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RESPECT

A Marxist Feminist Exploration of Consciousness in Restaurant Work

Alanna Uthgenannt

Uncovering labor feminist social movements throughout American history can be useful for understanding how worker consciousness arises, especially in the context of the United States' tiered wage system. The tiered wage system, along with—more broadly—mechanisms of white cis-heteropatriarchy, perpetuates the continued economic exploitation, discrimination, and sexual harassment that characterizes restaurant work. With the objective of reaching a deep understanding of the theoretical and historical backdrop of feminist labor movements and organizing tactics, this critical essay will explore the extent to which women working in front-of-the-house positions in restaurants (servers and bartenders) are conscious of their oppression. If so, at what point does consciousness translate to forms of resistance including, but not limited to, unionization and political organizing?

To build a theoretical framework, I will unite the works of Betty Friedan, Patricia Hill Collins, and Gloria Anzaldúa in their collective theories of consciousness. Additionally, I will consult *Women, Race, and Class*, which is Angela Davis's magna carta of feminist movements throughout American history up until 1981. These approaches will work in tandem to depict a horizon of possibilities for women restaurant workers to raise consciousness and countercultural momentum. Since I am writing about labor feminism, I will also draw on the work of Dorothy Sue Cobble (1988, 2003), the leading scholar of working-class women, labor unions, and labor movements. As such, I will bring in a Marxist feminist theoretical

lens, asking: what can Marxism do for feminism? What do Marxism and feminism tell us about women workers?[1] By concisely evaluating theoretical and historical perspectives of worker consciousness through the lens of Marxist feminism, I argue that abolishing the tiered wage system is long overdue and restaurant workers in this historical moment in 2021 (almost 2022) have the capacity-building potential to drive this structural change, while COVID-19 was still a pandemic.

Why Women Restaurant Workers?

The United States economy has a tiered wage system, a minimum wage for tipped workers set federally at $2.13 per hour, and a minimum wage for nontipped workers currently set federally at $7.25 per hour.[2] Although women make up 48 percent of all nontipped workers, they make up 66 percent of tipped workers (Jayaraman 2013, 140).[3] The restaurant industry is thus one of the only sectors of the U.S. economy in which lower wages for women are not simply a matter of employer practice; they are also a matter of the law. Furthermore, whereas white men are more represented in fine-dining restaurants, women restaurant workers—especially women of color—are more likely to find employment in casual, family-style restaurants, diners, or fast-food chains, which contributes to their economic marginalization. Approximately 20 percent of the restaurant industry's jobs provide a livable wage, and almost all those jobs are found in fine-dining restaurants.[4] Women make up 72 percent of all servers nationwide—the largest group of tipped workers—and have three times the poverty rate of all other workers in the United States. Waitresses earn 85 cents to every $1 that waiters earn—a difference of almost $70 per week. In addition to economic inequality, sexual harassment, discrimination, and wage theft characterize the experience of most restaurant workers.

Theory and Consciousness: What Can We Learn from Feminism and Marxism?

Simply put, to be conscious—or in a state of consciousness—is to be aware of and responsive to one's surroundings. For the purposes of this essay, consciousness will refer specifically to an awareness of one's institutional and hegemonic oppression. Feminist consciousness can be understood by the cultural significance of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). At that point in U.S. history, many women who had joined the workforce during

the Second World War were sent back into the home in order for men to resume their rightful positions in the workforce (Harms Cannon 2016, 2). Women had tasted freedom—whether that was in the form of higher education or a brief career life—and shortly thereafter, became discontented housewives. Although they succeeded in obtaining the societally prescribed roles that women were encouraged to desire for themselves—having a good husband, home, and children—many women sunk into deep depressions. Friedan termed this duality of "success" and "discontent" the *feminine mystique*. As white, middle-class women began to discuss their struggles with one another, they were able to articulate their specific oppression as women within a patriarchal society.

Broadening Friedan's perspective, Patricia Hill Collins's (1990) theorizes about Black Feminist Thought and works to include women of color in an outlook of consciousness. Coining the term "outsider-within," Collins demonstrates that Black women are equipped to discern power relationships within oppressive social dynamics, thus developing a "Black women's consciousness" (Harms Cannon 2016, 4). Therefore, Black women's consciousness is much different than what is traditionally identified as feminist consciousness.

