a haven from the hostile environment of work and society, sometimes even serving as a support system that contributes to their upward mobility (Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Higginbotham and Weber, 1992; Romero, 1997b).

The experience of racism also leads many women of colour to prioritize race as the starting point of their self-definition and social position, as white racism treats 'all Blacks alike'. Thus, women of colour join men of colour in one anti-racist struggle of survival and social change. Furthermore, because race and class are frequently conflated, as when the term 'Black welfare mother' is used to signify all Black women, women of colour may struggle against racism, even if it means relegating gender issues (Jones and Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Reynolds, 1997). The relationship between women and men of colour is 'the area in which feminists of colour have made fewer inroads … because intergroup ethnic/racial conflict creates the need for little-questioned solidarity in order to survive' (Hurtado, 1996b, p. 381). Many Latin American, African and other 'Third World' women have chosen to identify first with liberation and anti-imperialistic struggles, joining in solidarity with men against a common oppressor, rather than seeing essentialized men as their oppressor. 'We are fighting for our people; they [white women] are fighting for their individual rights' (Méndez-Negrete, 1999, p. 40). This unique experience, in between 'woman' and 'of colour,' fighting racism and sexism, provides an opportunity for women of colour to reconfigure their subjectivity in relation to a multiplicity of others and 'not just white men' (Alarcón, 1990; Breines, 2002; Harnois, 2005).

White women are privileged too

Many white women, especially middle-class and affluent white women, have enjoyed the freedom to pursue professional opportunities because women of colour, in their roles as workers, have looked after their homes and their children. In these situations, white women have openly exploited women of colour as domestic workers and organizational assistants. They have used their racial and class privilege to sustain their social power and status and diminish the identity, social position and options of working class women of colour (Glenn, 1986; Hochschild, 2000; Reynolds, 1997; Rollins, 1985). In organizations, this 'special place for white women only' translates into a tendency by white women to collaborate with white privilege and white men, while women of colour oppose it and confront them (Brazaitis, 2004; Frost, 1980). Working class women's demands for equality, on the other hand, are tempered by their greater fear of family instability and potential poverty in divorce.

White women have also benefited from their whiteness in a racist and heterosexist system. For example, by virtue of being the desirable mothers of

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the white man's progeny, a group dynamic unfolds where white men relate to white women through 'seduction' and to women of colour through 'rejection' (Hurtado, 1989, 1996a). While white women's femininity is exalted and their virginity protected, women of colour's sexuality is demonized and their femininity degraded or exoticized (Carby, 1985; Hurtado, 1999; Lu, 1997; Smith, 1989, 1990). Christensen (1997) explores how this positioning of white women in relation to white men hinders their ability to engage in anti-racist and class struggles, as many white heterosexual women's middle and affluent class status is a product of the privileges derived from their relation to their fathers, husbands, lovers and organizational male mentors. Affluent white heterosexual women may collude with white men in the private sphere while fighting the 'male oppressor' in the public one. They 'feel so free to attack "their" men' because of their relationship to white men in powerful social positions (Williams, 2000, p. 170). By contrast, white lesbians and lesbians of colour, because of their lack of alignment with heterosexist privilege, are less likely to participate in the dynamics of seduction and have been able to forge alliances with women of colour out of this different relation with white men (Hurtado, 1999).

I have reviewed some significant differences in how women of colour and white women have experienced and understood their feminisms because of the way they have attended (or not) to the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality. Yet, in spite of this critique and the contributions of women of colour to understanding the complexity of gender in its racialized, classed and sexual dimensions, a liberal white feminist paradigm continues to dominate organizational research (Ely, 1999). For example, the emphasis on women managers dominant in this literature continues to focus on achieving individual rights for women, privileging gender over race, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of difference.

Furthermore, the liberal feminist paradigm in organization studies has extrapolated the experience of certain white, middle-class, heterosexual women to all women, so that issues that mostly impacted on them, such as barriers to advancement due to problems of work–family balance become normative and assumed to be central problems for most women in organizations (Calás and Smircich, 2006). This 'whitewash dilemma' has characterized women in management and women's leadership research in particular (Betters-Reed and Moore, 1995, p. 24), while in the organization change literature it has translated into a change agenda of equal access and opportunities for women where men are the standard, leaving unchallenged dominant cultural assumptions such as hierarchy, meritocracy and individualism that reproduce inequality and oppression.

