

PART II

METHODOLOGY  
AND METHODS FOR  
COLLECTING EDI  
MATERIAL



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## 7 Intersectionality as a methodological tool in qualitative equality, diversity and inclusion research

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### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we discuss how intersectionality can be used as a methodological tool in qualitative equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) research. We present five practical tools for eliciting researcher and researched perceptions and experiences as they cohabit socially constructed intersectional positions in a research project.

We contextualize our recommended tools against two themes pertinent to conducting qualitative intersectionality research. These themes concern the question regarding which marginalized identities to study and how best to analyze the insights associated with the intersectional locations spotlighted in qualitative research. Our response to these dilemmas is to embrace the complexity of intersectionality as a situated and embodied phenomenon best analyzed through constructionist and interpretivist qualitative research methods. We view the researcher–participant relationship as dynamic and complex, with a potential to marginalize, enlighten or empower both parties. Our aim in this chapter is therefore to present and advocate tools that raise individual awareness of the differential power relations and systems of inequalities between researcher and study participant.

We introduce five methodological tools and practices: intersectional reflexivity, a privilege versus penalties board game, an intersectional identity web, an intersectional identity work journal and a participant-led audiovisual data collection method. We suggest that each tool can be applied at different phases of the research project, from design and set up, to entering the field and participant briefing, through to data collection and analysis. Although we draw on our experiences of applying these intersectional tools in work, employment and organizational contexts, we anticipate that our suggestions will be pertinent beyond these contexts, such as in education, health and cultural studies.

Qualitative research entails ‘capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena in order

to describe and explain their behaviour through investigating how they experience, sustain, articulate and share with others these socially constituted everyday realities' (Johnson et al. 2006, p. 132). Our position, similar to other intersectional authors (for example, Hulko 2009; Holvino 2010), is that intersectionality is a critical tool for capturing actors' socially-constituted everyday subjective meanings in the context of unequal structural positioning of social categories. We position ourselves broadly towards constructionist/interpretivist and critical epistemologies, in contrast to the positivist assumptions (for example, treating identities as categorical variables) that often accompany psychological quantitative examinations of identity multiplicity (for example, see Bowleg 2008; Cole 2009; Else-Quest and Hyde 2016). Interpretivist and critical scholars (for example, Alvesson et al. 2008) advocate explicitly including the researcher's lens in interpreting research participants' meanings, interpretations and experiences. Including the researcher's lens in interpretation requires reflexive attention to one's social location, biases and privileges throughout the research process. This reflexive attention serves as a source of insight into social phenomena, including the role that power and knowledge play in producing particular accounts (Alvesson et al. 2008).

Contextualized against the intersectional literature, our approach is most closely aligned with McCall's (2005) intracategorical approach (explained later). Our perspective emphasizes the experiences of groups occupying marginalized social locations. The intracategorical approach focuses on understudied groups; it compares their experiences relative to a standard group and raises awareness of diversity within groups, representing the heterogeneity of minority experiences. However, in addition to focusing on diversity within marginalized locations, our approach turns the lens on the intersectional location of the researcher(s). We work from the viewpoint of our identities, a source of both insight and blind spots in research (Bell 2009). Thus, we extend the intersectional focus to the spectrum of identities to which we belong, which signal privilege or penalty. We recognize that, like our research participants, we are also subject to interlocking socio-structural systems. That is, our social identities as researchers, and our participants' social identities as members of communities and organizations, are constructed through multiple, simultaneous positions along several salient markers of difference. Thus, we attempt to avoid the criticism of focusing solely on the typical intersectional triad of gender–race–class categories in which identity clusters become merely reconfigured rather than dismantled (Monture 2007, cited in Dhamoon 2010).

In collaborating on this chapter, we applied intersectional reflexivity to

understand our respective locations in relation to the topic of intersectionality in qualitative research. Intersectional reflexivity (elaborated further in the chapter) entails developing a critical awareness regarding various identities and different gradients of disadvantages and privileges associated with those identities. It also means awareness of the implications of one's multiple identity positions in producing particular accounts.

The first author was brought up in an upper middle-class family background, raised in a metropolis in a developing country, and educated in both Nigeria and Britain. As a management scholar and practitioner, she is aware of constantly navigating visible and invisible identities, shifting according to her locations, being simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged relating to ethnicity, nationality, religion, education and accent. The second author identifies as a postcolonial subject; he grew up in a small Indian town as a member of a low-status cast. He was educated in India and in the US. A child of parents who did not complete high school, he is the first in his family with a college education. As collaborators on this chapter, we reflected on our common migrant and subject discipline background, and discussed differing historical learning perspectives on intersectionality. The intersectional tradition in the US is rooted in critical race scholarship, in particular in African American women's experiences. In contrast, the body of intersectional work in mainland Europe and the UK has a more recent history, and is infused with postcolonial traditions and contemporary migrant debates. Our collaboration on this chapter generated renewed focus for us on articulating which intersections constitute meaningful insights into social phenomena. This created opportunities for personal and scholarly learning. The collaboration also enabled us to examine our previous and prospective professional trajectories as EDI scholars.