To further understand identity and consciousness, Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) extends beyond an analysis of gender and race to offer a critical and new analysis of what she identifies as "mestiza consciousness." Similar to Collins' "outsider-within" status, Anzaldúa's experience is characterized by a feminist critique of race, class, and sexuality in her life lived on the border. To Anzaldúa, the Borderlands are physically present whenever "two or more cultures edged each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (1987, Preface). Her *new* "mestiza consciousness" is a product of theorizing how her sexuality, race, class, and gender are interlocking and compounding to characterize her struggle for survival. Claiming this knowledge is essential to broadening pathways for consciousness.

Furthermore, Martha Giménez analyzes capitalism alongside the oppression of women, asserting that if capitalism remains the dominant mode of production, an analysis of Marx's work is needed to understand the forces that oppress women. She argues "Marx's methodology leads to a conceptualization of the oppression of women as the visible or observable effect (e.g., in the labor market, socioeconomic stratification, domestic division of labor,

etc.) of underlying structured relations between men and women" (2005, 25). As such, Giménez illuminates how women are oppressed as workers because the two structures that define the workforce—capitalism and patriarchy—ensure women's socioeconomic subjugation. Given these overarching mandates, consciousness as women and consciousness as workers are both needed to ignite resistance, activism, and organizing against dominant powers.

Historical Legacies of Working Women

Since their entrance into the industrial workplace in the nineteenth century, women have been involved in activism. Angela Davis begins her history of working women during the Civil War. Because of the Civil War, more white women than ever before had gone to work outside of their homes. In January 1868, when Susan B. Anthony published the first issue of *The Revolution*, working women began to defend their rights conspicuously. Women had already become the majority share of workers in the garment industry. In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War the "sewing women"—as they were colloquialized—organized in all of the major cities where the garment industry flourished, which secured their entry into the National Labor Union delegation in 1869, shortly after its founding (Davis 1983, 138). Meanwhile, the labor movement continued rapidly expanding economic force, comprising thirty nationally organized unions. However, male supremacy was entrenched in the labor movement, as only the Cigarmakers and Printers' unions had allowed women to participate.

Susan B. Anthony was an early and prominent champion of the growing women's labor movement, but only if it took the backseat to the suffrage effort. Susan B. Anthony believed that suffrage was the answer to *all* of women's social disadvantages. Although she placed great emphasis on the social power of suffrage, she asserted that, "we shall show that the ballot will secure for women equal place and equal wages in the world of work; that it will open to her the schools, colleges, professions and all the opportunities and advantages of life; that in her hand it will be a moral power to stay the tide of crime and misery on every side" (Anthony qtd. in Davis 1983, 138-139). Therefore, first wave feminist activism and its most influential leaders focused exclusively to be coalitional in their messaging due to a unidimensional feminist consciousness, without incorporating class and race at the root of

social oppression, reflections that were considered later in academic discussions. Besides, the masses of working women were far too concerned about their urgent problems according to their needs—for example, wages, hours, working conditions, among other—to fight for a cause that seemed so abstract to them. Davis writes, "as working women knew all too well, their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons who exercised the right to vote continued to be miserably exploited by their wealthy employers. Political equality did not open the door to economic equality" (1983, 141). Nevertheless, Susan B. Anthony's publication *The Revolution* was still a beacon of support from 1868-1870 during its two years of operation. Working women—especially in New York—could count on the paper to publicize their grievances, strategies, goals, and strikes.

For some time, the suffrage movement did not have support from working-class women. However, when women went on strike, the New York garment industry in the winter of 1909, earning notoriety as the "Uprising of the 20,000," enfranchisement started to become particularly relevant to the working women. Labor leaders began to argue that they could use the vote to demand better wages, safer conditions, and fairer hours. After the tragic fire at the New York Triangle Shirtwaist Company claimed the lives of 146 women, the need for legislation prohibiting the hazardous conditions of women's work became dramatically obvious. In other words, working women needed the ballot in order to guarantee their survival (Davis 1983, 142). Thus, making the case for safe labor conditions could no longer distract from the fight for women's suffrage because they were ostensibly intertwined.

