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**Negotiating Equality and Diversity  
across Europe –  
Multiculturalism/Migration,  
Citizenship and Social Justice**

**Monika Mokre and Birte Siim**

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# Negotiating Equality and Diversity across Europe – Multiculturalism/Migration, Citizenship and Social Justice

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## Abstract

*The paper addresses the intersections of gender equality and ethno-national diversity across Europe focusing on the role of actors in democratic politics from the transnational context. The dual inspiration is scholars who reframe democracy, citizenship and social justice beyond the nation state and feminist scholars who theorize intersectionality in transnational politics. It aims to evolve the intersectionality approach further by analyzing the role of actors in democratic politics from the multilevel European context. Key questions are who is in/excluded in the (European) public sphere, and what conceptions of intersectionality do actors articulate? How might this analysis contribute to a better understanding and theorizing of the role of intersectionality in national and transnational political life? The conclusion discusses how to interpret conflicts and negotiations about intersections of gender equality and ethno-national diversity across Europe by major political actors. Are they a sign of a vibrant public sphere with potentials to evolve into a European public sphere, or a dangerous sign of the growth of Rightwing anti-migration forces exacerbated by the economic crisis?*

Migration has challenged theories of multiculturalism, equality and diversity attached to the nation state, and scholars have proposed post-national and cosmopolitan frames, which attempt to expand citizenship, democracy and equality beyond the nation state. The paper addresses the intersections of gender equality and ethno-national diversity across Europe focusing on the role of actors in democratic politics from the transnational context. The

dual inspiration is scholars who reframe democracy, citizenship and social justice beyond the nation state, and feminist scholars who theorise intersectionality in transnational politics.

Feminist scholars have proposed the intersectionality approach as a way to address multidimensional inequalities, differences and discriminations. Research demonstrates that in spite of differences in national histories, institutions and culture, European nation states face similar problems with migration. The intersectionality approach has highlighted that in many European countries gender equality has become a national value, which is often used by both women and men on the Left and the Right as a national demarcation, which constructs a borderline between ‘us and them’, the ‘white’ majority and minority groups, especially Muslim immigrants from non-European countries. The paper aims to evolve the intersectionality approach further by analysing the role of actors in democratic politics from the multilevel European context.

The first part discusses the main arguments for reframing theories of citizenship, democracy and social justice beyond the nation state and overcome methodological nationalism in the social sciences. The main part of the paper addresses the negotiations between gender equality and ethno-national diversity across Europe focusing on the framings of political actors within national and European Public Spheres (EPS). Here key questions are who is in/excluded in the (European) public sphere, and what conceptions of intersectionality do actors articulate? How might this analysis contribute to a better understanding and theorizing of the role of intersectionality in national and transnational political life?

The conclusion reflects on the major findings from the Eurosphere gender project (cf. Siim and Mokre 2013). It discusses how to interpret conflicts and negotiations about intersections of gender equality and ethno-national diversity across Europe by major political actors. Are they a sign of a vibrant public sphere with potentials to evolve into a European public sphere, or a dangerous sign of the growth of right-wing anti-migration forces exacerbated by the economic crisis?

### **Trans-national Challenges to Citizenship, Migration/Multiculturalism and Justice**

This section discusses the post-national challenge of overcoming methodological nationalism and reframe theories of citizenship, migration/multiculturalism and social justice. The aim is to develop a dual approach to citizenship, migration and justice within and beyond the nation state. The transnational space can be defined as a space beyond the boundaries of the nation states: It is the space where actors, actions and institutions cross nation state borders (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013). The following looks at some influential approaches which have addressed the post-national challenge to citizenship, democracy and social justice, which can inspire reflections about democratic citizenship from the European context: the critique of methodological nationalism presented by Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (2002); Rainer Bauboeck’s (2006) considerations on contemporary challenges for citizenship concepts, Engin Isin’s (2009) proposal for a new vocabulary of citizenship, Etienne Balibar’s (2004) emphasis on the democratic impact of protests by *sans papiers*, and Nancy Fraser’s (2005) arguments for reframing social justice.

In Wimmer and Glick-Schiller’s historical approach to methodological nationalism, it is defined ‘as the assumption that nation/state/society is the natural social and political form in the modern world’. They find that the modern world has always been transnational, even in the days when the nation states constrained most social processes, and show how methodological nationalism has influenced the study of international migration and immigrant integration. According to the authors the value of studying migration and transnational communities is to shift the perspective away from methodological nationalism. Their main argument is that migration politics and research has become a way of legitimizing the project of nation state building (2002: 311).

They present three variants of methodological nationalism: ignoring the national framing of modernity; naturalisation of national discourses; territorial limitation of the social sciences (2002: 307). They find that migrants became a special object of policy-making and research because (1) they disrupt relations between people, sovereign and citizenry, (2) between people and nation, (3) between people and solidarity groups, because they come from the outside into the national space of solidarity, (4) they represent exceptions to the normality within the boundaries of the state. According to the authors one implication of this conceptualisation has been a focus on migration of non-citizens and to describe migrants “as potential security risks, as culturally others, as socially marginal and as an exception to the rule of territorial confinement”.

