

Session 5 – Identity and identification

Benjamin GILBERT

Sciences Po

benjamin.gilbert@sciencespo.fr

53882 (Monday, 3.30 – 5.30 p.m.)

53883 (Monday, 5.40 – 7.40 p.m.)

21/01/2023 – 24/04/2023

Overview of the session

- 1) Presentation of a classical excerpt in sociology (20 min)
- 2) Discussion by the designated discussants (10-15 min)
- 3) Opening of the discussion to the whole class (15 min)
- 4) Short break (10 min)
- 4) Overview of the second mandatory excerpt (30min)
- 5) Short activity (20 min)



Allocation of presentations and discussions

| Date | Session | Text excerpt |
|-------|------------------------------------|--|
| 24/01 | Sociological approaches | |
| 31/01 | The individual in social context | Douglas (Mary). Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. 2003. |
| 07/02 | Norms and deviance | Becker (Howard). Outsiders. 1963. |
| 14/02 | Stratification and inequality | Marx (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848. |
| 21/02 | Identity and identification | Brubaker (Rogers). Trans. Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities. 2016. |
| 07/03 | Urban sociology | Venkatesh (Sudhir) and Levitt (Steven). History and disjuncture in the urban American street gang. 2000. |

Allocation of presentations and discussions

| Date | Session | Text excerpt |
|-------|---------------------------|---|
| 14/03 | The family | Edin (Kathryn) and Kefalas (Maria). Promises I Can Keep: Why poor women put motherhood before marriage. 2005. |
| 21/03 | Religion | Snow (David) and Machalek (Richard). "The convert as a social type". 1976. |
| 28/03 | Education | Khan (Shamus). Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St Paul's School. 2001. |
| 04/04 | Economic sociology | Esping-Andersen (Gøsta). 'Hybrid or Unique?: The Japanese welfare state between Europe and America'. 1997 |
| 11/04 | Society and the state | Dubois (Vincent). The bureaucrat and the poor. Encounters in French Welfare Offices. 1999. |
| 18/04 | Movements and revolutions | McAdam (Douglas). The Biographical Consequences of Activism. 1989. |

Presentation of a classical excerpt in sociology

Today's presentation is on:

Brubaker, R. 2016. Trans. Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.







Crenshaw (Kimberlé).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (born in 1959) is an American civil rights advocate, Professor of Law at UCLA and Columbia, most known for her studies on gender and race in the U.S.

She was the first to introduce the notion of intersectionality in 1989 in her essay *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies* (1989).

Crenshaw (Kimberlé).

In subsequent works, she expanded the concept to feminism and created the subfield of intersectional feminism. She is best known for:

- *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex* (1989)
- *Mapping the Margins* (1991)
- *On Intersectionality* (2014)
- *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Over Policed and Under Protected* (2016)

What is intersectionality?

Crenshaw (Kimberlé).

The concept of intersectionality emerges after the realization that there is a “tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis”.

Intersectionality intends to challenge the “single-axis analysis that distorts [...] Black women’s experience”. Kimberlé Crenshaw states that evaluating dominance within each group (gender or race) separately completely erases the experience of Black women “by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group”.

Crenshaw (Kimberlé).

In *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex* (1989), Kimberlé Crenshaw provides a theoretical framework that seeks at enhancing both antiracist and feminist fights by embracing intersections and in particular by giving space to the narratives of non-dominant groups within non-dominant groups.

Crenshaw (Kimberlé). *Mapping the Margins*. 1991.

In *Mapping the Margins* (1991), Kimberlé Crenshaw analyses intersectionality through the prism of violence against women of colour, studying three different but complimentary aspects of intersectionality:

- Structural intersectionality – How the existence at the intersection of race and gender shapes women of colour's experience of violence very differently than both white women's ones but also black men as well
- Political intersectionality – How feminist and antiracist politics ended up marginalizing the issue of violence against women of colour
- Representational intersectionality – Intersectional disempowerment through cultural representation

Structural intersectionality

Violence victims' situations are typically aggravated by situations of unemployment/underemployment, by housing difficulties (Desmond, 2017), by language fluency, etc. situations which are more frequent in minority communities and even more frequent when considering women of colour. Thus, this violence affects in larger proportions women of colour and their experience is worsened by their position at the intersection of gender and race.

Furthermore, problems that are politically addressed are being so from the perspective of the dominant group. Violence against women are politically considered under the prism of white women's experiences.

