



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal...

Grounded intersectionality: Key tensions, a methodological framework, and implications for diversity research

Mikkel Mouritz Marfelt

### Article information:

To cite this document:

Mikkel Mouritz Marfelt, (2016), "Grounded intersectionality", Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, Vol. 35 Iss 1 pp. 31 - 47

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2014-0034>

Downloaded on: 07 November 2016, At: 02:05 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 90 other documents.

To copy this document: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 539 times since 2016\*

### Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2016), "Identity, diversity and diversity management: On theoretical connections, assumptions and implications for practice", Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, Vol. 35 Iss 1 pp. 48-64 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EDI-08-2014-0061>

(2016), "(Mis)managing diversity: exploring the dangers of diversity management orthodoxy", Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, Vol. 35 Iss 1 pp. 5-16 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EDI-03-2014-0020>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:563821 []

### For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit [www.emeraldinsight.com/authors](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors) for more information.

### About Emerald [www.emeraldinsight.com](http://www.emeraldinsight.com)

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

\*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

# Grounded intersectionality

## Key tensions, a methodological framework, and implications for diversity research

Mikkel Mouritz Marfelt

*Department of Organisation (IOA), Copenhagen Business School,  
Copenhagen, Denmark*

31

Received 12 May 2014  
Revised 17 December 2014  
5 February 2015  
12 April 2015  
22 August 2015  
Accepted 17 September 2015

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to build on contemporary intersectional literature to develop a grounded methodological framework for the study of social differences.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A systematic literature review serves as the foundation for a discussion of the challenges associated with intersectional research. The findings assist in positioning the proposed methodological framework within recent intersectional debates.

**Findings** – The review shows a rise in intersectional publications since the birth of the “intersectionality” term in 1989. Moreover, the paper points to four tensions within the field: a tension between looking at or beyond oppression; a tension between structural-oriented and process-oriented perspectives; an apparent incommensurability among the macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis; and a lack of coherent methodology.

**Research limitations/implications** – On the basis of the highlighted tensions in contemporary research as well as the limitations of that research, the present presents a methodological framework and a discussion of the implications of that framework for the wider diversity literature.

**Practical implications** – The paper suggests an empirically grounded approach to studying differences. This provides an opportunity, for scholars and practitioners, to reassess possible a priori given assumptions, and open up to new explorations beyond conventional identity theorization.

**Social implications** – The paper suggests a need for an empirically grounded approach to studying social differences, which would not only create an opportunity to reassess common assumptions but also open up for explorations beyond conventional identity theorizations.

**Originality/value** – The framework departs from traditional (critical) diversity scholarship, as it is process oriented but still emphasizes stable concepts. Moreover, it does not give primacy to oppression. Finally, it adopts a critical stance on the nature of the macro, meso, and micro levels as dominant analytical perspectives. As a result, this paper focusses on the importance of intersectionality as a conceptual tool for exploring social differences.

**Keywords** Methodology, Diversity, Review, Grounded intersectionality

**Paper type** Research paper

### Introduction

In this paper, I investigate how intersectionality can be advanced as a grounded methodological framework, and I discuss the implications of that framework for diversity studies (Roberson, 2013). Like many other social phenomena, diversity is mediated by socio-historical relationships that reflect its ongoing production (Omanovic, 2009). Researchers studying diversity have recently argued that in order to adequately capture and examine the effects of multiple identities, “more research utilizing multidimensional conceptualizations of diversity is needed” (Roberson, 2013, p. 462). “Intersectionality”



The author is grateful for the support and professional review process facilitated by the three special issue editors. Also, the author appreciates the valuable feedback given from the two anonymous reviewers. Lastly, the author wants to thank Annette Risberg, Gavin Jack, Per Darmer, and Sara Muhr for constructive and helpful feedback.

serves as one such multidimensional conceptualization of diversity. In fact, the number of studies at the cross-roads between diversity and intersectionality has increased substantially in recent years, highlighting the relevance of a discussion of how intersectionality can inform diversity studies and other social phenomena (Walby *et al.*, 2012).

The concept of “intersectionality” arose from critical race theory. The term was initially coined in attempts to critically assess the relationship between gender and race (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is therefore closely tied to critical diversity research, as it contests “the instrumental view of differences inherent to the [non-critical] diversity paradigm” (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010, p. 10). At their cores, intersectionality and critical diversity research share a non-positivistic, non-essentialist understanding of differences among people as produced in ongoing, context-specific social processes (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). Although intersectionality and diversity are sometimes viewed as separate fields of research, this paper emphasizes the close ties between the two. I adopt a view similar to that of Metcalfe and Woodhams (2012), as I note that the emergence of intersectionality represents a significant “moment” at which the orientation of scholarship within the field shifted to “facilitate[e] a multidimensional approach to unraveling difference” (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012, p. 127).

In this paper I offer a systematic literature review that departs from the cross-roads of intersectionality and diversity research. To avoid the risk of gliding between the two concepts and to pay tribute to historical roots that laid the foundation for the methodological framework proposed here, this paper primarily focusses on intersectionality. In particular, I highlight four tensions. First, a tension associated with either looking at or beyond oppression, as some recent studies depart from the political normative historical roots of intersectionality. Second, I show how objections to the commonly used characterization of identity categories as “fluid” relate to a more fundamental tension between structural-oriented and process-oriented perspectives. Third, by showing that scholars emphasize different levels of analysis, I point to the apparent incommensurability among different levels of analysis in intersectionality. These three tensions provide a basis for addressing the fourth tension – the lack of a coherent methodology – and for proposing a framework that widens the applicability of intersectionality.

