Especially during adolescence and young adulthood, individual men may feel compelled to publicly adopt styles of masculinity that enforce sexist normative myths linking manhood to the objectification of women (Grazian, 2007; Sanday, 1990). Hegemonic forms of masculinity, or those most valued in a given place and time, have often included men’s sexual domination of women as an organizing feature of social life in order to ensure continuation of the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1995; Rich, 1983). Given heterosexuality’s prominent and potentially noxious role in the construction of masculinity, it is important to examine when and how men resist masculinity projects predicated on the sexual objectification and subordination of women. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 44 college men, and 16 focus groups with 87 additional men and women students, this article examines the multidimensional social processes that constrain and enable men as they attempt to resist sexist conventions of masculinity and heterosexuality. A theory of gender as structure—a multidimensional entity whose impact extends to all levels of social life—is used to investigate complexity and contradictions in men’s gendered sexual subjectivities, including why they engage in sexist thinking and behavior despite, in many ways, not personally desiring to do so.

Keywords: masculinity, heterosexuality, sexism, college

Especially during adolescence and young adulthood, individual men may feel compelled to publicly adopt styles of masculinity that enforce sexist normative myths linking manhood to the objectification of women (Grazian, 2007; Sanday, 1990). Hegemonic forms of masculinity, or those most valued in a given place and time, have often included men’s sexual domination of women as an organizing feature of social life in order to ensure continuation of the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1995; Rich, 1983). Given heterosexuality’s prominent and potentially noxious role in the construction of masculinity, it is important to examine when and how men resist masculinity projects predicated on the sexual objectification and subordination of women. A theory of gender as structure—a multidimensional entity whose impact extends to all levels of social life—provides tools for understanding the complexity of men’s gendered sexual subjectivities, including why they engage in sexist thinking and behavior despite, in many ways, not personally desiring to do so.

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In this article, I draw on in-depth interviews with 44 college men and 16 focus groups with 87 additional men and women students to examine the multidimensional social processes that constrain and enable men as they attempt to resist sexist conventions of masculinity and heterosexuality. I especially focus on the internal complexities of college men’s masculinity projects and to structural inconsistencies among men’s selves (their gendered identities, capacities, and sensibilities shaped by socialization experiences prior to college), cultural interactional expectations, and organizational arrangements.

GENDER STRUCTURE AND SEXISM AMONG MEN

Aiming to unite diverse ways of thinking about the construction of gender, a theory of gender as a social structure focuses on how differences based on sex as a category are produced dynamically at multiple levels: the individual, interactional, and institutional (Martin, 2004; Risman, 2004). At the individual level, sexist behavior may be the result of socialization experiences, beginning in early childhood, that lead men to develop core masculine identities that include sexist beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. At the level of interaction, sexist behavior may result when men “do gender” according to cultural expectations that link sexual performance and the objectification of women to manhood (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Processes operating at the level of institutions and organizations may segregate men and women (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006), provide resources or settings that enable men’s objectifying approaches toward women and sex (Ray & Rosow, 2009; Stombler, 1994), or otherwise regulate gender and sexual practices in ways that institutionalize normative definitions of masculinity, femininity, and heterosexuality (Butler, 1990; Pascoe, 2007).

The multi-dimensional processes discussed above work dynamically together to produce gender differences and inequality. Mechanisms operating at the three levels need not be in complete alignment in order to reproduce gender inequality, and there are always possibilities for structural vulnerabilities or rifts where social processes producing gender are conflicting or discordant. Bird (1996), for example, found that men might personally disagree with prevailing masculine ideals and associated practices like sexist talk and “girl watching,” yet may feel compelled to participate when among other men so as not to lose masculine status and peer inclusion. Exploring rifts may help uncover which processes are most potent at creating gender inequality and, correspondingly, how structural vulnerabilities may be exploited—by individuals and social movements—to undermine those processes and inter-level synergy. As Risman (2004) argues, examining the relationships among the different dimensions allows for complicated questions of recursive causality. For example, while gendered selves no doubt affect how gender is done in interactions, how does doing gender come to affect individual selves, communities of individuals, or larger cultural beliefs? How might social actors, individually or collectively, resist undesirable cultural expectations in ways that come to change structure?

