



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Intersectionality – Experiences of Inclusion and Exclusion

Department of Informatics and Media – Uppsala University
with the support of the Swedish Institute

12th February 2018

Venue: Hörsal 2, Ekonomikum, Kyrkogårdsgatan 10, Uppsala

PROGRAMME

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08.30–09.00 Registration – Coffee

Panel I – Intersectionality beyond feminist studies (09.00–11.00)

Chair: Nico Carpentier

09.00–09.30 Keynote Speaker: Nina Lykke, Linköping University, Sweden

“Intersectionality, feminism and global protest”

09.30–09.50 Stefania Milan, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

“Studying mediated activism through feminist understandings of technology”

09.50–10.10 Liza Mügge, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

“Intersectionality in the Study of Politics: Challenges and Opportunities”

10.10–10.30 Kirill Filimonov, Uppsala University, Sweden

“Bridging intersectionality and radical democracy: Re-articulation of feminist politics in Sweden’s Feminist Initiative 2014 election campaign”

10.30–11.00 Discussion

11.00–11.30 Coffee break

Panel II – Intersectionality in political practice (11.30–13.30)

Chair: Blerjana Bino

11.30–12.00 Keynote Speaker: Yasmin Jiwani, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

“Intersectionality in Political Practice – A Site of Interventions”

12.00–12.20 Karen Celis, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium

“Young, female and from an ethnic minority? You’re in! Intersectional Puzzles in Political Representation”

12.20–12.40 Irene Molina, Uppsala University, Sweden

“Intersectional perspectives on urban violence: the state and the Swedish suburb”

12.40–13.00 Siddharth Chadha, Uppsala University, Sweden

“Claiming Queer Spaces – the intersections of competing discourses of participatory identity politics”

13.00–13.30 Discussion

13.30–14.30 Lunch break

Panel III–Intersectionality in media studies (14.30–16.30)

Chair: Vaia Doudaki

14.30–15.00 Keynote Speaker: Nico Carpentier, Uppsala University, Sweden

“Intersectionality, the discursive-material knot and the identity politics of participation”

15.00–15.20 Arne Hintz, Cardiff University, UK

“The Scoring Society: Inclusion and Exclusion through Datafication”

15.20–15.40 Blerjana Bino, European University of Tirana, Albania

“Empowerment of Roma communities and alternative media: Intersectionality, identities and voices”

15.40–16.30 Discussion

PAPERS' ABSTRACTS

Panel I – Intersectionality beyond feminist studies

Keynote Speaker: Nina Lykke
Linköping University, Sweden

INTERSECTIONALITY, FEMINISM AND GLOBAL PROTEST

In the keynote address, I will explore the genealogies of intersectionality in black US feminism (Crenshaw 1991) and from this point of departure reflect on the ways in which intersectionality has become a central part of currently strong and important social protests. I shall intertwine theoretical reflections with selected examples. First of all, I shall discuss the Pussyhat movement which mobilized for intersectional anti-sexist and anti-racist protests in major cities worldwide on the day after the inauguration of Donald Trump as US President in January 2017. Moreover, I shall reflect on the ways in which the Black Lives Matter movement, according among others to black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (2017) is analysed as different from earlier black civil rights movements. Finally, I shall draw attention to the intersections of human, on-human and environmental issues (Godfrey and Torres 2016).

Stefania Milan
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

STUDYING MEDIATED ACTIVISM THROUGH FEMINIST UNDERSTANDINGS OF TECHNOLOGY

Studying activism entails relating with and writing about vulnerable subjects, both groups and individuals. Vulnerability takes many forms, often intersecting known categories of discrimination such as gender, race and sexual orientation and class; what's more, often activists are subject to surveillance and repression, often perpetrated and/or facilitated through digital technology. Working with vulnerable subjects such as activists calls for setting up appropriate additional safeguards that have consequences, at two levels: ontological/epistemological and ethical/methodological.

While (new) media studies applied to activism have often considered media as an empowering force able to shape activism for the better, feminist theories of technology emerged along the axis of Science and Technology Studies (STS) might help us to take into account as well as contextualize forms of discrimination that exist within and/or are perpetuated through digital technology. This contribution reflects on what can we learn from STS for the study of contemporary activism, with a focus on tech and data activism.

