

Digital Intersectional Feminism

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The logo for FASoS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), consisting of the text 'FASoS' inside a hexagonal border.

FASoS

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Trustworthy AI-based Systems for Sustainable Growth (TAIM), 2023-27

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-
- Other colleagues & friends over past 40 years, especially Flis Henwood
 - And organisers of this summer school

The New York Times

OPINION

18 January 2025

Mark Zuckerberg Has a Funny Idea of What It Is to Be a Man

Use of AI could worsen racism and sexism in Australia, human rights commissioner warns *Guardian*,
13 August 2025

AI tools used by English councils downplay women's health issues, study finds

Guardian, 11 August 2025

Exclusive: LSE research finds risk of gender bias in care decisions made based on AI summaries of case notes



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Outline

- Some questions
- Some data
- Example: Coding gender on Facebook & elsewhere
- Feminism – types & relations to technology
- Intersectionality and data feminism
- Feminism all the way down/
Full stack feminism

Questions

- Do you consider yourself a feminist?
- What does feminism mean to you?
- Has gender equality been achieved?

Definition of feminism

‘Advocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of the female sex; the movement associated with this’

Oxford University Press. (n.d.). Feminism, n., 3. In *Oxford English dictionary*. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6092042326>

Data on gender inequality, 1

	Maternal mortality ratio, deaths per 100,000 births, 2020	Adolescent births per 1000 women aged 15-19, 2023	Labour force participation rate, 2023	Ratio of women's to men's income, 2023	Share of seats in national parliament 2023
Austria	5	3.8	56.8	68.9	42.8
NL	4	1.9	64.1	70.4	39.1
US	21	13.1	57.3	68.9	28.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	509	94.2	33.5	70.0	27.3

Source: Tables 4 & 5, *Human Development Report 2025*, UNDP.
Available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/>

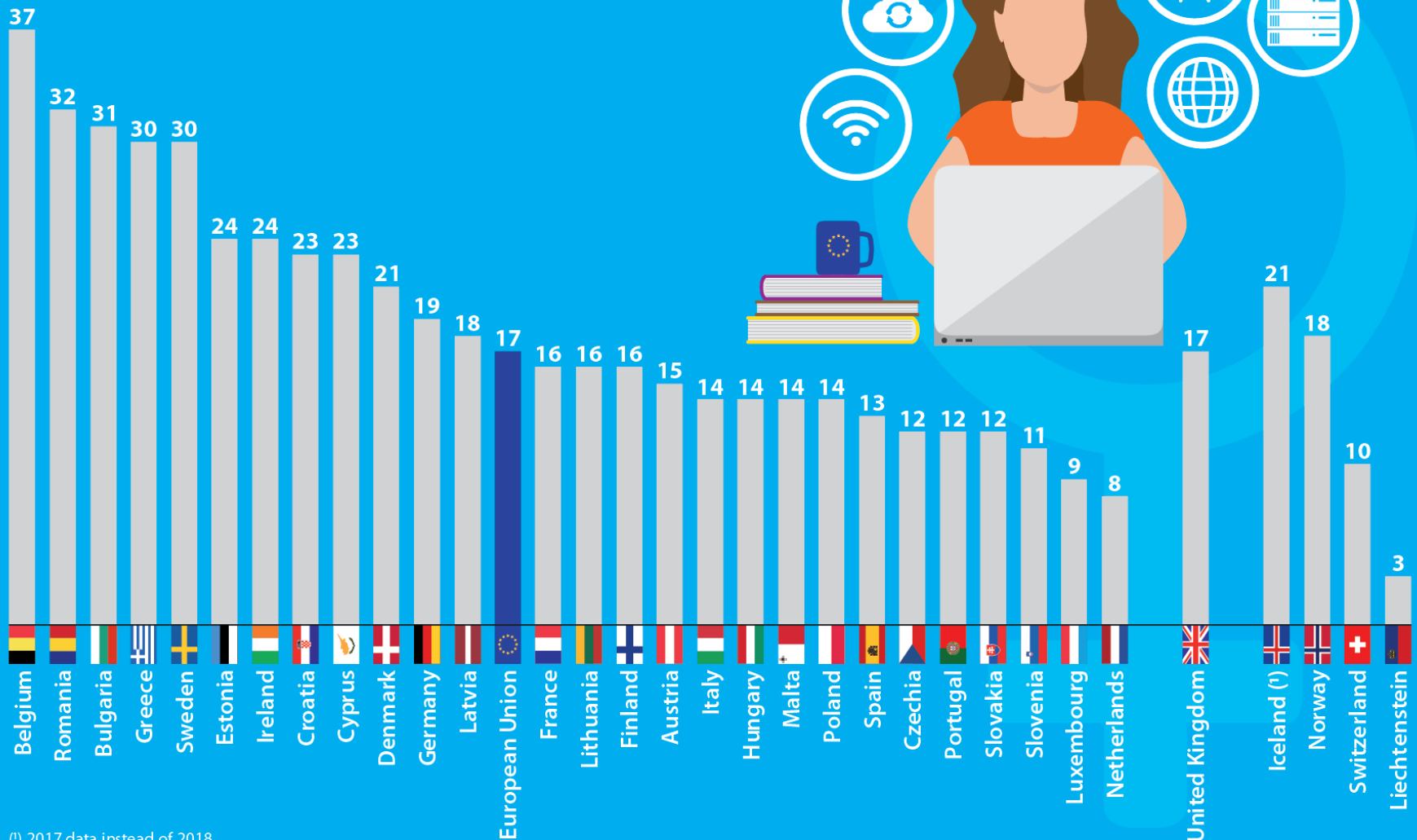
Gender inequality, 2 – Dutch universities