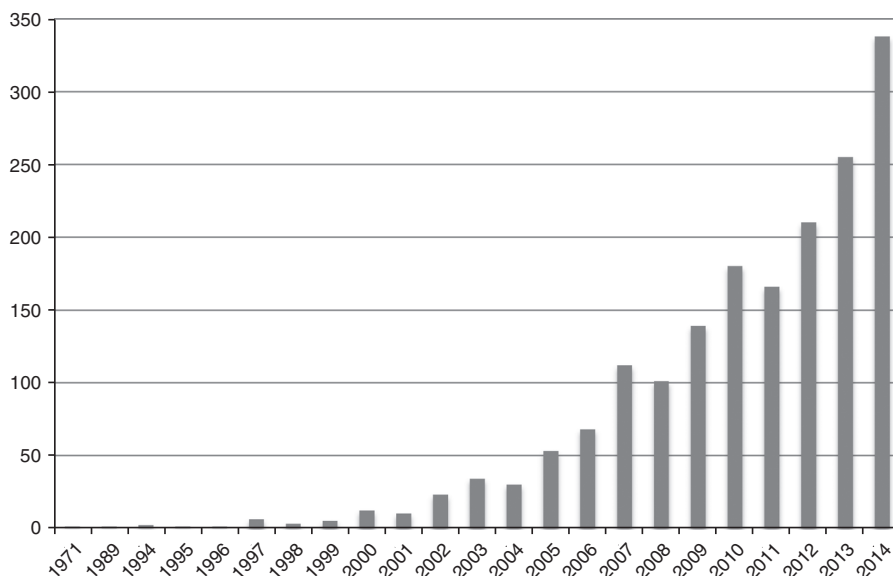
Intersectional research faces an inherent paradox – it must deal with the complexity that follows from the acknowledgment of multiple-axis interactions (Acker, 2012; McCall, 2005). Moreover, intersectionality is a vaguely defined concept (Bowleg, 2008; Choo and Ferree, 2010; Dhamoon, 2011; Kerner, 2012) in a multidisciplinary field that itself lacks a defined methodology (Nash, 2008). Recently, researchers have put a focus on this methodological impasse calling for new studies (Clycq, 2012; Cole, 2009; Nash, 2008; Zanoni *et al.*, 2010) that enable the potential deployment of intersectionality into a wider range of social phenomena (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Walby *et al.*, 2012). I build on contemporary theorizations of intersectionality to respond to this call. More specifically, I suggest that research could benefit from an empirically grounded methodology that does not give primacy to oppression, that recognizes fluidity and stability as co-existing concepts, and that relies on actions as the primary analytical starting point rather than a priory adopting a macro-, meso-, or micro-analytical perspective. In order to pay tribute to the close ties between intersectionality and diversity, I also link the proposed methodological framework to diversity research, and I discuss the implications of its adoption for the study of social differences more broadly.

### The evolution of intersectionality

The term “intersectionality” was introduced by Crenshaw (1989), who uses a metaphor of intersecting roads to explain how gender and racial discrimination intersect in a multiple-axis framework. She argues that “a focus on either race or sex [...] subsequently fail[s] to consider how marginalized women are vulnerable to both grounds of discrimination; thus, even a combination of studies about women and studies about race often [erase] the experiences of black women” (Dhamoon, 2011, p. 231). Crenshaw’s work, which resides in the feminist discussion of intersecting oppressions, has set the agenda for most studies of intersectionality (e.g. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008; Bagilhole, 2010).

Although intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw, the implied concept goes back much further in time than popular perceptions might suggest. For instance, Prins (2006) argues that Crenshaw’s intersectionality term was a refreshing re-articulation of an insight previously presented by such scholars as Davis (1983) and Lorde (1984). Some scholars even suggest that the origins of intersectional thought date back to the nineteenth century black American freedom movements (Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre, 2007). Therefore, even though intersectionality has been praised as feminism’s greatest theoretical contribution to date (McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008; Gopaldas *et al.*, 2009; Bilge, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2011), the concept has been lingering in the background for some time (Chhachhi, 2006; Jones, 2010).

The focus on intersectionality has increased significantly in recent years (see Figure 1). In fact, nearly 1,000 articles were published on the subject between 2011 and 2014, solidifying intersectionality as a concept on the rise within the diversity field.



**Notes:** In Business Source Complete, the search queries were “intersectional\*” and “diversity” filtered by: subject terms or abstracts or author supplied keywords. In Sage, the search queries were “intersectional\*” and “diversity” with no filtering, although the search was confined to studies in the humanities and the social sciences

**Figure 1.**  
Number of publications per year addressing “intersectional\*” and “diversity” as keywords

However, the concept has evolved beyond its initial origins to become a multifaceted concept that is “widely used in fields of social science” (Özbilgin *et al.*, 2011, p. 185). Intersectionality has even evolved to the point of being explicitly addressed beyond academia by, for example, research and advisory groups (Catalyst, 2010) in various political forums (Healy *et al.*, 2006; Gardiner, 2010). It has also made its way into the UN Commission on Human Rights, which included the term in the first paragraph of the resolution on the human rights of women (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

As intersectionality has become a multifaceted, open-ended concept, scholars tend to emphasize various elements as central to the concept. Therefore, an understanding of the historical roots of intersectionality is important for understanding why some elements of the concept have been prioritized at the expense of others. In one of her earliest articles on the topic, Crenshaw notes that:

Intersectionality [is] a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory [...] By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244).

This quote points to the multiple purposes of intersectionality. For some, this open-endedness and vagueness are the secrets to its success (Davis, 2008; Kerner, 2012). For example, the concept links postmodern theory to contemporary politics by suggesting a methodology that addresses dominant assumptions from a critical and normative standpoint. Crenshaw also argues that intersectionality should “unveil the processes of subordination and the various ways those processes are experienced by people” by moving structural and representational intersectionality into the foreground (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1297; see also Cho *et al.*, 2013).

### **Key tensions within the literature**

#### *Tension 1: looking at or beyond oppression*

Intersectionality research encompasses two streams. In the first, scholars view intersectionality as confined to the study of various forms of oppression (Collins, 1991; Denis, 2008; Cole, 2009; Bagilhole, 2010). In the second, scholars regard intersectionality as extending beyond the study of oppression (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011; Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre, 2007; Zander *et al.*, 2010; Shields and Diccio, 2011; Prasad, 2012; Clycq, 2012). This distinction is significant, as the first approach centers on oppression and marginalization, while the latter allows for a broader use of the concept.