## THE COMPLEXITIES OF INTERSECTIONAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The term 'intersectionality' was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a critical race and legal scholar. Crenshaw sought to make visible African American women's predicament in the legal justice system, as their unique experiences of discrimination were obscured by separation of gender and racial discrimination, leaving these women with restricted recourse to social justice. Intersectionality has become an influential concept shaped by social justice-inspired theory, methods and praxis (Cho et al. 2013). The related notion of interlocking oppressions was introduced by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) to illustrate parallel systems of power and domination

such as racism, sexism and heterosexism, to which many marginalized populations are subjected.

One of the most regularly cited scholars on the challenges of conducting intersectional research is McCall (2005) who described three kinds of methodological complexities: intercategorical, anticategorical and intracategorical. Intercategorical complexity is McCall's preferred approach. This approach examines existing analytical categories to investigate inequalities among conflicting and complex dimensions across social groups. Intercategorical complexity typically entails analyzing advantage and disadvantage explicitly and simultaneously within multigroup studies. An example would be examining income disparities between women and men while paying attention to the roles played by ethnicity and social class in explaining these disparities. By examining multiple between-group differences and examining relationships between multiple social groups within and across, this, the highest level analytical lens in McCall's framework, embraces and charts structural inequalities. 'Anticategorical complexity' deconstructs categories to challenge assumptions about groupings and classifications that reify and reproduce inequalities. Thus, this approach prioritizes fluidity over stability of categories although it makes analysis practically challenging. 'Intracategorical complexity' (which aligns broadly with our approach) studies social groups at marginalized social locations. The intracategorical perspective can be criticized for focusing on the marginalized (for example, lesbian and bisexual women of color's experiences) rather than making visible and dismantling larger social processes and structures that cause the inequalities (for example, Walby et al. 2012). However, we believe that our approach of advocating tools that raise individual awareness of the differential power relations and systems of inequalities between researcher and participant raises the visibility and impact of these systems at the micro-level.

Walby et al. (2012) also articulate additional complexities of working with intersectionality. The six tensions these authors identify are linked to the challenge of examining multiple identities that are both embodied and embedded in multiple systems of inequalities. For example, the authors draw attention to the tension regarding the extent to which the powerful are included in intersectional analyses. They advocate this is necessary in some cases, such as the need to understand the role that racists play in silencing ethnic minority women's experiences of domestic violence. Another dilemma raised by these authors concerns the extent to which we treat the incidence and impact of intersecting identities and inequalities as fluid or stable. Walby et al. (2012) recommend that we accept that, in any given historical context, certain social relations do present a degree of relative stability with regards to how inequalities are experienced. Walby

et al. (2012) thus advocate a focus on stability, with recognition that this is only fixed at a particular moment in time. As a way of addressing their six dilemmas, they integrate critical realism with complexity theory. Consequently, Walby et al.'s (2012) flexible conceptualization of the social system enables them to see tensions not as dualities (for example, between micro agency versus macro structure) but as part of the same social system.

Intersectionality has been embraced across a range of disciplines, including sociology, legal and political studies, and increasingly in psychology and management studies. Several authors (for example, Cho et al. 2013; Collins 2015; Rodriguez et al. 2016) commend the significant theoretical and analytical insights gleaned from focusing on simultaneity (Holvino 2010) and interlocking oppressions (Collins 2000) relating to multiple marginal status. However, a recurring theme in intersectionality scholarship concerns the practicalities of conducting such work. We draw attention to two issues in particular that have implications for conducting qualitative research. These are how to analyze intersections and who or which intersections to include.

### **Who is Intersectional? The Epistemological Basis of Qualitative Intersectional Studies**

In considering who to include, we turn to issues relating to epistemic standpoint. Epistemologies are theories about knowing, thus central to discussions regarding the role of power and inequality in the process of knowing (Else-Quest and Hyde 2016). As discussed, intersectionality is historically rooted in the unique experiences of African American women (Crenshaw 1989). Subsequently, a recurring theme in the intersectional literature centers on locating the most appropriate reference point from which to investigate systems of inequalities. For example, Mehrotra (2010, p.418) wonders whether intersectionality is best seen as 'an integrated theory of identity that includes positions of privilege and power or . . . a paradigm for understanding multiply marginalized identities'. On review, Mehrotra (2010) calls for strategic deployment of different epistemological bases depending on the contextual needs of a particular project or practice. Further, drawing inspiration from postcolonial, queer and transnational feminist theories, Mehrotra (2010) proposes an intersectionality theory with shifting epistemological bases that goes beyond the triumvirate of race, gender and class, to consider sexuality, colonization, immigrants, refugees and disability as legitimate bases for intersectional analyses. Thus, she expands the scope of women's experience to a variety of marginalized social locations as refugees, immigrants or as postcolonial subjects (although a feminist focus emphasizes women as participants).