From 1900 on, the Socialist Party, as the main champion of Marxism for almost two decades, supported the battle for women's equality. Additionally, the International Workers of the World (IWW) defined itself as an industrial union and proclaimed there could never be a harmonious relationship between the capitalist class and the workers it employed. At the IWW's first meeting in 1905, two of the leading labor organizers that sat on the platform were "Mother" Mary Jones and Lucy Parsons's, who famously stated, "we, the women of this country, have no ballot even if we wished to use it… but we have our labor… Whatever wages are to be reduced, the capitalist class uses women to reduce them," (qtd. in Davis 1983, 154). Lucy Parsons's consciousness recognizes her own oppression as both working-class and woman. However, like many suffragettes, the Socialist Movement largely did not consider an explicit awareness of Black people's unique oppressions.

Claudia Jones stands out as a young Black woman who assumed responsibility for the Communist Party's Women's Commission. She was known for chiding progressives for failing to acknowledge Black domestic workers' efforts to organize themselves. In the early twentieth century, most Black women workers were still employed in domestic service. Jones argued that paternalistic attitudes toward maids influenced the prevailing cultural definition of Black women as a social group (Davis 1983, 168).[5] The coalitional work of leaders in the socialist movement gives early insight into activism representing multiple intersections of oppression for workers, as is the case for servers and bartenders.

Picking up where Davis left off, Karen Nussbaum describes insurgent consciousness for women workers during the 1960s through the turn of the century.[6] In the 1960s and 1970s, women were becoming increasingly active in unions. Especially active were teachers and clerical workers in public-sector unionization (Nussbaum 2007, 164). Growing participation in unions in the 1970s signals growing worker consciousness. It is important to note, although consciousness-raising groups of the 1960s were effective, their sense of collectivity did not translate to widespread union engagement for women. This was predominantly due to occupational segregation, being that the typical unionized jobs, such as coal miners or plumbers, were coded as male. In response, Boston-based organization *9to5*, represented women office workers; in the 1970s, one out of three women worked as clerical workers (Nussbaum 2007, 161).

When *9to5* started organizing in Boston in the 1970s, their first task was to convince women that the problems they faced on the job stemmed from an unfair system of employment rather than from their personal failings. Women were participating in the workforce at new levels and their identity as workers grew stronger. Questioning their working conditions and opportunities led to institutional changes, expanding laws, and strengthening enforcement. Women broadened the debate to include new issues such as sexual harassment, the glass ceiling, and balancing work and family (Nussbaum 2007, 163). The country bore witness to an insurgency in legal and political work in order to bring women into the workforce and fight discrimination.

In 1991, sexual harassment charges against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas provided a nationwide tutorial on the subject. Sexual harassment claims to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) increased steeply and calls to the *9to5* hotline skyrocketed (Nussbaum 2007, 163-164). Repre-

senting an insurgency in their consciousness as women in the workplace, a growing populous spoke-up against workplace sexual harassment with "the confidence that came from knowledge and the courage that came from feeling backed up" (Nussbaum 2007, 164). From highlighting this moment, Nussbaum indicates that growing consciousness among the masses can be born from headlining news.

Restaurant Workers Organizing

Labor movements are not new to the restaurant industry. Waitresses have been struggling for seven decades to gain entrance to prestigious restaurants and attain economic security (Hall 1993). Motivated by class, waitresses have historically defined their primary objective to be the achievement of economic security. In the 1930s, waitresses challenged paternalistic and ideological assumptions of those who sought to moderate waitresses' morals by banning them from liquor service (Cobble 1988). Since then, we have witnessed the feminization of the food service industry. Dorothy Sue Cobble, in her scholarship on waitress unions in the twentieth century asserts: "although challenging the gender roles in their industry was not a motivating goal for women food servers, by fighting for their own economic security and by defending occupational advances that were thrust upon them, almost inadvertently, they permanently extended the boundaries of the territory labeled as 'female'" (Cobble 1988, 31). As such, the historical unionization on behalf of waitresses originating in the 1930s was motivated by economic security, which remains a central concern of modern-day labor movements.

One Fair Wage (OFW) is a non-profit organization and national campaign that aims to influence policy and reconstruct the racial and gendered narratives tied to restaurant work. OFW aims ensure that restaurant workers are paid *at least* the full minimum wage from their employers (OFW 2021). Working closely with the Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC United)—a nonprofit organization that fights to improve the wages and working conditions of restaurant workers—the organizations are leading the movement to abolish the tiered wage system by focusing on empowering, creative solutions for restaurant workers (ROC United 2017a, 2017b). Organizers make the argument that consumers and diners should care that women rarely take home the same pay, get the same positions, or receive the same treatment as men do in

the industry because this kind of inequity essentially guarantees that the majority of low wage workers nationwide continue to live in poverty (Jayaraman 2013).