While intersectionality has historically resided in feminist thinking and the struggle against oppression (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008), some recent studies have downplayed the political dimension in their use of the intersectional framework (see, e.g. Johansson, 2007; Zander *et al.*, 2010; Buell *et al.*, 2010; Banton, 2011; Christensen and Jensen, 2012). Ryan and Martin (2013) note a rising tendency to separate the political and methodological dimensions by appealing to an ideological or normative level of analysis and corresponding methodologies. For example, Zander *et al.* (2010) argue: “It is important to remember that the term ‘intersectionality’ refers to both a theoretical argument (often normative) and an approach to conducting empirical research that emphasizes the interaction of categories of differences” (p. 459). While recognizing the historical roots of the term, Zander *et al.* (2010) distinguish between the normative (political) level and the methodological level. Moreover, whereas power and the oppression of minorities has been an inherent dimension in intersectionality research (see, e.g. Dickens, 2007; Cronin and King, 2010; Cockburn, 2012), Zander *et al.* (2010) argue

that “intersectionality is not a theory of power, but an analytic tool and a perspective which can be used together with theories about power” (p. 459). Similarly, Dhamoon (2011) notes that intersectionality is not simply a normative-theoretical argument but also a research paradigm that can be applied to populations beyond those with intersecting marginalized identities. Recently, Clycq (2012) addressed this tension more specifically by drawing on Nash (2008) to argue that an intersectional approach to identities cannot be limited to the study of marginalized subjects, “as social identities always intersect with each other in a person and a dominant ethnic identity can go hand in hand with a dominated gender and/or class identity” (Chen, 1999; Fowler, 2003; Clycq, 2012, p. 160). These scholars pay both conceptual and practical attention to the methodological opportunities found in mainstreaming intersectionality as a research paradigm.

Intersectionality advocates for the existence of both oppression and privilege depending on the context and the subject. What might seem like oppression in one setting can be experienced as privilege in another. Therefore, even oppression and privilege become contextual and relational. As Nash notes:

One “so what” question that remains unexplored by intersectional theorists is the way in which privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level. That is, while intersectionality purports to describe multiple marginalizations [...] it neglects to describe the ways in which privilege and oppression intersect, informing each subject’s experiences (Nash, 2008, p. 12).

In this perspective, oppression and privilege are contextual and therefore never universal – a view that reflects a shift in the analytical center of attention in intersectional research from the politics of oppression toward other dimensions. As a result, the study of oppression may be sidetracked or even become a peripheral focal area.

### *Tension 2: the structure/process divide*

The tension between centering on oppression and expanding to areas outside oppression is key to the current state of research on intersectionality. Notably, however, the presence of other tensions in the literature makes the emergence of a broader consensus on the definition of intersectionality improbable in the near future. For example, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre (2007, p. 15) note that part of the popularity of intersectionality lies in the contemporary focus on processes – the tendency to prioritize how social order is constructed via interactions rather than how social order is predetermined by societal and institutional arrangements. Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre (2007) argue that although intersectionality draws on earlier thinking, one salient element of the term is the attention paid to the constant change in society and social elements. This focus on change was not only foundational to the historical fight against oppression but is also a key driver of the broader use of intersectionality today.

In many instances, processes are central to the study of intersectionality. However, although the field is populated with constructivist, processual, and post-structuralist elements, the literature also offers studies that strive to “contribute to intersectionality theory by incorporating structure and agency as mutually constitutive” (Boogaard and Roggeband, 2010, p. 54). This reveals another tension within the field – the dispute over whether structure or process is central to intersectional research. Walby *et al.* (2012) point to this divide, stating that “there is a tension between the use of stable concepts or whether the priority should be given to the use of fluid and changing ones” (p. 231). Along these lines, Walby *et al.* (2012) note how two central contributions to the intersectional literature – Hancock (2007) and

McCall (2005) – advocate for fluidity and process or stabilization and structure, respectively. Prins (2006) adds a geographical dimension to this divide by suggesting that there are significant differences in the treatment of intersectionality on the two sides of the Atlantic. According to Prins (2006), “the US approach foregrounds the impact of system or structure upon the formation of identities, whereas British scholars focus on the dynamic and relational aspects of social identity” (p. 279).

Nevertheless, some attempts have been made to bridge the structure/process divide. In some cases, “structure” and “essentialism” have been partly reintroduced into the conceptualization of identity categories as processual and fluid. For example, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012b) incorporate a structural Bourdieuan framework, stating “it is not our intention to suggest that traditional diversity strands such as race and ethnicity, or gender, are endlessly fluid and performative, or free from historical and structural baggage” (p. 196). Prasad (2012) argues that post-structuralists have a timely opportunity to utilize “strategic essentialism” to engage with a broader academic community. Richardson (2007) argues that the focus on fluidity delimits our understanding of how gender and sexuality intersect, as it does not pay sufficient attention to how cultural norms are constituted or why they prevail. To overcome this delimitation, Richardson advocates for the use of “patterned fluidity” to develop frameworks that “allow more complex analyses of the dynamic, historically and socially specific relationship between sexuality and gender” (Richardson, 2007, p. 457).

Although these examples originate from different perspectives on intersectionality, they all recognize and address the structure/process divide. They do so by providing a structural framework for processual analyses (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012b), by strategically engaging with essentialism (Prasad, 2012), or by bringing “patterns” back into the intersectional analysis (Richardson, 2007). Therefore, although many intersectional studies rely on the fluidity of the social, some also struggle to navigate around aspects of structure and essentialism (Richardson, 2007; Boogaard and Roggeband, 2010; Prasad, 2012; Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012b).

### *Tension 3: the incommensurability of analytical levels*

In intersectional research, analyses are often conducted from a macro, meso, or micro perspective. However, in addition to adopting these levels during the analysis, some scholars concentrate on the analytical implications of the different approaches and discuss how they can be combined (e.g. Kerner, 2012; Browne and Misra, 2003; Choo and Ferree, 2010; Christensen, 2009; Syed and Özbilgin, 2009; Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012a; Winker and Degele, 2011).

