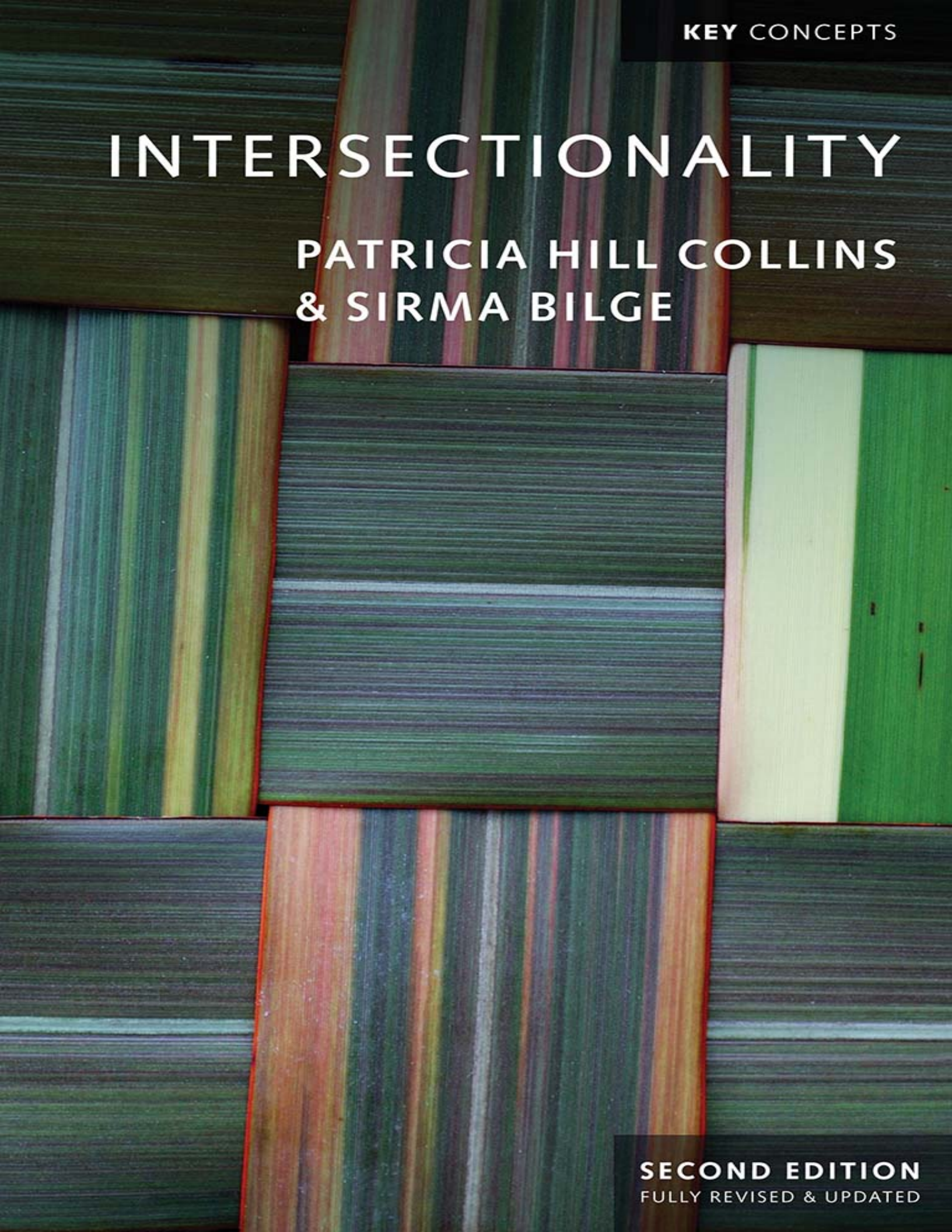
KEY CONCEPTS
INTERSECTIONALITY
PATRICIA HILL COLLINS
& SIRMA BILGE
SECOND EDITION
FULLY REVISED & UPDATED

Contents

Key Concepts Series

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Alan Aldridge, *The Market*

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Will Atkinson, *Class*

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Jon Mandle, *Global Justice*

