

Intersectionality: Resistance, Care, and Decolonial Futures in Crisis Times

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INTRODUCTION BY THE SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORS

INTRODUCTION

We begin by acknowledging that we write from relatively privileged positions as academics based in Danish academia. Our positionalities inevitably shape how we understand and engage with the development of intersectionality, as well as the limits of knowledge production under such circumstances. The intersectional challenges we encounter here are, of course, distinct from those faced elsewhere in the world. Yet, while the classical divides between the Global North and the Global South or West and the rest of the world offer some explanatory power, they are far too simplistic and we need to have discussions that cut across these, and other divisions. An intersectional lens helps us complicate and enrich this picture. The contributions of this special issue critically investigate intersectionality from a wide variety of global perspectives.

The starting point for this special issue was, indeed, to make an effort to complicate classical divides and challenge privileged positionalities by inviting intersectionality into the discussion, not just as a theoretical lens, but also as lived experiences. The 2024 Danish Gender Conference, which historically has many ties to this journal, became our way of doing so. For the first time ever, the main language of the conference was not Danish, but English, and instead of spending our budget on keynotes and dinners, we made a commitment to intersectional representation and set aside a large proportion of the budget to scholarships, particularly for individuals who did not have the funding to support conference participation, e.g. because of precarious contracts or lack of research support at their institutions. The 2024 Danish Gender Conference, in this way, provided an important space for sharing diverse intersectional issues and struggles from across the globe. This created room for perspectives ranging from Indigenous Sami voices to those from the African continent, as well as reflections on Eastern Europe and racialization in Danish contexts. The conference was as such an important starting point for the call for papers that led to this special issue. Furthermore, the conference

strongly encouraged formats other than research papers. This opened up the conference for participation of practitioners, artists and poets and became a way of opening academia up for how intersectionality is lived and operationalized within and beyond academia. Several of the contributions in the issue began their journey there, which is reflected in both the composition of the articles and the multiplicity of intersectional perspectives expressed throughout—most explicitly the essay by Mira C. Skadegaard, which is a version of her keynote at the conference.

This special issue on intersectionality is obviously not the only one of its kind. We stand on the shoulders of years of important intersectional research, including prior special issues (e.g. Elg, Christensen & Siim 2010; Guschke, Khawaja & Myong 2023; Hvenegård-Lassen & Staunæs 2020; Hvenegård-Lassen, Staunæs & Lund 2020; Mørck & Staunæs 2003; Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher & Nkomo 2016; Villeséche, Muhr & Śliwa 2018), as well as many years' thorough engagement with intersectionality in this journal (Borchorst & Tiegen 2010; Einarsdóttir & Thorvaldsdóttir 2007; Emerek 2017; Fiig 2010; Jensen & Elg 2010; Jensen, Larsen & Christensen 2018; Lykke 2009; Méndez 2007; Phoenix 2006; Staunæs & Søndergaard 2006). Each of these important pieces of work contribute with unique perspectives on intersectionality, as they are all formed by the political struggles and activist agendas of their time and context. Our special issue is no different. It is formed by the intersectional research presentations, debates, and interactions at the Danish Gender Conference and by the space for hope it opened up in a time where intersectional research feels more under pressure than it has in a long time, and where underrepresented, marginalized and minorized identities are threatened in a way we have long not seen. Thus, this space for intersectional research and intersectional voices seems all the more important at this point in time.

CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE AND PERPETUAL CRISIS

This special issue appears in times of multiple crises

and upheavals. The current moment is characterized by “polycrisis” (Morin & Kern 1999; Tooze 2021) where crises are entangled with each other and produce new crises where they meet. To mention but a few, we are witnessing a vitalization of far-right positions and sentiments, threats to academic freedom in the shape of repeated attacks on gender studies and critical race studies, as well as increased islamophobia and expanding queer- and transphobia (Hsu 2025; Ng et al. 2015; Prasad & Śliwa 2024; Vertelyte et al. 2024). More broadly, the COVID-19 crisis, inflation crisis, crises of care, environmental and climate crises, warfare on different continents and the horrors of the ongoing genocides in (but not limited to) Gaza, Sudan and Myanmar, which all in unequal and unjust ways influence the worlds we live, work and write within (Ashcraft 2022; Duffy, Armenia & Price-Glynn, 2023; Just 2024; Klitgård 2024). Of course, the atrocity of a genocide cannot be compared or pluralized without somehow being relativized, thus mentioning a list or using the *etc.* cannot but feel like a betrayal of the singularity of the individual genocide. At the same time, the polycrisis concept allows us to see how crises and conflict overlap and feed into each other, which means that genocides – and the power structures that make them possible – are themselves also connected (see also Srinivas et al. 2025). It is therefore with great sorrow and heavy hearts that we write these words, particularly as we feel the weight of warfare and the genocide in Gaza, but also acknowledge that this is part of a larger and globally organized violence rooted in extractivism and colonialism. Hence, we urge ourselves and our readership to pause before moving on to take a moment and attend to that sense of weight of injustice.