	% women students, FTE, end 2023	% women full professors, FTE, end 2023
Language & Culture	62.9	39.5
Social & Behavioural Sciences	72.6	42.0
Technology	28.6	19.8
Natural Sciences	40.6	20.9
Agriculture	56.0	26.7
Law	64.4	34.3
Economics	35.9	18.5
Medical centres	Not available	31.6

Source: Tables 1.8 & 3.1, LNVH (2024) *Women Professors Monitor 2024*. Available at: <https://www.lnvh.nl/>

Share of female students in ICT studies, 2018

(%)



(*) 2017 data instead of 2018

ec.europa.eu/eurostat



⚠ Oeps! Het spijt ons, maar u moet het geslacht van passagier invoeren.

Geslacht/genderidentiteit

➔ Selecteer

Selecteer

Man (M)

Vrouw (F)

Niet openbaar gemaakt
(U)

Niet gespecificeerd (X)

Mr

Mr

Mrs

Mx

Miss

Ms

Dr

Prof

Rev

Sir

Lord & Lady

FORTNUM & MASON
EST 1797

SECURE CHECKOUT



DELIVERY
ADDRESS

TITLE *

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME *

Please select

Mr
Mrs
Miss
Ms
Mx
Mr & Mrs
Mr & Mr
Mrs & Mrs
Sir
Madam
Prof
Dame
Dr
Lord
Lady
Air Commodore
Brigadier
Captain
Colonel
Commander
Commodore
District Judge
General
Group Captain
H. H. Sheikh
H.E.
HRH



DELIVERY
ADDRESS

TITLE *

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME *

Her Hon. Judge
His Hon. Judge
Lt. Col
Lt.
Major
Priest
Rabbi
Rev
Reverend Mother
Sergeant
Sister
Squadron Leader
The Hon. Mr Justice
The Hon. Mrs Justice
The Hon. Ms Justice
The Lady
The Lord
The Marchioness
The Marquess
The Most Revd
The Revd Canon
The Revd
The Rt. Hon
The Rt. Rev
The Venerable
The Very Revd
Viscount
Viscountess

ADDRESS

No salutation

Please select

Mr.

Ms.

No salutation

TITLE (OPTIONAL)

Professor Doctor

Doctor

Professor

Professor Doctor

Mag.

Prof. Mag.



Maas

Facebook Sign-up Page/ English version			
Year	Gender Field	Description	Mandatory
2004-07	No	n/a	n/a
2008-12	Yes	I am: Select sex. Male OR Female	Yes
2013-2014	Yes	Male OR Female (buttons)	Yes
2014-??	Yes	58 options	Yes
In August 2025	Yes	Female OR Male OR 'Custom Pronoun' (choice of she/he/they)	Yes
First four rows adapted from: Figure 4 in Bivens (2017) The gender binary will not be deprogrammed. <i>New Media & Society</i> 19(6): 880-98			

ISO/IEC 5218:2022(E)

4 Representation of human sexes

Human sex is represented by a one-character numeric code.

The following data elements and codes are used:

Data elements	Code
Not known	0 (zero)
Male	1 (one)
Female	2 (two)
Not applicable	9 (nine)

5 Designation

The use of this document and associated code may be referred to by the designation "SEX".

