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# Multiple Inequalities, Intersectionality and the European Union

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**ABSTRACT** The European Union (EU), a pioneer in gender equality policies, is moving from predominantly attending to gender inequality, towards policies that address multiple inequalities. This article argues that there are tendencies at EU level to assume an unquestioned similarity of inequalities, to fail to address the structural level and to fuel the political competition between inequalities. Based upon a comparison of specific sets of inequalities (class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender), this article explores where and how structural and political intersectionality might be relevant. It argues that a 'one size fits all' approach to addressing multiple discrimination is based on an incorrect assumption of sameness or equivalence of the social categories connected to inequalities and of the mechanisms and processes that constitute them. Focusing on similarities ignores the differentiated character and dynamics of inequalities. It also overlooks the political dimension of equality goals. Moreover, it has become clear that attention to structural mechanisms and to the role of the state and the private sphere in reproducing inequalities is much needed. The final part of the article presents constructive ideas for a more comprehensive way of addressing multiple inequalities.

**KEY WORDS** class ♦ diversity mainstreaming ♦ ethnicity ♦ European Union ♦ gender ♦ gender mainstreaming ♦ intersectionality ♦ race ♦ sexual orientation

While the concept of intersectionality is increasingly used in gender studies, sociology and economics (see this special issue, and the 'Race, Gender, and Class Bibliography' by Belkhir, 2005, but also Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Anthias, 1998; Beisel and Kay, 2004; Brah, 2002; Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Brewer et al., 2002; Browne and Misra, 2003; Collins, 1998; Gamson and Moon, 2004; Risman, 2004; Schippers, 2000; Wekker, 2004; Yuval-Davis et al., 2005), political and policy practice in Europe has seldom referred to intersectionality when trying to deal with multiple inequalities.

After three decades of creating a considerable body of European legislation to address inequality between women and men, attention to inequality has in the last 10 years or so been broadened to include discrimination on a range of additional grounds. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) introduced a broader anti-discrimination provision in Article 13, involving appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000: Article 21) provided further initiatives to tackle discrimination on these different grounds. In the proposed Constitution, these initiatives are to be consolidated. In 2000, the Council unanimously adopted the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC). The Racial Equality Directive implements the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and gives protection against discrimination in fields of employment and training, education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services. The Employment Equality Directive implements the principle of equal treatment in employment and training irrespective of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. It includes identical provisions to the Racial Equality Directive and also requires employers to accommodate, within reason, the needs of a disabled person qualified to fill the position in question. The EU sees these recent initiatives to combat discrimination and to promote equal treatment as major achievements (Green Paper; European Commission, 2004). In the next few years, the Stop Discrimination campaign can be expected to further promote these EU activities.

This article presents a critical reflection, focusing on the conceptualization of the structural and political intersections between different inequalities. Seen from the perspective of gender equality, there are serious theoretical puzzles attached to these questions, since 'the relationship of gender mainstreaming with other complex inequalities' is one of the major issues in current gender mainstreaming analysis (Walby, 2005). The article attempts to contribute theoretically to the conceptualization of the relationship between various inequalities by reflecting upon the concept of intersectionality. The final part of the article presents constructive ideas for a more comprehensive way of addressing multiple inequalities.

#### INTERSECTIONS: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COMPLEXITY OF MULTIPLE INEQUALITIES

Crenshaw introduced the concept of intersectionality as an escape from the problems of identity politics, to 'denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black

women's employment experiences' (Crenshaw, 1989: 139).<sup>1</sup> She distinguishes between structural intersectionality and political intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1994).<sup>2</sup> *Structural intersectionality* occurs when inequalities and their intersections are directly relevant to the experiences of people in society. Structural intersectionality can help to explain why a black woman is not considered for one job because she is black since the 'norm employee' is a white woman, while other jobs are also unavailable to her since the jobs available to black persons in that context are predominantly male jobs. It addresses the fact that heteronormativity is part and parcel of gender inequality, which means that the position of lesbians is very different from the position of heterosexual women. Crucial questions in analysing structural intersectionality are: How and when does racism amplify sexism? How and when does class exploitation reinforce homophobia? How and when does homophobia amplify racism?

