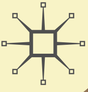

GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES
IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Gender, Considered

Feminist Reflections Across the US Social Sciences

Edited by
Sarah Fenstermaker
Abigail Stewart

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Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences

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Editors

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To all our feminist colleagues in the social sciences

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1

Introduction

Sarah Fenstermaker and Abigail J. Stewart

Like many academic undertakings, this volume is the result of lunch. In 2012, hoping for a post-retirement adventure, Sarah accepted the position of Director of the University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender, where Abby served as a founding director in the mid-1990s. We became close colleagues in the short five years that Sarah spent in Ann Arbor. At lunch in late 2017, we were anticipating Sarah's return to Santa Barbara. In the hope of sustaining the relationship that had deepened over that short time, Sarah said, "We should do something together."

We might have predicted a successful collaboration as we have many things in common: we were born within two weeks of each other; we were inhabitants of a long-ago cohort of feminist scholars who began as institutional tokens and as more and more women joined the academy, ended up contributing to the re-shaping of our disciplines and

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institutions; we were both active in developing Women's Studies departments and promoting multi-disciplinarity in our own research and in the classroom; we both had appointments in Women's Studies as well as in our social science disciplines. More than that, we saw the world in much the same way, surprising ourselves at how quickly—and how often—we agreed with one another.

At our next lunch, we developed the idea of a book that would assemble accomplished US feminist social science scholars to reflect on gender and its impact on their own research, as well as their own contributions to their discipline's approach to gender. We anticipated that many of our contributors would comment on changes in their disciplines over time, often with those changes the result of new feminist sensibilities and intellectual projects unimagined even a decade ago. In our volume prospectus, we wrote, "We imagine that each contribution will represent a unique 'take' on gender, inflected both by attention to the development of gender as an organizing analytic category within a discipline, and by the choices made in each contributor's feminist scholarship." Beyond that, we were eager to see the different ways our contributors approached their reflections; we believed it would be a great strength of the volume to see the range of ideas that would emerge from a relative lack of intellectual constraint.

As this volume represents a stroll through American social sciences, the inclusion of particular disciplines is largely self-evident. However, two disciplines deserve brief comment. At the University of Michigan, and for a long while, both history and psychology have been designated social sciences. At the University of California, Santa Barbara, history is included in the humanities and psychology in the natural sciences. We quickly agreed that insofar as both of these disciplinary practices privilege the empirical investigation of social life, they, along with their sister disciplines, should be represented in the volume. The reader will note that within the volume there is a diversity that is not only biographical, including variation in the entry of a scholar's cohort into academic life, but also in the specific sub- and inter-disciplines in which many of our contributors locate themselves. These include Women's Studies, American Studies, Disability Studies, Transgender Studies, and Middle Eastern Studies. Even so, social scientists all.

It is possible that there was some mystical, "right" way to arrange the chapters, but we could never divine it. We only knew we didn't want to simply march the reader through each social science discipline in alphabetical order, where first one enters anthropology, then economics, and on and on until one arrives at the outer reaches of sociology. We reasoned that this ordering would not only be tedious, but would re-inscribe the structure of the academy and mask the vitality and intellectual range of the offerings presented to the reader. Another option in ordering would have reflected our wish for contributors to contemplate the way in which cohort made a difference to their histories. But we soon discovered that their intellectual pathways did not map neatly onto age or generation. Maybe, we thought, the best way was to fall back on the alphabet and order the chapters that way (by author? by title?). But that seemed unnecessarily bureaucratic. Still, as social scientists we wanted *some* sort of reasonable ordering. The solution? A random number table! To this, our readers may respond, "then why have editors?" Our thinking was that with this method we would constrain neither author nor reader, yet be present in this introduction to point out how different essays could be seen in relation to each other—sometimes in surprising ways.

