Summary and Keywords

Intersectionality is a critical framework that provides us with the mindset and language for examining interconnections and interdependencies between social categories and systems. Intersectionality is relevant for researchers and for practitioners because it enhances analytical sophistication and offers theoretical explanations of the ways in which heterogeneous members of specific groups (such as women) might experience the workplace differently depending on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, and/or class and other social locations. Sensitivity to such differences enhances insight into issues of social justice and inequality in organizations and other institutions, thus maximizing the chance of social change.

The concept of intersectional locations emerged from the racialized experiences of minority ethnic women in the United States. Intersectional thinking has gained increased prominence in business and management studies, particularly in critical organization studies. A predominant focus in this field is on individual subjectivities at intersectional locations (such as examining the occupational identities of minority ethnic women). This emphasis on individuals' experiences and within-group differences has been described variously as "content specialization" or an "intracategorical approach." An alternate focus in business and management studies is on highlighting systematic dynamics of power. This encompasses a focus on "systemic intersectionality" and an "intercategorical approach." Here, scholars examine multiple between-group differences, charting shifting configurations of inequality along various dimensions.

As a critical theory, intersectionality conceptualizes knowledge as situated, contextual, relational, and reflective of political and economic power. Intersectionality tends to be associated with qualitative research methods due to the central role of giving voice, elicited through focus groups, narrative interviews, action research, and observations. Intersectionality is also utilized as a methodological tool for conducting qualitative research, such as by researchers adopting an intersectional reflexivity mindset. Intersectionality is also increasingly associated with quantitative and statistical methods, which contribute to intersectionality by helping us understand and interpret the individual, combined (additive or multiplicative) effects of various categories (privileged and disadvantaged) in a given context. Future considerations for intersectionality theory and practice include managing

its broad applicability while attending to its sociopolitical and emancipatory aims, and theoretically advancing understanding of the simultaneous forces of privilege and penalty in the workplace.

Intersectionality is a critical framework or approach that provides the mindset and language to examine interconnections and interdependencies between social categories and systems. This article presents an overview of the concept of intersectionality, its relevance for management and organizations, the debates and tensions associated with the theorization and practice of intersectionality, and considerations for intersectionality theory and practice in the future.

In the social sciences, an intersection denotes the crossing, juxtaposition, or meeting point, of two or more social categories and axes, or systems of power, dominance, or oppression. These categories and systems include social identities (e.g., woman, Pakistani), sociodemographic categories (e.g., gender, ethnocultural), social processes (e.g., gendering and racializing), and social systems (patriarchy and racism) (Dhamoon, 2011). One definition from the United Nations (2000) presents *intersectionality* as a concept to capture:

> the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. (Intersectionality) specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of women and men, races and other groups.
>
> (UN Gender and racial discrimination: Report of the Expert Group Meeting)

Therefore, intersectionality draws attention to individuals' and groups' multiple positionality at micro (individual) and macro (sociostructural) levels. The difference between seeing parallels and seeing intersections is that intersectionality "makes clearer the arithmetic of the various forces—the offsetting, ameliorating, intensifying, accumulating, or deepening" (McIntosh, 2012, p. 198) impacts of power in individual lives and in societal structures.

The multilevel aspect of intersectional thinking offers a breadth and complexity with which organizational scholars and equality practitioners can engage. The power of intersectionality as a framework for organizational studies is its potential to tap into theoretical, applied, and lived experiences (Brewer, Conrad, & King, 2002). Adopting an intersectional approach lowers the risk of essentialism. Essentialist assumptions are (often implicit) ways in which individuals infer "real" value in attributes differentiating members of different groups, such that these distinctions are interpreted as absolute differences between groups, and nothing much beyond this (Atewologun, 2011). For example, essentialism is the assumption that an individual's ethnicity or gender constitutes them without

considering how other factors influence these (such as other identities, times, spaces, and systems).

Intersectionality has conceptual similarities with the notion of fault lines, a perspective on group process in which having members with multiple shared characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and nationality) elicits within-group boundaries (Lau & Murnighan, 1998). Rather than being a group level phenomenon per se, intersectionality emphasizes the configuration of power, disadvantage, and privileged status at the level of the individual and societal structure. Intersectionality provides a means of conceptualizing that between-group differences stem from multiple and parallel factors. Intersectionality also provides a means of examining nuanced and complex within-group comparisons, while challenging assumptions of within-group homogeneity. An illustration of this nuance is Meyer's (2012) intersectional analysis of experiences of homophobic violence. Meyers (2012) reveals the racialized and gendered aspects of anti-queer violence such that black lesbians experienced anti-queer violence differently from their white counterparts. Further, black and Latino/Latina respondents often perceived anti-queer violence as implying that they had negatively represented their racial communities, while this was relatively absent in white respondents' narratives (Meyer, 2012). Similarly, De Vries' (2015) accounts of the experiences of trans men reveal the inequalities within the criminal justice and labor market system, based on interconnecting social positions. For example, presenting oneself as white and middle class situationally muted the stigmatized position experienced by trans Latinos, showing that "structural barriers are differentially permeable based on their interconnecting social positions" (De Vries, 2015, p. 23). Such dynamic analyses demonstrate how the very same categories (e.g., transgender man) may have differing implications in the context of other identities (such as class and ethnicity), and how these categories become more or less salient and have different meanings for the same people in different contexts.

