
INTRODUCTION

As globalization continues to transform social and economic processes in ways that profoundly affect daily lives, it is important that scholars and students have access to research that offers both insights and tools for understanding the (re)production of inequalities in a global landscape. In a global landscape it is necessary to understand the practices of representation through which inequalities gain meaning—both within and across national boundaries.

As an international collection of critical scholarship, *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation: A Global Landscape* takes a fresh look at inequalities in 20 countries on 5 continents. It offers both rich insight and cultural critique—yet it does not offer a universal paradigm, nor is it concerned with debates about scholarship from “the center” or “the periphery.” The collection answers the call advanced by scholars such as Patel (2010) and Connell (2007) who advocate a de-centering of North American/European sociology by placing scholarship from countries around the globe on equal footing.

The authors in this book examine representational practices that make inequalities meaningful in specific ways at particular times and places. This style of analysis enables readers to make connections across national boundaries and across categories of nationality, race, class, gender, and sexuality. For example, readers are able to consider how the strategies of power evident in the gendering practices of “civilizing” Kurdish

women in Turkey have resonance with the strategies of power used to marginalize indigenous peoples and languages in Mexico—as well as perceive a similar outline of power deployed strategically by transgendered men in Malaysia who construct their own language to resist oppression. In these chapters, readers are introduced to the ways language can be mobilized to marginalize and oppress groups of people as well how it can be mobilized as a form of resistance.

Throughout, readers will find that national discourses variously marginalize and privilege groups of people within the nation-state and that these discourses have key commonalities and differences. Consequently, readers will find new insights into how power, privilege, and inequality gain meaning and legitimacy across a range of cultures. *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation* takes up timely issues around the globe, including: analyses of media debates in Austria regarding the right of Muslim women to wear veils; the cultural policing of sexuality in Nigeria; strategic subversion of Internet censorship in China; and political asylum cases for lesbian women and gay men in Italy. Each chapter provides a general overview of relevant cultural and historical contexts for an international audience as well as a brief introduction to relevant methodological and theoretical frameworks. Consequently, it is a richly diverse and accessible collection.

Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation makes important and unique contributions to literature on inequalities by analyzing how

inequalities are constructed in traditional media, new media, and personal interaction. For example, research in this book includes analyses of television in Bulgaria and Turkey, newspaper articles in Brazil, South Korea, Serbia, and Ireland, talk radio shows in South Africa, interviews in Mexico, planning policies in the United States, historical documents in Russia, photographs in Austria, international media in Uganda, conversations in Mexico and Malaysia, new media in China, and artwork in Germany.

Authors in this book define language broadly as that which communicates meaning. As such “language” includes all systems of representation—all processes of signification. As a consequence, readers will find a variety of analytical styles, including frame analysis, semiotics, poststructural discourse analysis, critical discourse studies, and conversation analysis. Chapters animate these analytical frameworks in ways that do not require prior expertise—thus making the book useful to graduate methods and theory courses that take up issues of language and society, as well as to substantive undergraduate courses on inequalities.

As a collection of international scholarship, *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation* examines a variety of practices and contexts used to construct privilege and inequality. In essence, the chapters explore relationships between practices of accumulation, dispossession, and political power (Gray, 2010, p. 17) as they emerge around the globe today. The book examines how particular kinds of social subjects are constructed in public imagination and draws out relationships between knowledge and power. In the process, *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation: A Global Landscape* provides a conceptual vocabulary for understanding the production of inequality and privilege that travels beyond the North American framework of intersectionality.

LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION

The book begins with the premise that everything we know about the social world comes to us through language. Everything gains meaning,

importance, and relevance through systems of language—even our inner most thoughts are constructed through language. Consider the material reality of a stand of trees. It exists, one could point to it. Yet, one person may see the trees as cubits of lumber, another may see them as a sacred grove, another may see them as a place to camp, and a fourth may see them as obstacles to clear for development. Even while the physical presence of the trees is the same for everyone, the *meaning* of them may not be. Meaning cannot be separated from context or from the language used to make sense of both the context and the trees. The analyses in this book do not juxtapose false and true knowledge, but rather explore the practices through which knowledge comes to appear objective and social life meaningful.

