INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE:

INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER AND RACE

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Abstract

Can transnational public spheres be envisaged for Europe, which, in fact, create accountability – that is, spaces of critical articulations, control mechanisms, and political correctives to the governing levels? Can the political, as a critical force and the willingness to struggle and decide, be re-introduced into the public sphere? In which ways are race/ethnicity, class and gender cleavages being (re)presented and articulated in the public sphere and how do they intersect? In attempting to answer these questions, we aim this article at exploring the potential for a European discursive space pertaining to issues of gender and diversity. The empirical focus is on the views of political parties and social movements that are participating in public debates. Addressing the inclusions and exclusions in the European public sphere at the intersections of gender and racial/ethnic minorities, we look at the shifts in rhetoric, discourses and policies. As a result, we find common discursive patterns on the intersections between ethnicity and gender which, however, can at best be interpreted as a sign of the emergence of broader European public spheres. Only if these debates can be generalised, European public spheres fulfilling the functions of creating accountability and control mechanisms can develop.

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Introduction

According to the normative ideal, the democratic public sphere has been envisaged as universal, but critics have pointed out that, in reality, it was, from the outset, based upon different kinds of exclusions. First and foremost, the public sphere was defined as a national sphere of citizens, thereby excluding all non-citizens. Furthermore, the exclusion of the "private sphere" from public discourse led, above all, to the exclusion of women who were relegated to the private, but also to the exclusion of socioeconomic differences seen as part of the private economy. Further, discrimination against ethnic and national minorities has frequently been seen as an issue not to be dealt with in a liberal public sphere as long as legal equality is warranted.

In contemporary Western democracies, these demarcations have shifted – gender equality has become a major legal and political concern – and citizenship and diversity have to be renegotiated due to massive migration movements and supranational political entities. At the level of the EU, there is a growing rhetoric about gender equality and diversity as political goals. At the same time, research has documented that the traditional exclusions of women and ethnic minorities still play a crucial role in political discourses and policies across Europe.

The article addresses inclusions and exclusions in the European public sphere, focusing on intersections of gender and racial/ethnic minorities and looking at the shifts in rhetoric, discourses and policies. The first part of the article will employ theoretical perspectives based upon modern and postmodern/post-structural thought on the (European) public sphere. Key concepts are exclusion/inclusion, "us-them" and intersectionality, focusing on the special role of gender and race. The second part will use empirical data collected and analysed within the Eurosphere project to further develop these theoretical insights. The focus will be on the multiple discriminations against immigrant women as well as on nationalist (mis)use of gender equality as a genuine European value by right-wing political parties and organisations excluding, above all, Muslim minorities from the European public sphere.

The Public Sphere

Theorists of democracy tend to agree in their recognition of the paramount importance of the public sphere for democracy. However, there are wide differences in their concrete assessment of the democratic functions of the public sphere. Very roughly and generally, we can discern two of these functions. A public sphere is (1) the space for presentation/representation of political discourses between parts of the *demos,* that is groups and individuals, (2) the space in which this demos is constructed, that is, in which a common political identity, necessary for democratic decision making, develops. To many scholars, there is an unsolvable tension between these two aims, especially prominent in the case of the European Public Sphere, as identity building is necessarily based on inclusion and exclusion.

In the understanding of Chantal Mouffe (2000), there is a fundamental democratic paradox based on the impossibility of reconciling the values of equality and liberty. Mouffe's analysis makes a theoretical distinction between two conflicting aspects of democracy: democracy as "a form of rule" that is the principle of the

sovereignty of "the people"; and "the symbolic framework" within which this democratic rule is exercised, that is, the liberal discourse with its strong emphasis on the universal value of individual liberty and human rights (cf. Mouffe 2000, 1-16). Modern democracy and its public sphere thus represent a contingent historical articulation between two different traditions with different logic, which may and do conflict. In order to develop a common identity of the demos necessary for popular sovereignty, the borders of the demos have to be defined, which in many cases excludes people within the community. However, on the basis of the universal liberal ideal, this exclusion is fundamentally impossible.