While we know this special issue cannot make a tangible difference to the ongoing war crimes, we do believe that the interdisciplinary research field of intersectionality studies can help us reflect upon the intersecting power axes participating in this, and allows us to approach different aspects of the current polycrisis, by offering sophisticated theory and praxis to engage with related issues of inequality in complex ways. It raises questions about what

it means to think intersectionally about the various aspects of polycrisis: how to produce knowledge that ties them together, and how to do it in a way so that gender, race, sexuality, class, disability, etc. appear as co-articulated (Creary 2025; Klitgård, Liu & Horn 2022; Muhr & Ashcraft 2025; Ozturk 2021). The current moment calls for thinking about these forms of oppression together, across different cases, geographies and methodologies, and our special issue is but one attempt to do so.

Intersectionality as an analytical perspective allows us to draw out these connections and articulate connective elements that are otherwise thought of as distinct in order to ask new questions. How may the current rise in for example transphobia and islamophobia be seen as attempts to de-intersectionalize the idea of ‘woman’ or ‘queer’ as always cis and always white (see Puar 2007)? How may environmental and climate politics be leveraged for the eco-fascist protection only of white humans living in the global North (Darwish 2021; Mehrabi et al. 2024)? What even is this ‘human’, and how is it upheld through different vectors of oppression as well as various technological, affective and economic registers (Braidotti 2013; Haraway 1991; Wynter 2003)? How is dehumanization linked to the on-going global crisis of care that expresses interlocking postcolonial, gendered and classed oppressions (Fraser 2016)? Intersectionality provides a language that allows us to understand how these different cases and vectors of oppression relate and a critical perspective on the contingent inclusion of some at the expense of others.

The need to think intersectionally about contemporary topics is increasingly becoming acknowledged. Few concepts central to gender studies have travelled as far as the concept of intersectionality, and in the process it sees new applications and acquires different political significance (Lewis 2013; Nash 2014). Intersectionality as a framework is intuitive because it describes the diversity of perspectives and experiences within a given category and outlines an ever more defined division. In some versions, however, such adaptations of the intersectionality framework

risks depoliticizing the term by creating ever-smaller grits of categories that subjects may place themselves into rather than a more fundamental critique of the violence of these categories in the first place (Plotnikof et al. 2022). For example, various attempts at ‘intersectionalizing’ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) have been criticized for caring more about minority representation and showcasing the on paper most oppressed than actually targeting structures or everyday acts of racism and sexism at the workplace (Luthra & Muhr 2024). Such a use of intersectionality to count and represent still more detailed identity categories may only reify and commodify identities instead of using them to undo the power structures that reproduce these differences (Creary 2025; Dennissen, Benschop & van den Brink 2020; van Douwen, Benschop & van den Brink 2025).

It is also worth paying attention to how the popularization of intersectionality can reshape the conditions for carrying out research in gender studies. The centrality of intersectionality to gender studies ties the concept to the discipline in a way that has long been criticized for disconnecting it from its origins in Black feminist struggle and theorizing. The “whitening of intersectionality” (Bilge 2014) must be understood in the context of the term’s mainstreaming and its institutionalization inside the neoliberal university and gender studies in particular (de los Reyes 2016; King 2015; Nash 2014). This uprooting and appropriation of intersectionality by the wider gender studies discipline raises a number of complex questions in a context of backlash against gender studies. When are far-right critiques of intersectionality actually an attempt at delegitimizing the wider gender studies discipline, and when are they, in particular, an attempt at delegitimizing studies of race and racism? How to defend intersectionality without abstracting it away from race or historical colonial power relations? And how to respond to critiques while not silencing important challenges to intersectionality from within Black and decolonial theorizing?