How did we picture our readers and what they would draw from this volume? We first envisioned US feminist scholars who, like us, enjoy reading across the disciplines and draw both insight and inspiration from the interplay of disciplinary perspectives. Our international colleagues as well might find reflections by American feminists useful for comparison with their own evolving disciplines. We also imagined graduate students whose intellectual development and scholarly direction are invariably enhanced by multiple perspectives. Certainly, both of these groups are exceptionally diverse, with very real differences in their routes to particular disciplines and the scholarly passions that guide them. At the same time, we believe that they share an abiding interest in where American feminist social science has been and what the future holds for it. If we are right, we think readers will want to "pair" or link chapters across discipline, topic, and age cohort for complementary insights into specific empirical questions. Of course, we hope that some faculty may be interested in assigning some or all of these chapters to their students, and we know they will have a range of purposes in mind. But some of the

directions we offer can also serve as strategies for organizing material for teaching and student reflection. Therefore, we suggest some alternative ways to read, some themes we noticed as frequently discussed, and some that received sustained attention in an individual chapter, but much less cross-chapter treatment.

We note first that each essay in this volume takes up an individual feminist scholar's intellectual journey in her own voice and in her own way. In that sense, they are compellingly different from one another. One could certainly read them, as we did initially, as remarkable narratives of the history of a single person's pathway both in a discipline and in relation to interdisciplinary feminist scholarship. In that way, they prove powerful reading. Alternatively (or in addition), highly idiosyncratic comparisons could be made of any two accounts, focusing on aspects of intellectual development and influence.

Another way to read the chapters would be to choose the ones written by authors from a single graduate cohort; our authors' doctoral training occurred in five different decades, beginning with the 1960s (Kessler-Harris from history and Martin from sociology) and ending in the 2000s (Coffman-Rosen from psychology). For the remaining decades, our authors come from a range of fields: for the 1970s, we have Hawkesworth, Ortner, Sapiro, and Shields; for the 1980s, Inhorn, Jacobsen, and Nelson; and for the 1990s, Cole, Enke, Feldstein, Hancock Alfaro, and Ostrove. To some degree, preoccupations may reflect the shifting state of disciplines and the emergence of interdisciplines in those decades, but as we will see when we look at major themes, most themes these authors take up cross-cut the decades of graduate education. We note that the single coauthored chapter, by Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove, includes accounts of each of their pathways and reflects experiences that differed in many ways, including their doctoral cohorts.

Perhaps a more fruitful set of juxtapositions involves chapters that address a particular theme that has been a core focus of feminist scholarship across these decades. For example, authors of at least five chapters were preoccupied with issues of activism directed at institutional change. Such concerns are central to both Hawkesworth's and Jacobsen's chapters, as well as those of Kessler-Harris, Nelson, and Martin. The last three discuss lawsuits undertaken to challenge the status quo, with the hope of

institutional transformation. A related preoccupation across many chapters is the role of feminist organizing within disciplinary professional societies (Sapiro, Jacobsen, and Nelson), in interdisciplinary professional societies (Jacobsen, Kessler-Harris, Martin, Nelson, and Sapiro), and in feminist professional organizations (Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove, Jacobsen, Kessler-Harris, Martin, Nelson, and Sapiro). Clearly, an activist focus in organizations and institutions has persisted across time as a reflection of those social science disciplinary practitioners who press for change.

It is perhaps unsurprising that several authors take up the issue of interdisciplinarity as it has shaped their own work, but we believe readers may find it useful to consider the different forms that process has taken. It comes up as broadening the range of intellectual influences on scholarship, as well as occasionally being a disappointment. The chapters that take up this issue most centrally include those of scholars from psychology, political science, history, and economics (by Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove, Cole, Enke, Feldstein, Hancock Alfaro, Nelson, Sapiro, and Shields).

More topical themes also arise across chapters and might be considered both simply in terms of the individual accounts or in terms of disciplinary contrasts. Themes of power and masculinities are among the most enduring concerns of feminist scholars, and both are well represented in this volume. Consideration of power and power relations is taken up in depth by anthropologist Ortner, organizational sociologist Martin, and three scholars who began in political science: Hancock Alfaro, Hawkesworth, and Sapiro. Masculinities (which also index power relations) are discussed by anthropologists Inhorn and Ortner, organizational sociologist Martin, economist Nelson, and historian Kessler-Harris.

