



Incorporating Intersectionality in Your Research

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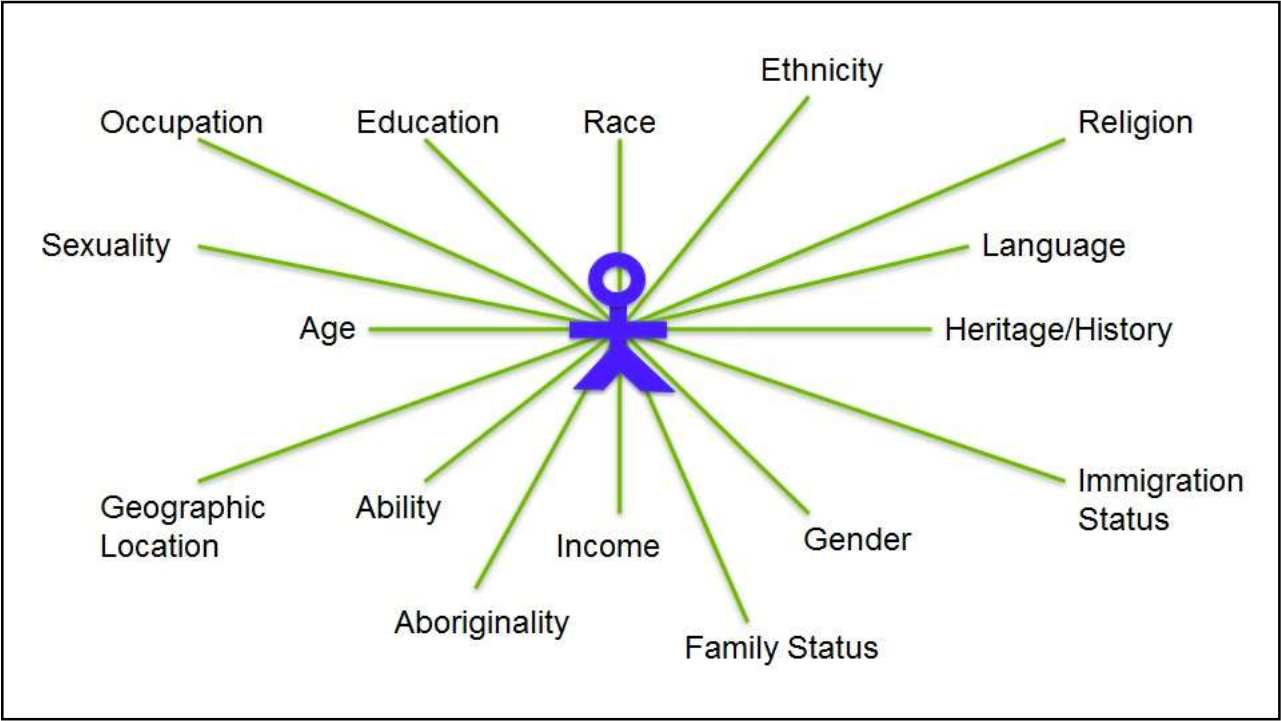
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What is intersectionality?

- The study of intersections between different forms of oppression or discrimination
- Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American lawyer and professor at Columbia Law School in 1989
- An intersectional approach looks at the multiple intersections of identity in endless combinations either leading to privilege or marginalization

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A legal blind spot

- *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors (1976)*
 - 5 Black women versus a discriminatory seniority policy
 - Policy targeting Black women – could not be labeled as either gender OR race discrimination

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Theory, Practice, Method

Intersectionality as...

- Theory
 - Provides a theoretical framework or approach: explains the ways that interconnected identities can affect access to power
- Method
 - Incorporating an intersectional methodology: looking at the way that intersecting social categories at the micro level reflect systems of privilege
- Practice
 - Gaining an awareness of power dynamics around you – identifying intersectional marginalization in the workplace, a more complete picture of interpersonal issues

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Designing intersectional research: practical recommendations

1. Allow participants to identify their own identity categories
2. Create compassionate questions
3. Recognize that identity categories are not fixed
4. Do not violate the vulnerability of others

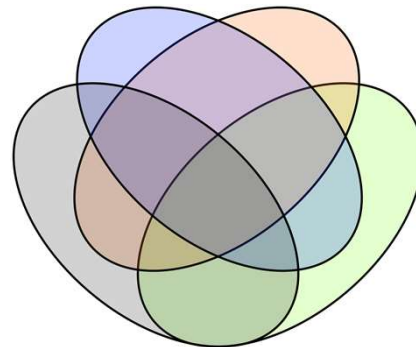
Hillsburg, 2013



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Why is this important?

- Blind spots
 - *What are we missing?*
- Social impact
 - *Recognizing and valuing others*
- Reflexivity
 - *Positionality as researchers*



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References

- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 38(4), 785-810.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *u. Chi. Legal f.*, 139.
- Hillsburg, H. (2013). Towards a methodology of intersectionality: An axiom-based approach. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 36(1), 3-11.

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Further readings

- Chapter 7 “Researching the Complexity of Gender: Intersectionality and Beyond” in J. Siltanen and A. Doucet **Gender Relations in Canada - Intersectionalities and Social Change**, Oxford University Press, 2017, 186-208
- N. Scott and J. Siltanen “Intersectionality and quantitative methods: assessing regression from a feminist perspective” **International Journal of Social Research Methodology**, 2017, 20(4):373-385
- J. Siltanen et al “The Challenge of Complexity: Reflections on researching an organizational change initiative promoting equity and inclusion in the City of Ottawa” in F. Klodawsky, J. Siltanen and C. Andrew (eds) **Toward Equity and Inclusion in Canadian Cities: Lessons from Critical Praxis-oriented Research**, Montreal QC: McGill Queen’s, 2017, pp. 60-82

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