Cillian McBride, *Recognition*

Anthony Payne and Nicola Phillips, *Development*

Judith Phillips, *Care*

Chris Phillipson, *Ageing*

Robert Reiner, *Crime*

Michael Saward, *Democracy*

William E. Scheuerman, *Civil Disobedience*

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Timothy J. Sinclair, *Global Governance*

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Michael Wyness, *Childhood*

Intersectionality

2nd edition

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge

polity

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Abbreviations

AAPF
African American Policy Forum

AIWA
Asian Immigrant Women Advocates

AWUC
Asian Women United of California

BIWOC
black, indigenous, and women of color

CBSA
Canadian Border Security Agency

CRC
Combahee River Collective

EU
European Union

FIFA
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (International Federation of Association Football)

IACHR
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

IAF
Industrial Areas Foundation (Texas)

IAHRS
Intersectionality in the Inter-American Human Rights System

IBPA
Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis

ICT
information and communications technology

IMF
International Monetary Fund

ISA
International Sociological Association

LGBTQ
lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer

MBK
My Brother’s Keeper

NBFO
National Black Feminist Organization

NGO
nongovernmental organization

OAS
Organization of American States

OECD
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OWAAD
Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent

PAR
participatory action research

SFNM
Strong Families of New Mexico

STEM
science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

UN
United Nations

USSF
United States Soccer Federation

WCAR
World Conference Against Racism

WIR

World Inequality Report

WNBA

Women’s National Basketball Association

YWU

Young Women United

Preface

The time is right for this new edition of our book. People around the world face new and unprecedented social issues concerning the environment, women's reproductive issues, the resurgence of far-right politics, food security, militarism, and migration. This context of global social change is a major catalyst for this new edition, in which we revisit and sharpen our analyses of intersectionality. In making our revisions, we opted to leave the structure of the original book intact and instead deepen our main arguments and conclusions by providing new case studies, updating information, and placing more emphasis on global issues. We make intersectionality's growing global reach more visible and, by doing so, highlight its analytical and political usefulness for addressing important social issues.

This new edition continues our process of developing ideas in conversation and writing collaboratively. Intersectionality mandates doing this kind of dialogical intellectual work. Because our collaboration can be taken as an example of intersectionality's global reach, we thought we would share a bit about our process. We first met in 2006 in Durban, South Africa, at the 16th World Congress of Sociology, the first meeting of this international group of delegates from more than 150 countries to be held in continental Africa. Patricia was a keynote speaker early on in the week-long event, and Sirma, a new assistant professor, was a presenter in the intersectionality session organized by Nira Yuval-Davis. By happy coincidence, we took the same bus on a field trip to the Kwa Muhle Apartheid Museum and to townships that bore the effects of apartheid. We had our first – albeit all too brief – conversation during that tour. Six years later, we

met again at the 6th International Congress of French-Speaking Feminist Research (Congrès international des recherches féministes francophones) in Lausanne, Switzerland. This grouping had been meeting since the mid-1990s in different cities across the French-speaking world, from Paris to Dakar to Rabat to Ottawa. The Lausanne conference, with its theme "Interlocking power relations and the discriminations and privileges based on gender, race, class and sexuality," brought together some 610 delegates, feminist scholars, and activists from Europe, Africa, the Americas, and the Middle East. This time, we were both on keynote panels. Afterwards, we struck up a conversation that we continued during a visit to the Musée de l'art brut, a small but striking museum that contained work by groups that had been considered outsiders, such as the art of psychiatric inmates. During this visit, we discovered that we shared similar perspectives not just on the conference and our sensibilities concerning intersectionality; we learned that Sirma is a painter, that Patricia is a dancer, and that the arts infuse our intersectional sensibilities. While we didn't know it then, our collaboration for this book had already begun.