6 Qualification

No significance is to be placed upon the fact that "Male" is coded "1" and "Female" is coded "2". This document was developed based upon predominant practices of the countries involved and does not convey any meaning of importance, ranking or any other basis that can imply discrimination.

‘This document meets the requirements of most applications that need to code human sexes. It does not provide codes for sexes that can be required in specific medical and scientific applications or in applications that need to code sex information other than for human beings. It also does not provide codes for human gender identities that can be required in other applications.’

RDA Rule 9.7, Library of Congress

‘Prior to January 2016, rule 9.7 directed catalogers to record gender when identifying persons. Although RDA gave catalogers the flexibility to record more than two gender labels, RDA rule 9.7 limited Name Authority Cooperative Program (NACO) catalogers to a binary controlled vocabulary: male, female, or not known. Queer theory tells us that gender simply doesn’t work this way. Gender is socially constructed and contingent. Requiring a binary label meant requiring that catalogers ignore the wishes of many trans- and gender-variant authors, as well as authors who simply did not wish to disclose their gender. With this problem in mind, a group of catalogers lobbied the international RDA Steering Committee for a rule change and ultimately succeeded. Additionally, after the rule change a PCC Ad Hoc Task Group was formed to recommend best-practices for recording gender in name authority records.’



More on feminism, also from OED

‘The issue of rights for women first became prominent during the French and American revolutions in the late 18th cent., with regard especially to property rights, the marriage relationship, and the right to vote. In Britain it was not until the emergence of the suffragette movement in the late 19th cent. that there was significant political change. A ‘second wave’ of feminism arose in the 1960s, concerned especially with economic and social discrimination, with an emphasis on unity and sisterhood. A more diverse ‘third wave’ is sometimes considered to have arisen in the 1980s and 1990s, as a reaction against the perceived lack of focus on class and race issues in earlier movements.’

‘a mutually shaping relationship between gender and technology, in which technology is both a source and a consequence of gender relations. ... An emphasis on the contingency and heterogeneity of technological change ... introduces space for women’s agency in transforming technologies.’

(Wajcman, 2004: 7)

TECHNO FEMINISM

JUDY WAJCMAN



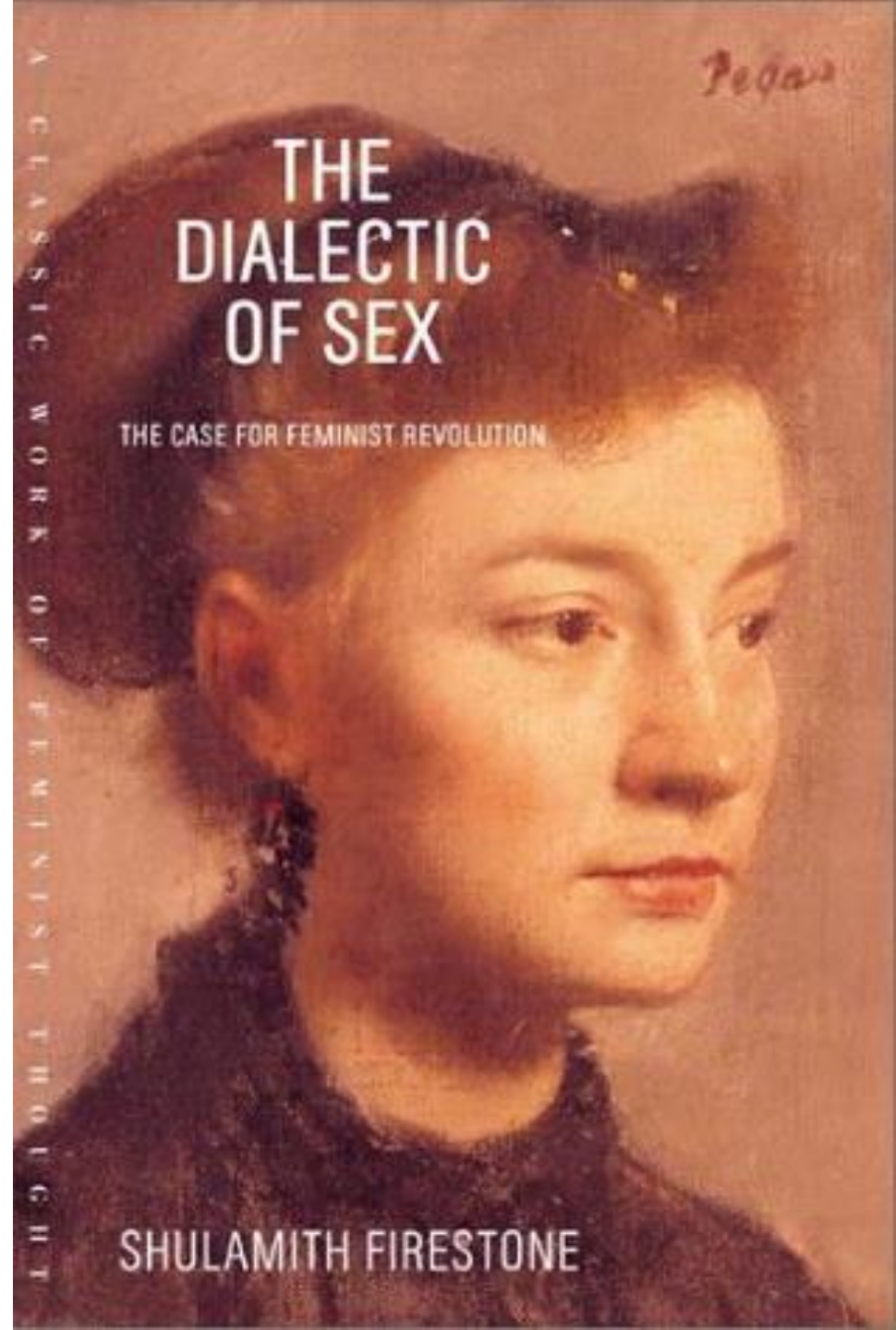
Are feminists for or against technology?