Even when the radical/cultural critique surfaced within feminism in the 1970s and later on influenced some organizational literature, its focus on universal patriarchy as the primary structure of women's oppression limited our ability to account for the concrete ways in which race, sexuality and class,

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differentiate the experience and the situation of diverse women in organizations. Moreover, despite radical feminism's goal of eliminating inequality more generally, privileged white women's voices continued to dominate organizational discourse (Calás and Smircich, 2006; Calvert and Ramsey, 1992, 1996).

Alternatives to the liberal framework: the contribution of other feminist theories

In this section, I explore other feminist theoretical frameworks — socialist, poststructuralist and transnational — and assess their possible contributions for addressing the intersections of race, gender and class in organizational theory and practice. My summaries do not capture the richness and complexity of each framework; others have already done that work (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Bulbeck, 1998; Calás and Smircich, 1996a, 2006; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Ferguson, n.d.; Jaggar, 1983; Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1978; Martin, 2003; Sandoval, 2000; Tong, 1989). My purpose rather is to highlight the possibilities that these theories open up for intersectional analyses because they already contain, implicitly or explicitly, conceptualizations of these intersections.

Considering these frameworks historically, it is no surprise that the moment has arrived for the voices of women of colour to be heard, for more people in the world have been claiming recognition and gender theorization has increasingly addressed these claims. Yet, the often-assumed novelty of intersectionalities notwithstanding, we must remember that it has been a slow road for those who since the 1970s advocated an integration of the intersections of race, gender, class and sexual orientation in feminist theory and practice. The early works just discussed were grounded in the material and experiential analyses of women of colour situations, regardless of identification with specific feminist frameworks (Alarcón, 1990; Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Anzaldúa and Keating, 2002; Brewer, 1993; Crenshaw, 1991; Hurtado, 1996a, 2003; King, 1988; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2003; Lugones and Spelman, 1983; Mohanty, 1991a, 1991b, 2003b; Smith, 1999; Springer, 2001). Their early impetus gave way to many concerns in socialist feminism and is well represented in more recent transnational feminist theorizing.

Socialist feminism understands class, race, gender and sexuality as interlocking roots of inequality (Jaggar, 1983; Wong, 1991) or interrelated processes of women's oppression (Acker, 1999b, 2006; Tong, 1989). By paying attention to both patriarchy and capitalism as related structures of domination, it emphasizes that structural, material and historical processes must be studied in their complexity and in their various manifestations, leading to a

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multi-issue feminism with the goal of restructuring organizations for all, not just for women.

The sexual division of labour characteristic of capitalist society is seen as a fundamental pillar of women's oppression, including the gender structure of the labour market that positions men and women in different jobs, different industries, with different salaries and in unequal sex-based patterns of employment and sex-segregated workplaces (Barber, 1992; Hartmann, 1987; Reskin and Roos, 1987). But these patterns are also reproduced between different groups of women. For example, comparative studies of women in different jobs, industries and organizational levels reveal patterns of occupational segregation and wage inequality in which women of colour predominate in the lower paid positions and white women in the managerial, higher paid jobs (Acker, 2004; Browne, 2000; Glenn, 2001).

Gender is seen as a historically determined difference that can never be studied in isolation from other social processes such as race, ethnicity and class. This historical specificity has contributed to understanding the different experiences of women of various races, ethnicities and classes and how the structure of work has impacted on women and men differentially through time (Amott and Matthaei, 1991). For example, Scherzer (2003) analyses nursing as a key site to examine the intersection of race, gender and class. Her historical account of the disciplinary practices that created nursing as a raced and classed stratified type of 'women work' shows how these interacting processes not only shape the occupational structure of nursing and nurse's identities, but also create conflicts and inequalities between different groups of nursing workers. Her analysis confirms that gender is raced and classed and that these processes are accomplished through concrete practices that are never independent of each other but always organizationally and historically specific.

Particular attention has been given to documenting and analysing the experience of white working women such as waitresses and cleaning women (Ehrenreich, 1999, 2001; Paules, 1991) and of women of colour's work as 'domestics' (Glenn, 1985, 1986, 1988, 2001; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992, 1997a). These studies reveal, once again, important differences between white and women of colour. While domestic service provided white women with opportunities for mobility into other occupations, domestic service for women of colour 'has been an occupational ghetto' (Glenn, 1988, p. 57). Asian, Latina and Black women have struggled nonetheless to redefine this occupation, which typifies pre-industrial work, hard physical labour and degraded status, in order to find some semblance of autonomy, control and dignity (Glenn, 2001; Romero, 1997a).

