

CHAPTER 1: INTERSECTIONALITY TO THE RESCUE

Exactly one week after well-known “shock jock” Don Imus called the Rutgers University women’s basketball team “nappy-headed hos,” he was fired by CBS News Radio. The controversy, which simultaneously characterized the women in sexist and racist terms, targeted a team that was runner up in the 2007 NCAA women’s basketball championship. That Scarlet Knights team included eight women of color and two white women. Women’s rights and civil rights organizations immediately came to the Scarlet Knights’ defense. National Organization for Women president Kim Gandy joined civil rights activists like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton to stand in solidarity with the National Congress of Black Women and the National Council of Negro Women to demand termination of Imus’ radio show.

This moment of convergence – the simultaneous attention to race and gender – produced solidarity instead of the Oppression Olympics and its attendant *Leapfrog Paranoia, Willful Blindness, Defiant Ignorance, Movement Backlash* or *Compassion Deficit Disorder*. Demonstrating the best of coalition politics, leaders of both communities acknowledged the dual causes of this episode – racism and sexism; sexism and racism. This analysis allowed for people who believe in either form of equality to join in a unified effort to oust Imus. This moment of convergence, produced in part by the recognition of *Categorical Multiplicity*, a term I define below, represents a taste of what intersectionality can bring to our public discourse about race, gender, class and sexual orientation in American politics.

Unfortunately, Imus’ period of contrition included a \$20 million contract settlement and a new contract with ABC Radio only months later. Clearly, *Categorical Multiplicity* is necessary but not sufficient to turn the page for good. Likewise, the call for attention to *Categorical Multiplicity* is a long-standing part of intersectionality research – but intersectionality doesn’t end there. This chapter will outline five aspects of an intersectional approach to politics that can thwart the lure of the Oppression Olympics. In contrast to the debilitating Oppression Olympics, intersectional approaches provide new ways for the privileged to stand in solidarity, foster egalitarian coalition

building among groups and enhance our attention to complexity in politics. We will return to these prongs in the case study chapters to come.

Most Americans recognize that race and class are socially defined concepts with little to no biological meaning. Gender and sexual orientation, on the other hand, remain categories with presumptions of biology implicated as justifications for how people are treated.ⁱ Intersectionality scholars analyze all four categories as social constructions that retain political influence far beyond any actual meaning of the biological, phenotypical and chromosomal differences among us. Many scholars recognize this claim as a constructivist one – based on the conviction that humans cognitively construct the world around them in order to best navigate a complex society.

While intersectionality starts with this constructivist premise, it recognizes the material reality that these social constructions impose on us. Despite our best efforts we learn norms of racialized, gendered, classed and sexualized behavior as children through observation and imitation of the adults to whom we are exposed, whether directly or virtually through the media. Although we live in a nation with a strong commitment to individual freedom, these norms interact to produce a web of patterned rewards for norm-conforming behavior and punishments for behavior that doesn't. While we might want that patterned reward system in place for criminal justice purposes, extending them beyond that domain socializes Americans into an acceptance of injustice and discrimination. Think of these intersecting behavioral norms as analogous to the threat that Morpheus and Neo discuss when they first meet in the movie "The Matrix:"ⁱⁱ

Morpheus: Do you believe in fate, Neo?

Neo: No.

Morpheus: Why not?

Neo: Because I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life.

Morpheus: I know exactly what you mean. Let me tell you why you're here. You're here because you know something. What you know you can't explain. But you feel it. You've felt it your entire life. That there's something wrong with

the world. You don't know what it is but it's there, like a splinter in your mind driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought you to me. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Neo: The Matrix?

Morpheus: Do you want to know what it is? The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us, even now in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

Neo: What truth?

Morpheus: That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind....ⁱⁱⁱ

In the movie the matrix rewards *Willful Blindness* and *Defiant Ignorance*. From a 21st century political perspective, so too does an Oppression Olympics orientation attempt to force people to pretend that race, gender, class and sexual orientation don't exist when individuals, groups and institutions interact with each other as if they do.^{iv}

Intersectionality adds a daunting but critical layer of complexity: the categories themselves interact with each other, teaching us how to overlook invisible norms and spotlight what is different as normatively dysfunctional. This chapter illuminates a path through the matrix by revealing the intellectual roots of intersectionality.^v

“To combine gender with race, language, sexual orientation, concrete interpersonal relations, and a host of other dimensions of identity is no easy or uncomplicated thing. But it is from the recognition of this complexity and these contradictions that we must start.”^{vi}

Categorical Multiplicity: The Foundation of Intersectionality

As I noted in the introduction, the idea that only the marginalized dimensions of categories matter and the bias towards compartmentalizing categories as mutually exclusive for political purposes both contribute to the Oppression Olympics. For example, the African-American women on the Rutgers team aren't Black on Monday-Wednesday-Friday, and female on Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday. What would they do about Sunday? Yet most analyses of American politics proceed as if this is the case. This allows the privileged dimensions of categories to which people belong to remain invisible norms, as we saw in the cases of Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and Sarah Palin.

Certainly, the mainstream sexism we observed in the 2008 election must be addressed. But we must also recognize the racism, classism and homophobia within the gender equality community. Moreover we must also address the sexism, classism and homophobia in the civil rights community.^{vii} By acknowledging the role of *Categorical Multiplicity*, intersectionality scholars draw upon two of the most useful contributions of multicultural feminist theory: that multiple categories are significant and due to the multiplicity of such categories, there are multiple sites of power that need to be reformed.^{viii}

The “intersectional turn” builds on cross-disciplinary work by feminist scholars and activists of color around the world. The impact of an intersectional approach to race, sexual orientation, gender, and class as analytical categories has emerged from over 50 years of scholarship.^{ix} Originally formulated as a personal identity-laden theory, early on intersectionality theory focused solely on the identities of women of color. African American feminist theorists such as Patricia Hill Collins, Joy James, bell hooks and many others articulated a both/and identity to locate Black women's sociopolitical situation as one that is, variously, “doubly bound” or featuring “multiple jeopardies.” This claim, evident across numerous disciplines of Black women's studies evolved from the both/and claims of 18th and 19th century writers such as Maria Miller Stewart and Anna Julia Cooper.

Latina and Asian American feminists have also made similar claims about the multiplicity of identity and claimed an inseparability of race, gender, sexuality and class in the lives of women of color. Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga have similarly talked about the categorical multiplicity of Latinas' lives in a racialized context of hybridity termed *mestizaje*. A related focus on hybridity has similarly energized European approaches to intersectionality as a paradigm that shapes analyses of public education, social welfare policy, and immigration studies.

These convincing claims in the U.S. context have been joined by post-colonial feminists who add the importance of North-South identity as a politically relevant category of analysis for women's international movements.^x The impact of this work has been tremendous, filtering into more generalized academic and international human rights work. International feminist and UN NGO forums have gradually put issues of intersectionality more centrally on their agenda.^{xi} Since then equality legislation in many countries as well as the EU has moved from focusing on single category approaches to intersectional approaches. As well, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's recent book, Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny (2006) recognizes the role of multiple identities in civil wars and contexts of ethnic violence.^{xii}

The multicultural feminist claim of multiple jeopardies has traditionally been interpreted to mean that *some* women have a larger number of multiple marginalized categorical memberships that *therefore* deserve a larger share of the policy solutions. I call this logic the *additive oppressions argument*,^{xiii} and it is easy to see where this logic leads – directly to the Oppression Olympics question of “Who has it toughest?” In addition to the normative concerns about the desirability or usefulness of such a debate, two specific problems emerge from the additive argument.

First, “adding on” race or other categories to claims of gender oppression falsely limits our attention to matters of quantity, ignoring the way that incorporating race, class or gender into a single analysis qualitatively changes the characteristics of subordination.^{xiv} Second, those steeped in the quantitative approach have expressed serious concerns about the infinite quantity of possible categories and combinations thereof. Slicing the group of women or men into ever thinner, more politically isolated

slivers is of particular concern in majoritarian political systems where numbers matter.^{xv} The additive oppressions argument creates significant obstacles to framing claims in a way that brings people together rather than drives them apart.