	Technology	Women/Men	How change occurs
Liberal feminist	Neutral – can be used for good or bad	Women homogenous group with certain characteristics/ men & women different but equal	Equal opportunities (policy) Any change to tech will come about through involvement of women
Eco-feminist	is masculine (rational, objective...)	Women closer to nature Men against women & nature	Women (& men) should reject tech and live more ‘natural’ lives
Techno-euphoric	is feminine	Women network/ make connections Men too linear	Through women embracing potential of ICT
Constructivist	Imbued with social relations of capitalism & patriarchy	Women & men gendered – relationship to technology central to this process	Gender & technology mutually constituted – both need to change – limits within capitalism

‘Both movements [feminism & revolutionary ecology] have arisen in response to the same contradiction: animal life within technology. In the case of feminism the problem is a moral one: the biological family unit has always oppressed women and children, but now, for the first time in history, technology has created real preconditions for overthrowing these oppressive “natural” conditions.’ (1970: 219)



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TECHNO-EUPHORIA

‘That night I plugged keyboard to computer to screen and sat down to write. Words poured out of me. My computer felt to me, feels to me still, the way wings must feel to a bird, making flight possible.’

L Cherny & ER Weise (eds) (1996) *Wired Women*, Seal Press, p. viii

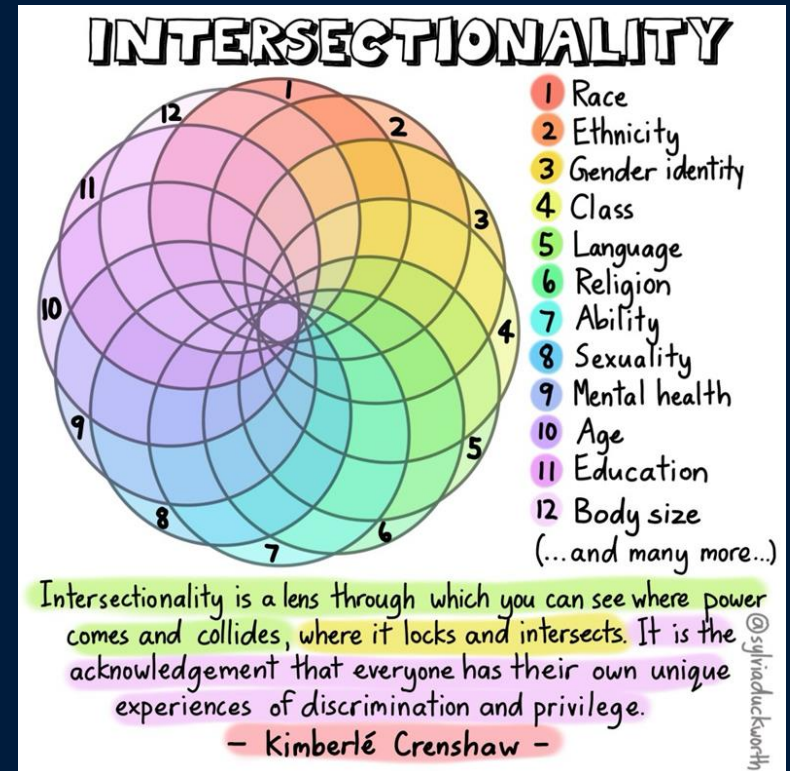


‘Intersectionality draws attention to invisibilities that exist in feminism, in anti-racism, in class politics, so, obviously, it takes a lot of work to consistently challenge ourselves to be attentive to aspects of power that we don't ourselves experience.’

