

The present and future of intersectionality: Controversies, challenges, transformations and opportunities

Stream Conveners

Jenny K. Rodriguez, Work & Equalities Institute, Alliance Manchester Business School, UK

Elisabeth Anna Günther, WU Vienna, AUSTRIA

Stella M. Nkomo, University of Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA

This stream interrogates the present and future of intersectionality. Intersectionality has undoubtedly transformed the way feminist research is conducted, and has become “an institutionalized intellectual project, and the dominant tool for excavating the voices of the marginalized” (Nash 2008, p. 13). However, there is talk of intersectionality having run its course, with some scholars referring to a post-intersectionality turn (see Chang & Culp, 2002). This post-intersectionality narrative has its roots primarily on the critique of intersectionality’s apparent inability to “grapple with subjects who occupy multiple social positions and those with “partially privileged” identities in particular” (Cho, 2013:388). At the same time, the post-intersectionality turn speaks to the particularities and challenges of the present socio-cultural and political moment, and its conceptual, theoretical and empirical implications for scholars and organizations.

We invite works that engage with the overall theme of this stream. Below, we set out some themes/questions that are of particular interest but note this list is not extensive:

- How do we do ‘intersectionality’ within a post-identitarian, dis-identity or identity-sceptical theoretical milieu whilst maintaining its possibilities for exposing racism, patriarchy, heterosexism, ableism and classism and interrupting oppressive power and privilege (Calás et al., 2013)? What is the role of intersectional research in the context of discourses of post-racialism? In a context where white supremacy is a global phenomenon, pushing back on intersectionality through the reconfiguration of white power and whiteness (Tate & Page 2018), we see the development of new strategies, such as white fragility, that evidence the growing racial resentment at the ground-breaking theoretical and analytical work of intersectional scholars (DiAngelo, 2018; Tuch & Hughes, 2011). What strategies can intersectional research bring to the fore to challenge this pushback?
- How can we prevent the co-optation of intersectionality and a whitewashing of power dynamics and forms of oppression in the name of intersectionality? The social justice roots of intersectionality, and its strong foundation in Black Feminist thought seem to have been abandoned and some argue that intersectionality has been co-opted and whitewashed, for instance, in discussions about the marginalised that do not centre their racialised and gendered privilege (e.g. Coston & Kimmel, 2012)
- Decolonial critiques to the use of intersectionality - There is an empirical void created by un-reflexive intersectional work that whilst focusing on oppression, seems to want to move on from its racialised nature. In this sense, ‘colour-blind intersectionality’ may mute the experiences of people of colour in ways that minimize their continuing subjugation and marginalization in organizations (Carbado, 2013). In addition, discussions and contributions from scholars and activists from the margins are obscured and overlooked as the dominant theory and research on intersectionality emerges from dominant academia.

- Intersectionality as a travelling concept - Another challenge intersectional scholars face is the implications of intersectionality as a travelling concept. By using the same terminology, such as class, race or intersectionality, one can overlook the difference in meaning and connotation. For instance, class and race have different connotations in Germanophone and Anglophone scholarships (Knapp 2005, Ferree 2013). Therefore, the nuances of intersectional work need to be interrogated with regard to the situated nature of intersections and their particularities at the structural/institutional level (Knapp 2013).
- How can we use the concept of intersectionality to tackle existing inequalities within work, employment and organisations? Whilst we understand that the 'multidimensionality' of marginalized subjects' lived experiences leads to particular forms of disadvantage, inequality and oppression (Crenshaw, 1989: 13), we are still unable to use this understanding meaningfully to address, let alone eliminate, them in workplace settings, which leads to questions about intersectionality's empirical validity (see Nash, 2008). To what extent is it necessary to complement intersectionality with other frameworks (e.g. queer theory, new materialist scholarship) in order to strengthen its analytical insight?
- How can we use the insights of intersectional scholarship to co-draft and design work, organisations and employment in times of digital transformation and data analytics? New ways of working are increasingly relying on data analytics, artificial intelligence and data mining. What insight can intersectionality bring to these debates and what are the challenges and opportunities for intersectional scholarship?

Submissions

Abstracts of approximately 500 words (submitted direct to stream leaders, ONE page, WORD NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding any references, no headers, footers or track changes) are invited by **Friday 1st November 2019**.

Decisions on acceptance of abstracts will be made by stream leaders within one month and communicated to authors by Monday 2nd December 2019. All contributions will be independently refereed.

Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address. **Abstracts should be emailed to Jenny Rodriguez:** jenny.rodriquez@manchester.ac.uk

References

- Calás, M.B., Ou, H. and Smircich, L. (2013) 'Woman' on the move: mobile subjectivities after intersectionality. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32, 8, 708–31.
- Carbado, D. W. (2013). Colorblind intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 811-845.
- Chang, R. S. & Culp, J. McC. (2002) After Intersectionality. *UMKC Law Review*, 71(2): 485–492.
- Cho, S. (2013). Post-intersectionality: The curious reception of intersectionality in legal scholarship. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2): 385-404.

- Coston, B. M., & Kimmel, M. (2012). Seeing privilege where it isn't: Marginalized masculinities and the intersectionality of privilege. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), 97-111.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics, *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139
- DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press.
- Ferree, M.M. (2013) On the locally situated and historical understanding of intersectionalities: Comment on Knapp. *Erwägen Wissen Ethik (EWE)* 24: 378–381.
- Knapp, G-A (2005) Race, Class, Gender: Reclaiming Baggage in Fast Travelling Theories. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 12: 249–265. doi:10.1177/1350506805054267.
- Knapp, G-A (2013). Zur Bestimmung und Abgrenzung von „Intersektionalität“. Überlegungen zu Interferenzen von „Geschlecht“, „Klasse“ und anderen Kategorien sozialer Teilung. *Erwägen Wissen Ethik (EWE)* 24: 341–354.
- Nash, J. C. (2008). Rethinking Intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89, 1-15.
- Tate, S. A., & Page, D. (2018). Whiteness and institutional racism: hiding behind (un)conscious bias. *Ethics and Education*, 13(1), 141-155.
- Tuch, S. A., & Hughes, M. (2011). Whites' racial policy attitudes in the twenty-first century: The continuing significance of racial resentment. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 634(1), 134-152.