In the discussion below I draw on two studies of college student social life to examine the experiences of men who challenge sexism in masculine heterosexuality. First, I draw on in-depth interviews with men from two contrasting campus peer cultures: fraternity men and male residents of a coeducational residence hall. I also draw on data from student focus groups to help form a picture of these social contexts and student life more generally. I focus in depth on three men who expressed
ambivalence, anxiety, or condemnation toward cultural meanings and practices that connect manhood to sexual performance and the objectification of women. I chose to focus on these men, not because they are an exhaustive representation of how the men I interviewed experience gendered sexuality, but because they each illustrate, in different ways, how gender structure constrains and enables men’s attempts to resist sexism in heterosexuality.

**Method**

I interviewed 44 men from two distinct peer cultures at the same large state university in the Midwest. In-depth interviews allowed me to collect rich data on how men made sense of experiences with gender and sexuality and on the social contexts in which they had them. Twenty-four men were members of four fraternities. Previous research indicates that fraternity men are more likely to live in single-sex environments, to engage in alcohol-fueled partying, and to sexually objectify women (Boswell & Spade, 1996; Martin & Hummer, 1989; Sanday, 1990; Stombler, 1994). Most of the fraternity men interviewed lived in large on-campus houses owned by their fraternities with approximately 60 to 90 other men. Another 20 men were residents of Welch Hall, a coeducational living and learning center with a 2 to 1 female to male ratio. Welch Hall has a reputation for being queer and feminist friendly, for awareness of left-leaning political causes, and for attracting students uninterested in fraternities and sororities. In addition, because previous research on men and sexuality has highlighted the importance of men’s homosocial peer groups (Bird, 1996), I believed it was important to sample men who lived in a mixed gender environment. While these two groups are distinct, with almost no overlap in social networks or interaction, the men are similar in other important ways. They are all American men between the ages of 18 and 23, heterosexual-identified, mostly White and middle class, and are resident students at the same university.

Guided by roughly 50 open-ended questions, I asked the men about their beliefs and attitudes about sexuality, their sexual and romantic experiences, and their broader desires and goals related to women and sex. I asked the men about their family backgrounds and socialization experiences related to gender and sexuality, their high school friendship groups, their transition to college and acclimation to new friendship grounds, and the social worlds they inhabited at the university. I was particularly interested in how they viewed themselves in relation to their peers—in high school, college, and in other social contexts. I asked respondents to define respectable and ethical sexual behavior for men, especially with regard to romantic and sexual relationships and the treatment of women. I asked respondents to evaluate themselves and other men they knew and to define “normal” male sexuality.

My analysis of the individual interviews is supported by data from a second study involving 16 focus groups of students at the same university (87: 24 men and 63 women). The purpose of this study, on which I was a co-investigator, was to investigate college social life, especially students’ attitudes about partying and hooking up, their perspectives on the dominant party scene, and how they balanced academics with socializing. Most of these focus groups were formed through student organizations (an evangelical Christian group or a sorority, for example) although some were formed through informal social networks, such as friendship groups. The focus group data allows me to connect individual men’s subjectivities,
analyzed through one to one interviews, to broader peer contexts. The combination of these two types of data also reflects an “interpretive reproduction” approach that situates youth development within peer cultures (Corsaro & Eder, 1990).

At the time of the interviews I was graduate student in my mid to late twenties. I positioned myself as an outsider and often asked respondents to “fill me in.” I believe the self I presented—as another man, slightly older, and in the ambiguously professional role as “grad student”—affected the data collection process. The men seemed comfortable telling me about their lives, even many personal details. They would sometimes explicitly or implicitly reference my gender, saying things like, “You know how guys are,” or “I’m sure you know what I’m saying.” I often left interviews feeling conflicted about the young men I had just met and talked to so intimately. I found many of them inspiring—they were ambitious, hardworking, likeable young men. Yet some told stories and expressed attitudes about women that made me cringe. It is this ambiguity, I now believe, that drove my initial interest in the project and precisely this kind of ambivalence that underlies the analyses I discuss in this paper.