Crenshaw uses *political intersectionality* to indicate how inequalities and their intersections are relevant to political strategies. Political differences are most relevant here, as strategies on one axis of inequality are mostly not neutral towards other axes. She uses an example of the unavailability of statistics on domestic violence police interventions broken down by Los Angeles district, which, given the racial segregation in this city, could provide information she needed on arrests differentiated by race. She found that this information was blocked (by domestic violence activists in and outside the police department) because of fears that it might be abused to reinforce racial stereotypes about some groups being pathologically violent. She argues that these concerns, while well-founded, are also potentially against the interests of women of colour since they do not help to 'break the silence' within the respective communities, thus hindering broad mobilization against domestic violence in these communities. Crucial questions in analysing political intersectionality are: How and where does feminism marginalize ethnic minorities or disabled women? How and where do measures on sexual equality or on racism marginalize women? How and where do gender equality policies marginalize lesbians?

Crenshaw developed these concepts of intersectionality mainly in considering the intersection between race and gender, with some attention to class. There are examples of other intersections being considered. For example, Schippers (2000) dissects the complex relationship between sexuality and gender to present a more robust analysis of hegemony and resistance in rock music culture. Similarly, Gamson and Moon (2004) examine the nature and effects of sexuality among multiple and intersecting systems of identity and oppression. Another example can be found in the work of Adib and Guerrier (2003), who analyse the interlocking of gender, nationality, race, ethnicity and class for women working in the hotel industry. Also concerned with the issue of work and the economy, Brewer et al. (2002) were instrumental in introducing the concept of

intersectionality into the discipline of economics by editing a journal special issue on the intertwined influence of gender, race, class and caste on the economic situation of individuals and groups. As yet, no work has been done on whether all possible intersections might be relevant at all times, or when and where some of them might be most salient (but see Yuval-Davis, this issue, for discussion of this).

While the concept is widely used in academic studies, some critics believe that intersectionality remains unclear as a model for understanding structures (Beisel and Kay, 2005). Although some reference to structural intersectionality exists in feminism and in gender equality policies, and to some extent also in anti-racism movements and policies, it is little used in connection to other inequalities. Strikingly, almost no reference is made to the concept of political intersectionality. One exception occurs in Sainsbury's analysis where 'intersecting struggles of recognition' are shown to have contributed to the surprising victory of the women's suffrage campaign in Oklahoma in 1918 (Sainsbury, 2003).

Overall, very little attention is paid to both structural and political intersectionality in policy-making. There are a few examples at the UN level, again mainly on the intersection of race and gender. In March 2004, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted a general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination (CRD/56/Misc21/Rev.3). The Commission on the Status of Women organized a panel on 'Gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance' at its 45th session in 2001. Yet, recognition of intersectionality is severely lacking at national levels (e.g. Patel [2001] refers to the UK as a bad example).

## CLAIMS TO ADDRESS MULTIPLE INEQUALITIES IN EUROPE

The EU, one of the pioneers in gender equality policies, provides an interesting case for analysis, as it moves from a predominant focus on gender inequality, towards policies that address multiple inequalities. There is a growing body of studies and comments from NGOs on the mix of 'hard' (Directives) and 'soft' (Green Paper, Stop Discrimination campaign) measures taken by the EU to address inequalities. This recent scholarship and criticism voices three basic concerns: the assumed similarity of inequalities, the need for structural approaches and the political competition between inequalities (see Bell, 2004). The first concern is whether the various inequalities addressed are 'similar' to the extent that they would necessitate similar policies. Studies criticize the new set of actions and legal regulations for overseeing the differences in power dynamics involved in different inequalities (EWL, 2004). Also, the lack of

consistency in different regulations is a frequent point of criticism because different inequalities get different levels of protection and policy attention and the regulations for different grounds of discrimination seem to emphasize rather different meanings of equality (McCrudden, 2005; Fredman, 2005).<sup>3</sup> This points to a deep contradiction, since the assumptions of similarity underlying policy documents such as the Green Paper (Verloo, 2005) are addressed with dissimilar measures. The current studies do not use (structural) intersectionality as a concept to help understand the nature of the relationship between different inequalities.

