

Lecture 8 Sociology 621 February 13, 2017 CLASS AND GENDER

Prologue: The salience of these issues

Nothing has been more divisive within progressive, emancipatory movements – and within emancipatory theories – than the issue of how to deal with the multiple dimensions of oppression. There is a tendency in some currents of radical theory to want to treat all forms of oppression symmetrically. One therefore frequently encounters lists of various sorts: sexism, racism, classism, ageism. In one sense this is a legitimate move: in terms of the lived experience and identity of people there is absolutely no *a priori* reason to regard any form of oppression as intrinsically “worse” than others, as more harmful than another. The oppression of people with handicaps can create harms as deep as class or gender. (When middle class kids asked in a survey whether they would prefer to be poor or be grossly obese without the possibility of losing weight, they say poor). And certainly in terms of identity and lived experience, identities forged through the experiences of any specific forms of oppression can stamp a person’s life most profoundly. Each person is the best authority on the character of their own lived experiences and the salience this holds for their identity, sense of meaning, ways of navigating the social world.

However, this is quite different from saying that each person has a privileged vantage point for explaining the harms they experience, for diagnosing the social structural mechanisms that generate the forms of oppression they encounter and obstruct the solution. It takes a scientific understanding of mechanisms to properly diagnose the causes of suffering, even if the knowledge of the suffering itself is derived directly from lived experience. This is the critical task for an emancipatory social science: to understand the structural causes of the harms connected to oppression and the conditions for reducing those harms.

The problem with “laundry list oppression” is that this tends to treat the specificities of the mechanisms of oppression are of secondary importance, or to argue all oppressions have the same explanatory importance for all problems. This is a mistake.

The task of a critical theory of class, race and gender, then, is to understand the specificity of the causal interactions of these social relations.

I. Introduction: Standard Feminist Critiques

Both Marxism and Feminism are emancipatory theoretical traditions. Both identify and seek to understand specific forms of oppression in the existing world – gender oppression, particularly of women, in the case of feminism; class oppression, particularly of workers, in the case of Marxism. Both theoretical traditions explore the consequences of the oppression on which they focus for other social phenomena, and both seek to understand the conditions which contribute to the reproduction of the oppression in question. Both believe that these forms of oppression should be and can be eliminated. Both see the active struggle of the oppressed groups at the core of their respective theories as an essential part of the process through which such oppression is transformed: the struggles of women are central to the transformation of gender oppression, the struggles of workers are central to the transformation of class oppression. And intellectuals working within both traditions believe that the central reason for bothering to do social theory

and research is to contribute in some way to the realization of their respective emancipatory projects.

Given these parallel moral and intellectual commitments, one might have thought that Marxists and feminists would work closely in tandem, mutually seeking to understand the complex ways in which class and gender interact. With some notable exceptions, this has not happened. Indeed, far from trying to forge a close articulation of Marxist analyses of class and feminist analyses of gender, in many ways the most sustained challenge to class analysis as a central axis of critical social theory has come from feminists. This was especially intense in the late 1970s and 1980s, but many feminists continue to be quite hostile to Marxist-anchored emancipatory theory.

The characteristic form of this challenge involves the accusation that Marxist class analysis is guilty of one or more of the following sins:

1. The concept of class in Marxism is gender-blind, whereas class relations are inherently gendered.
2. Marxist class analysis tends to “reduce” gender to class. That is, gender oppression is treated as if it can be fully explained by class oppression.
3. Marxist class analysis treats gender inequality and gender oppression as less important than class inequality.

I do not think that the first two of these criticisms are well grounded. The third is sometimes a problem. Briefly:

1. It is a strength, not a weakness, that the concept of class itself is “gender-blind”. Class *analysis* should not be gender blind, but the *concept* of class itself should identify a distinctive cluster of mechanisms.
2. There may have been a time when some Marxists saw class – or a related idea like the economic structure or mode of production – as fully explaining other forms of inequality and oppression, but no one claims this now.
3. The issue of what form of oppression is “more important” or “more fundamental” depends entirely of what specific problem one is studying.