Liza Mügge
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE STUDY OF POLITICS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Intersectionality has a strong black feminist political legacy. Since its academic coinage in the 1980s intersectionality has travelled to different disciplines. How is intersectionality used today in the study of politics? In this talk Liza Mügge shows how intersectionality is situated in contemporary political science. She will draw on an empirical introspective analysis of roughly two decades of intersectionality research published in ISI-ranked political science journals. The analysis shows that during its journey in political science intersectionality is increasingly applied as a research paradigm and less as political feminist project. Mügge discusses the challenges and opportunities of this trend for the future study of politics.

Kirill Filimonov
Uppsala University

BRIDGING INTERSECTIONALITY AND RADICAL DEMOCRACY: RE-ARTICULATION OF FEMINIST POLITICS IN SWEDEN'S FEMINIST INITIATIVE 2014 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The paper explores the construction of the hegemonic project of feminist politics by the Swedish political party Feminist Initiative (FI). Studying FI's election material from the 2014 parliamentary election campaign through the lens of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory and radical and pluralist democracy, the paper shows the equivalential logic behind FI's political project that used 'feminist politics' as a signifier for a number of progressive struggles. The study's findings suggest that privileging 'oppression' as a nodal point in the hegemonic project allowed FI to exceed the more traditional understanding of feminist politics in terms of gender. The paper concludes with a discussion on the possible bridges between intersectionality and radical democracy in both theory and political practice.

Panel II – Intersectionality in political practice

Keynote Speaker: Yasmin Jiwani
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

INTERSECTIONALITY IN POLITICAL PRACTICE – A SITE OF INTERVENTIONS

Intersectionality is a fraught concept, contested by many and yet embraced by others. While there are many drawbacks to the way in which intersectionality has been appropriated and disinterred from its roots, my focus is on recuperating intersectionality using a contextual framework. By the latter, I refer specifically to the matrices of power underpinning socio-historical and political contexts that position different bodies in particular ways, rather than focusing on their social location alone. Thus, what different bodies mean within the larger societal context offers us insight into the interlocking forces that privilege some bodies while constructing others as unworthy and ungrievable. Using particular examples drawn from media representations of Indigenous and Muslim bodies, I illustrate how contextual intersectionality serves as a heuristic device, highlighting the role of hegemonic values and thereby, identifying sites of intervention.

Karen Celis
Free University of Brussels

YOUNG, FEMALE AND FROM AN ETHNIC MINORITY? YOU'RE IN! INTERSECTIONAL PUZZELS IN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

My contribution jumps of from a recent study about the gendered dimension of the integration of ethnic minorities in Belgium. In Belgium, like in the Netherlands and France, ethnic minority women outnumber ethnic minority men in elected assemblies. The 'over-representation' of ethnic minority women is particularly striking, because it contradicts a commonly held assumption that ethnic minority women face 'double barriers' in politics as a result of their membership of two traditionally disadvantaged groups—women and ethnic minorities. However parties select ethnic minority women because their specific profile or 'intersectional identity mix'—being from an ethnic minority group, female and often young—maximised the representativeness of the candidate lists. In my contribution I reflect on what this type of inclusion along intersectional lines actually implies for political representation in practice, and distribution of power in particular.

Irene Molina
Uppsala University

INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN VIOLENCE: THE STATE AND THE SWEDISH SUBURB

Swedish cities count internationally as among the most ethnically segregated. The process of urban segregation in Sweden has been labelled as the phenomena of racialization of cities, given its clear racial hierarchical patterns. For the understanding of the political processes that have shaped segregation as well as the role played by the politics of stigmatization,

an intersectional perspective is highly useful. In this keynote, we will revise the current expressions of violence in the racialized Swedish suburb as well as the intersections between the systems of racism, sexism and the neo-liberalization of welfare.

Siddharth Chadha
Uppsala University

CLAIMING QUEER SPACES – THE INTERSECTIONS OF COMPETING DISCOURSES OF PARTICIPATORY IDENTITY POLITICS

This presentation reports on the research on the political logics of participation within the empirical setting of queer film festivals in Sweden. The research uses Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) as an analytical framework for a study of the Malmö Queer Film Festival, a theme-based festival, which in 2017 focussed on films and discussion about (in)accessibility of film, culture and the HGBTQIA-communities for people with disabilities (differently abled bodies and minds).