CRITIQUE AND DECONSTRUCTION OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Theoretical metaphors become powerful spaces that can imprison or liberate our thinking and imaginations. Intersectionality is one of these. The metaphor of the intersection, of a crossing, when applied to the examination of social reality and existence reveals something that otherwise is difficult to see. What intersectionality could reveal was the failure of justice and the lie of the taken for granted objectivity and neutrality of the legal system. The key intersection for such revelation was race/blackness and gender/woman identities. Kimberlè Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality as the interlocking of these two identity categories and their related forms of oppression. Crenshaw powerfully argued how discrimination against black women could not be equated to that of white women’s or to black people’s discrimination, thereby disclosing a major blindness in the legal system. Feminist intersectionality grew up from the tradition of Black feminist thought and activism which, while not using the specific term ‘intersectionality’, had in the late 19th and 20th century stressed the interdependency of race and gender (Allen 2022). Besides Crenshaw, early thinkers and precursors of intersectionality include Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Angela Davids, among others. The complex evolution of the term has been examined by Collins (2011, 2019) and Nash (2019) among others, and it is critically addressed by the authors of this special issue. Since the turn of the century, studies on the idea and application of intersectionality grew exponentially. The many different special issues mentioned earlier testify to the importance of the concept in gender and DEI studies.

As it often happens with concepts related to social justice and liberation (Butler 2025), over time the idea of intersectionality became co-opted and diluted in such a way that it risked losing its edge and revolutionary power. On the one hand, this co-optation happens through capitalism and the market (think of consultancy slogans) and by popular culture (think social media posts). As mentioned previously, when

used as an analytical tool, if taken out of the social justice context of its origins, the metaphor of intersection allowed for the criss-crossing of all imaginable identity categories independent of their connection to historical forms of discrimination. Applied in such a way, intersectionality can fuel an awkward combinatory game which resembles an all-you-can-eat buffet: one can keep on adding combinations of identity categories thereby achieving complexity but also risking making the concept both banal and useless. Intersectionality symptomatically manifested another version of what has come to be known as the *etc*-problem in feminist theorizing (Butler 1991). Furthermore, as presented in the philosophical article of *Katrine Høghøj* in this volume, what in its origins was created to address a specific contextual problem was over time turned into a “general theory of social identity”. This, she powerfully argues, is a key contradiction which points to a dual subject at the core of intersectionality: the subject of ‘lived experience’ and “a subject that is an effect of the intersection of various axes of oppression, that is a subject that is constituted through abstractions.”

We can envision such complex dynamics as a series of deconstructions, like the tearing apart of a signifier by an ever-expanding landscape of signifieds. While being aware of the epistemologies, politics and economics behind such dynamics, with this special issue, we propose *moving across and with* deconstruction and committing to keep on thinking *with* the concept. The danger in fearing the multiplicity of sense-making that a concept like intersectionality can foster is a return to foundationalism grounded in a longing for certainty, a nostalgic re-constructing of fixed meaning or identity. Instead, not abandoning social justice concepts such as queerness, feminism, safe spaces, me too, or intersectionality is a form of reaching towards justice through relational deconstruction. It is the acknowledgement that a concept (or a subject) as language and as sign can never be fixed and enclosed. Such recognition honours the long fight that characterizes the history of feminist and critical theorizing as well as discloses the awareness of co-optation and manipulation often suffered

by social justice movements.

Once multiple tearing apart and deconstructions have happened, the applications of the concept of intersectionality has lost its innocence. There is another way of saying this, the concept has been ‘queered’. We do not believe anymore that this or that concept is the magic key to healing or that once we take those epistemic or methodological lenses—the ones of intersectionality—we will immediately get to truth or to justice. Such is the fantasy that theories, including those of social justice, might attempt through their journey into our collective imagination. While this might be seen as a justice-fantasy, we do not believe either that the panacea is abandoning our social justice and feminist concepts in an ever search for the purity of the concept itself (a return to origins) or for the ‘innocence’ that often surrounds new concepts (a form of theoretical fast-fashion). Instead in this post-fantasy stage we hope to reach a maturity of the use of the concept, a form of theoretical adulthood that embraces imperfection, contradiction, paradox and multiplicity, where we see as much the limitations as we see the power.