In general, there are two major contributions that socialist feminism makes to the study of intersections of race, gender and class in organizations: firstly, it focuses on class as an important dimension of differences and of unequal relations of power among women; and secondly, it incorporates concrete

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accounts of women of different races, ethnicities and classes in work organizations. However, despite socialist feminism's strong advocacy for addressing intersections of race, class and gender, developing a way to frame organizational research from these simultaneous processes has been more elusive (Acker, 1999a, 1999b, 2006). Acker (2006) examines this problematic in detail and argues for a reconceptualization of class as gendered and racialized processes, to be studied in its concrete practices in an economy that includes production, reproduction, distribution and unpaid labour. Thus, when studying the intersections of race, gender and class in organizations from a socialist feminist framework, we must ask questions such as: 'who cleans for the cleaning lady who cleans for the managerial woman and how did it come to be that way?' (Scully and Holvino, 1999).

Poststructuralist feminism. Many feminist appropriations of poststructuralism emphasize language, textual analysis, theory-making and the discourses that constitute men and women as different — the 'other' of a discursive, binary pair. Yet some argue that gender analyses must not only take into account the subjective and symbolic dimensions of gender, but also its material and structural implications 'because it is through discourse that material power is exercised and that power relations are established and perpetuated' (Gavey, 1997, p. 54). Thus, gender is understood both as a category of analysis and a social relation of domination that is historically produced and always specific (Flax, 1987; Scott, 1988).

More interested in the accomplishment of particular subjectivities than in any essential propert(ies), a feminist poststructuralist analysis would explore intersectionalities of race, gender, class and sexualities, as the ever-mobile intersections are constituted and replicate classed, gendered, racialized and sexualized subjectivities and arrangements. Such an approach to studying intersections brings us to examining how gender constructions and performances may be different along dimensions of race, class, ethnicity and sexual identity and to what effect (Ahmed, 2004; hooks, 1990; Salih, 2004; Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2006). It would also have us read how these different identities are understood, produced, performed and 'mutually construct one another', when arriving at intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality (Collins, 2000b, p. 156).

While a focus on gender has dominated poststructuralist feminist appropriations in organizational studies (Calás and Smircich, 1992b, 1993; Martin, 1990; Metcalfe and Linstead, 2003), some have also paid attention to representations of race and gender in the organizational literature. For example, representations of Latinas and Asian women as docile and manually agile, justifying the belief that they make good factory workers and 'poor' managers, have been analysed (Calás, 1992; Holvino, 1993). These images are in stark contrast with images of white women managers perceived as innocent, feminine, bright and driven (Brazaitis, 2004; Morrison, 1987) or of Black women

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managers perceived as strong, self-sufficient and care-taking (Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Dumas, 1985). Others have focused on the accomplishment of masculinities, including its classed and racialized aspects, in the daily interactions and micro-practices of organizations. These studies demonstrate that gender identities of organizational actors are shifting and contradictory (Cheng, 1996; Gonzalez, 1996; Mirandé, 1997; Stecopoulos and Uebel, 1997).

Altogether, a poststructuralist feminist framework makes three important contributions to studying the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality in organizations. Firstly, it leads to an understanding of subjectivities in organizations as multiple, unstable and inessential (Gamson and Moon, 2004). Secondly, in analyses of representations, it offers a detailed description and critique of dominant organizational practices in relation to their raced, classed and gendered discourses and knowledge effects. It also reveals the creation of alternative spaces for other ways of thinking and doing organizations that flow from deconstructing the written and the social text. Thirdly, it calls for the researcher's reflexive stance, which demands that those involved in studying intersectionalities problematize their own social location at the intersection about which they seek to produce knowledge (Lykes, 1997).