The authors emphasise that the emergence of the transnational paradigm represents a shift within the social sciences which opens new understandings of migration and nation building. At the same time they warn against methodological ‘fluidism’ (2002: 326) and against neglecting the power of nation states and the potency of national identities for political actors. We find that these methodological reflections about migration and nation building can be an inspiration for theorizing a dual approach to understandings of citizenship, democracy and social justice within and beyond the nation state. One – but by no means the only – aspect of these questions is the legal concept of citizenship. Historically, citizenship is mostly defined as “a status of membership in a self-governing political community” (Bauboeck 2006: 15). This community is usually based on common nationality and common territory. Thus, it poses problems to transnational communities (such as the Roma but also, e.g., the Turkish diaspora) and to migration societies (cf. Creutz-Kaemppi et al. 2011).

In migration societies, full membership is only warranted to parts of the population, namely those possessing national citizenship of their country of residence. Thus, citizenship forms (1) a means of internal inclusion and exclusion in a nation state, and (2) a means of mobility control at national borders. In EU member states, a further distinction between EU and third country citizenship has been introduced. This two or three class structure of populations poses serious problems for democracy, which are frequently overlooked in liberal democratic theory. Excluding settled immigrants from access to full citizenship amounts to political tyranny (Walzer 1983: 62), since it subjects a part of the permanent population to legislation without representation (Bauboeck 2006: 20).

A further decisive difference concerns the acquisition of citizenship. “What justification is there for distinguishing between automatic acquisition at birth and naturalisation regarded as a contract based on active consent by both the immigrant and the receiving polity? Why should immigrants have to apply for naturalisation rather than being granted automatic access to this status after some time of residence?” (Bauboeck 2006, 21)

Inequalities of citizens and non-citizens result in a differentiation in rights on different levels. Marshall’s classic text *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950, reprinted in Marshall and Bottomore 1992), distinguishes between civil rights, political rights of participation and social citizenship. While citizenship as a legal concept is a bipolar structure (one either is citizen of a state or one is not), these rights can be differentiated in multiple ways thereby enhancing or decreasing the fundamental problem of the necessary limitation of political rights. In this vein, everybody in a certain territory, including *sans papiers*, i.e. people without rights of residence, must enjoy human rights and, arguably, some social rights. On the other hand, these rights are constantly endangered as deportation and expulsion are part of the discretionary power of the state. Secondly, national anti-discrimination laws are usually not fully applicable to non-national residents and EU legislation explicitly calls for discrimination of third country citizens as compared to EU citizens.

Citizenship is not only linked to rights but also to duties. Here, we can observe a further differentiation between citizens and non-citizens as the exclusion from citizenship rights does not mean the exclusion of major citizenship duties such as paying taxes or participation in general education. Other duties, such as military service or participation in

juries are usually reserved to citizens, while specific – and increasingly more and more precise – duties are imposed on non-citizens, generally subsumed under the duty to integrate.

Engin Isin also takes his starting point in a differentiation between different citizen's rights. His claim is to reframe citizenship by focusing on the changes in citizenship 'blurring the boundaries between human and civil, political and social rights and the articulation of rights by (and to) cities, regions and across states' (Isin 2009: 367). He presents a methodological criticism of the nation state as containers of rights from the perspective on globalisation. The aim is to develop a fluid and dynamic conception of citizenship that is geographically responsive and historically grounded and to propose a new vocabulary of citizenship and a new figure of citizenship in order to understand the social and political changes. The main argument is that 'how subjects act to become citizens and claim citizenship has substantially changed' and the effects of these changes are a new figure of citizenship. One implication is the emergence of new 'sites', 'scales' and 'acts' through which the actors claim to transform themselves (and others) from subjects into citizens to claimants of rights. These developments thus create new actors as well as new political subjectivities (2009: 368).

One of Isin's main points is that the new actors articulate claims for justice through new sites that involve multiple and overlapping scales of rights and obligations, which change our conception of the political as well as of citizenship. He finds that it is a challenge to theorise citizenship as an institution in flux embedded in social and political struggles that constitute it and to provide a new vocabulary of citizenship reframing actors, sites, scales and acts (2009: 270). Another main point is that citizenship can be performed or enacted by various categories of subjects including aliens, migrants, refugees, states, courts and so on; thus the 'actors' of citizenship are not necessarily those who hold the status of citizenship.

Isin's approach has several implications: First it is not possible to define who the actors are in advance, because citizenship as subjectivity enacts the conception of the political. Second, the 'sites' and 'scales' of citizenship are fluid and dynamic, and boundaries become a question of empirical determination. 'Sites' are defined as 'fields of contestation around which certain issues, interests, stakes as well as themes, concepts and objects assemble', and 'scales' as 'scopes of applicability which are appropriate to these fields of contestation'. The critical concept is 'acts', specifically 'acts of citizenship', which become the binding thread of investigation of these struggles.

