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Michèle Lamont

Abstract

This Presidential Address offers elements for a systematic and cumulative study of destigmatization, or the process by which low-status groups gain recognition and worth. Contemporary sociologists tend to focus on inequality in the distribution of resources, such as occupation, education, and wealth. Complementing this research, this address draws attention to "recognition gaps," defined as disparities in worth and cultural membership between groups in a society. Drawing on research I have conducted, I first describe how neoliberalism promotes growing recognition gaps. Then, drawing on research on stigmatized groups across several societies, I analyze how experiences of stigma and destigmatization are enabled and constrained by various contextual factors and actors, including institutions, cultural repertoires, knowledge workers, and social movements activists. I conclude by proposing a research agenda for the sociology of recognition and destigmatization, and by sketching how social scientists, policy makers, organizations, and citizens can contribute in the reduction of recognition gaps.

1) Introduction

Since the election of Donald Trump to the presidency in 2016, the United States is showing signs of a hardening of boundaries toward stigmatized groups (LGBTQ, Muslims, undocumented immigrants, low-income people, and others). European societies face their own challenges, with xenophobia contributing to the election of populist parties while left-wing parties are losing steam (Rovny 2018). These changes are taking place against the background of growing inequality and a multiplication of recognition claims, manifested most recently in the #metoo movement and workers' support for Trump (Lamont, Park and Ayala-Hurtado 2017). Given these circumstances, gaining a better understanding of how to extend cultural membership to the largest number is an urgent task.

This Presidential Address provides me the opportunity to propose a framework to help us see a way forward. I argue for a sociological agenda for the cumulative empirical study of destigmatization, defined as the process by which low-status groups gain recognition and worth in society. I also suggest ways in which social scientists, policy makes, organizations and citizens can contribute to broadening cultural membership.

A commitment to developing a sociology of recognition and destigmatization requires specifying concepts, describing empirically the existence of recognition gaps, and analyzing some of the pathways through with they develop and the possible ways they can be narrowed. After defining conceptual tools, I turn to prior studies I and others have conducted on stigma among devalued social groups in various societies. I describe changes in the boundaries toward the poor, blacks, immigrants and Muslims that have occurred under the influence of neoliberalism, particularly in France and the United States. I also describe how institutions and cultural repertoires can help extend cultural membership to a broader range of people. Then I

compare and explain how members of stigmatized groups in the United States, Brazil and Israel have experienced and responded to stigmatization in various contexts by drawing on institutional and cultural repertoires in their environment. Finally, considering three recent successful and less successful cases of destigmatization (people living in HIV-AIDS, African Americans, and people labelled as obese), I discuss destigmatization processes, focusing on how social movements and knowledge producers contest structural stigma through the removal of blame and the drawing of equivalences between themselves and other groups.

I conclude by proposing a research agenda for the study of recognition processes that builds on a broader model of how cultural processes feed into inequality (Lamont, Beljean and Clair 2014). I also suggest how social scientists and other groups can contribute to tackling the recognition gap. This is imperative, especially if one considers the underdeveloped state of policies to address recognition, as compared to other challenges such as poverty (for instance Berger et al (2018); but see Ellwood and Patel (2018)).

Proliferating Recognition Claims in a Context of Growing Inequality

In recent years, a growing number of groups in North America have been making recognition claims, as they protest stigmatizing or unfair treatment, and ask to be treated with dignity and respect. On the left, several social movements have made claims for cultural membership and social inclusion: Occupy, Black Lives Matter, the Dreamers, LGBTQ rights, and the *Idle no more Movement* in Canada (Milkman 2017; Denis 2012), and more recently, the #metoo campaign and many mobilizations for greater social inclusion on college campuses (e.g., Zimmerman 2017). On the right, the recognition claims of white American workers who feel cheated of their rightful place is given center stage in common explanations for the popularity of

conservative populism and the electoral success of Donald Trump as president of the United States (Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016; Williams 2017; Lamont et al 2017). Recognition claims are also multiplying in Europe: progressive cultural elites promote multiculturalism (e.g. Flemmen and Savage (2017) for the UK), concerned that immigrants from Muslim majority countries and Sub-Saharan Africa experience growing stigmatization, as they are increasingly required to demonstrate a full embrace of 'modern Western values' (Duyvendak et al 2016). For their part, Muslim populations are pressing for an acknowledgment of their religious and legal traditions in European countries (e.g. Bowen 2016 on Sharia law in the UK). Moreover, just as in the United States, recognition claims by the European working class men is feeding support for the populist right in many countries (Gidron and Hall 2017).

Some may view these events as a natural outgrowth of identity politics, as women, ethnoracial, religious and sexual minorities took front-stage to challenge the historical predominance of class claims in progressive politics (Fraser 2000; Gitlin 1993). The broadening of social citizenship since World War II has led social scientists to analyze the diffusion of diversity as a characteristic of institutions and societies.[1] This trend is evidenced by the increased presence of gender or race-inclusive practices among a wide range of institutions such as universities and corporations (Berrey 2015; Dobbin 2009; Skrentny 2009; Warikoo 2016) and has been reflected in textbooks, with a greater emphasis on minority rights and diversity, particularly in stable democracies (Bromley 2014, Soysal and Szakács 2010). In the United States, there has been a decline in social distance expressed by white Americans vis-à-vis ethno-

[1] For example, Banting and Kymlicka (2013) measure eight types of multicultural policies across 21 Western nations at three time points (1980, 2000, and 2010) as indicators of "some level of public recognition and support for minorities to express their distinct identities and practices" (2013: 582); also, Bloemraad et al, forthcoming).

racial or religious minorities, whether measured by the willingness to have someone of a minority group be a citizen of the country, a co-worker, a friend, or even a family member (Fischer and Hout 2006).

Yet, many have noted the emergence of counter-movements (Meyer and Staggenbord 1996), which has become somewhat more accentuated after the start of Donald Trump's presidential term. His first year in office has been marked by assaults against LGBTQ inclusion,[2] low-income groups (e.g., the GOP Tax Plan and efforts to repel Affordable Health Care; Appelbaum (2017)); women (on reproduction rights; Hauser (2017)); religious minorities (with Islamophibic rhetoric; Stein 2017)) and more. This may suggest a double movement (Polanyi ([1944] 2001) where progress toward greater social inclusion (the "moral arc of the moral universe that bends toward justice," celebrated by Martin Luther King[3]) is accompanied by a counter-cyclical movement toward more exclusion and stigmatization. This occurs just at the time when many social scientists and citizens had come to take for granted a gradual progress toward greater social inclusion after the election of Barak Obama as the first Black American president in 2008, the adoption of same-sex marriage in the United States in 2015,[4] and other inclusive political developments.

