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RESEARCH HANDBOOK ON
Intersectionality

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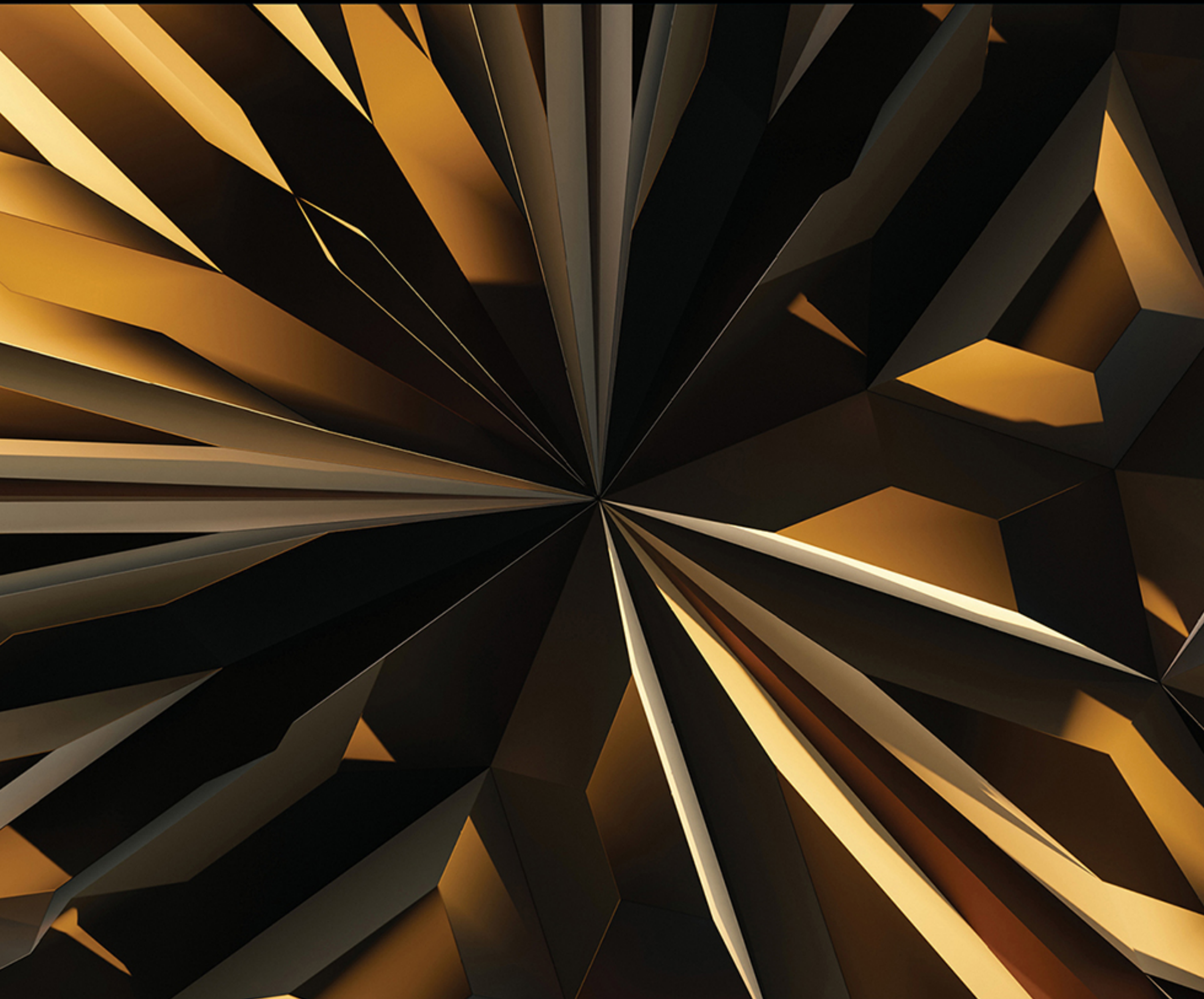
Edited by
Mary Romero



RESEARCH HANDBOOKS IN SOCIOLOGY

Research Handbook on Intersectionality

Edited by

Mary Romero

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RESEARCH HANDBOOKS IN SOCIOLOGY

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13. Intersectionality and ethnography

Robert Keith Collins

> The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite – that it frequently conflates or ignores differences. (Crenshaw 1991, 1242)

INTRODUCTION

When Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) wrote, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," one of her goals was to illuminate the problems of ignoring intragroup differences and how these differences shape lived experiences, particularly for African American women. In the epigraph above, she reminds us that ignoring differences within groups lends to conflict among groups based on inconsistencies between racial and class identities, racial and sexual identities, etc. This chapter expands on this theoretical discussion by examining the need – and useful observation and interviewing tools – for investigating the subjectivity of race and culture in lived experience. Central in this discussion is an examination of the relevance of intersectional research to ethnography and how taking intersectional lived experiences as the central focus of analysis lends to theoretical descriptions and specifications of how individuals make sense of their multidimensional identities. The fieldwork examples provided, and the lives that informed the research conducted, will show how being a self-reflexive researcher, while observing individual interactions within social and cultural environments, and focusing interviews on what individuals say and do during these interactions, provides insight into the multidimensionality of experiences and identities that individuals can embody. These complexities in experiences and self-understanding can often be missed using standard ethnographic approaches.

Although the discussion in this chapter may seem like a critique of standard ethnographic approaches, it is merely an attempt to expand on these tools, illuminating the strengths of an integrated intersectional and person-centered ethnographic approach. For over 20 years, my rationale for using an integrated approach to the study of African-Native Americans or individuals of blended cultural and/or racial African and Native American ancestry, particularly during the creation of the Smithsonian's traveling banner exhibit, "IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas" (Tayac 2009), is that it enables respondents to explain how they see the consistencies and inconsistencies between social recognition and self-identification (Collins 2009, 2021a). These explanations further enable the investigation of how race and culture, being both African American and culturally specific Native American, are navigated and negotiated in individual lives, when and in which social contexts self-understandings conflict with and are not determined by race and culture, and how individuals make sense of racial and cultural experiences (Collins 2006). Understanding that race and culture influence individual senses of being and belonging within families and communities scratches the surface of the many meanings behind identities. The challenge for ethnographers is to develop more tools that expand our abilities to investigate the consistencies and inconsistences between racial and

cultural identities in a person's life and why public racial identities may shape self-understanding for some, while private cultural identities shape self-understandings for others.