"The National Restaurant Association is the trade lobby for the $600 billion restaurant industry. It is one of the most powerful lobbies in Congress and in state legislatures nationwide," according to "The Other NRA" report published by ROC United in April 2014 (ROC United 2014b). The Other NRA represents the interests of Fortune 500 corporate restaurant chains like McDonald's and Darden Restaurants such as Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, and The Capital Grille. According to the same 2014 ROC United report, the Other NRA brings in annual revenues of over $91 million, and employs 750 staff-people, including nearly 40 Congressional lobbyists. The same report asserts that powerful organizations such as the Other NRA are capable of striking behind-closed-doors deals with policymakers to lock the federal minimum wage at $2.13 an hour for tipped workers, potentially obstructing our democracy.

The Other NRA may have the financial wherewithal to influence policymakers, but how are lobbyists at the Other NRA able to convince consumers and even restaurant workers that tips would decrease if the tipped minimum wage were to be abolished? In an interview on *Behind the Kitchen Door*, Jayaraman attests that she thinks "there is an assumption among a lot of people that it's a very low profit margin industry, that if wages were to go up, so would prices and people would lose their jobs" (qtd. in Feinberg 2014). In fact, all those things are a myth: Jayaraman insists that "the industry enjoys a 4 to 5 percent profit margin, which may seem small until you realize that Walmart, generally considered to be one of the most profitable companies in the world, has a 1 percent profit margin" (qtd. in Feinberg 2014). Moreover, states that have moved to One Fair Wage require that employers pay their workers a full minimum wage, such as $12 an hour in California. The biggest employers in the restaurant industry that are represented by the Other NRA are paying those wages and still managing to grow. Compared to the tipped minimum wage, OFW decreases the wage gap for women working full time and year round by 31 percent (Harwood et al. 2019). Furthermore, the poverty rate for all employed women decreases by 14 percent and for women working tipped positions in restaurants, the poverty rate is 28 percent lower (Harwood et al. 2019).

The ultimate irony of American consumerism is that tipped workers serving food in restaurants use food stamps at double the

rate of the rest of the workforce (Feinberg 2014). "Over half of Americans eat out at a restaurant at least once per week, and 20 percent eat out two or more times per week, driving the restaurant industry's continued growth in the midst of the current economic crisis" (ROC United 2012, 8). With no doubt, restaurant workers support an enormous sector of the U.S. economy, a pattern that has persisted. Therefore, while restaurant workers put food on our tables, they often are unable to afford to feed themselves (Feinberg 2014). Ensuring that tipped workers can count on receiving the full minimum wage, before tips, is a necessary step toward equity, dignity, and safety for women at work.

Sexual Harassment as a Case Study on Consciousness and Resistance

One female chef, Erin Wade, and her restaurant *Homeroom*, in Oakland, California, are finding avenues for resistance and leading the way in protecting staff from sexual harassment from customers. Reporting in an Op-Ed in the Washington Post (2018), Wade found that when female servers reported sexual harassment from customers to managers—all of Homeroom's managers at the time were men—they were often ignored because the incidents seemed unthreatening through a male lens. She explains: "We knew that we had to create something that didn't rely on men making judgment calls on women's stories because it was clear that system was failing all of us."

At *Homeroom*, when a staff member has a harassment problem, they report the issue using a color system. By stating simply, "I have a yellow at table twenty," the manager is required to take a specific action. Yellow means the manager must take over the table if the staff member chooses; with orange, the manager will take over the table; if red is reported, the customer is ejected from the restaurant. In each case, the manager's response will be automatic, no-questions-asked. Consequently, Wade and her employees have found that most customers "test the waters" before physically harassing servers. Moreover, the color system has proved that women effectively perceive unwanted attention, so reds occur infrequently. Nonetheless, when reds do occur, Wade asserts that her employees are empowered to act decisively. In fact, Wade's technique has proven so effective that it was implemented as a national guideline by the EEOC. Wade, furthermore, emphasizes the need to start "exposing the great work of women

around the country to create more inclusive places for us all to work," instead of fixating on the misbehavior of men. Still, there is yet to be a creative solution for combatting sexual harassment *between* employees and the way that hypermasculinity operates to keep women in positions of subjugation that limit their occupational advancement.

