

Volume 11 Issue 1 2021:

Introduction

"Intersectionality was a lived reality before it became a term." (Crenshaw, 2015, n.p.)

This Issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies (IJIS) focuses on **'Intersectionality'**. For this Issue, we have welcomed articles that address intersectionality in any point of the research. The idea of focussing an Issue on 'Intersectionality' came as a result of extensive discussions among the editing team and colleagues from the Department of Politics and Society. We have experienced that the notion of Intersectionality is often discussed as a concept, a theory, a method or a case study by some means or another.

Therefore, it seemed obvious that we should focus a whole Issue on this with the hope to receive articles that challenge us and provide us with new perspectives. We have tried below to offer an introduction to the term of Intersectionality, and an explanation of how we, the editing team, understand it, but also how this Issue's authors discuss it.

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to describe the specific situation of Black women, who were not only marginalized because of their gender, but also because of their race. The ways in which these 'categories of differences' (Davis, 2008) or 'identity markers' – race and gender - are intersecting is forming a specific situation for the individual at hand (Davis, 2014). Crenshaw criticises identity politics because the homogenisation of the category of women ignores that personal identity and experiences are created simultaneously by several other social categories, and therefore, they become relational and inseparable. As a result, these intersections must be examined in order to gain a more rounded understanding of a specific group, topic or problematic.

Since then, intersectionality has been applied to other identity markers, such as "sexual orientation, class background, able-bodiedness, national belonging" (Davis, 2014, p. 22). Due to its universalist perspective, intersectionality has been developed and adapted to different fields and disciplines.

A person's specific intersectional position is defining how they are socially privileged or oppressed, as each identity marker is connected to power structures (Atewologun, 2018). Intersectionality can therefore be used to describe the overlapping and simultaneity of different (discriminatory) categories and how these are influencing the individual's experiences. In a racist, patriarchal, heteronormative society, white straight cis men have an easier access to power than BIPoC queer women. Apart from individual lives, the social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies are also influenced by these power relations between intersections (ibid.).

The purpose of this issue is to show the importance of intersectionality for international studies. To understand international relations and power politics, it is important to consider all forms of oppression and inequalities. Intersectionality either used as a method, a theoretical framework or an empirical case provides an approach that takes into account all the characteristics that influence an individual's standing in society as well as their ability to take influence within the society. Furthermore, a motivation was to show the multifarious ways in which intersectionality can be applied in research and to give a more nuanced understanding of the concept and its use. According to Wendy Smooth (2013), intersectionality encourages recognition of the differences that exist *among* groups, moving dialogue beyond considering only the differences *between* groups. Therefore, she suggests that intersectionality not only offers a platform to understand the individual level but also how systems of oppression maintain hierarchy.

Smooth's argument on intersectionality is clearly shown throughout Sørensen and Coessens article. The article uses a multi-level approach to examine what role women play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the Acholi ethnic group of northern Uganda, concluding that women's role is vital. Using the case study of Betty, they have shown how gender is "not only the missing piece of the puzzle within peacebuilding but is also one of the key challenge's women are faced with" (Sørensen and Coessens, 2021, p. 16).

Porziella in her article with title illustrates how individuals from the same oppressed group - migrants - face different inequalities and privileges - LGBT community. She strongly problematizes the phenomenon of 'homelessness' for LGBT migrants, both physical and emotional. 'Homelessness' is experienced with a feeling of isolation as the individuals face both the exclusion because of their LGBT identity but also because of the fact that they are migrants. Nevertheless, Porziella also addresses the positive outcome that contexts and spaces provided by

LGBT organisations may provide to LGBT migrants, resulting in a deconstruction of their ‘homelessness’ and instead finding a ‘home’.

The effects of conflict-related sexual violence on kinship networks are analysed by Czarniawska, Jensen, Berger, Souza and Zaker. The article zooms in on the situation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh. The authors argue that the notions of purity and “undamaged” women and girls are present within the cultural values of this community. In this context, the authors conclude that Rohingya women who have suffered conflict-related sexual violence are victimized twice: first by experiencing sexual violence during conflict, and secondly by the community’s stigmatisation and restrictions post-conflict. Through an intersectional lens, it is argued how the women experiencing sexual violence in this community are stigmatized and marginalized both by them being women and by them being refugees.

The contribution by Andersen, Mikkelsen & Palomo focuses on the situation of immigrant Latin American women in the USA. The article addresses the shocking reports of women being forcibly sterilized in the Irwin County ICE detention center. By taking an intersectional approach, they argue that the intersectional position of immigrant Latin American women is correlated to their vulnerability to forced sterilization. Delving into the history of eugenics in the US, the authors also employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate the impact of negative right wing discourses on the vulnerability of marginalized women in relation to practices of forced sterilization.

Collectively, the four articles provide a productive contribution to the IJIS and the Department of Politics and Society. Engaging in important discussions and understandings of current developments, we hope that this issue will offer food for thought and open further debates.

Furthermore, this Issue features an essay from Schröder, in which the author takes a provocative standpoint, arguing that queer people have a higher mobility inside the ‘Heterosexual Borderlands’. However, the author demonstrates that this mobility is dependent on the subject's intersectional position.

Notes on Editors

Rieke Schröder is a recent graduate from the Global Refugee Studies master at Aalborg University Copenhagen. Her primary research focuses on queer feminist issues around migration and displacement. She obtained a bachelor's in Social Work in Osnabrück, Germany and is volunteering with LGBT Asylum. She received a scholarship from both the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) during her studies.

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María Sierro Fernández is also a master student in Global Refugee Studies at Aalborg University Copenhagen. She graduated in 2016 from a Double Degree Programme in Translation and Interpreting and Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication, awarded by the University of Valladolid (Spain) and the University of Milan (Italy). Starting in September 2021, she will be an intern for the Global Refugee Studies research group.

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