Transnational/postcolonial/'Third World' feminisms consolidate, redeploy and expand the important critique of white feminism by women of colour, restating their insistence on the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality, as reviewed earlier here, but also going beyond these. Specifically, these analyses have emerged out of disruptions and complex oppositions to other social change movements, such as national liberation movements dominated by men; feminist movements dominated by white western women; Eurocentric academic discourses that privilege theory over activism; movements that privilege heterosexuality; and Marxist analyses of class that make invisible women of colour and non-western women (Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Hurtado, 2000; Mohanty, 1991b, 2003b; Narayan and Harding, 2000).

Thus, postcolonial/transnational feminisms, now embraced both by Third and First World feminists, bring us to the present. In particular, the urgency and importance of a transnational feminist framework comes to the fore in the context of globalization. Women throughout the world consider a need for organizing and building alliances based on recognizing and theorizing their differences, not only their similarities, and thus going beyond the naive global sisterhood of the 1960s and the global feminism of the 1990s (Mendoza, 2002).

From these perspectives, gender, class, race, sexuality and nation are seen as complex social processes and discursive constructions that need to be challenged at the same time that they are strategically deployed to question dominant western paradigms (Mohanty, 2003a; Spivak, 1988, 1990). These analyses take further the socialist and poststructuralist feminist attention to

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the historically and contextually specific material and discursive practices, to include nation, ethnicity and culture as important axes of study.

One of the major contributions of transnational feminists is to study the role of the state in circumscribing the daily lives and survival struggles of women of colour, which reveals its co-implication as an important institution in a complex nexus of power and domination that is gendered, patriarchal, racialized and (hetero)sexualized (Mendoza, 2002; Mohanty, 1997). Additive models captured in arithmetic metaphors like 'double oppression' and 'multiple jeopardy' (King, 1988) give way to more nuanced images like a 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 2000a; Martinez, 2000), 'border crossing' (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Mendez and Wolf, 2001) and 'cross-border' existence (Hurtado, 1999). These metaphors signal an attempt to dismantle hierarchies of oppression and instead articulate and explore complex positionalities and contradictory subjectivities.

Altogether, theorizing the intersections of race, gender and class is at the core of postcolonial/transnational feminism in the following important ways: a focus on the simultaneity of oppressions; a goal of understanding and rewriting history from the social locations of women of colour; a recognition and interest in women of colour's agency; attention to the role of the state and the interrelations between colonialism, racism and gender in women of colour's lives and a recognition of the importance and difficulty of forging women's alliances for change (Mohanty, 1991a; Otis, 2001; Sampaio, 2004). Emerging, thus, from within this matrix of gendered, racialized, sexualized and international relations of power, as well as from the experiences and perspectives of women of colour in the context of a new global capitalism, I explore three potential contributions of transnational/postcolonial feminism to the study of the intersections of race, gender and class in organizations.

Firstly, race, gender and class are embedded in other social and complex relations that include the nation-state and sexuality (Briggs, 1998; Holvino, 2003; Kempadoo, 2001; Mendoza, 2002; Mir *et al.*, 1999). More than ever, today these relations are global, making necessary a specific goal of postcolonial feminism to study the processes of colonization and globalization and their differential impact on women and men in developed and developing countries. For example, the loss of income for women in North Carolina has much to do with globalization processes in the textile industry such as moving off-shore jobs to cheap labour capitals like Tegucigalpa. Simultaneously, moving jobs off-shore creates limited opportunities for young Honduran women while displacing local men from work. These decisions are made in corporate boardrooms composed mostly of white men and executed by white women executives breaking glass ceilings in the USA and other multinational headquarters, who are themselves suffering from the stress of balancing work and childcare needs. Filipina and other migrant women end up working for these people to relieve the care deficit needs in the First World and to the detriment of their own children and families in the Third (Acker,

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2004; Adler and Izraeli, 1994; Calás and Smircich, 1993; Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2002; Wichterich, 2000). In this way, there is no separation between domestic and global struggles and processes and how they manifest themselves in different aspects of organizational life (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994).

Secondly, race, gender, class, nation and sexuality are recognized as sites of heterogeneous subject positions and complex and shifting dimensions of individual and collective identity. For example, in their study of narratives of migrant women in hotel work, Adib and Guerrier (2003) illustrate how interactions and identities are complicated when the 'interlocking (p. 413) of gender with nationality, race, ethnicity and class' is considered. Studying the implications of these complex positionalities allows for reconceptualizing coalition-building across diverse national, gender and racial groups for organizational change (Barvosa-Carter, 1999; Ferguson, 1998; Kurtz, 2002).

