

Analyses of intersectionality must encompass transnational flows. The frames that shape the possibilities for intersectionality in Europe are not restricted to a national scale when the politics of gender and religion and austerity play out *across* European countries as well as in the European public sphere.

These reflections have important implications for intersectional, comparative method and for a concept of intersectionality that travels while remaining aware of its American genesis. The aim of these contributions is, therefore, dual: to make visible the new contours of the politics of belonging and inclusion using intersectional lenses outside the United States and to reflect on the implications of these lenses for intersectional politics and praxis.

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Political Intersectionality and Democratic Politics in the European Public Sphere

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The European Union (EU) consists of 27 nation states, and its motto "united in diversity" refers to the right of EU citizens to cross borders and work and live legally in another EU country as well as to the accommodation of national minorities. In spite of this common fate, "diversity" issues have increasingly been associated with conflicts between citizens and noncitizens about integration of new migrant groups. At a time of rising populism in Europe, it is important to assess

how major political actors of the European Public Sphere (EPS) articulate issues regarding the intersection of gender and ethnic diversity. To do so, this article draws on the findings from the Eurosphere project, which compares sixteen European countries to investigate the inclusion or exclusion of women and minority groups in the EPS (Siim & Mokre 2013).¹ The Eurosphere project provides timely insight into how key actors representing selected political parties and social movements/NGOs across Europe perceive intersections of gender and ethnic diversity.

Drawing on project findings, I argue that feminist understandings of intersectionality in political life need to evolve further through awareness of the multiple political actors in democratic politics within and across a broad range of contexts. A contextual and situated approach to political intersectionality should carefully identify what kind of diversity is being articulated and conceptualized, who is speaking about what issues, who are the excluded minorities, and what is left unspoken.

METHODS AND DATA

The study was based upon elite interviews, analysis of institutional data/official documents, media content analysis, and surveys. Organizations were selected to represent positions for and against diversity and for and against EU integration. This article analyses interviews and written/official documents to assess interrelations between gender, ethnicity/nationality, and socioeconomic differences for all organizations in the Eurosphere sample (Siim & Mokre 2013).

KEY FINDINGS

The results from the Eurosphere project show that political actors in selected political parties and civil society organizations are concerned about gender and diversity. However, they understand and articulate the intersection of gender and ethnic diversity in contrasting ways. National histories, institutions, and belongings as well as the transnational European context shape the particular ways in which the interrelations between diversity and gender are understood and framed as discourses

1. The gender strand of the project studied the inclusion/exclusion of women and ethnic minorities in the European Public Sphere (EPS) focusing on multiple inequalities, conflicts, and contestations. Please see eurospheres.org (accessed December 5, 2013).

and public policies by major social and political actors in European countries.

In Europe, national histories, meanings, and relations between the key categories of gender, ethnicity/race, and class vary from the United States where race has been the major social category, and in Kimberlé Crenshaw's influential work on intersectionality, she refers mainly to structural and political dimensions of intersections between racism and patriarchy (Crenshaw 1989). Since the Second World War, the memory and legacy of the Holocaust has led to silence about "race" in public discourse, especially in Germany (Ferree 2008) but also in France, shaped also by legacies of colonialism. Class struggles between the Left and Right have also been prevalent since the First World War. However, relations between class and gender rather than gender and race have been key issues for feminist scholarship on Europe, although they were not labeled intersectionality (Yuval-Davis 2011). This specific European history and contemporary European politics informs how civil society and political actors understand the relevance of racial categories, the intersection of gender and race, and its political salience.

Transnational institutions also play a vital role in developing gender equality policies at the EU level, in further contrast to the United States. The EU's institutional framework has opened possibilities for the framing of gender issues, especially since the mid-1990s (Mokre and Borchorst 2013). Gender equality is inscribed in the EU's gender and antidiscrimination legislation as well as in the Lisbon Treaty. Furthermore, a transnational public sphere including civil society actors is emerging with important implications for intersectional democratic learning that are explored below.