Theorists of deliberative democracy (see, above all, Habermas 1996) find a solution for this dilemma in the concept of rational communication as the base of the public sphere. According to this model, generally accepted procedural rules can warrant equal possibilities to participate in the public sphere and to come to mutually satisfactory results on the basis of rational consideration. Feminist theorists in the deliberative tradition have criticised the universalistic dimension of this concept as, in fact, oppressing concrete differences, with the effect of excluding from the public sphere, women above all, (cf. Benhabib 1992 and Fraser 1990). Due to the liberal private-public distinction, for example, the family as an institution and an important "political" arena for reproducing unequal gender roles, has been ignored (cf. Fraser 1990).

More recently, feminist theorists have tried to re-theorise this critique in a more positive gender-neutral way by including other forms of discrimination. In this vein, Iris M. Young proposes a concept for a more heterogeneous public, open to "bodily and affective particularity" (Young 1998, 443). Public spaces have to recognise, in a positive way, differences of perspective, affiliation and experience. In her influential book *Inclusion and Democracy*, Young (2000) develops an inclusive, communicative theory of democracy based upon difference and diversity, aimed to include marginalised social groups through their mobilisation and organisation in civil society.

The main question behind this vision is the potential tension between political equality and structural group differences. In her concern with marginalised groups, Young criticises the hypocrisies of universalistic models of liberal democracy, not recognising the specific situation of these groups but still claiming to warrant equality of individuals.

The theory of radical democracy (Mouffe and Laclau 1985) criticises universalistic models of liberal democracy and the public sphere from a different perspective: The openness of any structure conditions a constant struggle upon stabilisation of meaning and identity. Difference and equivalence are the categories which contribute to the dynamics of identity building by establishing a discourse. This is only possible by excluding a threatening *other*.

According to Mouffe, the public sphere is necessary for the existence of political subjectivity – only by the public articulation of differences can the political subject locate rifts and take decisions. The claim for "rational discourse" is not more than a claim for hegemony for a certain kind of political understanding. Therefore, we need an alternative "agonistic pluralism," which recognises confrontation between conflicting interpretations of the constitutive liberal-democratic values (cf. Mouffe 2000, 9-16). Here, the similarities between the proposals by Mouffe and Young for

concrete politics become obvious, in spite of their fundamental differences. Drawing on their approaches to democracy, it is possible to conceptualise the public sphere as a locus/space for conflicts and struggles about inclusion and exclusion of marginalised social groups as well as for contesting and negotiating about political discourses and visions about the polity.

The European Public Sphere (EPS)

The idea of an EPS implies a radical break with the theoretical understanding of public spheres as confined to nation states. Most scholars of European integration see an EPS as normatively desirable as it is needed to allow citizens to identify with the political system and to enable responsiveness of the system. To permit representatives and policymakers to react to people's concerns, the latter have to be articulated within the public sphere. Therefore, the lack of an EPS is often understood as part of the democratic deficit and the legitimacy gap in the EU (see e.g. Eriksen and Fossum 2001). Still, it is contested if a public sphere beyond the borders of national democracy is feasible. And, if yes, the question arises how such a public sphere can deal with the many differences to be included in a sphere dubbed "complex diversity" (Kraus 2009).

This situation opens up the space for fundamental questions about the public sphere in democracy: How much homogeneity does a democratic public sphere need? Can heterogeneity be understood as a normative asset of a democratic public sphere? How can diversity and equality be accommodated in a democratic public sphere? Calhoun (2004, 7) plausibly argues that participation in the public sphere shows a form of solidarity even if this participation does not lead to harmony. And Risse (2003, 5) as well as della Porta and Caiani (2010) even maintain that contestation is a crucial pre-condition for the emergence of an EPS, rather than an indication for its absence; that is, Europeanisation by contestation. But does this positive assessment also hold true for fundamental conflicts, for example, of cultural and religious values? In order to deal with these questions, we aim to confront theory and research.

Diversity in the European Public Sphere

The EPS is, per definition, diverse as the EU consists of 27 different nation states. Thus, when the EU tries to democratise (as it has done since the Maastricht Treaty), the question of the possibility of a transnational or supranational democracy arises. A symptom for the emergence of a European democracy can be seen in the EU efforts to do away with certain forms of inequality – between EU citizens of different member states but also, in a rather prominent way, with gender inequality. At the same time, discrimination against citizens of non-EU member states is also a general EU rule, becoming more and more problematic in times of increasing global migration flows.