Discussion of the need for an intersectional ethnography is particularly timely as ethnographic approaches within anthropology are actively being modified to understand the lived experiences of multiethnic and racialized populations in the United States. Twentieth century descriptions of culture offered generalized mappings of everyday life guided by seemingly stable community or racial group expectations. Twenty-first century ethnographers are attempting to understand what it is like for community members and members of racialized groups to navigate and negotiate these cultural and racial expectations, particularly within racialized cultures, and why some aspects of culture are accepted as elements of self-understanding, while others are rejected (LeVine 1963, 1982; Valverde 1999). These new approaches to understanding lived experiences within racialized cultures seem to be evolving in tandem with anti-racist liberation movements and re-examinations of the anthropological record that reveals how and why race and culture intersect in a person's life over time and that a cultural construct, like race, is not "master programmer" of these intersections (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Strauss 1992, 1–2).

An ethnographic approach to the intersections of race and culture can enable greater understandings of the conflicts that inconsistencies between the two create in a person's life. In practice, such an approach can aid ethnographers' abilities to speak to respondents with attention to when race and culture cause individuals of similar backgrounds to have different understandings of self within different contexts related to appearance and lifeways. The response received can lend to greater academic attention to – and explanation of – explanatory gaps in the literature on the overlapping relationships between race and culture that manifest in people's lives. The remainder of this chapter discusses and illuminates the relevance of intersectionality to person-centered ethnography, explanatory gaps in analyses of intersectional experiences, the relationship between intersectionality and how person-centered ethnography leads to constructing intersectional interview questions, preparing for intersectional interviews, showing respect, and examining what people say about intersectional experiences, what people do with intersections, how people embody intersections, and the implications an intersectional approach holds for future research into subjective racial experiences.

THE RELEVANCE OF INTERSECTIONALITY TO ETHNOGRAPHY

Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a term used to describe the confounding and converging ways in which race, class, and gender shape the experiences that identities represent. Centered in legal scholarship, the coining of this term is premised on the notion that too often analysis of these elements of lived experiences, particularly within the United States, are "predicated on a discreet set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the intersections of race and gender" (Crenshaw 1989, 140). The relevance of Crenshaw's assertion to ethnography becomes evident when observing and listening to African-Native Americans. One can see and hear individuals navigating and negotiating cultural, racial, and gendered experiences in pursuit of being and belonging within community, family, and society (see Tayac 2009). While culture and race shape these experiences, their intensity and subjective nature may also vary given the gender of the individual. These experiences generate everyday understandings of what life is like for the person to live within

cultural, racial, and gender dimensions of being African-Native American (Chamberlain 1891; Collins 2006, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Hallowell 1955).

Over the past 30 years, intersectional legal studies of race, class, and gender have produced a body of analytical research that illuminates the subjectivity of human experiences with these social constructs that offer tools for ethnographic analysis. For example, Crenshaw's (1989) exploration of how "single-axis" frameworks provide a foundation for understanding how marginalization occurs and produce multifaceted subordination experiences.

Devon Carbado's (2013), "Colorblind Intersectionality" sought to expand the discussion of intersectionality to include the extent to which critiques of the approach led to new arenas of investigation in which intersectional experiences could become the central focus of analysis. Three critiques that illuminated the need for methodological expansion were that intersectionality "is only or largely about Black women, or only about race and gender," "is a static theory that does not capture the dynamic and contingent processes of identity formation," and "is overly invested in subjects" (Carbado 2013, 812). These scholarly critiques sought to illuminate the limitations of the legal theory based upon how it was applied. For the ethnographer, mapping the normative concerns held in people's lives about race, class, and gender and how these same individuals have come to understand their own experiences over time offer new avenues for investigation (Alcoff and Mendieta 2003; Cho et al. 2013; Sacks 1989, 1994).

During the same year in which Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality, anthropologist Karen Brodkin Sacks (1989) highlighted the need for – and relevance of – "a unified theory of class, race, and gender" in comparative anthropological studies of culture. These studies, grounded in ethnographic case studies, have been central to anthropological practices. On the one hand, the goals have been to "understand, appreciate, and interpret cultural uniqueness in its own terms." On the other, the goals have been "to generalize, to discover similarities amid diversity, and to develop cross-cultural explanations and theories that proceed in practice from a much more restricted range of Western cultural frameworks" (Sacks 1989, 534).

For Sacks, these goals were contradictory and in need of attention to the differences that exist within the class, race, and gender sameness that was characteristic of Marxist and social feminist theorizing of the time. By investigating the extent to which race and gender "reduce" to class in the United States, scholars are encouraged to expand their expertise in the tensions between "specificity and generalization in cross-cultural comparison" to include ways in which comparisons of race, class, and gender could reveal the tensions of social transformation, how class could produce communities just like cultures, the agency of people of color and white working-class women within these communities, and how and why gender identities, particularly the gender identities of women, should not be considered analytically separable from racial and class identities in a person's lived experiences (Sacks 1989, 534).

EXPLANATORY GAPS IN INTERSECTIONAL STUDIES

Although theoretically sound, when trying to understand the relationship between intersectionality and lived experiences, two major explanatory gaps can be found in the literature. One, it is difficult to find how many aspects of culture and race intersect in the lives of individuals. Building from Crenshaw's foundation, scholars of intersectionality have explained the importance of understanding the salience of intersecting experiences with race, class, and gender. What remains elusive is what it is like to experience and make sense of racism, violence, etc.

in everyday life and over time (Carbado 2013; Collins and Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Devereux 1968; Sacks 1994).