THE FRATERNITY SETTING

Institutional arrangements and practices work together with individual level processes to facilitate a fraternity-driven party scene on the campus studied. Many students arrive at college with fully formed assumptions that college is a time to party and sexually experiment (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006). As one focus group participant explained: “You see these images of college that you’re supposed to go out and have fun and drink, drink lots, party and meet guys. [You are] supposed to hook up with guys, and both men and women try to live up to that.” Others agree: college is a time to let loose, have fun, and be social. A culture of “hooking up” (sexual interaction outside of committed relationships) predominates on many college campuses (Bogle, 2008).

Organizational policies enable fraternity dominance of partying. Heavy policing of underage drinking in dormitories and at off campus bars push many students to fraternity houses where they find large parties with no adult supervision and copious amounts of free alcohol (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006). Sororities typically have strict rules about alcohol and guests. In a focus group sorority women complained: “It just sucks about the rules of the house, we can’t have guys over here, we can’t have guys over past 12 …” And another woman explained: “if you get caught drinking or with boys or you’re breaking rules then you have to go in front of Standards” (in-house governance). To be sure, not all students like or attend fraternity parties, but students widely understand that fraternities provide opportunities for the quintessential college experience. When asked where a guy could find casual sex, a male evangelical Christian student said definitively: “check out a fraternity party.” Many men said they joined fraternities precisely because they wanted to have fun, “experience college,” and “meet lots of people.” One particularly blunt man said he sought fraternity membership for the “booze, boobs, and brothers.” Few knew of gay fraternity men; heterosexuality predominated and outward displays of homosexual desire were unheard of.

At the interaction level, participating in the fraternity culture means “compulsively” asserting heterosexuality with and for other men (Pascoe, 2007). While men perform hetero-masculinity through “sex talk” (Eder, 1995; Kehily, 2002) and other
heterosexual posturing, the fraternity men also expect each other to pursue women at house parties, bars and clubs, and many other social gatherings. The pursuit of women is often a collective endeavor and just as much about homosociality and the group “girl hunt” as it is about the actual sex (Grazian, 2007). Men known for heterosexual success are rewarded with peer attention and status. As one fraternity man explained: “It’s definitely a status thing. And the guys who do [get girls], they’re definitely, uhm, seen as like, oh he’s a stud, he’s popular. And guys’ll want to be around him, go out with him to the bars and stuff. It like, raises the spirit of the whole group, I guess.”

In one to one interviews, however, individual men reported many private concerns, anxieties, and grievances related to the enactment of a masculinity predicated on sexual performance and the objectification of women. Below I profile two men in depth whose experiences illustrate how a gender structure approach can help us to understand men’s objectifying and sexist approaches toward women and sex. As I explain with these case studies, organizational arrangements and cultural expectations can enable and sustain sexist selves while constraining and concealing the expression of non-sexist ones.

**Travis: The Enduring and Enabled Sexist Self**

At the individual level, men may learn to disrespect women as sexual objects through sexist media representations, through behavior modeled by other men in their lives, and through broad cultural ideologies—including religious ones—that position women as subordinate to men. Regardless of its source, sexism is seen as being internalized within individual men, forming part of their gendered identities.

Beginning in middle school, now 21-year-old Travis had strongly identified with a group of male friends who, in his own words, “got into trouble” and treated girls poorly. “We chased girls, be hooking up with girls, drinking, partying, more girls, what not.” These early experiences of male bonding around sex and girls were socially and psychologically rewarding. In his interview, Travis explained with a modest matter-of-factness that he has good “spit game,” or a charismatic way of chatting women up at bars and parties, and his fraternity brothers recognize him for his sexual success with women. Heterosexual sophistication and performance are key parts of his identity.

Since entering college, however, Travis has acquired a greater awareness of social injustice. White and from a poor background, Travis entered the university through a program for disadvantaged students, many of them Black. His new structural context—the university—was vastly more diverse and complicated than his White, working-class hometown, causing shifts in his identity: “I think I became more aware of myself, my race, my background, everything.” Travis began to question some of his internalized predispositions, including about gender and sexuality.

At about the same time, however, Travis joined his fraternity, in large part because he saw fraternity membership as a path toward upward mobility and adult prosperity. This new context validated and resuscitated existing parts of his identity that he had begun to question: “I hope I don’t play a part in this, but I think sometimes I do, the way you’re accepted by guys is how many girls you’ve been with, what you do with girls, and you know stuff like that....” While his early peer experiences had prepared him to easily navigate the interaction order of his new
fraternity, he expresses unease about objectifying practices toward women, his own included: “I’m not really true to girls I guess, not really in a relationship…. I kind of tell girls what they want to hear, when I get caught up in it.”