Thirdly, it is especially important to resist constructions about 'the other' that represent them as victims without agency (Calás and Smircich, 1999; Mohanty, 2003a). Intersections of race, gender and class are embodied in postcolonial subjects; those who have been traditionally silenced and relegated speak back, affirming their own agency and representing themselves beyond the traditional disempowering images of the so-called 'oppressed,' thus, it is important to study resistance, survival and agency, not just victimization and oppression (Chio, 2005; Ong; 1987; Zavella, 1987). Further, those who claim to represent and speak for others, that is, organizational scholars, must re-examine our/their constructions of 'the other' to reveal, reflexively, what these constructions say about ourselves/themselves. Race, class, gender, nation and so on are indeed present in our own dominant scholarly voices (Briggs, 1998; Calás, 1992; Henry and Pringle, 1996; Holvino and Scully, 2001; Khan, 2005).

Moving forward to address the simultaneity of race, gender and class in organizations

I draw from the different feminist theories reviewed in the previous section in what Hurtado calls 'relational dovetailing' where, instead of 'taking-apart in an adversarial mode we make knowledge by bringing-together in a politically conscious way' (personal communication 22 February 2001) and suggest a strategic deployment of these multiple feminist frameworks to advance the study of the simultaneity of race, gender and class in organizations. Also referred to as 'tactical subjectivity' (Sandoval, 2000, p. 59) and 'complementary theorizing' (Holland, in DuCille, 1994, p. 624), my point is to use the socialist, poststructuralist and transnational frameworks as 'tactics for intervening in and transforming social relations' in organizations (Sandoval, 2000, p. 62).

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Firstly, as a theoretical intervention, I suggest, a reconceptualization of gender, class and race as simultaneous processes of identity, institutional and social practice. By processes of identity practice, I mean the ways in which race, gender and class produce and reproduce particular identities that define how individuals come to see themselves and how others see them in organizations. These practices cover the gamut from well-studied early socialization practices to more pervasive societal discourses like the cult of domesticity of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which defined a particular identity for white middle-class women centred on wifehood and motherhood. In contrast, the identity of working class women of colour was constructed as less than, supporting, for instance, their roles as domestic servants (Glenn, 2001).

By processes of institutional practice, I mean the ways in which race, gender and class relations and stratification are built into organizational structures, processes and ways of working, which seem normal at the same time that they produce and reproduce particular relations of inequality and privilege. We can further analyse domestic service as a particular type of institution with a particular set of interactions between the domestic worker and her employer, a clear division of labour, poor wages and a set of practices sustained by the lack of societal regulation of that institution (Glenn, 1985, 1986, 1988, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, 2002; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992, 1997a).

By processes of social practice, I mean the ways in which societal structures, beliefs and ways of engaging at the societal level produce and reproduce inequalities in organizations along the axes of race, class and gender. Analyses of reproductive labour illuminate the complex interrelation between domestic and global market forces that result in a transnational division of the labour of care along lines of race, gender, class, ethnicity and nationality (Glenn, 2001; Parreñas, 2002). These processes need to be studied in a double move that breaks them apart and specifies them at the same time that it connects and articulates their relatedness.

Secondly, as a general methodological intervention, I suggest that the simultaneity of race, class and gender, my point of departure, be expanded to include ethnicity, sexuality and nation in organizational analyses for, as transnational feminism helps to articulate them, the explanatory value of these categories in today's organizations can no longer be ignored. While the multiplicity of processes of identity, institutional and social practice, their fluidity and their local and translocal links complicate the study of intersectionality, simplification is no longer an alternative. In fact, beyond theoretical and methodological implications there are also political implications in the institutional practices of theorizing and practicing organization studies and organizational change. Yet, difficulties notwithstanding, I propose three specific interventions for doing (analysing and practicing) simultaneity in organizations:

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Researching and publicizing the hidden stories at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity and nation

Telling the stories and articulating the narratives of organizational actors across different axes of power and identity practices is an important intervention for changing dominant organizational discourses because it brings to light alternative narratives that seldom find their way into mainstream accounts and organizational mythologies (Calás and Smircich, 1999; Ely and Meyerson, 2000). One purpose of this intervention is to help change dominant organizational narratives that privilege the experience of white men and women and construct organizations within the liberal paradigm of maleness, heterosexism, whiteness and western-ness. These are narratives that construct and reproduce particular kinds of identities with particular relations and access to power.

