



The Intersectionality Framework and Its Importance In DEIA Work

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Overview

Background

Why use an intersectionality framework?

Practical recommendations

Background

“Systems of oppression—namely, racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism—worked together to create a set of social conditions under which [B]lack women and other women of color lived and labored, always in a kind of invisible but ever-present social jeopardy” (Cooper, 2016)

Kimberle Crenshaw

Demarginalizing the Intersection
of Race and Sex:
A Black Feminist Critique of
Antidiscrimination
Doctrine, Feminist Theory and
Antiracist Politics (1989)



When a Theory Goes Viral

Intersectionality is now everywhere. Is that a good thing?

By *Tom Bartlett* | MAY 21, 2017



FELIX CLAY, EYEVINE, REDUX

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw prefers to steer clear of the rancor surrounding the word she coined.

For such an unwieldy word, “intersectionality” sure does get around. You might run into it in a [review](#) of Dave Chappelle’s latest comedy special (which was deemed insufficiently intersectional); or in an [interview](#) with the singer-songwriter Solange Knowles (who doesn’t just want to hear about intersectionality “but actually feel it”); or in a college-newspaper [column](#) about veganism (which informs herbivores that “our struggles are intersectional”). The word has migrated from women’s-studies journals and conference keynotes into everyday conversation, turning what was once highbrow discourse into hashtag chatter.

Intersectionality as a field of study, analytical strategy, and critical praxis centralizes the key ideas that

- race, class, gender, sexualities, and other axes are systems of power
- these systems of power are interconnected and function together to result in inequalities...that shape people's lives
- activism for social justice must move beyond ... single identity politics to dismantle interconnected structures and systems of oppression and privilege.

Moradi et al., 2020, p. 152

Intersectionality

As an analytic framework

Adapted from Grzanka, 2020, p. 249

Describes the complexity of social life for all actors.

A way of linking scholarship to social change.

An approach for understanding how multiple identities function in contextualized systems of inequality.

Why use an intersectionality
framework?

Why use an intersectionality framework?

(Hankivsky, 2016)

Without it, we default to talking about the most privileged groups.

Offers a more complete understanding of social issues, including their causes.

To generate policies that don't allow the most marginalized to "fall through the cracks."

To understand similarities and differences, and how they are related to power and inequality. (Cole, 2009)

Broadening the Science of Broadening Participation in STEM Through Critical Mixed Methodologies and Intersectionality Frameworks (Metcalf et al., 2018, p. 588)

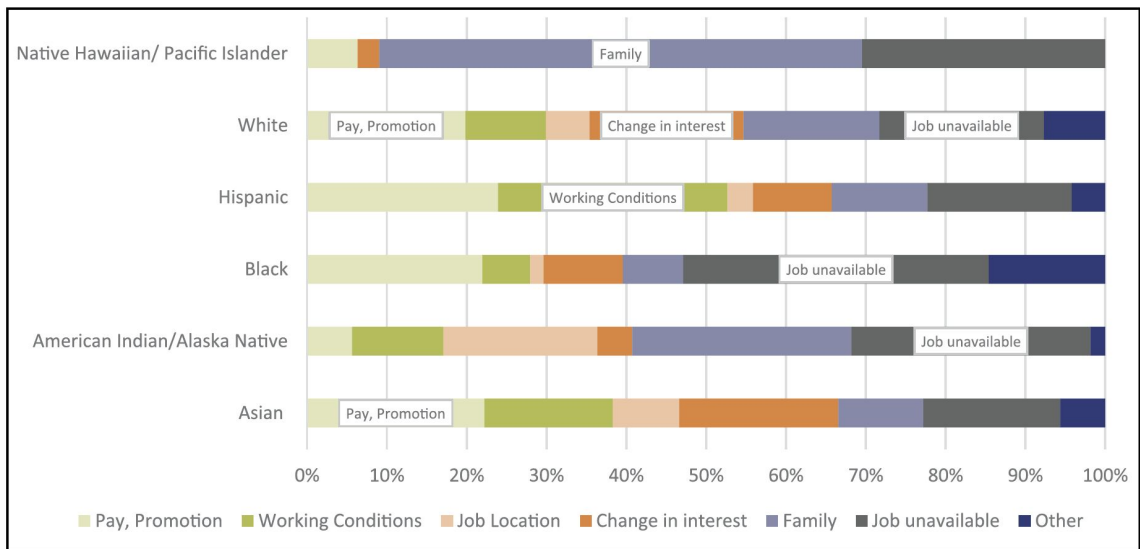


Figure 3. Primary reason why women with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) degrees take jobs outside field by race. Original analysis.
Note. National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sestat/>