The two other concerns deal with the character or consequences of political interventions, and are hence linked to issues of political intersectionality. These are, first, concerns about the overly individualistic character of the proposed (anti-discrimination) policies (Verloo, 2005), and appeals for more structural approaches. A growing number of authors and organizations plead for diversity mainstreaming or equality mainstreaming, or for other more structural approaches to anti-discrimination, such as installing positive duties (Shaw, 2004, 2005; Squires, 2003). Second, some say the increasing competition between inequalities is fuelled by the specific nature of current policies. They warn of changes in the 'hierarchy' of inequalities, and express particular concern that gender might lose out, or is already losing out (Holzleitner, 2005).

These concerns contrast sharply with the rhetoric of the Green Paper, currently the most formal, all-encompassing document available on this subject. The Green Paper seems to start from an unquestioned assumption of similarity of inequalities. It does not address the current lack of consistency in policy, or the danger of competition between equalities and the groups organized around them in civil society, as a significant problem. And while it argues that the experiences of gender equality policy might feed into the development of policies addressing other inequalities, it does not present any coherent ideas for more structural approaches; it even seems to overlook gender inequality altogether. In other words, the EU policy does not seem to address the dangers and concerns that are currently voiced by experts and stakeholders alike.

## QUESTIONING ASSUMED SIMILARITIES

Through comparing specific sets of inequalities, the next part of this article addresses the notion of assumed similarity underlying the appeal of, or the ambition for, consistent policies on multiple inequalities. This might also shed some light as to where and how intersections might be relevant. The comparisons made will necessarily be exploratory, as they are intended solely to demonstrate how we could start to articulate the similarities and differences between multiple inequalities. Obviously,

such a comparison would need to be time- and place-specific, so I focus here on the EU and its old member states in the last decade.

All inequalities relevant to the new European anti-discrimination regulations can be seen as connected to social groups or categories, to distinctions made in interactions and institutions by people themselves or others. The comparison will focus on four social categories strongly connected to inequalities: gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation and class. The first two are chosen from the categories prominent in current European anti-discrimination policy. Gender and race/ethnicity<sup>4</sup> are categories addressed by comparatively well-developed equality policies in the EU. Sexual orientation is added as a category specific to European policy, and social class as the most prominent example of a social category that is strongly connected to inequalities, yet not currently included in the European equality agenda.

The first comparison presented here uses five dimensions: the range of positions in each category; the common understanding of the origin of the social category; the possible location of the inequalities connected to it; the possible mechanisms producing them; and the norm against which this social category seems to be compared. Table 1 presents an understanding of how these four social categories are commonly (presented as being) linked to inequalities in public debates and in the strategies of social movements and organizations dedicated to the abolition of these inequalities. I am well aware that there is a wide variety of political and theoretical positions on all these points, but in order to outline why various social categories cannot be treated as linked to inequalities in equivalent ways, I have roughly mapped out what are widely recognized positions. Table 1 summarizes this first comparison.

The table shows differences in the first two dimensions, in the range of positions commonly recognized in the social category and in the perceived origin of the category. Gender is the most limited category of the four, commonly seen as having two positions that are perceived as originating in nature, in biology. While this perception of biological origin is contested, and gender is often defined as a socially constructed set of interpretations, norms, symbols, behaviours, institutions and identities, only postmodern gender theory includes biology in this social construction and this understanding is hardly ever part of gender equality policies or integrated in the demands of feminist organizations. Class, while being similarly dichotomous (the working class vs the owners of production<sup>5</sup>) is a very different kind of category because it combines this dichotomy with a strong representation of its origin as 'nurture', as the result of historical patterns of education, ownership and exploitation.<sup>6</sup> Comparing gender categories with class positions thus shows that gendered social identities are to a large extent fixed in two positions, while class identities are represented as positions that can be overcome or lost. In contrast to gender and