Intersectionality increases analytical sophistication and offers theoretical explanations of the ways in which heterogeneous members of specific groups (such as women) might experience the workplace differently (as leaders, board members, line managers, construction workers, or IT engineers, for example) depending on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, and/or class, and other social locations. Sensitivity to such differences enhances insight into issues of social justice and inequality in organizations and other institutions, thus maximizing the potential impact of social change. Intersectionality is relevant because it helps individuals, scholars, and practitioners make sense of, and work with, the complex experiences that occur at the juncture of these social categories and systems, and the implications therein.

What Is Intersectionality?

Several review articles have sought to systematize current thinking and practices for interrogating interdependent categories and systems of power/penalty. A central issue in these reviews relates to what the term *intersectionality* signifies. Rodriguez, Holvino,

date: 20 January 2020

Fletcher, and Nkomo (2016) cite sources variously referring to intersectionality as a metaphor (e.g., Acker, 2011), a concept (e.g., Knapp, 2005), a research paradigm (e.g., Dhamoon, 2011), an analytical sensibility, (i.e., a way of thinking about identity and power; Crenshaw, 2015), an ideograph (Alexander-Floyd, 2012), and a knowledge project (Collins, 2015). These numerous conceptualizations could attest to the flexibility, breadth, and complexity of the term on one hand, but also reflect its status as a relatively recent conceptual framework.

Else-Quest and Hyde (2016) summarize three assumptions underlying most definitions of intersectionality. The first assumption is a recognition that people are characterized simultaneously by their membership in multiple social categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, etc.) and by awareness that these categories are intertwined such that the experience of one social category is linked to their membership of other categories. In working groups, when multiple attributes (e.g., gender, age) of group members come into alignment, diversity-related fault lines occur (Lau & Murnighan, 1998). Fault lines split teams into relatively homogeneous subgroups, which can increase team conflict and impede performance (Bezrukova, Spell, Caldwell, & Burger, 2016; Thatcher, Jehn, & Zanutto, 2003). A second assumption underlying definitions of intersectionality is that, embedded within each socially constructed category, is a dynamic related to power and power interrelations. This makes attention to power an essential component of intersectional analyses. The third assumption, presented by Else-Quest and Hyde (2016), is that all social categories have individual and contextual facets to them. That is, social categories are intrinsically linked to personal identities, as well as to wider institutional processes/practices and structural systems. The entwined personal and structural implications of intersectional thinking thus render the meaning and experiences relating to social categories fluid and dynamic.

Hulko recommends viewing intersectionality thinking as a "paradigm" in reference to its broad use (including the notion of interlocking oppressions) as "a cohesive set of theoretical concepts, method of analysis, and belief system" (2009, p. 44). Hulko (2009) then advocates the use of intersectionality as a "lens" or "perspective" to encompass approaches at a relatively narrower, microscope of examining social identity multiplicity in a manner that is neither additive nor reductive.

The History of Intersectionality

The notion of intersectionality is rooted in the racialized experiences of minority women in the United States. Early criticisms of the artificial separation of gender and ethnicity in women's lives can be found in the black and Latina feminist movements of the 1970s and early 1980s, which argued that (mainstream) feminism had advanced the cause for white women while silencing the voices of minority women. For example, the Combahee River collective comprising black lesbians emphasized the importance of understanding multiple forms of subordination that comprise interlocking oppressions (Combahee River Collective, 1986). Additionally, some of the titles from black feminist scholars are telling of the sentiments behind the movement, such as bell hooks' "Ain't I a woman?" (1981) and

date: 20 January 2020

Hull, Scott, and Smith's "All the women are white, all the blacks are men: But some of us are brave" (1982).

The term intersectionality specifically derived from the work of critical legal scholar, Kimberley Crenshaw (1989), who sought to draw attention to how treatment of African American women within the law needed to be interpreted, analyzed, and understood through the dual lenses of gender and race discrimination. Similar concepts drawing attention to the implications of multiple positionality were the notions of interlocking oppressions (Collins, 1990) and gendered racism (Essed, 1991).

Intersectionality has become the commonly adopted term to capture thinking around interfaces, multiple oppressions, and mutual constitutions (see Tuori, 2014) that can be located in legal, political, and sociological academic scholarship; and, in particular, the critical feminist streams of these disciplines. Intersectional thinking has gained increasing prominence in work and organizational studies, primarily utilized as a specific framework for analyzing positions and experiences within the "gendered and ethnicised occupational hierarchy" (Bradley & Healy, 2008, p. 40).

Rodriguez and colleagues (2016) outline the history of intersectionality in work and organizations, from its focus on social identities to structural manifestations of workplace inequalities, such as the attention to gendered organizations (Acker, 1990) and inequality regimes (Acker, 2006, 2009). Inequality regimes are "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organisations" (Acker, 2006, p. 443). The predominant focus of intersectionality studies in business and management studies is on individual subjectivities and intersectional locations "to highlight the texture and consequence of inequalities experienced by individuals and groups given their social membership" (Rodriguez et al., 2016, p. 202). This emphasis on individual experiences and within-group differences has been variously described as "content specialization" (Hancock, 2007) or an "intracategorical approach" (McCall, 2005). In work and organization studies, a typical illustration of this approach is Adib and Guerrier's (2003) analysis of narratives of women working within hotels. Their respondents' intersecting identities are observed as fluid, as they position themselves within institutional power arrangements according to race, ethnicity, nationality, and class. Rather than constructing their work experiences as an outcome of one type of difference added to another, the women in Adib and Guerrier's (2003) study constructed narratives that revealed the simultaneous and shifting nature of their identities, as one or more identities were emphasized or downplayed as a form of resistance.