In daily life, we often believe that we simply recognize the world around us. However, it is impossible to perceive anything just by looking. Consider the example of money—the meaning of money must “already be there” before we look at it, in order for us to understand what it is and how to use it. To the extent that we can recognize money when we see it, we are seeing through a cultural eye. This is true when we think about the trees, and even when we think about ourselves. These fairly simple examples become quite complicated when we also consider how language, as a system of representation, (re)produces relations of power.

Knowledge is created through language; knowledge is also legitimized or marginalized through language. At both national and global levels we can see this in discussion of issues such as global warming and population growth. Further, knowledge is always a cultural enterprise—not an individual one. Even cognition and perception are cultural as well as individual processes. Consequently, many scholars in this book adopt Michele Foucault’s expression of knowledge/power to indicate that all knowledge is an expression of power and all power is an expression of knowledge—they cannot meaningfully be separated from each other. Consequently, the creation of knowledge is always a political act—one that

naturalizes and rationalizes particular relations of power. Even the gross power of physical violence begins with some form of dehumanizing language. In the 21st century, this may have become most evident in debates that frame one person's "freedom fighter" as another person's "terrorist." How we each learn to name ourselves and the world around us is an expression of knowledge/power. Social identities are not an essence but a positioning constructed through systems of representation (including memory, myth, news, and science) all of which are implicated in networks of power.

Language is always fraught with conscious and unconscious motivations, competing investments, political perspectives, and economic interests. As a signifying practice, language produces both knowledge/power and tangible material consequences. Consequently, *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation* examines the "politics of representation"—the cultural struggles over how events, processes, people, institutions, and countries are to be understood. In this sense, the book examines language as a point of articulation between social structures and social life, as well as between social imagination and social being. Studies of language/representation offer sociologists a particularly productive site of investigation because they regard individual agency, social constraint, and the cultural organization of knowledge/power. Bertrand Russell (1938, p. 10) once said that the fundamental concept in the social science is power—in the same sense in which energy is the fundamental concept in physics. Sociological studies of language offer an effective tool for making visible the ways that power operates in everyday practices.

Language is a cultural system par excellence. "Without language there is no social interaction; without social interaction there is no social structure, no culture" (Pascale, 2011, p. 162). Sociological analyses of language and representation push the formal boundaries between social theory and empirical analyses as they bring new insights into the (re)production of culture, knowledge, and power. The chapters in this book exemplify some of the best work in studies of language and society.

The authors in this collection write in a time when debates regarding the nature of relationships between secular and religious communities abound—as do debates about technology, globalization, and global media. The chapters offer insight as well as opportunities for discussion and debate on how inequalities experienced locally are (re)produced globally, as well as what it means to produce authoritative knowledge about social life. In this sense, the chapters work at getting at the liminal, or in between, spaces where new ways to understand ourselves and others emerge.

The 21st century challenges the familiar juxtaposition between local and global contexts. It has become increasingly important to think of local contexts as much more than an immediate context. To a significant extent, locality is a dynamic integrative environment—both spatially and historically (Pennycook, 2010). From this perspective, language and representation are more than local practices—they are practices through which locality is created. Language and representation are not activities that take place within contexts, but practices that create, shape, and define contexts. In this sense, language and representation are constitutive practices—they are the primary way in which social life is organized and made meaningful.

As a collection of perspectives on language, society, and inequality, the book's overarching contribution to the field of sociology draws from vibrant international and diverse transdisciplinary scholarship that includes cultural studies, communication, media studies, anthropology, and socio-linguistics. Across and within all fields that study language/representation, the word "discourse" is used frequently. Even within a single discipline and within a single country, this word can refer to a broad range of things. So it is all the more reason that the word "discourse" warrants some discussion. Each chapter provides a definition of "discourse" as it is used in that particular analysis as well as an overview of key analytic strategies. For now, suffice it to say that the word "discourse" can be used to refer to: conversation or discussion; a lecture, speech, or

treatise; language-in-use (spoken or written words); a specialized form of knowledge/jargon (legal discourse); as schema that organize ways of thinking; and as a system of representation that produces objects of knowledge. In some fields, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, the word discourse may be used to mean all of these things in a single article—leaving readers to parse the particular meaning of the word through context and usage.