We envision this type of engagement with intersectionality as a push towards extensions and layers of different truths and forms of justice, a call to radical thinking and activism, an invitation to renew our commitment to justice and equality. For forms of relational deconstruction towards justice, we take inspiration in the poetic (Lorde 2017) and in the arts (Butler & Athanasiou 2013). The essay by *Sif Lindblad* in this volume presents an inspirational example of the potential reparative power of art by examining the intersection between artistic practice and psychic diversity. While the article by *Devanik Saha*, also in this volume, shows the potential of a mature understanding of intersectionality. In his insightful study of Maternal Health Policymaking in India intersectionality helps reveal the double dimension of structural discrimination of identities and the experience of the particular and contextual.

INTERSECTIONALITY AS CRITICAL FEMINIST RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY AND CARE

In many ways, then, intersectionality as a concept and as a field of study have come far since the seminal works of scholars such as Crenshaw (1990), Lorde (2017), and hooks (1984). Their ideas have spread across interdisciplinary research areas and, through that, expanded the scope of intersectionality theory and praxis with emerging conceptualizations, explorative methodologies, and a multiplicity of empirical foci and practices (for overviews see, e.g., Hvenegård-Lassen, Staunæs & Lund 2020; Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher & Nkomo 2016; Villesèche, Muhr & Śliwa 2018).

This multi-faceted maturing of the field, with all the diversity that brings in theory and praxis, is also evident in this special issue. For instance, the contribution of *Waithira Dhormal* explores how intersecting differences such as social class, education, and civil status amongst pastoralist women affect their different climate adaptation in Kajiado County, Kenya. On a very different note, another contribution is written and performed by *Richard Longman* and *Florence Villesèche*, who explore intersectionality in the classical music canon in Western Europe. These authors develop multimodal methods to think and understand intersectionality with the senses and acoustics of music. Furthermore, in a third example from this special issue, *Liesanth Yde Nirmalarajan* develops vignettes to make visible the invisible walls of digital welfare services experienced by different marginalized people who all depend on social care work in Denmark. While all of these contributions differ in theorization, methodology, and empirical focus, they materialize the width and breadth of current intersectionality studies, without losing sight of the fundamental concerns.

As such developments advance and expand *what* and *how* we perform intersectionality in our work in a myriad of ways, they are all somehow—some more explicitly, others more implicitly—underpinned by

feminist critique as a form of resistance that challenges the complex functioning of unevenly distributed powers and privileges and their performative effects on intersecting differences and inequalities. This continued focus and profound push to expand our concern with overlapping axes of oppression followed by exacerbated injustice, to include multiple marginalized identities, bodies, experiences, work and life conditions, is of course, sadly, also a testament to the persistence and backlash of these overlapping power systems and their troubles. But, in effect, it is also a testament to the tireless acts of resistance that current intersectionality scholarship embodies, while insisting on keeping with solidarity and care for differences, as hooks (1984, p. 65) called us to, so many years ago:

Women do not need to eradicate difference to feel solidarity. We do not need to share common oppression to fight equally to end oppression. We do not need anti-male sentiments to bond us together, so great is the wealth of experience, culture, and ideas we have to share with one another. We can be sisters united by shared interests and beliefs, united in our appreciation for diversity, united in our struggle to end sexist oppression, united in political solidarity.

As intersectionality studies continue to refuse to let various oppressed groups be pitted against one another but instead unravel how intersecting differences materialize different kinds of inequalities, power imbalances, and lacking privileges—they also show that this kind of feminist solidarity and care not only extend to the content of our theories and analyses. In line with the early intersectionality thinkers, and often with reference to Freire's critical pedagogy (1970), many intersectionality scholars have gone far to create knowledge and craft methods with marginalized people as equal “...*makers of theory and as leaders of action.*”(hooks, 1984, p. 161).

In this volume, the concern with solidarity and care in intersectionality is manifesting as a praxis, for example, in *Sayaka Osanami Törngren* and *Viveka*

Ichikawa's piece. In developing the concept of 'middle space' they not only seek to understand but also try to perform ways of embodying intersectionality beyond theory, and work (self-)critically and (self-) reflexively with changing positions of (lacking) power and (lacking) privileges in the workplace, in this case in Swedish academia. Likewise, another example in this special issue approaches the praxis of intersectionality, namely in the roundtable conversation with *Bontu Guschke, Molly Occhino, Mie Plotnikof, Mira C. Skadegård, and Sheena Vachhani*. This contribution also concerns intersectionality in the context of anti-discriminatory efforts in higher education in Denmark and the UK. Here, the scholars carefully address both the need for knowledge-based organizational efforts in existing intersectionality frameworks, and they discuss how to enable involvement of the typically excluded voices, experiences, and bodies, in order to gain insight *with* the lived experiences of intersecting inequalities.