In Isin's approach acts of citizenship that produce new actors, sites and scales of citizenship is vital for understanding how citizenship has changed in an age of migration and movement (2009: 371). Isin's reframing focuses on citizenship as 'a dynamic (political, legal, social and cultural but perhaps also sexual, aesthetic and ethical) institution of domination and empowerment that governs who citizens (insiders), subjects (strangers, outsiders) and abjects (aliens) are and how these actors are to govern themselves and each other in a given body politics' (2009: 371). The crucial concept is 'enactment of citizenship' and the main unit of analysis in such an enactment is 'acts or deeds by which and through which subjects become, or constitute themselves, as citizens' (2009: 377-83).

In sum: Isin's approach makes a distinction between active and activist citizens and shifts the focus to activist citizenship arguing that 'the emerging figure of the activist citizen making claims to justice is the defining figure in contemporary global politics' (2009: 383-84). We find the focus on struggles, contestation and the ability to link the local, national, global sites and scales to be one of the strengths of this vocabulary of citizenship. The strict distinction between active and activist citizens is, however, debatable and needs to be explored through empirical studies.

Étienne Balibar (2004) takes a similar approach as Isin while explicitly focusing on non-citizens and, thereby, radicalizing Bauboeck's and Isin's approach. "Paradoxically the struggles of the *sans papiers*, perceived by the government as disturbances of the public order, desperate forms of blackmail or products of a conspiracy whose manipulators should

be sought among ‘criminal networks’, have been and are privileged moments in the development of *active citizenship* (or, if you prefer, direct participation in public affairs) without which there exists no polity (*cit *) but only a state form cut off from society and petrified in its own abstraction” (Balibar 2004: 48). Balibar’s claim here is for a *droit de cite*, “a right of entry and residency of foreigners and, in particular, of ‘immigrants’, in the diversity of collective situations and individual trajectories covered by this term” (Balibar 2004: 47). More important for our aims here, however, is his emphasis on the impact of public acting of *sans papiers*. He succinctly describes the democratic necessity of political public spheres as complement and critique of the polity and as the space to negotiate inclusion and exclusion.

Nancy Fraser’s recent approach reframes the normative approach to social justice in a globalizing world (2005; 2007). Fraser recently argued that the struggles for economic redistribution and social recognition require that the issues of the political should be discussed at the global rather than the national level. This means reframing Fraser’s influential social justice model premised on three universal principles, which link social equality, cultural diversity and participatory democracy (1990: 77). The main argument is that decisions affecting ‘the fate of all’ are increasingly taken or not taken at the global level. This has implications for the understanding of the public sphere, which is a key concept in deliberative democracy with the dual function to create legitimacy to decisions and to empower citizens vis-à-vis the state (Fraser 1990).

Fraser claims that in order to reconstruct democratic theory in the current ‘post-national constellation’ it is necessary to problematise the national frame and reflect upon the notion of ‘transnational public spheres’ (2007). The public sphere is concerned with who participates and on what terms. Her earlier work criticised the exclusive nature of Habermas’ model and the universal ideal of the public sphere, premised on the public/private divide. The revised public sphere model was based upon heterogeneity and diversity, which expanded democracy and decentred politics from parliament to civil society. The new argument emphasises that the public spheres are increasingly transnational or post-national with respect to the constitutive elements of public opinion: the who of communication, the what of communication, the where of communication and the how of communication, and finally the addressee of communication is no longer the Westphalian state power but a mix of public and private transnational powers.

Fraser has also discussed what sort of changes would be required to imagine a genuine critical and democratizing role for transnational public spheres under current conditions. She has emphasised that a public sphere theory understood as a critical theory in a post-national world faces a dual challenge ‘to create new, transnational public powers and to make them accountable to new transnational public spheres’ (cf. Fraser 2007: 23). This approach thus includes both a critique of the national bias of hitherto held concepts of the public sphere, and the analytical claim about the possibility of transnational public spheres being able to make transnational public powers accountable. Fraser concludes that we need a paradigm shift from “a theory of social justice’ to a view on justice as participatory parity focused not only on the ‘what’ of justice but also on the ‘who’ and ‘how’” (2005: 8-9).

*To sum up:* Wimmer and Glick-Schiller’s approach refers primarily to methodological arguments connected to transnationalism for reframing theories beyond the nation state, while Bauboeck’s, Isin’s, Balibar’s and Fraser’s arguments refer to empirical changes in citizenship and democracy connected with migration and globalisation. Bauboeck mainly deals with the legal side of citizenship; Isin and Balibar focus on the challenge for enactment of citizenship by new actors and on new sites ‘from below’; while Fraser proposes a comprehensive deliberative model focusing on the dual challenge of creating both transnational public powers and transnational public spheres.

### Reflections about Democracy, Diversity and Gender from the European context

Questions concerning EU citizenship, democracy and the European Public Sphere (EPS) were addressed empirically in Eurosphere's<sup>1</sup> gender project (EGP), which explored the participation and articulation of citizens in the EPS from a perspective of diversity and gender. This section gives an overview of the theoretical and methodological reflections in the gender project, while the following sections discuss the empirical findings (Siim and Mokre 2013).