Mehrotra (2010) advocates for the pertinence of intersectionality frameworks in a globalized, transnational context. Similarly, we acknowledge that an intersectional frame is applicable beyond the study of diversity in organizations. Indeed, intersectionality is relevant for understanding multiple, simultaneous marginalized experiences and narratives as different individuals engage with major institutions including educational, health and organizational systems in national and transnational contexts.

The approach described above is similar to Anthias's (2013) perspective. Anthias (2013) advocates a particular analytical sensitivity that attends to a number of debates regarding what to examine under the intersectional framework. These debates relate to the dialogical nature of social relations, the centrality of power and social hierarchy, and the importance of locating these within spatial and temporal contexts, for example. Relatedly, Hulko (2009) argued that intersectional analyses should consider the temporal and spatial nature of oppression. According to Hulko (2009), interlocking oppressions and inequalities are time and context contingent and not fixed or ahistorical. One illustration of the contingent nature of inequalities can be found in Mahalingam and Wachman's (2012) work on reproductive rights in the context of caste with gender intersections. Mahalingam and Wachman's (2012) findings suggested that, in contrast to the Western feminist discourse on women's reproductive rights of women, women in marginalized communities with a history of female infanticide should be empowered to resist aborting their female fetuses. Countering a pro-abortion and women's right to choose narrative, this demonstrates that women's reproductive rights can mean divergent practices across different contexts.

In addition, Walby et al. (2012) highlight the tension that can arise when various identity dimensions and systems are pitted against each other. For example, sexism and classism could be in competition, cooperation or positioned hierarchically in relation to each other. As noted previously, Walby et al. (2012) also strongly advocate for focus on inequalities to extend beyond disadvantaged people's experiences because this obscures the role of the powerful in upholding these systems. They suggest that adopting terms like 'strand' or 'category' in selecting who to study has a similar impact. As an alternative, they suggest the use of the term 'set of unequal social relations' or 'social system' (Walby et al. 2012, p. 230) to make inequalities visible regardless of which inequalities are examined. We agree with Walby et al. (2012) and apply their perspective to the research relationship in our focus on individual's simultaneous location on privilege and disadvantage. We default to the term 'identity', as a commonly used term to denote facets of self which mark membership of various systems of unequal relations. However, we adopt a relational perspective

of this (that is, we consider identities vis-à-vis the researcher–participant dynamic) that we hope signifies the researcher–participant embeddedness in multiple asymmetrical power relations.

In summary, regarding who to study, our perspective is that intersectionality offers expanded insights into the vast richness of experiences of marginalization under multiple oppressive systems, extending to colonialism and beyond.

### **How to Conduct Intersectionality Research: Questions of Analysis**

After ‘who’ to study, another prevalent theme in intersectionality work regards ‘how’ to study it. Within organizational studies, a predominant analytical approach is Acker’s inequality regimes (2006, 2012). Acker’s position is that gendered substructures including organizational processes reproduce regimes of inequalities. Intersectional analyses enable organizational researchers to identify and challenge specific regimes of inequalities and asymmetries in power; specifically, to identify the organizational substructures that make gender, race and class invisible (Acker 2006, 2012).

Another analytical perspective on studying intersections in organizations is provided by Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) who advocate an emic approach to examining diversity. In contrast to emic approaches, the predominant etic approaches to studies of diversity in organizations typically focus on predefined multiple categories of identity and often fail to explore the effect of interdependent nature of these categories as they emerge in context (Tatli and Özbilgin 2012). Such etic approaches to demographic diversity do not adequately treat the effects of multiple identities with a nuanced understanding of relational and contextual dynamics of identities at work. Also, they are not sensitive to the emergence of new categories of difference in the data. To operationalize the contrasting emic approach proposed, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) apply Bourdieu’s theory of social capital to enable intersectional diversity scholars to tune into asymmetries in capital accumulation.

Both Acker (2012) and Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) offer useful guidelines to help answer the question about how to conduct organizational intersectional research. However, these perspectives adopt a socio-structural approach. While a systemic perspective is critical for advancing intersectional knowledge, researchers may also find value in more micro-level approaches. For example, Atewologun et al. (2016) adopt a perspective on intersectionality that focuses on intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, extending beyond narratives of multiple-oppressed individuals. They focus on individuals’ locations across a multiplicity of identity dimensions, that is, on individuals’ experiences of juxtaposition across identity categories,

rather than the cumulative impact of straddling multiple worlds. They introduce the notion of intersectional identity work as ‘a perspective for examining the ongoing construction of mutually constituted identities in response to identity threat’ (Atewologun et al. 2016, p.227). Using this approach, intersectional analytical insights can be gleaned from understanding how individuals ‘engage with identity facets, adapting them to anticipate and interpret encounters, negotiating self and others’ views about them’ (Atewologun et al. 2016, p.239). Thus, Atewologun et al.’s (2015) approach is aligned with a qualitative methodology that seeks deeper engagement with categories as situated, complex and embodied.