For example, Bell and Nkomo's (2001) in-depth stories of white and Black women's narratives in corporations reveal important differences in how the two groups learn and experience race: while white women learn to keep their distance from Blacks, to be 'colour blind,' and to exhibit the appropriate etiquette when in the presence of Blacks, Black women learn to arm themselves psychologically in order to be respectable, to buffer themselves from racism and to develop courage. As they advance into management positions, the women bring these different attitudes into every aspect of their work, from whom they confide in and talk to, to the judgments they make about others' competence, to how they negotiate their own careers and leadership roles. But Bell and Nkomo do not go far enough in exploring simultaneity, choosing to bring to the fore race and gender while understudying the role of class, nation and sexuality in their subjects' narratives. Reynolds (1997), on the other hand, calls for Black women researchers to stop inquiring about the differences between white and Black women and to start addressing the differences and diversity among Black women. This requires that researchers find ways to continuously shift and articulate these various differences instead of foregrounding one or the other (Buitelaar, 2006; McCall, 2005).

Considering another axis of power, Ostrander (1984) provides us with rich narratives of upper-class women. These narratives contribute to understanding the simultaneity of race, class and gender as experienced in the dominance of white affluent women. They remind us that the simultaneity of class, race and gender lives also in white women (DuCille, 1994; Ely, 1995; Hearn, 1996). But this requires that accounts of women managers also make visible their class and sexual locations, instead of just presenting them as 'women managers' (Marshall, 1989, 1993, 1995; Morrison, 1987; Ruderman and Ohlott, 2002).

A second purpose of telling these more complex stories is to help change the experience that organizational members have of each other across dimensions of difference from that of a 'generalized other' to a 'concrete other'

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(Benhabib, 1992; Cobb, 2000; Hurtado, 1999). 'Women's first place of identity and political awareness is the body', says Harcourt (2001, p. 204). Seeing and working at the intersection of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and nation allows for the specificity of concrete bodies and histories to enter and begin reshaping organizational theory and practice. Hegemonic, one-dimensional and essentialized identities produced and reproduced through social and organizational practices can be disrupted by the collection and dissemination of these differentiated stories and narratives that focus on the complexity of identity-subjectivities and practices.

Identifying and untangling the differential and material impact of everyday practices in organizations

Because 'women' is not a universal experience or category, we must identify, untangle and suggest interventions to change the differential impact that everyday practices have for different women in different types of organizations. An even more focused and differentiated analysis is needed so that the complex experience of the simultaneity of race, ethnicity and class can be understood (McCall, 2005; Smith, 1995). This type of analysis focuses on institutional practices, how they create power and material advantages and disadvantages for different groups and how these practices are reinforced by and relate to specific symbolic and discursive organizational processes.

For example, Munro (2001) explores how Asian women have specific interests in the workplace based on the structuring and restructuring of ancillary hospital work through hierarchical grading with women at the bottom in part-time jobs, and through specific work practices that favour white women assignments in the tasks of direct public contact and men in the tasks that require strength, and relegate Asian women to the invisible and 'dirty' hospital tasks of cleaning bathrooms. Ignored by the union, these practices contradict the union's own agenda of proportionality, fair representation and self-organization, intended to include all workers. As Munro indicates,

> Any attempt to define workplace interests from an over-generalized analysis of the labour market will run the risk of missing the specific way in which class, gender and race interconnect in particular workplaces. (2001, p. 468)

To these effects, Acker suggests that we study regimes of inequality — 'the historically specific patterns of race, gender, and class relations within particular organizations' through case studies that shed light on the differential impact that class and race have on men and women (2006, p. 109). She enumerates various forms in which these patterns can be made visible through detailed descriptions of the characteristics of the inequality regimes

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in a specific organization by analysing the dimension(s) of inequality which constitute the regime, the (in)visibility of these patterns and their legitimacy and the practices and structures by which the inequality patterns are organizationally sustained (Acker, 1999b, 2006).