For example, Christensen’s (2009) conceptual article addresses the notion of “belonging” from the macro, meso, and micro perspectives. She emphasizes “the importance of the meso level of collective organizations and institutions in linking the macro structures to the level of individual agency and identities” (Christensen, 2009, p. 37), and points to the need for more profound empirical analyses within and across the three analytical levels. Furthermore, by dividing intersectionality research into the social-institutional (macro), workplace (meso), and individual (micro) levels, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012a) seek to dispute the acontextual and cumulative formulations of traditional categories of disadvantage, such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity. They argue that the multiplicity of identities and forms of disadvantage at all three levels enable contextual depth but also point to the complexity of intersectional analyses (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012a). Knapp (2005) argues that intersectionality is a theoretical programmatic “aiming to relate the integrated study of large-scale societal

structures of dominance, the historical and contextual systematics of unevenly distributed power, meso-level institutional arrangements and forms of governance, interactions between individuals and groups as well as individual experiences” (p. 255). Similar to Christensen (2009), Browne and Misra (2003) argue for the development of a framework that “link[s] micro processes with meso and macro processes” (p. 507) in order to focus on intersections for all groups. These scholars argue that such an approach can initiate the redesigning of qualitative research to collect and analyze data across a wider range of groups (Browne and Misra, 2003). While Browne and Misra seek to develop active links among the three levels of analysis, Christensen (2009), Tatli and Özbilgin (2012b), and Knapp (2005) serve as examples of studies that conceptualize intersectional analyses as the overarching framework that allows for the investigation of otherwise separate levels of differences and inequalities.

Choo and Ferree (2010) not only point to the tension among the macro, meso, and micro levels but also relate it to the tension between structure and process. They characterize intersectionality theories as centered either on process or systemics, and they suggest that intersectionality “runs the risk of focusing on abstracted structures in their intersectional configuration, thus turning the persons who are experiencing the impact of macro- and meso-interactions into incidental figures, underplaying their agency in these complex constellations of forces” (Prins, 2006; Staunaes, 2003; Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 134). These scholars argue that a more constructionist conceptualization of intersectionality should appeal “to those who doubt the stability of identity categories at the micro level” (Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 134). However, rather than departing from the macro/meso/micro rhetoric, they stress that “process models can be sensitive to the issue of identities or social locations, by considering these as being constructed through (Adams and Padamsee 2001), or co-constructed with, macro and meso categories and relations” (Prins, 2006; Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 134).

The incommensurability among different levels of analysis is evident in the fact that scholars tend to divide theorization and analysis into separate levels. Although some researchers advocate for the integration of these levels, few take a critical stance on the nature of those levels. Therefore, although some studies advocate for an integrative or linked methodology, and suggest the incorporation of all three levels of analysis, the effects of conceptualizing the analysis in different and incommensurable levels are often not addressed.

#### *Tension 4: the lack of a coherent methodology*

The fourth and final tension concerns the lack of a coherent methodology (see Nash, 2008). Several recent studies addressing intersectionality advocate for the development of alternative methods for conducting intersectional analysis (Clycq, 2012; Cole, 2009; Nash, 2008; Zandoni *et al.*, 2010), thereby enabling the potential deployment of intersectionality into a wider range of social phenomena (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Walby *et al.*, 2012; Dhamoon, 2011). However, Christensen and Jensen (2012) note that “while overall principles and abstract methodology have already been extensively discussed, there has been less debate about concrete intersectional methodology and analysis” (p. 110). Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been an upsurge in different approaches to studying intersectionality in practice. Although there is no coherent methodology among intersectional scholars, several tendencies are worth noting.

Some intersectional researchers focus on quantitative approaches, such as surveys, reproducible experiments, and the mapping of long-term trends in representation based on census reports (see, e.g. Zimdars, 2010; Steinbugler *et al.*, 2006; Stainback and



Tomaskovic-Devey, 2009). However, the abundance of intersectional research lies in qualitative studies of “everyday life.” These studies often focus on narratives (see, e.g. Ozturk, 2011; Soni-Sinha, 2012; Holvino, 2010) and discourse (see, e.g. Haas, 2012; Dottolo and Stewart, 2008; Rule and Modipa, 2012). Christensen and Jensen (2012) go so far as to argue that the complexity of identity formation is revealed in the narratives and discourses of everyday life, as they provide a “melting-pot where intersecting categories are inextricably linked” (p. 117). Prins (2006) devotes an entire paper to the opportunities inherent in narrative analyses and argues that “the constructionist approach to intersectionality, with its account of identity as a narrative construction rather than a practice of naming, offers better tools for answering questions concerning intersectional identity formation than a more systemic intersectional approach” (p. 277).

There are also alternatives to narrative- and discourse-based qualitative intersectional research, some of which seek to explore methods beyond those utilized in conventional studies. For example, Valentine *et al.* (2010) argue that “events” may offer an “effective way of empirically researching the complexity of the ways that intersections of categories [...] are experienced in everyday life” (p. 925). These scholars draw on Abrams (1982) in noting that events provide an “indispensable prism” (p. 192) through which transformations between past and present can be understood, and which allows for causal links between actions and consequences to be inferred. Kaijser and Kronsell (2013) adopt a cross-disciplinary perspective covering “a wide range of levels and topics, ranging from discourses in international climate agreements, local effects of adaptation measures, to the representations of climate change in contemporary poetry” (p. 429). In a rare case, Kennedy (2005) includes the personal computer as a salient non-human actor in identity formation. She calls for feminist science and technology studies (STS) to engage with debates on intersectionality in order to improve our understanding of women’s technological relationships (see also Diedrich *et al.*, 2011, for a discussion of intersectionality and STS-inspired classificatory thinking). Kennedy’s (2005) paper exemplifies a type of research that could develop substantially in the coming years. Similarly, Åsberg and Lykke (2010) draw on Mayberry *et al.* (2001) in their editorial piece, which suggests that feminist science studies are maturing into a field in which the intersections between gender, class, race, science, and technology are explored.

Even though the studies mentioned above differ in various ways, they share a common theme – closeness to the subject. Given that “closeness to the subject” and “everyday experiences” are central to most intersectional research, some scholars have recently placed greater emphasis on empirically grounded research. Tatli and Özbilgin’s (2012b) conceptual paper advocates for empirically grounded studies aimed at getting close to research subjects. They note:

The use of pre-determined categories, irrespective of historical, institutional and socio-economic context, leads to static accounts of diversity at work, which ignore the dynamic nature of power and inequality relations. Consequently, etic approaches essentialize difference in framing of workforce diversity and produce flawed empirical, theoretical and policy insights (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012b, p. 181).