These changes take place against the background of growing inequality in the distribution of resources, especially in the United States: The era of shared prosperity that characterized the immediate aftermath of World War II petered out at the 1970s (Stone et al 2016). The

[2] For instance, on July 26, 2017, Trump announced his intent to reinstated a ban against transgendered military recruits (Lopez (2018); Moreau (2017)).
[3] Mentioned in a Baccalaureate speech delivered at Wesleyan University on June 8, 1964.
[4] This includes a 2013 law allowing women into combat and the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which helped women sue for unequal pay.

concentration of wealth is at its highest point since the Great Recession of 1929 (Piketty 2014),[5] while class mobility is at its lowest point (Chetty et al 2017), especially in the more unequal developed countries (Corak 2013). It is in this context that the media have greatly increased the coverage of the distributional aspects of inequality in the United States and abroad, resulting in a heightened awareness of economic inequality.[6] Accordingly, interest in the educational "achievement gap" has grown steadily (e.g. Reardon 2011), likely given the importance of educational attainment in achieving economic mobility. This is illustrated by a Lexis-Nexis search which reveals that between 2003 and 2004, the term "achievement gap" was mentioned 983 times, compared to 1862 mentions between 2008 and 2009, and 2826 mentions between 2015 and 2016.

In a time of a growing income and wealth inequality, it is particularly important to understand and reduce inequality in recognition, or what I term "recognition gaps." Recognition gaps can be defined as disparities in worth and cultural membership between groups in a society. These gaps can be closed through the social process of destigmatization. Among social scientists, we have yet to develop a systematic empirically-based understanding of recognition (or destigmatization) processes that would match the depth of accumulated knowledge about the distribution of resources, and this, despite the impressive growth of knowledge pertaining to various types of stigma (e.g., Pescosalido and Martin (2015; 2007); Major, Dovidio and Link (2018)), closure (Tilly 1998), and in the Bourdieusian tradition, cultural reproduction, misrecognition and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1990; 2000). Sociologists are uniquely well-

[5] Between 2009 and 2013, the top 1 percent captured 85.1 percent of total income growth between 2009 and 2013 (Sommeillier, Price and Wazeter 2016).
[6] This can be measured by the success of books such as Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century,* which sold over two million copies worldwide (Goldhammer 2017: 27-9).

positioned to study recognition processes: as a multi-methods and multi-paradigmatic field, we can mobilize simultaneously a range of types of data and theories to study empirically and systematically cultural processes (Lamont, Beljean and Clair 2014).[7]

But why does recognition matter? Skeptic sociologists concerned about material inequalities might ask what difference recognition makes if people are hungry, homeless, or incarcerated. They may ask whether recognition is simply about people feeling good about themselves because others acknowledge their value. Recognition matters because of its direct impact on well-being. Indeed, recognition and its mirror opposites, stigmatization and discrimination, have been shown to have been associated with physical and subjective well-being in several realms:

a) A large body of evidence shows that perceived racism is a psychosocial stressor that affects health negatively and contributes significantly to racial disparities in health in the United States (William and Mohammed 2013; Krieger 2014).
b) Stigma can contribute to poverty, which in turn affects physical and subjective well-being. It is the case for LGBTQ youth who are rejected by their family, which leads them to homelessness (Durso and Gates 2012). While the poor often feel isolated and depressed (Santiago, Wadsworth and Stump 2011), their plight is not only due to poverty, but also to the isolation that comes with stigmatization. Stigmatization's impact on well-being is net of lack of resources: self-stigma dissuades people from pursuing life goals

[7] I conceptualize cultural processes as "ongoing classifying representations/practices that unfold in the context of structures (organizations, institutions) to produce various types of outcomes. These processes shape everyday interactions and result in an array of consequences that may feed into the distribution of resources and recognition—and thus, often contribute to the outcomes considered by each of the three dimensions of inequality. These processes are largely a collective accomplishment as they are shared representation systems involving dominants and subordinates alike." Lamont et al (2014): 14.

(see the "why try" effect described by Corrigan et al (2009)). This suggests that stigmatization exercises an independent effect on poverty.

c) Blue-collar workers feel stigmatized as a result of their downward mobility. Their instability is associated with the recent opioid epidemic and the decline in life expectancy among non-college educated whites in the United States (Case and Deaton, 2015). In the American context where worth is above all defined as socio-economic success, many come to see themselves as "losers" (Lamont 2000). A growing number isolate themselves due to feeling of worthlessness: their marital rate is declining and fewer are joining civic associations (Cherlin 2014).

d) The stigmatization of groups influences social policy and erodes a robust welfare state. In the United States, public support for welfare benefits for the poor is particularly low (Gilens 2009). Americans are less likely to want to help the poor than their European counterparts and they are comparatively more likely to favor psychological and individualist explanations of poverty over structural ones (or "blaming" versus "social" explanations (Van Oorschott and Halman 2010), especially among whites without a college degree (Lauter 2016; Shelton 2017).

e) Stigmatization matters for politics—influencing Donald Trump's ability to speak to the white working class for instance. Indeed, a systematic analysis of 73 of his electoral speeches revealed that he systematically aimed to appeal to this group by validating their worth as workers (Lamont, Park and Hurtado-Ayala 2017). He did this by removing blame for their downward mobility, that is, by repeatedly pointing to globalization to explain their economic plight. He also systematically put down the competition (immigrants in general, singling out "illegal immigrants," Mexicans, Muslims and

refugees) and raised workers' status by stressing their role as protectors and providers of women and children (including against Muslims!). Thus, the recognition gap experienced by workers helps explain the role played by this group in the outcome of the 2016 American presidential elections. This applies not only to the Trump elections, but also to Brexit (Dodd, Lamont and Savage 2017) and to populism more generally (Bonikowski 2017).

From Distribution to Recognition

Sociologists have long described inequality as a multidimensional phenomenon, from Max Weber's (1922) essay on "class status and party" ([1922] 1978) to Bourdieu ([1979] 1984)'s conceptualization of class that considers the structuration and amount of economic and cultural capitals. Students of intersectionality have revisited this question by distinguishing between the structural, political and representation aspects of gender and racial inequality (Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005). A famous debate between philosophers Fraser and Honneth (2004) on "the politics of distribution and recognition" has given a different twist to the multidimensionality of inequality by reframing the question in the context of a normative discussion around the sources of injustice (also Taylor 1995). Although their exchange was theoretical in nature, it underscores the need for an empirical inquiry into recognition and distribution as separate but interacting dimensions of inequality.[8]

How to proceed? One possible path is to focus on "recognition gaps" and how to narrow

[8] This is an essential complement to other empirical studies of stigmatization and recognition in the professions, groups, and social movements (e.g., Mansbridge and Flaster 2007; Cohen and Dromi 2018, Moon 2012, Hobson 2003, McGarry and Jasper 2015, Saguy 2012; Barbot and Dodier 2014). Future research should consider how destigmatization occurs across such units of analysis.

them. Sociologists have developed a large literature on the "achievement gap," which aims to reduce observable consistent patterns of disparity in educational measures (Jencks 1972, Miller 1995, Jencks and Phillips 1998, Kao and Thompson 2003). They have also considered "poverty gaps" (the mean shortfall of the total population from the poverty line), addressed by the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal (Grusky, Kanbur and Sen 2006). I suggest that we should now tackle "recognition gaps" defined as "disparities of cultural membership between groups, "with the goal of extending cultural membership to the largest number. This could affect positively collective well-being (Hall and Lamont 2013) and the quality of social life more generally.[9]

For the current purpose, recognition is defined as "the affirmation of positive qualities of human subjects and groups." (Honneth (2014: 329).[10] It is a social act by which the relative positive social worth of an individual or group is affirmed or acknowledged by others. Each act contributes to the cultural process of recognition—a growing consensus about the equal worth of social groups.