Two, as Crenshaw and others have asserted and observed, experiences with race, class, and gender are varied in the social and cultural worlds that individuals navigate and negotiate. For example, the experiences of women of color, at the intersections of race and gender, reveal a need for qualitatively different analytical frameworks for understanding their experiences than those used for white women; however, "representational intersectionality" can lend to explorations of the similarities and differences in women's identity politics and experiences with discrimination (Crenshaw 1991, 1245). This variation in experiences with discrimination suggests the need for an ethnographic approach that accounts for how individuals cope with discrimination in the cultural and racial worlds that they share, live as individuals representing marginalized groups, and make sense of as part of their own identities. These gaps lend to an incomplete picture of how individuals navigate and negotiate these intersections, and understandings of being and belonging within context, particularly when formulating the answer to the question, "Who am I?" (Bauman 2001; Beck-Gernsheim and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Bourdieu 1977; Csordas 1997; Hollan 2005).

Do analyses of intersectionality only lend to qualitative analyses of cultural constructs like race, class, and gender? The multidimensionality of Black women's experiences discussed by Crenshaw and those that followed show the limitations of generalizations about women's experiences. It is not that generalizations are not useful for understanding common trends in experience and identities; however, to understand how these experiences relate to individuals' lived experiences requires methodological approaches that transcend these generalizations and illuminate their significance in context. This ability to account for variations in racial experiences within social and cultural worlds suggest that intersectionality is relevant to more than the current foci and scopes of analyses.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND PERSON-CENTERED ETHNOGRAPHY

How does one holistically investigate, interrogate, and understand the unique cultural and racial experiences that created the variation that individuals embody? For scholars of culture, the relevance of intersectionality to ethnography can be seen when an ethnographer takes intersectional identities as the central focus of analysis. For example, when I began researching African-Native American lived experiences, a standard ethnographic approach was used with individuals of various tribal backgrounds and varying degrees of African American and Native American cultural and/or racial ancestry and knowledge of tribal specific cultural practices and languages. Interviews occurred during one session, with perhaps a follow-up. Questions centered on telling me about being African-Native American experiences with racism, and the extent to which individuals felt accepted by society. These narrated experiences enabled me to explore the experiences of African-Native Americans and offer generalizations about their marginalized interactions within Native American communities and societies when encountering anti-Black sentiments from relatives, tribal members, related and non-related individuals of European and Native American ancestry, and skin discrimination or colorism from other African-Native Americans; however, an explanatory gap emerged that made my investigations limited: my analysis centered on social recognition and what African-Native

Americans experienced from others. What was it like for respondents to be African-Native American and how did the ways they made sense of their experiences shape how they saw and understood themselves?

Integrating the intersectional frameworks into this research provided a lens through which to examine the convergence of cultural, racial, and social worlds salient in collective African-Native American experiences; however, wedding this lens with an ethnographic approach centered on subjective human experience further illuminated how variations within group experiences occur, and how individual African-Native American lived experiences both related to and differed from generalized common experiences. Such an approach expanded my understanding of how African-Native Americans made sense of the dynamic natures of acceptance, discrimination, and rejection experienced in everyday life, in their own words, while simultaneously expanding the implications of person-centered ethnographic approaches to understand individual experiences within cultural and social worlds.

Person-centered ethnography has made significant contributions to academic understandings of individuals' subjective experiences within cultures and societies. A frontier for person-centered analyses is exploring subjective experiences in racial contexts. Originally used by Robert LeVine (1982) to describe ways anthropologists sought to gain first person insight into subjective human experiences and associated behaviors, person-centered ethnography is a useful tool for exploring how the dynamics of individual experiences are shaped by social and cultural processes. During interviews, attention is centered on respondents as both responders to questions asked by the interviewer and informants about how they make sense of their own experiences within culture and society. Respondents are also understood as active – rather than passive – agents in the formulation of their own identities and the nexus of variation in identity formation that exists within cultures and societies (Briggs 1986; Csordas 1997; Gorden 1992; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994, 1996; Levy and Hollan 2015; Wikan 1990).

To map how person-centered ethnographic interviewing and observations have been used to research African-Native American lives, it is important to map the approaches characteristic of the person-centered ethnography. Three approaches characterize person-centered ethnography: (1) What do individuals say about their experiences? (2) What do people do during their experiences? (3) How do people embody their experiences? Although all these questions are analysed simultaneously in my fieldwork and can be found to have similar usage with both person-centered ethnographers and scholars using person-centered approaches, it is important to note that these approaches can be used independently.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT INTERSECTIONS?

For over a century, ethnographers of culture and cultural identities have focused on what respondents say during interviews, as this is the easiest way to obtain responses to research questions that offer an understanding of what it is like to be them. What an individual discusses during the interview process reveals how they answer the question "Who am I?" and how these events have shaped the answer given in a variety of contexts, from family settings to social settings with non-familial members of the same ethnic or racial background. Narrated lived experiences also reflect respondent comments on the experiences that have shaped their lives. Most ethnographers assume that this is the respondent's answer, which is why participant observations are often wedded with interviews that illuminate what respondents say about

their experiences to gain a more holistic understanding of what respondents go through and the nature and source of conflicts that arise within cultures (Hollan 2005; Obeyesekere 1984; Quinn 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995; Wikan 1990).

Person-centered studies expand on the strengths of what respondents say and have observed during interpersonal interactions by adding tools intended to limit the overlook of potentially important information. For example, scholars taking both a standard ethnographic and person-centered approach to identity engage interviewees as informants on research topics and respondents to interviewer questions. Subsequent analyses examine how individuals' self-identity, and their ethnic and racial group affiliations are achieved and maintained. The ways interviewees talk about ethnicity, identity, race, their intersections, experiences with racism, even when class and/or gender is or is not salient in the interview. Although the similarities between standard ethnographic and person-centered approaches represent the strengths found in studies aimed at revealing the relationship between class, gender, identity, race, etc., two major differences emerge from the person-centered approach that reveals information potentially overlooked (Collins 2006, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2021a; Hollan 2005; Quinn 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995).