This book, then, is the result of a true collaboration. Neither one of us could have written it alone. We felt the need for a book that would introduce the complexities beyond the audiences with whom we both felt comfortable. We started our conversation from our different locations within inter-sectionality and worked our way toward carving out points of connection. Sirma writes about intersectionality in French and English within a francophone academic context of the linguistically restless Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) situated on the unceded Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) territory, where the competition between French and English overshadows indigenous language struggles. Acutely aware of the problems of translation across her

three languages of Turkish, French, and English, Sirma brings a commitment to situating intersectionality within global frameworks and the geopolitics of knowledge. Always mindful of her roots in a working-class, African American neighborhood in Philadelphia, Patricia writes for academic audiences and general readers in US and UK contexts. Her work is widely recognized, yet the demands of helping to institutionalize intersectionality in the academy has limited her involvement in activist settings. During many conversations, we hammered out the arguments that we felt would be most useful to our readers.

We could see how we complemented one another and knew that the ideas that could travel across the kinds of differences that shaped our own lives were likely to be the strongest ideas for intersectionality. One core premise of intersectionality concerns the relationships between ideas, practices, and, in this case, the execution of this book. This entailed working through and across many differences. Yet we quickly found out that dialog is hard work. In a sense, we lived our material via the process we chose to follow in writing this book. Don’t get us wrong! It is not as easy as it sounds, and there is nothing romantic about that. It involves labor and it creates tension – but generative tension.

There were so many moving points to this kind of conversation and, by implication, to the kind of work that intersectionality must do. The process involved getting fluent in each other’s language of intersectionality, in each other’s ways of putting things together, in each other’s perspective and perception. We also needed to speak several languages, for intersectionality is everywhere, and it is polyglot: it speaks the language of activism and community organizing as much as it speaks that of academia or of institutions. It speaks to young people

through social media and popular culture and to established scholars through journals and conferences. These different fields of practice of intersectionality do not engage each other as much as they should, perhaps because they lack a common language. If such is the case, then our book needs to speak to these different constituencies in ways that are not mutually exclusive, in a language that is audible and makes sense for them.

Consider this book an invitation for entering the complexities of intersectionality. We provide some navigational tools for moving through intersectionality's vast terrain. The book is a road map for discovery and not a portrait of a finished product. We simply could not include everything in one volume. You may find that some of your favorite authors are barely mentioned and that authors of whom you have never heard are discussed at length. We mention many areas of intersectionality, but could not include an extensive discussion of public health, epistemology, environmental issues, the arts, and many other areas where people have taken up the ideas of intersectionality. Just as we brought different areas of expertise and interest to the process of writing the book, yet learned to listen to one another and translate along the way, we encourage you to do the same as you pursue these areas.

Just as our collaboration was crucial for the book, so we value the support of others who helped us along the way. We both thank the team at Polity for shepherding this project through unexpected delays. Thanks to Louise Knight, our editor, who brought the idea for this book to us and trusted our ability to get it done; to Evie Deavall, production editor at Polity; editorial assistant Inès Boxman; and copyeditor Sarah Dancy. We also appreciate the comments of the two anonymous reviewers whose critical eye greatly strengthened this text, as well as anonymous

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First and foremost, Sirma wishes to thank her partner Philippe Allard, who always stood by her through the ups and downs of all her writing projects, and her sister Gönenç Bilge-Sökmen and her mother Figen Bilge for their unfailing love and support, despite the great physical distance that separates her from them. Sirma thanks graduate students who attended her past and present seminars at the Université de Montréal for being a constant reminder of the utter necessity of pursuing critical work, and for making her feel intellectually and emotionally less out of place. They are far too many to list here. Their reception and critical engagement with the first edition of this book in Sirma's graduate seminar on intersectionality have been invaluable. Her appreciation also goes to colleagues in the sociology department at the Université de Montréal, with special thanks for their support to Anne Calvès, Christopher McCall, and Marianne Kempeneers, the department's head, and librarian Catherine Fortier. Sirma expresses heartfelt gratitude for the friendship and solidarity of some amazing scholars and activists, for many impassioned conversations: thanks especially to Sara Ahmed, Paola Bacchetta, Leila Bdeir, Leila Ben Hadjoudja, Karma Chávez, João Gabriell, Eve Haque, Jin Haritaworn, Suhraiya Jivraj, Yasmin Jiwani, Délice Mugabo, Jen Petzen, Julianne Pidduck, Malinda Smith, Michèle Spieler, and Rinaldo Walcott. Arashi needs to be thanked for bringing feline grace and mandatory playtime to her life. Last but not least, Sirma wishes she could thank her father, Ugur Bilge, for his constant support, for never failing to ask, "Isn't it finished yet?" and for prompting her to translate it into Turkish. Ugur Bilge, who planted the passion for reading in Sirma's life first through the children's books of