Stigmatization, a process that results in the mirror opposite of recognition**,** is understood (following Goffman (1963)) as a cultural process that consists in qualifying negatively identities and differences (Lamont et al 2014; Dubet et al 2013).[11] Concomitantly, *de*stigmatization is the

[9] A recent survey shows that dignity and agency have an impact on subjective well-being that is comparable to income (Hojman and Miranda 2018).
[10] For a philosophical discussion of the concept of recognition, see Mattias (2013).
[11] More specifically: "In his foundational work, Goffman (1963) distinguishes between three types of stigma: (1) stigma on the basis of physical or external attributes/marks (e.g., obesity); (2) stigma on the basis of internal or personal attributes and character (e.g., mental illness or deviant behavior); and (3) tribal stigma on the basis of racial, ethnic, or religious attributes. Phelan, Link and Dovidio (2008) also differentiate among three types of stigma, but differently. They argue that stigmatized groups are best differentiated not by the location of their discredited attribute, but by who they are (1) exploited or dominated (e.g., ethnic minorities, women and the poor); (2) victims of norm enforcement (e.g. sexual "deviants" and the overweight); and (3)

social process by which low-status individuals or groups gain recognition or cultural membership. The process of destigmatization involves changing cultural constructions of groups over time (Clair et al 2016: 223). Finally, cultural membership is the status of those who are collectively defined as valued members of a community (Ong 1996; Lamont 2000; Edgell and Tranby 2010).[12]

While each of these topics have been the object of a theoretical and (in some cases) an empirical literature, here I am more concerned with connecting issues than with conversing with sociological literatures discussed elsewhere (Mijs et al 2016; Lamont et al 2014; Clair et al 2016; Lamont et al 2016).[13] My focus is to initiate a sociological approach to the study of destigmatization as a fundamental social process[14] that contributes to reducing "recognition gaps," a dimension of inequality that has received relatively limited cumulative attention.

This analysis will often refer to the popular concept of "cultural repertoires," defined as a

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stigmatized as having perceived diseases (e.g., Those with HIV/AIDS or the mentally ill." (Lamont et al 2016, p. 312-313). I favor the concept of stigmatization over racialization (e.g., Meer 2012, Murji and Solomos 2015), because it does not privilege phenotype or race as a discredited attribute and it facilitates the analysis of the intersection between discredited identities beyond race (poverty and sexuality). It also enables a comparative sociology of various types of stigma (Clair et al 2016) which is complementary to the study of the properties and mechanisms of boundary change (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013).

[12] Tilly (1998) describes how the construction of legal, regulatory, and organizational categories by those in power defines roles, rights, obligations, and interlocking expectations that legitimate economic and social hierarchies, whether these oppose the middle class and the working class, or other categorical inequalities such as black/white, citizen/foreigner, legal/illegal, and qualified/ unqualified arise. He focuses on how people who control resources "set up systems of social closure, exclusion and control" to exploit subjects and hoard opportunities. Cultural citizenship is broader in focus in that it does not privilege the control of material resources over the relative symbolic positioning of groups.

[13] Such a review should also consider similarities and differences between the study of recognition and that of status change (Ridgeway 2017) as well as the study of performance in the civic sphere proposed by Alexander (2006). My approach is resolutely inductive and does not posit that specific criteria are particular salient in the construction of worth (e.g. competence in the accomplishment of task).

set of tools available to individuals to make sense of the reality they experience (building on Swidler (1986)). Comparative cultural sociology shows that cultural repertoires are unevenly available across national contexts (e.g., Lamont and Thévenot 2000). This holds for national myths (e.g., racial democracy in Brazil, Zionism in Israel), philosophies of integration (Favell 1998), cultural myths of belonging (e.g., multiculturalism in Canada (Winter 2014)), transnational repertoires (neoliberalism and human rights (Paschel 2017); as well as for criteria of worth (socioeconomic success in the United States as compared to France) (Lamont 1992; 2000). In its focus on what tools are available where, comparative cultural sociology has allowed social scientists to move away from methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Gluck Schiller 2002) and cross-cultural analysis that essentializes national differences and class cultures (the culture of poverty for instance (see Lamont and Small 2008). Thus, a culture of working class solidarity is more available in France than in the U.S., not because the French are naturally more "solidaristic" but because historical cultural repertoires such as socialism, Catholicism and French republicanism continue to make working class solidarity relatively more salient in this environment (Lamont 2000).

2) Neoliberalism and Growing Recognition Gaps

The last forty years have seen the ascent of neoliberalism, which is the intensified extension of the principle of market mechanisms and fundamentalism (Block and Somers 2014) to all aspects of society—the economy, the state, the audit society (Evans and Sewell 2013). In addition to contributing to economic inequality, these mutually reinforcing changes (Hall and Lamont 2013) have fostered a transformation of scripts of the self (Meyer 2010), and more specifically, the ascendency of criteria of worth associated with the neoliberal self, which

emphasize socioeconomic success, competitiveness, and self-reliance (or the privatization of risk) (Sharone 2013; Silva 2013; Lamont et al 2016). In short, neoliberalism is as much a problem for recognition gaps as it is for economic inequality.

Neoliberal scripts feed growing recognition gaps. The groups that do not meet the criteria of the neoliberal self—by definition, blue collar workers, the broader working class, the poor, the unemployed, and immigrants who are perceived to use a disproportionate share of welfare resources (Camarota 2015)—become more stigmatized as these criteria gain in importance. Simultaneously, the status of the college-educated professionals and managers and the upper-middle class that epitomized neoliberal virtues increase as these scripts become more normative.

These changes are happening at the time when the size of the middle class and the upper-middle class is diminishing and the likelihood of joining its rank is declining (Corak 2013). Yet, such groups remain well represented in today's entertainment media, and in sit-coms in particular, whereas blue collar workers have largely disappeared, and those who remain are often represented as buffoons (Butsch 2003; Skidger 2013). For their part, the poor are largely invisible or represented in the most stigmatizing way (e.g., Milman (2012) for a comparison of representation of welfare mothers in Israel and the United States).

Thus, neoliberal scripts of the self contribute to a growing recognition gap by associating worth and cultural membership with middle class identity, occupation and lifestyle, attributes that are now out of reach for a growing segment of the population (Chetty et al 2017; Corak 2013), which may condemn many to perceive themselves, and to be perceived by others, as "losers." Indeed, Americans believe the chance that a person who is born into the bottom 20% of households in income can reach the top 20% in adulthood is more than 50% higher than in reality (Alesina, Stantcheva and Teso 2017)—this difference is considerably greater than that

found in Italy, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom. If the American dream is perceived to be attainable by all, the failures of those who don't reach it can thus be explained in reference to their putative moral deficiencies.