In the vein of employee-to-employee relationships in restaurants, research by Patti Giuffre and Christine Williams indicates that consciousness-raising for restaurant workers is not easily negotiated. When asked about what behaviors constituted sexual harassment, many women and men indicate that experiencing some sexual behaviors in the workplace can be pleasurable.[7] Giuffre and Williams elucidate that "this attitude may be especially strong in organizations that use and exploit the bodies and sexuality of the workers" (1994, 379). To no surprise, they are talking about the restaurant industry. They assert that the issue at stake is explaining, or raising consciousness, about "the gap between experiencing and labeling behaviors of 'sexual harassment'" (Giuffre and Williams 1994, 379). Ultimately, drawing the line between illicit and legitimate forms of sexuality at work is a process fraught with ambiguity and perhaps one reason restaurant workers are so hard to organize. Nevertheless, we know that women restaurant workers report sexual harassment at rates higher than all other industries and their continued degradation on the job is one reason that women account for leaving the industry.

Conclusion

According to a report in September of 2021, One Fair Wage found that over half—54%—of restaurant workers are considering leaving their jobs. Considering the pre-existing low wages, high levels of sexual harassment, and wage theft, compounded with the high risks and economic insecurity workers faced working throughout the pandemic, it is not surprising that workers want out.

I am of the belief that we are perhaps on the precipice of a new labor movement; one born out of the changing nature of work hastened and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. For some restaurant workers, this has meant leaving the industry; or, maybe they never returned after being laid off during the pandemic, as so many workers were. The unwillingness to return to their exploitative roles as servers and bartenders certainly reflects a consciousness of their mistreatment as workers. However, it is pos-

sible that reform might not come from a working-class movement; rather, the power will shift from the worker to leadership out of necessity for restaurants to hire workers to survive. In doing so we can imagine a day when the CEO of Darden foods will abolish tipping from their restaurants and impose a base-rate wage of $15 an hour out of necessity because they depend on workers to survive. On the other hand, the exodus of workers from the restaurant industry is comparable to a strike in absence of a prominent union presence. Leaving in itself is an act of resistance and agency. Workers are sending a message to the industry: we will no longer endure their subminimum wages and continued mistreatment. I join my voice to the ROC United movement: "It is time to abolish the subminimum wage for tipped workers" (ROC United 2014a, 7).

Notes

1. These are big questions that do not have clear answers; scholars debate on how to read women into Marx's work and so thinking about feminism and Marxism at face value would seem counterintuitive. For the scope of this paper, I will refrain from engaging in intricate and in-depth analysis of Marx by limiting my discussion to the specific condition of women restaurant workers. In the near future, I would like to engage with Marxist feminism to continue developing this project.
2. The subminimum wage has deep-rooted origins in post-abolition racist attitudes. For white-owned businesses right after the civil war, adopting the tip system was a way to avoid having to pay salaries to newly freed slaves. Before the emancipation of African Americans, tipping was not socially welcomed. Americans imported the tip system from European aristocracy as a way to demean and degrade African Americans as servile, only capable of 'menial' jobs. Consequently, today's $2.13 tipped minimum wage (per hour) eternizes the legacy of slavery by perpetuating racial and gender inequality. The continued racial injustice sustained by the subminimum wage informs why an overall increase of the minimum wage was a core demand of the August 1963 March on Washington. See two important reports: (1) *Report: Raising Minimun Wage a Core Civil and Human Rights Issue,* published by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights in October 2014. https://civilrights.org/2014/10/03/report-raising-minimum-wage-a-core-civil-and-human-rights-issue/#; and (2) *A Persistent Legacy of Slavery:*

Ending the Subminimun Wage for Tipped Workers as a Racial Equity Measure published by the One Fair Wage and The UC Berkeley Food Labor Research Center in August 2020. https://www.onefairwage.org/publications/persistent-legacy-of-slavery

In sum, after more than 50 years, the subminimum wage remains a cornerstone of institutional roots of oppression.