In contrast, intersectionality theory uses *Categorical Multiplicity* as a way to recognize that race, class, gender and sexual orientation all can represent equal but not identical threats to the values of freedom and equality embraced by all Americans. For example, earlier I mentioned the role of biology in constructions of gender and sexual orientation. Interestingly, these biological justifications have cut both ways – to thwart gender equality (women are “naturally” weaker and more nurturing) and to promote LGBT equality (LGBT identity is genetic, not a choice). This example clearly demonstrates the assumption that multiple categories function identically isn’t tenable under all circumstances; we will address this reality in subsequent dimensional discussions below.

So the question isn’t is America *more* racist or *more* sexist, which leads us to Leapfrog Paranoia and Willful Blindness. Instead intersectional approaches to categorical multiplicity focus on illuminating the ways in which categories emerge as politically relevant based on processes operating at multiple levels – the self, the group and government / society. This conceptualization changes, in other words, the first order question. How do racism, sexism, classism and homophobia interact and emerge to threaten our democracy in 2010?^{xvi} We will return to this point when we discuss *Time Dynamics*. Intersectionality research has stepped away from the assumption of a priori equal quantitative weight of the categories in research outcomes without stepping away from the central belief that such categories must be addressed in empirical research.^{xvii} Yet as we saw in the case of the response to Don Imus mere recognition of multiple categories is necessary but not sufficient for substantial societal transformation. Beyond identity politics, beyond the number of categories we discuss, the character of the relationship among these categories is also important. Intersectionality theory has expanded beyond late 20th century multicultural feminist theory to address this political reality.

Categorical Intersection: The Central Metaphor of Intersectionality

I've mentioned twice that categories of race, gender, class and sexual orientation all present equal but not identical threats to our democracy as one nation with liberty and justice for all. Work produced by intersectionality researchers has characterized the relationship between categories in a variety of ways. Faced with the incompatibility of the *additive oppressions approach* with existing civil rights jurisprudence, legal theorists like Kimberle Williams Crenshaw,^{xviii} Mari Matsuda, Adrien Katherine Wing, Patricia Williams and Margaret Montoya identified numerous gaps in the American legal framework left unaddressed after mid-20th century movement activism on behalf of women and racial/ethnic minorities. Within the legal domain, these women argued that a gap persists between the lived experience of women of color and the opportunity for legal remedy against discriminatory pay structures, work rules or protection from domestic violence. Their convincing explanations of a relationship among political categories of difference such as race, class and gender preserved the claims for justice based on ***Categorical Multiplicity***, but on substantively different grounds than multicultural feminist theory. ***Categorical Intersection*** emphasized the invisibility of women's lived experiences in a legal system that constructed race and gender as mutually exclusive.

Characterizing the relationship between categories as intersectional rather than additive turned these scholars away from the Oppression Olympics and toward the possibilities for transformative politics. Crenshaw, recognizing this "tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis,"^{xix} coined the metaphor of intersecting streets to describe the legal location of women with multiple marginalized identities. This formulation has been encapsulated in the law by Canadian courts.^{xx} Each category is taken to be an intersecting "vector" and society occurs at the point of intersection for all people.^{xxi}

Figure 1 displays the original metaphor, herein called "Content Intersectionality" because of its emphasis on three central categories of difference as substantively, not simply analytically critical to U.S. politics. More specifically, each of the categories in figure 1 has the same color because, particularly in the legal arena due to the role of signals and spillover across movements, each category has been construed to require not

simply equal, but more importantly identical legal remedies.^{xxii} Content intersectionality has focused primarily on rendering the invisible visible – that is, enlightening the world about the lives of people (primarily women to date) who politically, socially, and/or legally exist at the intersection of race, class and gender. Yet as intersectionality as an analytical framework has gained popularity, two central shifts have emerged, based on a deep theoretical and jurisprudential engagement with Crenshaw’s original metaphor.

** Figure 1 About Here **

In the 20+ years since the landmark interventions of multicultural feminists like Gloria Anzaldúa, Patricia Hill Collins and Crenshaw’s original metaphor,^{xxiii} intersectionality research has progressed to more explicitly include class and sexual orientation along with the initial categories of race and gender identified by Crenshaw and others.^{xxiv} The two-dimensional intersecting street metaphor must now accommodate this change in *Categorical Multiplicity*. We might first want to just add more streets – instead of a two-street intersection, we’d presume more of a British-style roundabout. Unfortunately this move is flawed because it violates the spirit of Crenshaw’s original formulation, which emphasizes the indivisibility of multiple categories in our lives – by removing the intersections completely. It is indeed impossible to be only white on Mondays, only gay on Tuesdays, and so forth.

So how might we capture the power relationships that exist along the North-South spectrum in international or transnational contexts? How might we account for religion or disability as categories of difference? In her forthcoming article and recent book, Rita Dhamoon quite helpfully walks through the multiple images and metaphors that have emerged from the serious consideration of additional categories, and cites several standards for selecting the relevant categories within any particular political context for study. Table 1 lists several of them.

** Table 1 about here **

Dhamoon notes that all of the standards of choice are driven by the analysis and critique of how power operates and its effects.^{xxv} While this step of selecting which intersections

to study allows us to incorporate previously ignored categories, it also potentially dislodges the hegemony of the race-gender-class triumvirate of categories that have dominated intersectional scholarship for decades. Some scholars question this turn as a move to delegitimize race as a central component of the intersectional approach (others have said similar things about gender). Dhamoon reminds us that however unsatisfactory this possible outcome might seem, “there are no universal grounds on which to know which interactions should be studied.”^{xxvi} It is important to note that the absence of universal grounds does not give us license to engage in Willful Blindness, Defiant Ignorance or even Compassion Deficit Disorder but instead recognizes that as political contexts vary, so too does the relevance of certain categories. To talk about race in India, for example, might not be nearly as legible as talking about caste. Further, to assume that caste is simply a proxy for race in India also presents a host of problems (whether methodological, in terms of validity or theoretical, in terms of conceptual clarity) for research design or policy prescriptions.

Nevertheless, the central benefit of content intersectionality is its ability to make the “invisible” visible. It produces historically, politically, and socioeconomically accurate information that has several benefits. Canadian public health scholar Olena Hankivsky argues that intersectionality has “the potential to...in the final analysis, contribute an important conceptual advancement in expanding policy discourse in relation to social justice.”^{xxvii} In this regard, we can think of intersectionality as a justice-oriented analytical tool.

If we are committed to that part of our pledge of allegiance to the flag that says, “with liberty and justice for all,” then in addition to our focus on the invisible – overcoming Willful Blindness, Defiant Ignorance, and Compassion Deficit Disorder in the process – we must also attend to Movement Backlash, another aspect of the Oppression Olympics. By reframing the intersection as a dynamic center of both invisibility and hypervisibility, we can expand intersectionality’s utility as an antidote to the Oppression Olympics.

Visibility for marginalized groups and individuals, particularly from a political or public policy perspective, is contingent and mediated by what I have elsewhere called a

“politics of disgust.” Welfare recipients, undocumented immigrants, prison populations, and terror suspects are usually identified with often disturbing inaccuracy by authorities based on their memberships in multiple intersecting categories: single poor black mothers, Latino/a working class Spanish speakers, Black and brown working class men, young Arab American men. The perversion of democratic attention in a politics of disgust involves elites using a warped version of such populations’ public identity as an ideological justification for outrageously invasive public policies. Second, among these subsets of larger groups, elites’ power in a communicative context of gross inequality – their bigger microphones and megaphones – make contestation and the relationships with logical allies difficult to the point of impossibility. Most ironically, for these intersectionally disadvantaged groups, sometimes the best one can immediately hope for is invisibility. The panopticon of surveillance, to use Foucauldian terms, often feature egregious and intense ***Movement Backlash***.

Consider the following examples: The 1960s and 1970s activism of the National Welfare Rights Movement led a 1980s President Ronald Reagan to lay the economic ills of the United States at the feet of the Cadillac-driving “welfare queens” – a fabricated image. The successful push for the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 was countered by states like California, which passed Proposition 187 in 1994 after immigrants were targeted as the cause of California’s recession. While sadly scapegoating is nothing new, the idea that such groups are intersectionally identified through a justice-oriented focus on power is new and such efforts have met with varying levels of success.