A major difference is the length of the interview. For users of the standard ethnographic approach, this usually consists of one interview session with a follow-up. Using a person-centered approach, individuals may be interviewed 15 to 20 times over a longer period stretching into years. Person-centered interviewers can learn how the respondent's understandings of cultural and racial identities, for example, change over time and within various social and cultural contexts, vary by socio-economic status, and ultimately reveal the inconsistencies between identification (self-understanding) and recognition (what one represents to others). While both practices are frequently discussed as "identity," categories like race often gain and hold importance in publicly asserted understandings of self-formulated by individuals over time. Taking race as the central focus of investigation in one interview session may limit the depth of lived experiences with race and culture that a respondent can convey. Interviewing individuals multiple times enables the respondent to think about the situations where their own culture(s), class, race, and racism experienced in interpersonal interactions converged and had an impact on their understandings of self and their experiences, and elaborate further on the meanings these events held. Interviewing over time generates a more holistic description of recalled circumstances, events, and situations. Respondent understandings of variability in identification and recognition, within context, becomes more evident (Bauman 2001; Beck-Gernsheim and Beck-Gernscheim 2002; Douglas 1985; Hollan 2005; Quinn 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995).

Ethnographies of identity also tend to examine social constructs like class, gender, and race, etc. as aspects of identity. In many studies, interviews and observations tend to focus extensively on what respondents feel and think about class, gender, and/or race, or infer bias from an event, and leave the interpersonal and social situations that influence experiences with racism, for example, and how they are confounded and complicated by class and gender illusive and in need of further investigation. Ethnographers using person-centered approaches have also conducted interview and observational fieldwork in international settings and with indigenous communities. In both settings, their attention to the interpersonal interactions where gender impacts class attitudes towards community responsibilities, social acceptance impact social mobility, etc., sheds light on the situational complexities that caused different individuals to make sense of and talk about experiences with class, caste, gender, and racial bias in both dif-

ferent and similar ways while remembering reactions to such oppression (Hollan 2005; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994, 1996; Parish 2008; Whyte and Whyte 1984).

WHAT PEOPLE DO WITH INTERSECTIONS?

It is important to engage in participant observations of human behavior, as interpersonal interactions often reveal the actions that serve as motivations behind why people say what they say. Observations of what people do can also shed light on the relevance of culture to racial identities. Since narratives and oral histories are frequently viewed as having an element of "tall-tale" associated with the respondents' motives, engaging in participant observation affords the interviewer a chance to observe what people do when making sense of circumstances and events where culture and race intersect (Bauman 2001; Collins 2006, 2009, 2020). For example, during my own fieldwork, I have observed numerous respondents' claims of Native American heritage being challenged as the assertions of "wanna-be" Native Americans by African American, Native American, and non-Native American co-workers, despite the presence of the individual's full-blood grandmother or grandfather, or the individual speaking a tribal language to his or her grandparents. Other observations have included those of African-Native American respondents retaliating against similar acts by ignoring the taunts of co-workers or in some cases resorting to violence or merely identifying as only African American because it is "easier" for the respondent to go along with the expectations others have of how he or she should identify (Collins 2006, 2009, 2020).

Using a person-centered approach to examining how African-Native Americans coped with the inconsistencies between identification and recognition, I found that many respondents' actions matched their words. Not only did they defend their right to identify as tribal specific Native Americans, both culturally and/or racially, the ways that they identified educated detractors about the misplaced nature of the expectations they held about the respondents' identity, and simultaneously reinforced their pride in being of African descent as well.

Although, a longer interview period is more conducive to understanding the evolving ways that respondents remember their lived experiences, when time is of the essence, this format is useful. Not all ethnographers have one to two years to devote to the ethnographic process. The following are examples of person-centered interviews on a short research time frame with respondents that had the previously discussed experiences. Conducting multiple small interviews, over the course of two days, while observing the gathering of the California Creek Association, during the creation of the traveling Smithsonian banner exhibit "IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas" (Tayac 2009), enabled me to understand the linkages between what African-Native Americans said and did. It is important to note that the African-Native American individuals that participated in the California Creek Association were not only of Creek or Muskogee Native American ancestry. This community organization was intertribal and therefore the African-Native Americans interviewed were of several different cultural backgrounds (i.e., Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, etc.). For example, observing Mr. Reed, his actions matched his narrative. He was not only active in the association but was enthusiastic to share his understanding of the inconsistencies between how he identified and how he was recognized by others.

Mr. Reed: … I am Cherokee citizen … Around the age of 16, I moved out to Muskogee, Oklahoma. That is where my father is from. In some way it is good, because the communities are small. Muskogee is small. Every kind of knows everyone. "Oh, you're a Roberts. I know your family." You know. But, on the other hand, people are still part of the past and race relations aren't where they should be in Oklahoma.
Me: What were race relations like?
Mr. Reed: Very segregated. Like in high school. I went to Muskogee High School, graduated … At lunch time … the blacks would sit on one side … the whites would sit on one side. You know, coming from California, I was not used to see Confederate flags and, you know, Confederate flag clothing and stuff like that. You know, I was not used to that. There were not a whole lot of interracial couples. It was totally different. We have a long ways to go, you know, living up to our Constitution … living up to being a great country.
Me: How does this make you feel?
Mr. Reed: Well the skin tone issue is twofold. Because one, being African American, you kind of catch it from the African American community too. There is this whole light skinned – dark skinned thing that, of course, can go all the way back to slavery. There is an issue for the African American community, but for the most part, you're black, so you are accepted. But, you know, every once and a while, there is still that tension. The ways I was raised is you know … you are this. This is your background. You're black, you are Euro-American, and you are Native American, but society is going to treat you this way, so be prepared.
Me: So how do you answer the question, "Who am I?"
Mr. Reed: I am African American, but I am also Cherokee … At no point in time do I choose, oh I am just Native American. I am just that: A black Cherokee. I also have Euro-American ancestry … but most of all, I am just a human being.
Me: What does being Cherokee mean to you?
Mr. Reed: You know, being a Cherokee, to me, is just being a survivor … Specifically, I am a descendent of Freedmen … and that this different. I run into Black Indian all the time. I am Sioux and black; I am Navajo and black. That it totally different from being a member of one of those five tribes … because my ancestors were chattel. They were slaves … that legacy alone is clearly unique … to me, I am a survivor. I got it two-fold. My ancestors were enslaved by Euro-Americans. We made it. We survived. They were enslaved by Native Americans. We adapted and we survived. So, I am a survivor.

