

Intersecting Inequality: The Effects of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation on Wages

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Abstract

Using the combined 1 and 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 Census, we examine the significance of interactions between race, class, gender, and sexual orientation on wage stratification. We find that these four axes of wage inequality not only have additive effects, but also interact each other in affecting in wage stratification. The results show that gay men are less likely than heterosexual men to earn as much as heterosexual White men at every earnings level. Also, gay racial minority men are further disadvantaged by their racial minority status as they have much lower odds than gay White men. In contrast, lesbians are more likely to earn as much as heterosexual White men than their heterosexual female counter parts. However, both gay men and lesbians get smaller returns to education than heterosexuals. These findings indicate that sexuality is one of the elements constructing a hierarchical social order with White heterosexual men at the top.

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Homosexuality has been in the news often of late – from gay clergy to same-sex marriage (e.g., The Associated Press, 2005). The increased media coverage also corresponds to a growing body of literature on the effects of homosexuality in a variety of spheres, including the workplace (Badgett, 1995; Croteau, 1996; Woods, 1993), education (Barrett, Pollack, & Tilden, 2002), and law (Moore, 2001), indicating that sexual orientation is one of the key dimensions of social stratification. Research on wage stratification, however, often neglects the significance of interactions between race, class, gender, and sexual orientation – and the multiplicative effect of multiple simultaneous statuses. While intersections of race, class, and gender have received some attention (e.g., Cotter et al., 1999), sexual orientation is remarkably absent. Similarly, in the research on sexual orientation and wage inequality, interlocking influences of race, class and gender are rarely incorporated. This is the first study to analyze all these intersections simultaneously. Using Public Use Microdata Sample data (PUMS) of the 2000 Census, we examine the intersecting effects of race, class, gender and sexuality on wages in the United States. The results suggest that all gay men are disadvantaged compared to heterosexual White men and that gay racial minority men are further disadvantaged by their racial minority status. Lesbians, on the other hand, have an earnings advantage over heterosexual women – lesbians are more likely than heterosexual women to earn as much as heterosexual White men. Our findings suggest that the interlocking effects of these four dimensions on wage inequality and the significance of White heterosexual masculine

norms in constructing labor market hierarchy differs ? among people of different race, class, gender and sexual orientation.

Intersecting Inequality

Scholars studying the multiple effects of race, class, and gender on wages often argue that these statuses cannot be studied individually, as an individual's simultaneous statuses can have tremendous, and often conflicting, effects on wages and social equality. That is, women of color likely suffer from “multiple jeopardy” – once for their sex and an additional penalty for their race (for a discussion see Hill Collins, 1990; King, 1988). Wage and labor market inequality reflect a dominant social order that simultaneously prioritizes Whites over people of color, men over women, and higher social classes over lower.

Further, subordinate statuses are relational; “Each oppressed group in the United States is positioned in a particular and distinct relationship to white men, and each form of subordination is shaped by this relational position” (Hurtado, 1989, p. 833). The possible interactions between multiple statuses may produce contradictory results, especially when sexual orientation is included. In fact, neglecting to incorporate intersecting inequality in research on wages and labor markets can result in “a distorted, incomplete picture of labor market stratification” (Dickerson, 2002, p. 199).

Sexual orientation is an additional minority status that can further marginalize workers, but stereotypes about gay men and lesbians often include aspects of affluence – implying that sexual orientation may not have an additive negative effect on wages. Images of affluent gay White men in mass media, such as Will on NBC's *Will and Grace*, often perpetuate the stereotype of homosexuals as White men with professional occupations.

Opponents of anti-discrimination legislation for homosexuals evoke the stereotype of wealthy White gays and lesbians to argue that anti-discrimination legislation for gays and lesbians is unnecessary. For example, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia has argued that “because those who engage in homosexual conduct tend to reside in disproportionate numbers in certain communities [and] have high disposable income, ... they possess political power much greater than their numbers, both locally and statewide” (“Romer v. Evans,” 1996). Scalia’s dissent likely echoes that of a large segment of the general population. Stereotypes like these imply that gays and lesbians use assumed affluence to influence political outcomes concerning gay rights from same-sex marriage to anti-discrimination legislation. The question remains, however, does this stereotypical image of rich homosexuals really represent the real experience of homosexual men and women of various racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds? There may be a large difference in what people believe about gays and lesbians and what is empirically observable about gays and lesbians. The many differences among homosexuals – differences by race, class, gender, region, or status – may mean that affluent gays and lesbians are more prominent on the political scene and that they use their wealth to influence political outcomes, while the majority of gays and lesbians do not. The day-to-day experiences of gay men and lesbians may both contradict and embody stereotypes about sexual orientation.

