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Affilia 2009 24: 44

DOI: 10.1177/0886109908326814

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**Affilia: Journal of Women
and Social Work**
Volume 24 Number 1
February 2009 44-55
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10.1177/0886109908326814
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This article addresses the theoretical paradigm of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, focusing on its evolution over time and place and application to the everyday lives of women. The objective is both to honor the roots of intersectional scholarship and to demonstrate the temporal and spatial nature of oppression and privilege. Theoretical concepts are illustrated by narratives from women who have crossed different sociocultural contexts and phases of the life course. This dialectical and self-reflexive intersectional analysis focuses not only on oppression but also on privilege and demonstrates that intersectionality and interlocking oppressions are time and context contingent, rather than fixed and ahistorical.

Keywords: *interlocking oppressions; intersectionality; privilege; social location*

Researching and writing about intersectionality and interlocking oppressions often require a blurring of any remaining lines of distinction between the personal and the professional because identity, oppression, and privilege are not solely abstract concepts; they have real, complex, and often-disputed meanings in our daily lives. Moreover, it can be difficult to comprehend what these meanings may be and the dialectical relationship between the personal and the political from a purely structural level analysis. Consequently, feminist, antiracist, and disabilities scholars have urged researchers and practitioners to engage in explorations of the subjective realm of oppression to gain a better understanding of the personal impact of structural relations of domination (Crow, 1996; Essed, 1991; Mama, 1995; Marks, 1999; Millar, 1998; Morris, 1996; Shakespeare, 1996; Smith, 1987) to get at the lived experiences of “the relations of ruling” (Smith, 1987).

Underpinning such efforts is an understanding of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and interlocking oppressions (Hill Collins, 2000), yet it is only recently that serious attempts have been made to clarify the conceptual and operational features of this “paradigm,” as Hancock (2007) recently and convincingly termed this way of thinking and doing diversity and difference. Several terms have been used in the literature to categorize intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, including *paradigm*, *framework*, *theory*, *lens*, and *perspective*. I prefer to use the term *paradigm*, as in a cohesive set of theoretical concepts, method of analysis, and belief system, when discussing both intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, and *lens* or *perspective* when referring only to a way of approaching social identities that embraces multiplicity and is neither additive nor reductive, as in an *intersectional perspective*.

Since the members of the Combahee River Collective (1977) first articulated their lived reality as Black lesbian women whose experiences of oppression could not be reduced to

Author's Note: This article was first presented at the conference on Intersectionality from Theory to Practice: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, on April 18, 2008.

one factor, such as their race, gender, or sexual orientation, a wealth of scholarship has put forth an intersectional perspective such as this, although the term *intersectionality* itself is not always used. In spite of the popularity of this theoretical paradigm, the complexity of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions appears to become diluted in practice, and conceptual or theoretical interrogations are infrequent. In the absence of theoretical specificity, the misuse of concepts can and does occur, and the resulting confusion can prevent researchers, practitioners, and educators from understanding and applying an intersectional lens to their work. In this article, I attempt to remedy this confusion and to pay homage to the first intersectional scholars by writing myself into this theoretical discussion and connecting the personal and the political. The use of “my self”—our greatest tool in social work—will make clear the “everyday dialectics of oppression and power” (Charlton, 1998) and extend theorizing on intersectionality and interlocking oppressions.

The main objective of this article is to present an analysis of the everyday and context-contingent nature of oppression and privilege and, through doing so, to further the understanding of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions among social work educators, students, and practitioners. I use both *social location* and *intersectionality* in this article and attempt to retain (and explain) the theoretical specificity of each term in the text that follows. Intersectionality can be seen to operate at more of a theoretical level and to refer to the way in which identity categories interact, whereas social location indicates the result of this interaction in terms of privileges and disadvantages and functions at more of a practical or everyday level, with the term *everyday* used in the feminist sociological sense proposed by Smith (1987).

The theoretical insights offered here are supported by data from past research participants and my own experiences of crossing different sociocultural contexts and phases of the life course, with the aim of providing some depth to a paradigm or lens that feminist academics are increasingly using. This article poses theoretical arguments and asserts conceptual distinctions rather than providing an evidence base per se. It begins with a description of my social location and a story that indicates the applicability of intersectionality to the everyday lives of women and then presents an overview of the development and evolution of the concept of intersectionality, paying particular attention to the Black lesbian feminists whose statements in the late 1970s and early 1980s called attention to their invisibility and lack of voice within the women’s and civil rights movements. Next, I introduce an analysis of the context- and time-contingent nature of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, drawing on the experiences of women whose lives have crossed expanses of time and space. I conclude with suggestions for the development of teaching and practice to reflect an appreciation for the variability of social location and intersectionality at the individual and cultural levels and interlocking oppressions at the societal level (Jones, 1972; also see Thompson, 2006).