This interview illuminates the complicated intersections of race and culture in the lives of African-Native American individuals. He is not only proud of his Native American ancestry that is a result of enslavement by Native Americans, but also of the African and European ancestry that characterizes how he is recognized.

HOW DO PEOPLE EMBODY INTERSECTIONS?

The embodiment approach engages how the bodies of individuals represent cultural constructs and "become culturally elaborated into experiences of self and other" (Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994, 228). The focus on the body in relationship to what people say and do enables the interviewer to consider how race, age, ethnicity, class, and gender (etc.) shape respondent's identification practices and influence how they are recognized by others. Scholars using this person-centered technique tend to focus on qualitative information received from – and observations of – respondents, which includes "how bodily senses become culturally elaborated in different ways in different places" (1994, 228). How individuals embody and experience cultural and racial difference is most relevant to intersectional studies, particularly where gender is concerned. Examining what individuals have to say about their experiences with

gender discrimination or how gender shaped interpersonal interactions, wedded with participant observations, enables the researcher to analyse the relationship between the body and subjective experiences. Such analyses also enable the researcher to explain how interviewees make sense of why there are difference in interpersonal interactions based on the body or bodily appearance. A frontier for ethnographic investigations is the relationship between body and subjective experiences, particularly as discussed by scholars of intersectionality.

"Who Made That up?"

The following is an example of an interview using this approach. To protect their anonymity, these respondents, Ms. Bird and Ms. Brown, are given fictitious names. They are sisters that grew up in and around the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and affiliated with the California Creek Association. Their different lived experiences reveal how Choctaw lifeways can vary even between African-Native American individuals, when upbringing is varied. This notion is important to raise, because Erik Erickson, who analysed the notion of identity crisis in the social sciences, reminds us that people gain their identities from their parents; however, this interview illuminates what happens when upbringing occurs with varying parentage (Tayac 2009).

Me: What was life like growing up for you?
Ms. Brown: For me, I really did not understand that I have two cultures until my teens … but I am getting it now.
Ms. Bird: For me, it's been really different. I mean we grew up together … It is just hat I am darker complexioned. OK. I have always known that we are Choctaw and African American, of course. And, I have always held that like dear to me. I have known both. So when you have to fill out applications or things in school and you put on there, you know, African American and other, which is Choctaw, people would go, "What is that?" "What are you talking about?" I have even had teachers that would erase that and say, "You just need to go with one." And that was basically with what you look like. OK. So I have had it really different because I am dark complexioned and people take you for what you look like versus what you really are. You know, I have always known who I was, since a little girl. You know, my parents always told us, you know, what background we come from – who we are. Me versus my sister … I was on both sides … you know, I kind of grew up in it because I went to an all Native American school. You know, I went to the boarding school, and I did stuff like that, and I went to the Pow-Wows and all of the gatherings and stuff like that so, you know, it was really difficult, and it made other people learn too. You know, not to look for people on the outside, as that is what they are. Now, as an adult, it is really good, I fine with everything. I'm good. I'm blessed.
Ms. Brown: You learn to embrace both sides.
Me (Asking Ms. Brown): So, what was it like for you?
Ms. Brown: You know … I did not go to the Pow-Wows, but as far as, how they taught their children in school, I didn't know because I was not around like that … I learned a lot from her.
Me: So, this term Black Indian? When you hear it, what does it mean for you?
Ms. Bird (Smirking and Sighing): You know, honestly, it kills me. You know, I kind of hate to hear the term and this is why: it's because, here I come, walking up, coming from somewhere and the majority of people would say, "That's a black girl." OK. "That's an African American girl." OK. But you are only going on the outward appearance. Then, when you speak to me and I speak to you about being Choctaw and my ways, you know, really, when you speak to me and I tell you about my ways and things that I like to do, it's not what a lot, the norm would like to do, it's not … The norm people like to do the worldly type of things … I like to keep the old ways dear to me. Like prayer is very dear to me. That's the number one thing, you know is prayer, and knowing where you came from and what it our purpose here. You know, it's just basically other people having to accept. You know. I'm good. I'm fine.

> **Ms. Brown (Smirking):** I personally think that it's ignorant to say black Indian, white Indian.
> **Ms. Bird:** If you come across, white complexioned, they were gonna' say you're a white Indian.
> **Ms. Brown:** You know, what is that?
> **Ms. Bird:** Really. It's kind of strange to say, "Here we have some black Indians" … I don't know who came up with that. But that is kind of crazy. I am not a black Indian. I am Choctaw and African American and I am a woman.

In this interview, despite interrogation from non-family members, memories of childhood map to concerns about inconsistences between identification and recognition, but also the roles that appearance and gender play in the respondent's senses of being and belonging within their family.