Because of time constraints we cannot, in this course, systematically explore all of the theoretical and empirical problems of the relation of class to gender. Nevertheless, it is important to respond to these objections and define a general perspective on how to think about the structural interconnection between class and other forms of oppression.

If we have time, I will also discuss a number of broad normative issues around class and gender that bear on the contrast between Marxism and Feminism: the nature of their *emancipatory visions* and how this generates some of the the *explanatory challenges* each theory faces.

II. The Interaction of Class & Gender

1. Micro/macro analysis

First, a general point of clarification about the context of these issues. The class/gender intersection should be understood as both a micro-issue and a macro-issue:

Micro: At the micro-level, understanding the lived experiences, interests, subjectivities, etc. of individuals requires understanding how they occupy locations within gender relations, not just locations within class relations. A “location” is a location-within-a-relation or a set of intersecting relations. But what exactly does this mean? What is a location-within-a relation? This can get very murky very quickly, but here is how I think about it: The *relata* of relations are the interacting practices of people – the actions in which people engage that are inherently inter-actions with others. A location is thus a location within sets of relationally interacting practices of different sorts. When people insist that race and gender are important often they are making mainly a micro-claim: the locations people occupy within gender relations and racial relations impact their lives and experiences in critical ways. These impacts explain all sorts of important things, including identities and other aspects of subjectivity, as well as life chances, opportunities, interest, etc.

Macro: At the macro level there is significant variation in the forms of gender relations (as well as class relations, of course) across any unit of analysis: societies, families, regions, etc. These variations are also explanatory of various phenomena.

The analysis of the interaction of class and gender involves understanding interactions at both the micro-level of the social relations of individual’s lives and the macro-level of broader social structure.

2. Understanding the interrelationship of Class and gender

Analysis of the inter-relationship between class and gender (or other forms of nonclass oppression) involves two related, but still different sorts of problems:

1. Analyses of the *joint effects* of class and gender in explaining various things.
2. Analyses of the effects of class and gender *on each other*.

What I want to do here is simply clarify how to think about these questions for the case of class and gender.

III. Joint Effects of class and gender in explaining various things

Suppose we want to explain some variation across individuals – political attitudes, voting behavior, mortality, standards of living, mental health. How should we think of the way these sorts of phenomena are affected by gender and class?

1. Two basic theses:

Thesis 1. Distinct mechanisms thesis.

When we speak of “class” and “gender” as forms of oppression we are attempting to identify *distinct causal mechanisms*. That is: “class” and “gender” are each names for causal mechanisms (or clusters of mechanisms) located in specific aspects of social relations. “Distinct” does not imply that these mechanisms do not affect each other, or that in the world any phenomenon we might be interested in is ever simply the effect of one of these mechanisms alone. And it does not prejudge the question of the extent to which changes in one might explain changes in another, but simply affirms the point that these are not just disguised forms of the same thing.

One possible grounding for the autonomy of gender mechanisms is sexuality: Gender oppression is generated in part by the mechanisms through which sexual identities are formed, and these mechanisms are distinct from class exploitation. Another possible grounding is the problem of biological reproduction – the bearing and rearing of children – but not sexuality as such. And of course, at the core of the constitution of gender relations is the intersection of these two relational processes: the relations through which biological reproduction occurs and the relations through which sexual interactions occur. To say that these relations are forms of oppression implies that they are characterized by forms of domination and inequality that generate harms.

To say that gender oppression constitutes a mechanism distinct from class, means that it *generates distinctive effects*. This implies that in our analysis of various social questions -- consciousness, voting, educational attainment, income inequality, conflict, etc. -- we face the task of trying to sort out the distinctive ways in which class and gender affect the outcomes.