Including sexual orientation in an analysis of the effects of minority statuses on wages will help define how these interlocking hierarchies of stratification work differently for different groups. The few studies of the effects of sexual orientation on wages provide some indication of how sexual orientation differs by sex (as most studies include both homosexual men and women, but analyses are often conducted separately by sex). While

these studies address the oversight of neglecting sexual orientation, they overlook other concurrent statuses, such as race and class. In the next section, we discuss research on the effects of race, class, and gender on wages. We then report research findings on the relationship between sexual orientation on wages. We also discuss White heterosexual masculinity and labor market hierarchy among different race, class, gender and sexual orientation statuses before presenting our data and methodology.

The Intersections of Gender and Race on Wages

It is undeniable that women have made strides in the labor market in recent years. However, the gains for women are not equally applicable to all racial groups. In fact, some scholars contend that gains in the labor market are largely reserved for middle-class White women, who outsource their domestic and care work to women of color, immigrants, and poor women (Duffy, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000; Nakano Glenn, 1992). Yet, research shows that, historically, work done by women has been devalued simply because women do it (e.g., England, Herbert, Kilbourne, Reid, & Megdal, 1994). Bielby and Baron (1986) argue that men and women usually work in different environments, but even when men and women have similar work roles, they are given different job titles, helping to obscure the extent of the wage gap between men and women. Huffman and Velasco (1997) report that jobs performed primarily by women have a large wage penalty, regardless of government regulation, firm size, or formalized employment practices. However, the effect of gender in the labor market and on wages is not consistent across all racial groups. For example, Black men and women are disadvantaged in the labor market compared to Whites as a result of their race, but differences between Black men and women do not universally place Black women at a greater disadvantage than Black men – while Black

women are more likely to live in poverty than Black men, they are also more likely to be professionals (Dickerson, 2002). McCall (2001) also shows that there are greater wage differences by race than between men and women. Cotter et al. (1999) analyze gender and race wage differences and conclude that, while the gender penalty is large, the race and gender interactions are more severe:

The additive and independent character of racial and gender inequalities implies that white women are economically disadvantaged relative to white men because they are women; however, white women's earnings inequality is not as great as that of African American and Hispanic women due to the benefits that accrue to white women from their membership in the dominant racial/ethnic group (453).

These studies indicate that women of color do face a "multiple jeopardy" situation where they are penalized, first, for being women, and second, for being a person of color. However, it is unclear how this relationship might change when sexual orientation is included.

The Intersections of Sexual Orientation and Gender on Wages

Recent economic and sociological research shows that gay men consistently have lower wages than other men. In a pioneering study analyzing the wage effects of homosexuality, Badgett (1995) concluded that gay and bisexual men earned between 11 and 27 percent less than similarly qualified heterosexual men, controlling for education and broad occupational category. Badgett operationalized various levels of homosexuality, ranging from respondents who had one or more same sex sexual partners to respondents who had at least as many same sex sexual partners as other sex sexual partners. All

definitions showed a significant effect on earnings and the magnitude of the effect became stronger as the definition became more stringent. Black and his colleagues (2003) replicated Badgett's findings, indicating that gay men earned 14 to 16 percent less than other men. Clain and Leppel (2001) compared cohabiting gay men to married men and reported that gay men earned between 16 and 22 percent less than similar married men, controlling for education, region, and occupation. Allegretto and Arthur (2001) compared cohabiting gay men to heterosexual cohabiting and married men and found that gay men earned significantly less than other partnered men: 15.6 percent less than married men and 2.4 percent less than cohabiting heterosexual men. These studies on gay men indicate a persistent and unexplained earnings difference between homosexual and heterosexual men.

The findings for lesbians are less consistent and vary depending on a number of factors, including how homosexuality is operationalized. Behaviorally lesbian and bisexual women in Badgett's (1995) study earned from 12 to 30 percent less than similar heterosexual women, depending on how stringent homosexuality was defined. However, all differences for lesbians and bisexual women became insignificant when controlling for occupational category. Black and his colleagues (2003) used the same data, but slightly different operationalizations of lesbianism, and found that lesbians earned 20 to 30 percent *more* than similarly qualified heterosexual women. Clain and Leppel (2001) analyzed cohabiting lesbians and found that they earned more than other partnered women. These studies on lesbians' earnings show a range of wage differences between lesbians and other women, providing no clear expectations about lesbians' wages relative to other women. This also indicates that gender differences exist for homosexuals such that the effect of sexual orientation on wages is likely to be different for gay men versus lesbians. By and

large, these previous studies either ignore race differences or include dummy race variables, which are unable to tap the simultaneous effects of race and sexual orientation. Neglecting to incorporate differences by race likely obscures variation among multiple minority statuses. While these studies indicate that sexual orientation, gender, and race affect wages, there is no study, as we know of, that analyzes how combinations of these statuses may affect wages.