Finally, intersectionality is discussed in many papers as a central theoretical perspective. It is the main topic of Cole's and Hancock Alfaro's chapters. It is also an explicit central concern (with varying structural referents—often race and gender, but also disabilities, gender, and ethnicity) in the essays by Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove, Feldstein, Kessler-Harris, Ortner, and Shields. More implicitly, Enke takes the issue up in discussing race and gender, as does Inhorn in terms of the experience of gender within some Muslim communities.

A few more themes of intense concern to feminist theorists were each addressed by authors. For example, three of our authors focused centrally on labor, including on housework as labor; this included both of our economists (Jacobsen and Nelson), as well as historian Kessler-Harris. Three also took up issues of gender similarities as well as gender differences from the perspective of three different fields: political science (Sapiro), economics (Nelson), and psychology (Shields). Four addressed issues of motherhood and reproduction in very different ways and contexts: Feldstein, Kessler-Harris, Inhorn, and Nelson. Four more included a focus on sexual harassment: Hawkesworth, Kessler-Harris, Martin, and Shields. Finally, three included focused attention to sexualities (Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove, Enke, and Kessler-Harris).

Five very important themes were taken up in detail in only one chapter each. These include class (Kessler-Harris), disabilities (Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove), religion (Inhorn), immigration (Kessler-Harris), and trans experiences (Enke). We note that some of these issues are emergent in the more recent decades and will likely characterize more scholars' focused attention in the decades ahead, but some have been relatively long-term preoccupations of at least some feminist scholars, but never center stage for many. We are very happy they are part of this volume, showcasing some brilliant contributions in these areas that should encourage more.

One other detail is not quite a theme, but might attract some readers' interest. All of our authors refer to important contemporary scholars' impact on their work. In addition, nearly all of our authors mention the influence of one or another foundational thinker on them and/or on the field; this kind of reference came up regardless of doctoral cohort. It is perhaps unsurprising that Sapiro's chapter on political theory mentioned Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill, but our economists (Nelson and Jacobsen) mentioned many thinkers across disciplines: Mary Daly, Mary Hartmann, Helene Cixoux, and Virginia Sapiro. Equally, Hancock Alfaro, who defines herself as truly interdisciplinary, discusses nineteenth-century theorist Maria Stewart, and early work by historian Joan Scott, political scientist Mary Hawkesworth, and bell hooks, among others. In other cross-disciplinary references, Hawkesworth discusses legal scholar Catherine Mackinnon, and Martin cites the work of Harvard Business School researcher Rosabeth Moss Kanter. Many authors mention early

disciplinary predecessors. Jacobsen and Nelson mention economists such as Myra Strober, Barbara Bergmann, Marianne Ferber, Nancy Folbre, and Francine Blau; anthropologist Ortner discusses Mary Douglas. Our historians mention the impact of earlier historians: Feldstein describes the influence of Jacqueline Jones; Kessler-Harris outlines Gerda Lerner's; and Enke discusses Elizabeth R. Kennedy's. Sociologist Martin discusses Joan Acker and Raewyn Connell, and psychologist Shields reviews the impact of Sandra Bem, Kay Deaux, Brenda Major, Alice Eagly, Mary Parlee, and Janet Hyde. Some authors discuss or mention the same thinkers (e.g., Hancock Alfaro and Ortner both mention DuBois, and Jacobson and Nelson both mentioned Strober). Psychologists Coffman-Rosen and Ostrove mention "previous transgressive scholars" and some refer to influential activist/writers (Enke on Madeline Davis and Leslie Feinberg). We believe these references are more than obligatory nods to past thinkers but reflect a shared sense of the importance of recognizing at least some of the work that enabled one's own.

We should note what we did *not* intend with this volume as well. We did not intend it to serve as a comprehensive account of developments in feminist scholarship within the social sciences, or in any particular social science field, over five decades. We did not intend it to "cover" all important feminist scholars' contributions within or across fields, to reflect the most important ones, or to serve as a guide to the field of women and gender studies from the perspective of the social sciences. We hope and believe the volume offers material that can contribute to others' efforts to accomplish any or all of those scholarly projects, but they were not our goals, nor does it achieve them. Instead, we hope these essays are food for thought: thought about the contours of feminist social scientists' careers in this long period; thought about the different preoccupations of feminist social scientists and the approaches they have taken to studying them; thought about the contributions of feminist social scientists to the interdisciplinary field of women and gender studies; and thought about the impact interdisciplinary feminist scholarship has had on social science fields and scholars. We have learned a great deal from each essay and from thinking about them in various combinations and contrasts; we hope our readers will too.