Thesis 2: Interactive effects Thesis.

While different forms of oppression identify distinctive kinds of causal mechanisms, in the world these mechanisms *interact*: **the world is not additive!** This is of fundamental importance and can be called the *structural interaction thesis*. This implies a rejection of two possible claims:

- (1). The view that the category “class” should itself be regarded as inherently “gendered”. Class and gender are ways of identifying specific causal mechanisms, and our task is to understand the specific forms of their interaction.
- (2). The view that these mechanisms only have additive effects: that the effects of class, for example, do not in part depend upon gender.

In effect this is like arguing in chemistry that the effects of water cannot be understood as the effects of H and O taken separately, but of the specific forms of interaction of H + O in the water molecule.

The interactive effects thesis implies the following kind of model for an explanation of X:

$$\text{Explanandum X} = B_1\text{Class} + B_2\text{Gender} + B_3(\text{Gender} \times \text{class})$$

The claim that class is “gendered” is, in effect, the claim that coefficient $B_1 = 0$.

Example: in predicting income, gender has an effect, class has an effect, and there is an interactive effect.

In this general abstract model, there is also no universal presumption that class is “more important” than gender, i.e. that $B_1 > B_2$.

Note: A famous claim in the sociological literature on race is the “declining significance of race” thesis by William Julius Wilson. What does this thesis mean?

$$\text{Race equation: Explanandum X} = B_1\text{Class} + B_2\text{Race} + B_3(\text{Race} \times \text{class})$$

Strong version: B_2 and B_3 are declining over time.

Weak version: B_2 is declining over time. Race has weaker *additive* effects.

2. “Clender”

If one really insists that the concept of class is intrinsically gendered (and, symmetrically, that the concept of gender is intrinsically “classed”), then one should really replace the separate concepts of “class” and “gender” with “clender”: we live within a structure of clender relations in which there are no specific effects of class or gender, but only effects of their intersection. I don’t think this makes sense, or that anyone really believes this. Male and female capitalists are both capitalists within the class relations of capitalism, and thus exploit the workers they employ, even if there are gendered dimensions of the intersection of gender and class and generate important (interaction) effects in the lives of male and female capitalists and – conceivably – on the workers they employ. Female capitalists might be characteristically less ruthless because of those interactions.

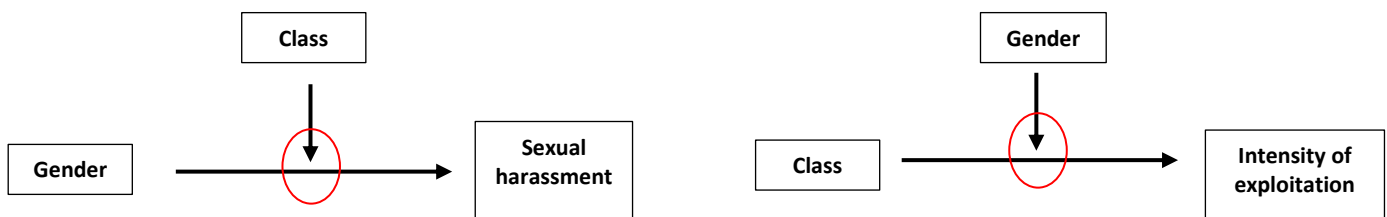
3. What does an “interaction” really mean?

Here is how to think of the processes of interaction. Let’s take something which we think that gender helps explain and something class helps explain. In both classes the idea is that gender or class mechanisms generate effects.

- sexual harassment: Gender processes generate sexual harassment
- material exploitation: class processes generate material exploitation (extraction of labor effort).