### **Engaging with the Murkiness of Intersectionality**

Overall, we see these two issues regarding who and how to study intersectionality as relating to the open-ended nature of intersections. We join other intersectionality scholars (for example, Davis 2008) in embracing the ambiguities and uncertainties generated by intersectionality work as not necessarily a constraint but as a possibility for transformation. Intersectionality research serves as a catalyst for seeking out alternative, blended and innovative approaches for understanding lived experiences at the nexus of multiple positionalities. Nash (2008) encourages engaging with the murkiness and contradictions in intersectionality theory in order to realize its commitment to combat various forms of oppression. Our contribution in this chapter is that engaging with the complexities of intersectional qualitative research offers possibilities for studying power asymmetries and revealing privileges, particularly at the individual level of analysis. Next, we discuss five tools and practices that embrace the situated and dynamic nature of researcher–participant identities and acknowledge that these are shaped by different gradients of power and disadvantage.

## **TOOLS FOR CONDUCTING INTERSECTIONAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

We discuss five methodological practices and tools that apply the intersectional framework that can be used by qualitative researchers at different stages of the research project (Table 7.1). We hope these tools contribute to understanding the situated nature of identities and the impact of this situatedness on researcher-participant dynamics. These tools are adopting intersectional reflexivity (best applied at the project outset, and ongoing through the project), a privilege versus penalties board game (best applied at the project outset, but can be used as a data collection tool), plotting an

*Table 7.1 Methodological tools and techniques for conducting qualitative intersectional research on equality, diversity and inclusion*

Research phase	Design and set-up	Entering the field and briefing participants	Data collection and analysis
Methodological tools	Intersectional reflexivity Privilege and penalties board game	Intersectional identity web	Photovoice audiovisual data collection Intersectional identity journals
Primary target	Researchers	Researchers and participants	Participants

identity web (recommended on entering the field and engaging with participants), keeping an intersectional identity work journal (recommended as a data collection tool) and conducting participant-led audiovisual data collection (recommended during data collection and analysis). We have used these tools and practices in teaching, research and consulting applications relating to the concept of intersectionality. Next, we discuss how these practices and tools can be practically used to elicit the perceptions and experiences of researcher and participant as they cohabit socially constructed intersectional positions in a research project.

### 1. Cultivating Intersectional Reflexivity

Our first recommended tool is intersectional reflexivity. We encourage researchers to adopt this in advance of, and through, the intersectional research project. This recommended mindset is inspired by Yuval-Davis’s work. Yuval-Davis (2012) called for a ‘situated intersectional perspective’ for studying everyday experiences relating to embodied identities that border or cross identity categories. According to Yuval-Davis, researchers have to traverse various boundaries of belonging that invariably include some people and exclude others. Thus, situated intersectionality entails dialogue across different social positions, a form of cross-boundary engagement that enables a common ground for shared understanding. Although her emphasis stems from her work on communities, nationalities and migration, our position aligns closely with Yuval-Davis’s situated epistemologies.

As research participants shift boundaries of identification, so Yuval-Davis (2015) encourages researchers to mindfully engage in such dynamics. Thus, intersectional qualitative researchers need also to pay attention

to ‘rooting’ (that is, a reflective understanding of one’s own positioning) and ‘shifting’ (that is, understanding the situated nature of other participants’ positionalities) as they conduct their research. In Yuval-Davis’s (2015, p. 641) words, this entails ‘being self-reflective regarding one’s own positioning (rooting) and yet attempting to understand the situated gazes of the other participants (shifting)’.

In our experience, practical techniques to enable researchers’ self-reflection and empathy when conducting qualitative intersectional research are rare. Broadly, all the other tools we discuss in this chapter (the privileges versus penalties board game, intersectional identity web and journals, and photovoice audiovisual data collection) do enable Yuval-Davis’s concepts of ‘rooting’ as self-reflection, and ‘shifting’ as enhanced situated understanding, to varying degrees. In general, these tools foreground lived experience and require active engagement (through the duration of the research process) with intersectional identities as embodied and situated in various constellations of privilege and marginality.

Focusing specifically on approaches to cultivate intersectional reflexivity, we encourage researchers to seek a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of intersectional work done by researchers and participants where multiple identities are embodied, narratives shift and social identity borders are regularly traversed. Cultivating intersectional reflexivity requires that identity intersections are actively deployed to make sense of the research processes in which participants and researchers engage as they co-produce data and knowledge. While this seems evident, it is not always practiced. For example, Hulko (2009) reflects on her disappointment with feminist scholars who are marginalized as women but otherwise privileged as straight, white, able-bodied North American, married and gender-conforming. Such scholars do, intellectually, acknowledge the systems of interlocking oppressions, but often pay insufficient attention to privilege, and how intersecting advantages and disadvantages may have affected their theorizing. Thus, self-reflections about your role in the research process may be necessary. Reflexivity ‘goes beyond reporting facts and truth to actively constructing interpretations of the researcher’s own experiences in the field and then questioning how these interpretations came about’ (Hertz 1997, p. 15). Reflexive intersectional authors highlight the importance of being aware of researchers’ reactions to data, and share personal struggles in navigating the research process. Examples of this can be found in the reflexive accounts of Douglas (2002), Bell et al. (2003), Pio (2007) and Kamenou (2007). For example, Kamenou (2007, p. 2002) acknowledges her position ‘as a white minority researcher of Greek-Cypriot origin, investigating the experiences of non-white minority groups’. Kamenou (2007) recounts how some of her South Asian and black Caribbean female