Neoliberal scripts of the self also negatively shape how workers draw boundaries toward other groups in the West. In both France and the United States, for instance, the working class has experienced economic downward mobility, deskilling, the declining prestige of their national identity, and changes in gender roles that have challenged the superior status of men as protectors and providers (Williams 2017; Gilbert 2017). There is a growing gap between what workers believe to be their legitimate worth to society (what Blumer (1958) dubbed "sense of group position") and the lower status they believe the broader society attributes them—a recognition gap, which generates considerable anger and resentment (Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016).

In the early nineties I conducted interviews with 150 working class men living in and around the Paris and New York suburbs for *The Dignity of Working Men* (Lamont 2000). I spoke to low-status white collar workers and blue-collar workers which included African Americans and white workers in the United States and North African immigrants and white workers in France. I asked workers to engage in boundary work—to describe the kinds of people they are similar to and different from, inferior and superior, etc.—approaching the interview as an experimental setting for documenting inductively the mental maps through which they define their worth. The book revealed how these groups largely mobilize moral criteria of worth: they view themselves as self-reliant, hard-working, honest, responsible men who keep the world (including their family and neighborhood) in moral order. The book also showed that American workers drew simultaneously moral, racial and class boundaries, as they define themselves in

opposition to the poor and African Americans (often collapsing these two categories), whom they perceive as lacking self-reliance and as having a lesser work ethic and lower moral standards. At the same time, immigrants were not salient in their moral boundary work; these workers appeared to be largely indifferent to immigrants, some even viewing them in positive terms, as engaged in the pursuit of the American dream.

Compared to American workers, French workers were more inclusive of the poor and blacks (who in the French context of the early nineties, were largely perceived as including French citizens from the Caribbean). They drew on cultural repertoires associated with French republicanism, socialism and Catholicism to downplay their differences with these groups as well as racial phenotype, and to emphasize solidarity toward the poor. But they also drew strong boundaries toward North African immigrant Muslims, who were perceived as lacking self-reliance and violating the workers' sense of group position. Muslims were also rejected due to their perceived moral incompatibility with French values—concerning the respect of women and human rights in particular.

These boundary patterns have changed considerably since the early nineties, as Lamont and Duvoux (2014) show from reviewing recent changes in boundary patterns in French society. We found that: 1) Boundaries toward blacks are now stronger than in the early nineties, in part because this group now includes a sizable number of West African Muslim immigrants, a group associated with genital mutilation and polygamy; but also, because Islamophobia has become more prevalent in Europe over the last two decades. The xenophobic Front National party has been courting workers and the "petits moyens," the lower middle class aspiring to upward mobility who embrace the values of neoliberalism such as the privatization of risk, and who resent the demands that immigrants put on the French welfare system; 2) Boundaries toward the

poor have also rigidified, as this group is now asked to demonstrate the same degree of self-reliance in France as they were a few decades ago in the United States (Duvoux 2009; Martinache 2010). We find a similar pattern in other Western European countries, with boundaries toward Muslims becoming more salient over time (but not boundaries toward the poor), especially in countries with strong neo-liberal policies (Mijs, Bakhtiari and Lamont 2016: 4-5).

The American working class has experienced economic and cultural changes not unlike those facing their French counterpart, as they face deindustrialization, deskilling and declining status (Cherlin 2014). This is also reshaping the boundaries this group draws toward other groups: 1) They have less solidarity towards the poor than they had a few decades ago and they are more likely to explain poverty by moral failure than by structural changes: Forty four percent of those who believe the poor would prefer to remain on welfare are whites without a college degree (Lauter 2016); this group has less sympathy toward welfare recipients than non-whites and the college educated. 2) By some accounts, boundaries toward African-Americans have weakened among the general population, as indicated by attitudinal surveys about racial stereotypes which show a strong decline in blatant racism, but not in subtle racism and the persistence of cultural explanations of black-white inequality (Bobo et al 2012). However, spatial and institutional segregation persists amidst the gradual dismantling of civil rights and antidiscrimination laws (Clair, Daniel and Lamont 2016: 227), and whites with lower levels of education exhibit more negative (even if declining) racial attitudes toward African Americans than their higher-educated peers (see Bobo et al 2012, Table 3.4, p. 64); 3) Boundaries toward immigrants have hardened. In addition to the economic and cultural changes described above, the implementation of ostensibly race-neutral immigration laws has had uneven consequences

for how immigrant-origin groups across racial/ethnic categories are received in the United States, with immigrants (and non-immigrants) who are perceived as "illegal" disproportionately affected (Asad and Clair 2018; Schachter 2016). Trump's electoral speeches accentuated the boundaries drawn toward immigrants, refugees, and Muslims in particular, framing them as dangerous and, in some cases, illegal and immoral (Lamont, Park and Ayala-Hurtado 2017; see also Flores forthcoming). Thus, there is ample indication that neoliberalism is fostering an overall narrowing of cultural membership and a growing recognition gap for specific vulnerable groups as neoliberal criteria of worth are becoming more hegemonic across neoliberal societies—with similar changes resulting in stronger boundaries toward the poor and some immigrants, and with more emphasis put on self-reliance, competitiveness and socioeconomic success.

3) Collective Well-Being and Inclusive Cultural Membership

Inclusive cultural membership—a key aspect in the process of destigmatization and the closing of recognition gaps—is an important dimension of collective well-being that often is given less weight than other economic, demographic and political measures of "societal success."[15] Since 2002, the Successful Societies Program has aimed to consider collective well-being in its many dimensions, including cultural membership. Hall and Lamont (2009; 2013) have analyzed how institutions and cultural repertoires can serve as buffer or scaffolding in improving individual and group capacities to meet challenges, even in the face of neoliberalism.

[15] While public health experts and demographers use non-ethnocentric measures such as low infant mortality and high life expectancy, some economists now aim to go beyond the traditional economic measures (GINI index and GNP) to incorporate well-being—e.g., education, health and sustainability (e.g., Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2009). For their part, political scientists embrace measures such as the Corruption Perception index (e.g., Rothstein 2011) and the Democracy index developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

For instance, in his work with Banting, Kymlicka proposed the Multiculturalism Index to measure how inclusive societies are by focusing eight types of multicultural policies across 21 Western nations, thus signaling boundaries (Banting and Kymlicka 2013: 582). Wright and Bloemraad (2012)) showed that such programs lead immigrants to be more emotionally and cognitively engaged in their host society, and more likely to run for political offices. This study illustrates how institutions can contribute to bridging recognition gaps. Similarly, the law (e.g. concerning the protection of same-sex marriage (Hatzenbuehler et al 2014; Hatzenbuehler et al 2009)) and policies about access to public funds (in the form of tax credits for instance) also send clear signals about who is in and who is out (Steensland 2006; Guetzkow 2010). By categorizing citizens, state bureaucracies contribute directly not only to the distribution of resources, but also to the creation of status pecking order in education and beyond (Domina, Penner and Penner 2017).