Masculinity and race, gender and sexuality

Hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) which is constructed around White heterosexual middle class men's characteristics – characteristics that emphasize toughness, competition, and the subordination of women and gay men – is not a static gender role but a practice of power hierarchy over other racial, class, gender, and sexuality orientation minority groups. A minority group's deviation from hegemonic masculinity is often used to justify their lower socio-economic locations in society.

With regard to the intersection between gender and sexuality and given the strongly gendered nature of contemporary society, it is likely that there are large differences between gay men and lesbians. Gay men are widely denigrated in contemporary culture. At best, they are seen as silly and flamboyant; at worst, they are seen as sexual predators. That is not the case for lesbians. Lesbians appear to be much more accepted in contemporary society (e.g., Pascoe, 2005, p. 335). Perhaps it is because of the interaction between gender and sexual orientation and the social value of masculinity over femininity that lesbians are more acceptable than gay men. As a culture, we value masculinity much more than femininity – femininity is associated with weakness, dependency, and submissiveness (for example, see Koivula, 1999). Gay men are often not considered to be “real men” –

stereotypically, they are considered feminine and passive. Although the femininity of gay men is by no means universal and more images of masculine gay men are appearing in popular culture, this feminized stereotype is persistent and is therefore likely to affect the real lives of gay men.

Lesbians, on the other hand, may be seen as striving to embody “maleness.” Given this cultural valuation of masculinity, lesbians should be at an advantage over other women, as lesbians are assumed to be more masculine than other women or to value more masculine ideals than other women (Dunne, Bailey, Kirk, & Martin, 2000; Lipka, 2002). But how this may affect lesbians’ daily lives is not clear. They could be penalized for transgressing their gender or they could be rewarded for trying to achieve male ideals – striving for good paying, high-level jobs and higher wages, for example. As a result, the presumed association between male homosexuality and femininity could help explain gay men’s lower earnings compared to other men.

The perceived or actual correlation between gender and sexual orientation encourages a discussion of the similarities and differences between sexual orientation and gender – and a discussion of those differences by race. Gay men and lesbians may “do sexuality” in the same way that others “do gender” – reproducing gender and sexuality stereotypes by conforming to norms and expectations about women and homosexuals (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Miller, Forest, and Jurik (2003, p. 357) argue that “individuals ‘do gender’ and simultaneously ‘do sexuality’ with an awareness of dominant societal norms and in anticipation of the judgments of others.” This concept of doing sexuality implies that gay men and lesbians may make labor market choices that reflect their gender, sexual orientation, or both. Further, different races, ethnicities, and cultures

feel differently about sexuality and gender-typed behavior. The differences among racial groups in terms of the acceptability of homosexuality may affect how these groups are treated in the labor market. For example, some African Americans think of a gay Black man as “a waste of a good Black man” (Alexander, 2004, p. 19). However, Black men may be able to express a wider range of stereotypically feminine behaviors without being labeled gay, largely because of a long African American tradition of music and dance (Pascoe, 2005).

Thus, how homosexuality is expressed differs among racial and ethnic groups. Lippa and Tan (2001) found that gay and lesbian respondents from gender-traditional ethnic groups (Asian and Hispanic) were more likely to report higher levels of gender-atypical traits than White gays and lesbians (i.e., Asian and Hispanic gay men reported more feminine traits than White gay men). It is possible that cultural beliefs about sexuality combine with the act of “doing sexuality” such that racial and ethnic minority gays and lesbians embody stereotypical gender traits more strongly than White gays and lesbians. These studies indicate that the effect of sexual orientation may be stronger for people of color than for Whites; gays and lesbians of color may face discrimination both from the sexual majority (heterosexuals) and the racial majority (Whites). This implies that sexual orientation should have an additional negative effect on wages such that gays and lesbians of color earn less than all other groups.

While the discussion of “doing sexuality” and “doing gender” implies that differences between minority and majority groups result from individual-level “supply-side factors” (such as choices made by minorities), it is also likely that a number of structural, or “demand-side factors” (such as structural obstacles to good jobs), may also disadvantage

minorities in the labor market. Minorities – including gay men and lesbians – may be restricted from certain jobs, occupations, or work environments with serious implications for wage inequality. That is, the structure of contemporary society and the labor market may relegate minorities into disadvantaged positions in the labor market. Men and women of color may be particularly hurt by structural changes such as deindustrialization, the availability of government programs, or segregation and desegregation (e.g., Browne, 2000; House & Madura, 1988; Houston, 2005). Also, stereotypes about sexuality in different cultures may provide justification for lower wages. Stereotypes about racial groups often include a component of sexuality: stereotypes about African Americans imply that African Americans are highly sexualized, while stereotypes about Asians imply that Asians are asexual. Either stance could provide a rationalization for lower wages by sexual orientation and race.