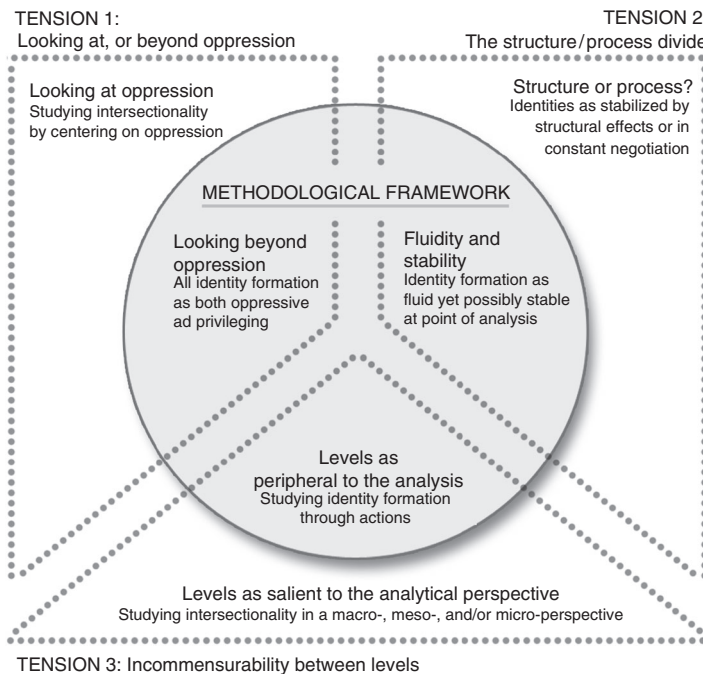
These studies are only some of the many contemporary cases that demonstrate how intersectionality is “put into practice in a multitude of ways, from the top down to the bottom up, and in highly contested, complex, and unpredictable fashions” (Cho *et al.*, 2013, p. 807). To further substantiate this multifaceted position, Cho *et al.* (2013) call

for collaborative efforts across and within disciplines, suggesting that it is vital to bring “the centrifugal tendencies of scholars situated firmly within their disciplines into conversation with scholars working more at the margins of their disciplines” (p. 807).

### The methodological framework

In the following, I use the first three tensions to reflect on ways of bringing intersectionality forward from a methodological standpoint. In so doing, I also engage in the debate regarding the lack of a coherent methodology (Tension 4). Figure 2 illustrates how first three tensions act as guidelines in the positioning of the methodological framework within the literature.

Looking beyond oppression: first, I propose pursuing the tendency to acknowledge how identity formation can be experienced as both oppression and privilege at any given time and in any given context. The primacy given to oppression has led to what Martinez (1993) calls “oppression Olympics” in which groups compete for the title of “most oppressed.” Dhamoon (2011) expands this point by noting how “the priority assigned to the race-class-gender trinity has often meant that some forms of oppression are explained as more damaging than others” (Monture, 2007, pp. 199-234). Ironically, some studies that seek to dismantle dominant positions have invoked their own strongholds within their respective research fields. In particular, the “gender-class-race trinity” has been “invoked so frequently that it has been called a mantra” (Fine and Burns, 2003; Cole, 2009, p. 171). To keep intersectionality from evolving into a field in which theoretical primacy is given to a small group of selected identity categories, we must foster research that investigates a wide range of differences. Along these lines,



**Figure 2.**  
The suggested methodological framework and its positioning

Dhamoon (2011) calls for new conceptualizations of identity formation while recognizing the historical context that has led to this limited focus:

The privilege assigned to this trinity is not intrinsic to the study of categories but indicative of the choices researchers have made (and in some cases had to make) in specific historical contexts [...] is important to consider what analysts have invested in studying the trinity of race-class-gender and not other interactive categories. This critical reflection has the potential to open up unexpected avenues of exploration (Dhamoon, 2011, p. 234).

The question is whether the debate around oppression should be the main discussion. Perhaps we should view oppression as just one entrance point – and not necessarily the most relevant one for understanding differences among people. To move beyond the oppression Olympics and the primacy given to just a few categories, we can develop methods that move beyond oppression as a central focus (Tension 1). This not only allows for methodological advancement into unexpected avenues of exploration but also has the potential to contribute to the “critique of identity politics, for its over-stabilization of discrete groups and categories” (Walby *et al.*, 2012, p. 226).

Fluidity and stability as co-existing: second, I propose the adoption of a processual perspective that enables the conceptualization of differences in new ways. Such a processual framework must allow for the recognition of stable concepts. One reason for intersectionality’s popularity lies in its processual focus (Styhre and Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2008). Therefore, a processual perspective is neither new nor controversial. However, the debate over the actual characteristics of “a processual perspective” must be nuanced. A dynamic/processual perspective risks disregarding what we might refer to as a “stabilized social order.” Walby *et al.* (2012) argue that “the way forward is to recognize that concepts need to have their meaning temporarily stabilized at the point of analysis, even while recognizing that their social construction is the outcome of changes and interactions over time” (p. 236). This calls for conceptualizations that recognize both change and stability.

The concept of the action net (Czarniawska, 2004), which originated from a combination of new institutional theory and the sociology of translation (Lindberg and Czarniawska, 2006), provides a possible starting point in this regard. Action nets center on the structure/process divide, as they provide a “compromise devised to embrace both the anti-essentialist aspects of all organizing (organizing never stops) and its apparently solid effects (for a moment things seem unchangeable and organized for good)” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 780). In such a view, dominant identity categories become “connections established and then stabilized to form a unit that can be designated as an ‘action net’” (Lindberg and Czarniawska, 2006, p. 292). Established identity categories are then stable as a consequence of ongoing actions that support them. The fluidity is recognized in actions and the nets those actions unfold, while the temporal stability of social order is recognized via the summation of these actions.

Macro, meso, and micro levels as peripheral to the analysis: third, I propose that we adopt a critical stance toward the macro, meso, and micro levels as dominant analytical perspectives. The conceptualization of analyses as divided into separate levels fosters a view of these levels as incommensurable. Therefore, I suggest a focus on collective actions and how their interconnections contribute to the process of identity formation (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). By following actions and the nets that they unfold, we can build a case for methodology that regards the incommensurability among the macro, meso, and micro levels as a peripheral issue. Furthermore, such a view supports findings that arise from all three levels: social-institutional, organizational, and individual.