**BOX 7.1 RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR CULTIVATING INTERSECTIONAL REFLEXIVITY**

Cultivating intersectional reflexivity:

1. Articulate your own salient intersectionalities.
2. Note how these intersectionalities may play out at intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional levels.
3. Manage the emotions, knowledge and experiences associated with this heightened awareness:
  - (a) Develop 'negative capability' – a form of openness of mind and comfort with uncertainties and not knowing.
  - (b) Practice cultural humility – interrogate your relationship with the whole person (research participant), to identify potential resources or gaps that may be inherent in power differences and their past and present life experiences.

participants saw Greek culture, religion and tradition as similar to their experiences, treating her as 'one of us'. Despite this Kamenou (2007) also acknowledges that an understanding of ethnic minority groups' lives from majority group researchers would be partial and incomplete. Such a reflexive approach to qualitative intersectional research acknowledges the social construction of multiple intersecting identities and intersubjectivity of meaning generated in this research. Thus, we advocate that researchers interrogate their own social location vis-à-vis their participants', and the research topic, and that, while doing this, privilege is actively and mindfully integrated into theorizing and reflection. We position intersectional reflexivity at the start of the research process, but see it as critical during latter stages in the research process – during design, when conducting the research in interaction with participants and during data analysis.

In practice, how can researchers cultivate such intersectional reflexivity? Reflecting in advance entails three important steps (Box 7.1). First, researchers could start by identifying and articulate their own salient intersectional identities. By this we do not mean an unending list of personal, social and relational identities, but a list of the handful of identities visible and invisible, mutable or fixed that may be salient in the context of the study. This list may well change from project to project, or even from one fieldwork site to the next. In our experience, privilege and marginalization in work-related diversity scholarship are typically related to ethnic, gender, professional, age, language fluency and social status. This first step is important because, when conducting diversity and

other scholarly work, researchers implicitly or mindfully navigate their privilege (including education and cultural capital) with disadvantaged identities (for example, gender, ethnicity, social class). For the researcher, it is important to articulate where each identity is located relative to the participant – in which of these areas is he or she privileged and likely to purposefully or inadvertently take on a dominant role? What are the implications of this for the knowledge experience?

Second, we encourage researchers to be sensitive to sites of intersectional identity salience in collecting and analyzing data (Atewologun 2014). Identity salience occurs ‘when an individual is prompted to categorize himself or herself along identity oriented criteria’ (Forehand et al. 2002, p. 1087). Salience can occur at intrapersonal, interpersonal and meso-levels (Atewologun, 2014). At the intrapersonal level, intersecting identities shift in value and meaning for the researcher throughout the research project. Also, social identities play out differently during interpersonal encounters between researcher and participants. Atewologun (2014) describes how ethnic Black male identity salience may be hyper-masculinized and ethnic Asian male identity salience hypo-macho/masculinized in comparison with normative masculinity. This challenges assumptions about what ‘ethnic-gender’ experiences may mean in minority, ethnic male professionals’ identity accounts. Finally, at the meso-organizational level, contextual factors such as demographic distribution and diversity policies can also influence the value, meanings and enactment of social identities. This means that, while the research topic may be restricted to one unit of analysis (the individual, the group/team, the organization or the community) awareness of the significance and attributions given to intersections can be generated from multiple levels (Atewologun 2014). Thus, researchers could be cognizant of the most pertinent influences, to articulate the ways in which prevailing context (for example, sub-discipline, academic domain, geographical or national zones) may influence researcher-participant dynamics and data interpretation.

For the third recommended step for cultivating intersectional reflexivity, researchers could seek to manage the emotions, knowledge and experiences associated with this heightened awareness. What are the implications of a researcher’s intersectional location and to what extent can this be used as a point of affinity or alliance between others? For example, Bell et al. (2003) elaborate on the complexities of conducting gendered and raced research in organizations, drawing on sensitive issues such as trust, authority and ‘silence versus voice’ as researchers of various backgrounds try to make sense of their data. One competence that researchers may need to acquire and hone to help manage the emotions, knowledge and experiences associated with this heightened awareness is ‘negative capability’,

which is a form of openness of mind and comfort with not knowing. This expression stems from John Keats's (1817 [1970]) appreciation of literary accomplishments 'capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Keats 1817 [1970], p. 43). In the context of organizational diversity research, Cornish (2011) highlighted three features of negative capability: (1) capacity to be open; (2) attentiveness to diversity and (3) suspension of ego. Negative capability also refers to sustained reflective inaction (Simpson et al. 2002), that is, our capacity to stay with difficult emotions and predicaments when we witness authentic narratives that challenge and unhinge various axes of our own privileges.