Given this range and variation regarding the word “discourse,” there are a few important things that can be said about five of its six variations: Discursive practices produce characteristic ways of seeing by drawing boundaries that define what we see and fail to see, what we accept and contest. Consequently, discursive practices distinguish characteristic ways of speaking and writing as well as ways of interpreting events. The exception to these statements is the understanding of “discourse” as a synonym for “conversation.” Technically speaking, this particular usage is not part of any specific analytic framework but expresses an overlap between vernacular and scholarly language.

Just as every text is intertextual (drawing from and contributing to other texts), it is also true that every text is polysemic—meaning it can be read in more than one way. The polysemic nature of texts makes the work of textual analysis both important and challenging. At a minimum, the authors in this book share a common goal, which is to demonstrate the kinds of logic that make everyday practices meaningful.

This collection includes 10 different frameworks for analyzing language: Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Cultural Studies, Discourse Analysis, Frame Analysis, Semiotics, Socio-linguistics, Poststructural Discourse Analysis, Textual Analysis, and blended strategies that incorporate several of these approaches. It also includes a range of empirical analyses of texts, theoretical studies of language and blended analyses. The analytical frameworks in this collection take up different levels of analysis. Conversation analysis and sociolinguistics

focus on conversation in a very narrow context while semiotics and poststructural discourse analysis focus more broadly on cultural issues and signifying practices. Frame analysis, textual analysis, critical discourse, and cultural studies offer insights gained from blending levels of analysis—each in slightly different ways. Overall, the breadth of analytical frameworks showcases the richness of theories and methods for producing sociological studies of language and their usefulness for understanding inequalities in a global landscape.

INEQUALITIES IN A GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

Studies of inequality are at the core of Sociology and many other social sciences. But what is inequality? To whom do we seek to be equal? On the one hand, the concept of equality expresses an ideal that all people are treated fairly and have access to the same social and economic opportunities. In this sense, everyone would belong to the nation-state as a full citizen—not only in a formal sense of documentation but also a daily sense of belonging. So what does it mean to treat people “fairly”? Is it fair to treat everyone the same or does fairness demand taking into account the ways that groups of people have been systematically disadvantaged? What constitutes “the same social and economic resources”? In the United States, for example, there is an often tacit understanding that the resources and cultural citizenship available to middle-class white men tend to be the standard against which inequalities are measured. On closer consideration, we would find this group to be narrowed even more by (dis)ability, heterosexuality, and religion. In the United States, tacit knowledge would lead us to expect that everyone should have access to the same forms of education, housing, employment, income, health care, legal protection, and quality of life that is considered to be “ordinary” for this group. In reality this “ordinary” standard of living is dependent on inequality. It is impossible for everyone to achieve anything like this quality of life. As is

true in many countries, the United States depends on people who have little education to labor for low wages in jobs such as picking crops, cleaning offices, caring for children, and washing dishes. People who hold these jobs often live in substandard housing; their children generally have access to poor educations and their families have little health care. For low-wage workers, life is marked by uncertainty and insecurity. Imagine all of the forms of low-wage work that exist. Now imagine the cost of services if people doing this work were paid a living wage that made health care, education, and good housing possible.

Privilege is a system of social structures and dynamics that organize and distribute resources along particular lines. Privilege is secured when marginality and dispossession are naturalized. Consequently, people who benefit from low-wage work learn to believe that “unskilled” workers—like those who labor in the fields—deserve to be paid little. The current system of agriculture demands a large body of unskilled workers to harvest our food—their life chances are not an accident. So, if we are going to advocate equality, we need to be willing to rethink the nature of privilege.

On a global scale, North America and Europe might be considered the standard against which material inequality is measured. Yet as early as 1998, the United Nations Human Development Report documented that only 20% of the world's population lived in the wealthiest countries and yet they consumed 86% of all goods and services. In this context, what does “equality” mean? As world consumption expands at an unprecedented rate, the United Nations reports that 2.6 billion people lack basic sanitation, 1.3 billion have no access to clean water, 1.1 billion lack adequate housing. There are not enough resources in the world to create anything like “equality” unless many of us are willing to live with considerably less.