The Everyday Articulations of Privilege and Oppression

I hold multiple privileges by virtue of my Whiteness, Anglo-Canadian ethnicity (third generation of Scottish and Scandinavian ancestry), upper-middle-class background, and able bodiedness. My gender, same-sex partnership status, and bisexual orientation render me subject to oppression, despite my having some control over the disclosure of the latter status and thus the ability to access heterosexual privilege at times and being subject to less oppression because of my gender expression as more of a femme queer woman than a butch

one. My age (late 30s) and faith (agnostic) do not place me close to either the center or the margin (hooks, 1984/2000), so the amount of privilege and oppression that I hold in relation to these identity constructs depends on the context, with my age rendering me at a disadvantage in my academic workplace and at an advantage in most other places. Furthermore, I have not always identified as bisexual or queer, having evolved into this identity at age 33 following the dissolution of a long-term opposite-sex partnership—the timing of my coming out being fairly typical of bisexual people and women, who have tended to come out later in life than gay men (Diamond, 1998; Grov, Bimbi, Nanin, & Parsons, 2006), although the average age is likely to be lower for the generation after mine (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). The significance of this aspect of my identity is that when I started researching and writing about intersectionality, I identified as straight or gay friendly and was in an opposite-sex partnership. My social location shifted when I no longer had straight privilege.

The significance of intersectionality to my own life became particularly clear in the winter of 2007, when I spent 2.5 months in Cuba with my same-sex partner—half the amount of time we intended to spend there, largely owing to the heteronormativity and sexual harassment that we endured daily. For example, at about 9:00 p.m. on a Sunday evening, my partner and I were walking along a street in front of the Hotel Nacional—not holding hands and generally engaging in covering behavior (Goffman, 1963; Yoshino, 2006)—when a group of young Cuban men threw bottles at us—one glass one and one large plastic one filled with liquid. Thankfully, we escaped unharmed. After we recounted this incident to members of a lesbian support group to which we had been invited as guests, we were told, “But that’s not because you’re gay; it’s because you’re foreign.” This explanation is probably true because we were practicing “rational outness” (Bradford, Ryan, & Rothblum, 1994) and so rarely presented as a couple and are both able to pass because of our gender expression. However, did it really matter which aspect of our identities—queer, women, White, or foreigner—provoked this male violence? Is it acceptable to throw bottles at foreign women but not at gay women? Yes, I differ in some respects from Lorde’s (1984/2007a, p. 116) “mythical norm”: White, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure. Aspects of my identity do mark me as the other, as less than, as invalid in most places; however, in Cuba, my Whiteness and financial security should have meant that I could report this violent incident to the policeman down the block, as suggested by the young Cuban man who had witnessed it. Yet I did not feel powerful enough as a queer woman in the company of my same-sex partner and certainly could not send only part of myself on that mission.

The Development and Evolution of Intersectional Ways of Thinking

The Combahee River Collective is credited with originating an intersectional way of thinking on the basis of a statement they issued in 1977. hooks (1981/2007), Lorde (1984/2007b), and Minh-Ha (1989) also expressed the indivisibility of their multiple and contingent identities, the latter in a book titled *Woman, Native, Other*. These early writings tended to focus on the intersectionality of marginalized social statuses, with Lorde’s (1984/2007a) description of herself being fairly typical: “As a forty-nine year old Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong” (p. 114). Crenshaw, a Black feminist, coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989, and Hill Collins (1995, quoted in Dressel,

Minkler, & Yen, 1997, pp. 583-584), also a Black feminist, later expanded on this term, making this distinction between intersectionality and interlocking oppressions:

First, the notion of interlocking oppressions refers to the macro level connections linking systems of oppression such as race, class, and gender. This is the model describing the social structures that create social positions. Second, the notion of intersectionality describes micro level processes—namely, how each individual and group occupies a social position with interlocking structures of oppression described by the metaphor of intersectionality. Together they shape oppression. (Hill Collins, 1995, quoted in Dressel, Minkler, & Yen, 1997, pp. 583-584)

In this quote, Hill Collins referred to identity categories (race, class, and gender) as systems of oppression and identified micro-level processes as structures of oppression, which unfortunately adds to the conceptual confusion. This is one example of the slipperiness and lack of specificity with which these concepts have been used. Another intersectional scholar, Dahmoon (2008), provided a clear distinction among identities (South Asian woman), categories (race and gender), processes (racialization and gendering), and systems (racism and patriarchy) in a thorough review of “intersectionality-type analysis.” The term *intersectionality* is used in conjunction with identities and categories, whereas the term *interlocking oppressions* applies more to processes and systems.