Iranian Marxist Samed Behrengi, suddenly passed away in 2014; Sirma dedicates this book to his memory.

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1
What Is Intersectionality?

In the early twenty-first century, the term “intersectionality” has been widely taken up by scholars, policy advocates, practitioners, and activists in many places and locations. College students and faculty in interdisciplinary fields such as women’s studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, American studies, and media studies, as well as those within sociology, political science, and history and other traditional disciplines, encounter intersectionality in courses, books, and scholarly articles. Human rights activists and government officials have also made intersectionality part of ongoing global public policy discussions. Grassroots organizers look to varying dimensions of intersectionality to inform their work on reproductive justice, antiviolence initiatives, workers’ rights, and similar social issues. Bloggers use digital and social media to influence public opinion. Teachers, social workers, high-school students, parents, university support staff, and school personnel have taken up the ideas of intersectionality with an eye toward transforming schools of all sorts. Across these different venues, people increasingly claim and use the term “intersectionality” for their diverse intellectual and political projects.

If we were to ask them, “What is intersectionality?” we would get varied and sometimes contradictory answers. Most, however, would probably accept the following general description:

> Intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytic tool, intersectionality views categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability, ethnicity, and age – among others – as interrelated and mutually shaping one another. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences.

This working definition describes intersectionality's core insight: namely, that in a given society at a given time, power relations of race, class, and gender, for example, are not discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but rather build on each other and work together; and that, while often invisible, these intersecting power relations affect all aspects of the social world.

We begin this book by recognizing the tremendous heterogeneity that currently characterizes how people understand and use intersectionality. Despite debates about the meaning of this term, or even whether it is the right term to use at all, intersectionality is the term that has stuck. It is the term that is increasingly used by stakeholders who put their understandings of intersectionality to a variety of uses. Despite these differences, this broad description points toward a general consensus about how people understand intersectionality.

Using Intersectionality as an Analytic Tool

People generally use intersectionality as an analytic tool to solve problems that they or others around them face. Most colleges and universities in North America, for example,

face the challenge of building more inclusive and fair campus communities. The social divisions created by power relations of class, race, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, sexuality, and ability are especially evident within higher education. Colleges and universities now include more college students who formerly had no way to pay for college (class), or students who historically faced discriminatory barriers to enrolment (race, gender, ethnicity, indigeneity, citizenship status), or students who experience distinctive forms of discrimination (sexuality, ability, religion) on college campuses. Colleges and universities find themselves confronted with students who want fairness, yet who bring very different experiences and needs to campus. Initially, colleges in the US recruited and served groups one at a time, offering, for example, special programs for African Americans, Latinx groups, women, gays and lesbians, veterans, returning students, and persons with disabilities. As the list grew, it became clearer not only that this one-group-at-a-time approach was slow, but that most students fit into more than one category. First-generation college students could include Latinos, women, poor whites, returning veterans, grandparents, and transgender women and men. In this context, intersectionality can be a useful analytic tool for thinking about and developing strategies to achieve campus equity.

Ordinary people can draw upon intersectionality as an analytic tool when they recognize that they need better frameworks to grapple with social problems. In the 1960s and 1970s, African American women activists confronted the puzzle of how their needs concerning jobs, education, employment, and healthcare simply fell through the cracks of antiracist social movements, feminism, and unions organizing for workers' rights. Each of these social movements elevated one category of analysis and action above others; for example, race within the civil rights

movement, or gender within feminism, or class within the union movement. Because African American women were simultaneously black and female and workers, these single-focus lenses on social inequality left little space to address the complex social problems that they face. Black women's specific issues remained subordinated within each movement because no social movement by itself would, or could, address the entirety of discriminations they faced. Black women's use of intersectionality as an analytic tool emerged in response to these challenges.

