

INTERSECTIONALITY

Every person has a mix of identities that include their sex/gender, race, sexual orientation, and class. Intersectionality refers to how these identities overlap and influence each other.

Certain aspects of your identity are associated with greater power than others. Power refers to how members of a given group are doing, on average, in a given society with respect to things like educational attainment, wealth, and political influence. Some academics argue that identities with power are dominant or privileged, whereas those with less power are minority.

Although a person may have power or privilege when it comes to some of their identities (e.g. White, heterosexual man), they may experience discrimination based on other parts of themselves (e.g. working class, disabilities). That is why it's important to consider the person as a whole and how their identities intersect.



“My own personal identity, I identify as a bisexual woman. I identify myself as pagan. I identify myself as a very uncultured Latina. Brown woman is pretty much my favorite label for me, because it just seems to fit. I’m brown. And brown has a lot of different qualities, and I’m okay with that....I’ve never been in any one particular box, and it felt like so much of me was wrong. And then, coming to realize that there are so many other humans who think that so much of them are wrong. Just to hear my expression of the things that I perceived were wrong. To realize that they’re just part of my independent human experience. And this is the kind of flavors that I have, and they’re not good, bad, they’re just indifferent, they’re mine. And some of them are to be celebrated. Some of them I cringe at. But none the less, they’re all part of that experience.”

— Paola

CALL TO ACTION

CONSIDER THIS

Consider the following questions.

Challenge yourself to think of answers

from multiple perspectives, & to understand what might bias your response.

Discuss these topics with someone else in your class.

How do you identify yourself to others? Which of your identities are privileged? Which are not?

Come of our identities are more visible to the outside world than others. Which of your identities are hidden? How do you decide what to tell people about those parts of yourself?

“The conservative leaning culture of being Nigerian, versus the very Western culture that I grew up in. Those tend to clash, meaning, for my generation, for Nigerian women who either grew up in the UK or in the United States, our parents kind of don't always understand that in addition to wanting to settle down and get married, we're also very passionate about the world we live in, and pursuing careers. And a lot of times the culture doesn't really recognize that.”

- Funmi