The alternative to focusing on individual experiences and within-group differences in work and organizations is highlighting systematic dynamics of power. This traditionally more critical approach encompasses a focus on "systematic workplace disparities in the control and power of organisational goals processes, resources, and outcomes" (Rodriguez et al., 2016, p. 202). These approaches are clustered broadly by Atewologun and colleagues (2016, p. 224) as studies that examine how "ideologies, structures, institutions and experiences interact to sustain societal inequalities and power re-

lations" that play out in the workplace. In this cluster is Choo and Ferree's (2010, p. 135) "systemic intersectionality," examining "how inequalities span and transform structures and activities at all levels and in all situational contexts." Likewise categorized by Atewologun and colleagues (2016) is McCall's 2005 "intercategorical approach," in which scholars examine multiple between-group differences charting shifting configurations of inequality along various dimensions. Similarly, Dhamoon (2011) encourages analyzing processes of differentiation (e.g., racialization and sexualization), through which subjectivities are produced, and their corresponding systems of domination (i.e., racism and sexism). Here, focus is not on individuals, categories, groups, or institutions, but on techniques of power—that is, "doing difference" and "Othering" rather than "the Other."

An illustration of this second cluster of approaches to intersectionality is the sociological evaluation of Browne and Misra (2003) of the US labor market. The authors demonstrate that a major influence on domestic work is global restructuring, which creates a pool of immigrant women workers who perform housework and childcare for extremely low wages to service high-paid professionals. Often, these immigrant workers hail from more privileged backgrounds in their origin countries, yet their previous experiences and backgrounds are frequently ignored by their employers. Additionally, their wages are kept low based on prevailing societal assumptions that women are not breadwinners; and such exploitative wages may be justified and sustained by their employers' beliefs that immigrants are "better off" in the United States earning low pay than in their home countries (Browne & Misra, 2003). Thus, a sociological intersectional analysis of domestic labor demonstrates the intertwining of race/ethnicity, gender, nationality/citizenship, and class.

Warner, Settles, and Shields (2016) advocate a both/and logic that integrates the complexities and commonalities of intersectionality. This logic entails examining individual identities and making group-level comparisons, while examining additional intersections and the diversity of experiences therein. Thus, individual-level analyses would entail comparing individual identities to each other as well as considering intersections as systems of inequality. They offer an illustration of how this can be done in their analysis of Risman (2004)'s examination of Espiritu's (1997) work on Asian male migrants to the United States. In explaining how racism is gendered and classed, Risman (2004) acknowledges that it is important to examine the patterns and commonalities in these men's experiences (e.g., the general stereotyping of Asian men as effeminate). However, scholars can also go beyond this to examine differences (e.g., between Vietnamese and Chinese men's experiences) as well as the ways in which broader structures, across and within history and society (such as immigration policies and propaganda during the war) have similarly and differentially influenced these men's experiences.

Another example of applying a "both/and" logic to intersectionality is analyses incorporating everyday lived experiences into broader socio-structural lenses. One such example is Carrim and Nkomo's (2016) work on South African Indian women's managerial identity work. These authors explicitly implicate the socio-political-historical context in analyzing intersections among categories of difference. This impacts the managerial identities of South African Indian women in various ways, such as growing up in a racialized apartheid

date: 20 January 2020

system infused with patriarchy and immersion in Indian culturalization, as well as the women's position in time as the first cohort of their kind to enter corporate South Africa. Another adoption of a both/and logic requires engaging with cultural narratives at different levels. Narratives are collective representations of disembodied types of actors, that exist at the macro (cultural), meso (institutional and organizational), and micro (personal) levels (Loseke, 2007). Intersectional analyses that adopt this framework could examine (e.g., black men's) personal stories of career experiences, their embeddedness in organizational narratives, such as leadership narratives and diversity discourses, and could further embed this in more macro cultural stories such as the stereotype of black men being aggressive. A similar suggestion is Brewer, Conrad, and King (2002) two-pronged approach, which includes bottom up theorization, placing the experiences of "women of color" at the center of analyses (e.g., Pompper, 2007), combined with top down approaches investigating social structures and the political economy (e.g., Syed, 2007). This combined approach is likely to elucidate the ways in which structure and agency work together to account for the experiences of diverse groups in the workplace.

Theorizing Intersectionality

Theory is central to advancing our understanding of the world, distinguishing between mere observations of a phenomenon and academic evidence and data around which new knowledge can be constructed (Atewologun, 2011). Theorizing intersectionality entails engaging with how we conceptualize problems of multiple positionality and interlocking oppressions and then formulate social explanations for addressing these (Clarke & McCall, 2013). As a way of understanding and organizing new knowledge, intersectionality may be best conceived as a critical theory (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). That is, intersectionality acknowledges that power relations play a fundamental role in the construction of thought, experience, and knowledge. According to Else-Quest and Hyde (2016), critical theory is differentiated from a traditional falsifiable grand theory as it advances social justice goals, in contrast to grand theories being more aligned with positivist traditions. As a critical theory, intersectionality is best aligned with social constructionist and feminist standpoint epistemologies (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Constructionist approaches to social inquiry reject the notion that interpretation and meaning can be objectively understood (Atewologun, 2011). Social constructionism acknowledges that meaning-making and interpretation occur in the context of the (social) world into which we are born, including its historical and cultural influences. Social constructionism emphasizes that the "social and psychological worlds are made real (constructed) through social processes and interaction" (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 375). Similarly, standpoint theory conceptualizes knowledge as situated and relational rather than objective. Thus, theorizing through an intersectional lens means acknowledging that much knowledge is contextual and reflective of political and economic power (De Vries, 2015). However, Warner, Settles, and Shields (2016) caution that standpoint feminist theory applied to intersectionality runs the risk of essentializing. They recommend researchers avoid the risk of essentializing by emphasizing how individual participants'

lived experiences offer rich insights into the particular dynamics at play in the given context relative to the intersecting identities, rather than claim a universal advantage held by oppressed groups in understanding power dynamics. Warner and colleagues (2016) also recommend that specific insights from these intersectional locations be tested empirically.