Intersectionality as an analytic tool is neither confined to nations of North America and Europe nor a new phenomenon. People in the Global South have used intersectionality as an analytic tool, often without naming it as such. Consider an unexpected example from nineteenth-century colonial India in the work of Dalit social reformist Savitribai Phule (1831–97), regarded as an important first-generation modern Indian feminist. In an online article titled "Six Reasons Every Indian Feminist Must Remember Savitribai Phule," published in January 2015, Deepika Sarma suggests:

> Here’s why you should know more about her. She got intersectionality. Savitribai along with her husband Jyotirao was a staunch advocate of anti-caste ideology and women’s rights. The Phules’ vision of social equality included fighting against the subjugation of women, and they also stood for Adivasis and Muslims. She organized a barbers’ strike against shaving the heads of Hindu widows, fought for widow remarriage and in 1853, started a shelter for pregnant widows. Other welfare programmes she was involved with alongside Jyotirao include opening schools for workers and rural people, and providing famine relief through 52 food centers that also operated as boarding schools. She also cared for those affected by famine and plague, and died in 1897 after contracting plague from her patients.

Phule confronted several axes of social division, namely caste, gender, religion, and economic disadvantage or class. Her political activism encompassed intersecting categories of social division – she didn’t just pick one.

These examples suggest that people use intersectionality as an analytic tool in many different ways to address a range of issues and social problems. One common use of intersectionality is as a heuristic, a problem-solving or analytic tool, much in the way that students on college campuses developed a shared interest in diversity, or African American women used it to address their status within social movement politics, or Savitribai Phule advanced women’s rights. Even though those who use intersectional frameworks all seem to be situated under the same big umbrella, using intersectionality as an analytic tool means that it can assume many different forms because it can accommodate a range of social problems.

In this book, we examine multiple aspects of intersectionality but, for now, we want to show three uses of intersectionality as an analytical tool. In line with Cho et al.'s argument that "what makes an analysis intersectional is not its use of the term 'intersectionality,' nor its being situated in a familiar genealogy, nor its drawing on lists of standard citations," our focus is on "what intersectionality *does* rather than what intersectionality is" (2013: 795). Our cases of how intersecting power relations characterize international football, the growing recognition of global social inequality as an intersectional phenomenon, and the emergence of the black Brazilian women's movement in response to specific challenges of racism, sexism, and poverty illustrate different *uses of* intersectionality as an analytic tool. Specifically, they suggest how intersectional analyses of sports illuminate the organization of institutional power, how intersectionality has been used to diagnose social problems, and how intersectional responses to social injustices enhance activism. These cases both introduce important core ideas of intersectional frameworks and demonstrate different uses of intersectionality as an analytic tool.

Power plays: the FIFA World Cup

Across the globe, there is no way of knowing exactly how many people play football. Yet surveys by the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) provide a good guess: an estimated 270 million people are involved in football as professional soccer players, recreational players, registered players both over and under age 18, futsal and beach football players, referees, and officials. This is a vast pool of both professional and amateur athletes and a massive audience that encompasses all categories of race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, nation, and ability. When one adds the children and youth who play

football but who are not involved in any kind of organized activity detectable by FIFA, the number swells considerably.