Interaction then implies something like this:

- Sexual harassment: the intensity and forms of sexual harassment vary by class
- Material exploitation: the intensity and forms of exploitation of workers varies by gender



IV. Effects of class and gender on each other.

1. Effects of GENDER on CLASS:

There are two main ways that gender relations affect class:

1.1. *Shaping the way people are tied to the class structure*

a. *allocating people into class locations*: discrimination affects probabilities of getting into class locations either because of blocking access to relevant resources (credit markets, educational attainment) or through direct exclusions (marriage bars, glass ceilings, sexual harassment within work, etc)

b. *shaping various indirect linkages of people to class structures: mediated class locations*. Critical example = the way people are linked to class structures via family and kinship relations. This is the heart of the debate with John Goldthorpe over the class location of married women in the labor force. (See the addendum to the lecture for a summary of this discussion)

1.2. *shaping the nature of class locations themselves*.

Gender relations can have a direct impact on the nature of class relations themselves. Given certain forms of gender relations, some kinds of class locations are much more likely to occur and then to be filled by individuals. Particular gender relations around the social standing of unmarried daughters of farming families, for example, was very important for the creation of working class textile jobs in the early 19th century in New England. These young women could not inherit the farm and because of the specific gendered practices of family formation, they were an available labor supply for these positions.

2 Effects of CLASS on GENDER:

The basic idea here is that the nature of class relations and their changes over time helps us explain certain features of gender relations and their changes.

2.1. *Functional explanations & interest explanations*

In discussions of the way class relations affects gender relations, two kinds of explanations are often invoked. These can be called “functional explanations” and “interest explanations”. We are going to have a lot to say about functional explanations when we discuss the theory of the state and ideology. This is a very interesting and complex idea. I don’t want us to get bogged down with this here, so I will not go deeply into what a functional explanation is, but I still need to briefly introduce it.

What is a Functional explanation?

The simplest kind of functional explanations occur in biology, where this is completely standard. If I ask you, why are the bones in the wings of birds hollow, a good answer is: because this enables birds to fly by reducing the weight of wings. Why is the neck of the giraffe so long – a favorite example of evolutionary biologists? To enable the giraffe to eat the leaves of the acacia tree. In each case the explanation for some structural property of a creature is explained by its *beneficial effects for the creature*. This is what we mean by the “function” of the property in question and we say that the function of something explains its form.

The reason this is a special kind of explanation is that we are explaining the existence of something by its effects, by its consequences. In ordinary causal explanations the cause comes *before* the effect; in functional explanation an effect explains its own cause!

As we will see later, some people reject out of hand functional explanations in social science. They work in biology because of the theory of evolution – this provides a mechanism by which functional relations come into existence. In sociology they are more precarious. But we won't worry about that here.

Interest explanations

There is another kind of explanation that sometimes looks like a functional explanation, but really isn't. This is an explanation that invokes the *intentions* of people. It goes like this: Why are tax policies beneficial to rich people? Because politicians intentionally design tax policies in the expectation that they will serve the interests of rich people. Here again the beneficial effects of something (tax policy) help explain the policy, but they do so because politicians consciously designed the policies to generate these effects. An interest-explanation is different from a functional explanation because it works through the intentions of actors. **A key difference between a functional and an intentional explanation – which we will make much of later – is that in the former something is explained by *actual* effects whereas in the latter, in intentional explanations, the explanation is based on *anticipated* effects.** More on this later in the semester.

Back to gender

“Functional” explanations and “interest” explanations often work together, but they have some significantly different features. A class-functional explanation of Male domination has the form:

Aspects of Male domination in contemporary society are explained by virtue of their positive effects for capitalists or capitalism.

A class-interest explanation has the form:

Aspects of Male domination in contemporary society are explained because capitalists realize that they are in their interests and so see to it that male domination continues.

Similar kinds of arguments are often encountered for racism, nationalism, and many other things. As we will see later, in many circumstances, a combination of functional and interest explanations are needed.