In his recent analysis of intersectional court claims, Francisco Valdes found that among nine different categories of intersectional claims, only those that exclusively involved protected classes got relief from the courts. The remaining challenge for advocates is the larger set of cases where claimants were members of both protected and unprotected classes. In such situations the court’s logic subsumed claimants’ protected status (e.g. one’s race) under their unprotected status (e.g. their class). Valdes’ finding is a clear example of how the legal structure fosters or facilitates ***Willful Blindness*** to a claimant’s own privilege (a clear link to the final dimension of intersectionality discussed

below). In matters of legal strategy, claimants are incentivized to downplay or ignore their privilege. Valdes contends that while this juxtaposition reveals the continuing dysfunction of the U.S. legal system, it also provides a road map for future strategic litigation.

Along with Hankivsky and Dhamoon's work, Valdes' analysis demonstrates that *Categorical Multiplicity* and *Categorical Intersection* are by now the most well-known aspects of intersectionality theory among scholars. However, three additional tenets are emerging from the latest intersectional research. The first of these is attention to *Time Dynamics*.

Time Dynamics

In a recent keynote speech, Crenshaw adjusted her metaphor from a pair of intersecting streets to a consideration of how the Grand Canyon evolved. Instead of streets, rivers have flowed in such a way as to craft the Grand Canyon, and rivers still flow, but not as they did thousands of years ago. The "intersectionality canyon," as it were, includes both the dynamic, time-oriented aspects embodied by the rivers that run through it and the institutional rock formations that change ever slowly based on the rivers' flow. *Time Dynamics* focuses on the river-based aspects of the metaphor.

Intersectional attention to *Categorical Multiplicity* revealed in the introduction that there are no pure victims. Therefore we must acknowledge *both* where disadvantage yet remains *and* where privilege has emerged. Acknowledging the changing demography of the United States in the 21st century^{xxviii}, *Time Dynamics* refers to the idea that the membership of the privileged group and the disadvantaged group are not static throughout United States history. Unlike pluralism, which assumes that everyone has an equal chance at any point in history to land in the privileged or disadvantaged group, the *Time Dynamics* aspect of intersectionality recognizes the changes in the river's path over the course of time and humans' ongoing complicity in such changes at any point in time.

In light of the critiques of standpoint theory, scholars have argued for a more fluid, contingent approach to thinking about categories of race, gender, class and sexual orientation. As we learned in the introduction, everyone is not either black or white;^{xxix}

moreover by 2025 more than half of all families will be multicultural.^{xxx} A more fluid approach to race as a category is needed in the 21st century. Theorist Cristina Beltrán also argues for greater attention to time-based contingencies in race and sexual orientation categories: “Put another way, theorists of *mestizaje* must retain an attentiveness to historical specificity and inequality **in tandem with** an increased awareness that all human subjectivity is plural, contradictory, socially embedded and mutually constitutive.” (emphasis mine)^{xxxii}

Time Dynamics recognizes: first, that tremendous progress has been made by excluded groups in American politics. If no progress had been made, *Movement Backlash* wouldn't exist. If the chance for additional progress didn't exist in 2010, *Leapfrog Paranoia* would never emerge. Thus the second, more controversial claim of *Time Dynamics*, directly challenges the *Defiant Ignorance* practiced by excluded groups: pretending such progress hasn't occurred, whether rhetorically or strategically, is false and disingenuous. The third, less controversial but equally important recognition confronts the *Defiant Ignorance* of groups with power: evidence of progress made does not necessarily equal all of the progress that needs to be made. Together the two claims suggest that pre-existing policies may have outlived their usefulness and need to be replaced with a better mousetrap to accurately reflect a 21st century political reality.

Time Dynamics breaks down *Defiant Ignorance* on all sides of the political community, which makes it more difficult and controversial than *Categorical Multiplicity* or *Categorical Intersection*, because entrenched elites on opposing sides of policy debates have to let go of the “pretending not to know” posture. Chapters two, three and four will wade directly into this controversy by calling for a shift from calls for public service to a call for “deep political solidarity.” This aspect of intersectionality contributes directly to the potential for counterintuitive coalitions that are egalitarian and have the power to transform politics. Instead of asking whether the other position is right according to your side's standards, the question instead is “How is the other side right?”^{xxxii} At that point dropping the *Defiant Ignorance* can slowly, carefully, begin.

** Figure 2 About Here **

Figure two reflects the shift from content intersectionality in its more static, limited form, to a more dynamic, process-oriented image of intersectionality. This aspect of intersectionality theory also addresses the pragmatic reality of generation gap politics in the 21st century by acknowledging the dynamic nature of privilege and disadvantage without ignoring the role of either historical patterns or humans' ability to intervene in their own lives. The political ramifications of the current generation gap emanate from the dually troublesome overestimations made by each end of the generational divide: the 60's Generation, who tend to overestimate the importance of history,^{xxxiii} holding on tightly to it as the reason for political action or inaction; and the Millennial Generation, who overestimate the irrelevance of history, dismissing the old ways as dust that can be swept out of the house without making anyone sneeze [consider an example of living feminism here]. *Time Dynamics* is possibly the most difficult but also potentially productive aspect of intersectionality theory.

Diversity Within

Following Don Imus' statement, Rutgers coach C. Vivian Stringer held a press conference to introduce the world to the women Imus had impugned. Designed specifically to confront the characterization of "hos," the women were dressed in business attire and spoke about their academic pursuits, in an effort to take back their power to define who they were, instead of allowing Imus and his producer Bernard McGuirk to do it for them.^{xxxiv}

Expanding upon the commonplace idea that "not all stereotypes are true of all group members," intersectionality theory demonstrates the *Diversity Within* all groups to combat both mainstream stereotypes from both outside and within the group itself.^{xxxv} More specifically, *Diversity Within* emphasizes how intersecting categories produce subgroups within the groups, who often have divergent political agendas.

For example, within the group of African Americans, no one would dispute that Oprah Winfrey and Michael Jordan are not disadvantaged in the same way as unemployed African Americans living on the south side of Chicago, based on the intersecting category of socioeconomic class. Indeed scholars of African American

politics have long argued that African Americans share a sense of “linked fate” that can transcend politically relevant distinctions like class and gender in political attitudes and behavior.^{xxxvi} Yet while linked fate may persist among Black political attitudes, it does not significantly affect Black political participation.^{xxxvii}

Unfortunately, our political and public policy discourse is not always sufficiently nuanced to capture this complexity. Thus subgroups of populations remain disadvantaged with broad debate focusing on why exactly such diverse outcomes exist, overlooking the common sense reality that many longstanding policies were designed to benefit a specific slice of a group (like middle class blacks or white women) based on the assumption that what was good for this slice was good for the entire group.^{xxxviii} Building on the idea that there is no pure victim, *Diversity Within* recognizes the differential power relationships and multiple centers of power in American politics.

The late political theorist Iris Marion Young attempted to reconcile the recognition of within-group diversity for practical politics, asking the question, on what grounds, then, can women claim to speak for women as a group? This question has emerged over the past 20 years not simply in response to women of color charging second-wave feminists with racism, but among conservative, independent, and moderate women who state that the feminist movement doesn’t speak for them. So it’s more than an idle question.^{xxxix}

We can’t always spin our wheels, Young concludes, searching for what we have in common, because there will always be the chance that someone will be excluded.^{xl} But if that’s the case, then how do we form groups to get things done politically? Young recommends we think of race or gender categories as “serial collectives.”^{xli} When we think of women as a serial collective, there is no requirement that we must all have something in common beyond a relationship to a material object and the social practices in relationship to it.^{xlii} If we think in terms of serial collectives, we set aside the paralyzing question of what we must have in common before we can speak and focus instead on what we can do to change our world.

Drawing upon the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Young highlights the way in which politically, we can think of women as analogous to commuters taking the bus.

Commuters need not all be a specific race, gender, class or sexual orientation, of course, but they do share a relationship to the commuter bus^{xliii} and the practices that are associated with it – including its route (over which they have little direct control), whether it's on time (something they may or may not have some control of), and how far they choose to ride (something they have more but not complete control over).

Surveying the variety of cars and buses and other forms of transportation, we can envision the degree to which individuals forming groups is a matter of choice *and* opportunity; where individuals have embarked and have elected to follow the journey of the bus itself. Prior to embarking, potential riders represent a serial collective – a collection of individuals with the potential for group action. Once embarked, however, the individuals have elected to “link their fate”^{xliiv} with those of their fellow passengers, however temporarily, episodically or contingently (e.g. solely for the purposes of arriving at a destination). The members of this collective may spend most days never actually thinking of themselves as a “group,” until something very specific happens – like the bus has an accident or doesn't show up at its scheduled stop one day. There may then be a specific block of time where commuters join together to address some specific task (like finding an alternate route to work or school).