These efforts, then, question what critique can do for us and how it may regenerate in the future - both within and beyond intersectional feminist scholarship. Because as Ahmed (2014, p. 11) painfully reminds us:

One time, I pointed out that a speaker list for an event included only white men. [...] Someone replies that they thought I sounded 'very 1980s', and that they thought we had 'got over' identity politics. Not only might we want to challenge the use of identity politics as a form of political caricature, but we might want to think of this 'over'. Feminist and anti-racist critique are heard as old-fashioned, as based on identity categories that we are assumed to be over.

Hence, when we move forward with intersectionality theory, methodology, and praxis, we are surely not leaving the fundamental concerns of feminist critique—both as a deconstructive and affirmative form of resistance, solidarity and care—behind. Rather, the current political climate and backlash indeed calls for us to keep engaging with intersectionality as

“generative labour” (Hvenegarrd-Lassen, Staunæs & Lund, 2020 p. 179), reminding us to critically focus on the ever-present value of different forms of feminist critique of intersecting axes of power and oppression. And as the contributions of this special issue shows, there is important hope, energy and inspiration to be found in caring for our differences, both regarding different positionalities, regions and locations, and regarding our different perspectives, methods, and forms of critique. So, as we move onward, we need to advance what we already know and do with intersectionality, but also to further expand and experiment with rethinking, reimagining, reworking *what, how, and with whom* we develop the future of intersectionality scholarship. Both amongst the actors, practices and fields we already know, and by daring to move beyond and look further away—to unknown places, practices, theories and knowledges.

DECOLONIAL AND HYBRID SCHOLARSHIP

The making of this special issue initiated at a European business school, where academics from various disciplines and backgrounds convened to discuss intersectionality. In this context, what materialized was not merely a thematic concentration; it constituted a collective engagement with decolonial and hybrid scholarship. The contributions compiled herein elucidate the potentialities and conflicts associated with integrating intersectionality, decoloniality, and hybridity into discourse within broader fields, such as management and organization studies and gender studies.

We began with the idea, based on Quijano (2000), that coloniality is still a structuring force long after formal colonialism has ended. The coloniality of power persists in regulating knowledge, subjectivity, and identity via Eurocentric epistemologies that marginalize Indigenous cosmologies and critical, underrepresented scholarship in areas such as diversity, inclusion, and feminist or anti-racist discourse (Ramirez et al. 2024). Decoloniality is not merely a rhetorical flourish; it represents a continuous effort

to reevaluate and reform the methodologies of education, research, and organizational practice, contesting Eurocentric hegemony and fostering the development of more inclusive, contextualized, and transformative knowledge forms (Mignolo 2009; Lugones 2007).

However, Kapoor (2024) cautions that decoloniality may become romanticized when detached from political economy. Epistemic disobedience cannot resist neoliberal absorption; moreover, decolonial discourses may be appropriated by capitalist multiculturalism. Tate and Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2020) remind us that intersectionality already has a decolonizing aspect that comes from Black feminist and anti-colonial histories. When viewed in terms of history and relationships, intersectionality goes against universalism and breaks down Eurocentric binaries (Ramirez & Munar 2022). Thomas (2020) also warns that any decolonial critique should not erase or misrepresent the Black feminist roots of intersectionality. To do so would constitute an additional epistemic erasure, compromising the fundamental objective of decolonization.

The articles in this special issue show that decolonial scholarship is never pure. Instead, it is hybrid, arising from the cacophony of contextualized knowledges (Dhmoon 2015). Hybridity in this context does not signify a celebration of cultural amalgamation; rather, it acknowledges that knowledge and resistance are cultivated in relational and frequently contradictory environments (Bhabha 1996; Darling-Wolf 2007; Ramirez & Munar 2022). Mirza (2015) establishes this hybridity through embodied intersectionality: Black and ethnicized people in higher education occupy contradictory states of hyper-visibility and containment, yet assert marginality as a transformative locus of knowledge and resistance. These lived, embodied experiences serve as a reminder that hybridity and decoloniality are not merely theoretical constructs, but are actively manifested in daily struggles against surveillance, exclusion, and epistemic marginalization (Ramirez et al. 2024).