‘If you don't have a lens that's been trained to look at how various forms of discrimination come together, you're unlikely to develop a set of policies that will be as inclusive as they need to be.’

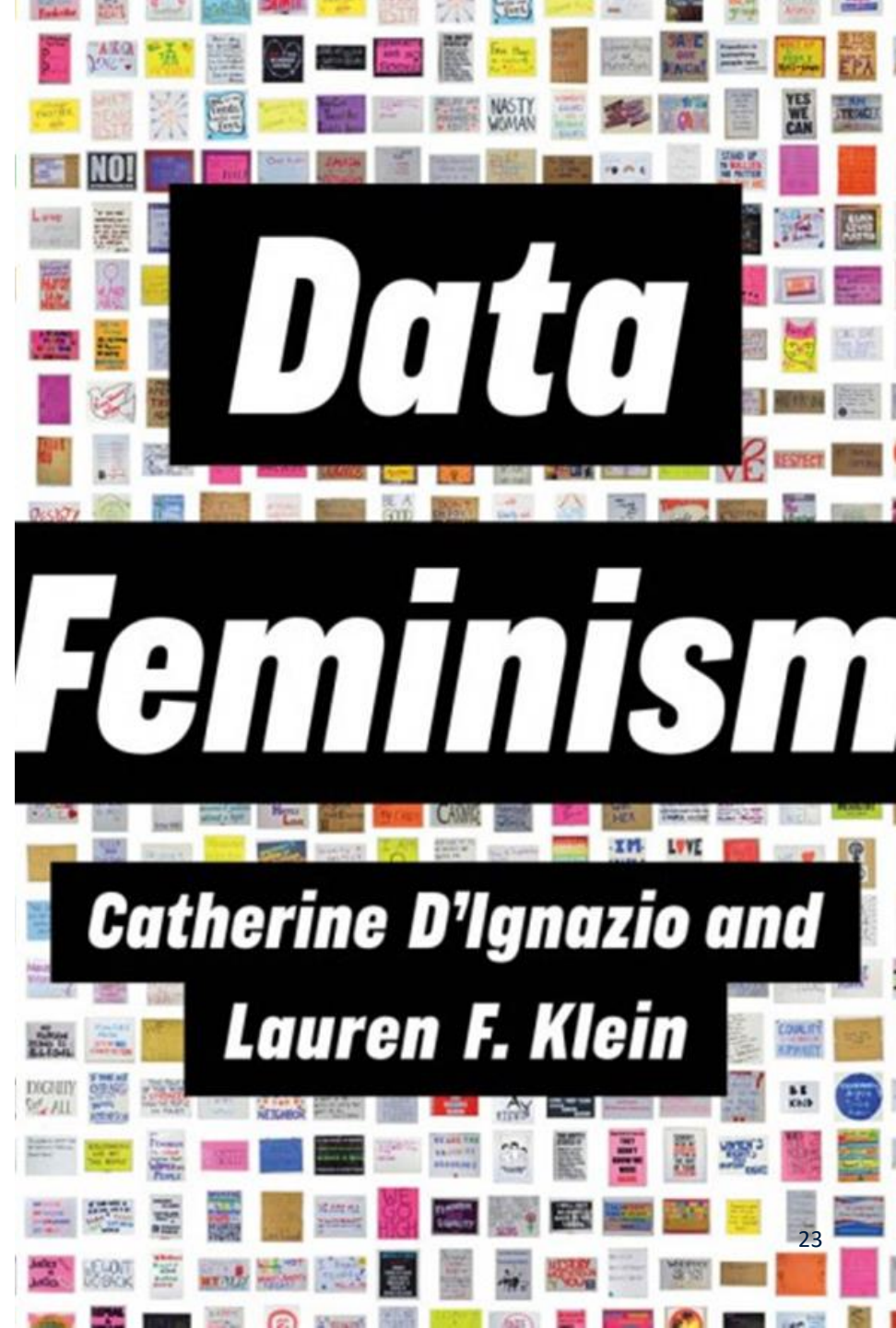
Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1, Article 8.