Our work on the volume was begun when we went our separate ways—Abby in Ann Arbor and Sarah back to Santa Barbara. However, a number of people helped greatly in the volume's development. The volume was supported by the work of Terrence Crimes, Tammy Culler, and Nicole Perry at the University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Tim Stewart-Winter was of great help in the suggestion of prospective contributors, and David Winter in supporting our work together in Albuquerque, and in locating a random numbers table!

Happily, what we imagined at lunch is realized here. We are gratified by the overwhelming response of those invited to submit a chapter, the final roster of our colleagues who participated in the project, and the varied approaches and commentary their chapters offer. It is our contributors who made the volume a satisfying intellectual adventure, and we are grateful to have found this way to sustain our friendship.

Sarah Fenstermaker is Research Professor Emerita at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and former Director of the University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Fenstermaker's research on domestic labor and the workings of gender, race, and class has resulted in numerous publications, most notably *The Gender Factory: The Apportionment of Work in American Households*, *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change* (with C. West) and *Sociologists Backstage: Answers to 10 Questions about What They Do* (with N. Jones). Her most recent research (with V. Jenness) examines the accomplishment of gender and sexuality among transgender inmates in the California men's prison system.

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2

Opening Doors for the Insurgent

Elizabeth R. Cole

In the past 30 years, intersectionality has developed from its inception as a conceptual tool based in critical race and feminist theories to play a visible and powerful role in the progressive social movements of the twenty-first century (Gordon 2016). During the same period, it has traveled across the academy where it has been taken up in disciplines including the social sciences (Bilge 2013). In the course of this journey to academia, an implicit divide has opened between the disciplines and the interdisciplines (e.g., women's and gender studies, ethnic studies) in the ways that scholars deploy intersectionality frameworks in research. This tension is captured by the distinction Cho et al. (2013) make between projects that "formalize the methodological or theoretical foundations of intersectionality within disciplines and to extend their reach within disciplines by

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building from the ground of empirical research out" (792) and projects they call insurgent, in which "scholars strike out in the margins of their disciplines and are often skeptical about the possibility of integrating mainstream methods and theories into intersectional research" (793).

Of course, this divide is not value-neutral. If the disciplinary mainstream considers the approaches of feminist scholars who invoke intersectionality while using conventional framings and methods as more rigorous or higher quality, that is, as "good" intersectionality, there's a risk that intersectionality's travel to the disciplines ultimately marginalizes other approaches, including approaches that are arguably more congruent with intersectionality's commitment to social justice or what May terms *antisubordination* (2015, 229). The consequences of this differential valuation are not only academic but pose tangible, material costs in terms of publication, hiring, promotion, and merit evaluation for scholars who choose methods that are less legible in the disciplines. In this chapter, I discuss the historical contexts that gave rise to the tension between disciplinary intersectionality and more insurgent approaches in order to explore the question of what's at stake for feminist social science if intersectionality travels to the social sciences primarily through the former. I consider how those of us who practice the type of intersectionality that is deemed legitimate within the disciplines can use our privilege to open the door for the insurgent. Along the way, I reflect critically on my own experiences in navigating this tension.

Intersectionality Travels to the Disciplines

Critical legal theorist Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality (1989) as part of a synthesis and elaboration of decades of writing by women of color "advance[ing] the idea that systems of oppression—namely, racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism—worked together to create a set of social conditions under which [B]lack women and other women of color lived and labored, always in a kind of invisible but ever-present social jeopardy" (Cooper 2016). May describes intersectionality as "an analytical and political orientation" that "approaches lived identities as interlaced and systems of oppression as enmeshed and mutually reinforcing" (2016, 3). Importantly, it was not conceptualized primarily

as an analytic for academics. Rather, it is a tool for creating social change: "Developed in the context of struggles for social justice, intersectionality offers a means to question and to challenge dominant logics, to further antisubordination efforts, and to forge collective models for social transformations that do not replicate or reinforce the inequalities, erasures, and distortions animated and buttressed by either/or logics" (4).