How committed are you to resolving inequality now? What changes would you be willing to make in your standard of living so that others could have access to clean water and sanitation? Keep in mind that access to water and sanitation is just a starting point—it's probably not how

anyone reading this book thinks about equality. To solve the problems of inequality, we need to solve the problems of privilege. Sociological studies of representational practices through which the presence and meaning of inequalities and privilege are constructed can help us to address material disparities.

Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation challenges outmoded binary thinking about the symbolic and material, structural and interactional, as well as the local and global. It helps readers to develop insights into the suffering of others and also into the ordinary ways that we each participate in perpetuating that suffering. By linking symbolic practices to their material consequences, social structures to individual actions, and local perspectives to global politics, we can see more clearly how good people perpetuate bad systems. Importantly, through studies of language we come to see the ways in which we are implicated in our own oppression and in the oppression of others. This insight provides tremendous opportunities and resources for change. There are many ways to be involved in changing the world. Studies of language give us one way to reconsider how we can change our own relationships to inequalities.

While human slavery and forms of military domination are on the rise, it is also true that for many people around the globe, systems of inequality are maintained not by physical force but through the complicity of ordinary people. Antonio Gramsci referred to this form of cultural domination as hegemony. Hegemony is established through social processes that persuade ordinary people that the interests and needs of the dominant group are in fact their own. People are dominated not by weapons but by the imposition and elaboration of ideas and habits. In hegemony, the sense of antagonistic domination disappears (Baudrillard, 2010, p. 33). People come to participate in their own oppression by internalizing the social system that subordinates them. For example, in many societies dominated by men, women (most especially heterosexual women) learn to see high-heeled shoes as beautiful and choose to wear them even though they severely

limit or disable their basic abilities. High-heeled shoes make walking and standing for extended periods painful and make it impossible to run quickly. The value of high-heeled shoes is not comfort or utility, but the belief that they increase women's sex appeal for men. Similarly class hegemony succeeds when working-class and poor people come to adopt the political views and affiliations of the wealthy. Consider, for example, that every metropolitan newspaper in the United States has a business section but none has a workers section—and no one seems to think this is remarkable. This would seem to be possible only if the interests of business are believed to be the same as the interests of workers—or if the interests of the workers were irrelevant. In a white racial hegemony, people of color adopt the values of white people—such as hairstyles, standards of beauty, ways of speaking, and behaving. Since hegemony literally rewards people for being complicit with their own subordination, people of African descent often succeed more easily if they have white-identified hairstyles.

Although inequalities might once have been created through formal laws, for the most part they continue today as ordinary practices—indeed they so often appear to be ordinary that they come to seem insignificant in the landscape of our days. This is how hegemony works. Yet hegemony is never secured once and for all; it is constantly challenged and renegotiated. Consequently, it becomes very important to examine the relationship between discursive and material realities. By encouraging readers to think deeply about the ways that we reproduce inequalities, this book offers readers the opportunity to think through the ways that we can each interrupt hegemonic systems and begin to make them less sustainable by making them less ordinary.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation: A Global Landscape encourages readers to think in a complicated way about the relationships

between the symbolic, the social, and the material—hence it can be said to articulate the predominant challenge faced by cultural theory. The annotated table of contents provides a familiar organization of chapters by topics of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality. This organization has strategic usefulness for classrooms; however, in this section I want to provide a more conceptual framing that offers a dynamic, global perspective on privilege and inequality. This section links together broad issues of language/representation and inequality to demonstrate both the global aspect of these processes and the (re)production of power/knowledge.

In the cultural theory paradigm that juxtaposes local and global contexts, scholars often write about hybridity as a layering of identities. Just as scholars in this collection challenge the juxtaposition of local and global contexts, they challenge the concept of hybridity. Consider that in language use—expressions, images—do not occur for the first time. Every image, every expression is part of an expression that has been repeated before and will be repeated again. This is not to say there is no originality, but that originality is the creative repurposing of the familiar. This can be understood as relocalization of others' expressions (Pennycook, 2010, p. 34). The concept of relocalization leads us to focus on similarity, difference, and repetition.