Arguably these post-national approaches can enlighten the understanding of the European context, since EU can be understood as a laboratory for transnational governance, democracy and citizenship. Wimmer and Glick-Schiller's approach can contribute to sharpen our sensitivity to transcend 'the naturalisation' of national discourses. Bauboeck's, Isin's, and Balibar's approach focuses on changes in citizenship 'from below' related to migration, which can add to the understanding of EU citizenship. It raises critical questions about who the citizens are, who participates in the public sphere, what are the political identities, where on what sites and about how they participate and enact citizenship. Fraser's view on justice as 'participatory parity' can add to our understanding of EU as a multilevel structure of sovereignty. From this perspective one critical question is whether it is possible to identify transnational European Publics, which these transnational powers can be made accountable to. Another question is whether a European public sphere beyond the borders of national democracy is feasible; and finally how such a public sphere should deal with gender and other inequalities.

Approaches to European integration have until recently been divided between approaches concerned mainly with the impact of multilevel political institutional, i.e. Europeanisation 'from above' (cf. Lombardo and Forest 2012: 1-22), and approaches focusing on the role of citizens, i.e. Europeanisation 'from below' (Risse 2003; della Porta and Caiani 2010). Lombardo and Forest have recently presented a discursive and sociological approach to 'the gendering of Europe', which aims to develop pluralistic and inclusive frameworks for studying Europeanisation processes in the area(s) of gender and other inequalities focusing on variations of gender regimes across Europe, including the role of actors (Lombardo and Forest 2012: 2-4). This approach needs to evolve further to address the participation and framing of actors in transnational civil society. Arguably a re-conceptualisation of European democracy from a transnational frame should focus on how political institutions interact with the activities of citizens (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013) of the EPS. The gender project focused on intersections of how two groups of actors (political parties and social movement/NGOs) articulate gender and ethno-national diversity.

The ideas of transnational democracy, civil society and public spheres imply a radical break with the understanding of democracy as confined to nation states. Most scholars of democracy and European integration see EPS as normatively desirable, which is needed to allow citizens to identify with the political system and to enable responsiveness of the system. To permit representatives and policymakers to be responsive to people's concerns, the latter have to be articulated within the public sphere. The lack of an EPS is therefore often understood as part of EU's democratic deficit and legitimacy gap (see e.g. Eriksen and Fossum 2001). A different approach focuses on the increasing power and legitimacy of the European Parliament (EP) arguing that the EP has moved from a weak to a strong pub-

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<sup>1</sup> The empirical focus in the Eurosphere project was on how four sets of social and political actors (political parties, social movements/NGOs, think tanks and media) envision European diversity and the EU polity and how they participate in the public debates. The data cover semi-structured elite interviews, institutional data (web-based and printed documents and materials), surveys and media content analysis. Close to 200 organisations are included in the analysis and approximately 1300 elite interviews are conducted. The interviews cover: 1) views on diversity in general; 2) views on ethno-national diversity; 3) perceptions of the EU and its development; 4) preferred political strategies within the policy fields of citizenship, migration and enlargement; and 5) perception.

lic by ‘linking general publics to sectorial publics’, e.g. around claims for gender equality (Liebert 2007: 277).

The evolution of EU governance and democracy has inspired fundamental questions about the public sphere in democracy: How are diversity and equality accommodated in a democratic public sphere? Calhoun (2004: 7) argues that participation in the public sphere shows a form of solidarity even if this participation does not lead to harmony. And Risse (2003: 5) as well as della Porta and Caiani (2010) maintain that contestation is a crucial precondition for the emergence of an EPS, rather than an indication for its absence; that is, Europeanisation by contestation.

Siim and Mokre (2013) propose that the European public sphere (EPS) can be understood as a locus/space for conflicts and struggles about in/exclusion of women and marginalised social groups in society (see also Brüll, Mokre and Siim 2012). The EPS is thus understood as a place for both contestation and negotiations of political discourses, policies and visions for (gender) equality and gender justice. Empirically many questions remain: What kind of contestations and negotiations exist in the EPS about gender equality and diversity; who are the actors; how do they communicate; to what extent is there an empowerment of political actors in European civil society; and to what extent do the transnational powers have legitimacy and can be made accountable to civil society actors?

### **The Post-national Challenge to Feminist Theories and Research**

Feminist scholars have proposed competing theories and models of gender equality and gender justice, but only few have explicitly addressed the transnational challenge (Ferree 2008; Yuval-Davis 2011). This section briefly discusses the ‘intersectional turn’ in European gender theory and research focusing on the proposals to reframe the feminist intersectionality approach from a multi-layered and transnational perspective. The main argument is that intersectionality needs to evolve further for us to understand and conceptualise the dual challenge of national variations in gender equality and conceptions of ethno-national diversity across Europe as well the post-national challenge (Siim 2013).

Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberley Crenshaw (1989; 1991). Crenshaw’s influential work focused on the intersections of gender and race in the US, and it was framed by conceptualisation of race and gender as the major social categories. The main argument being that contemporary feminist and antiracist discourses in the US have failed to consider the intersections of racism and patriarchy (Crenshaw 1991).

The intersectionality approach has become an influential analytical approach in European gender research addressing the intersections of gender and multiple differences and inequalities, especially race/ethnicity, class and other categories of difference (Phoenix 2006; EJWS 2006). Intersectionality is a multifaceted concept, which has been employed to analyse differences within the EU diversity and mainstreaming agenda (Squires 2007; Verloo 2006). It is concerned with conceptualisation of multiple forms of inequalities; differences and diversities, including differences among women (see EJWS 2006). The approach is still underdeveloped and needs to evolve further in dialogue with empirical research sensitive to variations of the categories in national contexts, for example different genealogies of the key categories gender, class and ethnicity/race (cf. Ferree 2008; Siim 2013).

The theories discussed in the first part of this article allow for more concrete applications of the intersectionality approach. With regard to legal provisions one should keep in mind that in many countries, naturalisation depends on, e.g., economic factors. Intersections between ethnicity and class play a role here as well as gender – given the gender-specific income differentials in most European countries. A similar argument can be brought up with regard to criminal records which, in most cases, make naturalisation impossible. Punishment for criminal activities is empirically clearly related to class, while statistically fewer women than men have a criminal record.

Also, the exclusion of large parts of the population from social citizenship enhances the intersectional overlap of (foreign) nationality and (subordinated) class as well as frequently (female) gender.

Other forms of intersectionality are found in the duty of integration imposed on migrants, e.g., the assumption that integration duties imposed by the state, such as obligatory language courses, are advantageous for women from ethnic or religious groups which traditionally exclude them from education.

In the Eurosphere gender project, one critical issue was to conceptualise the dynamics of the transnational multilevel contexts, especially the interactions of transnational governance and civil society actors (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013; Siim and Mokre 2013). One inspiration is Nira Yuval-Davis' approach to gender and nationality, citizenship and 'politics of belonging', which has contributed to conceptualise citizenship from the dual intersectional and trans-national perspectives (2006; 2007; 2011). According to Yuval-Davis, human beings are members of multiple social and political communities and social differences express different axes of power. Peoples' identities and experiences are intersectional and should thus be explored on institutional/organisational, structural and individual levels.

Another inspiration is Myra Marx Ferree's (2008) approach, which contributes to advancing the comparative and transnational understanding of the framing of equality in the EU model. It highlights the differences in the framings of equality and in the politics of race, class and gender in the US, Germany and the expanding European Union. She suggests that the hybridity of the EU model incorporates two competing senses of transnationalism; liberalism and social democracy: "an orientation to neo-liberalism and economic competitiveness on the global level, and a specific regional claim to the distinctive success of 'Europe' as a model of modernity and social progress" (Ferree 2008: 237).

Ferree understands the multi-level institutional EU framework as a mixture between social democracy and liberalism, which influence the gender model. Comparing the institutional frameworks for gender equality in the US and Europe she finds that the US privileges a metaphor of gender "being like race", since both represent a form of second-class citizenship. This contrasts with Western Europe where the class analogy "gender being as class" works better for women making claims as a collective group. She also notes that in the post-socialist states of Eastern Europe the gender-class analogy is problematic because socialism as a principle is associated with an authoritarian state (Ferree 2008: 244).

According to Ferree the interaction of institutional frameworks and activists is a crucial element in the framing of EU gender politics. She finds that the hybridity of the EU structure in relation to gender, race and class, especially the social and democratic aspirations of the European member states, offers valuable ping pong effects between transnational actors (2008: 252). But she warns that the complexity of the discourse also includes significant dangers, and one of the problems is that the framing is based upon a distinction between gender citizens and non-citizens, which includes EU citizens and excludes "the other" those outside the EU, the non-Europeans framed as less modern and less gender equal.

Ferree has proposed a dynamic and institutional approach to the EU gender model emphasising the hybridity of the EU structure and the interaction of institutional frameworks and activists. This is an analytically attractive model, since it highlights the specific intersections of gender, class and race/ethnicity within this multilevel framework. This understanding of the European gender model also raises critical questions to be pursued further by empirical analysis. One question concerns the influence of different political families on European gender politics; another question concerns the effects of the variety in gender models across Europe.

### **In/exclusion of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Democratic Politics in Europe**

This section discusses the particular characteristics of the EU gender model based upon reflections in the Eurosphere gender project (cf. Siim and Mokre 2013). It explores intersectionality from the trans-national context through empirical research about the articulation of gender and ethno-national diversity by political actors in the European Public Sphere (Siim and Mokre 2013). The study of in/exclusion in democratic politics in the EPS can contribute to refining the intersectionality approach and the role of actors in relation to democratic politics across Europe and on the trans-national level.