The politics of intersectionality in Europe is therefore shaped by the nation state, transnational institutions, and European politics. Two findings emerge from analysis of this context: *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* understandings and uses of intersectionality and a democratic learning process at work between transnational civil society actors, in particular women's and antiracist organizations, in multilevel Europe (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013).

Inclusionary and Exclusionary Intersectionality

The way gender and diversity were articulated in interviewees' discourses reveals interesting findings about how intersectionality is understood by major political actors across Europe and within the EPS. While the

intersection of gender and ethnonational difference is omnipresent in political actors' discourse on diversity, these actors formulate diverse understandings of the interactions between gender and ethnicity, which we label *exclusionary* and *inclusionary* intersectionality.²

The first narrative, mainly articulated by right-wing parties and civil society actors/NGOs within and across a number of European countries, is that of *exclusionary intersectionality*. It was almost always evoked with reference to Muslim minorities and identified tensions between diversity and equality, which are conceived as irresolvable. For example, in Denmark, Norway, and Finland, actors expressing this view proposed a radical, one-dimensional solution: either to reduce or abolish diversity or to abandon claims for equality. This discourse was also found among selected women's rights NGOs: nearly 20% of the respondents interviewed from women's rights NGOs understood ethnic diversity as a threat to gender equality. However, it is important to note that these positions were not unequivocal, even in the same organization (see Brüll, Mokre, and Siim 2012).

A key issue across actors' discourses involved the priority to be given to either the norms of gender equality or ethnic diversity. Here the findings point toward a strong acceptance of gender equality, which is probably the legacy of the EU's institutionalization and legitimization of gender equality in various EU treaties. In contrast, there was weak acceptance of ethnic diversity by major social and political actors. One interpretation of this asymmetry could be that gender equality is embedded in discourses of national belonging in a number of European countries today and articulated by political actors across Left and Right. Gender equality has achieved the status of expressing and characterizing national identity while accommodation of ethnic diversity is more recent, often imposed by EU directives, and therefore contested by national political actors. The study indicates that gender equality is perceived both as a European and a nationally specific value. It is used by both mainstream political organizations and right-wing antimigration forces as a tool of demarcation to construct a borderline between "us and them," the gender-equal majority and oppressed Muslim women (Rolandsen Agustin and Sato 2013).

2. Some discourses could not be clearly categorized, and a few statements expressed an explicit rejection of intersections between gender and ethnicity/nation (no relation) (Brüll, Mokre & Siim 2012).

Exclusionary intersectionality appears, therefore, to be linked to the ways in which these organizations perceive migration within Europe as a major political problem which has led to particular politics of belonging and exclusive nationalism. This seems to be different from the positive uses of intersectionality by political actors in the American context where the identification of intersections is used to foster inclusion and political mobilization rather than as a tool of exclusion.

In contrast, *inclusionary intersectionality* sees both equality and diversity as positive values and fully reconcilable. Within this discourse two subdiscourses were identified: (a) the multiple discrimination approach, which is made possible by the EU institutional and legal framework and emphasizes the intersection between different inequality-creating mechanisms and their potentially negative cumulative effect; (b) the mutual learning process, which acknowledges the tensions between equality and diversity and is concerned about overcoming these tensions by learning from other social actors (Brüll, Mokre, and Siim 2012).

Democratic Learning Processes

Mutual learning processes are possible through the development of discourses and democratic practice of civil society organizations. The unique institutional framework of the EU gender model generates transnational negotiations through which such democratic learning can be possible, a further point of contrast with the American context.

