

Diversity statement

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Diversity reflects the richness of human experience and is a source of innovation and progress. However, multiple domains of social life are organized in ways that exclude, mistreat, and/or undervalue some groups of people. It is thus a matter of justice to consider questions of equality and inclusion when discussing diversity. My approach to addressing issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion is intersectional and multi-prong. I recognize that there are multiple axes of inequality and exclusion and that they affect the various domains of social life in different ways. Based on my research, with its multiple levels of analysis, from the micro to the global level, I find that issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion must be addressed at multiple levels as well, involving both personal transformation and institutional transformation. I have integrated concerns regarding these issues in all aspects of my professional and personal life, in my research, teaching, service, and community engagement, and I will continue to do so in the future.

In fact, my research directly addresses several aspects of diversity, equality, and inclusion. In my work on citizenship and migration, I focus on global inequalities and on the experiences of migrants. In my violence research, I relate gender-based violence to other types of violence and demonstrate how gendered institutions can be prone to violence. Structural as well as personal change is critical to diversity, inclusion, and equality. I contribute to these discussions through my engagement with theories of action and through constructing valid models of action that can facilitate both personal and institutional transformation. Finally, my work on transnational social movements and community highlights global cultural diversity and identifies different institutional logics, strategies of collective action, types of civil society, and movements' efforts to pursue global justice.

As a cis-gender woman presenting as white but speaking with a slight foreign accent while teaching sociology in Mississippi, I have had to think hard about diversity, equality, and inclusion in the classroom. It is clear to me that the identities of both the professor and the students matter for learning outcomes. In order to make my classroom more inclusive, first, I expose any hidden rules of the curriculum and make them explicit. This allows first-generation students, students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, and students from diverse cultural backgrounds to understand what it takes to succeed academically. For upper-level courses, I attempt to even the playing field by breaking down complex assignments into manageable intermediate steps and I guide each student through completion of those steps. Second, I develop open-ended assignments that allow students to focus on issues that matter to them.

Third, I develop assignments that provide students, especially those from privileged backgrounds—some of whom may be resistant to issues related to equality and inclusion—opportunities to learn about experiences that are different from their own. Experiential learning rather than didactic learning, in my experience, is more effective in creating open-mindedness and concern for others' struggles. In my introductory courses at the University of Mississippi, for example, I ask students to conduct participant observation of a religious community with which they are not familiar. When I recently ran into a student who had taken my course several years ago, this assignment was the first thing she remembered about the course. Another assignment that seems to have a big impact on students is the opportunity to interview someone belonging to a different racial, ethnic, national, or religious minority in this country about how they

experience race and/or ethnicity. I find that many students are uncomfortable talking about race and ethnicity. This assignment is a chance to face the discomfort through listening to a first-hand account of what it is like to be a member of a community different from one's own.

In my service and community engagement, I strive to support efforts identified by members of underprivileged groups as beneficial to their causes. At the University of Mississippi, for example, I advocated for a successful student-led initiative to remove a Confederate statue from the center of campus. I also worked on a Faculty Senate resolution defending my department colleagues who had been attacked for their research on microaggressions on campus. Locally, I have been involved in a book club with community members and university faculty and staff to improve our community's understanding of issues of race. At the University of Notre Dame, I pushed for the establishment of a LGBTQ+ and friends organization on campus. In South Bend, Indiana, I facilitated the building of a coalition between labor and the LGBTQ+ community and worked on introducing ordinances promoting LGBTQ+ rights to enhance the effectiveness of the city's Human Rights Commission.