Here are two examples of class based functional explanations of unequal gender relations that come from the Marxist tradition:

(1). Frederick Engels' argument in his influential book *The origins of the Family Private Property and the State*: This is a complex and very interesting theoretical account of the *origins* of male domination. Here are the basic elements:

Thesis 1: A gender division of labor pre-existed male domination. This division of labor, Engels believed, had biological foundations given the level of technology. Women had greater responsibility for early childrearing and associated domestic tasks; men for hunting and large-animal husbandry

Thesis 2: In this division of labor, men tended to have physical control of the most valuable potentially heritable property. Large animals was the pivotal resource here.

Thesis 3: For men to insure that this property would be inherited by their own progeny, they needed to control access of other men to the fertility of the mothers of their children.

Thesis 4: Male domination of women is the mechanism through which this control of reproduction is assured.

Conclusion Male domination of women is thus explained by the *functional requirements for a stable system of inheritance of male-controlled property*.

(2). More contemporary argument of Marxist feminists: Unpaid domestic labor is functional for the accumulation of capital by lowering the costs of reproducing labor power. Structure of the argument:

Thesis 1 The provision of unpaid domestic labor is beneficial for capitalists by lowering the costs of reproducing labor power (since some of those costs are provided by unpaid domestic services). The question then becomes: who will perform this unpaid domestic labor.

Possibilities There are three options: 1. Equal sharing; 2. Predominantly performed by women; 3. Predominantly performed by men

Thesis 2 Until very recent times, the care of small children was most easily and efficiently done by women because of breastfeeding, relatively high fertility rates to insure surviving adult children, etc.

Thesis 3 Because of thesis 2, it is more efficient for households for mothers/wives to take primary responsibility for the necessary unpaid household work than for husbands. The allocation of men to the role of fulltime breadwinner and the wife to homemaker will be more efficient -- on average -- than other arrangements. This is the cheapest solution for capitalists and the most advantageous for households.

Thesis 4 Because the solution 2 is the best for capital, this solution will tend to be the most stable in capitalism.

Thesis 5 Allocating women to these roles generates (or strongly reinforces) their subordination to men because of economic dependency, isolation, lowered status.

2.2 Class structure may obstruct change (even if gender or other oppressions are not positively functional for reproducing class structures)

Two basic arguments

1. class structures shapes *resources* available for struggle:

class structure → access to resources → affects struggles over gender oppression

2. Struggles over nonclass oppressions require mobilization of solidarities and popular power and this mobilization is threatening to dominant classes (the Pandora's box problem) so they act to undermine such struggles:

class structure → dominant classes are threatened by sustained mobilization of oppressed groups of any kind → oppose struggles against nonclass oppression, even though the oppression itself does not especially benefit them.

2.3 *Dynamic Asymmetry of Class and gender*

If we look at the question of reciprocal effects *dynamically*, then a pretty good case can be made that, at least within capitalism, *changes* in the class structure have had a bigger effect on *changes* in gender relations than vice versa:

Gender: why have gender relations been so dramatically changed in the past half century years? Why now and not 1900? 1800? Massive entry of women into the labor force -- which is a change in their class locations -- seems the central factor. The structure of the explanation:

The dynamics of capitalism → change in the demand for different kinds of labor → change in the class interests implicated in the exclusion of women from the labor force → entry of women in the labor force → change in gender relations.

At the heart of this explanation, the interests of both men and women are disrupted by the trajectory of capitalism. Robert Jackson argues, that a critical issue here was the interests of powerful men – capitalists. The struggles of women also mattered, but they could succeed so dramatically because the constraints were so disrupted by class-driven dynamics.

In the section on race we will see a parallel case for race:

Race: why did the civil rights movement succeed in the 1960s but fail in earlier decades? Transformations of the class structure seem critical for this.

V. Visions of Emancipation, challenges of explanation

1. Marxism & Feminism as emancipatory critical theories

Recall how I defined an emancipatory critical theory in the first lecture of the semester: This is a social theory that analyzes existing institutions and practices in terms of an emancipatory alternative. Both Marxism & Feminism are emancipatory traditions of social theory in this sense. They are both grounded in a normative ideal of a world free of oppression; where they differ in these terms is the kind of oppression around which the theory revolves – class oppression in Marxism, and gender oppression in Feminism.