Intersectionality's emphasis on social inequality seems far removed from the global popularity of this one sport. Yet using intersectionality as an analytic tool to examine the FIFA World Cup sheds light on how intersecting power relations of race, gender, class, nation, and sexuality organize this particular sport, as well as sports more broadly. Rich nations of the Global North and poor nations of the Global South offer different opportunity structures to their youth to attend school, find jobs, and play sports, opportunity structures that privilege European and North American nations, and that disadvantage countries in the Caribbean, continental Africa, the Middle East, and selected Latin American and Asian nations. These national differences align with racial differences, with black and brown youth from poor countries, or within neighborhoods within rich ones, lacking access to training and opportunities to play. Girls and boys may want to play football, but rarely get to be on the same teams or compete against one another. As a sport that highlights physical ability, football brings a lens to the phrase "able-bodied" that underpins analysis of ability. At its foundation, football is big business, providing financial benefit to its backers as well as to a small percentage of elite athletes. Differences of wealth, national citizenship, race, gender, and ability shape patterns of opportunity and disadvantage within the sport. Moreover, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the patterns of their intersection determine which individuals get to play football, the level of support they receive, and the kinds of experiences they have if and when they play. Using intersectionality as an analytic tool illuminates how these and other categories of power relations interconnect.

Because it is a global phenomenon, the FIFA World Cup is a particularly suitable case to unpack in order to show how intersecting power relations underpin social inequalities of race, gender, class, age, ability, sexuality, and nation. Power relations rely on durable, albeit changing, organizational practices that, in this case, shape the contours of FIFA World Cup soccer regardless of when and where the games occur and who actually competes. Four distinctive yet interconnected domains of power describe these organizational practices – namely, the *structural, cultural, disciplinary*, and *interpersonal*. These domains of power are durable across time and place. FIFA's organizational practices have changed since its inception and have taken different forms in Europe, North America, continental Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Yet FIFA is also characterized by tremendous change brought on by new people, changing standards, and a growing global audience. Using intersectionality to analyze the FIFA World Cup sheds light on specific intersections of power relations within the organization; for example, how gender and national identity intersect within FIFA writ large, as well as the specific forms that intersecting power relations take *within* distinctive domains of power. Here we briefly discuss intersecting relations within each domain of power within FIFA, thereby laying a foundation for analyzing intersecting power relations.

The *structural domain of power* refers to the fundamental structures of social institutions such as job markets, housing, education, and health. Intersections of class (capitalism) and nation (government policy) are key to the organization of sports. In this case, ever since its inception in 1930, the World Cup tournament has grown in scope and popularity to become a highly profitable global business. Headquartered in Switzerland, FIFA enjoys legal protection

as an international nongovernmental organization (NGO) that allows it to manage its finances with minimal government oversight. Managed by an executive committee of businessmen, FIFA wields considerable influence with global corporations and national governments who host the World Cup. For example, for the 2014 games in Brazil, FIFA succeeded in having the Brazilian parliament adopt a General World Cup Law that imposed bank holidays on host cities on the days of the Brazilian team's matches, cut the number of places in the stadiums, and increased prices for ordinary spectators. The law also allowed beer to be taken into the stadiums, a change that benefited Anheuser-Busch, one of FIFA's main sponsors. In addition, the bill exempted companies working for FIFA from Brazilian taxation, banned the sale of any goods in official competition spaces, immediate surroundings, and principal access routes, and penalized bars that tried to schedule showings of the matches or promote certain brands. Finally, the bill defined any attack on the image of FIFA or its sponsors as a federal crime.

Hosted by different nations that compete for the privilege years in advance, FIFA events typically showcase the distinctive national concerns of its host countries. Brazil's experiences illustrate how national concerns shape global football. Fielding one of the most successful national teams in the history of the World Cup, Brazil has been one of a handful of countries whose teams have played in virtually every World Cup tournament. In 2014, the potential payoff for Brazil was substantial. Hosting the World Cup signaled its arrival as a major economic player on the global stage, minimizing its troubled history with a military dictatorship (1964–85). A victorious Brazilian football team promised to enhance Brazil's international stature and foster economic policies that would help its domestic population. Yet the challenges associated with hosting the matches began well

before the athletes arrived on the playing fields. Brazil estimated having to spend billions of US dollars in preparation for the event. The initial plan presented to the public emphasized that the majority of the spending on infrastructure would highlight general transportation, security, and communications. Less than 25 percent of total spending would go toward the 12 new or refurbished stadiums. Yet, as the games grew nearer, cost overruns increased stadium expenses by at least 75 percent, with public resources reallocated from general infrastructure projects.