As noted above concerning the historical role of socialism, Catholicism and republicanism in France, cultural repertoires also have a direct impact on boundaries, as they contain narratives about the relative worth and positioning of various groups. They can weaken or strengthen mutuality and solidarity toward low-income populations, LGBTQ individuals, or ethnoracial or religious minorities (Berezin and Lamont 2016). Thus, mobilizing institutions and cultural repertoires in crafting messages about worth can affect recognition gaps and extend cultural membership to the largest number. More specifically, broadening the criteria by which people can gain cultural membership beyond socioeconomic success and self-reliance is likely to help narrow the recognition gap and may allow a wider range of people to be viewed as worthy—as businessmen, creative people, craftsman, spiritual leaders, or caring pillars of the community (also Stark 2009). In the conclusion, I will suggest how social scientists, politicians

and policy makers, organizations and citizens can help inflect cultural repertoires in such a direction.

4) Experiences and Responses to the Recognition Gap: Claiming Cultural Memberships

What is the role of institutions and cultural repertoires in enabling and constraining how stigmatized groups experience and respond to exclusion? My colleagues and I consider this question in *Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma in the United States, Brazil, and Israel* (Lamont et al 2016), a comparative study that focuses on middle class and working class African Americans, Black Brazilians and three stigmatized groups in Israel: Arab Palestians, Mizrahi Jews and Ethiopian Jews (the last two groups are not discussed here).[16] We asked individuals to describe an incident where they were treated unfairly: "What happened? Where were you? How did you respond?" We also asked: "What do you teach your children about how to respond to exclusion? What is the best response that your group has at its disposal to respond to racism?" These questions generated narratives on actual incidents and on normative responses. We argued that experiences and responses are enabled by the distinct cultural repertoires individuals have access to in their national context; a range of background factors, including state capacity and

[16] The study draws on in-depth interviews with over four hundred randomly sampled men and women conducted in and around New York City, Rio de Janeiro, and Tel Aviv in 2007-2008. The United States-Brazil comparison is theoretically motivated because the United States has stronger racial boundaries than Brazil. In the comparative sociology of race, Brazil often stands for the ideal type of country with weak racial boundaries (with low residential segregation, a high frequency of intermarriage, etc.) (e.g. Telles 2004). For its part, Israel stands in stark opposition to Brazil given its walls and security checkpoints, and the fact that its main excluded group, Arab Palestinians, are largely segregated (institutionally and spatially) from the majority group. At the onset of the project, we were pondering where the United States would fall in between these two extremes.

other institutional dimensions; and the way groupness is experienced for each of the five group under consideration.[17]

African-American men and women we talked with mostly describe experiences of "assault on worth" (e.g., being ignored, insulted, overlooked, and underestimated) when queried about incidents where they felt they had been treated unfairly. We found across our three countries this preponderance of assault on self over discrimination in the examples of experiences that were offered to us.[18] As for responses to experiences of stigmatization, confronting is mentioned by four out of five of African-American interviewees, compared to half of the Brazilians, and still fewer among Arab Palestinians. Confronting often means offering an alternative view of the individual or the group, thereby affirming their moral worth. More concretely, it takes the form of "educating the ignorant" about lack people, defending dignity, and claiming or imposing respect. In some cases, it even means affirming one's mere presence or existence as a human being.

Take the case of, Meagan, an African-American teacher, who describes how she deals with White people who cut in front of her at the grocery store. She observes "They do that all the time; they're just trying to be superior" and recalls saying to one particular woman: "You do this not because I am Black, but because you are White, because my being Black has nothing to do with you." Then she reflects: "Of course, it comes as a shock to them. They don't want the confrontation. If you confront them, they are not going to give you a word back because you are

[17] We operationalize groupness as three dimensional, that is, as involving social identity, symbolic boundaries and social/spatial boundaries (Lamont et al 2016: 22-27).
[18] This was unexpected given that the American literature on racism emphasizes discrimination (e.g. Quillian 2006).

not there…. I don't think she is going to do this to too many Black women. One woman, I actually put my foot out to trip her…"

In contrast to responses to specific incidents, the normative response most frequently mentioned by African Americans to describe the way they teach their children to deal with racism is the response encouraged by neoliberal scripts centering on competitiveness and self-reliance: they emphasize individual mobility and accessing the economic rewards of upward mobility. Collective responses focused on group self-empowerment were promoted by only twenty percent of our interviewees—interviews may yield different responses today (after Black Lives Matter) than they did in 2007-2008.

Whereas confronting is the predominant type of response in the United States, Black Brazilians are equally likely to confront, to engage in "management of the self" (e.g., to ponder the incident and how best to respond, instead of confronting the other party), or to not respond (e.g., due to surprise at being treated in this way). This is in part because Black Brazilians have far more uncertainty about whether or not they experience a racist incident. They do so only when "race is explicitly mentioned," for fear of being labeled a "bigot." This is illustrated by the case of Ana, a Black Brazilian woman journalist. Elegantly dressed, she comes back to her hotel after a long day of work. She mentions her room number to obtain the key to her room. Instead of presenting it, the male clerk calls the room and waits a bit before hanging up and saying while winking, "I'm sorry, he's not there"—obviously thinking that she's a prostitute calling a client. Ana is mortified but does not confront. Yet, when we ask her ten years later to describe an incident where she was treated unfairly, this is the incident that comes to her mind. She concludes: "I could not confront him because he did not say anything that I could point out to

show that he was being racist. I went to my room, called my husband [who is White]. He told me to calm down and that I was exaggerating."

Why is Ana so hesitant to confront? The cultural repertoire of "racial mixture," (Telles and Sue 2009), which captured the blurredness of racial boundaries, is hyper-salient in Brazil, and works against the polarization of racial groups. Compared to African Americans, members of this group think of their identity as anchored more in skin color than shared culture or history; as many families are racially mixed, they do not experience strong spatial segregation within Rio, which further weakens their sense of racial belonging. In addition, the cultural schemas about White on Black racism that are so omnipresent in the United States are far less so in Brazil; not having immediate access to omnipresent scripts about racism has a direct impact on the responses. Finally, the large degree of class inequality in Brazil makes class schemas particularly salient compared to racial schemas for interpreting incidents and may add confusion to interpreting the situation.

In contrast, why are African Americans such as Meagan much less hesitant to confront? Her confidence is enabled by readymade scripts about repeated racist interaction between Blacks and Whites, which are sustained by a collective awareness of racial exclusion, inequality, and history that confirms to Meagan that she is witnessing racist behavior. A legal culture, backed by the Civil Rights Acts, convinces her that it is legitimate to stand up for oneself when facing racial slights. Her strong sense of groupness, which makes her race salient, also feeds her confidence to confront. In Brazil, by contrast, confronting is often done in a more low-key way, with an orientation toward "educating" non-Blacks.

