



Leveraging the Alignment between Machine Learning & Intersectionality: Using Word Embeddings to Visualize Intersectional Experiences of the Nineteenth-Century U.S. South



Parametric statistics and intersectionality are two powerful discipline-spanning paradigms with nearly mutually exclusive research agendas. The chasm is a result of their fundamentally incompatible epistemologies. Machine learning, a new paradigm poised to supplant parametric statistics in social science research, is alternatively perfectly aligned with intersectionality, although it is not yet being widely used in this way. I argue that we can better realize the full potential of both machine learning and intersectionality by leveraging the epistemological alignment between the two. I empirically demonstrate this alignment through a word embedding model of first-person narratives of the nineteenth-century U.S. South. Situating social categories in relation to social institutions, I find that the culture, economy, and emotion categories distinguish by race, and the domestic category distinguishes by gender. Even in a corpus over-representing abolitionist sentiment, white identities are afforded a status via culture and a humanity via emotions not allowed Black identities.

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Zoom Meeting ID: 998 4499 3279

Passcode: 724615

Faculty host: Laura Mandell, ENGL

Biography

Laura K. Nelson is an assistant professor of sociology at Northeastern University where she is core faculty at the NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks, is affiliated faculty at the Network Science Institute, and is on the executive committee for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She was previously a postdoctoral fellow at the Berkeley Institute for Data Science and Digital Humanities @ Berkeley at the University of California, Berkeley, and for the Management and Organizations Department at Northwestern University, where she was also affiliated with the Northwestern Institute on Complex Systems (NICO). She uses computational tools, principally automated text analysis, to study social movements, culture, gender, institutions, and organizations. She has published in Sociological Methods and Research, Sociological Methodology, Mobilization, and Oxford University Press, among other outlets, and has given talks and workshops on computational social science throughout the U.S. and internationally.

You can also click this link to join the seminar <https://tamu.zoom.us/j/99844993279?pwd=TKJodWFVRURyMmkwakl4SWZGeVJTQT09>