Intersectionality's commitment to addressing *Diversity Within* focuses our attention on the process by which the task gets defined and achieved. Too often, a small subset of the serial collective decides among themselves what the task at hand should be, under the assumption that their decision sufficiently covers the entire group. Yet this agenda-setting process falsely assumes that what's good for them is what's good for the entire group. Intersectionality scholars have proposed new and different ways to set the agenda for the collective.^{xlv}

Once that associated task is completed, they can then elect to dissolve the collective (and return to daily life as an individual commuter) or they may choose to remain together as a non-political entity (socially saying hello, playing card games on the bus during the ride) or as a formally organized political entity (forming a Straphangers Campaign or Bus Riders Union).^{xlvi} Again the future of the group is to be set by more than the privileged members of the collective. At any particular time some, one or all

may attempt to veer “off-road” in order to reach their intended destination. The final aspect of intersectionality returns us to Crenshaw’s new metaphor of the Grand Canyon. It will focus on the seriality of categories like race, class, sexual orientation and gender to examine the dynamic relationships across individual and institutional levels of analysis.

Individual – Institutional Interactions

Crenshaw’s original intersecting streets metaphor was deeply American in the sense that it was tied to a modernist sense of “progress” that is deeply deterministic and limiting. Using streets as proxies suggests that only two directions, forwards and backwards, exists, with little attention to where the road begins or ends. Theoretically, this limitation highlights the need to add the *Time Dynamics* dimension for historical specificity. Pragmatically, limiting politics to either forward progress or backward regress facilitates the entrenchment of political positions, making compromise and bipartisanship ever less likely in the 21st century. What if we could create a space for moving sideways instead of simply backwards and forwards? Luckily the intersectionality canyon metaphor alleviates some of these issues without losing the central points that remain so valuable to a 21st century political context.

Whether intersecting streets or rivers crossing, intersections are sites of motion. Those who might get “stuck” in the intersection may be able to turn around and go home or return to the riverbank, but far too frequently their ability to act on such a choice is constrained. The *Individual Institutional Interactions* dimension of intersectionality allows for the idea that race, gender, class and sexual orientation are constructed and enacted at multiple levels – the individual, the group, and the institutional. In other words, the institutions are the rock formations created within the Grand Canyon by the rivers. They are created by the rivers, worn away after decades and centuries, and created in such a way that anyone traveling down or across the river must avoid colliding with them. From a pragmatic political point of view, this dimension also gives a more accurate sense of the amount and duration of effort required to completely dismantle systems of oppression like racism, sexism, homophobia and classism without rendering them ahistorical phenomena.

The complexities of these *Individual Institutional Interactions* occur on multiple political planes: the organizational, intersubjective, experiential and representational.^{xlvii} If we continue to use Crenshaw's metaphor and place a justice-seeking group in a craft to navigate the river, we can embrace both the serial collective agency that Young embraces, as each person has in some way elected to get on the boat (in however contingent a manner), but in doing so they recognize the route, the presence of rock formations (which we can suggest represent political institutions) and the presence of other vehicles (which we can suggest represent other groups both similar to and distinct from our focus group) are three semi-permanent and dynamic forces with which those in our original rivercraft must contend, a fact largely out of their control. In other words agency exists in embarkation and throughout the journey, but in ways that carry risks of close calls, crashes and confrontations with other passengers and rock formations.

I've deliberately used the word "craft" rather than specify a type of vehicle to indicate the mutually constitutive roles of both *Diversity Within* and *Time Dynamics* in traversing the river in any particular direction. While some may have access to either a yacht or a jetski to get from point A to B, others may only have a piece of driftwood or a river raft to navigate the same journey. What is an open question and subject for politics, however, is which craft will best navigate that section of the rivers' crossing and for whom. This new metaphor allows us, therefore, to contend with the ways in which individuals and groups contend with multiple centers of political power and institutions.

Most recent intersectional work recognizes that the categories of race, class, gender and sexual orientation shape *both* individuals' relative locations within political systems *and* macro-level phenomena such as international human rights compliance standards as well.^{xlviii} This move to embrace a full commitment to the focus on *Individual-Institutional Interactions* sheds light on the organization of political power more generally.^{xlix} Thus political power is not presumably located in *either* structures *or* individuals, and it flows in multiple directions instead of remaining static.

Unlike prior approaches to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, intersectionality recognizes that power should not be conceptualized in a zero-sum framework. The zero-sum framework contributes to the Oppression Olympics.

Intersectionality's focus on relational power highlights the dynamic interactions and distributions of power within and between individuals and groups, institutions and nation states.¹

The *Individual-Institutional Interactions* element of intersectionality theory also avoids thinking of the structure as undifferentiated power that completely dominates the individual's ability, or vice versa. All too often in U.S. politics, opposing debates of public policy are grounded in disagreement concerning the locus of power and therefore accountability in government policies and practices (aka structure) or in citizens' individual behaviors. One common area where such discussions focus either on systemic or on individual explanations is the role of fathers in poor households. Liberals focus on the systemic causes of absentee fathers – unemployment, poor education and poor availability of a social safety net more generally. On the other hand, conservatives focus on the role of personal responsibility among the fathers themselves. If we were to set aside *Defiant Ignorance* in an intersectional framework, we would acknowledge that there is an interaction between individuals and institutions that points us toward reform of both elements, rather than just one or the other. Yet without setting aside *Defiant Ignorance*, there is no room for this higher-order conversation in our broader American political discourse.

The complex interactions between individuals (as *both* individuals *and* members of groups) and the institutional practices, norms and structures produce the culture in which we live. More often than not this interaction is neither neat nor unidirectional in its influence. As we know, cultural production is a dynamic process that involves elements of opportunity for liberation and oppression at multiple levels of analysis. It is in fact possible that even as individuals are exercising their freedom to participate in American cultural discourse the cultural impact at the group or institution level reinforces the oppression of their compatriots. This tension continues to haunt our political discourse, which tends toward the reductionist and the polarizing rather than toward complexity and nuance. For example, presenting oneself as the “anti-nappy-headed ho” plays into multiple dominant norms of respectability and uplift ideology that disciplines

women athletes of color into cookie-cutter images pre-designed for them.^{li} We will continue this discussion of complexity in the next section's examples.

Analyzing American Politics From an Intersectional Perspective

Figure 3 shows all five aspects of what I term "Paradigmatic Intersectionality". Only when brought together do all five aspects of intersectionality effectively address the dilemmas posed by the Oppression Olympics.

** Figure 3 about here **

Intersectionality takes seriously race, gender, sexual orientation and class as analytical categories rather than just as identities.^{lii} Why? If we focus solely on race as an identity, we are limited to identity-based policy solutions that get bogged down in debates about the legitimacy and humanity of the individuals themselves, which ignores the role of institutions in shaping politics. The previous section on *Individual-Institutional Interactions*, however, taught us that we can't simply focus on the structure in response. Intersectionality's approach to politics can illuminate new ways to think about long-standing debates such as affirmative action and multiracial identity.

Focusing on gender, race, class and sexual orientation as identities ushers in the reification of lived experience,^{liii} which often leads to paralyzing claims of "uniqueness," "incommensurability," and the dreaded Oppression Olympics. Using sexual orientation, gender, class and race as analytical categories accepts the lived experience of people without making it a condition of group formation, epistemology, or agenda setting, further opening opportunities for deep political solidarity.

This expansion beyond the limits of identity politics in no way dismisses identity as irrelevant or downright pernicious, as some advocates of colorblindness would do. Instead the work opens up space for the first benefit of intersectionality: creating diverse coalitions that are non-identity based but may still generate identity-based benefits. Intersectional approaches neither eschew identity nor remain mired in it. Multiple planes of interaction (the organizational, intersubjective, experiential and representational)^{liv} and

Categorical Multiplicity open up avenues of agency without ignoring the role of ***Individual-Institutional Interactions***.