But race effects are further complicated by gender status. Hierarchically structured inequalities indicate that minority men may benefit more than minority women because they gain a “patriarchal dividend” due to their sex, though the dividend for racial minority men is likely smaller than the dividend for White men. According to Connell (1995, p. 82), “Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige, and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend.” Thus, for instance, although racial minority gay men may be disadvantaged due to their association with femininity and racial minority status, they may still have higher wages than racial minority lesbian women due to the benefit men accrue from their gender status.

Data and Methods

We use data from the combined 1 and 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 Census. Census data is the only available data large enough to conduct detailed analyses of the intersecting effect of multiple oppressions in U.S. labor markets. Analyses are restricted to male and female workers aged 18-64 who earned between \$1 and \$300 per hour in 1999. Using this data, gays and lesbians are identified by indicating they are in a cohabiting same-sex relationship. As a result, we focus our analyses on heterosexual and homosexual individuals in couples – married or cohabiting. As married men accrue a wage advantage over single or cohabiting men (Goldin, 1990; Loh, 1996), we minimize this advantage by combining married and cohabiting heterosexuals. This not only reduces the impact of the marriage premium for men, but it shifts the focus from the effect of marital status on wages to the effects of sexual orientation, race, class, and gender on wages.¹ Previous studies also indicate that even among cohabiting couples the effects of sexuality on wages persist (e.g., Clain & Leppel, 2001). Gays and lesbians are identified as individuals who reported being an unmarried partner to someone of the same sex; heterosexual cohabiters are similarly identified as unmarried partners of different sexes.

The dependent variable is a binary variable indicating whether or not an individual earns as much per hour as heterosexual White men at each earnings percentile (10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th). Following Cotter et al.'s method, we examine class effects indirectly by looking at the population distribution of race, gender, and sexuality groups at these income thresholds. Hourly wages are constructed by calculating annual 1999 earnings divided by usual weeks worked times usual hours worked per week in 1999. To account

¹It appears that partnered gays and lesbians accrue similar marriage-like benefits, compared to single gays and lesbians. One study reports that partnered gays and lesbians have higher earnings, more education, work more hours, and are more likely to be White than single gays and lesbians (Carpenter & Gates, 2005).

for wage differences across labor markets, percentiles are based on heterosexual White male earnings by metropolitan area – created by the Census Bureau to delineate local labor markets (Burr, Galle, & Fossett, 1992; Cohen, 1998). Like the Cotter et al. study, race/ethnicity categories include *White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander*.²

To assess differences between various race, gender, and sexual orientation groups, we create fifteen different minority groups – classified by race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. An additional group, heterosexual White men, is the reference group. To assess additional differences by sexual orientation, we construct interaction terms for each of the work-related control variables (education, work hours, and work experience) by multiplying each term by a binary homosexual term. We also account for the possibility that children may impact heterosexual and homosexual wages differently by computing an interaction term for children in homosexual households.

We control for common individual-level characteristics that are likely to affect wages. Education categories are: *less than high school* (the reference category), *high school degree, some college, college degree, and advanced degree*. *Potential work experience*, a proxy for actual work experience, is age minus years of schooling minus six. This number squared yields *potential experience squared* and allows potential work experience to have a nonlinear effect on wages. Children are more difficult to identify in same-sex or other-sex cohabiting households in the census, as only “own children” of the householder are identified; the partner’s children are not listed as children of the householder when respondents are not married. Therefore, to count the number of children

² In 2000, respondents could choose several races or ethnicities. If respondents selected only one race, they are coded as that race. As only about 2 percent of respondents in the 100-percent file of the 2000 Census indicated they were two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), if respondents selected several race categories, they were excluded.

in the household, we identify *children* as individuals less than fifteen years of age living in the household. To account for differences in wages by region, we include a series of binary terms for respondents residing in the *West* (used as the reference category), *South*, *Midwest*, or *Northeast*.

We use logistic regression to analyze the likelihood that these fifteen different groups – classified by their race, class, gender and sexuality status – will earn more than heterosexual White men's 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th local labor market earnings percentiles.

Results

Table 1 indicates that all 15 groups are less likely to reach each straight White men's earning percentile. We find similar results to Cotter et al.'s findings on race/ethnicity and gender effects on wages; the race/ethnicity and gender disadvantages are 'additive' – that is, straight racial minority women are doubly disadvantaged by their race/ethnicity and gender status. Also, racial minority men and women's disadvantages become more severe at higher earning levels (except for Asian men and women). For gay men, the race/ethnicity and sexual orientation disadvantage also seems to be additive – White and racial minority gay men are less likely to achieve each straight White male's earning percentile than their straight counterparts. In contrast, White and racial minority lesbians have smaller negative coefficients than their straight counterparts. This suggests that sexual orientation and gender interact rather than simply accruing an additional wage penalty. However, the negative coefficients for White and racial minority lesbians are still larger than that for gay White and racial minority men in most cases. These findings suggest that gender disadvantage persists across class, race, and sexuality.