While he appreciates the friendships he has formed with his brothers—friendships that would “last a lifetime,” he said—his public gender performance hides ambivalence. A kind of victim of his own success, Travis finds himself limited to his established patterns of caddish thinking and practices. He would like to change.

In his interview, Travis repeatedly laments how difficult it is to interact with women in more relational, less objectifying ways: “I’m a real nice guy, and, supposedly I’m a good looking guy, and whenever I’m nice to a girl, I try to talk to a girl, a girl always thinks that I’m trying to get with her or try to have sex with her.”

Travis interacts with women mostly in party environments where the prevailing party and hookup culture imbues interactions with sexualized meanings and gendered expectations (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009). Women, he believes, assume he has motives beyond friendship, and his male friends tease him for wanting anything besides sex. For the time being, Travis approaches women in objectifying ways and, as he admits, is frequently disrespectful and deceitful. The normative expectations for men’s gendered sexuality, stringently enforced in his social milieu by men and women, limit possibilities for evolution in his gendered self.

Alex: Public Performance, Private Identity

Boys from an early age learn to display heterosexual desire and prowess in order to claim masculinity in interactions (Eder, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Renold, 2005). Schrock and Schwalbe (2009), conceptualizing masculinity as practices that signify manhood and the “possession of a masculine self” (p. 281), argue that assertions of heterosexuality are often valid signifiers of masculinity that enable males to construct, maintain, and align themselves with the dominant gender category in interactions with others.

In high school, 20-year-old Alex was surrounded by clean-cut athletes and academic achievers, men and women who were more into community service than drinking and hooking up. Yet he lost his virginity at 16, relatively young for his friendship group, he said, and he had become sexually confident in the context of two lengthy committed relationships. Today, he explained, his fraternity brothers refer to him as “Pornstar” because he takes so many women upstairs to his private room during parties. Over the course of a two-hour interview, however, it became clear that “Alex the pornstar” is a public persona, an interactional accomplishment (West & Zimmerman, 1987) that Alex carefully nurtures while also maintaining a less provocative, less sexist private identity.

Parties and hooking up are a significant part of fraternity life. There are parties every week and bar outings almost daily, Alex explained in detail, and the men around him doggedly pursue women for sex. Alex does not mind: “I like meeting new people. I’m a people person and I can talk to people. I’m pretty good at talking to girls.” He has also, over the course of two years, become very successful at hooking up with them. In other words, Alex, like Travis above, is proficient at meeting the interactional demands of fraternity life.

Yet the gender and sexual self that Alex narrated during the interview resists many aspects of sexist constructions of men’s sexuality. While he believes sex and emotions can be separate (sex can be “just sex,” he insists, for men and women), he
also claims to care about his partners’ emotional well-being. He says he wants girls to feel comfortable, safe, and not pressured into sex. He also wants his hookups—which rarely go beyond oral sex, he said—to be mutually pleasurable, again a departure. “I reciprocate. A lot of guys don’t. They make a game out of, you know, getting off and not giving. I don’t mind it though.” Alex claims to pursue girls without sacrificing his core beliefs in politeness and respect. “I think girls think I’m … a … cool, nice guy. Nonthreatening, I guess you could say.” Unlike Travis, who aspires to interact with women in respectful, egalitarian ways, Alex claims to do so already.

Alex strategically manipulates his public social identity within his fraternity to exploit the interactional processes that connect men’s masculine identities and worth to the sexual objectification of women. The sexual behaviors that he regularly engages in (hooking up with women he has just met at bars and parties) hold meanings for him that are different from the public meanings his peers attach to these behaviors. He sustains these dual meanings by distinguishing “front” and “backstage” performances (Goffman, 1959). While his brothers call him Porn Star in actuality, he says, “I probably have less sex than they do, and I’m not just using girls for sex.” (By “less sex,” he means less penetrative, penile-vaginal intercourse.) He asserts he never uses women by placing his own sexual interests above theirs. He is careful not to disabuse his brothers of their belief that he is a “porn star,” however. When they press for details of his sexual exploits, he offers just enough, only minor details, he insists, that are flattering to his partners. By tapping into sexist meanings and subject positions, made so available by the public rituals and routines of life in the fraternity party scene, Alex meets the cultural expectations of masculinity for his social milieu—all without, in many ways, personally “buying into” cultural meanings that privilege men’s interests at the expense of women.