With thanks to Daniella Pauly Jensen for slides 6 & 22-24



Duckworth, S. (2020, Aug 19). Intersectionality [Infographic]. Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/2jy46K4>. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

- Rethinking how we approach data
- Grounded in (intersectional) feminist activism and critical thought
- A way of thinking about data informed by experience and action
- A goal: Empowering those without power
- A process: Continuously challenging and redistributing power

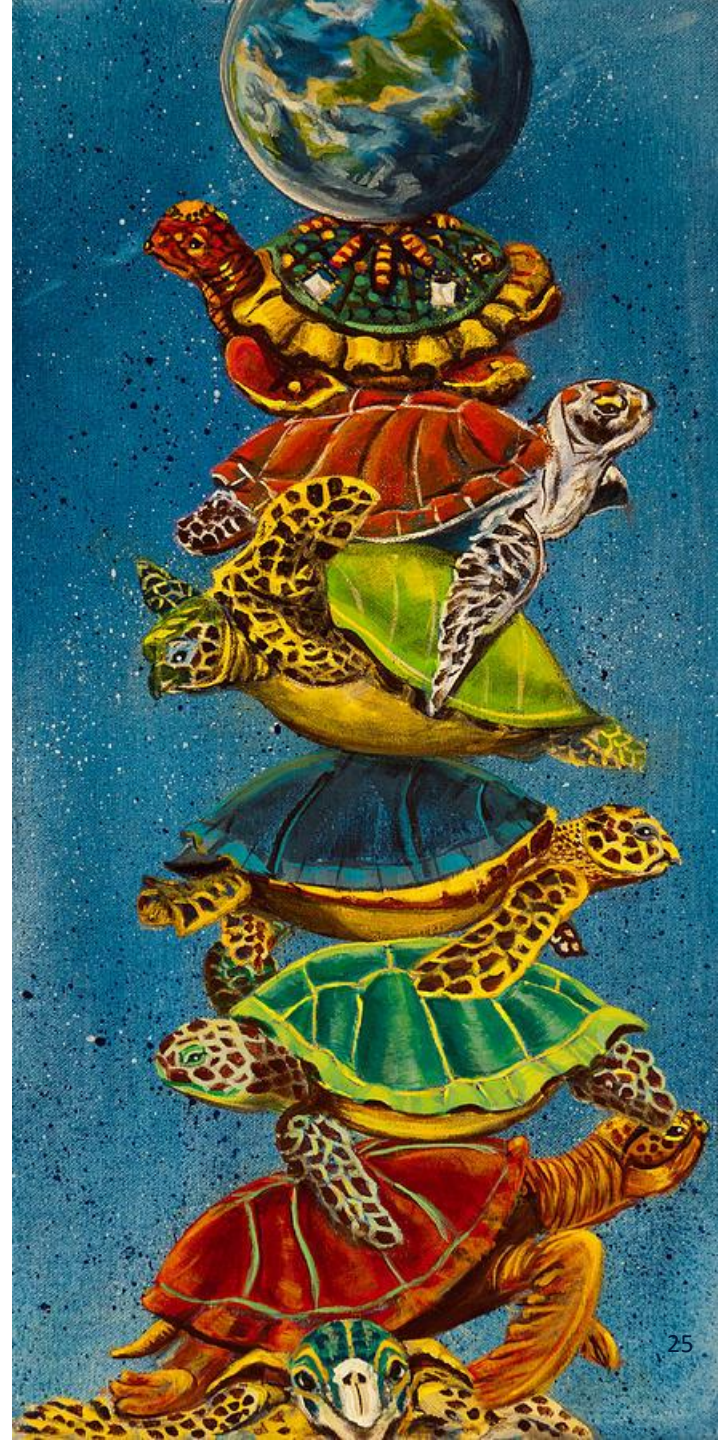


Data and power

- Before data, there are people.
 - Data are a reflection of human experience, values, and decisions.
- Close relationship between data and power
 - Data collection as a means to consolidate power
 - Governments and corporations have used data to preserve an unequal status quo
- Automated decisions: Civic, economic, and personal choices are increasingly automated.
- Feedback loops amplify the effects of bias.

Discussion questions

- What would feminist AI look like?
 - Avoid or embrace bias?
- Is technology always the answer?
 - Moving away from solutionism
- When and where to intervene?



References not already mentioned

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