Take, for example, the news media's longstanding overdependence on single black mothers as prototypes of welfare recipients.^{lv} Intersectional analyses can certainly describe this problem, but it can also offer innovative solutions. A 20th century identity politics-laden solution might be civil rights driven: getting more Black faces in our newsroom to counter this overdependence. Not only is that a very indirect solution to this particular problem, one strategy to achieve it, affirmative action, has been eviscerated by the Supreme Court in recent years, thanks in part to ***Movement Backlash***. A 20th century approach to this problem would pour most resources into defending and attempting to resuscitate the rollbacks of affirmative action programs at the state and federal levels. A noble effort, perhaps, but is it the most appropriate allocation of resources for this particular challenge? A 21st century intersectional analysis instead comprehensively attends to ***Time Dynamics*** and ***Individual-Institution Interactions*** in order to identify an unlikely and previously unidentified site of action for welfare activists: the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), whose decisions about consolidation of media ownership can dramatically affect the diversity of images portrayed of women on welfare.^{lvi} Here they might encounter new and largely counterintuitive allies in an effort to more accurately represent their stories and change the size of their microphone relative to the very large ones carried by political elites.

This kind of simultaneous attentiveness to ***Time Dynamics*** and ***Individual-Institutional Interactions*** follows in the footsteps of many scholars, including Iris Marion Young in her thinking of categories as serial collectives. Unfortunately Young followed 20th century practice by discussing only one category, gender, in depth. Intersectionality integrates all of the analytical categories as interlocking categories of difference.^{lvii}

Returning to the example of the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights, Black female athletes endure a tremendous amount of surveillance and pressure^{lviii} to conform to a “Black Lady” public image^{lix} that is simultaneously liberating (from the “nappy-headed hos” stereotype) and constraining (preventing complete autonomy of personal expression,

including its heterosexism). Significantly such athletes experience that pressure from coaches who are themselves often Black women. *Time Dynamics* improves Young's original formulation by acknowledging the accrual of power over time by multiple centers of power, and *Diversity Within* recognizes the multiple centers of power as sites of struggle for the power of self-definition.

Whether through U.S. census categories, discriminatory policies like segregation, detention and internment, or incentive-driven policies like affirmative action, government and its agents play a significant role in the access we have to freedom of identification and equality of opportunity in the United States. One final example of the relationship among the five prongs of intersectionality can illuminate the need for all five aspects in American political discourse. Millennial-generation driven identity movements like the Multiracial Movement have sought complete freedom of self-identification in all aspects of their lives. From the perspective of *Categorical Multiplicity* and *Time Dynamics* it is important to recognize the politically charged practice of "passing" and its legacy as part of the resistance to the idea of a multiracial identity and its goals.

First, attention to *Categorical Multiplicity*, *Categorical Intersection* and *Time Dynamics* would draw our attention to the role of gender in this movement. When the mothers of mixed race children in the United States were primarily slaves, there was little if any activism to re-classify mixed race children as "mixed" rather than as the legislatively-mandated "black." In the 20th century, as greater numbers of White mothers have become involved in the Multiracial Movement,^{lx} the push for a "mixed," "biracial," or "multiracial" identity choice has emerged from multiracial citizens and their parents. This move has garnered resistance from communities of color who envision the shift as a move to share in the spoils of whiteness, like those who long ago passed into whiteness. Without a significant commitment to antiracism, it is difficult if not impossible for the Multiracial Movement to contest this belief, sparking a closing of ranks to protect allocations of resources tied to the census, like the 2000 and 2010 "Check the Black box" U.S. census campaigns targeting African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and African immigrants.^{lxi} Far from influencing just the interpersonal identity domain, the Multiracial Movement has successfully altered the administration of the U.S. census for all

Americans and shifted Census-driven debates over allocation of resources toward a discourse that accepts their perceived reality of who they are. My point here is not to challenge multiracial people's agency to self-identify but to reveal the institutional impact of their activism. In conjunction with the *Time Dynamics* element of intersectionality theory, *Individual-Institutional Interactions* focuses on the idea that just as history (whether recent or centuries ago) plays a dynamic role in explaining the status quo, so too do government and cultural institutions play a shifting role as well in the political chances for new politics.

Recent research on multiracial identity laments the hegemony of the African American and white parentage as a dominant prototype used to define the agenda of all multiracial individuals, a troubling legacy of the black-white paradigm's dominance of race-relations discourse. Clearly there is *Diversity Within* the multiracial community, which must be acknowledged in building models of identity development, agendas for political action and egalitarian coalitions. What is perhaps most relevant to the discussion here is that an intersectional analysis that attends to both *Time Dynamics* and *Diversity Within* better helps the movement than a unitary model. Fuller recognition of *Diversity Within* and *Time Dynamics* by the movement itself might counter the image of the movement as one seeking its own share of white privilege, reducing the likelihood of sparking the Oppression Olympics. Without an intersectional analysis, much of the complexity required for full consideration of these issues drops out.

Each political debate – representations of welfare recipients and the multiracial census movement – gains deeper clarity from the five dimensions of intersectionality theory. The intersectional approach can be applied to policy debates of all kinds, as we will see in chapters three, four and five. But before analyzing each case study, let's examine the benefits of the 21st century intersectional approach.

Benefits of the expanded form of intersectionality:

While intersectionality theory started in identity politics, it has not remained there.^{lxii} Identity politics cannot transform the United States on its own; institutional change beyond identity politics is critical to 21st century politics. Attention to the five prongs of

the intersectional approach – *Categorical Multiplicity, Categorical Intersection, Time Dynamics, Diversity Within* and *Individual-Institutional Interaction* – directly challenges the Oppression Olympics. Specifically, it offers us three hallmark contributions to our politics in the 21st century, each of which will be explored in the case studies to come.

A unitary approach (e.g. focusing on race OR gender) cannot handle the complex processes of self-integration that must take place in order to avoid harmful, anti-solidarity actions like self-deception,^{lxiii} which undergirds the *Willful Blindness, Defiant Ignorance*, and *Compassion Deficit Disorder* elements of the Oppression Olympics. As I've noted throughout the chapter, intersectionality forces a direct confrontation with *Willful Blindness* and *Defiant Ignorance* through attention to *Time Dynamics* and *Diversity Within* to engage the role that privilege plays in all Americans' lives. There are no longer any pure victims in our political context. In the absence of any pure victims we must examine new ways for us to stand in solidarity with each other as individuals who are simultaneously marginalized and privileged. Chapter two will take up this directly, by examining the individual-level preparation necessary to pursue deep political solidarity.

Second, I've also mentioned in passing throughout the chapter that the intersectional approach provides the chance for new kinds of counterintuitive coalitions. Turning the discussion away from zero-sum questions using *Categorical Multiplicity* and *Categorical Intersection* eludes the threat of *Leapfrog Paranoia*. Along with such a turn, confronting *Willful Blindness* and *Defiant Ignorance* will facilitate the eradication of *Compassion Deficit Disorder*, as apathy gets confronted as the exercise of privilege that it is in these contexts. Similarly, new domains for attention to the roles of gender, race, sexual orientation and class are revealed by the attention to *Diversity Within* and *Individual-Institutional Interactions*. The political agendas of marginalized groups and their allies are transformed based on a different approach to the process by which the agenda gets set and ultimately new kinds of egalitarian coalition building within as well as between groups to achieve such an agenda. We'll examine these more egalitarian coalition-building opportunities with regard to a specific political issue in chapter three.

Last but certainly not least, throughout the chapter there has been an emphasis on complexity that is often challenging for mainstream portrayals of American politics. Returning to “The Matrix,” recall that Morpheus’ offer to Neo of a choice between the red pill (of liberatory knowledge) or the blue pill (to remain mired in Willful Blindness and Defiant Ignorance) is one that only Neo can make for himself; it cannot be impressed upon him. Similarly, this book is addressed to those who have elected to take the red pill, who are open to the complexity and nuance that are rarely in evidence throughout most of our current public discourse. For those of us interested in and committed to justice, the causal complexity of our political context is not something that can be avoided in the 21st century. Attention to intersectionality provides a structured way to engage this complexity without being as reductionist as past approaches. We will see this attention to complexity throughout the rest of the chapters.

How to talk to someone a lot older than you about intersectionality.

- Watch “The Matrix” (again, if necessary) with the purpose of analyzing the similarities between the matrix and the complexity of intersectionality as a tool to fight the Oppression Olympics. Tell your older folks that like Morpheus, all you offer is the truth.
- Watch the Oscar-winning “Crash,” along with “Love Actually.” See any troubling kinds of omissions with regard to *Individual-Institutional Interactions*?

How to talk to someone a lot younger than you about Intersectionality.