Moreover, this view avoids a priori prioritization of any one level, as priority is given to actions manifested in the particular empirical context. Indeed, researchers are likely to encounter a multitude of actions, some of which support the stabilization of dominant identity nets and some that counteract that stabilization. This points to the permeability, overlaps, and possible degeneration of dominant identities. Furthermore, this view enables new conceptualizations of intersections as manifold, messy, and disordered, and forces us to rethink whether we have given priority to the most relevant identity categories, or simply embraced and reproduced the historical (and structural) baggage of intersectional theorization (Dhamoon, 2011).

Research questions and design: this framework offers an approach that does not necessarily view oppression and inequalities as central themes. Notably, however, the framework does not reject oppression and inequality as valid notions. Rather, it has few analytical ambitions upfront – it “tries to minimize the a priori assumptions before the study can begin” (Czarniawska, 2008, p. 18). This allows for new explorations. For example, this perspective enables the study of things that come into being and seem to stabilize, as well as those that are never more than an event in a brief moment in time. The strength of this perspective is that it allows us to learn from the “failures” – those actions that have less effect than actions forming dominant social categories. This, in turn, supports exploration in new territories, such as failed constructions of alternative identities, absent identities, and periodic or permanent breakdowns of dominant identities.

The following analytical questions can help guide researchers who wish to adopt this framework (see also Kaijser and Kronsell, 2013; Winker and Degele, 2011; Matsuda, 1991):

- Which social categories, if any, are represented in the empirical material?
- Which social categories are absent? Are any categories that seem important to the empirical material missing? If so, why?
- Are there any observable explicit or implicit assumptions about social categories or about relations among social categories?
- How do represented and/or absent categories support or oppose each other?
- How does the representation of the categories and their intersections shift over time or in different contexts?

As this framework adopts an epistemic standpoint, certain research designs are particularly relevant. Techniques relevant for such a framework include, but are not confined to, open-ended interviews and participant observations (Czarniawska, 2004). Moreover, as the framework is loose with a low degree of analytical ambition, scholars must be reflexive and make decisions on what to extract as significant from the context under investigation. This reflexivity is crucial and has the potential to initiate the much-needed discussion of why some categories, such as class, race, and gender, have received more attention than other conceptualizations of differences. Contrary to the tendency of a priori prioritizing some social identity categories, we should use an open-ended, grounded approach to rigorously justify the types of differences that are deemed relevant.

### **Implications for diversity research**

One consequence of the framework proposed in this paper is that social categories can only remain stable through the actions that maintain their temporal stability. As such, the framework addresses categorization, a familiar concept within intersectionality and critical diversity studies, from a different epistemological standpoint than theoretically

dominant views, such as social psychology and identity theorization. More specifically, the proposed framework suggest that the analytical starting point is the emergence, change, maintenance, absence, and dissolving of social categories through the empirical study of actions.

Therefore, the framework presented here also provides for the advancement of critical diversity studies. In part, the ideas presented in this paper sit well within this area of study. However, this paper also takes a radical step away from this field. Critical diversity research has advanced the understanding of differences, but it has also often adopted a critical stance in relation to dominant categories. For example, Mir *et al.* (2006), Zanoni *et al.* (2010) call for perspectives that examine individuals' embeddedness in local hierarchies. Although the proposed framework enables the study of such embeddedness, it does not adopt a focus on "racialized, class-based and gendered hierarchies" (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010, p. 16). Instead, it investigates how hierarchies are constructed through actions that do not pre-assign primacy to certain categories. Moreover, this framework addresses categorization from an epistemological and methodological standpoint that lies closer to the heart of action nets and other network-based theories, such as actor-network theory (see, e.g. Law, 2009), than traditional (critical) diversity scholarship.

Tatli and Özbilgin (2012a) highlight that "most workforce diversity studies [...] focus on a single category of difference which is considered salient by previous studies, rather than identifying what is salient in that specific context" (p. 182). Similarly, Konrad *et al.* (2006) and Roberson (2013) note that diversity scholars cannot afford to ignore the interplay among identities. This appreciation of multiple identities and their interaction is at the heart of intersectionality. Therefore, intersectional research has an opportunity to provide direction for diversity studies on a broader scale.

According to Konrad *et al.* (2006), taking such interplays seriously also requires an expansion of our methodological horizons "to increasingly engage in research that is process-oriented and better able to capture the multiplicity of identities [...] [and for] critical approaches to be melded into the pragmatics of the daily management of diversity" (p. 537). The framework proposed here adopts such a process-oriented methodology. Moreover, the framework takes its departure from critical scholarship, pointing to the problem of giving primacy to oppression. In comparing critical diversity studies with mainstream diversity management, Ahonen *et al.* (2014) note that "the diversity that critical scholarship produces in terms of governmentality is not very far from the diversity that mainstream diversity research in management produces; [in both cases] diversity is still something that can and even should be managed to achieve desirable ends" (p. 16). No methodological framework can completely disregard a priori assumptions. However, we must develop methods that seek to minimize and/or critically assess those a priori assumptions (Ahonen *et al.*, 2014).

In conclusion, this paper echoes the tendencies and tensions that characterize intersectional research today. The proposed framework is positioned within these tensions, but the framework itself holds no promises. It only suggests a way forward. Time will tell whether intersectionality will inform diversity research and organizational research at large. The framework is one small step toward bringing intersectionality into new areas. It offers opportunities for collaboration between intersectionality and the more general study of differences. Intersectionality is changing in its ongoing production (Omanovic, 2009). In the end, what will make intersectionality a prosperous field will be the advancement of its theoretical and practical content through collaborative efforts across and within disciplines (Cho *et al.*, 2013).