Although the previously discussed interview data is contemporary, person-centered questioning, particularly what people say about their subjective experiences, can also be applied to analysis of historical interviews of African-Native Americans. Between 1936 and 1938, Works Project Administration (WPA) fieldworkers conducted over 2,000 interviews with former slaves. Although the fieldworkers did not claim to use a person-centered approach, their desire to research the life histories of former slavers and what they said, in their own words, about how they experienced slavery is consistent with the approach. Interviews, such as that of Mr. Lindsey, whose father was full-blooded Creek and mother was half Creek and half African American, offer an examples of former slave vernacular, enslaved African-Native American identity, and why an enslaved individual, despite being three-quarters Native American, would identify as only African American. More specifically, as WPA fieldworker Lottie Major heard in October 1937 in Wichita Falls, Texas:

> Why I don't tell dese 'ventures at one time is 'cause I can'think of it all at same time. Didn't all happen same time, did it? Well, den dah you is. I's mo' Injun mix dan I is nigger, but makes no difference. I's a nigger. You all know how dat is. I's proud of it. I was borned in Rocky Branch, Kentucky, on October 10, 1847. My mother was half-breed Creek Injun – half-Negro, half-Injun. Her name was Charity. She died 'long 'bout 1853. My father's name was Faithful. He was a full-blood Creek. He was killed in the war 'tween Mexico an' 'Nited States. (Minges 2004, 145; Library of Congress 1936)

To understand Mr. Lindsey's identity, one would have to interview him, like WPA fieldworker Lottie Major, with questions that explored his recollection of what it was like to be a slave. We could assume that society told him that he was African American or that his mother told him that he was because slavery followed the condition of the mother. Unless he recalled this imparting of identity during the interview or had observed the interaction through participant observation, our assumptions would be mere speculation. During the interview, one would need to have asked questions aimed at understanding why Mr. Lindsey said what he said. Through participant observations, one would need to examine why he did what he did, or what aspects of his cultural practices or everyday lifeways suggested that he was only African American.

Much can be learned from the participant observations missing from Mr. Lindsey's interview. While we can't go back and observe Mr. Lindsey's everyday experiences, these two practices, interview and observation, used in tandem with one another during current fieldwork, can illuminate the consistencies and inconsistencies between words and actions and interviewer bias and the realities of respondent lived experiences. Participant observations would have also allowed us to accompany him during everyday interpersonal interactions, which could reveal the when, where, and in which contexts Mr. Lindsey's identification of

self was consistent or inconsistent with how he was raised and recognized by his community, family, and the larger society (Erikson 1959). This "situational variance" in identification and subjectivity in identity assertion would also offer the ethnographer insight into the relationship between Mr. Lindsey's appearance or body action, and his experiences (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Quinn 1992, 2005). The researcher could also observe how other people reacted to his appearance in the context of interpersonal exchanges, how these reactions shaped memories of self-understanding over time, desires to accept or reject how he was recognized by others or changed identification practices to reduce the extent to which the African American identity he asserted was challenged. While standard ethnographic approaches create useful maps of how recognition impacts the identification practices of individuals, individual-centered approaches, like person-centered ethnography, lead to descriptions of what it is like to live with misplaced recognition of identities. For example, as a soldier, Mr. Lindsey encountered Geronimo. This is what he remembered:

> I see ole Geronimo jus' befo' he s'render to Gen'l Miles. I wasn't as dark as ah is now, mo' red like. Geronimo see me, he say "You ain't no nigger. You's an Injun." Ah say, "My fathah may been Injun, but my mother's a nigger, an' 'at's the race I chose … In 1885, ah was sent to Arizona to he'p hunt fo' Geronimo. (Minges 2004, 148)

Ethnographers using these contemporary and historical approaches have developed a body of literature that is amenable to intersectional analyses of identity. These works draw distinctions between experience near (emic) and experience distant descriptions (etic) of subjective experiences. The goal is to avoid imposing social and cultural constructs, like cultural and racial identities, allowing them to emerge in people's interviews to a greater or lesser degree. The ethnographers seek to understand how individuals perceive their world from the inside and as it intersects with structural aspects of being and belonging, like kinship or legal status (Hallowell 1963; Herskovits 1928; Katz 2012; Lauber 1913; Porter 1932; Woodson 1920).

Like WPA fieldworkers, historical individual-centered analysis does not refer to their approach as "person-centered," despite sharing characteristics with contemporary practices. In a similar vein, scholars of African-Native America did not refer to person-centered ethnography, despite taking the experiences of African American individuals and populations as the central focus of analysis. For over a century, scholars have engaged in socio-cultural studies of Americans living at the intersections of culture and race and created the foundation for using person-centered techniques to research on African-Native Americans. For example, Alexander Francis Chamberlain (1891, 90), in "African and American: The Contact of Negro and Indian" reminds us that studies of the individuals resulting from the contact and intermarriage between African Americans and Native Americans must include "the results of intermarriage of Indians and negro, the physiology of the offspring of such unions" … "the social status of the negro among the various Indian tribes"… "the influence of the Indian upon negro, and of the negro upon Indian, mythology and folklore" and the physical anthropology and social and cultural formulations of being and belonging that shaped their lives.

Frank Speck's (1915) examination of the lived experiences of the "Moor Indians" or "Nanticoke" illuminated how the community self-segregated along color lines, which not only created variation among individual's identities as Native Americans, but also how they included and excluded one another. For example, in reaction to the State of Delaware classifying the Nanticoke as Negro, and providing them with schools, many individuals refused to associate or intermarry with African Americans. They formed the "The Indian River" and

"Warwick Indians," which led to the creation of the "Nanticoke Indian Association." Those who did not desire to be called "Indians" in Cheswold, Kent County, Delaware, continued to intermarry with African Americans, particularly those of lighter phenotypes, and became known as the Harmonia people (Foster 1976, 17; Speck 1915, 2–9).

With the aid of his research assistant Zora Neale Hurston, Melville J. Herskovits (1928) studied the frequency and nature of racial variation among African Americans in Harlem, NY, students at Howard University, and various communities in West Virginia (Herskovits 1928). Among students at Howard University, they found that out of a total of 1,551 individual interviews, 97 identified as Negro mixed with Indian, 106 identified as more Negro than white, with Indian, and 133 identified as Negro, Indian, and white (Herskovits 1928). For Herskovits, this indicated that knowledge of Native American ancestry and self-identification as being of Native American ancestry was not a recent phenomenon. This also suggested that these individuals were raised in families with the same identities.