Zembylas (2025) posits that intersectionality and decoloniality are most effectively comprehended through a challenging yet productive dialogue. Intersectionality is inherently decolonial as it reveals interconnected hierarchies, whereas decolonization is fundamentally intersectional in acknowledging co-constitutive oppressions. This convergence generates opportunities for epistemic resistance in higher education, albeit always accompanied by tension. As editors based at European institutions, we are very aware of how our own privileged positions affect this issue. We acknowledge the systemic challenges of language, accessibility, and disciplinary dominance that persist in marginalizing diverse scholarship (Gani & Khan 2024). Recognizing our involvement in these structures is fundamental to engaging in a reflexive, decolonial editorial politics.

The articles in this issue also connect with Gale de Saxe and Trotter-Simons (2021), who argue that linking intersectionality and decolonization helps both students and scholars develop critical consciousness. They show that universities are still colonizing places where whiteness and neoliberalism pretend to be neutral. However, through praxis—by accepting cognitive dissonance, dialectics of consciousness, and relational learning—scholarship can contest the status quo. In the same way, the contributions collected here push back against both purity politics and simple binaries (Ramirez & Munar 2022). They show that intersectionality and decoloniality must be seen as praxis, as ongoing and contested struggles that link critique to change.

Seen together as a whole, this impressive collection of papers show that decolonial and hybrid scholarship does not look for a single synthesis. Instead, it embodies a pluriversal orientation (Escobar 2020; Blaser 2013) that embraces contradictions while opposing epistemic closure. Intersectionality is not neglected but rather repositioned within its Black feminist and Global South lineages. Decoloniality is not idealized; it is rooted in material struggles concerning land, sovereignty, and institutional power (Ramirez & Böhm 2021). Hybridity is not

depoliticized; instead, it is reasserted as a domain of relational knowledge and agency at the peripheries.

This special issue enriches diverse academic disciplines by promoting scholarship that is both decolonial and hybrid: scholarship that challenges Eurocentrism without erasure, recognizes complexities while fostering solidarities, and emphasizes praxis as the domain where critical knowledge and social transformation converge. It encourages readers to accept the chaos of decolonial and intersectional engagements—not as a constraint, but as a fertile ground for rethinking management, organization, and society and gender studies.

PRESENTATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

The special issue consists of 9 articles, 2 essays, 1 round table and 2 book reviews. We are deeply impressed with all the contributions and wish you happy reading. Although we know this format won't do the contributions justice, we would like to end this editorial with a brief summary of each contribution. We divide the summaries into sections as they also appear in the issue: articles, essays, round table and book reviews.

ARTICLES

The first article is written by *Katrine Høghøj*, and has the title “The Dual Subject of Intersectionality: Between ‘Lived Experience’ and ‘Categories of Oppression’”. The article examines the dual subject within intersectionality: one rooted in “lived experience” that can be taken at its word, and another constituted through abstract intersections of oppression. Engaging with Marxist critiques, it argues that contemporary intersectionality often overemphasizes lived experience, leading to theoretical weaknesses. By distinguishing between intersectionality as a contextual response to specific problems and as a general theory of social identity, the author highlights how its expansion into the latter creates conceptual issues.

The article calls for a re-engagement with intersectionality's critical origins while integrating Marxist methodology for deeper structural analysis

The second article is written by *Devanik Saha*, and has the title “Re-examining Janani Suraksha Yojana: The Relevance of Intersectionality to Improve Maternal Health Policymaking in India”. The article critiques India's Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), a cash-transfer scheme aimed at reducing maternal mortality, through an intersectional lens. While JSY has boosted institutional deliveries, it has failed to significantly lower maternal deaths or reach the most marginalized women. The author identifies three key flaws: treating women as a homogenous group, ignoring lived experiences, and neglecting social determinants of health. Using the case of an Adivasi woman's death, the paper shows how caste, class, gender, location, and discrimination intersect to shape inequalities. It argues for adopting intersectionality in maternal health policy to better address inequalities.

The third paper is written by *Waithira A.C. Dormal*, and has the title “Climate adaptation as relational capacity: An intersectional study of pastoralist women in Kajiado, Kenya”. The paper explores climate adaptation during times of intensifying drought in Kenya across three ecologically distinct sites. To understand the variation of pastoralist women's adaptation to such crisis, the study applies an intersectional lens and recast climate adaptation as a relational capacity involving the conversion of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic resources. Further, the paper also uses its findings to identify policy levers in labour support, collateral design, and group governance that can support the shift from crisis coping in different environments towards adaptation involving relational capacity building.