[Table 1 About Here]

Because the coefficients in table 1 are not adjusted for differences in individual characteristics such as education and work experience, they may over or understate the effects of sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and gender on wages. In the models presented in table 2, we include all control variables tested in Cotter et al.'s study. These control variables have effects in the expected direction. Thus we do not discuss them in detail.

[Table 2 About Here]

After controlling for individual characteristics, the negative coefficients for each group become smaller compared to the unadjusted coefficients in table 1. For example, the negative coefficients for straight Latino men are reduced to less than half compared to the unadjusted coefficients. After controlling for individual characteristics, straight Latino men have a better chance of achieving White straight men's earnings levels than straight Black men. However, all 15 groups still have significantly lower probabilities of achieving each straight White men's earnings percentiles except for high-class gay Asian men (at the 90th percentile). The disadvantages by race and gender for racial minority women are still evident after controlling for individual-level characteristics. Individual-level characteristics do not account for as much of the difference in the coefficients between table 1 and 2 for racial minority women as they do for racial minority men. The rest of the analysis focuses on class, race/ethnicity, and gender interaction effects on homosexual men and women's earnings.

Among gay men, Whites are least disadvantaged, followed by Asian and Latinos. Gay Black men are least likely to achieve the each earnings threshold. This suggests that racial minority gay men experience similar racial disadvantage as racial minority straight

men. However, compared to straight men, gay men's probability of achieving each threshold is lower than their straight counterparts between the 10th and 75th percentile (except gay Asian men at the 25th percentile and gay Latino men at 75th percentile). Further, gay Black men are disadvantaged all the way through and their disadvantage becomes larger at higher earning levels. These findings suggest that although their disadvantage by sexual orientation varies by race/ethnicity, gay men generally experience an additional disadvantage in the labor market.

There is an interesting interaction between class and race/ethnicity on gay men's earnings. The patterns of disadvantage across the earning levels vary by race/ethnicity groups. White and Asian gay men's negative coefficients consistently decline as they reach higher earning percentiles – indicating an increasing likelihood of achieving straight White men's earnings percentiles at higher class levels. In contrast, Black gay men's disadvantage increases at higher percentiles. Latino gay men struggle to achieve straight White men's 50th percentile earning level; however, their chances are better at higher earning levels. This suggests some bipolar distribution of the population in terms of earning ability for White, Asian, and Latino gay men when they are concentrated in either lower or higher earnings percentiles. Gay Black men are disadvantaged at all earning levels.

Among lesbian women, race/ethnicity disadvantages are similar to that of men and straight women. White and Asian lesbians have the smallest negative coefficients at higher earnings/class levels although Asian lesbians are more disadvantaged than White lesbians at the lower percentiles. Latina lesbians follow this pattern. Lesbian Black women are the

most disadvantaged among lesbians. This suggests that racial/ethnic disadvantages are similar and persistent across class, gender, and sexual orientation.

In contrast, sexual orientation seems to have different effects on earnings for men and women. Compared to straight women, lesbians have smaller negative coefficients. This means that White and racial/ethnic minority lesbians have a more advantageous labor market position than their straight counterparts. In addition, while straight women's disadvantages become more severe at higher earnings levels, – a sign of a glass ceiling for straight women – the negative coefficients for lesbian women are constant across the earnings levels. This suggests that lesbian workers may have been more successful in overcoming gender barriers.

Previous research suggests that homosexual men and women invest more in human capital such as education, which may contribute to their higher income [*e.g., Carpenter & Gates, 2005). However, it is not clear if they are rewarded similarly for their human capital investment compared to straight men and women. Thus, table 3 shows the results of interaction terms between sexual orientation and human capital (education, work hours, and work experience). The interaction effect of sexual orientation and the number of children in the household is also tested because a previous study suggests that lesbian and straight mothers' work patterns are different (Peplau & Fingerhut, 2004).

[Table 3 About Here]

The results show that the returns to education (less than high school is the reference category) for homosexual men and women are weaker across the earnings levels (except the lower class level – the 10th percentile – where the coefficients are not significant). This suggests that gays and lesbians benefit less from educational attainment. In addition, the

lower returns to education are more severe for gays and lesbians with higher educational attainment levels (the coefficients for interactions between homosexuality and bachelor's or advanced degree are significantly negative). Furthermore, the negative coefficients are generally larger at higher earnings/class levels. For instance, the negative coefficient for lesbian*bachelor degree interaction increases from -.113 at the 50th percentile and -.229 at the 75th percentile to -.407 at the 90th percentile. This means that at higher earnings/class levels, homosexual men and women get smaller returns to their educational investment.