**TABLE 1**  
**Comparing Four Social Categories that are Linked to Inequalities**

<b>Representations of Social Categories in Terms of:</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Class</b>
Range of positions	Dichotomous	Multiple	Three/four or more	Dichotomous
Origin of social category	Contested: Nature/nurture	Contested: Nature/culture	Nature [constructed]	Socioeconomic construct
Location of inequality	Organization of labour, intimacy and citizenship	Organization of citizenship and labour [intimacy]	Mostly organization of intimacy and citizenship	Organization of labour
Mechanisms (re)producing inequality	Material (resources) Discursive (norms) (Sexist) Violence	Discursive (norms) Material (resources) (Racist) violence	Discursive (norms) [material, violence]	Material (resources)
Norm	[White heterosexual middle-class] man	White [heterosexual middle-class man]	[White] heterosexual [middle-class man]	[White heterosexual] middle-class [man]



class, sexual orientation has a wider, if still limited, range of positions. It is quite common to see a presentation of three positions (as in the Flemish 'holebi' label that wraps them as *homosexual*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*). It is also quite common to see four to five positions, as in the US organizations for LBGT, referring to Lesbians, Bisexuals, Gay and Transgender or Transsexuals. When we turn to race/ethnicity, it becomes clear that the range is even wider, and that what counts as 'race' or as 'ethnicity' is much more contextually constructed and contestable than gender, sexual orientation or class. The label 'race' seems to be constructed as more closely linked to nature, to biology, to being born as belonging to a certain category, while the label 'ethnicity' is constructed as linked more closely to nurture, to culture and geographical roots, but both labels overlap. We see differences along a dimension of essentialism vs constructionism, where class is recognized widely as social, while race/ethnicity is often still seen as essentialist, as having a natural, objectively physical origin.

Further differences come to the fore when we compare what are commonly articulated to be the most important locations of the inequalities connected to these social categories.<sup>7</sup> The problem of inequality of sexual orientation is primarily located in the organization of intimacy and citizenship. In contrast, gender inequality is connected to at least three sociopolitical realms. Gender, while primarily linked to the division of labour in many policy texts, is also connected strongly to the organization of citizenship and the organization of intimacy. While social, sexual and parenting relations are racialized or ethnicized, race/ethnicity, like class, but contrary to gender and sexual orientation, are not seen as located predominantly or even partly in the sphere of personal relationships and intimacy; they are not seen to be 'a private problem' in that sense, their public character is widely acknowledged. Compared to gender and sexual orientation class and race/ethnicity are represented more as firmly located in the public sphere, in the spheres of citizenship and employment. Class is seen to originate in how labour is organized, while race/ethnicity inequality is seen to derive from the way we organize citizenship (who belongs to 'us'? who is the outsider?).

Differences also occur when analysing the variation in conceptualizations of how inequalities connected to these social categories are (re)produced. While addressing both material and discursive mechanisms is often an obvious recourse in policies concerning gender and race/ethnicity inequality, class inequality is represented as predominantly a problem of the distribution of resources (including educational resources), while sexual orientation inequality is articulated mostly as a discursive problem, a lack of recognition and a problem of stereotyping.

One cannot help but remark that all four social categories are confronted with the same dominant and privileged norm citizen, with slight differences in accent: for gender categories the norm citizen is first

of all male, followed by white, heterosexual and middle class. In sexual orientation categories the norm citizen is predominantly heterosexual and then male, white and middle class. The norm class citizen is predominantly middle class, then male, white and heterosexual. For race/ethnicity categories, the norm citizen is first of all white, followed by male, heterosexual and middle class.

My evocation of conceptualizations of how social categories are connected to inequalities is necessarily simplistic. One could question to what extent the differences rendered here result from my poor depiction of common representations, to what extent they result from poor articulations of the link between social categories and inequalities, or to what extent there actually are 'real' underlying differences here. My intention is to question and debate what the framing of social categories, and the way they are seen as linked to inequalities, means for social movement and policy strategies.