In this collection, Hong Kong scholar Jackie Jia Lou's critical semiotic reading of "Chinatown" architecture in the capital of the United States is a good example of relocalization. Although people of Chinese ancestry left this community a long time ago, the appearance of a "Chinatown" is maintained through the relocalization of Chinese architecture, language, and art. Lou demonstrates that even planning policy cultivates this relocalization by requiring that business and streets must be in Chinese as well as English. Yet, the benefits of this relocationization of Chinese culture do not accrue to Chinese residents but instead toward largely non-Chinese business owners.

Studies of language examine what is said, how it is said, and what is not said in particular

contexts. This is a particularly useful way for understanding how regimes of power/knowledge circulate both over time and place. In English, there is an old adage that the more things change the more they stay the same. Indeed relationships of inequality have changed dramatically in the last decade, yet inequalities continue to increase. Change doesn't always mean things are getting better. Kevin Whitehead's analysis of radio talk shows in post-apartheid South Africa demonstrates some of the ways that white people perpetuate a racialized system while avoiding explicit talk about race. In particular, his study illustrates how white callers made references to wealth and poverty in ways that are clearly meant to indicate race.

The discursive and material linkages between race and class are not unique to South Africa. Roland Terborg and Laura García Landa argue that a narrow focus on economic inequality overlooks the many ways that linguistic racism shapes economic life in profoundly meaningful ways. Indigenous peoples continue to experience the impact of colonial discourses that threaten their own languages and undermine life chances, particularly with regard to education and employment. Terborg and Landa demonstrate that the failure of economies cannot always be measured in numbers—and that economic well-being is not always tethered to purely economic elements. Language is fundamental to identity and to cultural survival—it embodies a way of seeing the world and a way of being in the world.

The power of colonial histories maintains a forward momentum around the globe despite the collapse of colonial empires. Social categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation have all been imagined by, or in dialogue with, colonial classifications. The integrity of these categories is often challenged by contemporary scholarship. For example, scholars have debunked the fiction that everyone has one and only one place in each of the categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality. However, the added challenge for international and transnational scholarship is to imagine the meanings of difference globally.

Since meaning and imagination are inseparable aspects of processes of signification, Arjun Appadurai's powerful argument for imagination as social practice is particularly relevant to thinking about the production and meaning of difference globally. In the 21st century, a sense of self is conditioned by the experience of globality—rather than by a single cultural logic. By globality, I do not mean an inclusive and integrating global landscape but rather one permeated by what Appadurai refers to as global flows of people, media, finances, technology, and ideas.

In this collection, Nadezhda Georgieva-Stankova demonstrates how the flow of commercial soap operas between Turkey and Bulgaria contributes to shaping both personal identities and cultural politics. Through the transnational flow of soap operas, the histories of Turkey and Bulgaria are drawn into a newly reimagined present that is fraught with power struggles that cultivate both xenophobia and nostalgia. Georgieva-Stankova's engaging analysis of blogs demonstrates how the purportedly simple pleasure of soap opera can destabilize cultural and political landscapes.

The presence of undocumented immigrants in the United States—part of the global flow of migration—is contributing to a new public discourse of race-baiting. While a cultural history of white people in the United States quickly shows that whites have always believed racism to be a thing of the past, public discourse on racism has taken a new turn. By analyzing a conservative television talk show, Shiao-Yun Chiang illustrates that not only are expressions of racism openly sanctioned, so are claims of racism. This interesting account demonstrates how political conservatives will tempt opponents to make claims of racism and then publicly reprimanded them for those views. It is an intricate but common rhetorical move in U.S. public media that relegates the presence of racial inequality to the past by making it nearly impossible to raise the issue in the present.

Scholars in this book take up the identities of race, class gender, and nationality as strategic or tactical identities while rethinking the location of agency and the meanings of difference. Hemant

Shah explores the complicated experiences of belonging and alienation that emerge for generations of Indian-identified residents living in post-Amin, Uganda. Drawing from cultural studies, Shah demonstrates that in a diasporic context transnational media have helped to produce very strategic notions of identity and belonging.