A content analysis of articles published in two major journals in counseling psychology (Shin et al, 2017) found that **only 40 articles out of over 6700 published since 1979 met minimal criteria** defining intersectionality (<1%). What's more, the majority of these papers (70%) used intersectionality in ways the researchers coded as "weak," that is, they investigated experiences of populations representing multiple identities without considering how these locations represented systems of inequality that mutually define and support each other.

Research using an intersectionality framework

- (1) attends to the experience and meaning of belonging to multiple social categories simultaneously
- (2) includes an examination of power and inequality
- (3) attends to social categories as properties of the individual as well as the social context and considers those categories and their significance or salience as potentially fluid and dynamic

(Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016, p. 320).=

Practical Recommendations

Pay attention to processes

Systems, context, power

Ask the right questions

May need qualitative data (mixed methods)

Reflexivity

Think about similarities (Cole, 2009)

Analyses

(Del Río.González et al., 2020)

Not multiple main effects

Not only interaction effects

Can be within group or between group (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016)

Consider alternatives

Which intersections?

(Warner, 2008)

Clear rationale

The problem of invisibility

- Marginalized groups: intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008)
- Privileged groups: identities taken for granted

Interdisciplinarity

When the n is small

(Metcalf, et al., 2018)

Use an intersectional approach
even when the n is small.

“For far too long in our quantitative
work, researchers have prioritized
statistical significance over
meaning.” (p. 594)

Consider intersectionality at
every point in the process
(Cole, 2009; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016)

Take aways

- Intersectionality framework is uniquely suited to DEIA work.
- Draws attention to erasures and silences.
- Not one intersectional method
 - Methodological papers are proliferating
- “What makes an analysis intersectional is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power.”
(Cho et al., 2013, p. 795)

Table 1*Implications of the Three Questions for Each Stage of the Research Process*

Research stage	Question		
	Who is included within this category?	What role does inequality play?	Where are the similarities?
Generation of hypotheses	Is attuned to diversity within categories	Literature review attends to social and historical contexts of inequality	May be exploratory rather than hypothesis testing to discover similarities
Sampling	Focuses on neglected groups	Category memberships mark groups with unequal access to power and resources	Includes diverse groups connected by common relationships to social and institutional power
Operationalization	Develops measures from the perspective of the group being studied	If comparative, differences are conceptualized as stemming from structural inequality (upstream) rather than as primarily individual-level differences	Views social categories in terms of individual and institutional practices rather than primarily as characteristics of individuals
Analysis	Attends to diversity within a group and may be conducted separately for each group studied	Tests for both similarities and differences	Interest is not limited to differences
Interpretation of findings	No group's findings are interpreted to represent a universal or normative experience	Differences are interpreted in light of groups' structural positions	Sensitivity to nuanced variations across groups is maintained even when similarities are identified

Table 1. Components of the Research Process Where Intersectionality Can Be Applied With Multiple Possible Methods.

Component 1: Theory

Method A. Categories are framed as person variables

Method B. Categories are framed as stimulus variables

Component 2: Design

Method A. Within-group focus

Method B. Between-group comparisons

Component 3: Sampling techniques

Method A. Stratified random sampling

Method B. Purposive sampling

Component 4: Measurement

Method A. Conceptual equivalence

Method B. Measurement invariance

Method C. Intersectional measurement

Component 5: Data analytic strategies

Method A. Multiple main effects

Method B. Statistical interactions

Method C. Moderators in meta-analysis

Method D. Multilevel modeling

Method E. Moderated mediation

Method F. Person-centered methods

Component 6: Interpretation and framing

Method A. Attention to power and inequality

Practical recommendations

Pay attention to processes: systems, contexts, power

Not multiple main effects; not only interaction effects

What are the most meaningful intersections?

Use an intersectional approach even when the n is small.

Considerations at every point in the research process