

Intersectional Theory

I have used the thesis of *intersectionality* and the idea of the *matrix of domination* as interrelated constructs to describe social structures of domination. Intersectional thinking suggests that race, class, gender, nation, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and other forms of social hierarchy structure one another. My goal has been to conceptualize intersectionality and study its manifestations in a matrix of domination from one social setting to the next.

Patricia Hill Collins, *On Intellectual Activism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2013. Kindle edition.

... I introduced the term *matrix of domination* as a heuristic device for describing structural power relations that house individuals and groups.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 1998. Page 259.

Another way of approaching power views it as not something that groups possess but as an intangible entity that circulates within a particular matrix of domination and to which individuals stand in varying relationships. These approaches

emphasize how individual subjectivity frames human actions within a matrix of domination.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge. 2000. Page 274.

... I have proposed early on to replace the category of “patriarchy” with the neologism *kyriarchy*, which is derived from the Greek words *kyrios* (lord/ slavemaster/ father/ husband/ elite/ propertied/ educated man) and *archein* (to rule, dominate)....

Kyriarchy is best theorized as a complex pyramidal system of interlocking multiplicative social and religious structures of superordination and subordination, of ruling and oppression.... Such kyriarchal relations are still today at work in the multiplicative intersectionality of class, race, gender, ethnicity, empire, and other structures of discrimination. In short, kyriarchy is constituted as a sociocultural and religious system of dominations by intersecting multiplicative structures of oppression. The different sets of relations of domination shift historically and produce a different constellation of oppression in different times and cultures. The structural positions of subordination that have been fashioned by kyriarchal relations stand in tension with those required by radical democracy.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 2013. Kindle edition.

The inner voice, or “still small voice,” connected with experience is foundational to the epistemology of intersectionality and to why spirit is so central to its development. Intersectionality or multiracial feminism—feminism—what antiracist feminist scholar Chela Sandoval calls “differential consciousness”—grows from an internal sense of the intrinsic value of human beings— of oneself and one’s communities. That is why Sandoval calls differential consciousness the “methodology of love.” “Differential consciousness” describes an ability to read power relations and respond in a way that helps oppressed peoples survive. It is a technology for reading a situation and choosing tactics that enable one to act effectively to equalize power relations. Sandoval uses “technology” to refer to the “practical arts” of activism. Technologies combine pragmatism and creativity, highlighting activism as an artful practice, one that is always changing along with the practitioner and the situations she encounters. Sandoval writes, “The differential technologies of oppositional consciousness, as utilized and theorized by a racially diverse US coalition of women of color, demonstrate the procedures for achieving affinity and alliance across difference; they represent the modes that love takes in the postmodern world.” Working across differences is not only about strategic activism. It is a way of loving others and working from a place of love in the contemporary United States....

I hypothesized that I would draw from activists’ life stories a “queer feminist” theory-in-praxis that prioritizes struggles against racism, poverty, and violence, based on a view of these struggles as central to the projects of women’s and queer liberation.

Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, *Social Change and Intersectional Activism: The Spirit of Social Movement* New York: Palgrave Macmillan (St. Martin's Press). 2012. Pages 3-4 and 159.