The fourth article is written by *Zenia Henriksen* and *Kræn Kielsgaard* and has the title “Revolution and the Hijab in the Political Satire of Noor Khanom”. The article analyses the Syrian satirical TV show *Noor Khanom* (2018–2021), hosted by journalist

Noor Haddad, as a site of feminist resistance. Using intersectionality, postcolonial feminism, and media theory, it examines how the show critiques authoritarianism and patriarchal norms by reappropriating domestic imagery and humour. Central to this is the hijab, framed variously as personal freedom, subject to the male gaze, and a tool of political resistance. Haddad's personal decision to unveil sparked public debate, reflecting contested ideas of agency and morality. Ultimately, Noor Khanom demonstrates how satire can reimagine gender roles and women's political participation in post-revolution Syria.

The fifth article is written by *Richard Longman* and *Florence Villesèche* and has the title "Singing a different tune: re-sounding intersectional voices in classical music". The article critiques the persistent exclusion of women composers in Western classical music, showing how intersections of gender, race, class, and geography shape structural marginalisation. Moving beyond additive accounts of representation, the authors combine intersectionality and feminist new materialism to highlight exclusion as an active, ongoing process embedded in institutions, aesthetics, and sonic practices. Through a multisensory approach integrating sound and performance, they challenge text-based scholarship and foreground embodied, affective ways of knowing. Their intervention urges a rethinking of canon formation, evaluative hierarchies, and institutional practices, calling for deeper transformations in how knowledge, music, and inclusion are produced.

The sixth article is written by *Helene Pristed Nielsen* and has the title "Mapping the margins of small places". *Helene Pristed Nielsen* rethinks Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality by applying it to small-scale and islanded communities. Drawing on feminist geography and island studies, she explores how limited anonymity, compulsory intimacy, and interconnectedness in such settings shape identity negotiations and processes of inclusion and exclusion. The article argues that in small places—whether literal islands or close-knit social groups—identities may resist reinterpretation due to social transparency and

overlapping relations. Through empirical examples from the Faroe Islands, Thailand, Europe, and the Danish Armed Forces, Nielsen shows how "islandness" influences power dynamics and complicates intersectional identity expression.

The seventh article is written by *Emilia Ganslandt* and *Emily Boyd* and has the title "Intersectionality and adaptation justice in Sweden: Where are we - and where next?". This article examines how climate adaptation justice is conceptualized in Sweden, a country often viewed as affluent, equal, and relatively invulnerable to climate impacts. Through a review of environmental and climate justice research, the authors find that scholarship focuses mainly on socio-economic status, migrants, and Sámi communities, while overlooking broader intersectional dynamics, privilege, and adaptation itself. They argue that Sweden's strong social contract and narratives of equality obscure hidden vulnerabilities and reinforce the "affluence-as-shield" assumption. Applying intersectionality can expand understandings of justice, uncover overlooked inequities, and strengthen adaptation policies by addressing power, privilege, and diverse lived experiences.

The eighth article is written by *Liesanth Yde Nirmalarajan* and has the title "Invisible Walls in the Digital Welfare State: How Parents Navigate Marginalization and Agency in Digitally Mediated Encounters". This article examines how marginalized parents in Denmark navigate digitally mediated welfare systems. Drawing on intersectionality and Donna Haraway's concepts of cyborgs and string figures, it shows how digital infrastructures co-construct experiences of marginalization and agency. Ethnographic data and vignettes of parents illustrate barriers such as opaque digital platforms, bureaucratic complexity, and cultural assumptions of "digital by default." Parents often face "invisible walls" that obscure their struggles from institutions, reinforcing exclusion while shifting responsibility onto individuals. Yet, parents also exercise agency through informal networks and digital communities. The study highlights broader implications for citizenship, social work, and

digital inclusion.

The ninth and final article is written by *Sayaka Osanami Törngren* and *Viveka Ichikawa* and has the title “Intersectionality beyond theory: Coming to Terms with our Embodied ‘Ambiguosness’ and the Courage to Choose the Middle Space”. This article explores “middle space” as a site of ambiguity, transformation, and resistance, where intersectionality is both lived and theorized. Written by two first-generation immigrant Japanese women scholars in Sweden and Canada, it combines autoethnography, personal narrative, and critical feminist methodology. The authors situate their experiences of privilege and marginalization within broader social and institutional structures, challenging binary categories of centre and margin. By emphasizing reflexivity, dialogue, and embodied knowledge, they highlight how identities are continuously negotiated. The middle space offers a framework for activism, solidarity, and academic praxis, linking theory with lived experience to advance intersectional feminist scholarship.