Since I finished my PhD on dementia and intersectionality in 2004, I have watched with keen interest the proliferation of intersectional scholarship. This scholarship began to trouble me about 2 years ago when I started to read and discuss intersectionality with feminists who inhabit a space of marginality as women yet are otherwise privileged: straight, White, able bodied, Anglo-Canadian or American, Western or Northern, midlife, married to men, gender conformative, and so on. What I have found in this body of work is that a focus on interlocking, rather than additive, oppressions is clearly identified, whereas privilege is largely exempted from interrogation; stories of the authors' own intersecting identities and the ways in which these identities have affected their theorizing are largely absent; and age and disability, which are of particular relevance to older women, are not usually addressed in conjunction with the trio of race, class, and gender, which are more often expanded to include sexual orientation, faith, ethnicity, and nationality. For example, of the 26 pieces of intersectional scholarship written from 2000 to 2008, 12 referred to both privilege and oppression (Brewer, Conrad, & King, 2002; Crenshaw, 2000; Dahmoon, 2006; Few, 2007; Gamson & Moon, 2004; Ludvig, 2006; McCall, 2005; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Sondergaard, 2005; Valentine, 2007; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006), 11 included age (Butterfield, 2003; Gamson & Moon, 2004; Hankivsky, 2005; Mann & Huffman, 2005; Ludvig, 2006; Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), 2001; Prins, 2006; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Sondergaard, 2005; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006), only 8 referred to disability (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2006; Dahmoon, 2006; Hankivsky, 2005; Ludvig, 2006; OHRC, 2001; Valentine, 2007; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006), and only 3 focused on privilege and oppression and included age and disability (Ludvig, 2006; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006), all of which appeared in a special issue of the *European Journal of Women's Studies*.

This lack of acknowledgement of the theorists' own social locations, particularly their privileges, in conjunction with an ever-expanding list of marginalized social statuses that ostensibly belong to “the other others” (Ahmed, 2004), reminds me of the long-standing tensions between academic and grassroots feminists regarding feminist epistemology, seeming somewhat like an appropriation of knowledge. I wonder if this is a way of reclaiming or recolonizing feminist intellectual space and relegating all the marginalized women

back to the realm of the others. This is the co-optation that Lynn Weber (personal communication, April 18, 2008) identified as a possibility for which intersectional feminist scholars need to be prepared, although Weber may not have envisioned the enemy as coming from within. I argue that this co-optation may be happening already in terms of those intersectional scholars who omit privilege from the scope of their analysis, focusing only on people who are marginalized, socially excluded, or oppressed on the basis not only of their gender and do not address their own social location (see Butterfield, 2003; Davis, 2008; Hankivsky, 2005; Mann & Huffman, 2005; Prins, 2006; Risman, 2004).

Social Location and Intersectionality

Although I have been engaged in intersectional scholarship for some time now, I started using the term *social location* again after I came to the conclusion that intersectionality is best viewed as a metaphorical state of being, existing primarily in the consciousness of theorists, and that it should be no more than an analytical lens through which a researcher or theorist views the social world. In contrast, social location is more easily understood by and applicable to the people and groups with whom we work as practitioners and educators and can be more easily used in research on processes whereby privilege and oppression are distributed in our social world. Thus, one concept may best be used in theory and research and one in practice and education; however, because feminists purport to engage in praxis (Freire, 2001), it is no surprise that these terms are used interchangeably. The terms do have different meanings, however, as I indicated earlier.