Nancy Fraser (2007) has recently addressed the new challenges to notions of normative legitimacy and political efficacy in a post-Westphalian world and discussed what sort of changes would be required to imagine a genuine critical and democratising role for transnational public spheres under current conditions. According to Fraser, a public sphere theory understood as a critical theory in a post-Westphalian world must rise to the double challenge to create new, transnational

public powers and to make them accountable to new, transnational public spheres (cf. Fraser 2007, 23).

Fraser's approach includes two parts – the critique of the national bias of hitherto held concepts of the public sphere, and the claim for the possibility of transnational public spheres being able to make transnational public powers accountable. While Fraser's critique is shared from different theoretical perspectives, the positive claim raises many questions. From the perspective of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), transnational public spheres are certainly feasible but not in an all-encompassing form. In order to be politically relevant, these public spheres need borders and exclusions.

Furthermore, the efficacy of transnational (as well as of all other kinds of) public spheres depends, inter alia, on the willingness of people to participate in these public spheres. The mere possibility for participation, that is, inclusiveness, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for democratic public spheres. Empirically, we can observe a declining interest of ordinary citizens to participate in public spheres. At the same time, we are facing deep social cleavages and struggles over migration and religious diversity, frustrations due to the decline of the welfare state and a decrease of the middle class, leading to an increasing gap between rich and poor.

Thus, crucial question to be answered is: How can transnational public spheres be envisaged which, in fact, create accountability – that is, spaces of critical articulations, control mechanisms and political corrective to the governing levels?

Categories of importance for theorising and empirically observing these dynamics are race/ethnicity, class, and gender cleavages. These are topics related to great passion and political brisance – but in which ways are they (re)presented and articulated in the public sphere and how do they intersect?

Intersectionality

The overlaps of different identity ascriptions and discriminations (above all, race/ethnicity, gender and class) form the main concern of theories of intersectionality. These issues have been crucial for feminist scholarship. The concept evolved within US debates about women of colour and was first theorised by Kimberlé Crenshaw who stated:

> *Feminist efforts to politicise experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicise experiences of people of colour have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. […] [However,] because of their intersectional identity as both women and people of colour within discourses that are shaped to respond to one or the other, women of colour are marginalised within both* (Crenshaw 1995, 333).

Intersectionality has travelled from the US to Europe and from social movements in the US to EU (mainstream) politics. It has also become a central concept for European feminist research (cf. Squires 2007). Intersectionality as the claim to recognise multiple types of discrimination and their specific forms of interweaving is to be discerned from intersectionality as an analytical tool, as well as from a governmental concept in policy documents aiming to forestall these acts of discrimination. (see Mokre and Siim forthcoming).

The Eurosphere project offers an opportunity for a context-sensitive empirical analysis of intersectionality. It focuses on inclusion/exclusion of women and

minorities in the EPS. This raises questions about intersections of gender with ethno-national diversity, on the one hand, and about gender and national majorities, on the other hand.

On a more fundamental level, we deal here with the tension between diversity, equality and individual liberties. Within the triad of class, gender and race, the general normative assumption consists of a positive view of ethnic and national diversity and negative views of inequalities of men and women as well as a similar view with regard to socioeconomic conditions. However, these normative assumptions are contested, for example, by political positions in favour of traditional family values ascribing a specific role to women. More importantly, the parts of this normative assumption potentially contradict each other, for example, when gender roles are differently defined in different ethnic/national groups.

The intersectionality approach can serve as an analytical tool (1) to discern multiple discriminations due to the overlap of different disadvantages/forms of discrimination; (2) to position different social groups within a complex spectrum of positive and negative discrimination (majority men, majority women, minority men, minority women, majority men with low socioeconomic status etc.); and (3) to understand and evaluate tensions between diversity and equality.

Intersectionality in the Eurosphere Project[1]

Methods. The Eurosphere project has addressed the relations between two key concepts: ethnic/national diversity and the EPS. Conceptually as well as empirically, gender questions and socioeconomic differences were also taken into account, although in a less prominent way than the focal issue of ethnic/national diversity.

The empirical analysis encompassed positions on these questions held by political parties, social movements/citizens initiatives, think tanks and media. These organisations and their representatives are understood, at the same time, as actors in a European public sphere and as communication spaces. Positions and opinions have been analysed on the basis of written documents, elite interviews and a media content analysis.