- Watch “Up in the Air,” with special attention to the interaction between Natalie (Anna Kendrick) and Alex (Vera Farmiga) for an example of how attention to *Time Dynamics* can bridge the systematic variation one might expect on the dimension of age.

Table 1. Standards of Category Selection

Signs of injury, social stigma or lack of access	Garcia-Bedolla 2007
Substantive issue of social justice (e.g. environmental justice)	Jordan- Zachary 2007
Scope and target of critique (e.g. center of power in women's rights or civil rights community at the state, national or transnational level)	Brah & Phoenix, 2004

Figure 1. Content Intersectionality

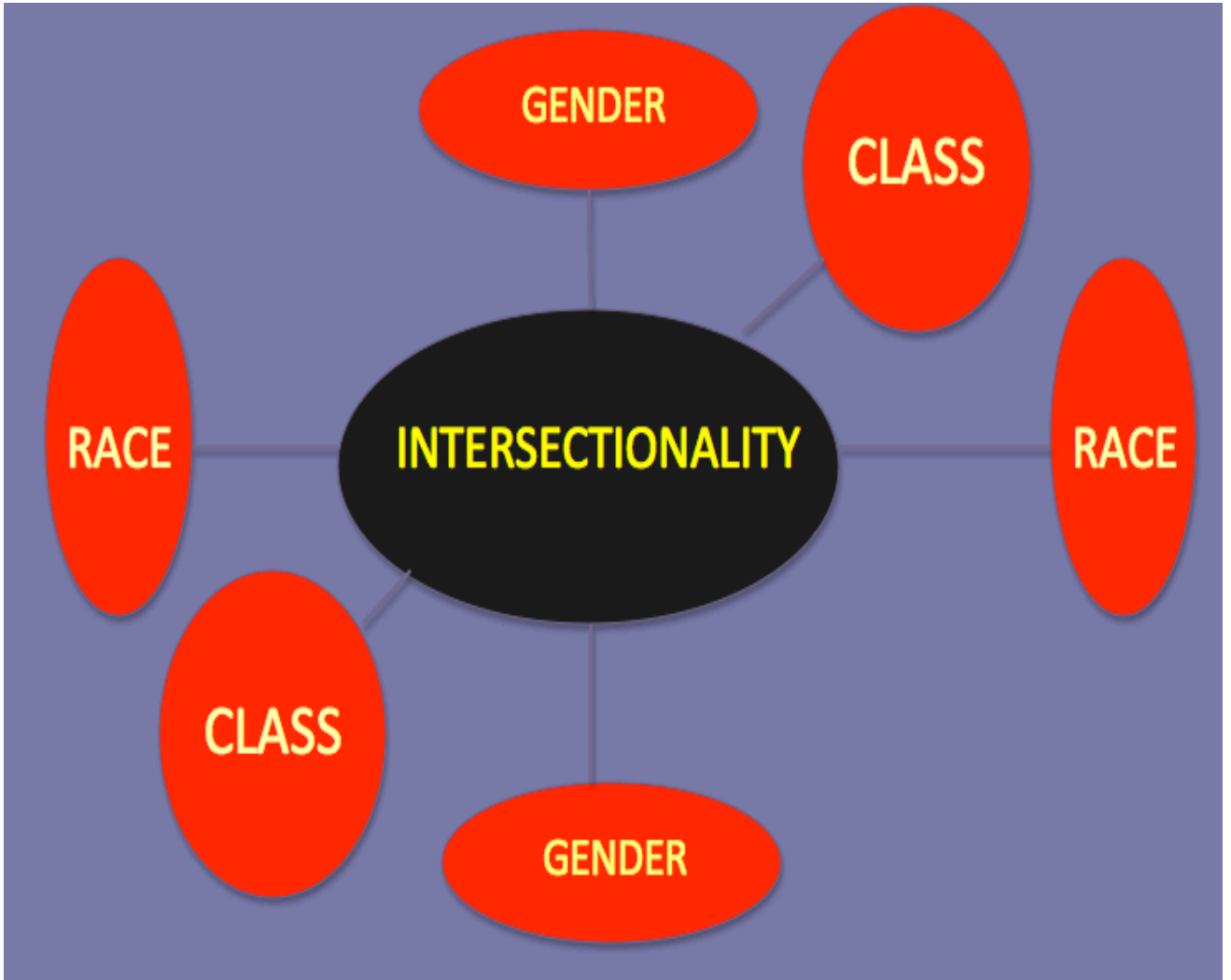


Figure 2. Dynamic Content Intersectionality

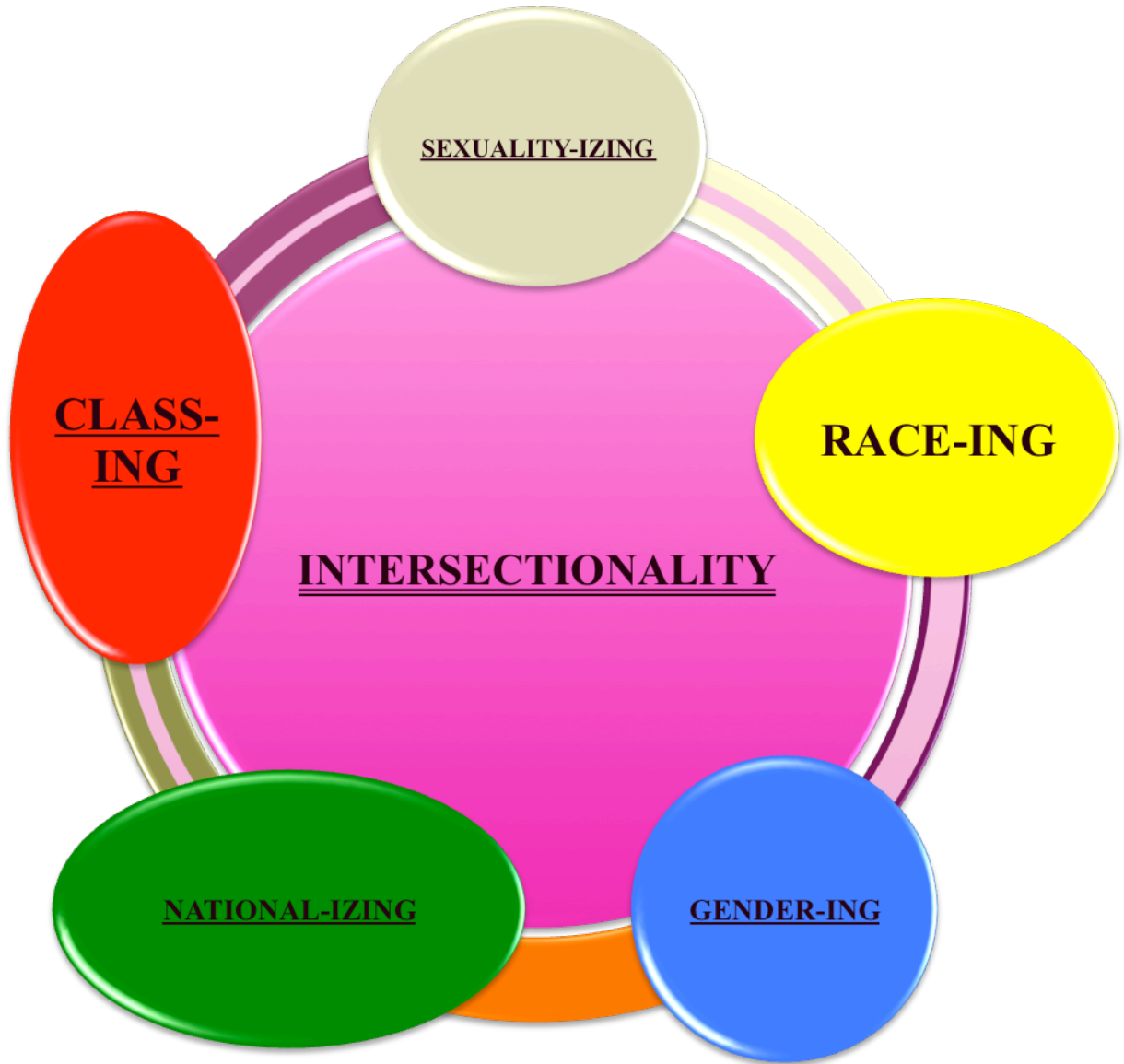
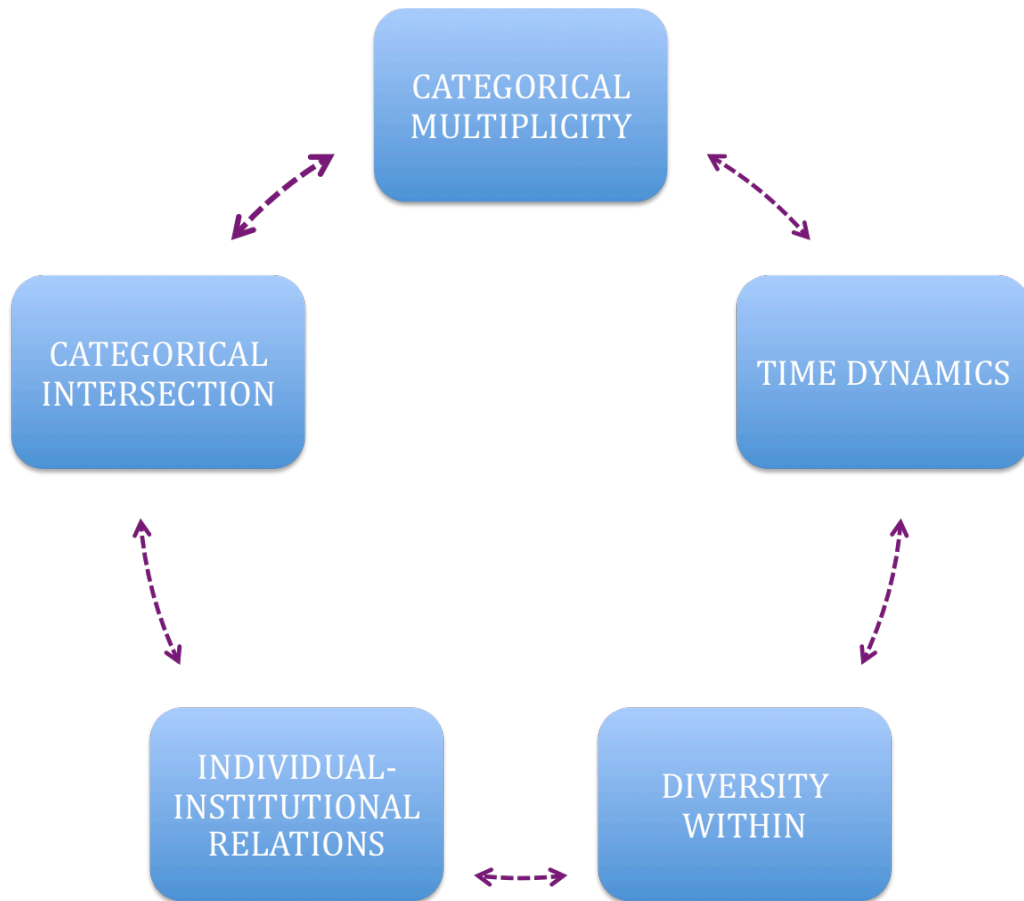