Developing negative capability mitigates against defensive and counterproductive reactions that thwart the insights we may gain about how embodied and situated identities contribute or reproduce systems of inequalities as we conduct and interpret data. Negative capability in the context of qualitative intersectional research also links with the notion of cultural humility (Ortega and Coulborn Faller 2011). Cultural humility is advocated over cultural sensitivity, the latter being the cultural competence that is often emphasized in social work and organizational diversity training. Cultural sensitivity accentuates homogenous shared group characteristics, thus undervaluing clients' unique differences, and pressures workers to be experts on their clients' culture. Cultural humility, on the other hand, integrates multicultural and intersectional understandings. It is advocated to improve social work practice because it draws attention 'to the diversity of the whole person, to power differences in relationships (especially between workers and families), to different past and present life experiences including microaggressions, and to potential resources or gaps' (Ortega and Coulborn Faller, 2011, p. 32). Ortega and Coulborn Faller's (2011) cultural humility perspective draws upon three dimensions from the vantage point that social workers' and their families' lives are interconnected; researcher and researched lives are similarly so connected. Their first two dimensions are (1) self-awareness and reflection about our privileges and beliefs and practices; and (2) having an open mind with awareness that our knowledge of differences is partial, incomplete and biased. These dimensions reinforce the broader discussion on cultivating intersectional reflexivity made thus far. Their third dimension draws on adopting an orientation of learning from others. They encourage social workers to view their professional helping roles as part of a greater connectivity between peoples, and to welcome their clients' cultural expertise as a contribution to this greater whole. For researchers, this means seeing research participants' identity constellations as critical contributions to the body of scholarly work. Thus, when we approach qualitative

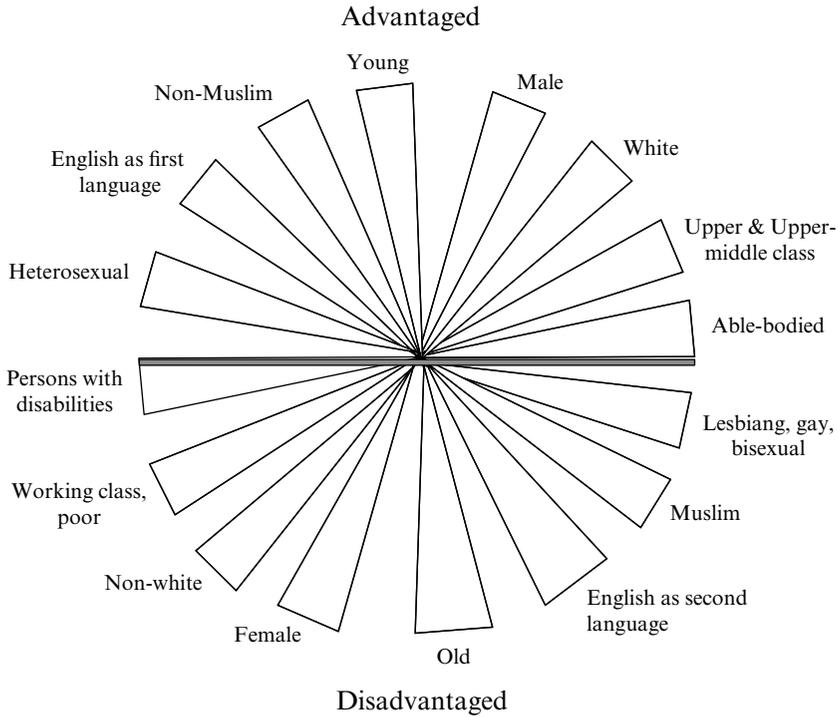
EDI research with an enhanced and critical intersectional reflexivity, it raises the potential for enhanced meaning creation and co-production of knowledge.

## **2. Revealing Privilege and Penalty: The American Dream Board Game**

A second tool that applies intersectionality in qualitative EDI research is the American Dream board game, an experiential yet fun exercise for revealing privileges and penalties inherent in the American myth of meritocracy. The board game was developed by Yim (2006) to promote a reflective understanding of axes of privileges and marginalities associated with various identities and has been used as a pedagogical as well as an intervention tool. The board game is modelled after Monopoly. Each participant is assigned a character, comprising a range of intersecting identities including ethnicity and gender. As participants roll the dice to reach the 'picket fenced house' (a symbol of the great American Dream), they have to navigate actions printed on cards in the Chance deck that describe a variety of discriminatory experiences of those who embody many marginalized identities (for example, you are driving your car, you are pulled over at a stop sign, All Blacks move two spaces back). The game is a useful tool for opening up conversations about a topic that may be sensitive or about which majority group members are unaware. The game permits individuals to explore their own values, privileges and disadvantages in a relatively safe space. We recommend this game for the project design and set-up stages. As privilege is typically invisible (McIntosh 1990), we suggest this tool for research members who may be new to the intersectional framework, as well as for newly-formed research teams. This game can be used to generate discussion, insight and reflections in a diverse and/or newly formed research team about to embark on working together on an intersectional research project.

