

Centering Us

What Doing Black Feminist Sociology Really Looks Like

Martin recognizes that for Black feminist sociologists **"the boundaries between theory, methods, and activism are not only fluid, they also place Black women... at the center"** (p. 87). To clarify the Black feminist sociologist (BFS) project, Martin outlines several principles for understanding BFS because the "absence of a shared vision impedes the ability of Black feminist sociology" to articulate Black women's experiences (p. 90).



Martin's Eight Principles of Black Feminist Sociology

1. "[BFS] recognizes that **doing gender is [different]** for Black and white women" (p. 90).

Black women's realities are often ignored by white women and the academy. This produces a lack of representation and misrepresents Black women.

2. "[BFS] recognizes that **doing race is [different]** for Black men and Black women" (p. 91).

BFS contemplates how race, gender, and other identities intersect to suppress Black people in dynamic and multidimensional ways.

3. BFS promotes **research and activism by** Black women **for** Black women.

BFS brings its work to public outside of the academy and white male hegemonic spaces. Black feminist sociologists must recognize and develop their peers' work to advance social projects that benefit ordinary Black women.

4. BFS must be **interdisciplinary**.

Interdisciplinarity and diverse knowledge traditions have allowed Black people and scholars to further liberation. Involving frameworks of understanding outside of the sociological canon will preserve an innovative spirit in BFS.

5. BFS must not limit itself to either **quantitative** or **qualitative methods**.

Each BFS study will discern the best methodology (or mix of methods) depending on the study's research questions. All methods produce unique and valuable conclusions.

6. "[BFS] must **challenge stereotypes and myths** about Black women" (p. 92).

Misrepresentations and myths (re)produce false notions of Black women and their inherent humanity. BFS can "debunk" these myths that are seen via social media, mass media, popular culture, sociology, and the academy.

7. BFS must **address social justice issues** to respect and appreciate Black communities.

BFS should direct available resources towards scholar-activism. Though tackling social justice issues is not simple, "know that there is value in the struggle" (p. 93).

8. BFS **challenges oppression** in many forms from different sources.

Every aspect of identity is valuable. Thus, BFS refuses to prioritize the oppression of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. over another identity's oppression.

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