**AN ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING**

Institutional arrangements and organizational practices can enable or inhibit men’s objectifying approaches toward women and sex. While fraternities can resource masculinity projects centered on the sexual objectification and exploitation of women (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009; Ray & Rosow, 2009; Sanday, 1990; Stombler, 1994), other environments may support more relational and non-objectifying approaches.

Welch Hall combines living and learning in a coed environment with twice as many women as men. Residents espouse strong countercultural identities and often define themselves in opposition to mainstream campus life, especially fraternities and sororities. One focus group participant said, “I think Welch is just more like open.” Another described Welch as “more culturally diverse,” with “a lot of bizarre little subcultures.” Welch Hall has a reputation as liberal and attracting “misfits” and “hippies.” One focus group participant heard a fellow student assert in class that, “they wear potato sacks” and “patchouli.” The hall also has a reputation for being queer-friendly. Welch women in a focus group laughed in commiseration when another said, “A lot of the guys [here] are gay.” For many of the Welch Hall residents, choosing to live in the hall was a conscious act of resistance to conventional gender relations. The gender segregation at the heart of fraternities and sororities seemed mystifying, old fashioned, or simply sexist to Welch Hall residents. As with the fraternity men, though, what appeared from the outside to be a uni-
form peer culture hides contradictions and complexity in men’s gender and sexual subjectivities.

**Thomas: Finding a Place and Forging a Non-Sexist Identity**

Twenty-one-year-old Thomas thinks about sex all the time—“probably more than any guy I know,” he said. “But I’m just really open about it. Like I talk about sex and, uh, pleasuring yourself all the time. My friends are always telling me to shut up,” he laughed. Like other men I talked to, Thomas is aware of widespread gender beliefs that connect manhood to the objectification of women. But despite his own sexual successes—he has had several girlfriends and many hookups in between—he rejects the idea that men are somehow manlier if they sleep around. In high school many of his friends were “like that,” he said. “You know, talking about girls as hos and bitches and whatnot, and trying to get with girls, leading them on.” He believes our culture supports such behavior, and he is not immune. “I definitely played that part [in high school].” As he narrated his experiences from high school, he distanced himself from his past actions, almost as if he were analyzing someone else’s life: “Some of the experiences were [pausing] just because of context. Like people are at a party and hooking up.” This narrative strategy reflects his awareness that the gender he performs, and the cultural expectations he confronts, vary significantly with context.

Thomas uses the interview to restively contemplate sexism, both in abstract terms but also as it relates to his personal life. In the quote below he questions why he is attracted to women on campus in tight jeans and short shorts.

> It’s like the sex is on display. I can see that as hot, as physically alluring, but it’s more of like a fantasy. It’s almost pornography. It’s not real. On some level I recognize, Ok, this is turning me on, almost in a base, primal way. But I’m not attracted to her necessarily. Maybe I’m even repulsed by her.

Thomas continues this self-interrogation with a discussion of his daily consumption of pornography and how he is aroused by “fake women with big tits” who “just seem awful, like with these big painted mouths and fake voices and plastic [high heeled] shoes. But it’s still hot and I get off.” He is troubled by his pornography habit and the connection between what he personally finds “hot” and “physically alluring” with broader cultural processes that render women sexual objects, devalued and even abused. In this sense, the gender he does is rooted not just in social contexts, but somewhere inside—as part of his self.