The meanings and relations between the key categories, gender, ethnicity/race and class are influenced by European history and political developments related to the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989. The EU consists of 27 nation states, and the motto “united in diversity” refers to EU citizens’ right to cross borders and work and live legally in another EU country, as well as to the accommodation national minorities, which has emerged as a result of the two European world wars. In spite of this common fate, “diversity” issues have increasingly been associated with conflicts about integration of new migrant groups; between citizens and non-citizens. Arguably EU’s particular history, political institutions and multi-level governance provides an opportunity to refine the concept of political intersectionality in relation to democratic politics from the transnational EU context (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013).

European studies of the interaction between gender, class and race can be traced back to the late 1970s and 80s (see Yuval-Davis 2011). Scholars have noticed that in Europe the race dimension has taken prevalent forms of anti-Semitism and colonialism, and the “Jewish question” has since the Second WW been a reason to not speak about “race”, especially in Germany (Fereee 2008; 2009), but also in France. Hence distinctive European power structures exist which are different from slavery and segregation in the US. Class struggles between left and right have been prevalent in Europe since the First WW, and relations between class and gender have been key issues for feminist scholarship, although not framed as intersectionality (Yuval-Davis 2011). Another significant factor is that struggles between native majorities and national minorities and religious struggles between Catholics and Protestants are part of Europe’s historical legacies.

Today the challenge from migration has become a major political problem across Europe. EU citizenship requires national citizenship, and non-citizens, including immigrant, refugee and ethnic minority groups, experience exclusion and marginalisation. Even if they are able to “enact citizenship” in new ways on new sites and in Engin’s sense become actors who can make claims for justice in some countries, they are absent in the national parliaments across Europe as well as in the European Parliament. Furthermore, as Bauboeck and Balibar point out, even their participation in the public sphere is constantly threatened by their precarious legal status. First, one has to ask what the exclusion and marginalisation of non-citizens, immigrant and ethnic minority groups means for democratic politics. A second question is the relation between active citizens and new groups of activist citizens. Finally, with regard to the EU and its democratic potential, one has to wonder what different naturalisation laws mean for this polity. Naturalisation on the base of ethnic, cultural, or religious bonds (as, e.g., applied by Hungary and Bulgaria with regard to “their” minorities abroad) plays a major role here (cf. Creutz-Kaemppi et al. 2011: 14): How do strongly national approaches towards ethno-national diversity affect immigration and naturalisation politics in the European Union?

Looking at the European context from a comparative (US) perspective, it is furthermore worth noticing that a number of European democracies have developed extended welfare states, a tradition for trade union movements and relatively strong civil society movements. From a gender perspective one democratic achievement has been the participation and representation of women in the political elite during the last 20 years. As a result women today make up between 30 and 40 per cent of the members of parliament in most

European countries and one third of the European Parliament (Pristed Nielsen and Rolandsen Agustin 2013). Women's representation has made a difference to democratic politics in many European countries, because it has made particular versions of state feminism possible, i.e. interactions between political institutions and civil society actors; between women's agency within and outside public institutions (Rolandsen Agustin and Siim 2013).

### **Political Actors' Understandings and Articulation of Intersectionality**

The Eurosphere gender project can illuminate the interactions of political institutions and civil society actors within multilevel governance (Siim and Mokre 2013). The findings illustrate particular ways in which political actors formulate interactions between gender equality and ethno-national diversity within and across selected arenas in various European countries. The focus is on the "politics of intersectionality",<sup>2</sup> i.e., the particular ways in which the interrelations between ethno-national diversity and gender are understood and framed as discourses and public policies by major social and political actors, influenced by national histories, institutions and belongings.

The public sphere (PS) was defined in the plural with a further differentiation between various public arenas. The analytical framework of the PS was divided into four dimensions (Ferree et al. 2002): the who, i.e., the participation of citizens; the what, i.e., the format and issues of the public discourse; the where of communication; and the outcome of the process. Intersectionality was used as a transversal analytical approach to study relations between gender and ethno-national diversity in discourses, policies and democratic practice. Here the focus is on citizens' participation in the public sphere and the framings of gender and ethno-national diversity by major actors representing selected political parties and social movements/NGOs/MSOs<sup>3</sup> across Europe. The key questions were, which forms of public spheres in/exclude which groups, to what degree and on which matters (Siim 2013: 3-21)? This approach makes it possible to identify elements of openness in various kinds of public spaces towards the idea of an EPS.

The methodological design encompasses multiple approaches, multiple sites/arenas and was based on a combination of elite interviews, institutional data/written documents, media content analysis and surveys. The organisations were selected to represent positions for and against diversity, and for and against EU integration. This paper draws primarily on the evaluation of the interviews and document analyses for all organisations in the Eurosphere sample, with regard to assessment of interrelations between gender and ethno-national diversity, and only to a limited extent on socio-economic differences (cf. Siim and Mokre 2013). Secondly it includes diverse case studies of national and transnational civil society organisations, selected political parties as well as the European Parliament (Pristed Nielsen 2013; Pristed Nielsen and Rolandsen Agustin 2013).