Martin Power, Amanda Haynes, and Eoin Devereux explore the presence and meaning of poverty in Ireland within the broader context of the importance of the myth of classlessness in Ireland's public imaginary. Power, Haynes, and Devereux explode the myth of classlessness by examining media coverage of a marginalized housing estate, Moyross, in Limerick in the Southwest of Ireland. They argue that media are complicit with class warfare "from above" that produces the appearance of classlessness by stigmatizing people who are poor.

Similarly, Viviane de Melo Resende and Vivian Tamalho demonstrate how media in Brazil naturalize the presence of extreme poverty. They argue that journalism (re)produces a discourse that naturalizes homelessness, reifies poverty as a permanent feature of society, and ignores social inequality. Resende and Tamalho explore the power of metaphors used for understanding poverty and how these become part of everyday practices that reinforce the marginalization of people who are homeless.

Scholars in this collection forge new ways of understanding and deconstructing signifying practices that have sustained national and global flows of people, media, finances, technology, and ideas. Yet, "flow" does not accurately capture the violence that often accompanies this movement. Ebru Sungun analyzes the ways that the project of nation building in Turkey targeted women and young girls. The Turkish government paired new social, educational, and economic opportunities for girls with a cultural indoctrination aimed at eradicating Kurdish language and culture. The meanings of Turkish and Kurdish identities were (re)presented through mandatory education.

Sungun's analysis of linguistic genocide will remind readers of the chapter by Terborg and

Landa on Indigenous languages and poverty. While nation-states are generally represented as coherent entities, as global citizens we must consistently distinguish between the state—as a legal, political, and economic power—and nations that are composed of people who often hold competing collective identities, despite the commonalities of a shared state. This point is underscored by much of the scholarship in this book. Swedish scholar, Kjerstin Andersson interviews young men about their own use of violence in racialized "fight stories" that construct mirroring positions of immigrant and Swedish forms of masculinity. In her analysis of talk about violence, it is impossible to disentangle youth and masculinity from the discourses of nationalism and racism.

While Andersson considers violence within the changing racial landscape created by immigration, Nataša Simeunović Bajić offers readers a critical analysis of violence against the Roma minority in Serbia—a group of people who have been legal citizens for generations. Bajić illustrates some of the ways that representations of "otherness" maintain cultural alienation. She also places these practices within an important and extensive cultural history of dispossession that brings into question the culpability of individuals, institutions, and the state.

Consistently, readers are reminded that the everyday actions of ordinary people express both agency and constraint. Without question, individuals choose their own words and actions yet these are always also shaped by broader cultural practices. The relationship between the agency and constraint come into sharp focus as Margarita Astoyants examines the representational practices through which the meaning and social value of orphans in Russia has changed over the last century. Astoyants traces how the state at times has honored and at times scorned orphans. She connects government discourses to everyday practices and the tangible consequences for orphaned children.

While Gramsci is perhaps most remembered for his work on the oppressive force of hegemony, he argued that hegemony takes two forms—from above, which is oppressive, and

from below (the process through which subaltern views become hegemonic), which is liberating. Language is a powerful force for enacting and resisting oppression; readers will see this in the way that public discourse shapes public belief, in the destruction of Indigenous languages and in the creation of new languages. Weizhun Mao examines language practices that create and sustain a socially sanctioned community of “netizens.” Mao explores how Internet users in China employ a variety of linguistic strategies to evade government censors in a multiplicity of online spaces. He demonstrates how process has generated creative practices and at times what appears to be a new form of language that produces a sense of community among users.

Similarly, in Malaysia, *maknyah* (male-to-female transgendered people) have developed their own language to resist oppressive discrimination. Caesar DeAlwis, Maya Khemlani David, and Francisco Perlas Dumanig examine how transgendered women cope with the pressures of living under Islamic law. The creation of a creative and private language not only enables discrete communication, it establishes a sense of community. Intimacy is a potent source of vulnerability around the world for sexual and gender minorities. In a global landscape, intimate vulnerabilities also arise in relationship to immigration.