J. Hugh Johnson's (1929) research revealed the dilemma faced by commissioners taking the first Creek Nation census in 1832. The commissioners' desired to assess the rights and status of community members of African American ancestry, to make definitive decisions about their being and belonging. They encountered both Creek men living with an enslaved African American wife and free African Americans that were culturally Creek.

For Laurence Foster (1976), this data, and others examined in the creation of his dissertation titled, "Negro-Indian Relationships in the Southeast," suggested that the identities these individuals embody reflect variations in contacts with Native Americans. For example, some individuals descended from direct intermixture between African Americans and Native Americans, but others descended from more complicated intermixtures between African Americans and Caucasian-Native American ancestors. According to Foster, this data could be interpreted as:

> The social order is so constructed in the United States that a person classed as white must have no Negro blood; and in cases where the Indian is classed as "white", he must not have a "drop" of Negro blood. But where it is financially or politically advantageous, one drop of Indian blood does not make a white man an Indian. In the final analysis this all explains why there are so many different colors of persons in the United States classed as Negroes. (Foster 1976, 73)

A. Irving Hallowell's (1963) research into people of African and Native American descent, like his earlier research on persons of European and Native American descent, was conducted within Native American communities. His study of families and social groups revealed how the phenomenon of Native American culture impacted all three populations. The resulting phenomenon he called "transculturalization" whereby individuals became permanently identified with Native America. Coined by Hallowell in 1963, "transculturalization" is "the process where individuals, under a variety of circumstances, are temporarily or permanently detached from one group to enter the web of social relations that constitute another society. To a greater or lesser degree, they come under the influences of the new customs, ideas, and values" (Hallowell 1963, 523). For individuals that have gone through transculturalization – like their descendants – changes in culture, such as manners, speech, values, etc. may vary greatly or slightly from both groups which they embody, and produced different lived experiences, identities, and lifeways.

A theory of transculturalization was crucial for Hallowell since anthropological approaches to the study of experience had been predominantly culture-centered, and that empathized the

actions of the group and group cultural impact on individuals; little to no attention was paid to the behavior of individuals within cultures or cultural environments. Consequently, cultural and experiential data derived from interviews leaned towards the analytical focal points of the participant observer, rather than the "meaningful aspects of the world of the individual" as experienced, motivated, or satisfied by him or her (Hallowell 1955, 88). The latter potentially reveals consistencies and inconsistencies in cultural practices, the experiences of minority populations and conflicts have within culture and their contributions to intracultural variations. Edward Sapir's (1958) linguistic analyses and studies of subjective experiences would cause him to later suggest that:

> The true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meaning which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in these interactions. (Sapir 1958, 515)

While the cultural studies conducted by these scholars illuminate examples of the depth and breadth of ethnographic literature focused on subjective lived experiences, individual and person-centered ethnographers, like Hallowell, have created a useful body of interviewing techniques, as well, that allow for the investigation of subjective intersectional experiences within socio-cultural constructs (Hollan 2005; Quinn 2005; Spradley 2016; Valverde 1999; Wikan 1990). As previously discussed, person-centered ethnography describes anthropological attempts to describe subjective experiences, based in human behavior, as close to first person experiences as possible. Three lines of inquiry characterize the person-centered approach to intersectional investigations: Why do people say what they say? Why do people do what they do? How do people embody subjective experiences? (Hollan 2005; Lowe and Strauss 2018). Using these questions to approach a research problem, either individually or in combination, helps develop academic understandings of the need for individual-centered studies of cross-cultural conflict and experiences. To analyse the questions also enables the separation of individuals' experiences as themselves and as members of groups. As individuals recall their experiences, participant observations enable interviewers to witness the person's actions during subjective experiences, such as how the body, especially racial appearance, may cause individuals to represent an identity to themselves that they do not represent to others. Although often separated for the purposes of analysis, these questions provide the framework for questions constructed and asked during interviews, as well as providing a rationale for the resulting intersectional analysis (Berry 1969; Cobb 1939; Collins 2009, 2020; Forbes 1983; Foster 1976).

CONSTRUCTING INTERSECTIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Drawing from person-centered interviewing strategies, which take individuals as active agents in their lived experiences, intersectional interviews with marginalized or racialized individuals require an understanding of how embodied individuals respond to interview questions. Therefore, it is important for questions to be both open-ended and focused because identity is both public and private: public in the sense that race shapes their lived experiences and private in the sense that culture and family identities may have similar, if not more, importance and relevance to the answer to the question, "Who am I?" For example, there is a difference between asking African-Native American respondents, "Please tell me how race impacts

African-Native Americans?" and "Have you experienced racism?" "How did that anti-Black experience make you feel?" (Biehl et al. 2007, Borneman and Hammoudi 2009; Briggs 1986; Hollan 2005; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994, 1996; Spradley 2016).

The first question, which person-centered ethnographers would refer to as treating the interviewee as an informant, may illicit a performative response. The respondent may provide a general response about what he, she, or they know about their own experiences – and those of others – with individuals directing anti-Black opinions and sentiments towards them. The respondent may also attempt to provide the interviewer with what he, she, or they believe(s) should be said about the impact of race on African-Native Americans. It is important to note that anti-Black sentiment is being used here as an example, which is a more prevalent experience among the African-Native American respondents that I have interviewed over the past 20 years than anti-Indian or Native American sentiments. The second question and sample follow-up can enable respondents to be self-reflexive and consider their own experiences. Their experiences may include examples of how African Americans and Native Americans that are non-family members mis-identify the respondent and accuse them of trying "not to be Black" by claiming Native American ancestry (Collins 2009, 2017, 2020; Hollan 2005; Sturm 2002; Whyte and Whyte 1984).