In several Brazilian cities, the FIFA cost overruns sparked public demonstrations against the increase in public transportation fares and political corruption. On June 20, 2013, 1.5 million people demonstrated in São Paulo, Brazil's largest metropolitan area, protesting the exorbitant cost of stadiums, the displacement of urban residents, and the embezzlement of public funds (Castells 2015: 232). As the countdown to the kickoff began, Brazilians took to the streets in more than 100 cities, with slogans expressing objections to the World Cup, such as "FIFA go home!" and "We want hospitals up to FIFA's standards!" "The World Cup steals money from healthcare, education and the poor. The homeless are being forced from the streets. This is not for Brazil, it's for the tourists," reported a *Guardian* article (Watts 2014). This social unrest provided the backdrop for the games in which, despite making the semifinals, Brazil suffered a historic loss to Germany.

Because FIFA is unregulated, it should come as no surprise that for years it has been accused of corruption. Disputes over where to hold the event, the competition of nations and their financial backers, have characterized the World Cup since its inception. Corporate sponsors, wealthy backers, and the global media outlets appear to be the primary beneficiaries of the World Cup's global success.

There appears to be little if any financial benefit to countries that actually host the World Cup – South Africa recouped approximately 10 percent of its outlay on stadiums and infrastructure for the 2010 World Cup, and many of the 12 stadiums that Brazil constructed for the 2014 event were investigated for graft. Yet nations may have reasons beyond financial gain for hosting the games. Qatar was granted the right to host the 2022 World Cup, suggesting that the fiscal and political controversies that characterize FIFA's operation will persist.[1]

An intersectional analysis of capitalism and nationalism sheds light on structural power relations that enabled FIFA as a global business to influence the public policies of nation-states that host the games. But other categories of analysis in addition to class and nation are also hardwired into FIFA's structural power relations. Take, for example, gender inequalities. Sports generally, and professional sports in particular, routinely provide more opportunities for men than for women. Thus far, we've focused on FIFA's male athletes, primarily because the first FIFA World Cup held in 1930 was restricted to men. Yet since 1991, when the first women's games were held in China, FIFA has also administered women's World Cup soccer. When the US hosted the landmark 1999 World Cup, only a few countries were considered contenders. Since then, women's World Cup soccer has grown in popularity, reaching unprecedented global audiences by the 2019 event in France. Despite this growing interest, financial benefits that accrue to elite female football players pale by comparison with those offered their male counterparts. These gendered structures within football – for example, the men's FIFA World Cup launched in 1930 and the women's FIFA World Cup launched 60 years later in 1991 – foster accumulated advantages and disadvantages based on gender within FIFA's structural domain of power.

The cultural domain of power emphasizes the increasing significance of ideas and culture in the organization of power relations. The FIFA World Cup is an excellent example of how the power of ideas, representations, and images in a global marketplace normalize cultural attitudes and expectations concerning social inequalities. Significantly, the World Cup is the most widely watched sporting event in the world, exceeding even the Olympic Games. For example, FIFA's audit of the 2018 World Cup in Russia reports that a combined 1.12 billion viewers worldwide watched the final. Over the course of the games, a combined 3.572 billion viewers – more than half of the global population aged 4 and over – tuned in to watch some aspect of the games at home on TV, in public viewing areas of bars and restaurants, and on digital platforms. From the perspective of FIFA's organizers and financiers, the possibilities of reaching this massive global consumer market of sports fans are limitless.

Given the growth of mass media and digital media, it is important to ask what cultural messages concerning race, gender, class, sexuality, and similar categories are being broadcast to this vast global audience. In this case, promoting and televising football offers a view of fair play that in turn explains social inequality. Broadcast across the globe, the World Cup projects important ideas about competition and fair play. Sports contests send an influential message: not everyone can win. On the surface, this makes sense, but why is it that some individuals and groups of people *consistently* win whereas others consistently lose? FIFA has ready-made answers. Winners have talent, discipline, and luck, while losers suffer from lack of talent, inferior self-discipline, and/or bad luck. This view suggests that fair competition produces just results. Armed with this worldview concerning winners and losers, it's a small step toward using this frame to explain social