Structural intersectionality

Typically, help resources in the case of rape are coherent with the dominant group needs, thus don't intersect with those of women of colour (who'll seek housing rather than legal solutions at first). This inadequacy weighs on helpers' morale.

One example of structural intersectionality is the marriage fraud provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which was designed to support immigrants who were married to and abused by American citizens. Because the legal status of many immigrants is connected to their American spouse, some feel that they could not report abuses as it would endanger their status.

Structural intersectionality

The Act tried to remedy this situation by letting immigrants stay in the country independent of their spouse, so long as they could provide evidence that their spouse was abusing them. Once the Act was passed, a spouse could require a waiver to the rule of permanent residence proving hardship caused by domestic violence.

However, proofs that could lead to the waiver, and the information of its existence were largely kept out of reach of many women with recent immigrant status, due to language barriers, knowledge of the law, economic difficulties, etc. The people most neglected by the law — those who could not speak English and those who were poorer — were most likely to be women of colour.

Political intersectionality

Discourses and definitions based on dominant subgroups only fail at providing a complete definition of discrimination. Strategic silences can lead to an erasure of women of colour. This reinforces intersectional submission/dominance patterns.

For instance, the issue of domestic violence has sometimes been regarded as a side effect of the racist violence imposed on men outside of the house, by society. This vision invisibilises females' experience of it and the trauma resulting from it.

Using the experience of the dominant subgroup to shape response policies also implies that more discriminatory walls can arise in front of women of colour.

Structural intersectionality

One example of structural intersectional is the disparate media treatment of discriminations, which Kimberlé Crenshaw analyses through the case of the Central Park jogger. In 1989, in Central Park, a (white) woman jogger was raped, allegedly by a group of men, whose skin colour was highly discussed in the news.

The case made the front pages for days, whereas other, more violent crimes, which were committed on women of colour, were barely discussed in the news.

Likewise, the case was used to construct a narrative of rape in the early 1990s, with racialized language, calling alleged perpetrators “savages” and “beasts.”

Structural intersectionality

Sexualised notions of race, which are culturally anchored, weight heavily when it comes to rape trials. Some advances in anti-rape policies which are led by feminist movements miss that this rhetoric is part of a cultural narrative, thus keeping on penalizing women of colour, in particular Black women.

On the other hand, antiracist lines of defence are highly mobilized when the accused is a Black man (and succeeds), but not as much when the victim is a Black women, even though statistically speaking Black women are more likely to be raped than Black men are to be falsely accused of rape.

Representational intersectionality

The cultural construction of the Black female image (body and sexuality) is most likely to be performed not by Black women, and in a misogynistic or racist way.

This culturally anchored image increases the discriminations that Black women are facing and silences their voices.

One example of representational intersectionality is the 2 Live Crew controversy. In 1990, an obscenity trial was held against 2 Live Crew, a Black rap group that performed sexually explicit lyrics in Florida in 1990. Their songs referred to women in explicit terms and some interpreted the lyrics as encouraging rape.

Representational intersectionality

However, according to Kimberlé Crenshaw, most of the discussion around 2 Live Crew failed to be intersectional. Instead of focusing on Black women victims or rape, some editorialists referred a lot to the white jogger case from Central Park, thus shifting the focus on Black men as perpetrators rather than Black female as victims.

Other editorialists supporting the group put forward that male rappers used extra-misogynistic language in order to parody how American culture depicts Black men as super-sexual and aggressive. According to them, the music of 2 Live Crew was thus intended to serve the interests of the Black community.

Representational intersectionality

Here, however, and as Kimberlé Crenshaw points out, this narrative implies that Black women were then supposed “to accept misogyny and its attendant disrespect and exploitation in the service of some broader group objective” (Crenshaw, 1990).

Strikingly, it was never argued whether these uses of Black women bodies could empower said Black women. Moreover, the voices of Black women — the group of people ostensibly targeted by the songs — were ironically absent from the trial.

Crenshaw (Kimberlé). Mapping the Margins. 1991.

In conclusion, the author emphasizes the need to recognize social categories as constructs whose intersection produces specific experiences that need to be taken into account when establishing policies.