Social location refers to the relative amount of privilege and oppression that individuals possess on the basis of specific identity constructs, such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and faith. The metaphor of intersectionality has been used to describe the entanglement of identity categories that make up an individual, the differential attributions of power that result from such varied configurations, and the need to view intersectional beings holistically rather than try to tease apart different strands of identity (Andersen & Hill Collins, 2001; Bannerji, 1995; Brah, 2001; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1994; Lorde, 1984/2007a; Mullaly, 2006). As Hulko (2004) noted,

We each possess different degrees of oppression and privilege based on our relative positioning along axes of interlocking systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and ageism. Where each of us lies in relation to the center and the margin . . . —our social location—is determined by our identities, which are necessarily intersectional. (p. 238)

As a theoretical concept, social location is similar to intersectionality and interlocking oppressions in that it describes an externally imposed situation arising from the patterned attribution of positive and negative qualities to perceived social identities, with an understanding of power, particularly the power to define others as “invalid” (Hughes, 2002; Zola, 1982), being integral to this theoretical paradigm. As I noted at the outset, theoretical concepts that are associated with intersectional scholarship can be misused. An example of such misuse is when social work students or educators use the word *oppression* to refer to their individual perceptions of having been personally disadvantaged or wronged in some way, irrespective of their membership in a social group (see, e.g., Tester, 2003; for a critique, see Mullaly, 2006). Students who receive low grades or have their views challenged in class by other students and/or the professor may refer to themselves as oppressed when

they are not being discriminated against on the basis of any social identity category. These students may indeed have been wronged in some way or have experienced injustice. However, the question should be this: Are students as a group subject to any of the five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, or violence (Young, 1990)?

The incorrect usage of the term *oppression* indicates a disregard for the complexity of theories on the dynamics of oppression and privilege and highlights the need for theorists to explain social location and intersectionality better, both conceptually and operationally. It may be that “epistemic privilege” (Narayan, 1988)—knowledge derived from lived experience—enables women who are multiply marginalized to understand and implement intersectional ways of thinking better and to appreciate the structure and function of interlocking oppressions more fully; however, I do not believe that the lack of membership in an additional marginalized group precludes women from being conscious of the dynamics of privilege and oppression. I do argue, however, that one’s identity shifts over time and place and thus that social location varies both spatially and temporally. As Reimer Kirkham (2003) found in her study of intergroup health care relations, “The construction of who is the other and who belongs is thus not stable but shifts across place and time” (p. 775; also see Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). Although feminist theorists note that social location—constructed through “othering” processes—varies across time and space, we are usually left to imagine how it occurs. The next section provides examples of the ways in which identity categories, such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, and age, vary across different sociocultural contexts and phases of the life course.

The Variability of Social Location

Although an individual’s social location shapes his or her experiences across different sociocultural contexts, in terms of the relative degree of privilege and oppression he or she is afforded and has at his or her disposal, a person’s social location itself can be influenced by the specific sociocultural context that the person is inhabiting as well as his or her particular phase of the life course. Essentially, social location is context dependent; it is not a static or fixed category. To support this argument about the context-dependent nature of social location, I present three examples; the first deals with ascriptions of “racial” group membership and the connection to class, the second is about the variability of privilege that is because of ethnicity, and the last focuses on class and its interrelationship with age. The first and last of these examples are drawn from grounded theory research on the relationships between older people’s experiences of dementia and the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and gender (see Hulko, in press), in which the determination of the social location of the research participants was a sociological designation based on a paradigm of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions and the identification of the participants’ membership in particular social groups, such as low-income people, women, Anglo-Canadians, and Black people.

I argue that processes of racialization vary in different locales, so that a person may hold privileges that are because of his or her perceived Whiteness in one setting and experience discrimination as a “Black person” in another (see Bannerji, 2001). Angela Huggins (a self-selected pseudonym of a research participant) explained how different “racial” statuses were ascribed to her, depending on whether she happened to be in the West Indies, where she was born and lived until age 14, or in Canada, her home for 60 years:

Huggins: Well, I accept the fact that Canadians do look at me as a Black person.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Huggins: Yeah. So I. . . .

Interviewer: But you don't see yourself like that?

Huggins: I don't classify myself as Black. I have four different races in my blood, I mean, how can it be. . . .

Interviewer: How can you single out one? [laughs]

Huggins: Exactly! And in the islands, we don't discriminate like that. We have a class thing. . . .

Later in the interview, I returned to this point for further clarification:

Interviewer: So in Canada you're considered Black as you're saying?

Huggins: Yeah.

Interviewer: What would you be considered in Trinidad, in the West Indies?

Huggins: White. [laughs] It's funny, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's interesting. Hmm.

Huggins: And I could not go out with a Black man in Trinidad. I would be disowned.