Figure 3. Intersectionality as a Paradigm for Politics



ⁱ Hawkesworth, Mary (1997). “Confounding Gender,” *SIGNS*

ⁱⁱ Interestingly, the producers and distributors of “The Matrix,” the Wachowski brothers and Warner Brothers, recently lost a copyright infringement case filed by Sophia Stewart, an African American female writer who was awarded \$2.5 billion in November of 2009 because of the legally impermissible similarities between her scripts for “The Matrix” and “The Terminator” series of films and the final products.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wachowski, Larry and Andy (1996). “The Matrix” Original Screenplay, 33-35.

^{iv} The challenge to the constitution of and relationships between categories in politics should not be confused with a poststructuralist challenge questioning the very viability of such categories, a position McCall (2005) terms “anti-categorical” (1773).

^v There is a very good reason for doing so, even at the risk of “reification” of the term intersectionality. There is a significant amount of semantic slippage – Chicana Studies, Black feminist studies, and Asian American women’s studies are all often assumed to fall entirely within the rubric of intersectionality research, when in fact intersectionality and feminism (of any variant) in particular are not synonymous terms. My logic here is similar to the point that not all women and politics scholarship qualifies as feminist, nor all race politics as nationalist. While there are numerous sympathies, of course, this kind of semantic slippage obscures the very richness of the content that has so greatly shaped intersectionality; the multivocality for which intersectionality is known. For this reason, the next part of the chapter is dedicated to achieving analytical clarity. Both the semantic slippage and citations across disciplines and content populations suggest that this kind of work has taken place in multiple locations simultaneously, often unbeknownst to scholars immersed in their study of a specific intersectional group. Some scholars even go so far as to claim an exclusive origin for intersectionality in the specific group they study. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to demonstrate at length, the origins of intersectionality are multiple and intersecting.

^{vi} Calhoun, Craig (1995). **Critical Social Theory**, p. 186.

^{vii} Dara Strolovitch (2007) notes that in this day and age most social justice organizations agree that this is important work. However, “intersectionally disadvantaged” groups still fall through the cracks in terms of getting their political needs onto the agenda. See also Cohen 1999 for analysis of homophobia in the African American communities, Seidman for analysis of racism in the LGBT community.

^{viii} Intersectionality’s focus on these two contributions of multicultural feminist theory occurs in light of critiques advanced against its other tenets. For example, the idea that women of color have a unique standpoint approach has produced a vast array of work focused on the cases of women who endure “multiple jeopardies.” This content of knowledge improves our global political literacy and improves the chances of developing effective policy ideas. However the paralysis the claim of uniqueness produces for widescale political action hurts our attempts to undermine the Oppression Olympics, which thrives upon the assertions of “incompatibility” and “uncompromising” political postures. In particular the claim that women of color have a unique standpoint that is distinct from and largely incommensurable with standpoints of other women [Hill Collins, Patricia (2000). **Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment**.] has been criticized as impermissibly vague [Maynard in Bhavnani 2001] and paralyzing [See, e.g. Zerilli 2006.]

^{ix} Mary Hawkesworth lists the many areas in which intersectionality has already contributed to our knowledge: “Working within and across a range of disciplines, feminist scholars of color have demonstrated that attention to intersectionality changes understandings about the social construction of subjectivities, the materialization and stylization of bodies, the identities of desiring subjects, the designation of desirable objects, patterns of desire, sexual practices, gendered performances, the terms and conditions of sexual exchange, the asymmetries of power in public and private spheres, the politics of reproduction, the distributions of types of work, the organization of domestic activity, the divisions of paid and unpaid labor, the structures of the formal, informal and subsistence economies, the segregation of labor markets, patterns of production and consumption, terms and conditions of labor exchange, opportunities for education, employment, and promotion, the politics of representation, the structures and outcomes of public decision-making, the operating procedures of regulatory and redistributive agencies, the dynamics of diasporas and decolonization, the potent contradictions of globalization, war-making and militarization, and women’s manifold resistances against the oppressive forces structuring and constraining their life prospects.” Hawkesworth, Mary (2006) **Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological**

Innovation, p. 209. Most of the research Hawkesworth lists is content-based scholarship about women who reside at the intersections of race-, gender-, class- and sexual orientation-based marginalizations. Its achievements are analogous to the contributions made by Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* (1988) and Mills' *The Racial Contract* (1997) to social contract theory. For our purposes it is also important to note that this kind of intersectional work broadens our knowledge base about intergroup relations, justice and democracy in particular. Leslie McCall (2005) also notes briefly in a footnote the vast loci from which the term and framework emerged – 14 different works from at least four different genres of theorists.

^x They also point out the importance of other sociopolitical divisions, including (dis)ability status; rural/urban; nomad/settled and probably most importantly, inclusion/exclusion in global market relations.

^{xi} Yuval-Davis, Nira (2006) "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women Studies* 13:3, 193-209.

^{xii} Ibid.

^{xiii} See Barvosa, 2008, 77-78; Weldon 2008 (Politics, Gender & Concepts).

^{xiv} Maynard 2001, 125

^{xv} Young 1997, 20

^{xvi} This more nuanced question genuinely considers the answer an open empirical question, which could mean at some point that these categories may shift in relevance for American politics.