For the purpose of this chapter, we evaluated the results of interviews and document analyses for all organisations in the Eurosphere project sample, with regard to assessments of the interrelation between gender, ethnicity/nationality, and socioeconomic differences. These positions were identified within the Eurosphere project database; furthermore, Eurosphere project working papers and country reports were included in the analysis.

While our results showed an interesting qualitative picture of perceptions of intersectionality held by important actors in the EPS, they are exploratory and cannot be understood as representative in a general way. This is due to the research design, for which the question of intersections of diversity and gender was a second-order question. Thus, in many of our interviews, gender was not mentioned or only if prompted and sometimes in a rather perfunctory way.

Results. In general, our empirical evidence suggests that intersections between ethnicity/ nation and gender play an important role in most discourses in the EPS. The overall picture confirms the importance of the interaction of gender with other social categories, especially ethnicity/race, for discourses about diversity and the EPS. Social and political actors formulate different forms of interactions between

gender and ethnic minorities, which can be interpreted as a difference between exclusionary and inclusionary intersectionality (cf. Rolandsen-Augustin 2009; Christensen and Siim 2010). In our empirical research, we also found statements which cannot be clearly assigned to one or the other form of this intersectionality (ambiguous intersectionality). And also, the explicit rejection of intersections between gender and ethnicity/nation forms a small part of our empirical results (no relation).

Exclusionary Intersectionality. Exclusionary intersectionality sees tensions between diversity and equality as unsolvable and, thus, proposes a radical, one-dimensional solution – either to reduce or abolish diversity, or to abandon claims for equality. In this vein, state-nationalist parties and NGOs emphasise the disadvantages of diversity, above all, with regard to gender equality (cf. Van de Beek and Vermeulen 2010, 14). In our empirical results, such disadvantages were – implicitly or explicitly – nearly exclusively mentioned with regard to Muslim minorities: "The Islamic culture is very different in terms of the understanding of life and of justice, lack of democracy, human rights and gender equality" (Danish Association, quoted in Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 12).

As another Danish example showed, some interviewees focused on gender injustice within minorities: "Especially within the Islamic world we see a notion that women are in second place; there is no equality as we see it within Denmark" (quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 12).

In other cases, negative implications for majority women were the main concern:

> *You know, women are engaging with [...] Africans, Turks, Arabs, Egyptians [...] and then they have domestic problems. They are restricted in their individual liberty and their freedom of movement* (Good Bye Mosque, Austria, quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 11).

While most examples of exclusionary intersectionality were found in interviews with nationalist organisations, this attitude could also be found within gender NGOs: Nearly 20 percent of the interviewed representatives of gender NGOs understood ethnic/national diversity as a threat to gender equality. And it seemed interesting, within this context, that the French and Greek members of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) aimed at excluding the Turkish gender group KADER by arguing that the participation of KADER would mean the acceptance of women wearing a headscarf in the EWL[2] (cf. Arribas Lozano and Kutay 2010).

However, these positions were in no way unequivocal, not even within one and the same organisation, as two quotations from members of the Bulgarian Women's Organisation (WAD) showed:

> *I am conservative in regard to different ethnic and religious visions of men and women because I think that the Christian visions of genders are prerequisites for real not only juridical gender equality. To what extent the visions should be imposed in order to be accepted, I can't judge.*
>
> *When we speak about women's rights, we must not speak about national diversity. Women are women everywhere, independently of the role determined for them by religion, politics or economic situation. A women's community could fight for equal rights independently of ethnic background* (quoted in Pristed Nielsen 2010, 9, 13).

On the other hand, we could find, in our data, at least one example supporting – partly – sacrificing (gender) equality in favour of diversity. Seeing differences in the way different communities deal with women's rights, a member of the Finnish nationalist party started to raise doubts as to whether the Western model of gender equality is really the best model for every society:

> *[W]omen's position is quite different in Western countries than it is in Africa or even in Asia. (…) But is, for example, some Western model of thought or way of life and our model of (gender) equality then for the best somewhere else? I don't know. I haven't been thinking about it in those terms* (quoted in Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 22).

