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Intersectionality in Action: Case Studies and Methodological Innovations
Gender Politics
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Introduction

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as an attempt to model how various oppressions, for example, racism as well as sexism, interrelate themselves within the same person. Originally a theory to understand black women's social and political standings in the US, intersectionality has emerged as a supreme approach to explain the multiplicity and interaction of social categories and power relations. As you read about intersectionality theory, it becomes clear that ideas such as oppression as well as privilege cannot be viewed individually from one another. For instance, the position of black women involves the intersection of two structures: racism and sexism; when Crenshaw tried to define these structures separately, the result was that the totality of the experience of black women could not be explained this way. This approach has been adopted in most fields as a way of interpreting events, for instance gender studies, sociology, psychology, and political science (Collins 'Bilge, 2016).

This paper shall seek to establish how scholars currently use intersectionality as a possibility to analyze the experiences of people in modern societies with an aim of identifying how the interactions among the four institutionalized social categories: race, gender, class, and sexualities affect opportunities and barriers to vulnerable individuals.

Definition

Actual intersections are thoroughly described by the scholarly known as the concept of Intersections, though it was established by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to explain how racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization intertwine in different people's experiences. Crenshaw used this term to describe the intersection of racism and sexism as two systems of oppression that work concurrently to affect the lives of Black women and that cannot be understood based on each individually (Crenshaw, 1991).

The intersectionality theory posits that individuals' statuses cannot be considered in isolation, addressing the fact that one's experience is conditioned by his or her positions in multiple systems. This analytical approach acknowledges that the processes of social categorization and enfranchisement recur previously mentioned intersections in tandem to deliver dysphoric modes of being privileged and oppressed (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

Intersectionality has been embraced as theory and method in several disciplines such as feminism and gender, sociology, psychology, and political science. However, critical paradigm has been used more to examine the ways in which women's realities are shaped within interlocking systems of oppression based on gender or race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other forms of identity (Collins, 2015). This

concept has also brought change on the level of the public policy and social actions, support of diversity and change in the way that inequality is fought (Hankivsky, 2014).

Origins and Development of the Concept

As for Crenshaw's concept, the notion of intersectionality gained a great deal of popularity and was actively further developed in various fields of knowledge. Sex and gender: In a sociology perspective, intersectionality has been applied to describe ways in which women encounter the world not just as female beings but also as racialized beings in interaction with their class, sexual orientation, or age (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Patricia Hill Collins also played roles in this development by stressing the significance of the notion of intersectionality in understanding power and oppression (Gunner & Hiemstra, 2016). Collins conducted research and developed a theory on how types of oppression intertwine with one another by constructing the society in a way that is dominated by one group over another (Collins, 2000).

Today, intersectionality is a strategic framework that helps in analyzing the multi-faceted nature of social categories and relations of power. It has been used in various fields like media and communications where it is referred to as social methodology, sociology, psychology, political science and law among others. Intersectionality in several sociological investigations is utilized to gain a deeper understanding of social inequities with focus on how societal relations of power affects the experiences and opportunities of individuals (Collins, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Nevertheless, intersectionality also met criticism and theoretical debates in theory-practical discourse. Some scholars post internationalized that concept may grow complex and inapplicable in practicable (McCALL, 2005). Some scholars have supported that there is no clear operational definition that has been provided to the concept, which could potentially limit the enforcement of any policies in relation to intersectionality (Hancock 2007). Still, some scholars, derisively dubbed intersectionality as oversaturated and complicated for good reason by Collins and Bilge (2016) pointed out that the lovers of the term cherish its complexities because that is the reality of people as an intersectional whole. Intersectionality has transitioned from being a theoretical concept to a theory applied in social research and practical fields all over the world. Research from other countries also provides example of how intersectionality can be used to study and explain processes of domination and/or submission within the today's globalized world and thus enhance the knowledge of various forms of global injustice (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Intersectionality has been deemed one of the most significant theories within the sphere of gender studies and to scholars in various social sciences. Due to this, it has been argued that it makes it possible to provide a complex analysis of social hierarchy and subordination, where various

dimensions of identity are interconnected (Collins, 2015). This has paved way to uncover power relations and improve the formulation and enforcement of public policies.

Applications of Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been applied in many areas of academia and real life, which has elevated it to one of the significant theoretical frameworks for analyzing power relations in modern society.

It is crucial to emphasize that intersectionality was applied in the context of gender and postcolonial feminism most actively. The experts have employed intersectionality as a tool to examine how women are not only shaped by biological gender, but also by other aspects of life including race, social class, sexual orientation, among others. It has made the possible to examine the internal diversity among women, since the life of a Black woman or a poor woman is different from that of a White or lesbian one (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Hill Collins, 2000). For instance, in her studies, Patricia Hill Collins used scholarship as a framework that depicted the matrix of domination and how racism, sexism and people of color Black women and economic oppression affected their lives (Collins, 2000).