In theorizing intersectionality, Clarke and McCall discuss the framework's potential to offer "different explanations of the same facts" (2013, p. 351). They advocate that even projects that do not set out to be intersectional can benefit from applying an intersectional frame as a theoretical resource to craft "inclusive normative solutions to problems of social inequality" (Clarke & McCall, 2013, p. 361). For example, the issue of women's fertility (which has implications for women's careers) has traditionally focused on class-based explanations. However, research cited by Clarke and McCall (2013) suggests that class-based explanations of family formation experiences are racialized. Historically, insights into women's fertility that comes from connecting racial to class differences are often underplayed (according to Clarke & McCall, 2013), diminishing our capacity for understanding diametrically opposed experiences among educated women in this area. Thus, social constructionist and standpoint perspectives on intersectionality reveal the value of knowledge embedded in historical and cultural practices that emanates from the position of multiple marginality.

While all intersectional scholars would agree about the centrality of multiple marginal status for knowledge, a recurring challenge concerns the manner by which one decides on which intersections, oppressions, categories, or identities to focus. Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012) advocate an emic approach to contrast the predominant etic approaches of using predefined multiple categories of identity. An emic approach would be more sensitive to the relational and contextual dynamics of identities at work. It is also more likely to enable new categories of difference to emerge from the data. To operationalize this, Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012) suggest applying Bourdieu's theory of social capital to enable intersectional diversity scholars to detect asymmetries in capital accumulation. Anthias (2013) warns against reducing differences to identities, and points out the impossibility of attending analytically to plurality and simultaneity, and the challenge of managing completing claims, of which marginalized positions are most important, and how many differences ought to be incorporated. To fulfill its call as a paradigm or method that explains wide-ranging social phenomena, it is no use for intersectionality to focus just on the experiences of a specific subordinated group. Thus, a fine balance is required to capture individuals' lived experiences in a given context relative to certain intersecting identities while avoiding the risk of collating an unending list of social categories to be included/explored as well as debates about how to prioritize them. Additionally, analyses of intersections ought to embrace theorizing around clusters of power and privilege, which may be underplayed if sole focus is on giving voice to experiences relating to oppression and marginalization.

date: 20 January 2020

One approach that manages the tensions of giving voice versus deciding against competing social categories may be found in the De Vries (2015) study of transgender individuals, which offers further insight into how multiple marginal positions can be managed. De Vries (2015) advocates a multifaceted and transparent prism that utilizes heuristic categories to analyze connections between social positions and institutional structural stratification. De Vries' (2015) approach takes on a complex, multifaceted analysis across 12 categories (race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, ability, language, religion, culture, ethnicity, body size, and age). In this working model, social categories are represented by planes on the prism, and analyzed along multiple aspects comprising both subjective and objective modes. For example, social class is analyzed according to one's perceived/attributed class by others, one's class identity, the individuals' socio-economic status as well as their cultural capital. This technique goes beyond examining binary experiences in which categories are exclusive of each other; it also avoids the common situation in which unmarked and privileged identities are not interrogated or subjected to enquiry and allows for a continuum of categories that may embrace gender fluidity or able-bodiedness, or shadism. Additionally, this approach challenges the assumed universality of experiences (an illustration of this is how the mannerisms that help define gender are based on the non-disabled body) (de Vries, 2015).

For De Vries (2015), tuning into multiple facets and the diversity within these concepts revealed the limitations of previously adopted terms. For example, De Vries (2015) revealed how Asian Americans (Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, and Japanese Americans) did not identify with the research call for transgender people of color, a term which they associate with black and Latina/o populations.

De Vries (2015) also advocates the development of an intersectional narrative, as opposed to a list of identities, to situate oneself as a researcher. The model thus frames researchers' positionality, making explicit how various facets come into play and offer strengths and limitations to the research context/content, focus and design. Indeed, the intersectional researcher's multiple positionality in their knowledge project is an important, and perhaps underutilized frame. Atewologun and Mahalingam (2018) recommend that researchers cultivate intersectional reflexivity, a mindset that is based on Yuval-Davis' (2013) advocacy of a "situated intersectional perspective" for studying everyday, embodied intersections. Cultivating intersectional reflexivity entails first articulating intersectionalities salient to the research project, then identifying in advance possible sites of intersectional identity salience (see Atewologun, 2014), in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional domains. Last, cultivating intersectional reflexivity entails taking steps to manage the emotions, knowledge, and experiences associated with heightened awareness. According to Atewologun and Mahalingam (2018), this researcher mindset is critical at the start of the research project but also during the research process as participants and researchers co-produce data and knowledge.

Overall, advancing intersectionality thinking requires the ongoing development of theories and methodologies that are sensitive to its nuance and complexities. Some of the ways to approach this have been discussed. Rodriguez et al. (2016) request a move away

from subjective identity-centered approaches to those in which individual experiences and encounters are linked with structures and institutional arrangements in organizational and management practices. Thus, there is further need for techniques that stipulate the mechanisms and conditions through which social identity categories intersect, that provide enhanced understanding of the impact of these effects, and that demonstrate the link between the insights from a macro, structural perspective with the lived experience from a micro, individual focus.