Thomas struggles to “undo” how gender is done within and around him. His choice to live Welch represents a conscious attempt to engineer a peer culture and organizational setting supportive of his goals for self-change. As he said, “I think part of living here is about not blindly following” and “using the tools an education gives us.” Changing his personal desires has proved difficult. He admits to being unsuccessful at mobilizing his erotic desires toward less sexist outlets. Nonetheless, he appears to successfully draw on his learning community’s coeducational environment, culture of intellectualism, and progressive ideals to gird himself against sexism as it exists throughout society. His forging of a non-sexist identity is enabled by his chosen organizational setting, where cultural interactional expectations are, in his words, “pretty open and free” and supportive of “a more feminist minded kind of way of being.”
A theory of gender as structure—a multidimensional entity whose impact extends to all areas of social life—provides tools for understanding the complexity of men’s gendered sexual subjectivities, including why they engage in sexist thinking and behavior despite, in many ways, not personally desiring to do so. Processes operating at these different levels depend upon and reinforce each other (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006; Risman, 2004). The men profiled in this article wrestled with cultural meanings that connect manhood to sexual performance and the objectification of women, yet they did so in different ways with different implications for gender inequality.

Travis and Alex participate in the mobilization of masculinity through collective enactments of gendered heterosexuality (Grazian, 2007; Martin, 2001). At one level, this mobilization is enabled by the institutional arrangements of fraternities and the wider university’s rules, practices, and distribution of resources. At another level, cultural expectations and peer pressure compel men like Travis and Alex into public performances of this masculinity. Both men outwardly adhere to an interaction order that promotes sexist constructions of men’s sexuality, typically predicated on the sexual objectification of women. Within the interaction order of the fraternity scene, the social identity sexual performer—a collectively pursued icon of masculinity—occupies a privileged place, and men like Travis and Alex receive status because their peers interpret many of their behaviors as signifiers of this identity.

Travis and Alex’s public embracing of masculine heterosexual culture hides complexity in their subjectivities. Travis admits to treating women disrespectfully and to using sex with women to gain attention and status among his friends. By his own account, he is good at the subtle games of interpersonal coercion (flirtation, persuasion, deceit) that men can use to extract sex from women. However, he expresses ambivalence toward his behavior and a desire to relate to women differently. Alex outwardly performs according to the cultural expectations of his fraternity peer culture while inwardly disagreeing with its cruder aspects and disrespect toward women. He skillfully manipulates available cultural meanings of manhood to construct a “front stage” self as a sexual performer, despite abandoning this script when behind closed doors, allowing him to navigate undesirable gender expectations while maintaining the rewards of peer group membership.

Travis and Alex differ markedly in terms of the internalization of gender at the individual level. Prior to college, Travis’s high school peer group required him to assert a masculine heterosexual identity built around overt misogyny and a callous sexual pursuit of women. This core situation (Swidler, 2003) he regularly faced in interaction likely shaped his gendered cultural capacity, including how he views himself and what gender strategies he feels comfortable and competent enacting. The gendered self constructed by and for him prepared him well for the “alcohol-party-sex compulsions” (Sanday, 1990) of his current fraternity life. Despite his concerns that the sexist practices of this world are juvenile and unethical, they are familiar trade for which his peers reward him. Men may take up sexist subject positions (regardless of personal values) because they have particular cultural capacities for those actions and because particular interactional settings demand them (Swidler, 1986). Men may continue sexist ways because these ways are familiar, comfortable, and not easily cast off for alternatives. Alex never developed a simi-
lar gendered self. While maintaining a private identity allows him to resolve some of his masculinity dilemmas regarding sexist peer expectations, this strategy does nothing to dismantle larger structures of inequality. His public complicity only supports hegemonic arrangements that, in turn, suppress alternative expressions of masculinity (Bird, 1996).

In contrast, Thomas strongly disavows public displays of hetero-masculinity that encourage the sexual objectification of women. He took steps to locate himself within an organization setting that discourages sexist expressions of masculinity. Privately, Thomas struggles against his internalization of sexism, especially concerning the eroticization of masculine dominance. The misogyny of pornography arouses him, leading him to feel guilty and confused. He draws on his chosen living community — with its progressive activism and intellectual culture — to help him navigate a larger society that insists on sexism. Supported by his chosen immediate environment, he consciously attempts to distance himself from sexist constructions of masculinity.

Taken together, the three men illustrate the usefulness of conceptualizing gender as deeply embedded in multiple dimensions of social life. Men may find their desires to resist sexism matched by countervailing social forces; gender inequality is produced dynamically across multiple dimensions of social life, and efforts to resist sexism may need to attend to more than one dimension simultaneously.

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