ESSAYS

The first essay is written by *Sif Landblad* and has the title “Unreason as a means to repair the art institution”. The essay examines how curatorial practice can embrace “unreason” as a reparative and transformative method rather than pathology. Focusing on the 2024 Palais de Tokyo exhibition *Approaching Unreason*, it draws on François Tosquelles’ institutional psychotherapy and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s concept of the reparative. Through artworks and processes highlighting psychic diversity, vulnerability, and joy, the exhibition models how unreason can serve as both subject and curatorial strategy. The essay argues that such practices challenge normative frameworks, foreground collective creativity, and open institutions to care, resistance, and transformation, positioning unreason as a method of repair within art curation.

The second essay is written by *Mira C. Skadegård* based on her keynote at the Danish Gender Conference at

CBS in 2024. It has the title “Copenhagen Gender Conference 2024 Keynote: Intersectionality in the Nordics”. Mira C. Skadegård’s keynote at the Copenhagen Gender Conference (2024) explores intersectionality within the Nordic context, drawing on her research and lived experiences. She emphasizes the importance of structural perspectives in addressing discrimination, situating intersectionality within human rights frameworks and focusing on historically disenfranchised groups. Key themes include the dangers of overemphasizing intent, the concept of complicity in sustaining oppression, and the barriers posed by Nordic exceptionalism, which obscures systemic racism and sexism under myths of equality. Skadegård calls for confronting denial, amplifying marginalized voices, and dismantling entrenched power structures to realize a truly intersectional and inclusive future.

ROUNDTABLE

The special issue also includes a roundtable featuring *Bontu Guschke*, *Molly Occhino*, *Mie Plotnikof*, *Mira C. Skadegård*, and *Sheena Vachhani*. The roundtable is entitled: “Building Inclusive University Cultures: How can universities take action against discrimination?”. The roundtable explores how universities can combat discrimination by embracing intersectionality, unlearning simplistic categories, and fostering both formal and informal change based on the critical knowledge regarding intersectional forms of discrimination. In the roundtable, the panellists further stress the need for political will, critical self-reflection, and creating accountable spaces to include all kinds of bodies and experiences marked by intersectional forms of oppression and discrimination within and beyond the university. They highlight challenges of representation, discomfort, and privilege, while emphasizing collective response-ability and knowledge-based DEI practices.

BOOK REVIEWS

The special issue ends with two book reviews. First

Connie Carø has written a review of Sine Plambech's 'Global Sex' and next Cathrine Bjørnholt Michaelsen has written a review of 'New Materialism and Intersectionality' edited by Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, Taru Leppänen, Tara Mehrabi, and Milla Tiainen.

A NOTE ON THE FRONTPAGE

Finally, we want to end with a few words about the frontpage image. The image is a picture of a painting by the artist Valkis López, who is an activist, and Muxe Gunaa from the Istmo of Tehuantepec.

Valkis López is a Zapotec *muxe gunaa*, artist, and human rights activist whose life and work emerge from the ancestral lands of Santo Domingo Ingenio, Oaxaca. Her story is one of intersectional resistance—she navigates the layered oppressions of gender non-conformity, Indigenous identity, and economic marginalization while transforming pain into beauty and exclusion into public voice.

Marked by violence in childhood and denied professional opportunities because of her identity, Valkis has forged her own path through art, hairstyling, community organizing, and public storytelling. Despite

holding degrees in law and education, she was only allowed to work under her deadname. Today, she lives and works as her true self, refusing invisibility.

Her exhibition *Resiliencia*—a visual testimony painted on broken roof tiles after the 2017 earthquake—reflects her practice of turning trauma into creative futurity. Each piece speaks to survival, memory, and the dignity of those pushed to the margins.

Valkis is an active member of Transformándome, a project supported by UNESCO and Fundación Artus, which empowers *muxe* and trans women through rights-based education, affective healing, and collective tools for justice. Her activism weaves together gender, culture, territory, and emotion, challenging both the romanticization and the erasure of *muxe* lives.

Her testimony reminds us that intersectionality is not just a framework—it is lived reality. And in that reality, Valkis dares to live and dream in full colour.

“Ser muxe gunaa es libertad”

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