The project explored how civil society organizations understand and articulate gender and ethnic diversity. At the national level, the findings indicate differences between women's organizations/networks and the organizations/networks combating racism. Members of the selected women's organizations were primarily concerned about women's issues and did not articulate concerns for ethnic diversity and the rights of ethnic minorities at all (Arribas Lozano et al. 2013).³

At the transnational level, though, discourses and democratic practices articulating gender and ethnic diversity demonstrated a distinct learning process at work. Comparison of the case studies of two transnational organizations — the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Network against Racism (ENAR) — indicates that respondents

3. The six selected women's organizations were the following: the French organization, Ni Putes Ni Soumises; the Danish Women's Council; the Bulgarian Women's Alliance for Development (WAD); two Turkish organizations (KA-DAR, the organization to support women candidates in political parties, and Kamer, the Women's Centre); the Hungarian women's organization, NaNe. All are members of the EWL (see Arribas Lozano et al. 2013).

from EWL initially articulated concerns primarily for gender equality and women's rights, whereas the respondents from ENAR articulated concerns for antidiscrimination policies but also for gender equality (Pristed Nielsen 2013). The case studies indicate, however, that the European Women's Lobby has experienced a learning process. It has gradually become concerned with the organization and claims of ethnic minority women, inspired by activities of the Black European Women's Council and of the Network of Migrant Women in Europe (Rolandsen Agustin 2013). These findings illustrate the potential for democratic learning processes within and between these transnational organizations, possibly influenced by the unique institutional framework of the EU gender model (Ferree 2008) as well as by the particular organizational structure of the EPS. Organizations like EWL and ENAR are made up of members from states across the EU, and they may in some cases have *de facto* intersectional and transnational constituencies. They are, therefore, less bounded to national narratives of exclusionary intersectionality (Rolandsen Agustin 2013).

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY IN POLITICAL LIFE

The findings discussed here indicate that feminist understandings of intersectionality in political life need to evolve further by including empirical cases from various political contexts and building awareness of the multiple political actors involved in democratic politics. In turn, the empirical evidence provides grounds for additional theorizing around intersectionality. As these findings demonstrate, particular intersections are directly determined by diverse contexts: they are made by specific political actors in particular locations. The Europshere project started to explore the effects of these contexts and locations.

The finding that the exclusionary articulation of intersectionality is predominantly directed toward Muslim minorities must be understood within the specificities of the European context. All across Europe, gender equality has become strongly embedded in politics and political institutions, whereas ethnic diversity is associated with the excluded migrant/noncitizen minorities. These issues are inextricable from a broader political struggle about migration policies and the integration of "third country nationals" (immigrants from countries outside the EU), which has become a controversial issue across the left/right divide. In the

context of increased migration, the tension between gender equality and the diversity represented by Muslim minorities and migrants have become a contested political issue for mainstream political actors as well as for civil society organizations, including women's and migrant organizations. Further research should address how issues of gender, race, and particularly religion came to be problematized by mainstream and right-wing political actors within European nation states and within the EPS and how this can be changed by democratic forces in the emergent EPS.

Furthermore, the democratic learning processes between transnational civil society actors can broaden understandings of political intersectionality and democratic politics by drawing on a very different context from the United States. Findings from the Eurosphere project can be compared with Dara Strolovitch's (2007) portrayal of the U.S. landscape of advocacy organizations for women's rights. Comparison indicates that in contrast to the United States where organizations that focus on one group (i.e., women) tend to downplay intersectionality among their constituency, in Europe intersectionality could be theorized as an interactive learning process between European women's organizations searching for a common language for diverse organizations, claims, and interests.

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Impossible Intersectionality? French Feminists and the Struggle for Inclusion

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The history of the origins of the concept of intersectionality is deeply embedded in the U.S. context. The intertwined histories of the American women's movements and American race relations as well as the conjunction of several theoretical strands, such as the philosophical critique of the modern subject, poststructuralism, the critique from feminists of color, and critical legal studies, have marked the genesis and the operationalization of the concept of intersectionality in American feminist studies (Ackerly and McDermott 2011, Dhamoon 2011). This legacy has given the concept of intersectionality particular analytical contents, preferred objects of inquiry, and methodologies as well as specific political aims (McCall 2005). Kimberlé Crenshaw's initial formulation of intersectionality exemplifies this U.S. genealogy since it represents a joint analytical and political effort, embedded in critical legal studies and black feminist theory, to identify and promote the