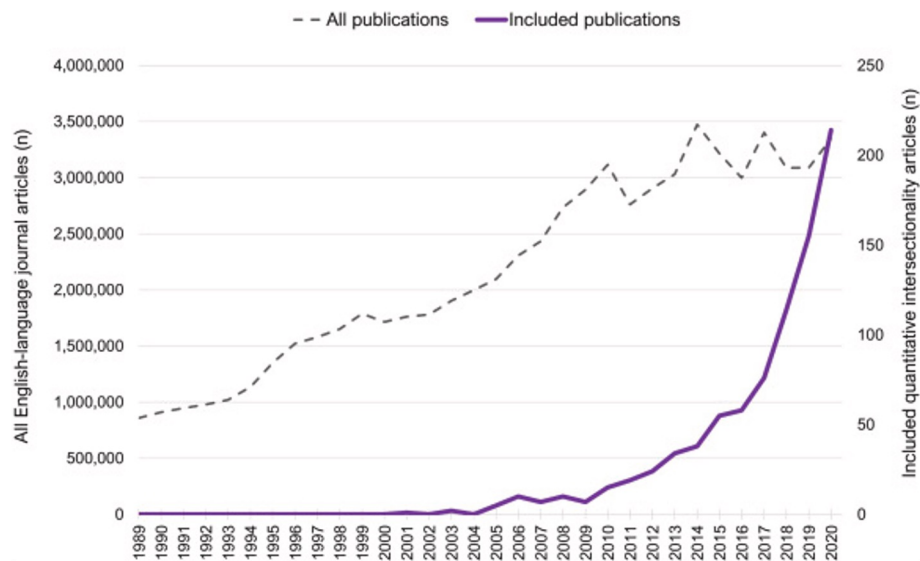
In a nutshell, Kimberlé Crenshaw argues in favour of a complication of our understanding of identity by considering its diversity and complexity.

In her final analysis, she suggests that we view identities as “coalitions”, where coalitions are an alliance of different groups of people.



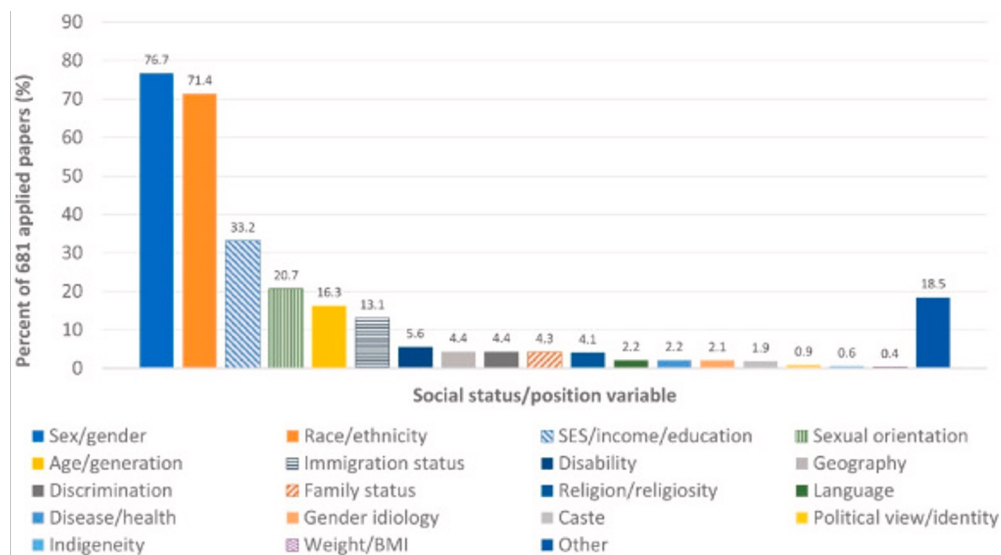
Activity – Measuring intersectionality

Measuring tools have emerged some time after Kimberlé Crenshaw's first publication.