In addition, homosexual men and women get smaller returns to their longer work hours at the 25th and 50th percentiles. However, lesbians get larger returns to work experience at 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles although their advantage becomes smaller at 25th and 50th percentiles. Gay men's returns to work experience are significantly different from heterosexual men and women only at 25th and 50th percentiles, but they receive smaller returns to work experience.

Our results show that the interaction terms between the number of children and sexual orientation are positive for gay men (except for the 90th percentile) and for lesbians at the 75th and 90th percentiles. This suggests that gays and lesbians may put extra effort in the labor market when they have children. However, this may also reflect that gay and lesbian parents face difficulty acquiring child custody unless they are financially advantaged.

Conclusion

Scholars of the intersections of race, class, and gender often argue that these statuses cannot be studied individually because people experience the effects of these multiple statuses simultaneously. However, quantitative research on wage inequality is

only beginning to explore the dynamics of intersecting oppression. While intersections of race, class, and gender have received some attention (e.g., Cotter et al., 1999), sexual orientation is remarkably absent. In this study, we examine all of these axes of wage inequality in the United States.

The results show that all four status dimensions are significant factors of wage inequality. Further, these factors not only have “additive” effects on wage inequality for minority groups, but they also have different effects on wages, contingent on a specific status dimension such as gender. First, we find that all fifteen minority groups have a lower probability of reaching each cohabiting or married straight White men’s earnings level. One of the striking, but not surprising, results is that gender and race disadvantages extend across all status dimensions. Similar to Cotter et al.’s (1999) finding, racial minority women are doubly disadvantaged from their racial and gender status. Second, there are differences among racial minority groups; the disadvantages are most severe for Blacks, followed by Hispanics.

Homosexuals experience race and gender disadvantage similar to their straight counterparts. However, gay men are additionally disadvantaged due to their sexual orientation. We find that gay men have a lower probability of achieving White straight men’s earnings levels than their straight counterparts at most earnings levels. This means that sexuality is one of key mechanisms that construct hierarchy among different groups. There are also diverging patterns of class effects among gay men. While White, Asian, and Hispanic gay men’s disadvantages at higher earnings levels are not as severe as at lower earnings levels, Black gay men’s disadvantage steadily becomes larger at higher earnings levels. This suggests that while there is some proportion of White, Asian, and Hispanic gay

men who have attained middle-class status, most gay Black men are concentrated in lower economic levels.

In contrast to gay men, lesbian women have a higher probability of achieving each earnings level threshold than their straight counterparts. Further, while straight women are experiencing a “glass ceiling effect” at higher earnings levels, lesbian women’s disadvantages are smaller at the highest earnings level. In addition to some representation of gay men at higher earnings levels, this may have contributed the image of affluent gays and lesbians in mass media even though they may represent only small proportion of the homosexual population. Further, both gays and lesbians get smaller returns to their education and their penalty becomes more severe at higher earnings levels. At higher earnings levels where the significance of education becomes high, they are more penalized for their gender transgression.

Gay men’s disadvantage and lesbian women’s advantage may reflect their assumed relations to hegemonic masculinity. Stereotypes of gay men as feminine may lead wage discrimination against gay men. In contrast, lesbian women’s assumed association with masculinity may reduce their gender disadvantage. As lesbian women are often stereotyped as masculine, they may have better opportunities in finding well-paid occupations. These findings suggest society’s male-centered values have a significant influence on people’s financial situations beyond the effects of gender. However, this advantage is not the same for different racial groups. As racial minority homosexuals deviate from White masculinity norms, they are disadvantaged in the labor market. Furthermore, it should be noted that gay men’s probability of achieving White straight men’s earning levels is still higher than that

of their lesbian counterparts in almost all cases, indicating the presence of a patriarchal dividend—all men benefit from their gender status.

These results suggest that including sexual orientation as an axis of wage inequality improves our understanding of interlocking, multiple oppressions. Sexuality is one of the elements constructing a hierarchical social order with White heterosexual men at the top. Although we found that the effects of sexuality are “intersecting” rather than simply “additive,” which may complicate the intersectionality research on wage stratification, the intersecting effect is consistent with the social order that stratifies people according to their relation to hegemonic masculinity. Including sexual orientation in intersectionality research may help us advance the analyses on the dynamics in which White-heterosexual-centered masculinity affects wage inequality among different groups.