2. The emancipatory visions

What, precisely, are the emancipatory visions of these two traditions?

2.1 Marxism & classlessness. Marx himself was fairly explicit in his characterization of the emancipatory ideal – a classless society. The institutional implementation of this ideal was much less clear, but the principle of the ideal was clear: a society without class exploitation and alienation, a society governed by the distributional maxim “to each according to need from each according to ability.” Capitalism, then, is to be analyzed from the vantage point of these ideals: how does capitalism block the realization of these ideals? What dynamics in capitalism point in the direction of the realization of this ideal of emancipation?

2.2 Feminism & Emancipation. The positive normative vision in feminism is perhaps less clear and contested among feminists. Is the emancipatory ideal *gender equality* or *genderlessness*? Does a radical egalitarianism within gender relations imply an obliteration of gender difference or just a valorization of gender difference? But whatever else feminists might believe about this, the emancipatory vision involves an end to inequalities of power, opportunity, and status built around gender relations.

A note on the normative foundations of gender emancipation: relations & identities

I think the most coherent position is in fact *genderlessness* in the following precise sense: gender is a social construction. It is a social transformation of sexual differences which are biologically-rooted into social differences between men and women that are culturally salient and *enforced* through various kind of gender-specifying norms. Genderlessness means the destruction of all gender-differentiated normative rules that govern and enforce expectations about the proper and appropriate roles or identities or behaviors of biological men and women. This does not mean the eradication of all difference between the modal man and woman; and it does not mean normative androgyny in the sense of normatively enforced rules which obliterate expressions of traits that are stereotypically called “masculinity” and “femininity”. What it means is that there would be no *socially enforced* association between masculine and feminine behaviors and dispositions and biological categories. Genderlessness is the withering away of socially sanctioned and normatively enforced expectations about how a man and a woman should behave by virtue of biological sex.

Our language for talking about these emancipatory issues has not really kept up with the cultural developments around gender and sexuality. My argument for genderlessness is specifically directed at the issue of gender *relations* rather than gender *identities*. Some people argue that the emancipatory ideal centers around identities: people would still have gender identities, but they would not be binary nor simply organized along some one-dimensional continuum; there would be a heterogeneous with fuzzy boundaries. This of this in a manner parallel to “musical identities”. There is no simple one dimensional spectrum of musical identities going from – say – high-brow to low-brow. And one can imagine an emancipatory musical identity space in which there was no status hierarchy connected to musical tastes, and no relations of dominations linked to musical preferences/identities.

3. The explanatory challenges

3.1 The general problem: In addition to elaborating normative foundations, a fully elaborated Emancipatory theory faces four interconnected tasks, as elaborated early in the semester:

1. *Diagnosis of Harms.* Demonstrating that existing social arrangements impose serious harms on people
2. *Emancipatory alternative.* Demonstrating that an alternative structure of relations in which such harms would be absent would be viable – that a social order with those institutions would actually work.

3. *Transformation.* Demonstrating that this alternative is achievable and providing an account of transformation – the process by which people can move from the present world to the alternative.

Both Marxism and Feminism make convincing cases for 1. They face dramatically different challenges in 2 and 3.

3.2 Alternatives & transformations

Marxism: It is easy to convince people that harms exist in capitalism and that they are caused by the social institutions of capitalism; what is hard is to convince people that a radical alternative is feasible and achievable. Both of these constitute huge theoretical challenges to anti-capitalists. The idea that a complex industrial society can be effectively run without markets and private ownership is a tough sell, and the idea that political forces could coalesce to accomplish this transformation is also difficult to make convincing. The relatively deterministic quality of Historical materialism helped solve both of these problems: capitalism is doomed, the vast majority of people would, in the face of the demise of capitalism, benefit from a radical democratic control of the economy, where there is a will there is a way, etc. The strongly deterministic tendencies within the Marxist tradition can be thought of as helping to solve the core explanatory challenge of a theory of anti-capitalist class emancipation.