The research contains itself within a political definition of ‘participation as equalisation of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal or informal decision-making processes’ (Carpentier 2016). It uses participant observation, supplemented with informal interviews to understand the discursive and material actions of the film festival organisers in decision-making moments and evaluates the balance/unbalance of power positions and the struggles between these actors. It further uses this analysis of participatory intensities (minimalist or maximalist) of the Queer film festival organization in comparison with a qualitative content analysis of the discursive outcomes (audience screenings and discussions) of the festival as a counter-hegemonic struggle for HGBTQIA identity politics.

The paper argues that a maximalist form of participation (in its political sense) is a signifier which in the discursive-material setting of queer film festivals emerges as a necessary condition for establishing a counter-hegemonic articulation of HGBTQIA identity politics. However, the discursive and material ‘presence’ of participation within the practices of queer film festival organization remains elusive, thereby pointing to its contingent nature. The ontological meaning of participation, therefore emerges as a dialectic of necessity/contingency, in which the contingent affirms the necessary while simultaneously impeding its full constitution. At the societal level, participation is to be understood as a constant struggle that can only be interpreted through its relative intensities, within the specific discursive-material conditions that facilitate a particular logic of power and decision-making.

Based on this research, the presentation reflects upon the intersections of power (im)balances and (in)equalities within the queer struggles for a counter-hegemonic identity politics. Intersectionality, in this analysis, is proposed as an enabling condition for establishing a democratic politics through constant dialogical between competing discourses for the formation of broader alliances based on common normative grounds.

Panel III – Intersectionality in media studies

Keynote Speaker: Nico Carpentier
Uppsala University

INTERSECTIONALITY, THE DISCURSIVE-MATERIAL KNOT AND THE IDENTITY POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION

This theoretical reflection focusses on the interconnections between the discursive-material knot—a model that aims to capture the entanglement between the discursive and the material through the lenses of post-structuralist discourse theory and new materialism—and intersectionality. The starting point is a discourse-theoretical discussion on multiple identities and identifications, then integrating its material dimensions (and the logics of the dislocation and invitation) in a second stage. This deeply intersectional approach will be illustrated by a reflection on the identity politics of participation, and the role that the subject positions of leader, expert and owner play, in combination with those of citizen and ordinary person, and cross-cut by (among others) gender, regional and ethnic identities.

Arne Hintz
Cardiff University, UK

THE SCORING SOCIETY: INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION THROUGH DATAFICATION

In contemporary digital environments, data about us is constantly collected, stored, shared and analysed. Our online communication, consumption habits, political preferences, health, mood, and geographic location are tracked by a range of companies and compiled to form comprehensive profiles. Increasingly, we are assigned data scores that assess our quality as a 'good' consumer and citizen – from financial scores to the 'risk scores' given to migrants and convicts, and to the planned citizen scores in China. Datafication, exemplified through the practice of data scores, has become a new governance model.

This has led to serious challenges regarding biases and data-based discrimination of, for example, ethnic minorities and poor communities. At the same time, it has required the incorporation of populations into data systems for, e.g., social service provision. Informed by critical data studies, this presentation will investigate the implications of datafication for different social and cultural groups. Based on these insights, it will review the consequences for our understandings of citizenship and the public.

Blerjana Bino
European University of Tirana

EMPOWERMENT OF ROMA COMMUNITIES AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA: INTERSECTIONALITY, IDENTITIES AND VOICES

Despite the fact that policy processes and discourses have shifted from “normalisation” to “integration” and “social inclusion” of Roma communities in Albania, there has been no substantial transformation in the social processes that locate Roma as “Others”. Alternative media, as participatory communicative spaces, have the potential to challenge this by giving voices to the Roma communities and enabling them to create their own meanings based on their own terms and to re-validate their identities. Drawing from my previous research on the role of alternative media to counter marginalisation of Roma communities in Albania, this paper explores how the participatory media production and distribution of diverse voices of Roma communities contribute to empowerment. The latter is unpacked in terms of: development of a sense of self and capacity through the expression of voices that are otherwise unheard and self-representation; ability to negotiate and influence relationships and decision-making; working together to achieve impact for other members of the community. Finally, by utilising the concept of intersectionality, the paper points to the complexity of Roma identities, their heterogeneity and multifaceted marginalisation.