For their part, Arab Palestinians say they experience blatant insults ("you dirty Arab"), being threatened physically, and being viewed as "the enemy within," due to impugned solidarity

with the Palestinian cause. They easily attribute these experiences to their nationality. They rarely spontaneously mention being "misunderstood," as they have no such hope. They almost never use legal tools, even in cases of egregious abuse, as they have no trust in the system. Their response is often to ignore, as they have little hope for change. They frequently aim to gain emotional detachment—putting themselves above the aggressors. As a postal worker states "the best way to stick it to someone is to actually ignore them." Ignoring incidents and self-isolation makes sense in a context of high residential segregation and where confrontation is unlikely to yield results. Unlike Brazilians, Arab Palestinians rarely have doubt about whether an incident has occurred. Unlike African Americans, this does not lead them to confrontation, given the constraints they face.

Cultural repertoires play a crucial role in enabling various types of responses to stigmatization—and they help explain how members of stigmatized groups address recognition gaps as they experience them in their everyday life. For instance, the Brazilian national myth of racial democracy helps us understand why Black Brazilians confront less, and Zionism helps explain why Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews embrace "participatory destigmatization," by downplaying discrimination and emphasizing their religious identity, which grounds their national cultural membership (Mizrachi and Herzog 2012). Transnational neoliberal scripts (competitiveness and socioeconomic success) sustain individualist strategies and are most salient among African Americans. Scripts about how each group makes sense of its historical place in the country are also factored into the explanation (e.g., slavery and Jim Crow segregation in the United States), as do scripts about the moral character of the dominant group (white being more often viewed as domineering and strongly differentiated in the United States than Brazil, where everyone has (putatively) a Black grandmother "somewhere"), etc.

Institutions play an equally significant role, whether individuals think of activating legal recourse (far more frequent in the United States than in Israel or Brazil), or whether the law serves to legitimize claim-making on the ground of racial injustice, or the spatial and institutional segregation that Arab-Palestinians citizens of Israel experience on a daily basis, including in K-12 educational settings. Thus, to fully understand destigmatization processes, one should consider the state in its capacity to legitimize, stigmatize and control populations (Morgan and Orloff 2017)

5) Destigmatization Processes: How Do Group Boundaries Get Redrawn?

In a recent study, colleagues and I examined destigmatization processes through the comparison of three groups that have experienced different degrees of destigmatization over the last several decades (Clair, Daniel and Lamont 2016). We compared people living with HIV/AIDS, the most successful case of destigmatization (as measured by changes in attitudinal scales); African Americans, a group that saw mixed results; and the case of people labeled as obese, among whom efforts to destigmatize have had limited success (Saguy 2012). We drew on the secondary literature on these cases to trace the process by which destigmatization occurred (on not). We focused on identifying social actors central in these processes, the cultural repertoires and other resources they drew on, and the destigmatization actions they engaged in.

Whereas the social psychological literature on stigma identifies various steps in stigma reduction at the individual level, we were concerned with understanding destigmatization as a group-level process. Drawing on social psychological insights, we considered each group's successes or failures in removing blame and drawing equivalences between their groups and various outgroups. Our analysis considered how to improve public attitudes toward stigmatized

groups and how to increase inclusionary policies and practices that could afford them greater cultural membership. We point to three important steps to achieve these objectives: 1) Improve beliefs and attitudes through institutions and informal interactions; 2) Provide positive constructions of groups and behaviors among stigmatizers; and 3) Provide support for laws and policies that incorporate groups.

As shown on Figure 1, we identified a causal pathway that connects key social actors, which include knowledge workers such as medical experts, legal experts, and cultural intermediaries such as journalists. Also crucial are social movement leaders and social movement actors. Together, they draw on cultural resources available in the environment, such as existing ideologies pertaining to equality, rights and multiculturalism, to promote the groups they are concerned with. They do so by engaging in a number of destigmatizing actions, such as developing and disseminating non-blameworthy claims about the etiology of the group's disadvantage (Clair, Daniel and Lamont 2016: 230).

Insert Figure 1 about here

For the new meanings to be adopted, several conditions need to be met, according to our analysis (228-9): 1) the knowledge produced by experts has to be credible and conclusive. This is the case for instance when medical researchers were able to show that HIV/AIDS is a condition that can affect anyone, demonstrating the potential for linked fate (one of several general conditions for destigmatization). This frame also dissociated the disease from allegedly sexually promiscuous (and thus blameworthy) gay men. The diffusion of such claims was facilitated when high status actors, such as the basketball player Magic Johnson, went public as someone having

the virus. Such a framing of the condition facilitated its destigmatization as it was compatible with existing ideologies, such as the increasingly popular rights-based claims used by other minority groups (Skrentny 2009).

This analysis operates with a very different understanding of causal pathways for reducing stigma than cognitive approaches (Lamont et al 2017). Instead of focusing on changing perceptions (for instance, by administering the Implicit Association Test to raise awareness of prejudice (based on differentials in the speed of association between the picture of a white American and an African American and the word "bad," (Lai et al 2016), we conceptualize the causal chain as a historical process of cultural change that occurs in a three-dimensional social space (involving groups located in time and space). This chain connects not only knowledge claims about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted, but also the relative prestige and resources of the experts and their channels and networks of diffusion. While the impact of diversity training (including administrating the Implicit Association Test) is increasingly contested (Dobbin and Kalev 2017), it is important to consider the relatively minor impact of laboratory interventions (Lai et al 2016) in the broader context of the unfolding networks of relationships in which people are exposed to cultural repertoires in their daily lives (Fischer 2011; Small 2017). Changing such frames is likely to have a broader impact on recognition than nudges and probes administered in the artificial context of laboratories.

Conclusion

Sociologists have yet to develop a systematic understanding of recognition and destigmatization processes, although many of our sub-disciplines—social psychology, cultural sociology, social movement theory, race and ethnicity, immigration, political sociology, law and

society—provide essential insights and tools for understanding these processes. While I do not have the space to detail all of those insights and tools here, I conclude by sketching an outline of what a sociology of recognition and destigmatization might look like—and what it might accomplish for our understandings of, and efforts to reduce, social inequality.[19]

In this address, I have summarized several empirical findings on recognition and (de)stigmatization, drawing on my previous collaborative research. I have argued that 1) neoliberalism is feeding growing recognition gaps by making more salient competitiveness, socioeconomic success, and self-reliance as criteria of worth, thus stigmatizing large segments of the population; 2) institutions and cultural repertoires can serve as buffers or scaffolding to provide recognition to stigmatized groups; 3) responses to stigmatization and discrimination are moderated by a range of contextual factors that include the cultural repertoires individuals have access to and societal institutions; and 4) knowledge workers (lawyers, medical and policy experts and social movements actors) actively draw cultural resources to positively transform the meanings associated with groups.