This paper focused on wage inequality, but other aspects of labor market inequality research would benefit from an analysis of multiple minorities statuses, such as occupational segregation. As we found strong differences in wages among various racial, gender, and sexual groups, future research should test other variables to explain various aspects of social stratification. For example, researchers may find large differences in the effect of occupational segregation among workers with multiple statuses – it is possible that White gays and lesbians are more heavily concentrated in the service industry or professional occupations, but gays and lesbians of color may be more concentrated in the manufacturing industry. As a result, the effects of economic restructuring may have a bigger impact on gays and lesbians of color than on White gays and lesbians – further exacerbating labor market inequality among gays and lesbians and between heterosexual and homosexual workers. Future studies should incorporate these aspects of labor market

inequality to better understand the real experience of multiple oppressions among people of different race, class, gender, and sexual orientations.

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Table 1. Logistic regression coefficients at the selected straight White male earnings percentiles

	10TH	25TH	50TH	75TH	90TH
Intercept	2.118 ***	1.034 ***	-0.059 ***	-1.145 ***	-2.241 ***
Straight men					
Black male	-0.795 ***	-0.920 ***	-1.073 ***	-1.226 ***	-1.421 ***
Asian male	-0.304 ***	-0.618 ***	-0.504 ***	-0.372 ***	-0.361 ***
Hispanic male	-0.356 ***	-1.190 ***	-1.470 ***	-1.559 ***	-1.596 ***
Gay men					
White male	-0.443 ***	-0.476 ***	-0.470 ***	-0.429 ***	-0.445 ***
Black male	-1.143 ***	-1.275 ***	-1.402 ***	-1.681 ***	-1.948 ***
Asian male	-0.859 ***	-0.958 ***	-1.062 ***	-1.001 ***	-0.908 ***
Hispanic male	-1.025 ***	-1.620 ***	-1.833 ***	-1.862 ***	-1.716 ***
Straight women					
White female	-1.118 ***	-1.363 ***	-1.462 ***	-1.644 ***	-1.869 ***
Black female	-1.247 ***	-1.673 ***	-1.961 ***	-2.285 ***	-2.519 ***
Asian female	-1.515 ***	-1.633 ***	-1.617 ***	-1.747 ***	-1.942 ***
Hispanic female	-1.771 ***	-2.372 ***	-2.652 ***	-2.886 ***	-3.016 ***
Lesbian women					
White female	-0.401 ***	-0.641 ***	-0.697 ***	-0.770 ***	-0.889 ***
Black female	-1.142 ***	-1.535 ***	-1.797 ***	-2.025 ***	-2.022 ***
Asian female	-1.058 ***	-1.248 ***	-1.194 ***	-1.143 ***	-1.103 ***
Hispanic female	-1.247 ***	-1.801 ***	-2.028 ***	-2.184 ***	-2.131 ***

Note: *P<=.05, **P<=.01, ***P<=.001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 2. Logistic regression coefficients at the selected straight White male earnings percentiles with control variables

	10TH	25TH	50TH	75TH	90TH
Intercept	-5.557 ***	-12.639 ***	-12.472 ***	-13.238 ***	-15.016 ***
Straight men					
Black male	-0.657 ***	-0.628 ***	-0.748 ***	-0.831 ***	-0.947 ***
Asian male	-0.308 ***	-0.435 ***	-0.335 ***	-0.316 ***	-0.447 ***
Hispanic male	-0.051 ***	-0.368 ***	-0.582 ***	-0.667 ***	-0.719 ***
Gay men					
White male	-0.366 ***	-0.350 ***	-0.328 ***	-0.179 ***	-0.078 **
Black male	-0.879 ***	-0.750 ***	-0.790 ***	-0.937 ***	-1.038 ***
Asian male	-0.669 ***	-0.403 ***	-0.486 ***	-0.373 ***	-0.259
Hispanic male	-0.238 **	-0.583 ***	-0.736 ***	-0.644 ***	-0.390 ***
Straight women					
White female	-0.470 ***	-0.990 ***	-1.179 ***	-1.289 ***	-1.364 ***
Black female	-1.050 ***	-1.292 ***	-1.511 ***	-1.677 ***	-1.724 ***
Asian female	-0.837 ***	-0.968 ***	-1.041 ***	-1.220 ***	-1.426 ***
Hispanic female	-0.812 ***	-1.319 ***	-1.521 ***	-1.630 ***	-1.643 ***
Lesbian women					
White female	-0.364 ***	-0.558 ***	-0.597 ***	-0.557 ***	-0.530 ***
Black female	-0.900 ***	-1.079 ***	-1.203 ***	-1.218 ***	-0.998 ***
Asian female	-0.627 ***	-0.649 ***	-0.578 ***	-0.537 ***	-0.522 *
Hispanic female	-0.567 ***	-0.840 ***	-0.973 ***	-0.990 ***	-0.793 ***
Citizenship	0.452 ***	0.564 ***	0.314 ***	0.091 ***	0.047 ***
Immigrant status	-0.108 ***	-0.110 ***	-0.239 ***	-0.183 ***	-0.043 ***
English proficiency	0.283 ***	0.601 ***	0.682 ***	0.692 ***	0.627 ***
High school	0.350 ***	0.563 ***	0.546 ***	0.469 ***	0.262 ***
Some college	0.416 ***	1.003 ***	1.057 ***	1.006 ***	0.799 ***
Bachelor degree	0.478 ***	1.756 ***	2.008 ***	2.045 ***	1.967 ***
Advanced degree	0.674 ***	2.148 ***	2.635 ***	2.657 ***	2.592 ***
Married	0.079 ***	0.219 ***	0.289 ***	0.359 ***	0.409 ***
Number of children	-0.044 ***	-0.029 ***	0.022 ***	0.064 ***	0.111 ***
Logged work hours	2.187 ***	2.876 ***	2.287 ***	2.126 ***	2.290 ***
Experience (potential)	0.054 ***	0.108 ***	0.132 ***	0.129 ***	0.119 ***
Experience ² (potential)	-0.001 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***
South	-0.164 ***	-0.031 ***	-0.009 ***	0.011 **	0.056 ***
Midwest	-0.342 ***	-0.044 ***	0.047 ***	0.054 ***	0.023 ***
North East	-0.043 ***	0.006	0.054 ***	0.058 ***	0.031 ***