Table 2, then, presents a comparison of five other dimensions that show differences in political and policy activities connected to the social categories under scrutiny here. This table examines whether the social categories are articulated as political cleavages, whether they are institutionalized, and what are the predominant goals, claims and strategies used to deal with the inequalities connected to them.

First of all, the social categories chosen are all defined as political cleavages as the result of active agitation and articulation by social movements. For the category of class, this articulation has developed from workers' movements into the heart of the political party landscape. In this sense, class is a cleavage that has found its way into the centre of parliamentary politics (even if the 'Third Way' deviates attention away from class). This is not the case for the other categories. There are a small number of women's parties or parties based upon ethnicity, but this is rare in Europe. There are no parties based upon sexual orientation.

There are also important differences in the degree of institutionalization of the social categories; the extent to which politically relevant and recognized institutions have been installed to address the inequalities assigned to them. Class has a very high degree of institutionalized representation across Europe as a politically recognized dimension of inequality (as such, class is represented in political parties, in trade unions and in corporatist systems), whereas race/ethnicity is just starting to achieve some – limited – representation. Gender is much more institutionalized, not only in bureaucracies (departments for equal opportunities) but also within governments (ministers for gender equality). Sexual orientation is rarely institutionalized as an inequality category.

Furthermore, differences appear in the presentation and common acceptance of political goals connected to these inequalities. Multiple goals can be identified for sexual orientation and gender at the level of

**TABLE 2**  
**Comparing Political and Policy Activities as Connected to Four Social Categories**

<b>Representations of Social Categories in Terms of:</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Class</b>
Political cleavage	Social movement	Social movement	Social movement	Political parties
Institutional mechanisms	Many	Growing	Few	Many
Goals	Equality, difference and deconstruction: multiple goals	Equality; assimilation vs multiculturalism is a hot topic	Equality, difference and deconstruction: multiple goals	Accepting abolition of class differentials as a goal
Claims	Redistribution and recognition	Redistribution and recognition	Recognition	Redistribution
Political strategies	Struggle for equal treatment, positive action, mainstreaming	Struggle for equal treatment, positive action, mainstreaming	Struggle for equal treatment	Redistribution, some positive action

political movements. At times equality is the advocated goal, sometimes difference, and occasionally the goal seems to be the deconstruction of the categories. Even if such political differences often lead to heated debates within the respective movements, this results in a wide variety of goals, from same-sex marriage or quotas (forms of inclusion) to extended maternity leave (forms of reversal) and queer thinking (displacement<sup>8</sup>). For the categories of race/ethnicity and class, this is different. While the abolition of class differentials is a respected political goal, the issue of whether the goal of equality with regards to race/ethnicity should be assimilation, integration or multiculturalism is hotly debated.

The main struggles and claims differ as well, with the main struggles for sexual orientation being about recognition and equal treatment (opening of the institution of marriage), or about the right to be different (gay pride). There are not many voices addressing the lesbian/gay pay gap, although there is increasing attention to discrimination in the labour market. The struggles around gender and race/ethnicity are about both redistribution (equal pay, discrimination in the labour market) and recognition (revaluing care and cultural differences).

Current political strategies show a threefold comprehensive approach to gender issues, but a singular focus on equal treatment and a strategy of inclusion when it comes to sexual orientation. For class and race/ethnicity, there are, in addition, some cases of positive action. The calls for diversity mainstreaming parallel to gender mainstreaming are very recent and seem to be connected mostly to race/ethnicity (as well as to categories not taken into consideration here, such as age and disability).