---

**References**

- Abrams, P. (1982), *Historical Sociology*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Acker, J. (2012), "Gendered organizations and intersectionality: problems and possibilities", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 214-224.
- Adams, J. and Padamsee, T. (2001), "Signs and regimes: rereading feminist work on welfare states", *Social Politics*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1-23.
- Ahonen, P., Tiernari, J., Meriläinen, S. and Pullen, A. (2014), "Hidden contexts and invisible power relations: a Foucauldian reading of diversity research", *Human Relations*, Vol. 67 No. 3, pp. 263-286.
- Åsberg, C. and Lykke, N. (2010), "Feminist technoscience studies", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 299-305.
- Bagilhole, B. (2010), "Applying the lens of intersectionality to UK equal opportunities and diversity policies", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 263-271.
- Banton, M. (2011), "A theory of social categories", *Sociology*, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 187-201.
- Bilge, S. (2010), "Recent feminist outlooks on intersectionality", *Diogenes*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 58-72.
- Boogaard, B. and Roggeband, C. (2010), "Paradoxes of intersectionality: theorizing inequality in the Dutch police force through structure and agency", *Organization*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 53-75.
- Bowleg, L. (2008), "When black + lesbian + woman ≠ black lesbian woman: the methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 59 Nos 5-6, pp. 312-325.
- Browne, I. and Misra, J. (2003), "The intersection of gender and race in the labor market", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 487-513.
- Buell, D., Glancy, J., Kartzow, M. and Moxnes, H. (2010), "Cultural complexity and intersectionality in the study of the Jesus movement", *Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 309-312.
- Catalyst (2010), "Women of color in accounting: exploring the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender", *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 44-45.
- Chen, A. (1999), "Lives at the center of the periphery, lives at the periphery of the center: Chinese American masculinities and bargaining with hegemony", *Gender and Society*, Vol. 13 No. 5, pp. 584-607.
- Chhachhi, A. (2006), "Kumari Jayawardena", *Development and Change*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 1335-1346.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. and McCall, L. (2013), "Toward a field of intersectionality studies: theory, applications, and praxis", *Signs*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 785-810.
- Choo, H. and Ferree, M. (2010), "Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: a critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 129-149.
- Christensen, A.-D. (2009), "Belonging and unbelonging from an intersectional Perspective", *Gender, Technology and Development*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 21-41.
- Christensen, A.-D. and Jensen, S. (2012), "Doing intersectional analysis: methodological implications for qualitative research", *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 109-125.
- Clycq, N. (2012), "My daughter is a free woman, so she can't marry a Muslim: the gendering of ethno-religious boundaries", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 157-171.
- Cockburn, C. (2012), "Who are 'we'?, asks one of us", *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 205-219.

- Cole, E. (2009), "Intersectionality and research in psychology", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 64 No. 3, pp. 170-180.
- Collins, P. (1991), *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Crenshaw, K. (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, Chicago, IL, pp. 139-167, available at: [https://scholar.google.dk/scholar?q=Demarginalizing+the+Intersection+of+Race+and+Sex%3A+A+Black+Feminist+Critique+of+Antidiscrimination+Doctrine%2C+Feminist+Theory%2C+and+Antiracist+Politics&btnG=&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5](https://scholar.google.dk/scholar?q=Demarginalizing+the+Intersection+of+Race+and+Sex%3A+A+Black+Feminist+Critique+of+Antidiscrimination+Doctrine%2C+Feminist+Theory%2C+and+Antiracist+Politics&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5)
- Crenshaw, K. (1991), "Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color", *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1241-1299.
- Cronin, A. and King, A. (2010), "Power, inequality and identification: exploring diversity and intersectionality amongst older LGB adults", *Sociology*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 876-892.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004), "On time, space, and action nets", *Organization*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 773-791.
- Czarniawska, B. (2008), *A Theory of Organizing*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Czarniawska, B. and Joerges, B. (1996), "Travels of ideas", in Czarniawska, B. and Sevón, G. (Eds), *Translating Organizational Change*, de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 13-48.
- Davis, A. (1983), *Women, Race and Class*, Vintage Books, New York, NY.
- Davis, K. (2008), "Intersectionality as buzzword", *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 67-85.
- Denis, A. (2008), "Review essay: intersectional analysis", *International Sociology*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 677-694.
- Dhamoon, R. (2011), "Considerations on mainstreaming intersectionality", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 230-243.
- Dickens, L. (2007), "The road is long: thirty years of equality legislation in Britain", *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 463-494.
- Diedrich, A., Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. and Styhre, A. (2011), "Sorting people out: the uses of one-dimensional classificatory schemes in a multi-dimensional world", *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 271-292.
- Dotto, A. and Stewart, A. (2008), "'Don't ever forget now, you're a black man in America': intersections of race, class and gender in encounters with the police", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 59 Nos 5-6, pp. 350-364.
- Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. and Styhre, A. (2007), *Organisering och Intersektionalitet*, Liber and Korotan, Ljubljana.
- Fine, M. and Burns, A. (2003), "Class notes: toward a critical psychology of class and schooling", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 59 No. 4, pp. 841-860.
- Fowler, B. (2003), "Reading Pierre Bourdieu's masculine domination: notes towards an intersectional analysis of gender, culture and class", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 17 Nos 3-4, pp. 468-494.
- Gardiner, J. (2010), "Ethnicity and gender at work: inequalities, careers and employment relations – by Harriet Bradley and Geraldine Healy", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 399-401.
- Gopaldas, A., Prasad, A. and Woodard, D. (2009), "Intersectionality: insights for consumer research", *Advances in Consumer Research – North American Conference Proceedings*, Vol. 36, pp. 789-790.
- Haas, A. (2012), "Race, rhetoric, and technology: a case study of decolonial technical communication theory, methodology, and pedagogy", *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 277-310.