Intersectionality has become a buzzword (Davis 2008) and a viral theory (Bartlett 2017), and the proliferation of papers attesting to its travel into the disciplines gives an indication of how broadly it has been taken up (e.g., Carbado et al. 2013; Else-Quest and Hyde 2016; Lewis 2013; Salem 2018). At the same time, there is little reason to believe that intersectionality's travels in academic psychology have been either broad or deep. As evidence, Cortina et al. (2012) conducted a content analysis of specialty journals focused on race and gender. Most scholars of intersectionality would agree that simply including these categories does not mean that the research is using an intersectionality framework. Nevertheless, even based on this very low bar for inclusion, they found that articles published in gender-focused journals rarely theorized race (between 1–21%,) and research in race/ethnicity-focused journals rarely theorized gender (2–16%). More recently, a content analysis of articles published in two major journals in counseling psychology (Shin et al. 2017) found that only 40 articles out of over 6700 published since 1979 met minimal criteria defining intersectionality (<1%). What's more, the majority of these papers (70%) used intersectionality in ways the researchers coded as "weak," that is, they investigated experiences of populations representing multiple identities without considering how these locations represented systems of inequality that mutually define and support each other. Thus, the available evidence suggests that the extent to which this analytic framework has meaningfully traveled has been overstated, at least within psychology. But exaggeration of the acceptance and pervasiveness of intersectionality poses a risk that skeptics and critics can dismiss the concept without any substantive engagement with it (see Kimberlé Crenshaw quoted in Bartlett 2017), what Carastathis (2016) has termed "intersectionality fatigue" (12).

While it is important to preface this discussion with an acknowledgement that intersectionality has made limited inroads into academic

psychology, it's also the case that in the past ten years there has been a surge of publications in psychology that either address how intersectionality can best be deployed in research in psychology or invoke intersectionality to frame their empirical investigation, most often of populations that are marginalized in some way(s) (see Shin et al. 2017). Intersectionality is fundamentally a disruptor and a tool for change. As Warner, Settles, and Shields note, "applications of intersectionality, at their best, dismantle dominant knowledge production by employing subversive methods and asking subversive questions" (2016, 173). In contrast, the very notion of a discipline, with its norms, compliance, gatekeeping, and enforcement, threatens the integrity of the concept of intersectionality, "import[ing] a range of assumptions and truth claims that sometimes contribute to the very erasures to which intersectionality draws attention" (Cho et al. 2013, 793). For example, Cole and Sabik (2009) discussed how often-cited findings that Black women have greater body satisfaction compared to White women are based on responses to validated scales comprised of items that primarily tap White women's normative concerns (e.g., thinness), rather than Black women's (e.g., hair, skin tone); in practice, norms for scale validation have not required attention to diversity at the level of item generation. Thus, the well-established conventions in the social sciences, particularly the value placed on the conventional application of established methods (Tomlinson 2013) and parsimony (May 2015; Warner et al. 2016) work against intersectionality's emphasis on complexity and disruption.

For example, null hypothesis testing in experimental methods involves making comparisons to determine whether there are differences between groups. Perhaps unintentionally, "research framed by this approach can be used to confirm the belief in the essential difference between the groups, particularly when criteria for group membership have not been clearly rationalized a priori" (Cole 2008, 451). The reliance of psychology and other social sciences on null hypothesis testing both supports assumptions about the homogeneity within groups (Cole 2008) and obscures the ways "social categories … reflect … what individuals, institutions, and cultures do, rather than simply as characteristics of individuals" (Cole 2009, 175). Thus, to argue that status quo disciplinary practices can undergird intersectional investigations, as I have (Cole 2009), raises the

possibility of inadvertently endorsing projects that flatten intersectionality (Fine, quoted in Guidroz and Berger 2009), reducing social categories to demographic descriptors and intersectionality itself to a hypothesis to be tested by comparing group means.