As Huggins's experiences in Trinidad and in Canada indicate, processes of racialization are indeed context dependent and interrelated with the identity category of class as well as that of ethnicity. However, ethnicity should not be conflated with race (see Desflor Edles, 2004; Oommen, 1994), as is illustrated in the next example.

Growing up in Canada as a White, upper-middle-class Anglo-Canadian, I took for granted my membership in the majority-group culture and undoubtedly enjoyed the privileges that are associated with this status, although I was not conscious of having White privilege (McIntosh, 1989) until much later in life. My own "moments of questioning" (Frankenberg, 1993, quoted in Tyler, 2004), which were no doubt prompted by a developing "sociological imagination" (Mills, 2000), took on greater significance when, at age 20, I lived in Spain for 8 months to complete the 3rd year of an undergraduate degree in sociology and Spanish. Although I retained my White and class privileges, I was firmly located as an outsider throughout my residence in Andalucía (southern Spain) because I was a non-native Spanish speaker; had no Spanish or Latino ancestors; and wore clothing, accessories, and a hairstyle that marked me as North American. I was an ethnic minority in this socio-cultural context. My outsider status was reinforced daily by shouts of *guiri* (a derogatory term for a foreigner) as I walked along the street, was ignored in the line to buy produce at the local supermarket, and had groups of young Spanish students point and laugh at me, among other instances. After I had been in Spain for about 4 months, the Gulf War started, and, as a precautionary measure, Canadian students were advised to follow the guidelines issued by the U.S. embassy—not to speak English in the streets, not to wear clothing with American insignias, and not to gather in groups, particularly near train and bus stations. This experience of being "the other" in Spain made me aware that we carry aspects of our social locations with us and that people respond to us either favorably or negatively on that basis. This was also the year that prompted me to take on the identity of feminist.

To demonstrate the complexities of ethnicity and privilege further, although my North American accent marked me as an outsider in Spain, while I was working on a community development project in Costa Rica 5 years later, I was treated with deference more often than inferiority. This treatment was because of the fact that Costa Ricans saw me as having a Spanish accent and speaking correct Castellan as opposed to having a Latino accent and speaking the more colloquial Spanish of Latin America, and my Anglo-Canadian ethnicity

and fluency in both Spanish and English were markers of status in that context. This was not the case in Cuba, however. With more than 70% of the inhabitants of African descent (Saney, 2004) and a general distrust of foreigners that is linked to the U.S. blockade and the island's reluctant reliance on tourism, my Whiteness and foreignness were a liability at all times. I could never be other than a *turista* (tourist) or an *extranjera* (foreigner), and a White female one at that, and the only status I was occasionally afforded was linked to my ability to communicate in Spanish.

I have included these stories to demonstrate that social location based on ethnicity can be context dependent and to highlight the importance of separating race and ethnicity if we want to understand the complexities of marginalization and domination. In addition, this use of self is an ode to Jordan (2001) and other intersectional intellectual ancestors (Andersen & Hill Collins, 2001; Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002; Carter-Black, 2008; Dahmoon, 2006; Okazawa-Rey, 2002) who have made use of events in their everyday lives and highlighted their own intersectional identities to bring the dynamics of privilege and oppression to life or to make real "the relations of ruling" (Smith, 1987).

I now present an example that speaks to the variability of social class and the relationship with age or phase of the life course, in particular (see Longino, Warheit, & Green, 1989). That social class can vary in time and place, taking on more significance in one country than another, can be seen in Huggins's statement that her social class was more significant in Trinidad, where they "have a class thing," than in Canada, where there is more discrimination on the basis of race, or in Cuba, where possessing "convertibles"—tourist currency that is worth 24 times the Cuban peso—was far more important than being a university professor or having a doctoral degree. The contingency of social class is particularly evident among older people after they retire and become wholly or partially dependent on the government for income support. Julianna Molnar (a self-selected pseudonym of a research participant) was a physician, and her husband Gyorgy (a pseudonym) was an engineer during their working lives in their native Hungary. After they retired from their respective careers and immigrated to Canada a few years later, their financial and social status changed dramatically. They became "pensioners," with all the constraints and stigma associated with that label (Bytheway, 1995). In highlighting significant components of her life history, Julianna—the only survivor of the Holocaust from her family of origin—noted that anti-Semitism was the overriding problem during her youth in Hungary and that being dependent on the Canadian government and her family for financial support was the challenge of her later years:

Julianna Molnar: My youth was, it was very, it was very. . . . There was a lot of anti-Semitism in Romania; there was a lot of anti-Semitism in Hungary. When we lived in Hungary, there was the big problem with anti-Semitism. Since we live here, we [inaudible], we are living on the government's money. But we are OK. For 10 years, my son was providing for us. Then after that we got, how do you say . . . ?