Intersectionality as a concept has been utilized in sociology to understand institution and power relations in relation to those who have been marginalized and denied equal chances in societies. Various types of inequality and their influences have been analyzed in the field to uncover various social structures. For instance, in his work, McCall (2005) studied the concept of 'Intersectionality of Complexity', revealing how various categories of social organization foster a wide range of experiences, which fail to be captured well when limited to one specific identity category.

In matter of psychology, intersectionality has been used in the examination to diagnose how people's multi-faceted parts shape their psychological health. To analyze how multiple oppression affects psychological well-being in the ethnic minority groups, Bowleg (2013) stated that intersectionality needs to be taken into consideration in psychological studies. For example, she noted that black lesbian women are different in that they experience problems that are not the result of prejudice against them based on color or gender alone.

Intersectionality has also had some influence in public policy and various advocacy pursuits. Strategies that look at intersectionality aim at eradicating disadvantage in society in a much broader way as it acknowledges that for individuals, they can be discriminated based on a combination of factors. For instance, mainstream policy interventions that incorporate intersectionality's perspective want to create strategies with customized services for various categories of the populace, including Black women, people of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities and so on (Hankivsky, 2014).

Intersectionality has also been taken outside the Americas' context in a bid to examine the experiences of subjugation and survival in other regions of the world. Building further on these ideas, Yuval-Davis (2006) tried to demystify how the intersectional approach may be engaged methodically to comprehend global power relations and justice movements. This way of framing intersecting identities has helped to broaden the understanding of how identities operate in various contexts and has brought fresh insights to the analysis of global inequalities.

Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies with research approaches

Intersectionality grows methodologies applied to the subject that reflects the approaching of different types of oppression in the experiences of persons. Such intersections are not greatly represented in any single methodological framework, which means that the very nature of such intersections must be studied using research strategies that can capture the multifaceted nature of social identities and power relations. Many authors have used qualitative, quantitative and even combined methods focusing on the qualitative or quantitative approach.

Semi-structured methods of data collection and use of interviews are crucial in research in terms of the perception and experiences of individuals with intersectionality. The main research method used in this study is the qualitative research that is comprised of in-depth interviews, focus groups and life histories because they allow the data to capture greater detail and treat each participant's answers as unique experience. Bowleg (2008) conducted and published a qualitative interview with Black lesbian women and how racism, sexism and homophobia interrelate in ways in the day-to-day existence of the women. This approach is helpful in enabling the researcher to gain insight into the lives of the people and let the individual share their experiences.

Another form of collecting data that is widely used in qualitative research is a narrative evaluation, which enables the researcher to understand how people frame these experiences in their minds: what stories do they know about them? Sociologically relevant method to understand how multiple race positionings shape people's perceived selves and life stories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Specifically, qualitative analysis investigates the nexus between the forms of oppression and the impacts of such forms of oppression on the experiences of the affected people. Quantitative research generally relies on statistical surveys and analysis to understand how social categories such as race, gender, and class structure the relations of power and distribution of resources for all. Hancock (2007) specifically notes that analyzing various types of inequality would require the usage of multivariate statistical methods. These models enable the determination of how specific variables impact the variables of other subjects which in turn, affects the result.

An example of quantitative analysis is intersectional regression where one can find out how multiple social categories determinant different results which can be health, income or education level. Bowleg (2012) employed this method in his research on how the cross working of gender, race and sexual orientation contributed to the mental health of Black lesbian women. Many researchers use both qualitative and quantitative frameworks to gain a broader understanding of intersectional accounts of the world. This assists in triangulation of data and helps to arrive at more convincing research findings.

Case Study: Intersectionality in Black Lesbian Women's Mental Health

Black lesbians' experiences of encountering racism, sexism and homophobia: A qualitative and quantitative approach the article under discussion was prepared by Lisa Bowleg, an academic from the United States, who aimed to investigate how Black lesbian women experienced racism, sexism or homophobia at the same time. Numerous Black lesbian women reported that they experience marginalization in the context of both Black communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) populations. This double marginalization increases the risk of isolation and alienation because of one's disability. There was also more evidence that black lesbian women exhibited higher scores of psychological stresses than white lesbian women and black gay men. Bowleg stated that racism, sexism, and homophobia are inflammatory determinants that lead to doubt, which in turn increases symptoms of depression and anxiety (Bowleg, 2012).

Criticisms of the Theory of Intersectionality

Intersectionality, though currently global and highly valued, has undergone several criticisms. In fact, there are numerous customers and three significant objections which are the following Hi, In this case, one of the most frequent objections is related to the theoretical aspect of the concept. However, some critics like McCall in his observation made in 2005 maintains that intersectionality is somewhat saturated with complexity and impracticality. This reality can create confusion and challenge for researchers as they seek to establish coherent and shared approaches to analyze the links between various types of subjugation.

Another common source of concern is related to methodological issues. The examination of Ethnic and Gender combinations and other intersections would highly demand the application of such techniques that have been noted from the context above in Extent, and which are sometimes complex in their applicability and interpretation to majority of the researchers (Hancock, 2007). On the same note in the usage of intersectionality, the absence of clear operational measures also poses a critical problem in the empirical and policy-based studies of this concept.