Feminism: Feminists do not face the same challenge. Few feminists have ever worried about the question: is social integration and social order possible without male domination? Is a society of egalitarian reciprocity and equal power and opportunity for males and females viable? These questions are not posed because feminists more or less take for granted that male domination and the associated oppression of women are eliminable. Why is this seen as sufficiently obvious as to require little elaborate defense?

Hypothesis: the essential core of the emancipatory vision in feminism revolves around micro-level interactions, not macro-level institutions. To be sure, there are macro-institutions needed to accomplish and sustain the micro-level practices, but the moral vision is deeply anchored in micro-relations. And here, then, is the hypothesis: the possibility of stable, egalitarian, symmetrical, mutually empowering micro-level gender relations is something that people experience in prefigured ways within existing society. And further, people have the experience that struggling around these relations at the micro-level pushes them towards greater egalitarian symmetry. This reality of micro-gender, then, underlies a more voluntaristic agent-centered theory.

Can one imagine a macro-level unraveling of gender emancipation? Demographic collapse as a possibility. This is not entirely a far-fetched idea: perhaps it is the case that in the absence of asymmetries in opportunities and power between men and women, fertility would drop below 2.1 per woman, and this would lead eventually to demographic collapse unless some new countervailing mechanisms were created (like strong pro-natalist incentives). We already observe very low fertility in developed economies which have significantly eroded male domination and dramatically expanded the power and opportunities for women. In some countries fertility is well under 1.5 per woman. Perhaps this is a consequence of greater equality, and thus poses a problem of sustainability.

VI. Concluding remarks

The central problem of emancipatory social theory of whatever sort is to identify forms of oppression in society and seek to understand the conditions for their transformation. Class and gender oppression remain two of the most salient axes of such theoretical efforts: class, because of its centrality to the problem of economic exploitation, and gender, because of its centrality to the problem of the subordination of women. Marxism and feminism are the two theoretical traditions that have devoted the most attention to understanding these oppressions. In the past a great deal of theoretical energy has been devoted to metatheoretical debates over the general priority to be given to one or the other of these clusters of causal processes. One of the accomplishments of the theoretical progress of recent years has been to move beyond such preoccupations. This does not mean that we must slide into the postmodernist mush of everything causing everything (or nothing causing anything). The rejection of grand metatheory means that the relative causal importance of class and gender depend upon the specific explananda under discussion. The agenda now is to get on with the messy business of empirically examining the ways in which class and gender intersect across a wide spectrum of social questions.

Addendum

An example of Class & Gender: The class location of married women

1 Stating the Problem

1.1 Consider the following objective locations of women. What is the class location of each?

<i>Wife's Job</i>	<i>Husband's Job</i>
1. Typist, full time	no husband
2. Typist, full time	factory worker
3. Typist, full time	capitalist
4. Typist, part time	capitalist
5. Homemaker	factory worker
6. Homemaker	capitalist
7. Homemaker supported by the state	no husband

1.2. Basic problem: we have until now treated individuals as the incumbents of class locations. But individuals are also members of families. Problem = how do we accommodate families into the class structure? And, how does this affect the "class location" of the members of families.

1.3. *Remember the point of all of this:* class is meant to explain things. The point of this question is that it affects the explanatory power of the category for explaining such things as consciousness formation, class formation, class conflict.

1.4. Basic strategy = different specific instances require different logics to answer the question:

1. *children:* their class = the class of their family -- strictly derived from the class of their parents

2. *students*: their class is *objectively indeterminate* with varying degrees of indeterminacy (not “contradictory”, but indeterminate): they have particular probabilities of ending up in particular classes, and these probabilities define the class character of their studenthood.