Practicing Intersectionality

This section considers practice in wide terms including methods and methodology, as well as implications for managers, practitioners, and educators.

Intersectionality as Research Practice

With regard to methodology, Rodriguez et al. (2016) summarize the steps for operationalizing intersectionality for empirical examination. The process entails, first, making decisions regarding what data to collect and how to collect it, then conducting analyses that are sensitive to the range of diversities under examination and the nature of their interrelations; then outlining the structural factors at play while maintaining the fluidity and the temporal and contextual dimensions of intersections. Intersectionality tends to be associated with qualitative research methods due to the central role of giving voice. Qualitative methods often include focus groups, interviews, action research sessions, and observations, to elicit stories and narratives (Byrd, 2014). Intersectionality studies have also involved thematic analysis, such as Cole, Avery, Dodson, and Goodman's (2012) historical evaluation of news articles concerning interracial and same sex marriage. Qualitative intersectional researchers are urged to go beyond content specialization of black women (Hancock, 2007) and begin to examine power and privilege; they could also acknowledge the fluidity and social construction of social identities more explicitly in their design, and interpret results in the context of social, historic, and structural inequalities. Further, Atewologun and Mahalingam (2018) offer suggestions for how intersectionality can be used as a methodological tool in qualitative research. They discuss five practical tools and techniques for eliciting researcher and researched perceptions and experiences as they cohabit socially constructed intersectional positions in a research project. These tools, to be used throughout the entire research cycle include—an intersectional reflexivity mindset (earlier discussed), a privilege versus penalties board game, an intersectional identity constellations graph, intersectional identity work journal, and participant-led audio data collection method.

Although intersectionality tends to be associated with qualitative research, there are strong advocates for its application and contribution within quantitative paradigms. The tenets of quantitative research may have been perceived historically as impediments to intersectional studies. Challenges of integrating intersectional thinking with quantitative method incorporate logistics (i.e., finding adequate samples to test different conditions),

date: 20 January 2020

methodological complexity, and difficulties with interpreting findings theoretically (Goff & Kahn, 2013). There are, however, a number of guidelines that business and management researchers operating within positivist paradigms (in particular quantitative and mixed method approaches) can embrace to integrate intersectional thinking into their work (e.g., Cole, 2009; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; Goff & Kahn, 2013; Warner, 2008). The value of intersectionality to quantitative research includes its potential to critique traditional quantitative research and to produce excellent intersectional quantitative research (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Specifically, quantitative designs can offer insight into additive, multiplicative, and intersectional effects of various identity categories. As with the richness offered by more qualitative approaches, detangling complex statistical effects will enhance nuance regarding the interplay of identities and categories (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Thus, the main contribution of quantitative studies to intersectionality is to understand and interpret the individual, combined (additive or multiplicative) effects of various categories (privileged and disadvantaged) in a given context. Additionally, methods to supplement the traditional 2x2 experimental design, such as longitudinal and field studies, in combination with other qualitative approaches discussed earlier would be beneficial (Goff & Kahn, 2013).

Intersectionality as Management Praxis

With such wide ranging and complex debates in academic scholarship, it is likely that practical application of intersectionality is yet to reach its potential. Despite, or perhaps because of this, intersectional scholars often advocate for a praxis of intersectionality that embraces social justice outcomes beyond academia (e.g., Collins, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2016). Intersectionality, and its related concepts and ideas, was devised to challenge assumptions of within-group homogeneity. The central purpose of intersectionality was to foreground the experiences of marginalized individuals. Thus, its role in providing a phenomenological understanding of organizational life at the margins is critical. As such, at a level of practical utility, giving voice, and revealing experiences relating to oppression and marginalization is a core function of intersectionality (Byrd, 2014). From a personal perspective, the opportunity to disclose, in a safe space (e.g., workplace interviews, surveys, or workshops), can be a cathartic experience. For example, participants in a study on the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and senior-level status identities described the experience as "cathartic," "a revelation," and "prompting new learning" (Atewologun et al., 2016, p. 231). Safe spaces can provide the starting point for personal transformation and micro-change (Collins, 1990). However, at the same time, in practice, intersectionality is helpful for elucidating differences and similarities between categories (Tuori, 2014) and diversity-related work group fault lines. It is acknowledged that social categories are analytically distinct, yet share common qualities in organizing the world and producing certain identities (Tuori, 2014, p. 33). From the perspective of similarity, categories are useful for analyzing their role in creating and sustaining boundaries between individuals and groups and within organizations. Yet, some categories are more powerful than others; some categories are more salient than others in certain circumstances (Tuori, 2014; Yuval-Davis, 2013).

date: 20 January 2020

Beyond the critical issue of voice and empowerment, intersectionality also brings important mainstream benefits to management and organization studies. The position of identity multiplicity and the presence of simultaneous power structures and processes affect a range of organizational outcomes. For example, stereotypes about dominance affect black and white women and men differently, such that black women (who are stereotyped as sassy) are permitted to display as much (i.e., high) dominance as white men, while still judged to be likeable and hirable. This is in contrast to the aggressive, hypermasculinized stereotype facing black men (see Livingston & Pearce, 2009; Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012), and the double bind facing (white) women in positions of authority as they need to manage the tension of being seen both as warm and likeable and as competent and assertive (e.g., Jamieson, 1995; also, see Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015, for review). Despite the practical implications of intersectionality at work, when people think about targets of gender discrimination, they imagine white women, and when they think of targets of racism, they think of black men (Goff & Kahn, 2013), suggesting that many of these intersectional effects may be overlooked in organizations.