The review suggests important paths for future inquiry. The agenda should include: 1) a systematic comparison of recognition gaps—both social and symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002), but also the experience of different types of stigmatized groups (based on phenotype, sexuality, religion, etc.) to understand the fundamental cultural processes involved in both stigmatization and destigmatization; 2) consideration of how inequalities in recognition and distribution mutually reinforce one another; 3) analysis of what responses to incidents of stigmatization may be most effective in countering negative effects on physical and subjective

[19] Bloemraad (2018) is a different but complementary perspective that came to my attention after I delivered this Presidential Address.

well-being at the individual and group level; 4) greater cross-polanization across the subfield of sociology that are relevant for understanding cultural processes; and 5) greater inter-disciplinary engagement with, and constructive criticism of, methods and conceptual tools from other social science disciplines.

Getting Respect shows that two of the main responses from members of stigmatized groups are to confront and challenge exclusion; and to adopt a normative response which consists of demonstrating that one meets the mainstream (individualistic) standards for cultural membership. Many of our interviewees, particularly in the United States, believe it is best to demonstrate that they are competitive, hard-working, and aim to become middle class—this is the response to stigmatization encouraged by neoliberal scripts of who is worthy in society. Is this likely to be a successful strategy? It may well lead to better jobs and life conditions for a minority (Alesina et al 2017). But studies have shown that the most adaptive response for members of minority groups is to engage the mainstream (for instance, mainstream school culture) while holding on to a strong positive vision of group identity (e.g., Oyserman and Swim 2001). Such studies suggest that affirming one's group identity, one's distinctiveness, fosters subjective wellbeing. Their findings speak against assimilation or the adoption of "mainstream" outlooks, and in favor of fostering a broad range of ways of being and assessing worth, away from the well-established standards of neoliberalism. Such an approach may work best when coupled with systematic collective efforts to destigmatize groups (instead of encouraging their assimilation)—for instance, to explicitly make visible and address the stigmatization of the poor, instead of blaming them for structural disadvantages. This is not to say that the poor should stay poor, but to argue for a broader acknowledgement that living a worthy life should not be conditional on accessing the top half of the income ladder.

But how can destigmatization be achieved? I have suggested that important opportunities may be found by building on psychological studies of stigma, as well as on studies of social movements and knowledge workers involved in the destigmatization of groups, such as people living with HIV-AIDS. *Getting Respect* brings sociologists studying cultural structures into dialogue with political scientists studying material/institutional/political structures and psychologists studying cognition. We must create bridges between these lines of work. Many psychologists working on stigma consider identities and boundaries as cognitive phenomena located in peoples' heads—with a focus on in-group tribalism and out-group dynamics—while political scientists typically focus on institutions and material factors or on identity politics as an area for political struggle. We need to better connect different levels of analysis. For this purpose, *Getting Respect* redirects the inquiry by adopting a multidimensional bottom-up approach to boundary formation that locates groups in their local and historical contexts. We privilege meaning-making as the medium by which groups are constituted, and we attend to how cultural and institutional as well as broad societal constraints manifest themselves in individual-level interactions to differently shape experiences of ethno-racial exclusion. Our inductive approach adds precision and systemic content analysis, and a fully developed multi-level explanation, to the important existing literature on responses to everyday racism.

From the standpoint of intellectual significance, one of the main commitments of sociologists is to bring attention to how the individual problems are connected to broader social forces (Mills 1959: 226).[20] This is particularly important at a time when cognitive psychology

[20] To quote C. Wright Mills "Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles—and to the problems of the individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. Within that range the life of the individual and the making of societies occur; and within that range the sociological

and behavioral economics (including the "nudging" and the "happiness" industries (Davies 2015)) are gaining in popularity, and when the media "prime" the audience to zoom in on the psychological and the intra-cranial level of analysis (Lamont, Adler, Park and Xiang 2017). Indeed, over the last two decades, under the influence of Daniel Kahneman (2011), cognitive psychology and behavioral science have gained considerable traction, thanks to influential popularizers such as economist Steven D. Levitt, journalist Malcolm Gladwell, and radio programs such as National Public Radio's *The Hidden Brain*, as well as other outlets that promote together a constellation of cognitively-focused authors.[21]

As Davies (2015, chapter 7) points out, behavioral economics is consistent with the neoliberal focus on efficiency and individualist utilitarianism, and it shifts the analytical focus away from meaning-making and meso and macro level phenomena that shape inequality. Wider sociological insights receive comparatively less attention in the public sphere (as evidenced by mentions of sociologists, psychologists and behavioral economists in the *New York Times* and *Congressional Record* (Wolfers 2015; but see Hirschman and Popp Berman 2014)).

The neglect of supra-individual, sociological forces in the public debate has meant that alternatives to the neoliberal understanding of the world are losing visibility. The decline of union density and the political impact of unions (Hacker and Pierson 2010), for instance, might have been the focus of working class outrage in the last election cycle had sociology been more influential. To counter this dynamic, we need to reenter the public debate and more forcefully offer alternative evidence about inequality as we have done in the past. One of our social

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imagination has its chance to make a difference in the quality of human life in our time. (Mills 1959: 226).

[21] The selection of Richard H. Thaler as the 2017 Nobel Prize Laureate in economics, in the footsteps of Kahneman (Nobel laureate in 2002), is a crowning moment for behavioral economics.

contributions is to shape how people understand reality, in concert with the other cultural intermediaries and moral entrepreneurs such as religious leaders, politicians and policy makers, media experts, and lawyers (Igo 2007; Starr 2005; Eyal and Bucholz 2010; Lei 2017; Gehman and Soublière 2017; Drezner 2017). Engaging more purposefully in such efforts extends our mission as knowledge producers who aim to develop more accurate and complex understandings of the social world. Contra Burawoy (2004), this role should not be the exclusive province of progressive sociologists but shared with social scientists whose professional identity centers on scientificity and value-neutrality.

Social scientists spend extraordinary energy figuring out how to address the achievement gap, the poverty gap, and other challenges connected to the unequal distribution of resources. While these contributions are important, more is needed to reduce inequality. I want to suggest various venues through which social scientists (and sociologists in particular), politicians and policy makers, organizations and employers, and citizens can contribute to destigmatization. Their contribution is an essential complement to the ways in which stigmatized groups aim to bridge recognition gaps.

Given the role played by social scientists as producers and diffusers of the categories through which citizens define reality (Camic et al 2011; Igo 2007), it is imperative that we renew with our mission to help citizens connect private troubles with social problems (Mills 1959). This can be achieved by raising awareness about how a society that is increasingly organized around the pursuit of socioeconomic success and the achievement of middle class status is doomed to condemn at least the lower half of the social pyramid, to be defined (and worst, to define themselves) as "losers." That so much of our disciplinary knowledge has been oriented toward making middle class status (and college education) available to all is troubling, especially

in the context of growing inequality which American society has experienced over the last decades.