The analysis of the negotiations of gender and ethno-national diversity revealed the diverse understandings of intersectionality by major political actors across Europe and within the European Public Sphere (EPS) (Siim and Mokre 2013). In general, the empirical evidence suggests that intersections between ethnicity/nation and gender play an important

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<sup>2</sup> This conceptualisation of intersectionality in the Eurosphere gender project is different from Crenshaw's understanding. Crenshaw distinguishes between structural and political intersectionality which points at the experiences of conflicting political agendas of racism and sexism (1991). First ethno-national diversity is broader than race, since it can refer both to national minorities as well as to immigrant and refugee groups. Second and more important, it refers not only to the agendas of marginal groups but also to agendas of mainstream political parties.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis of selected political parties and SMO/NGOs includes comparisons of political parties in Denmark and Hungary; of right-wing populist parties in Austria, Denmark and Norway; of six national women's organisations; of transnational activism organised in the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Network against Racism (ENAR); as well as a case study of women in the European Parliament, FEMM Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Siim and Mokre 2013).

role in most discourses on diversity in the EPS. The findings illustrate that European social and political actors formulate conflicting understandings of the interactions between gender and ethnicity/nation, which were identified as exclusionary and inclusionary intersectionality.<sup>4</sup>

Exclusionary intersectionality refers to a position which perceives tensions between diversity and equality as irresolvable and thus proposes a radical, one-dimensional solution – either to reduce or abolish diversity – or to abandon claims for equality. This discourse is mainly articulated by right-wing parties and NGOs – and almost always mentioned in regard to Muslim minorities, but it was also found among gender NGOs. Nearly 20 per cent of the interviewed respondents from gender NGOs understood ethnic/national diversity as a threat to gender equality. It is, however, important to note that these positions were not unequivocal, not even in the same organisation (see Brüll, Mokre and Siim 2012).

Inclusionary intersectionality refers to a position which perceives both equality and diversity as positive values and does not understand them as irreconcilable. Within this discourse, two sub-discourses were identified: a) the multiple discrimination approach, which emphasises the intersection between different inequality creating mechanisms and the potential negative implications for strengthening inequality (in diversity), and b) the mutual learning process, which acknowledged the tensions between equality and diversity, with a focus on overcoming these tensions by learning (Brüll, Mokre and Siim 2012).

This finding has both political and theoretical implications. The case studies of two transnational organisations, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Network against Racism (ENAR), confirm that there has been a democratic learning process about the relation between gender and diversity (Rolandsen Agustin 2013; Pristed Nielsen 2013). However, case studies of national women's organisations indicate that this is not always the case (Arribas Lozano et al. 2013).

Gender equality and anti-discrimination are both fundamental European principles inscribed in EU gender and antidiscrimination legislation as well as in the Lisbon Treaty (Mokre and Borchorst 2013). From a comparative perspective one key issue concerns the priority that ought to be given either to the norms of gender equality or to ethnic diversity. Here the findings point towards a strong acceptance of gender equality by major social and political actors compared with a relatively weak acceptance of ethnic diversity, for example in national women's organisations (Arribas Lozano et al. 2013).

More research is needed to understand and explain this. One interpretation could be that gender equality is today embedded in national belongings in a number of European countries articulated by political actors across left and right, while accommodation of ethnic diversity is a more recent principle, which is contested by political actors. Case studies of selected political parties further indicate that gender equality is used by both mainstream political organisations and right-wing anti-migration forces as a demarcation to construct a borderline between “us and them”, the gender equal majority and the oppressed Muslim women (Rolandsen Agustin and Sato 2013; Meret and Siim 2013).

Another main issue concerns the discourses (and democratic practice) of civil society organisations. Here the findings point towards differences between women's organisations/networks and the organisations/networks combating racism. Members of the six selected women's organisations, which were all collective members of the European Women's Lobby (EWL),<sup>5</sup> did not articulate concerns about ethnic diversity and the rights of eth-

<sup>4</sup> A refined analysis of discourses in selected political parties and civil society organisations shows that in addition to exclusionary and inclusionary intersectionality, there are statements which cannot be clearly assigned to one or the other form of this intersectionality (ambiguous intersectionality), and also a few statements with an explicit rejection of intersections between gender and ethnicity/nation (no relation) (Brüll, Mokre and Siim 2012).

<sup>5</sup> The selected women's organisations were from five European countries: the French organisation Ni Putes Ni Submisses, NPNS; the Danish Women's Council; The Bulgarian Women's Alliance for Development, WAD; and the two Turkish organisations, KA-DAR, the organisation to support women candidates in political parties, and Kamer, the Women's Centre; and the Hungarian women's organisation, NaNe (see Arribas Lozano et al. 2013).

nic minorities (Arribas Lozano et al. 2013). This issue of how civil society organisations understand and articulate gender and ethnic diversity was further explored in a comparison of two transnational organisations, The European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Network against Racism (ENAR), which reached a similar result. The first comparison indicates that respondents from EWL mainly articulated concerns about gender equality and women's rights, whereas the respondents from ENAR not only articulated concerns about anti-discrimination policies but also for gender equality (Pristed Nielsen 2013).

