



Black Hawk Hancock

Statement of Research

My research agenda focuses on three areas: Race and Ethnicity, Social Theory, and Cultural/Media analysis. I approach these areas through a diverse array of methods: historical research, ethnography, interviews, and interpretive analysis. As an interdisciplinary scholar, my work offers theoretical, methodological and empirical tools for illuminating and dismantling the mechanisms that structure modes of domination and inequality.

The first thread of my work investigates the practices, categories, and mechanisms through which societies become structured in racial domination. My first book, *American Allegory: Lindy Hop and the Racial Imagination*, and related articles (Hancock 2013, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005), engage topics central to African American Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnomusicology, and Cultural Studies. Inspired by the work of Ralph Ellison, *American Allegory* situates dance within the larger landscape of Chicago's racial segregation and illuminates the ways cultural practices perpetuate racial domination. I use the methodological approach of embodied sociology, where one becomes a practitioner of a particular art in order to make explicit the practical sense of everyday practices from the inside out. The contributions and connections that embodied sociology makes to feminist epistemologies, embodied knowledge, and ethnography are explicated in a forthcoming book chapter on racial and cultural analysis, as well as in a co-authored piece with Gary Alan Fine (Hancock 2017a, Fine and Hancock 2016).

My second ethnographic book (Hancock 2017b) *In-Between Worlds: Mexican Kitchen Workers in Chicago's Restaurant Industry* also focuses on racial domination. It does so through a study of the life-worlds of undocumented immigrants and the way they construct transnational selves straddled between two different countries. Their experiences of migration and negotiating work here in Chicago are central for the American economy. These immigrants navigate work while being politically and economically marginalized is vital to uncovering the persistence of racial inequality. Here cultural labor transforms identity by steeping these men in culinary and cultural traditions that are not their own. Through cooking, they cultivate new cultural and aesthetic dispositions, as well as new modes of cultural appreciation and understanding.

By exploring the Mexican immigrant experience in this way, we are able to supplement demographic and economic data with evidence about the goals and aspirations of some of

those people who have been so well chronicled and yet so simultaneously overlooked. As a result, this framework allows us to understand how global and transnational dynamics of ethnicity, culture, work and identity are manifested in their unique complexities in specific locales, and in turn how these locales illuminate the global and transnational dynamics at work.

This focus on racial domination has produced additional articles that consider spatial forms of ethno-racial segregation in the Chicago metropolitan region. These articles analyze how ethno-racial segregation is connected to economic class segregation, how public policy in housing and education are related to segregation, and how racial segregation in Chicago, specifically the hyper-segregation of African Americans, is a persistent and long-standing characteristic of the metropolis. As a result, these articles explore the spatial distributions of social class, which are intertwined with patterns of ethno-racial segregation, as well as more recent developments in areas of immigration, gentrification, and new forms of policing. A forthcoming co-authored chapter explores how these practices affect African American and Latinos, allowing Latinos to settle across a wider range of city communities and suburban neighborhoods, and, therefore giving them greater access to economic opportunities, quality housing, and public services (See Garner Hancock and Fidel 2017, Garner, Hancock, and Sykes 2015, Hancock and Garner 2011a, Garner, Hancock, and Kim 2007).

A second research thread builds on my training in philosophy developing dialogues among theorists and theoretical toolkits. This approach puts different theories and theorists into dialogue to juxtapose concepts in order to rethink how they illuminate the everyday life. These juxtapositions produce new perspectives through which to examine social existence (See Hancock and Garner 2015, 2011b). Another group of theoretical articles seek to create diagnostics for capturing contemporary historical conditions and to unearth the cultural currents that give rise to the politics of everyday life and the social forces that momentarily crystallize them. This diagnostic approach highlights the ways that social shifts are never straightforward and always in need of analysis (See Hancock and Garner 2014a). A group of theoretical articles seeks to develop theoretical “toolkits,” not simply to apply theory, but rather to rework theory and put it to use for new intellectual endeavors. The theoretical project here is to forge tools for analyzing the mechanisms that structure society in terms of domination and inequality. Theory provides the analytical insights to critique hierarchies and relations of domination and subordination that become embedded in social structures and social institutions in order to interrogate, to transform, and to overturn them. (See Hancock and Morrison 2016, Hancock 2017c).

Along similar lines of inquiry, I am currently collaborating with Bryan Sykes and Anjali Verma to assess the limitations of mixed methods research, drawing on how translational science across qualitative and quantitative divisions can deepen social science knowledge while remaining true to the epistemological traditions of each sub-field of methodology (Sykes, Verma, Hancock 2017). Specifically, this project examines how the themes, narratives, and ideal types derived from qualitative fieldwork can be broadly generalizable in a manner consistent with estimates obtained from quantitative analyses.

This project seeks to align findings from quantitative research with ethnographic components of a study, thereby leading to internally valid (or consistent) findings independent of methodology and externally valid conclusions jointly determined from both methods. This work was presented at the *Innovations in Ethnographic Methodology Symposium* at the University of California at Berkeley, March 4, 2016 and will be bundled for a Special Issue submission at *Ethnography*.

The third research thread explores the realms of culture and cultural politics. My research in this area revolves around the analysis of culture and how aesthetics and poetics constitute and help negotiate everyday life through performance and consumption (Hancock and Lorr 2013). My work has also explored the workings of media and culture in the construction of identity against the ongoing transformations and regulatory mechanisms of the contemporary mediascape (See Hancock and Garner 2014b). My current work documents the role that theory plays in understanding disempowered racial and ethnic groups in America by exploring the ways that discourse, power, and knowledge converge to structure societies in inequalities. In addition this work illuminates the material, economic and technological disparities for circulating information amongst groups (Hancock 2016a, 2016b).

These different areas of research navigate between micro contexts, and the particularities of people engaged in everyday practices, and macro level social forces that form, structure, and reconstitute domination. Furthermore, my research establishes dialogues, diagnostics, and critical tools for social analysis, as well as documents the cultural and historical conditions in order to unearth the social circulation of meanings that infuse people's lives with purpose. These three threads of my research reinforce the ways that scholarship can advance a greater understanding of contemporary social problems.

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