## **3. Intersectional Identity Web**

Our third recommended tool for conducting intersectional EDI qualitative research is the identity web (Figure 7.1). This tool is applied within the intersectional identity work framework advocated by Atewologun et al. (2016). Intersectional identity work combines an identity construction frame with simultaneous identity positions. This views identity construction dynamics as entangled with individuals' simultaneous position along axes of differences relating to gender, racial, class-related advantage and disadvantage, and others. Such dynamics can be revealed through plotting an identity web as well as keeping an identity journal (discussed in the following section).



Source: Adapted from Morgan (1996).

Figure 7.1 Intersectional identity web

Applying intersectional identity work helps individuals locate themselves across multiple identity configurations (including subordinate and dominant identities) for meaningful insight into experiences of intersectionality. The intersectional identity web is a useful method to use during participant briefing in advance of conducting research interviews or more directly as a protocol to be used during interviews. The identity web offers a relatively structured method for eliciting intersectional identity data. The ‘web’ maps identity constellations – radial lines representing multiple identity dimensions (for example, race, gender, able-bodiedness, religion, weight, sexual orientation, education, skin colour and class) (based on Morgan 1996). Individuals plot themselves on the graph, typically resulting in differential dis/advantage on several identity dimensions. They are then asked probing questions such as how the identities work together or under what circumstances or contexts specific identities are more or less

salient than others. Diversity research in organizations has traditionally emphasized the fixed, categorical and binary nature of male, ethnic and other privileges. The ‘haves’ are often pitted against the ‘have nots’ – compared with white, middle-class men, ‘others’ are typically assumed not to experience privilege (as noted by Atewologun et al. 2016). However, the intersectional identity web enables in-depth exploration of individuals’ constellation of multiple subordinate and dominant intersecting identities (for example, as a highly educated, native English language speaker from a higher socioeconomic background who is gay and dyslexic). Thus, the tool challenges non-dichotomous assumptions of advantage versus disadvantage prevalent in diversity research. Overall, the method is a critical tool to elicit intersectional dynamics for qualitative research purposes. It can also be useful for conducting intersectional analyses beyond traditional minority samples to extend to majority or mixed majority and minority individuals. For majority group members, this method can be used to reveal invisible privileges. To our knowledge, while this method has been used for learning and developmental purposes by one of the authors (for example, in workshops and in management coaching), it is yet to be used as a data collection tool.

#### **4. Intersectional Identity Work Journal**

Inviting participants to complete journals to record their experiences relating to intersections is our fourth recommendation for conducting qualitative intersectional EDI research. Much qualitative intersectional research relies on interviews. This is because the interview method is familiar, flexible and ideally suited for exploring complex issues (King 2004) such as experiences at the location of multiple marginality. Interviews also encourage openness and sharing with interested outsiders (King 2004). However, our experience of conducting intersectional EDI research is that there is a risk of biased recall, focusing on notable experiences of disadvantage and discrimination. Therefore, we advocate the journal method which mitigates some of the challenges of diversity research. For instance, regular journal entries enable a focus on lived everyday experiences, rather than memorable episodes such as experiences of stigma. Using journal entries as the primary data source also removes the requirement to examine narratives about personal experiences and then infer identity constructions from interview narratives. Journals are also less reliant on respondents’ memory to recall everyday events relating to identity simultaneity. Atewologun et al. (2016) used journals supplemented with interviews to capture rich data on everyday identity-heightening events experienced by senior-level minority ethnic women and men. For each

respondent, they used the gender or ethnic marker with which the participant had originally self-identified, such as ‘senior man of Indian origin’. Journal entries were prompted by the question, ‘Can you think about a time/event/episode at work today that prompted you to think of yourself as a senior (man of Indian origin, for example)?’ (Atewologun et al. 2016). The authors viewed multiple identities as mutually constitutive, and avoided additive assumptions (for example, asking respondents to rank or separate their identities) and referred to respondents’ intersecting identities using descriptors that most resonated with them in personalized journal templates and interviews. Using the identity-salient episodes elicited from the journals as an interview prompt enabled the authors to elicit rich data on everyday intersectional identity work. The study revealed how intersecting identities are leveraged across various power positions – in encounters with subordinates, superiors and clients. The methodology enabled theorization about how respondents subjectively constructed identity dimensions independently or simultaneously as cues and resources to understand or alter disadvantaged or privileged experiences (Atewologun et al. 2016).

Reflecting on intersecting identities in journals appeared to be a powerful tool for enabling participants’ insight and self-development. Similarly to the identity web described in the previous section, journals may be adapted for use with majority as well as minority individuals, to record and reflect on everyday experiences of inclusion and privilege and/or exclusion and subordination.

