It’s been over 30 years since Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term intersectionality, which describes the ways in which social identities such as gender, sexuality, age, race, class, and disability, among others are interconnected and create unique experiences of oppression and discrimination for marginalised persons.

While advances have been made over the years to incorporate intersectionality theory in scientific knowledge production, in practice mainstream research claims to be gender neutral, but continues to be framed by masculinist norms in method and content, and often smooths over the differences and complexities Crenshaw highlights.

That said, researchers and funding agencies have a crucial role in addressing unequal gender norms and power relations underpinning knowledge production, by adopting an intersectional framework in their work. A recent report published by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) under the auspices of the Science Granting Councils Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI), looked at a greater understanding of the trends and patterns in intersectional research by African scholars, and the role of Science Granting Councils, such as the National Research Foundation, in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research.

This report forms part of a series of reports that aim to establish the extent and manner in which an intersectional framework has been adopted in African scholarship.

The researchers used a rigorous and explicit systematic literature review framework to assess intersectional literature published in peer-reviewed journals by African scholars between January 2010 and December 2019. Editorials, book reviews and books were excluded from the sample. In total 50 articles all published in English language journals were reviewed for this study.

An intersectional framework in research and grant-making can help to address persisting gender inequality and interconnected oppressions.
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