Additionally, people with more than one disadvantaged identity suffer a significantly greater pay penalty compared to those with a single disadvantage (Woodhams, Lupton, & Cowling, 2015A). Also, men with disadvantaged identities (a disability or ethnic minority status) are disproportionally more likely than other men, as well as their female counterparts, to be in female-dominated low-status work (Woodhams, Lupton, & Cowling, 2015B). When multiple minority individuals are clustered in certain parts of the organization, employers and employees face such challenges as increased conflict, lower team satisfaction, and lower performance (see Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015). Further, fault lines that split teams into relatively homogeneous subgroups based on multiple simultaneous membership of specific groups are associated with conflict and lower performance (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Thatcher et al., 2003). These practical issues around assessment bias, pay differentials, performance, well-being, and conflict, surfaced by attention to intersectional praxis, are critical for HR practitioners and organizational leaders to address.

Finally, the significant value added by intersectionality is its capacity for real-world change. Intersectionality offers the terminology and insights necessary to advance social justice and to enact social change by promoting privilege awareness and encouraging ally behavior. Ally behavior entails dominant group members taking action for social change to challenge their own privilege at individual, community, and institutional levels (Case, Iuzzini, & Hopkins, 2012). Importantly, evidence suggests it is not merely awareness, but also a sense of self-efficacy and power to effect change that leads to ally behavior (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, Phillips, & Denney, 2012).

date: 20 January 2020

Future Considerations for Intersectionality Theory and Practice

Despite the significant contributions intersectionality offers for theory and practice in business and management, a central critique is that it has become a "catch all" (Salem, 2016). This case emerges because the framework straddles two domains of application, on the one hand is its use as an empowerment tool that makes visible structural oppression; on the other hand, this is contrasted with its potential as a broad tool extending to the center, for understanding simultaneous locations. Similarly, Nash calls out the uneasy tension between whether intersectionality "is a theory of marginalised subjectivity or a generalised theory of identity" (2008, p. 10). As highlighted previously, the benefits of an identity-based approach to intersectionality is that it advances understanding of how people position and are positioned by others with respect to multiple categories (Nash, 2008). Warner and colleagues (2016, p. 174) caution against the trend of mainstreaming intersectionality, in which they accuse researchers of having flattened the term through emphasis on individual identities, with little reference to its original sociopolitical and emancipatory aims. Salem's (2016) similar accusation is that as a "travelling theory" intersectionality has lost its critical edge, and that power has disappeared. Her perspective is that intersectionality has been co-opted by liberal feminism in a way similar to how diversity was embraced and commercialized under managerialism. Salem (2016) argues for a need to bring power back to the core, and highlights the role of Marxist feminism (which examines how social relations, including race and gender, are co-constituted and how these relations are tied to production). She also advocates a turn to the Global South for further insight due to this region's experience of theorizing the role of the state and nationalism and imperialism, among others, which are theorized and analyzed in transnational Marxism. Additionally, to retain its relevance as an identity-based framework, the future of intersectionality would entail grappling with non-binary categories, such as multi-racial heritage and non-binary gender/transgender identities, as well as the spectrum of disabilities.

One perspective gained from treating intersectionality as a generalized theory of being and positionality is that it acknowledges each individual's multiple positionalities across various axes of disadvantage and advantaged. This reveals the complicity of privilege in experiences of oppression. Privilege is a relational concept pertinent to social groupings and classifications and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups within systems of oppression (Case et al., 2012); it is thus inescapably and intrinsically intertwined theoretically with intersectionality. While intersectionality is established as a useful framework for examining disadvantages and multiple oppressions, it has yet to reach similar levels of success in theorizing about multiple privileges and the intertwining of marginality with unearned advantage. Despite the seminal work on privilege in the 1980s (McIntosh, 1988), there has been relatively little theoretical advancement of privilege. Privilege and disadvantage are deemed "inseparable, as co-dependent structural forces" (Case et al., 2012, p. 4). An area robust for future development is movement away from the deficiency models of intersectionality, toward encouraging and analyzing mind-

fully the simultaneous forces of privilege and penalty in the workplace (Rodriguez et al., 2016). Admittedly, grappling with privilege is challenging due to its invisibility. However, forms of it may be more visible when examined in combination with marginalization (Atewologun & Sealy, 2014). Current research suggests that psychological processes underlying motivations to deny or acknowledge one's dominant group privilege may be quite similar across different identity domains, such as white ethnicity, male gender, and heterosexual orientation (see Case et al., 2012). There remains much merit in expanding our notions of intersectionality to consider the ways in which the location of individuals at the nexus of multiple systems of oppression both empower and constrain experiences relative to others (Smith & Seedat Khan, 2016). Although there are "history of whiteness" studies in academic scholarship, much room remains for understanding parallel systems of privilege as well as the intersection between advantage and disadvantage. This includes the racial privilege that white feminists face and the class or educational privilege that African American scholars face (Smith & Seedat Khan, 2016). Such analyses are lacking in business, management and organizational studies.

Although privilege research can raise significant awareness in respondents to become advocates for social change, this may not be enough. Introducing the intersections of privilege with disadvantage is a key lens for activating ally behavior. For example, raising majority awareness of "plural experiences within hierarchies" (McIntosh, 2012, p. 199) increases empathy toward others' experiences of oppression of which one may have been previously unaware. This may also be the case for high status members of historically marginalized groups, such as able-bodied, heterosexual, minority professionals and executives (Atewologun & Sealy, 2014). Focus on intersectional privileges is not without its critiques, however. For example, Carastathis (2008, p. 28) points out the asymmetrical response to *black woman* compared to *white man*, which is due to the fact that "whiteness and maleness are already co-extensive or mutually implicated." Therefore, in Carastathis' (2008) view, an intersectional analysis of *white man* is redundant, as it offers nothing more to our understanding of the concept. Arguably, the need to engage with and support privilege studies is that what we know about society is at best, partial and even inaccurate if privilege, in some form remains under-examined (McIntosh, 2012).