- Hancock, A.-M. (2007), "When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: examining intersectionality as a research paradigm", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 63-79.
- Healy, G., Hansen, L. and Ledwith, S. (2006), "Editorial: still uncovering gender in industrial relations", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 290-298.
- Holvino, E. (2010), "Doing OD from the margins taking on the complexity of identities in organizations", *OD Practitioner*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 54-58.
- Johansson, F. (2007), "Finding innovation at the intersection", *Leader to Leader*, Vol. 45, Summer, pp. 22-25, available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ltl.239/abstract>
- Jones, J. (2010), "Toward a diversity science: the longest journey begins with the first step", *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 127-133.
- Kaijser, A. and Kronsell, A. (2013), "Climate change through the lens of intersectionality", *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 417-433.
- Kennedy, H. (2005), "Subjective intersections in the face of the machine: gender, race, class and PCs in the home", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 471-487.
- Kerner, I. (2012), "Questions of intersectionality: reflections on the current debate in German gender studies", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 203-218.
- Knapp, G.A. (2005), "Race, class, gender", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 249-265.
- Konrad, A.M., Prasad, P. and Pringle, J. (Eds) (2006), *Handbook of Workplace Diversity*, Sage, London.
- Law, J. (2009), "Actor network theory and material semiotics", in Turner, B. (Ed.), *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, West Sussex, pp. 141-158.
- Lindberg, K. and Czarniawska, B. (2006), "Knotting the action net, or organizing between organizations", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 292-306.
- Lorde, A. (1984), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Crossing, Trumansburg, NY.
- McCall, L. (2005), "The complexity of intersectionality", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 1771-1800.
- Martinez, E. (1993), "Beyond black/white: the racisms of our time", *Social Justice*, Vol. 20 Nos 1-2, pp. 51-52, available at: [www.jstor.org/stable/29766729?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/29766729?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- Matsuda, M.J. (1991), "Beside my sister, facing the enemy: legal theory out of coalition", *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1183-1192.
- Mayberry, M., Subramaniam, B. and Weasel, L.H. (2001), *Feminist Science Studies: A New Generation*, Routledge, London.
- Metcalfe, B. and Woodhams, C. (2012), "Introduction: new directions in gender, diversity and organization theorizing – re-imagining feminist post-colonialism, transnationalism and geographies of power", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 123-140.
- Mir, R., Mir, A. and Wong, D.J. (2006), "Diversity: the cultural logic of global capital?", in Konrad, A.M., Prasad, P. and Pringle, J.K. (Eds), *Handbook of Workplace Diversity*, Sage, London, pp. 167-188.
- Monture, P. (2007), "Racing and erasing: law and gender in white settler societies", in Hier, S.P. and Bolaria, B.S. (Eds), *Race and Racism in 21st Century Canada: Continuity, Complexity, and Change*, Broadview, Peterborough, pp. 197-212.
- Nash, J. (2008), "Re-thinking intersectionality", *Feminist Review*, Vol. 89 No. 1, pp. 1-15.
- Omanovic, V. (2009), "Diversity and its management as a dialectical process: encountering Sweden and the US", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 352-362.



- Özbilgin, M., Beauregard, T., Tatli, A. and Bell, M. (2011), "Work-life, diversity and intersectionality: a critical review and research agenda", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 177-198.
- Ozturk, M. (2011), "Sexual orientation discrimination: exploring the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees in Turkey", *Human Relations*, Vol. 64 No. 8, pp. 1099-1118.
- Prasad, A. (2012), "Beyond analytical dichotomies", *Human Relations*, Vol. 65 No. 5, pp. 567-595.
- Prins, B. (2006), "Narrative accounts of origins: a blind spot in the intersectional approach?", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 277-290.
- Purdie-Vaughns, V. and Eibach, R. (2008), "Intersectional invisibility: the distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 59 Nos 5-6, pp. 377-391.
- Richardson, D. (2007), "Patterned fluidities: (re)imagining the relationship between gender and sexuality", *Sociology*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 457-474.
- Roberson, Q.M. (2013), *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity and Work*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Rule, P. and Modipa, T. (2012), "'We must believe in ourselves': attitudes and experiences of adult learners with disabilities in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa", *Adult Education Quarterly*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 138-158.
- Ryan, I. and Martin, S. (2013), "The practice of intersectionality: the amateur elite sport development game", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 7, pp. 688-700.
- Shields, S. and Diccio, E. (2011), "The social psychology of sex and gender", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 491-499.
- Soni-Sinha, U. (2012), "Intersectionality, subjectivity, collectivity and the union: a study of the 'locked-out' hotel workers in Toronto", *Organization*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 775-793.
- Stainback, K. and Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2009), "Intersections of power and privilege: long-term trends in managerial representation", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 5, pp. 800-820.
- Staunaes, D. (2003), "Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification", *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 101-110.
- Steinbugler, A., Press, J. and Dias, J. (2006), "Gender, race, and affirmative action", *Gender and Society*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 805-825.
- Styhre, A. and Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. (2008), "Thinking the multiple in gender and diversity studies: examining the concept of intersectionality", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 8, pp. 567-582.
- Syed, J. and Özbilgin, M. (2009), "A relational framework for international transfer of diversity management practices", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 20 No. 12, pp. 2435-2453.
- Tatli, A. and Özbilgin, M. (2012a), "Surprising intersectionalities of inequality and privilege: the case of the arts and cultural sector", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 249-265.
- Tatli, A. and Özbilgin, M. (2012b), "An emic approach to intersectional study of diversity at work: a Bourdieuan framing", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 180-200.
- Valentine, G., Vanderbeck, R., Andersson, J., Sadgrove, J. and Kevin, W. (2010), "Emplacements: the event as a prism for exploring intersectionality; a case study of the Lambeth Conference", *Sociology*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 925-943.

- 
- Walby, S., Armstrong, J. and Strid, S. (2012), "Intersectionality: multiple inequalities in social theory", *Sociology*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 224-240.
- Winker, G. and Degele, N. (2011), "Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: dealing with social inequality", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 51-66.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006), "Intersectionality and feminist politics", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 193-209.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011), *The Politics of Belonging – Intersectional Contestations*, Sage, London.
- Zander, U., Zander, L., Gaffney, S. and Olsson, J. (2010), "Intersectionality as a new perspective in international business research", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 457-466.
- Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y. and Nkomo, S. (2010), "Guest editorial: unpacking diversity, grasping inequality: rethinking difference through critical perspectives", *Organization*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 9-29.
- Zimdars, A. (2010), "The profile of pupil barristers at the Bar of England and Wales 2004-2008", *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 117-134.

#### About the author

Mikkel Mouritz Marfelt is an Industrial Research Fellow at the Department of Organization at the Copenhagen Business School. His research addresses the governance, and strategic use of social identity categories in organizations. Areas of foci are the negotiations of identities, global governance of workforces in large organizations, and Big Data workforce querying. Mikkel Mouritz Marfelt can be contacted at: [mmm.ioa@cbs.dk](mailto:mmm.ioa@cbs.dk)

---

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

[www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm](http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm)

Or contact us for further details: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)