3. Please note that these statistics are from before the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. A "livable wage" or "living wage" refers to the hourly wage an individual would need to earn to meet the minimum standards given the local cost of living. To calculate the living wage of a particular region or locale, visit https://livingwage.mit.edu/
5. For more on organizing domestic workers, see Premilla Nadasen's "Power, Intimacy, and Contestation: Dorothy Bolden and Domestic Worker Organizing in Atlanta in the 1960s" in *Intimate Labors: Cultures, Technologies, and the Politics of Care* (Boris and Parreñas 2010). "Power, Intimacy, and Contestation" is extremely useful for understanding Black feminist histories of worker empowerment, especially through the lens of intimate labor. Studying the movement for domestic workers rights circa 1968—which was inspired by the civil rights movement and emboldened by other impoverished people mobilizing for change—Nadasen explains how the National Domestic Workers Union of America (NDWUA) succeeded in reaching thousands of Atlanta women, workers and employers alike. The NDWUA helped bring domestic work under protection of the fair labor standards act (FLSA) of 1974 and reshaped the character of the job (Boris and Parreñas 2010, 204). Of interest to me is how the organizing effort was able to transform domestic workers' self-perceptions and enhanced their dignity and sense of self-worth. Like restaurant workers, traditional organizing strategies had been unsuccessful for domestic workers. I ask, how can restaurant workers and community organizers learn from the tactics that the NDWUA used to mobilize workers and transform the perception of domestic work for the public? Domestic workers were historically very difficult to organize. For one, they did not wield the same kind of collective power as unionized workers because replacing a single disgruntled employee was far simpler than replacing a thousand, which is similarly a concern for restaurant workers. Additionally, as (predominantly) Black women, their politics were rooted in the interlocking systems of oppression that characterized their employment. An awareness of this vul-

nerability and additive multiplicity of marginalization was central to the NDWUA campaign.

As such, domestic workers were often hired and fired because of particular personality traits rather than their occupational skills. Nadasen finds that "the intimate nature of the job and the paramount importance of character led employers to sometimes refer to a domestic worker as 'one of the family'" (Boris and Parreñas 2010, 207). This rhetoric is used to extract extra work and encourage workers to take leftovers and hand-me-downs rather than payment, which Gary Alan Fine affirms in *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work* (1996) is also the case in restaurants. Altogether, domestic work and front-of-the-house restaurant work converge at the definition of intimate labor as work that is particularly undervalued and characterized by exploitation and mistreatment because of its status as traditionally women's work.

Therefore, because of their similarities on the basis of worker-experience and categorical conceptualization, domestic worker organizing has the potential to inspire movement-building capacity in restaurant workers. One way that NDWUA mobilized to bring dignity to the occupation was to hold an annual "Maid's Honor Day." They also held training sessions on various household responsibilities in hopes of leading women to higher wages. The goal of the NDWUA was to minimize the power differential with their employers and increase the stature of domestic service. If the restaurant industry was also able to chip away at these same goals, perhaps less sexual harassment, discrimination, and exploitation would persist. However, in the case of restaurants, there are so many positive cultural representations of restaurant work. Why hasn't this led to more dignity, rights, working condition improvements, and higher wages for restaurant workers?

6. Nussbaum is writing from her personal experience and the research of organizations through which she was associated: *9to5* and SEIU in the 1970s and 1980s, the Women's Bureau in the 1990s, and the AFL-CIO.
7. For more on how restaurant workers derive identity-affirming pleasures from their participation in an outwardly sexist hiring model, see Eli Revelle Yano Wilson, in *Front of the House, Back of the House: Race and Ethnicity in the Lives of Restaurant Workers* (2021), which confronts the patterns of racial separation within hierarchical spheres of employment by studying three high-end restaurants in Los Angeles. Borrowing Joan Acker's terminolo-

gy, Wilson examines restaurants as "inequality regimes," which can be defined as "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations" (2021, 9). In order to determine how individuals are channeled into different types of service jobs along the lines of race, class, and gender, Wilson investigates the institutional and interpersonal actions that are performed jointly by managerial hierarchies and coworker stratifications.

Critical of the mechanisms that reinforce immobility and socioeconomic subjugation, Wilson argues that both managerial actions and coworker interactions jointly pattern the unequal opportunities that workers encounter within restaurants. However, he emphasizes the disparate impact of the distinct mechanisms. He maintains that because of management's actions—such as hiring decisions and modes of communication—class-privileged white men and women gain access to the most desirable jobs in restaurants in terms of pay, working conditions, and authority. Throughout his investigation into interactions between front-of-the-house workers of different positions (servers and bartenders or support staff such as bussers and food runners), the "brown-collar" careers in the kitchen, and the (im)mobility pathways that are characterized by issues of race, gender, class, education status, and appearance, Wilson asserts that "employees themselves seal these worlds of work apart through their everyday micro-interactions" (2021, 5-6).

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