Interviewer: A pension?

Julianna Molnar: It's a pension. I'm going to go ask my husband. . . .

At this point, Julianna called her husband Gyorgy into the room, and he proceeded to explain that their income support as a couple includes quarterly restitution payments from the German government to low-income Holocaust survivors, in addition to old-age pensions and rent-geared-to-income housing provided by the Canadian government. Although this amount is meager, they can "meet debts with it," and it allows them to be independent from their two adult children who supported them for their first 10 years in Canada. This

small glimpse into Julianna Molnar's life gives us a sense of how social location can be varied throughout the life course as well as across different sociocultural contexts. Similarly, the quotes from Huggins indicate that processes of racialization—the dynamics of privilege and oppression that form social location—can be different in two different places, although the person remains the same.

These stories from past research participants, together with my own experiences, demonstrate the time- and context-contingent nature of social location. Although the idea that social location varies both temporally and spatially may appear self-evident, rarely is such a nuanced view of social location put forward by practitioners and educators, and contemporary intersectionality theorists do not link theory to everyday life in the self-reflexive manner used by our intellectual ancestors.

Conclusion

Social location is a dynamic concept; it is context contingent, and its attribution reflects processes of subordination and domination—both contemporary and historical. The ways in which identities intersect and oppressions interlock are fluid and varied because the meanings that are ascribed to identity categories and the power afforded or denied to specific social groups are based on the sociocultural context in which these social processes occur. Thus, social workers and other helping professionals need to understand not only the history of harms that have been done to particular social groups and contemporary experiences of marginalization and oppression but also the variability in their expression over time and place. Because the sociocultural context in which one lives and the phase of one's life course can determine to a large extent one's social location or, at least, the variance in its expression, we practitioners should focus on teasing out the dynamics of privilege and oppression in the lives of the people with whom we work, whether they are individuals, families, groups, or communities. Should we social workers use any of the models that have been developed to determine an individual's social location, such as the flower of power (Lee, 1985, cited in Bishop, 2002; see <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/csafety/mod2/media/flower.htm>), the Social Group Membership Profile and the Social Identity Wheel (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007), or the axes of privilege and oppression (Hulko, 2004), we need to remain cognizant of the fact that the privileges and disadvantages that are depicted through these modeling processes may change over time and place—both for us and for the people with whom we work. Assessing the sociocultural context surrounding the people and groups with whom we work should never be a onetime activity, nor should self-knowledge ever be considered static or complete. Rather, this task should be viewed as ongoing for practitioners and educators.

Furthermore, how one identifies oneself and the identities that others ascribe to the same individual may be different, as Huggins noted, and this is something that we also need to keep in mind. When talking about social location and intersectionality, we should be less interested in self-ascriptions than in socially designated labels that are based on processes of subordination and domination. The latter approach ensures that the focus stays on power and power relations and avoids the "I'm so oppressed because . . ." trap. As educators, we need to help students appreciate that they can be both oppressors and the oppressed at the same time (Bishop, 2002; Freire, 2001), without sliding into the realm of essentialism and reductionism. This can be a particularly powerful experience for students who may be aware of their marginal social status because of their aboriginal ancestry or ethnocultural background, for example, yet may not have considered how their social-class position has

afforded them more opportunities than other members of their communities. At the same time, students who hold unearned privileges owing to their Whiteness or straightness, for example, may be extremely reluctant to acknowledge these privileges, and if or when they do so, they are likely to need assistance to move beyond guilty feelings and toward responsible actions (see Bishop, 2002).

Engaging in intersectional scholarship means locating ourselves as subjects; attending to oppression *and* privilege (self and other); recognizing that identity categories are fluid, contingent, interactive, and indivisible; acknowledging that social processes such as racialization and gendering vary temporally and spatially; viewing systems of oppression, such as heterosexism and ageism, as historically and culturally situated; and using this knowledge to advocate for social change. Recognizing that intersecting identities and the systems and processes by which value is placed on them can shift over time and place not only provides an entry point for social change efforts but also better reflects the socially constructed nature of reality.

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