What Is Feminist Intersectionality?

Feminist intersectionality is:
- An approach to research and action.
- A belief that inequalities concretely affect the lives of women and other marginalized people.
- A commitment to exploring how inequalities work in relationship with individual identities, systems and institutions (See Figure 1).

Using feminist intersectionality involves:
- Asking how individual and institutional power creates differences and inequalities and can build movements for social justice.
- Recognizing that intersecting power relationships mean we can be both privileged and oppressed.
- Looking at changes over time and in relation to space and place. Power operates on and across multiple levels of experience, including individual, community, regional, national and international.
- Incorporating diverse and historically undervalued knowledges and voices, particularly those of Indigenous women, women of colour, women with disabilities and younger and older women.
- Embracing complexity and resisting either/or thinking.

The goals of feminist intersectionality are to:
- Help everyone become aware of how their identities, beliefs attitudes and behaviours support, and are affected by, systems and institutions of power.
- Unsettle dominant power relations to create social change and produce accountable research.

> **Brief History of Intersectionality:**
> First used by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the principles of intersectionality have been present in Black feminist thought for centuries, as a way of understanding the complexities of Black women's lives. Indigenous understandings of connectedness and 'all my relations' share many links with intersectionality.

What is A Feminist Intersectional Policy Analysis?

A feminist intersectional policy analysis asks how well public policies, services and programs account for the perspectives, knowledges and experiences of diverse individuals and communities. It identifies whose needs are not being (or are not likely to be) met and provides a starting point for making essential changes. The primary goal is to make policies, services and programs more accessible and inclusive for all people.

Intersectionality Recognizes:	Individual Circumstances	Aspects of Identity	Systems of Power	Institutions
		Gender Class Race Sexuality Family Structure Ethnicity Ability Indigeneity Religion Location Age Citizenship Language	Ableism Racism Sexism Classism Colonization Ageism Heterosexism Capitalism	Politics Immigration Education Economy Government Law Globalization War

Figure 1: Adapted from J. Simpson, 2009, *Everyone Belongs: A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality*.

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What Is Resource Development and Extraction?

Resource development and extraction is the process of removing natural resources from the Earth or otherwise transforming them for economic profit or to meet human needs. Hydroelectric dam construction, oil and natural gas drilling, hydraulic fracturing, mining, mineral processing, forestry and fisheries are all examples of resource development and extraction.

Why is A Feminist Intersectionality Policy Analysis Important?

Resource development and extraction projects are accompanied by substantial social, economic and environmental impacts for communities. A feminist intersectional policy analysis makes visible the *different impacts* on women and other marginalized members of communities living at the intersection of multiple inequalities. It allows policy-makers to see many more of the costs and benefits of these projects.

How Can I Do A Feminist Intersectional Policy Analysis of a Resource Development or Extraction Project?

A feminist intersectional policy analysis asks deliberate questions about how relationships of power have and have not been considered in policy and decision-making processes.

Gather Information
- Draw on publicly available documents from governments, corporations, communities, the media, and advocacy organizations.
- These may include impact benefit agreements, environmental assessments, transcripts and submissions from Review Board hearings, position papers, reports, and news articles.

Sort and Sift Through Information
- Most of what you find will contribute to a feminist intersectional policy analysis.
- Scan the table of contents, if applicable.
- Look for terms like: impacts, consultation, costs and benefits.
- Search for words that show power relationships. See the examples in the chart below. Use the 'Find' function to search the text of the document without having to read each section.

Words That Might Indicate Power Has Or Has Not Been Considered							
Women/Female	Disabilities	Aboriginal	Visible Minority	Indigenous*	Children	Poverty	Métis
Employment	Diversity	Traditions	Rural/Remote	Immigrant	Health	Social	Inuit
Environment	Income	Affordable	First Nation	Violence	LGBT	Cultural	Skills
*Search for the name of specific Indigenous peoples and nations whose territory is affected by the project. Examples: Mi'kmaq, Innu, Cree, Anishinaabe, Nunatsiavut, Norway House, Sheshatshiu.							

Ask Questions

Below you will find examples of key questions for resource development and extraction projects.

General Questions – Ask these questions in all stages of the project.

What are the costs and benefits of the project?
- What are the social, economic and environmental costs of the project?
- Who bears the costs? Who benefits from the project?

How are women and other marginalized groups recognized and included in the project?
- Which women are included?
- Are women seen as employees, community members, community leaders, business owners, consumers and/or users in the context of the project?

Figure 2: Iron mine in Labrador West[1]

- Does the project see women as occupying traditional gender roles (as caregivers, administrators, etc.) and also in non-traditional gender roles (as tradespeople, managers, community negotiators, etc.)?
- Have Indigenous people, people of colour, people with disabilities, migrant workers, immigrants and newcomers, senior people, young people, and people living with low incomes been included? How?

Is power seen as structural in the context of the resource development or extraction project?
- How are colonization, racism, and other systems of power (see Figure 1) recognized and addressed?
- Which histories are included? Who tells these histories?

Assessment Questions – Ask these questions about the assessment process.

What types of knowledge were included (are being included) in assessments and decision-making?
- Was Indigenous knowledge included as well as Western knowledge and scientific evidence?
- Were qualitative (interviews, stories, etc.) and quantitative (statistics, measures, etc.) methods used?
- How are costs and health conceptualized? Do they make space for non-Western ways of being and knowing?

Who was involved in the consultation and negotiation processes?
- Who is the proponent and to whom are they accountable?
- Which communities were consulted and which individuals within communities were involved?
- Which government actors were involved? What were their positions and contributions?
- How and where was consultation done? Were accommodations made to facilitate the inclusion of diverse people (accessible location, transportation, child care, translation, interpretation, etc.)?

What considerations of time and space were included?
- Which geographic spaces were assessed? Where are boundaries of the project impact area?
- What timeline is used to determine costs and benefits of the project?

Have the project assessments considered impacts or costs across multiple levels?
- How are the impacts different on a local, provincial/territorial, national, and international level?
- What are portrayed as the costs to individuals and communities? Who has identified those costs?
- How are the relationships between humans, communities and environments described?

Decision-Making Questions – Ask these questions about the decision-making process.

What do we know about the decision-making process?
- What stage is the decision-making process at? Who makes which decisions?
- Who is awarded intervener status in Review Board hearings? Whose interests do they represent?
- How is this process communicated to the public? Is it clear how decisions are being made and whose voices were taken into account in the process?

What is the final approval process?
- What steps are involved?
- What are the points where the public can intervene? How can they do that?
- What alliances can be formed for effective action?

Monitoring Questions – Ask these questions about the monitoring process.

What do we know about the monitoring process?
- Who designed the monitoring process? What type of consultation was done?
- What costs are included in the monitoring process?
- Who monitors the long-term costs and mitigation measures? Can the public be involved?

Reflection Questions – Ask these questions when you have completed your policy analysis.

Was social justice a consideration in the policy or decision-making process?
- Did the process appear to result in transformation for communities and policy makers? How? For whom?
- Did it challenge dominant systems of power (see Figure 1) or change institutional practices?

Share What You Have Learned

Find the places in the assessment and decision-making processes where you can intervene and share what you have learned about the costs and benefits of the resource development project. Make your findings accessible to other people and share them as a fact sheet, op-ed, blog post or a social media campaign!

[1]"Open pit iron mine, Labrador" by Neil Carey is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0