As intersectionality travels, a fundamental problem arises because the aims and values of intersectionality are not seamlessly congruent with those of the disciplines. Intersectionality's foundational commitment to antisubordination puts it at odds with disciplinary goals of a value-neutral science, and disciplinary investments in positivism, replication, and the emphasis on measurement cut against the grain of intersectionality's dogged focus on historical context and the instability of social categories (May 2015). At its core, intersectionality is a critique of the ways that conventional understandings of social categories both justify and obscure inequality. In contrast, Bilge (2013) warns against a *disciplinary feminism*, that prioritizes conforming to conventional norms and institutions of knowledge production over questioning or creating change to those structures. Disciplinary feminism, she argues, "participates in institutional (mis)appropriation and attendant depoliticization of both interdisciplinarity and intersectionality" (409). The risk when intersectionality travels to the disciplines is that it become depoliticized and subject to what Tomlinson (2013) calls the "rhetorics of regulation." These discourses "propose increasing the precision of an unruly intersectionality by privileging positivist research methods and standards that may be at odds with and undermine intersectionality's ability to provide radical critiques of power" (1002). Thus, as May argues, attempts to bring intersectionality to the disciplines always threaten to "disappear intersectionality and render it unknowable (on intersectional terms)" (143), that is, to distort it into forms in which it may not be recognizable (Cole 2015). In the worst case, when intersectionality gets assimilated, or even appropriated, into dominant, disciplinary frameworks, it could perversely be used to critique or even suppress the possibilities of challenging and transformational scholarship.

Disciplining Intersectionality

The misuse, distortion, and even appropriation of intersectionality have become so common that Alexander-Floyd proposed as a solution that intersectionality "must be properly understood as the purview of researchers investigating women of color" (2012, 19), and she called for a re-centering of the voices of women of color in intersectionality scholarship. Hancock (2016) acknowledged the same problem, but suggested that rather than understanding intersectionality as the intellectual property of women of color, it was more accurately framed as a meme, "a unit of cultural transmission" (18) that circulates through translation. In response to this debate, I suggested in a conference paper that although in this age of commodification and neoliberalism it is natural to think of intersectionality in terms of intellectual property, that framing implies a logic of scholars and activists as consumers (Cole 2015). As an alternative, I suggested we think about our engagements with the concept of intersectionality in terms of stewardship, which implies service and care (see Hancock 2016 and Moradi and Grzanka 2017 who further developed this concept). Intersectionality is a conceptual tool developed by scholars and activists to understand inequality and bring about social justice, particularly for individuals marginalized by race and gender. Responsible stewardship means that those claiming to work within this framework have a duty to read the foundational sources and act with fidelity to those commitments. Stewardship does not require any kind of purity test or imply a fundamentalism.

For over a decade, I have used my scholarship to articulate the necessity and benefits of bringing intersectionality frameworks to research in psychology and to draw guidelines to frame how we can do so while maintaining fidelity to the complexity of the original sources. But I have been continually mindful of the risks that disciplinarity poses for intersectionality's social justice mission, and at times I've been uneasy about the professional success I have experienced by virtue of choosing this approach. Even as I have been deeply gratified to watch the proliferation of citations to intersectionality within psychology over the past ten years, I have worried that the term has been invoked much more often than the

concept has been substantively engaged or that it has become, in Gordon's terms, "a signal, even a signature" (2016, 352). In this growing literature, there is a marked lack of what Shin et al. (2017) call "transformative intersectionality," that is, not only a consideration of "the role of multiple social identities and interlocking systems of oppression" but also a consideration of how psychologists can "engage in social justice action to dismantle systems of power and privilege" (464).

Cho et al. (2013) anticipated this struggle, observing that "efforts to 'discipline' intersectionality within established research practice can sometimes proceed along lines that suggest that its insurgent dimensions constitute an unruliness that undermines its utility and future development" (793). Tomlinson (2013) named the stakes more pointedly, arguing that "claims about proper methods are connected to power and always political" (1002). For these reasons, I am kept up at night by questions about the extent to which the diffusion of intersectionality into the discipline of psychology has come at the expense of truly transformative insurgent scholarship, and what role my own work may have played in that tradeoff. Indeed, I have been described as both a key author in the disciplinary strain of intersectionality studies (Cho et al. 2013), and elsewhere as representing the insurgent flank (Rutherford and Davidson 2019). I suspect that these views say more about the disciplinary perspectives of the authors than they do about my own work.

