



# *Doing* intersectionality

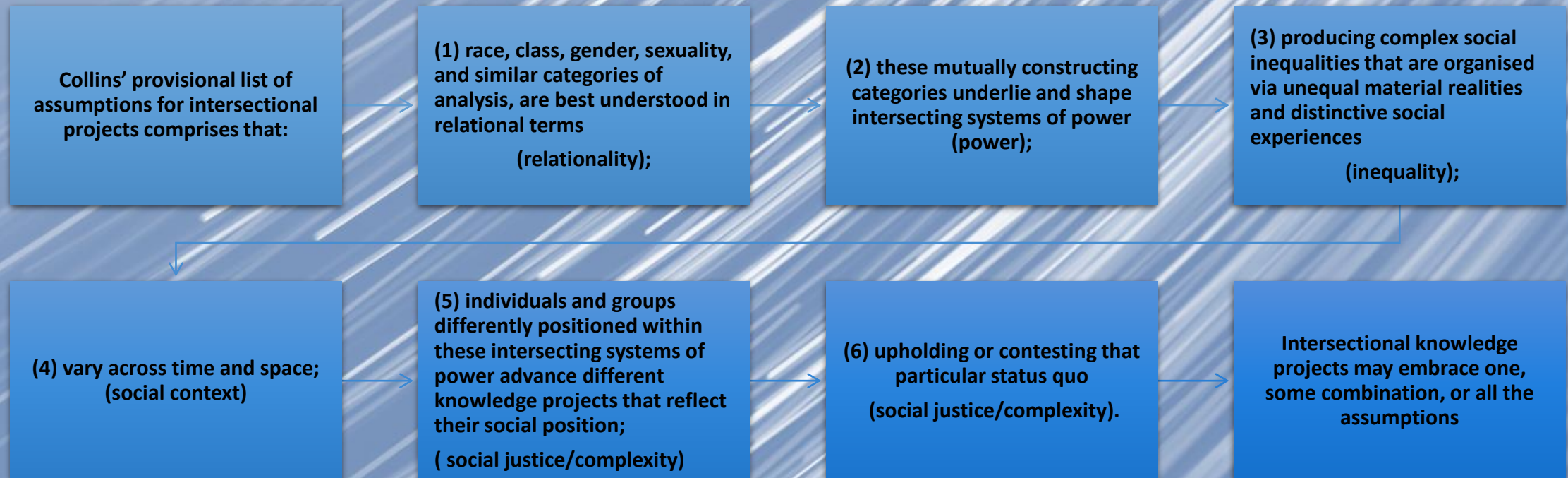
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# Patricia Hill Collins' provisional list of assumptions for intersectional projects



# Creating a space for dialogue

Every now and then in the news: cases of sexual harassment against seasonal workers in the strawberry fields in Huelva, Spain.

400 cases reported: 13 legal procedures (not sure about convictions)

Spanish migration legislation (2000): 'temporary foreign worker' system.

Careful selection of women in Morocco (i.e. family responsibilities)

Abusive working and living conditions (fields)—agricultural work, control by manager...

Sexual harassment and abuse at work/ rape

Intersection of sex, race, class, migratory status...

(Dialogue amongst perspectives/ knowledge)

Relational/Power/Inequality/Social context/Social justice/Complexity

Letizia Palumbo & Alessandra Sciarba:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/S/TUD/2018/604966/IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)604966\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/S/TUD/2018/604966/IPOL_STU(2018)604966_EN.pdf)





## Intersectionality improves group-based approaches

### Addressing underlying factors creating “vulnerability”

- How certain structures make certain “identities” a vehicle of vulnerability
- What are the institutional structures that make some people be discriminated against?
- Stereotypes/ lack of inclusive education/ fear of consequences of reporting violence...

### Accepting diversity within the groups

- Women/ girls
- Children/girls
- Children with disabilities/ girls with disabilities...
- Physical disabilities, cognitive

### The importance of a category/ system of power cannot be determined a priori- but has to be taken in relational terms:

- not all violence against girls with disabilities is gender-based: bullying from other children
- it is the combination/ intersection: forced institutionalisation of girls with disabilities much more frequent than of boys (period management, fear of pregnancy...)

### Categories are dynamic and context-based

Interagency statement at:  
<https://www.unicef.org/reports/working-together-ensure-right-girls-disabilities-live-free-violence>

# Principle of non-discrimination in the implementation of the IC (art. 4.3)

**How are the different actors interpreting this provision/ these obligations?**

- Multiple levels and actors
  - State reports
  - Civil Society shadow reports
  - GREVIO reports
- Multiple perspectives but 3 main approaches
  - Group-based
  - Mainstreaming difference or mainstreaming GBV policies into sectorial policies
  - Structural approach to inequalities

**The obligation to interpret the convention mindful of the interaction of intersecting forms of discrimination means implies taking into consideration that:**

- policies may be crafted in disempowering ways
- policies may result in discrimination
- Some women may be subject to specific forms of violence
- Stereotypes can be reproduced by policies and practices
- All 4 Pillars must be read with that principle in mind



**ENSURING THE  
NON-DISCRIMINATORY  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
MEASURES AGAINST  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
ARTICLE 4, PARAGRAPH 3, OF  
THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION**



**A collection of papers  
on the Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence  
against women and domestic violence**

<https://rm.coe.int/paper-on-article-4-paragraph-3-of-the-istanbul-convention/1680a5d92e>

# FGM/C at the Istanbul Convention

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## Intersectional failure

**Intersectional failure** refers to the violence resulting from not having an intersectional policy approach, and the reinforcement of power systems that remain unaddressed thereof.

### Explanatory Report to the IC, para 198.

“Due to the nature of female genital mutilation (FGM), this is one of the criminal offences that break with the principle of gender neutrality of the criminal law part of this Convention (...) It aims at criminalising the traditional practice of cutting away certain parts of the female genitalia which some communities perform on their female members...”

An intersectional approach (what internationality **does**):

- unveils layers of subordination as they are built in by structures, discourses and institutions-
- provides another lens to capture the complexity of power
- By doing so, provides a framework that does not reinforce unbalanced power relations

How has a particular form of violence been addressed in its

**Political aspects:** whether FGM/C has been conceptualised in disempowering ways for racialised women

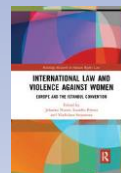
- Culturally motivated crime
- Racialised victim female subject
- Ignores male Circumcision; white plastic surgery, intersex surgery, mandatory genital surgery

**Representational aspects:** whether the narrative around it reinforces stereotypes and stigma

- Cultural crime
- Excessive interest and attention
- Perfect victim of barbaric culture
- Girls at risk...

**Structural and disempowering aspects:** whether the policy/norm meets needs of victims and whether it imposes burdens

- Little attention to residence permit, other forms of violence or needs/
- Paternalist policies/ tokenism
- Not prioritising needs of victims/ families/ girls
- Excessive control and policing over families
- No difference between needs of women who have undergone FGM/C and girls at risk



Mestre i Mestre, R (2020) 'Exploring intersectionality: FGM/C at the Istanbul Convention' in J Niemi, L Peroni & V Stoyanova (eds): *International Law and Violence against Women. Europe and the Istanbul Convention*, Routledge.