Activity – Measuring intersectionality

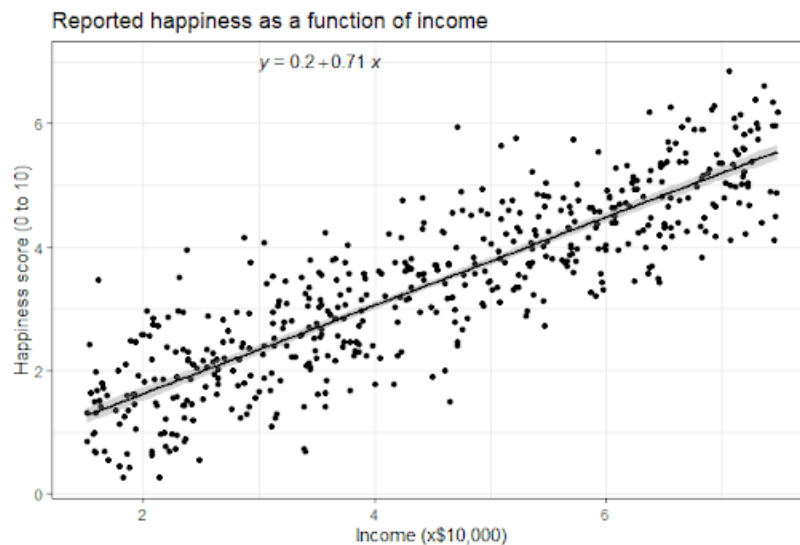
All methodologies do not include the same social positions (Bauer and al. 2021).



What does the disparate use of social positions say?

Activity – Measuring intersectionality

The main quantitative method for measuring intersectionality is regression analysis.



Activity – Regression analysis

One can distinguish different types of models for regression analysis.

The linear regression model: $y_i = x_i^T \beta + \epsilon$ for continuous variables.

The logistic regression model: $\log\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = x_i^T \beta + \epsilon$ for binary variables.

The Poisson regression model for count data variables, etc.

How to read results from a regression table?

Activity – Regression analysis

Table 1. Effects of gender, ethnicity, and class on soft political protest for Central and Eastern European countries

| Country | Gender | | Ethnic | | Class | | Constant | | N |
|----------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-----------|-------|
| | b | SE | b | SE | b | SE | <u>b</u> | <u>SE</u> | |
| All | -0,308** | 0,051 | -0,351** | 0,094 | -0,616** | 0,063 | -1,257** | 0,040 | 11371 |
| Bulgaria | -0,284 | 0,197 | -1,295** | 0,438 | -1,535** | 0,391 | -1,853** | 0,156 | 1400 |
| Estonia | 0,171 | 0,146 | -0,578** | 0,173 | -0,855** | 0,206 | -1,466** | 0,125 | 1517 |
| Hungary | -0,241† | 0,140 | 0,548* | 0,259 | -0,418** | 0,156 | -1,376** | 0,117 | 1518 |
| Poland | -0,476** | 0,161 | - a | - a | -0,641** | 0,187 | -1,746** | 0,116 | 1721 |
| Slovenia | -0,298* | 0,121 | 0,232 | 0,306 | -0,779** | 0,182 | -0,801** | 0,091 | 1476 |
| Slovakia | -0,313** | 0,113 | 0,005 | 0,188 | -0,223† | 0,133 | -0,923** | 0,088 | 1737 |
| Ukraine | -0,544** | 0,124 | -0,722* | 0,363 | -0,623** | 0,147 | -1,179** | 0,097 | 2002 |

^a Not calculated due to insufficient number of cases.

** p<0,01 *p<0,05 †p<0,10

Activity – Regression analysis

| Model value | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|-----------|
| | β | SE | β | t | p Value |
| (Constant) | | 93.665 | 14.70 | 6.371 | <0.001 |
| Section | 0.786 | 4.06 | 0.011 | 0.194 | 0.847 |
| Prior GPA | 46.211 | 3.59 | 0.735 | 12.877 | <0.001 |
| Gender | 0.199 | 4.18 | 0.003 | 0.048 | 0.962 |
| Major | 0.145 | 2.20 | 0.004 | 0.066 | 0.948 |
| Class standing | 4.609 | 2.43 | 0.108 | 1.895 | 0.060 |

Activity – Regression analysis

Create a dataset and use it to analyse discrimination.

Open: https://stats.blue/Stats_Suite/logistic_regression_calculator.html

In groups of two or three students, try to create a small dataset that will help illustrate the notion of intersectionality. Bear in mind that the outcome must be binary, and that the dataset should be interpretable with regards to a question in sociological research.

One or two groups will be invited to present their results.

For next time...

- Read Jacobs, J. 1961. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage Books. Read:, Bottom of page 34 to page 41 and bottom of page 61 to page 73
- Read Venkatesh, S. A., & Levitt, S. D. 2000. "Are we a family or a business?" *History and disjuncture in the urban American street gang*. *Theory and society*, 29(4), 427-462.
- When reading, remember to note the important elements of the text: question asked by the author(s), (hypo)theses of the author(s), methods used, references, writing style, argumentative construction, etc.
- Prepare the presentation and discussion (if concerned)