On the other hand, these examples may also reveal how the individual felt about the experiences and coped with the accusations. On the one hand, did the respondent feel the need to internalize the accusations and assert a culturally specific or tribal specific Native American identity in the face of this racism, or on the other hand, did the respondent reject the assertions and respond with silence? Did the coping mechanism cause the respondent to feel more belonging with family members, rather than other African American and Native Americans? This second line of questioning is important because usually, as with standard ethnographic approaches, the first line of questioning is asked only once in an interview setting. What enables the tools of the person-centered approach to engage the intersectional experiences of individuals is that both lines of questioning may be used simultaneously over a period, usually 20 interviews over the course of one to two years, depending upon fieldwork time constraints. The constraints can include, but are not limited to, respondents' abilities to participate, dissertation deadlines, grant report deadlines, etc. (Hollan 2005; Lowe and Strauss 2018; Quinn 1992; Rubin and Rubin 1995).

The simultaneous use of informative and responsive questioning, over a period, also reveals how individuals recall information to make sense of their experiences. For example, initial experiences with racist acts may provoke anger, the respondent may lash out of pride in kinship and self. However, discussing and recalling these experiences as part of their everyday life over a period can lead to respondents understanding the recalled situation(s) differently. The respondent may not have reacted because such experiences were typical of everyday experiences within or outside of familial settings with other African Americans and Native Americans (Collins 2006, 2009).

PREPARING FOR INTERSECTIONAL INTERVIEWS

When preparing for intersectional interviews it is important to understand the cultural and social intersections that one may encounter in the lives of respondents. Where intersections of culture and race are the central focus of analysis, required preparation includes knowing the

literature of the ways skin color confounds or shapes identities based upon sex or sexuality and the ways that race shapes or negates cultural identities (Campbell and LeVine 1961).

Like all ethnographies grounded in lived experiences, it is important for researchers to have competence in respondent's language(s). Although working with racialized populations in the United States is likely to ensure that English is the language of the interview setting, working with populations, such as African-Native Americans, whose Native American origins may represent different tribal specific populations, from respondent to respondent, knowledge of their language makes the interview setting more comfortable and more conducive to receiving a genuine response to interview questions. This also holds true when working with historical narratives such as the previously discussed slave narratives. Studying and understanding the vernacular used by former slaves or Black English Vernacular in general allows contemporary researchers to check bias projects onto past forms of speech and use the everyday speech of individuals to explain their experiences (Collins 2006; Hallowell 1955, 1963; Kahn and Cannell 1957; Labov 1972).

SHOWING RESPECT

Although most Americans are familiar with surveys, there are those that are still unwilling, in both rural and urban environments, to participate in surveys, and even more so in interviews. From big cities to small towns, showing respect is crucial. African Americans and some Native Americans in the urban environment of the United States still maintain the respectful forms of Mr., Ms., and Mrs. and not being alone with unmarried individuals without a chaperone. Although these cultural practices may not be fashionable in this digital age, they can be the key to respondents agreeing to being interviewed, or complete rejection of one's research project by potential respondents. In both urban and rural Native American communities, knowing the proper ways of self-introduction, showing respect to elders, youth, and those in between, land acknowledgement, and sharing one's own background, before asking information about another's, can be crucial to merely recruiting interest in one's research project (Campbell and LeVine 1961; Collins 2006; Lowe and Strauss 2018).

For multicultural and multiracial populations, like African-Native Americans, these practices may be magnified because racism may have caused individuals to not only avoid strangers but reject participation in research because of past misrepresentation. And, as with all populations, it is important to know that some things may not be conveyed during interviews, because some things that others freely talk about in US society should just not be discussed. The latter is particularly relevant for anthropologists and ethnic studies scholars alike because it takes local populations a long time to forget research and researchers that cast their communities in a negative light or caused social rifts that lasted longer than the research project that created them (Collins 2006, 2009, 2017).

Establishing rapport, interacting with individuals within the community, attending non-restricted community functions, and being seen within the community is often crucial to building trust. In some communities, respondents assuming that researchers are not beneficial is a natural defense mechanism to ensure harmony and stability. Although less common in big cities, in small communities, particularly tribal communities, or small Southern towns, where everyone knows everyone, it is important to show respect in all interaction and observe the customs of the community. The jargon that is spoken in academic settings does not always

translate within these contexts. Potential respondents may be more willing to talk to an outsider with good manners than a fellow community member, for fear that their "business" will be shared with their peers. It has been my experience that people living in these communities are willing to teach researchers what they know; however, bad manners can turn even the starkest enemies into allies, with a common goal of rejecting proposed research (Collins 2006; Hollan 2005; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter is to show the relevance of intersectionality to ethnography, particularly tools useful to illuminating how individuals cope with the intersections of race and culture. The intended outcome is an expansion of intersectional identity analyses to include person-centered understandings of lived experiences within cultural and social worlds, particularly race and culture. Overlooking variation within identities has been a limitation of group-centered ethnographic analyses. Identity politics, like standard ethnographic approaches, has limited academic understanding of the complex identities that individuals embody. By taking multidimensional understandings of self as the central focus of ethnographic analysis, researchers can further reveal the aspects of class, race, class, culture, gender, and other culturally constructed environments that shape senses of being and belonging within identities (Bernard 2011; Bernard and Gravlee 2015).

Exploring an integrated intersectional and person-centered approach reveals opportunities for much needed theoretical description and specification of how individuals make sense of their multidimensional understandings of self. As diversity within racial and cultural continues to increase, it is no longer viable to assume that group-centered approaches can account for the variations in lived experiences that exist within them. The limitations of this line of inquiry can be seen in the inability to account for several phenomena. First, the links between culture, race, and gender and sense of being and belonging in one or more of these cultural and social worlds are alluded to without a clear specification of how they manifest in the lives of individuals. Second, the illusion is that cultural and social worlds are salient in the lives of *all* who seem to publicly represent them, even though constructs like culture and race are internalized differently by different individuals due to life circumstances. Third, different individuals will accept and/or reject different aspects of cultural and racial expectation due to experiences with acceptance and rejection during interpersonal interactions within culturally and socially constructed environments. To understand the lived experiences of individuals navigating and negotiating the intersections between culture and race requires an approach that is amenable to ethnographic descriptions of this variation within groups. Intersectionality and person-centered ethnography provide tools that lend to such a methodology (Crenshaw 1991; Hollan 2005).

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