Because of my commitment to responsible stewardship of intersectionality, it's worth considering how my own efforts to advance intersectionality within empirical social science may have contributed to a dynamic of pitting a version of intersectionality that has the imprimatur of the discipline, that is, scholarship that does not threaten disciplinary norms, against a more interdisciplinary, methodologically daring, and explicitly political intersectionality. This dynamic comes into clearer view when framed in the historical context of social justice organizing.

It is unusual for psychologists to reflect on the impact of historical context on the intellectual trajectories of our scholarship and teaching (see Eagly et al. 2012 for an exception). Grzanka (2019) did just this, in an exploration of the ways that disciplinary norms constrain psychology's capacity to address questions concerning social justice. He began by considering the examples of Angela Davis and the HIV/AIDS activist

organization ACT UP to demonstrate how popular understandings of social justice movements can change over time. In these examples, representations of actors and movements that were viewed by their contemporaries as radical, disruptive, and even dangerous with time became idealized, depoliticized, and sometimes commodified in the collective historical memory. Not only does this kind of transformation blunt our capacity to understand the significance, lasting importance, and impact of social justice movements, it simultaneously conceals the ways current perceptions of "good" and "bad" actors stigmatize and exclude activists and ideologies that emerge from outside the mainstream and push for real change. Grzanka used this observation to reflect on the ways that practices psychologists widely understand as "good" (e.g., pursuit of objectivity, use of citation networks of mainstream psychologists to ground research, and research programs driven by paradigms rather than following social problems) normalize the value that scholars working in the mainstream of disciplines place on the most conservative theoretical and methodological approaches. These approaches privilege maintenance of the disciplinary status quo over social justice work.

Here I borrow from Grzanka's distinction between "good" and "bad" psychologists to consider how the disciplinary uptake of intersectionality may be producing a similarly fraught contrast between a disciplinary view of "good" and "bad" intersectionality. Paradoxically, intersectionality that is viewed as "good" from a disciplinary standpoint is often weak intersectionality, that is, "drawing from the theory of intersectionality with the intention of examining multiple identities without a thorough exploration of multiple, interlocking, and mutually constructive systems of oppression" (Shin et al. 2017, 464). Consequently, it rarely challenges or complicates conceptualizations of identities beyond the demographic. It is empirical, operationalized in terms of quantitative methods, and not explicitly political. Because of the reliance on null hypothesis testing, it is frequently comparative and primarily concerned with between-group differences rather than heterogeneity within groups or even similarity across identity groups (Cole 2008, 2009).

In contrast, from a disciplinary perspective, "bad" intersectionality is transformative (Shin et al. 2017), concerned with the structural aspects of the social categories that define identity (e.g., Bowleg's often cited

article rejecting single axis framing of Black lesbian identity [2008]). It may deploy unconventional methods, including thick description, use of samples that are not generalizable (e.g., participants in a specific social movement, see White's study of Black anti-rape activists (2001) or my 2008 paper reflecting on insight from activists' narratives to make recommendations about research practices), or participatory action research. It may be a deeply interdisciplinary (e.g., Settles et al.'s 2019 work on epistemic invisibility of faculty of color, which resulted from collaboration between psychologists and a philosopher), even to such an extent that disciplinary readers conclude "it's not psychology" (Shields 2008, 305). Most importantly, it is explicitly aimed at social justice. In these ways, intersectionality that the discipline would view as "bad" disregards, even challenges, many of the disciplinary values and assumptions of psychology; it is hardly surprising that scholarship of this type is rarely found in mainstream journals.

A Moment of Reflexivity: On Being a Gen X Black Feminist

As I've been considering whether (and how) my work to bring intersectionality frameworks to the practice of psychology has contributed to a dynamic that privileges a disciplined and depoliticized version of intersectionality, it has been helpful to take the long, generational view and reflect on my own place in the timeline of Black feminist thought and the intellectual genealogy of intersectionality.