NOTE: this problem with students is present for people with jobs as well because the *degree of attachment of a person to a given class may be variable* = the problem of intra-generational mobility: a worker who is saving up to become a petty bourgeois *and earns enough to do this* is simultaneously a worker and a pre-PB -- this can be considered an *intertemporal contradictory location*. This raises the important problem of the temporal dimension of class structures.

3. *housewives*: their class = derived from the insertion of their family into the system of property relations and exploitation → derived from their husbands. Note one possible alternative = housewives occupy a class location within the domestic mode of production. (Christine Delphy)

1.5. Difficult case = married women in the labor force.

2 Goldthorpe’s view

- Families pool income as units of consumption → all family members benefit from the exploitation-derived income of any member.
- Families have unitary class interests: class struggles occur *between* families, not *within* families.
- families are mobilized into class formations, not atomized individuals.
- *Because of the gender division of labor and male dominance*, the economic fate of most families depends upon the class character of the husband’s job.
- Therefore: the class of married women is derived from the class location of her husband.

3 Critique

- Given high rates of marital dissolution, many married women are rather like students in the sense that the temporal dimension of their class location is important: whatever we decide about families, they have a current class location and simultaneously have a kind of **shadow class location** = the class location that they would have if the marriage dissolved.
- class formations do not simply mobilize families as units; they also mobilize individuals. Different members of the same family may be inserted into class formations differentially, and at a minimum this means that individual locations may also matter.
- The interests that are tied to classes are not simply income-based interests. Issues of autonomy and domination, the politics of production, are also bound up with class, and these center much more exclusively on individuals as job-holders.
- The degree to which the material interests and fate of a woman are heavily dependent upon the class of her husband (and vice versa) varies across time and place. A variety of institutional features can intensify or weaken this dependency. *The more dependent is the economic welfare of a wife on her husband’s class, the more it makes sense to see her class location derived from that of her husband.*

4 Implications

- Under certain conditions, Goldthorpe's account is correct. In particular, if there is a) low divorce and b) high material dependency, then the class location of married women would tend to be identical to that of their husbands. If there is a) high divorce rates and b) low dependency, then the class location of women will be more determined by their own jobs, their individual insertion into the class structure.
- The overarching criterion for understanding class structures is this: class structures link individuals to class interests -- interests defined with respect to the mechanisms of exploitation. [NOTE: there is a second possible view of what it is that class structures distribute: class structures distribute identity-formation experiences -- Bourdieu's class habitus]
- If we take this interest-centered approach to class, then there are three primary ways in which individuals become linked to class interests and thus class structures. We can call these the *three axes of class location*. Each is relevant to the analysis of class and gender:
 - axis 1: direct class**
 - axis 2: mediated class**
 - axis 3: Intertemporal class:** critical issue = *shadow class if household breaks up*
- To fully specify the class location of women, it is necessary to define their linkage to the class structure along all three of these axes. This opens up the possibility of many more nuances in the structural map of locations themselves: individuals have direct and mediated class locations which may or may not be the same; this opens up possibilities for contradictory combinations of class locations within families; all of these combinations may exist with differing degree of temporal stability; and temporal instability suggests that there is an element of uncertainty in the very specification of a "location" -- locations of intrinsic ambiguities in their properties because of the temporal dimension.

5. US/SWEDEN Comparison

The empirical patterns we observe indicate that in the US the mediated class location of women matters a great deal more than their direct class location in shaping their class identity whereas in Sweden the two have roughly equal weight. Why should this be so? Possibilities:

1. Greater dependency of wife on husband in the US --> her class interests are objectively more subordinated to his. This is due to a) greater income inequality between men and women; b) role of the state in partially disengaging material welfare from family income --> less income drop upon marital dissolution.
2. Greater salience of the job itself in shaping consciousness in Sweden than in the US because of greater workplace mobilization through unions, etc.