Note: *P<=.05, **P<=.01, ***P<=.001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 3. Logistic regression coefficients at the selected straight White male earnings percentiles with interaction terms

	10TH	25TH	50TH	75TH	90TH
Intercept	-5.555 ***	-12.645 ***	-12.475 ***	-13.238 ***	-15.018 ***
Straight men					
Black male	-0.657 ***	-0.628 ***	-0.748 ***	-0.831 ***	-0.947 ***
Asian male	-0.308 ***	-0.435 ***	-0.336 ***	-0.316 ***	-0.447 ***
Hispanic male	-0.051 ***	-0.368 ***	-0.581 ***	-0.666 ***	-0.718 ***
Gay men					
White male	-0.358 *	0.620 ***	0.234	-0.154	0.320
Black male	-0.936 ***	0.170	-0.292	-0.945 ***	-0.675 *
Asian male	-0.743 ***	0.544 ***	0.066	-0.369	0.122
Hispanic male	-0.356 *	0.315 *	-0.241	-0.668 ***	-0.080
Straight women					
White female	-0.470 ***	-0.990 ***	-1.179 ***	-1.290 ***	-1.364 ***
Black female	-1.050 ***	-1.292 ***	-1.511 ***	-1.677 ***	-1.724 ***
Asian female	-0.837 ***	-0.968 ***	-1.041 ***	-1.220 ***	-1.426 ***
Hispanic female	-0.811 ***	-1.319 ***	-1.521 ***	-1.630 ***	-1.643 ***
Lesbian women					
White female	-0.772 ***	-0.078	-0.239	-0.380 *	-0.448
Black female	-1.302 ***	-0.596 ***	-0.876 ***	-1.127 ***	-1.049 ***
Asian female	-1.038 ***	-0.159	-0.201	-0.361	-0.462
Hispanic female	-0.970 ***	-0.353 **	-0.639 ***	-0.892 ***	-0.850 **
Interaction terms					
Gay*Some college	-0.135	-0.129 ***	-0.168 ***	-0.129 *	-0.360 ***
Gay*BA	0.049	-0.086	-0.202 ***	-0.133 *	-0.375 ***
Gay*advanced degree	-0.140	-0.161 **	-0.270 ***	-0.179 **	-0.318 ***
Lesbian*some college	0.035	-0.037	-0.008	-0.072	-0.205 +
Lesbian*BA	0.116	-0.054	-0.113 **	-0.229 ***	-0.407 ***
Lesbian*advanced degree	0.136	-0.017	-0.176 ***	-0.324 ***	-0.423 ***
Gay*experience	0.040	-0.218 ***	-0.084 *	0.053	0.041
Gay*experience ²	-0.001	-0.155 ***	-0.115 ***	0.004	0.119
Lesbian*experience	-0.012	-0.015 **	-0.013 *	-0.008	-0.011
Lesbian*experience ²	0.000	0.000 **	0.000 *	0.000	0.000
Gay*work hours	0.028 **	0.010 *	0.013 *	-0.002	-0.023
Lesbian*work hours	0.000 *	0.000	0.000 *	0.000	0.000
Gay*number of children	0.128 ***	0.076 ***	0.071 ***	0.045 *	0.010
Lesbian*number of children	0.031	-0.016	0.007	0.056 **	0.084 **

Notes: *P<=.05, **P<=.01, ***P<=.001 (two-tailed tests)

Control variables not shown.