One avenue for future research should be to gain a better understanding of the factors that foster solidarity (Banting and Kymlicka 2017). There is much that we don't know that is relevant for this topic. For instance, it would be important to better understand how ordinary people conceptualize universalism—what makes various racial groups equal for instance. When I conducted in-depth interviews with North African immigrants living in Paris (Lamont 2000), I was struck by the distance between the views of my respondents and the abstract mantras of French republicanism (which emphasize that citizens participate in the public sphere as individuals, not as group members, and that they are considered equal citizens, independently of their cultural, natural or social characteristics (Safran 1991)). Instead of such abstract precepts, which frame people as socially desembedded entities, my respondents repeatedly pointed to evidence of equality grounded in shared human traits observable in everyday experience: they observed that "we all spend nine months in our mother's womb;" "we all have ten fingers;" "we are all as insignificant as clouds passing in the sky;" or "we all get up in the morning to buy our bread at the bakery." Some also volunteered that we are equal as "children of God" and grounded equality in consumption, pointing that "if you can buy a house, and I can buy a house, we are equal" (Lamont, Morning and Mooney 2002).

More in-depth inductive studies of how ordinary people think about what brings people together (what I called elsewhere "ordinary cosmopolitanism" (Lamont and Aksartova 2002)) should be helpful to learning how to bridge group boundaries, including the ideological "silos" (or "bubbles") that have come to define the American public sphere (Pew Research Center 2014), particularly since the Trump election (McNamara 2017; Bail et al Forthcoming).

Understanding better ordinary cosmopolitanism could help foster solidarity and combat anti-immigrant and anti-poor populist rhetoric, by making common experiences more salient in the public sphere. This is imperative at a time when less than 7 percent of the non-college educated participate in protest or sign petitions (Caren, Ghoshal and Ribas 2011).

For politicians and policy makers, there are many venues for addressing recognition gaps. In particular, they could focus their energy on developing and promoting inclusive laws and policies that contribute to destigmatizing for vulnerable populations. In the voluminous literature on policies for poverty reduction, the stigmatization of low-income populations is now emerging as an important topic, as poverty researchers are starting to consider factors that contribute to the stigmatization of this group. For instance, Sykes et al (2014) argue that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program has enhanced feelings of dignity for the poor, particularly when compared with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF). Policies and programs not only affect access to resources or legal protection; they also signal cultural citizenship, that is, the prevailing social pecking order, who belongs and is worthy of support, and who has a marginal status (Asad and Clair 2018). Hence it is imperative for policy makers to be aware of these unintended consequences of their work (Harding et al 2012) and to consider policies' potential impact on recognition, which can directly affect well-being.

This is suggested for instance by a recent study showing that the states that have adopted same-sex marriage have seen a reduction of 7 percent of attempted suicides among public high school students between the age of 15 and 24. The number of suicide attempts among students represented as members of sexual minorities was 28.5% prior to the implementation of these laws by 32 states. Same-sex marriage laws were not passed primary to provide gay people message of acceptance; but were often justified by the need to treat LBGTQ cohabitants as

married for all federal tax purposes (Fischer et al 2018). Yet, such laws may well have been interpreted by gay youth as destigmatizing, resulting in a decline in anomie and suicide attempts (Raifman et al 2017).

Politicians and policy makers can also intervene directly in the engineering of collective identity (Paschel 2016; also, Polletta and Jasper (2001) on collective identity and social movements). One particularly successful example is the promotion of multiculturalism by Pierre Elliot Trudeau (Tierney 2007). Then Canadian Prime Minister, Trudeau succeeded in passing a policy defining Canadian society as multicultural in 1971. Many Quebec nationalists rejected this policy as they believed it to be in tension with the status of francophone Québécois as one of the two founding nations of Canada and believed that it put them on the same footing as newcomers such as the Ukrainians of East Central Alberta. Trudeau mobilized many tools connected to the state ideological apparatus to promote this new version of the national identity—public television, national celebrations, abundant funding for the public performances of ethnic groups, and much more. Today, when Canadians are surveyed on what distinguishes them from Americans, most point to the multicultural character of their society (Winter 2014). This suggests that Trudeau's multicultural policy has been an extraordinarily successful attempt to redefine collective identity. It also extended cultural membership to a broader range of people, and redefined the cultural frames used to integrate immigrants into Canadian society (e.g., Bloemraad 2006).

Organizations and employers can address stigmatization head on. For instance, in Australia, over 800 public, private and non-profit organization have voluntarily adopted Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) to foster respect and relationships, celebrate cultural expression, and provide opportunities for Indigenous people (Lloyd 2018). This is part of a

broader framework of activities that are administratively and financially supported by the Australian government, to encourage organizations to support the national reconciliation movement by taking practical actions both internally and in relation to surrounding communities. This may involve creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, educating employees, and much more.[22]

Similarly, universities can revise their policies with an eye for addressing contexts where community members may experience stigmatization and discrimination. In a recent example, several universities changed their policy to close dining halls during spring break policies that were experienced as stigmatizing among low-income and first-generation students who were less likely to be able to afford traveling home, much less to other destinations, during the break (Jack 2018).

Finally, citizens also contribute directly to broadening cultural membership in daily interaction through demonstrating solidarity in a range of ordinary situations. This includes posting rainbow flags in front of churches that identify themselves as embracing LGBTQ people, or the display of posters welcoming Muslims (stating "No matter where you are from, we are glad you are our neighbor!") on lawns and in the window of businesses following a travel ban directed toward citizens of seven Muslim countries by the Trump administration in February 2017. Under more exceptional circumstances, cultural membership is also broadened when many Europeans welcomed Syrian refugees to their countries during the winter of 2016, as did

[22] Although many indigenous (and non-Indigenous) people are critical of the national reconciliation movement for its failure to address structural issues, such as sovereignty, land rights and political representation, RAPs are often seen as producing positive, if incremental, changes for Indigenous people and fostering intergroup contact. However, the intense focus of many organizations' RAPs on addressing the socio-economic disadvantage of Indigenous people reinforces an already prominent "deficit discourse" that stigmatizes indigeneity as lacking (Fforde et al 2013).

Americans who mobilized in defense of the Dreamers and of undocumented immigrants prosecuted by the American government in 2017. Indeed, many Americans disassociate themselves from the "America First" frame promoted by Donald Trump, as exemplified on a wide range of pro-solidarity posters on display during the various Women's Marches that took place since the 2016 presidential election. Such visual displays also contribute to the definition of collective identity ("we don't want the US to be a mean nation") and the transformation of group boundaries in a way that is not easily measurable but can be substantial.

These possible contributions on the part of social scientists, politicians and policy makers, and citizens are only a few examples of the ways in which collective cultural engineering can contribute to the process of destigmatization and the reduction of recognition gaps. At a time when American unions have been largely destroyed and exercise a diminishing influence on policies (Hacker and Pierson 2010), it is more important than ever that progressive forces mobilize to influence the course of our societies, including the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion—the configuration of boundaries that shape our societies. Social scientists should focus particularly on influencing how people interpret their reality by drawing on the empirical research we pride ourselves on. It remains the sociologist's mission to document and highlight the social forces that shape our lives. This task is more important than ever, at a time when populist forces are gaining influence across advanced industrial societies. This is what we should do now as citizens, because we can.

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Figure 1. Cultural Resources and Actors Contributing to Destigmatization