A final future consideration for intersectional analyses in business and management is to extend beyond traditional organizational boundaries. Rodriguez and colleagues (2016) highlight the importance of examining transnational processes and practices that sustain marginalization and privilege more broadly. Thus, multidisciplinary insights abound from migration, globalization, expatriation, varieties of capitalism, and transnational feminisms, although these are still underutilized.

Conclusion

In conclusion, intersectionality continues to wield a breadth, depth, complexity, and nuance in our understanding of how work and workplaces are experienced and organized. As a theoretical framework and a practical tool, it makes a unique contribution to advanc-

date: 20 January 2020

ing understanding and empowering marginalized groups in the context of management, organizations, and beyond. While this flexibility is embraced by its current adopters, perhaps its applications across management research and practice will converge in scope over time as the concept matures. There remains much potential to contribute to dismantling power structures, revealing the power of social context and untangling the complexity of human behaviors using intersectionality in business and management theory and in practice.

References

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, *4*(2), 139–158.

Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes, gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender and Society*, *20*(4), 441–464.

Acker, J. (2009). From glass ceiling to inequality regimes. *Sociologie du Travail*, *51*(2), 199–217.

Acker, J. (2011). Theorizing gender, race, and class in organizations. In E. L. Jeannes, D. Knights, & P. Y. Martin (Eds.), *Handbook of Gender, Work, and Organization* (pp. 65–80). Chichester, UK: Wiley & Sons.

Adib, A., & Guerrier, Y. (2003). The interlocking of gender with nationality, race, ethnicity, and class: The narratives of women in hotel work. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, *10*(4), 413–432.

Alexander-Floyd, N. G. (2012). Disappearing acts: Reclaiming intersectionality in the social sciences in a post-Black feminist era. *Feminist Formations*, *24*(1), 1–25.

Anthias, F. (2013). Intersectional what? Social divisions, intersectionality, and levels of analysis. *Ethnicities*, *13*(1), 3–19.

Atewologun, D. (2011). *An examination of senior Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic women and men's identity work following episodes of identity salience at work*. PhD Thesis. Cranfield University, UK.

Atewologun, D. (2014). **Sites of intersectional identity salience**. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *29*(5), 277–290.

Atewologun, D., & Mahalingam, R. (2018). Intersectional reflexivity: Methodological challenges and possibilities for qualitative equality, diversity, and inclusion research. In R. Bendl, L. Booysen, & Judith Pringle (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods on Diversity Management, Equality, and Inclusion at Work*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Atewologun, D., & Sealy, R. (2014). Experiencing privilege at ethnic, gender, and senior intersections, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *29*(4), 423–439.

Atewologun, D., Sealy, R., & Vinnicombe, S. (2016). Revealing intersectional dynamics in organizations: Introducing 'intersectional identity work'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *23*(3), 223–247.

Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Caldwell, D., & Burger, J. M. (2016). A multilevel perspective on faultlines: Differentiating the effects between group- and organizational-level fault-lines. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *101*(1), 86.

Bradley, H., & Healy, G. (2008). *Ethnicity and gender at work: Inequalities, careers, and employment relations*. The Future of Work Series. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brewer, R. M., Conrad, C. A., & King, M. C. (2002). The complexities and potential of the-orizing gender, caste, race, and class. *Feminist Economics*, *8*(2), 3–17.

Browne, I., & Misra, J. (2003). The intersection of gender and race in the labor market, *Annual Review of Sociology*, *29*(1), 487–513.

Byrd, M. Y. (2014). Diversity issues exploring "critical" through multiple lenses. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *16*(4), 515–528.

Carastathis, A. (2008). The invisibility of privilege: A critique of intersectional models of identity. *Ateliers de l'ethique*, *3*(2), 23–28.

Carrim, N. M. H., & Nkomo, S. M. (2016). **Wedding intersectionality theory and identity work in organizations: South African Indian women negotiating managerial identity**. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, *23*, 261–277.

Case, K. A., Iuzzini, J., & Hopkins, M. (2012). **Systems of privilege: Intersections, awareness, and applications**. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*, 1–10.

Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory*, *28*(2), 129–149.

Clarke, A. Y., & McCall, L. (2013) Intersectionality and social explanation in social science research. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, *10*(2), 349–363.

Cole, E. R. (2009). Intersectionality and research in psychology. *American Psychologist*, *64*(3), 170.

Cole, E. R., Avery, L. R., Dodson, C., & Goodman, K. D. (2012). Against nature: How argu-ments about the naturalness of marriage privilege heterosexuality. *Journal of Social Is-sues*, *68*(1), 46–62.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge

Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *41*, 1–20.

date: 20 January 2020

Combahee River Collective. (1986). *The Combahee River Collective Statement*: *Black feminist organizing in the seventies and eighties*. Albany, NY: Kitchen Table.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 139–167. Reprinted in *The Politics of Law:* A Progressive Critique, 195–217 (2nd ed., edited by David Kairys, Pantheon, 1990).

Crenshaw, K. (2015, September 24). **Why intersectionality can't wait**. *Washington Post*.

Dhamoon, R. K. (2011). Considerations on mainstreaming intersectionality. *Political Research Quarterly*, *64*(1), 230–243.