One of the scholars who has argued for the complexity of theorization and methodological approaches to intersectionality is Leslie McCall. According to McCall (2005), in realizing that intersectionality is valuable, theory must be armed with more refined tools to adequately respond to how the interaction of proximate axes of difference occurs. These challenges lead McCall to propose using "intersectional categorical approaches", which means that simplistic and clearer-headed approaches to identities offer far more effective solutions for dealing with intersectionality analysis. Critics of intersectionality have questioned its legitimacy on the assumption that it is unfocused and elaborate Since theory implies the theoretical reality of experiential reality intersectoral respondents argue that the nature of intersectoral theory is clear because social reality is clear. In their critique, Collins and Bilge (2016) explain that one of the key benefits or assets of intersectionality is its recognition of the multi-dimensional character of oppression. Contrary to what is often expected from conventional theory, this theory refrains from simplification of power even as it introduces identities more comprehensively.

To overcome the methodological conflicts, some researchers have developed new strategies incorporating qualitative and quantitative research elements. It is worth stating that according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011 mixed method helps alleviate the shortcomings that affect each approach, given the more nuanced picture of intersectional phenomena. Besides, techniques like intersectional regressions can broaden the use of statistics and decrease their analytical complexity (Hancock, 2007).

In other words, while there exist criticisms of intersectionality theory that are worth discussing, advocates of the theory are equally right in calling for attention to be paid to multiple axes of oppression. Thus, the further development of the idea of methodology in the process of research and its further advancements with the help of innovations are valuable for addressing the challenges related to the definition of power dynamics.

Responses to Criticisms and Theoretical Adaptations

Due to the critique that has followed intersectionality for being abstract in its theoretical and methodological approaches, interventions were made and developed by scholars and followers of the theory. One of the largest responses that has been seen is operationalizing and clearing up definitions. For instance, Collins and Bilge (2016) have attempted to popularize and demystify Intersectionality by explaining its primary concepts and rules and giving rather practical examples of how Intersectionality may be used in social research. Since its introduction to the social science discourse, the intersectionality theory has evolved with continual research debates. In the later part of the chapter, Hancock (2007) put forward those intersectional regressions, which are more sophisticated

statistical tools, and are the most appropriate to address the multi-layered intersections of social categories. Thus, these models enable to study of patterns of interaction between the variables and their impact on individuals, thus providing a solution to the initial methodological issues resulting from the chosen topic.

Moreover, it is notable that the intersectional approach has been incorporated into other grounds of critical theories to broaden its coverage area and analytical perspectives. For instance, with Crt, it has been easier to have a deeper understanding of power relations in education and the law (Crenshaw, 1991). It is to be noted that some of the initial problems associated with the use of different methods can come in the way of effective implementation but can also be solved with the help of new techniques. An example is Bowleg's (2012) paper were conducted both quantitative and qualitative research to examine the experiences of racism, sexism, and homophobia among black lesbian women. The analysis of the current study thus employed both qualitative interviews and quantitative examination In addition to detailing the experiences of study participants, this enabled the collection of large amounts of data while also establishing methodological legitimacy for studying the interplay between different variables.

Another example is the work of McCall (2005, p.ahoma 311), who proposed a way to analyze persons with multiple identifiers: intersectional categorical approaches. This method was a better driver of the class's analytical complexity and offered more applicable and explicit findings.

Critiques of the theory and development of intersectionality have led to attempts to strengthen the use of intersectionality in practice. Due to continued efforts in operational definitions, new methodologies, and intersections of concern with other essential theories, scholars have enhanced the comprehension and applicability of intersectionality. They show that intersectionality is a pivotal model to study the repertories of social categories and power relations despite some difficulties since its elaboration.

Conclusions and Results

This paper delved into intersectionality, a theory that aims at analyzing how numerous forms of oppression affect people in their day to day lives. Now we know how capitalist and patriarchal Intersectionality began and how scholars like Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge enriched the concept. We discussed the fields, which study intersections, the specific fields that have adopted intersectionality, and the methods for intersectional research. Furthermore, we discussed weaknesses that have been pointed out by researchers commenting on the theory proposing theoretical and methodological modifications, which have been put forward by the theory supporters to address these issues.

Critically, intersectionality provides a lens through which to view the cross-hatched relationship between social processes of identification and power. Implications arising from theoretical perspectives encompass understanding multiple disadvantage and oppression, while methodological implications involve the increasing attention with policies and advocacy for social justice. In the case of research that explores the intersections of these forms of oppression, methodologies that include both qualitative and quantitative research, as well as other statistical models, have demonstrated that they can assist in the detection of complex relations between these aspects of oppression.

For future research, more effort should be made in creating the means of analyzing intersectionalism and its relevance in relation to various identities. Notably, future research could investigate the intersectional experiences of Black women longitudinally to understand how they change with time. However, using intersectionality in conjunction with other critical theories can even extend the essential knowledge about the relations of power and subordination. That is why, it is necessary to work to enhance the awareness and skills regarding intersectional research approaches in researchers to raise the quality of the research and policymaking based on these studies.

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