Valentina Pagliai offers key insights into media and political discourses used to construct political asylum cases for lesbians and gay men. Pagliai closely follows two prominent asylum cases that engaged much of Europe—one for an Iranian lesbian seeking asylum in Britain, and another of an Albanian gay man seeking asylum in Italy. She illustrates how these asylum cases were quickly used in ways that constructed Iran and Albania as lacking modern civilization and thus reinforcing racist positions.

Sexuality and gender are articulated through long histories. Sanya Osha both challenges and rewards readers with a complex analyses of the colonial, Christian, and Islamic discourses that took root in different regions of Nigeria. Osha argues that as a consequence, the construction of the body and of heterosexuality in Nigeria has

developed in very different ways. He offers key insights into the “crisis of manhood” and how these discursive regimes maintain a phallographic system that oppresses women.

Just as the rise of Islam within countries such as Nigeria and Malaysia transformed established relations of power, the entry of Islam into global, political, and social spheres has troubled dominant ways of thinking. Ricarda Drüeke, Susanne Kirchhoff, and Elisabeth Klaus take up media representations of religious veiling by Muslim women in Austria. Drüeke, Kirchhoff, and Klaus deconstruct nationalist discourses that circulate in photographic images of veiled Muslim women in press photography. On one hand, veiling transgresses spatial and gendered boundaries and confronts the meaning of public space in Western cultures. On the other hand, the practice of veiling offers a complicated politic since Western women’s liberation movements have been premised on the right of women to control their own bodies. The practice of veiling challenges prevailing notions of feminism; veiling can both make visible and subsume women’s identities. In this sense, the practice of veiling in Europe creates a liminal space, an in-between-ness that produces both proximity and alterity. Importantly, Drüeke, Kirchhoff, and Klaus argue that the presence of Islam in Europe challenges the binaries of public/private life by making religious practice (represented here by veiling) that is generally confined to private realms part of daily public space. The authors level a strong critique challenging the notion of public space as equally available to all people. To large extent, Antke Engel shares this critique as she challenges the self-proclaimed liberal and pluralist discourses of Western nations. In a very thoughtful theoretical essay, Engel explores the paradoxes of inclusive discourses in Germany with respect to queer sexualities. Her analysis deftly shows how the very construction of pluralism depends on a cultural imagination and a set of cultural practices that create disparate publics.

Most broadly, cultural or sociological studies of language analyze the material consequences of social imaginaries. In this sense, they analyze the

cultural processes through which we learn to think of ourselves and each other. Hae Yeon Choo and Myra Marx Ferree take up the issue of imagined communities and the politics of belonging with respect to lesbian and gay youth in South Korea. Choo and Ferree analyze newspaper articles about teenage homosexuality and demonstrate how the presence and meaning of lesbian and gay teenagers is constructed and contested in media. To some extent, this analysis returns readers to the notion of global flows since personal intimacies can be attacked as an influence of outside and unwelcome cultural influences that threaten national identity. Choo and Ferree illustrate the various ways that citizenship is always contingent and partial for lesbian and gay youth in South Korea.

Roberta Villalón also advances a critique of social imaginaries through an analysis of cultural memory. She examines public records that document Argentina's "Dirty War" in which tens of thousands of people were "disappeared," tortured, and killed. She argues that in order for the horrors of the "Dirty War" to serve a purpose, they must be remembered both by Argentineans and others—yet historical memory is always political, intertextual, and as much about the present as the past. By examining two accounts of this period—one official and one not—Villalón powerfully demonstrates that collective memory is a political struggle for the future.

In a global landscape it quickly becomes apparent that the ability to control language is one of the most fundamental forms of power. Through language we come to know the world, to value ourselves and others and to find meaning in difference. Through language we come to know our pasts and to imagine our futures. Chapters in this

book explore the classificatory power of the state, the representational power of media, as well as the everyday practices of oppression and resistance among average people.

As part of an emergence of a transnational public space, *Social Inequality & The Politics of Representation: A Global Landscape* comes replete with cleavages, contradictions, and overlaps. On the one hand, it displaces Western European scholarship yet on another, it privileges the analytic framework of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation developed in those countries. Sociology will only truly decenter Western scholarship when it reconstructs its core categories of analysis. Yet at its best, the book maps a sociological imaginary that may help readers to find both a constant displacement of political and intellectual frontiers and new paths to equality.

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