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *44*(2), 350–383.

Else-Quest, N. M., & Hyde, J. S. (2016). Intersectionality in quantitative psychological research II. Methods and techniques. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *40*(2), 155–170.

Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding everyday racism: An interdisciplinary theory* (Vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Espiritu, Y. L. (1997). *Asian American women and men: Labor, laws, and love*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Goff, P. A., & Kahn, K. B. (2013). How psychological science impedes intersectional thinking. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, *10*(2), 365–384.

Hancock, A. M. (2007). When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, *5*(1), 63–79.

Hooks, B. (1981). *Ain't I a woman? Black women and feminism*. New York: Routledge.

Hulko, W. (2009). The time- and context-contingent nature of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions. *Affilia*, *24*(1), 44–55.

Hull, A. G., Hull, G. T., Bell-Scott, P., & Smith, B. (Eds.). (1982). *All the women are white, all the blacks are men: But some of us are brave*. Black women's studies. New York: Feminist Press.

Jamieson, K. H. (1995). *Beyond the double bind: Women and leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kang, S. K., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2015). Multiple identities in social perception and interaction: Challenges and opportunities. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *66*, 547–574.

Knapp, G. A. (2005). Race, class, gender: Reclaiming baggage in fast travelling theories. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *12*(3), 249–265.

date: 20 January 2020

Lau, D. C., & Murnighan, J. K. (1998). Demographic diversity and faultlines: The compositional dynamics of organizational groups. *Academy of Management Review*, *23*(2), 325–340.

Livingston, R. W., & Pearce, N. A. (2009). The teddy-bear effect: Does having a baby face benefit black chief executive officers? *Psychological Science*, *20*(10), 1229–1236.

Livingston, R. W., Rosette, A. S., & Washington, E. F. (2012). Can an agentic black woman get ahead? The impact of race and interpersonal dominance on perceptions of female leaders. *Psychological Science*, *23*(4), 354–358.

Loseke, D. R. (2007). The study of identity as cultural, institutional, organizational, and personal narratives: Theoretical and empirical integrations. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *48*(4), 661–688.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *30*(3), 1771–1800.

McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Working Paper No. 189. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Centers for Women.

McIntosh, P. (2012). Reflections and future directions for privilege studies. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(1), 194–206.

Meyer, D. (2012). An intersectional analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people's evaluations of anti-queer violence. *Gender & Society*, *26*(6), 849–873.

Nash, J. C. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, *89*(1), 1–15.

Pompper, D. (2007). The gender-ethnicity construct in public relations organizations: Using feminist standpoint theory to discover Latinas' realities. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, *18*(4), 291–311.

Risman, B. J. (2004). **Gender as a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism**. *Gender & Society*, *18*, 429–450.

Rodriguez, J. K., Holvino, E., Fletcher, J. K., & Nkomo, S. M. (2016). The theory and praxis of intersectionality in work and organisations: Where do we go from here? *Gender, Work, and Organization*, *23*(3), 201–222.

Salem, S. (2016). **Intersectionality and its discontents: Intersectionality as traveling theory**. *European Journal of Women's Studies*.

Smith, R., & Seedat Khan, M. (2016). Gender. In J. Ferrante-Wallace, M. Seedat Khan, Z. L. Jansen, & R. Smith (Eds.), *Sociology: A South African perspective* (pp. 98–123). London: Cengage Learning (Emea).

Stewart, T. L., Latu, I. M., Branscombe, N. R., Phillips, N. L., & Denney H. T. (2012). White privilege awareness and efficacy to reduce racial inequality improve white Americans' attitudes toward African Americans. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(1), 11–27.

Syed, J. (2007). "The other woman" and the question of equal opportunity in Australian organizations. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(11), 1954–1978.

Tatli, A., & Özbilgin, M. F. (2012). An emic approach to intersectional study of diversity at work: A Bourdieuan framing. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *14*(2), 180–200.

Thatcher, S. M., Jehn, K. A., & Zanutto, E. (2003). Cracks in diversity research: The effects of diversity faultlines on conflict and performance. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, *12*(3), 217–241.

Tuori, A. (2014). **Doing intersectional identity work: Social categories, inequalities, and silences**. PhD thesis, Hanken School of Economics.

United Nations. ***Gender and racial discrimination: Report of the Expert Group Meeting***, November 21–24, 2000, Zagreb, Croatia.

de Vries, K. M. (2015). Transgender people of color at the center: Conceptualizing a new intersectional model. *Ethnicities*, *15*(1), 3–27.

Warner, L. R. (2008). A best practices guide to intersectional approaches in psychological research. *Sex Roles*, *59*(5–6), 454–463.

Warner, L. R., Settles, I. H., & Shields, S. A. (2016). Invited reflection intersectionality as an epistemological challenge to psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *40*(2), 171–176.

Woodhams, C., Lupton, B., & Cowling, M. (2015a). The snowballing penalty effect: Multiple disadvantage and pay. *British Journal of Management*, *26*(1), 63–77.

Woodhams, C., Lupton, B., & Cowling, M. (2015b). The presence of ethnic minority and disabled men in feminised work: Intersectionality, vertical segregation, and the glass escalator. *Sex Roles*, *72*(7–8), 277–293.

Young, R. A., & Collin, A. (2004). Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *64*(3), 373–388.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2013). *A situated intersectional everyday approach to the study of bordering*. Working paper no. 2. Euroborderscapes. European Commission.

Doyin Atewologun

Queen Mary University, London School of Business and Management

date: 20 January 2020

date: 20 January 2020