^{xvii} Intersectionality can carry out the promise of both/and constructions of multicultural feminist theory without falling victim to the additive language embedded within multicultural feminist thought. It takes this claim seriously through its pursuit of analyses that have consciously avoided such attempts at dissociation. Earlier scholars have engaged in this effort through case-based, content-related research of a specific intersectional population (Cohen 1999, Berger 2004, Hancock 2004) or through attentiveness in design to the contingencies of categories based on the dynamic aspects of their production (Naples) and/or the acknowledgement of the diversity within such groups, whatever the categorization strategy. Changing the first-order question allows intersectionality to achieve the potential of select multicultural feminist claims without the concomitant pitfalls. See also Yuval Davis (2006) and Weldon (2008) for further concrete steps in this direction.

^{xviii} It is Crenshaw who is thought to have first coined the term "intersectionality," though these premises were percolating in several different disciplinary domains.

^{xix} Crenshaw, Kimberle Williams. (1989/1991). "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics."

^{xx} Hawley Fogg-Davis (2006), unpublished manuscript.

^{xxi} Other 2-dimensional images have also been utilized to illustrate the operation of such categories at the micro-level; see Rita Dhamoon (2008), unpublished manuscript.

^{xxii} See Meyer and Boutcher, "Signals and Spillover: Brown v. Board of Education and Other Social Movements" (*Perspectives on Politics*, 2007). Here I am referring to the strategic litigational practice of arguing similar standards of scrutiny for suspect classes like race and gender.

^{xxiii} Despite numerous reproductions of her two seminal articles, Crenshaw has not published revisions of her original metaphor.

^{xxiv} While in this book I focus on four categories in American politics, it is clear that other political contexts may or may not draw our attention to these categories. For that reason, I'm emphasizing the logic of intersectionality over the content of categories examined. Other scholars have explored categories of national/citizenship status, (dis)ability, and religion in analyzing U.S. politics.

^{xxv} Dhamoon, R., "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality," Forthcoming PRQ, 2011 (26-28)

^{xxvi} Ibid, p. 26

^{xxvii} Hankivsky 2005

^{xxviii} Blackwell, Kwoh & Pastor 2002, 48-49

^{xxix} Martinez 1993

^{xxx} "[The United States in 2020 in a Very Different Place.](#)" NielsenWire (July 2009). Accessed January 31, 2010.

^{xxxi} Beltran 2004, 606

^{xxxii} Talk given by Edward Shapiro, M.D. at the Living, Loving, and Voting Conference, October 17-19, 2008, Stockbridge, MA.

^{xxxiii} See Andrew Sullivan, “Goodbye to All That: Why Obama Matters.” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2007.

^{xxxiv} Yet as I noted at the start of this chapter, this window of opportunity was narrow and attenuated in space and time by sociopolitical structures within which Black female athletes must navigate their lives. Indeed, one member of the team, Kia Vaughn, is reportedly suing Imus for slander and defamation of character, contending that the team’s abundant success was compromised by having to respond repeatedly to the controversy (AP, 8-15-07). She later dropped her lawsuit (AP, 9-11-07) after multiple media outlets lambasted her for the suit.

^{xxxv} This concept addresses what Cathy Cohen has termed “secondary marginalization” (1999).

^{xxxvi} Dawson 1994, *Shingles*

^{xxxvii} Hancock & Frasure 2009

^{xxxviii} In **The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the “Welfare Queen.”** Hancock identifies this psychological correspondence bias as the “failure of representative thinking.” In **Affirmative Advocacy** (2007) Dara Strolovitch empirically demonstrates the failure of social justice groups to represent intersectionally disadvantaged sub-groups of their constituencies.

^{xxxix} See Schreiber 2008, *Righting Feminism*

^{xl} Young 1997, 12.

^{xli} *Ibid*, 13.

^{xlii} *Ibid*, 24.

^{xliii} *Ibid*.

^{xliv} I use these words in direct homage to the work of Bobo and Gilliam on African Americans’ group consciousness and sense of politically linked fates (1990).

^{xlv} Strolovitch 2007, p.218; Yuval Davis 2006, 205-206; see also Matsuda 1991.

^{xlvi} The Bus Riders Union is a Los Angeles-based group that describes itself as a multiracial, working-class-based membership organization operating at the intersection of mass transit, the environment and public health, and civil rights.” It was formed in 1992 and remains active in 2010.

^{xlvii} Yuval Davis 2006, 198.

^{xlviii} Several intersectional scholars have attempted to illuminate the ways in which an intersectional paradigm crosses the hegemonic, disciplinary, structural and interpersonal domains (e.g. Berger 2004, Hawkesworth 2003). Both Berger and Hawkesworth examine how the analytical categories of race and gender interact with facially neutral institutional practices (such as Congressional seniority and the single-payer healthcare system) while simultaneously attending to and moving beyond the actual experiences of Black women as Black women in political contexts.

^{xlix} Garcia-Bedolla 2007, 238; see also Collins 2000 and Yuval Davis 2006.

^l This more complicated analysis of power acknowledges the multi-directionality of power and opportunities for agency identified but left under-developed in multicultural feminist thought.

^{li} See Cohen, in press, for further delineation of this impact.

^{lii} McCall 2005; Yuval Davis 2006

^{liii} Yuval Davis 2006, 197.

^{liv} *Ibid*, 198.

^{lv} Gilens, 1999, Mink 1999, Hancock 2004

^{lvi} Using similar logic about creative, counter-intuitive coalition-making Cohen proposed a gay-straight alliance of welfare recipients and queer rights advocates based on the common challenge both groups present to the heteronormative structure of American family politics (GLQ, 1997). While this example is located within identity politics as a domain, it acknowledges sexual orientation as an analytical category rather than a content binary of gay/straight, rendering the argument intersectional.

^{lvii} What does this shift imply for theory? First, deploying analytical categories (rather than the identity of “woman” or “black”) provides a way to decode meaning and to understand the complex connections among various forms of human interaction (Scott 1986, 1070), but in a meticulously contextualized and historically accurate manner (Hawkesworth 2006). Bringing together multiple categories of analysis in a similarly critical and nuanced way distinguishes intersectionality as a meta-theory of race, class, gender and sexual orientation.

^{lviii} Foster, Kevin Michael (2003). “Panopticonics: The Control and Surveillance of Black Female Athletes in a Collegiate Athletic Program” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 34:3 (300-323).

^{lix} Collins, Patricia Hill (2000). **Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Empowerment and Consciousness**. New York: Routledge.

^{lx} Williams, Kimberly (2006). *Mark One or More: Civil Rights in Multiracial America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

^{lxi} In 2000 prominent media personalities Tom Joyner and Tavis Smiley collaborated on the You Count! Campaign to encourage Blacks to fill out the form and check only the Black box. In 2010, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation ‘s 2010 Unity Diaspora campaign has targeted immigrant residents of African descent from the West Indies and the African continent.

^{lxii} Burack notes the continued commitment for Black feminist theorists to an identity politics site of struggle, despite the challenging ‘politics of authenticity’ produced by in-group essentialism fostered by reification of lived experience (2004, 104). Although contemporary Black feminists attend to this matter in a refreshingly reflexive way, the locus of such concerns maintain their focus upon identity politics. The politics of authenticity can be debilitating for a Black feminist politics of empowerment, drawing people into a web of endless discussions of what constitutes “authentic” Black feminist standpoint(s). The result is the stagnancy that Zerilli (2006) and others so roundly critique. Second, the inward turn can thwart creative coalition building. Bernice Johnson Reagon notes that while valuable, spaces for ‘just us’ cannot provide all of the sustenance we as human beings seek. Moreover, as Crenshaw and others have demonstrated, structural limitations in jurisprudence and public policy create very real barriers to the relief sought by Black women qua Black women. Changes to such structures, deeply embedded in mainstream political and legal culture, require coalitions for change based on more than shared identity. Intersectionality opens up these assumptions and in so doing opens up opportunities for counterintuitive coalitions. One unintended consequence of this turn illustrates the point. The passionate claims of “double binds” and “multiple jeopardies” that emphasized the marginalization of black women in a way that alienated their struggles from those of black men and white women. In the quite legitimate quest to carve out a political space for themselves, black women were face with a gender gap and backlash in the Black community that persists today. It is not that Black feminists were wrong to make claims passionately and publicly, but the resulting backlash has been problematic, as black men have used that public passion against them, at times joining mainstream constructors of Black women to call them “angry,” among other pejorative terms.

^{lxiii} Barvosa 2008, 141.