Identifying and connecting internal organizational processes with external and seemingly unrelated societal processes to understand organizational dynamics within a broader social context and change agenda

This intervention focuses on articulating as social practices, the relations between organizational processes and their broader social, material and historical context. This, in turn, helps develop theory-practice within a larger social justice agenda. Today, the social context is global and transnational, making it imperative to map the 'relations of ruling' among different stakeholders in a global system of work and capital (Mohanty, 2003a, pp. 56–8).

The changing roles of Latinos and Latinas, who make up the majority of the workforce in the *maquiladora* industry along the US–Mexican border, is a case in point. As the workforce reconfigures due to globalization few men make gains as technicians and professionals, while many more jobs previously associated with female employment at lower levels in the hierarchy go to both men and women (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994; Holvino, 1994a). These changing roles between men and women create dilemmas that show up in the workplaces, households and communities of these workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Williams, 1988). Without an analysis of this social context — the relationship between the 'outside and the inside' — and how these relations support and hinder change, organizational change interventions are likely to have very limited impact.

Locating organizations and their actors in their particular social contexts may also require explicating how that context and history show up in everyday practices (Bredström, 2006; Britton, 2000; Chesler and Moldenhauer-Salazar, 1998; Marks, 1999; Meisenhelder, 2000). For example, Mendez and Wolf (2001) engage in this type of analysis by reflecting on their experience as directors of an academic feminist programme that brought 'Third World' women activists as interns to the USA. They found that, despite their progressive agenda and best feminist intentions, neo-colonial relations exerted a major impact on the programme, reproducing unequal power relations among participants and replicating organizational micro-practices that manifested and fed such inequality. Much can be learned from the experience in other countries, and especially the experience in so-called 'Third World' countries, where more comprehensive analyses of interactions between the social/societal context and internal organizational dynamics of change are

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facilitated by the context itself (Cock and Bernstein, 1988; Marks, 1999, 2001; Seidman, 1999). Dorothy Smith's (1987) institutional ethnographies also contribute methodologically to these efforts (Chio, 2005).

Some concluding thoughts from my intersectional location

Since my first publication on simultaneity in 1994b, there is much work now, especially in Europe, which supports incorporating a simultaneity perspective in organizational studies. Named by others as intersectionality, intersections, or multiracial feminist theory (Brewer *et al.,* 2002; Harnois, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Weber, 2001; Zinn *et al.,* 2005), together we argue that a perspective that analyses race, gender, ethnicity, class, nationality and sexuality as simultaneous processes of identity, institutional and social practice, brings more complete and accurate analyses, as well as better organizational and policy change applications.

But, as much as I would like to think that, as a woman of colour, I am (like other women of colour) uniquely positioned to do this work, claiming an advantageous standpoint from which to do simultaneity research and practice, it is also clear that we are the less powerful in universities and have less access to research institutions and funds. At the same time, in the minority communities we seek to represent, we are usually less trusted or credited, as we are seen as 'not one of them' in our own shifting class status and identities (Khan, 2005; Mohanty, 2003a). Our 'outsider within' status is thus not such an advantage, for our knowledge production becomes suspect when we are caught in between the power relations of our disciplines, research institutions and academic practices and the communities and women we seek to give voice to through our research. Our privileged position at the intersections is easily transformed into a deficit, making working the simultaneity of racio-enthnicity, gender, class, nationality and sexuality a much more difficult and less likely enterprise (Collins, 2000a; Smith, 1999).

And while I would like to call for all organizational studies to be all the time articulated through an intersectional analysis and practice, many practical questions and paradoxes remain. For example, how do researchers gain funders' interest in the narratives and stories of those who traditionally have been left out, for who is interested in these other narratives, especially since one of the dynamics of dominance is to silence other voices? Or how do we answer the inevitable argument that 'there are always going to be voices excluded and marginalized', which stops exploration of the many variations of 'the dominant' and 'the suppressed' in particular contexts? And how do we encourage and 'raise the bar' for those who are dominant in various dimensions of difference, in a challenge to do research that acknowledges their own simultaneity? And further, how do we engage in inter-disciplinary work

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across even greater boundaries beyond organization studies to include the review of and serious engagement with both academic feminist and social change activist journals, where most of the current and rich work on simultaneity can be found?

These reflections bring strength to my realization that 'Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar' 'Wayfarer, there is no way, you make a way by walking' (Machado, 1979). Thus, I hope that as I keep on walking, I'll be joined by others. Together we can continue to broaden the intersectional path in organization studies.

Note

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