More comparisons of other sets of social categories linked to inequalities would probably only add similar patterns. Without playing down the similarities that are found, I hope the two tables illustrate the case I make here: different inequalities are dissimilar because they are differently framed to be relevant as policy problems. This does, and should, affect the way political strategies are designed to address them. Comparing other social categories or choosing other dimensions would reveal differences as well. One need only examine the dimension of choice: we can decide to become Catholic or Islamic tomorrow, or learn to speak a new language, but we cannot 'decide' to be old or young. Another dimension is visibility and ascription vs identification: we can hide our sexuality or wealth to some extent, but it is much more difficult to hide poverty or first language. Yet another dimension is the probability and possibility of a change in identity and status in connection to inequalities: we have all been young, and will – hopefully – all become old, while all of us can become disabled and some will even change sex or ethnicity. This also illustrates that these social categories can be unstable and contested: what counts as race or ethnicity in specific contexts, what counts as young or old, is intertwined with power in many ways.

Concluding, there seems to be a wide range of dimensions that differentiate between unequal social categories. It seems wise to ground policy strategies not only in the similarity, but also in the distinctiveness of inequalities. Moreover, these inequalities are not independent, since there are many historical, political, social and cultural intersections. The preceding discussion has also provided starting points for further conceptualization of intersectionality at work. Parallel to the analysis in Table 1, we can expect structural intersections to be most important where the location of inequality or the mechanisms (re)producing them are seen to be similar. Furthermore, we can expect political alliances or conflicts to run parallel to differences and similarities in degrees of institutionalization, goals, claims and strategies, as outlined in Table 2.

### INTERSECTIONALITY AND MAINSTREAMING

A second concern in recent studies is that policies addressing multiple inequalities should be developed as strategies at the level of structures and institutions (in public and private spheres as well as in states and state-like organizations). This implies political intersectionality, addressing sexism, racism, class exploitation or homophobia in policy-making processes and policies.<sup>9</sup> The fact that inequalities are dissimilar means that such 'equality' mainstreaming cannot be a simple adaptation of current tools of gender mainstreaming. Whether one thinks of checklists, training, impact assessment or expert meetings, a clear conceptualization of how intersectionality operates, a theory of the power dynamics of a specific inequality, as well as a choice for a clear political goal will be needed. Moreover, the fact that multiple inequalities are not independent means that such 'equality' mainstreaming cannot be a simple extrapolation of gender mainstreaming. If intersectionality is at work in strategies against inequalities, then new and more comprehensive analytical methods are needed and methods of education, training and consultation will have to be rethought.

A method frequently used to deal with multiple inequalities is to ask for comments or advice from different groups representing the specific axis of inequality. Conclusions such as those in the Green Paper to see the 'establishment of single equality bodies dealing with all the grounds of discrimination covered by the Directives' as 'positive', seem too fast and overlook political intersectionality. Although the method of dealing with multiple inequalities by asking for comments or advice from different groups that are each representative of one axis of inequality is used in some European states, it ignores the problem of 'identity politics' approaches to mainstreaming. Such approaches are in danger of ignoring differences in the political goals at stake, because they tend to conflate social position and

identity with political position and opinion. Moreover, they pay almost no attention to existing power struggles within organizations, and thereby make these struggles opaque and dangerous to the democratic process.

What would then be a good way to deal with political intersectionality? How should practices of mainstreaming structural inequalities be conceptualized? Two possibilities become apparent: one is to start where regulations on, and experiences with, gender mainstreaming already exist. The obvious advantage here is the existence of some infrastructures, routines, methods and tools. Expanding gender mainstreaming to encompass both structural and political intersectionality in current processes of gender mainstreaming, screening the various tools used so that they are not biased to one axis of inequality, can accommodate the complexity of interconnectedness and contribute to a higher quality of gender mainstreaming. I am well aware of the problems this might raise in terms of resources, expertise and visibility for gender and other axes of inequality. The other option is to develop forms of comprehensive (or 'equality') mainstreaming, such as race/ethnicity mainstreaming, sexuality mainstreaming, etc. This would make it easier to pay full attention to the power dynamics relevant in each specific case, even if the weakness of intersectional theory in terms of a structural analysis will still need to be overcome.

To choose between these two options is beyond the scope of this article. Both options are equally valuable and equally necessary; therefore it is practical and strategic to start from these two positions simultaneously. In a world in which gender equality policies are sometimes racist and classist, in which anti-racism policies often disregard gender, and identity politics colours all equality policies,<sup>10</sup> simultaneous action could theoretically suggest overlap and double effort, but could practically lead to progress on all fronts.

## STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS DIFFERENTIATED INEQUALITIES

The previous sections of this article outlined that a 'one size fits all' approach to multiple discrimination is based on an incorrect assumption of sameness or equivalence of the social categories connected to inequalities and of the mechanisms and processes that constitute them. Focusing on similarities ignores the differentiated character and dynamics of inequalities. It also overlooks the political dimension of equality goals. Moreover, it has become clear that attention to structural mechanisms and the role of the state and private sphere in reproducing inequalities is much needed.

After outlining the character of structural and political intersectionality, this concluding section presents some starting points for a more promising strategy to address differentiated inequalities. It calls for a sort of

diversity mainstreaming or (in)equality mainstreaming. Moreover, it highlights the necessity of an ongoing struggle over the implementation of such a strategy.

This strategy should start from the following propositions:

- Inequalities are found in both the public and private spheres. They are reproduced through identities, behaviours, interactions, norms and symbols, organizations and institutions, including states and state-like institutions.
- Inequalities are not equivalent; social categories are connected to inequalities in different ways.
- Inequalities are dynamic problems that can be located in various distinct structures, that are experienced differently, and that can be (re)produced in different ways.
- Inequalities are not independent, but deeply interconnected, maybe even interdependent.
- Inequality policies are subject to vastly different political views and parties (e.g. to annihilate differences or value diversity).
- Power struggles between various inequalities will always be present, as this is part of (political) intersectionality.
- These hegemonic struggles need to be addressed and anticipated by careful balancing of resources and institutionalization, and by organizing public arenas or institutions for them.

This article has demonstrated that strategies addressing differentiated inequalities at the structural level cannot be 'the same', and that an individualistic anti-discrimination policy is insufficient. What is needed is the development of complex methods and tools informed by intersectionality theory, an increase of resources, but also further development of intersectionality theory and a rethinking of the representation and participation of citizens in an era of post-identity politics. This necessitates ongoing organized political articulation, struggle, debate and deliberation.<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES

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1. Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix (2004) rightly point out that there has been earlier attention to the interlocking of major systems of oppression (e.g. the Combahee River Collective, 1977).

2. I take the distinction between structural and political intersectionality to be a practical distinction, especially when thinking about policy-making or the development of political (counter-) strategies. In general, I would agree with Chantal Mouffe (2000) that 'the identity of the people must be seen as the result of the political process of hegemonic articulation'. In a conceptualization that broadens the scope to identities instead of experiences only, the distinction is less relevant.
3. Even if McCrudden warns that attempting to achieve consistency might have its own dangers.
4. In the rest of the article, I deal with race and ethnicity together since these categories, while being analytically different, often overlap in policy-making and political practice.
5. It is not that clear whether it would make sense to add the middle classes to the two distinctive positions that constitute this category. To some extent, the middle classes seem to escape class, in another way they occupy a middle position.
6. It is important not to forget that in the 19th century class differences were still seen as natural; the perception of class as a social construct is the result of the workers' movements.
7. The distinction between the three structures of labour, citizenship and intimacy is taken from the conceptual framework of the Dutch Gender Impact Assessment that investigates the various locations of the problem of gender inequality (Verloo and Roggeband, 1996).
8. See Squires (1999) for this typology. See Verloo and Pantelidou Maloutas (2005) for comparative papers on differences in the framing of gender inequality as a policy problem in Europe.
9. In fact, one could say that addressing political inequality (to paraphrase Crenshaw) as differentiated from structural inequality is what distinguishes gender mainstreaming from other strategies such as equal treatment and positive action.
10. In Table 2 I have highlighted that there are many possible positions as to the 'right' strategy for achieving gender equality. I do not intend this to be understood as different interests connected to different identities, but as political positions that may or may not coincide with identities. In this sense, identity politics obscures political differences with categories of people sharing an identity.
11. For a conceptualization of such organized struggles, see Schmidt-Gleim and Verloo (2003).

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