## **5. Photovoice Audiovisual Data Collection**

The final tool we recommend for conducting qualitative EDI research on intersections is photovoice – a participatory photography data collection and analysis method. Photovoice is used as a tool in community-based research to understand community members’ perspectives on a critical issue in their community. Typically, participants are asked to take pictures to visually represent how they feel and think about an issue. Following this activity, the researcher meets with the participants and invites them to discuss the pictures to gain insights about the issue from the community members’ standpoint. We see this tool as useful for deepening phenomenological understanding of identities and belonging. Photovoice is a research tool developed for working with members of marginalized communities so that they can identify, represent and present their lives from their perspective (Wang and Burris 1997). This approach, often used as part of an action research methodology, sees members of marginalized communities as the experts on their lives, and this tool is an opportunity

for individuals to share their expertise and knowledge with researchers (Wang and Burris 1997). Wang et al. (1996) characterize photovoice users as ‘visual anthropologists’. From the perspective of intersectional identities, participants would utilize images to present their multiple identities, and to share their perceptions about issues or specific concerns they face based on their identity locations. For example, in a study of working-class men (butchers), Slutskaya et al. (2012) found that photovoice elicited themes that were rarely discussed or reflected in the literature (for example, themes relating to identity, nostalgia and memory). For instance, one of the butchers took pictures to reveal the aesthetic dimensions of packing the meat. Slutskaya et al. (2012) reported that photovoice provided an opportunity for working-class men to speak, and for participants to take control of data generation, enabling their active co-participation in the research process. The method elicited new insights and themes critical to the intersections of class and gender, such as the conflict between embodying a marginalized class identity and being a man. Thus, photovoice elicits phenomenologically grounded narratives providing powerful insights about issues, identities and belongings.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we presented five methodological practices and tools – cultivating intersectional reflexivity, playing a privilege versus penalties board game, plotting an intersectional identity web, keeping an intersectional identity work journal and collecting participant-led audiovisual data. These tools were offered as practical responses to two prevalent themes pertinent to conducting qualitative intersectionality research; that is, which marginalized identities to study and how best to analyze the insights elicited from intersectional projects. Our recommended tools and practices also counter the additive assumptions of multiple identities, for example, that analyses of sexism, can be layered over racism and homophobia, to understand minority lesbians’ experiences. Rather, our recommended approaches (ongoing researcher intersectional reflexivity, research team dialogue facilitated through the privilege versus penalties game, eliciting how participant identity combinations play out using the intersectional identity web, journal, or participant led data) embrace the complexity of intersectionality as situated and embodied within the research context as well as within the researcher–participant dynamic.

We acknowledge some of the boundaries of our advocated approaches. For example, we have emphasized agency over structural examinations of intersectionality. We believe that this individual, micro-level and

psychologically inspired focus offers added value to intersectionality in EDI research, and is complementary to sociological, macro approaches. Another potential criticism lies in the argument that a focus on privilege that can render invisible the experiences of the oppressed, further sidelining individuals at the margin (as recognized by Walby et al. 2012, and others). Our position is that, generally, researchers tend to come from more dominant social positions than their research participants. We argue therefore that there is greater potential for attaining social justice and equity in the production of EDI research by approaching research from the perspective of multiple simultaneous privilege and marginalization in which both researcher and researched are entangled. Thus, this is not a binary position of pitting the advantaged researcher against the disadvantaged participant; rather, we adopt a nuanced perspective that acknowledges that, in many ways, 'we are all sometimes privileged' (Atewologun and Sealy 2014, p.424), and in some ways, not, as we engage in co-constructed knowledge production.

Our recommended tools raise additional methodological questions. We have recommended that these tools are likely to come into their own at different stages of the research project. We suggested that each tool can be applied at different phases of the research project, from design and set up, to entering the field and participant briefing, to data collection and analysis. We also suggested ways in which they may be used complementarily. However, in due course, researchers' practical experiences of using these tools will offer guidance with regard to the most pragmatic and useful applications of these tools. Also, in time, it would be necessary to assess the extent to which these methods can be used as pedagogical tools to equip early career scholars to cultivate intersectional reflexivity and practice messy data collection.

In summary, we offer these techniques and methods as ways forward to deal with the messiness of qualitative intersectional EDI research, in particular with regard to concerns about which intersections to study and how to practically conduct such research. Our five tools seek to help researchers to capture the complex, intertwined experiences of multiple identity positions, to attend to reflexive understanding of the status of identities in the researcher–participant dynamic and to open up the space for participants to define their identities in their own terms. The methods we discuss here have been applied in a range of different circumstances including research, pedagogical and management development contexts. This is, however, the first time they have been brought together as a toolkit for enabling qualitative researchers to grapple with multiple identities and unequal social relations. We hope we have generated useful and practical starting points for researchers to engage with the fuzziness often associated with individual-level intersectional qualitative research in organizations.

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