The case studies included elite interviews from 2008, which were later supplemented by studies of the homepages and institutional data of the two organisations EWL and ENAR from 2010. The findings point towards discursive changes within EWL and indicate that there have been on-going democratic learning processes within as well as between these organisations (cf. Rolandsen Agustin 2013). Arguably the evolution of the two organisations is influenced by the EU gender model as well as by the internal dynamic of the two organisations, including the interactions between the national and transnational actors.

These findings raise many questions about democratic learning, which need to be explored in greater detail. One question is to what extent this learning process is influenced by the specific EU gender model focusing on multiple discriminations and inequalities. Another question is to what extent it is influenced by the European feminist debates and activism concerning intersectionality? A third issue concerns the dynamic interactions between the transnational actors and organisations with the EP and EC.

### **Implications for the Understanding and Theorizing of Intersectionality in Political Life**

The paper has argued that the feminist understanding of intersectionality in political life needs to evolve further by including empirical cases from various contexts, sites and arenas as well as by conceptualizing the role of political actors in national, transnational and supranational politics. A contextual and situated approach to political intersectionality should identify carefully what kind of diversity is being articulated and conceptualised; who is speaking about what issues; who are the excluded minorities and what is left unspoken; what are the effects of the articulation of the particular intersections by specific political actors in particular locations. The Eurosphere gender project started to explore these questions but more detailed case studies are needed to understand intersectionality in multilevel democratic politics. Further questions to be explored would be to understand how this particular problematisation of gender and ethno-national diversity came about and how it can be changed by political actors in national and transnational politics.<sup>6</sup>

Arguably the finding that the exclusionary articulation of intersectionality is predominantly directed towards Muslim minorities must be understood from the particular European context. All across Europe and in the EU, gender equality has become major principle firmly embedded in politics and political institutions, whereas ethnic diversity is often associated with the excluded immigrant minorities. In Europe there are presently political struggles about migration policies, and integration of third country nationals and refugees is a contested issue across the left-right divide. In the particular context of increased migration of third country nationals and refugees exacerbated by the economic crisis, the tensions between (gender) equality and the diversity represented by Muslim minorities have become a contested political issue for mainstream political actors as well as for civil society organisations, including women's and immigrant organisations.

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<sup>6</sup> The questions are inspired by Carol Bacchi's "what is the problem represented to be" approach (WPA) (Bacchi 2009).

Transnational articulations of political actors are of particular interest from a perspective of political intersectionality and democratic politics. The findings can contribute to overcome methodological nationalism in the social sciences and theorise the intersectionality approach from a post-national perspective. The Eurosphere gender project has illuminated the potentials of transnational democratic politics. A transnational interest in gender issues can be discerned; the German Green Party, for example, defines gender questions as key to its transnational activities. Similarly, a Turkish organisation collaborates transnationally on these issues (cf. Creutz-Kaemppi et al. 2011: 35). Although diversity is not explicitly mentioned by these organisations, international similarities and differences play a role for this work. Future research should look more concretely on forms of intersectionality developed within these contexts.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that transnational organisations, for example the European Women's Lobby, have experienced a democratic learning process. As a result, the EWL has gradually become concerned with the organisation and claims of ethnic minority women, inspired by activities by the Black European Woman's Council, the Network of Migrant Women in Europe and European Network against Racism (Rolandsen Agustin 2013). The findings also suggest that, up to now, the selected women's organisations are still searching for a common language on this issue (Mokre and Siim 2013).

The findings contribute to refining the theory of intersectionality in democratic politics because they suggest that citizens are engaged in a dynamic learning process within and across civil society organisations. A number of issues need to be explored further from the transnational European context. From the perspective of citizens it is a question whether the multilevel European gender model is favourable to the empowerment of citizens and for developing transversal solidarity across diverse women's organisations as well as across women's and anti-racist organisations. From the perspective of democracy it is a question how to interpret the present conflicts about immigration and ethno-national diversity across Europe. Debates about gender and ethno-national diversity can be interpreted as a sign of a vibrant public sphere with potentials to evolve to a European public sphere, but at the same conflicts about acceptance of ethno-national diversity can also be a dangerous sign of the growth of right-wing anti-migration forces within and across national borders. Finally, the issue of legitimacy and accountability of EU multilevel governance by EU public spheres remains to be solved.

Recent developments related to the economic and financial crisis can illuminate these concerns. Large groups of European citizens feel dis-empowered by EU' austerity politics and the responses illustrate that the European civil society is fragile and may be re-nationalised as soon as problems appear. This is especially true for debates in the mass media, but it is also possible to find the beginning of transnational solidarity in the European Public Sphere. The handling of the crisis by the multilevel EU governance further confirms that major problems remain with the lack inclusiveness and accountability of EUs transnational public powers.

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