Generational questions should come easily to me: my dissertation, that is, my first major piece of scholarship (Cole 1994), explored the generational impact of student activism on women who participated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with attention to the ways the later life impact of that experience was different for African American and White women (Cole and Stewart 1996). I was trained as a clinical and personality psychologist, and at the time I undertook the project, I was frustrated by my discipline's insistence on understanding people as autonomous individuals located outside social structure and historical context. The study was

guided by Stewart and Healy's (1989) observation that historically important events experienced in young adulthood, the time of identity formation, will be relevant to midlife efforts to create a lasting legacy for future generations. At the time, I was riveted by an almost cinematic idea of an individual's life story rubbing up against history in transformational ways. A person with aspirations sets off on her way, and irresistible social and historical forces reorient her, or even call her to move in a direction that perhaps she never before imagined. What is the impact of that encounter? What does that mean for the rest of her life and how she will understand it? We surveyed women who came of age during the campus protest movements of the 1960s at midlife, in their late 40s, asking them to reflect on their choices and their enduring commitments. So many themes from this first work have resonated in the writing I've done across my career, particularly my investment in understanding individuals in social and historical context. And yet, ironically, it is only recently that I have begun to reflect on the impact of my own generational position on my life's work.

Because I came of academic age as a scholar in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I got to read foundational texts in Black women's studies at the time they appeared, including Paula Giddings' *When and Where I Enter* (1984), which I encountered in Cheryl Gilkes' undergraduate seminar at Boston University, and Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* (1990), which we read in Nesha Haniff's graduate seminar at the University of Michigan. These books fundamentally shaped my intellectual landscape and provided frameworks that continue to influence my work. It was my good fortune that my personal development coincided with the flowering of academic Black feminism (contra attempts to frame the history of feminist movements within the conventional wave model [Thompson 2002]). These books provided guidance and inspiration and showed me how to imagine myself in a career in the academy with work worth doing. Upon earning tenure in 1999, I took a new position in two interdisciplinary units which demanded a complete rethinking (and retheorizing) of my reading and teaching, and I began some projects stretching and even transcending the disciplinary norms in which I'd been trained. In these ways, my own academic trajectory coincided with the development of intersectionality studies such that I was positioned to

write one of the first articles aiming to articulate the necessity of intersectionality frameworks for psychology (Cole 2009; see also Shields 2008). To be clear, this is my own intellectual work; I chose this path and it demanded my sustained effort and best thinking (together with the wise counsel of colleagues and mentors) over many years. But today, looking from the perspective of the rearview mirror, I am beginning to see how my life rubbed up against intellectual history to make this work possible, and more importantly, to shape the forms it took.

Comments made by Brittney Cooper on Facebook (and for which she gave consent to be quoted) helped me think about the context and constraints facing Generation X Black women as public actors in highly institutionalized and exclusionary settings. In a post in late 2019, Cooper pushed back on some of the commentary about the demise of Kamala Harris's 2020 presidential campaign by locating her career in generational terms:

> How do y'all think the generation of Black women who came of age during the heyday of [the welfare queen stereotype in the 70s] responded to it[?] [B]y becoming hyper professional and casting themselves as everything that particular narrative wasn't. That's the political environment that shapes a Kamala Harris and her entrance into U.S. politics. And we can speed past respectable Black womanhood as problematic all we want to, but we don't have any problems with those sisters when they are making it easier for us to navigate in the institutions that shape our daily lives. But we are quick to act above them, when they take those skills and try to lead on a broader scale. … Not saying Kamala could not have been more progressive. I'm saying she represents a type of Black womanhood that many of us were socialized to become, and that a lot of folks younger than us have the luxury of decrying as insufficient and unwoke, while being beneficiaries of the hits those Black women took. … This is not an apologia for Kamala. She wasn't my choice. This is me asking for the opportunity to nuance some of this shit, and to resist the desire to be like 'good riddance, she wasn't bout shit.' Cuz anytime people do that to Black women, a second look is *always* required. (Cooper 2019)

Kamala Harris is only the second African American woman ever to be elected to the US Senate. As a generational path-breaker, Harris had to