Inclusionary Intersectionality. Inclusionary intersectionality sees both equality and diversity as positive values and does not understand them as fundamentally irreconcilable. Within this discourse, we find two sub-discourses:

1. An emphasis on the intersection between different inequality creating mechanisms and the potential negative implications for strengthening inequality (in diversity). (This is the multiple discrimination approach.)

2. The acknowledgement of tensions between equality and diversity, with a focus on the possibility to overcome these tensions by learning (the mutual learning approach).

Multiple Discrimination Approach. This attitude was probably most clearly formulated by a member of a Danish left-wing party:

> *When integration fails, it hits the ethnic women twice as hard because they typically come […] from societies where they are repressed already in relation to the norms which apply in this society. This means that they enter a pocket where they are repressed both in terms of their nationality but also in terms of their gender* (quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 23).

Many of our interviewees, especially from immigrant/anti-racist groups as well as women's organisations and regional national minorities shared this view. Differentiations could mainly be found with regard to the question of whether some forms of discrimination are more problematic/important than other ones.

Frequently, spokespeople of regional national minorities as well as of organisations of the pro-immigrant/anti-racist type define diversity in a very inclusive way and mention all kinds of minorities (such as disabled, gender, sexuality, religion,) (cf. Van de Beek and Vermeulen 2010, 13). Mostly, however, ethnicity/race and gender are mentioned as grounds for discrimination.[3] Thus, respondents from anti-racist NGOs of the European Network for Anti-Racism (ENAR) unequivocally stand for the non-hierarchy of reasons for discrimination. Consequently, policies should aim at abolishing all forms of discrimination regardless of their grounds.

In this vein, at least some of the members of ENAR showed a strong commitment to women's issues. This is most prominently the case for the German organisation Tuerkische Gemeinde Deutschland (TGD), which lists on its homepage a whole range of women related questions with which they take issue, among them honour killings, domestic violence and forced marriages. In a similar vein, the Italian ENAR member, ARCI, has raised a campaign against female mutilation (cf. Pristed Nielsen 2010, 8).

On the other hand, some interviewees from minority NGOs understood the assumption of women's oppression in certain ethnic or, above all, religious groups, as a form of multiple discrimination, in itself: "The Danish debate [about immigrant women] is very un-nuanced and often based on ignorance, clichés and prejudices [...] it is like it is not respectable to be a housewife here [...] there is lack of mutual recognition" (Danish Democratic Muslims, quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 7).

According to opinions from the Danish Social Forum and the Women's Council, this form of discourse can also worsen the situation for majority women: "Projecting problems at other groups clouds the fact that we have not actually achieved gender equality in Denmark" (quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 9).

Overall, the non-hierarchical understanding of discrimination is not shared within gender NGOs. Besides the above mentioned cases of exclusionary intersectionality in gender organisations, representatives of women's organisations tend to use an anti-discrimination discourse, privileging gender; this was shown in an interview with a representative of the Turkish NGO, KAMER, and supported by members of the Bulgarian WAD and the Danish Women's Council.

Still, this attitude cannot be generalised – not even within one organisation. Another representative of the Danish Women's Council stated:

> *As a starting point, there should be no categories which take precedence. Some say gender cuts across, and perhaps this is true, but turning it into the most important – I wouldn´t go so far"* (quoted in Pristed Nielsen 2010, 14).

Summarising, one can state for the NGOs in our sample:

> *[…] It is interesting (and statistically significant) that it is only respondents from women´s groups who prioritise gender equality. Another observation is that particularly respondents from ENAR, but also from its two member organisations TGD and the Anti-Racist Centre, are internally very consistent in their replies. In contrast, respondents from EWL […] are mutually rather far from each other, advocating either the priority of gender concerns, other types of identity affiliation, or the non-hierarchy of grounds. […] Although the evidence is meagre, it seems that questions of policy priorities on group rights are an unresolved issue within the EWL organisations* (Pristed Nielsen 2010, 15).

This problem in dealing with the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity can also be traced to differences between the rhetoric and activities of the EWL: While the EWLs respondents articulated gender as the primary concern of the organisation, their projects show a distinct focus on intersectional gender and race projects. This focus has developed parallel to the shift of official EU policies from gender equality to an increased concern with diversity and multiple inequalities. Thus, in spite of their personal opinions, EWL representatives emphasised that the organisation has developed, during the last 10 years, from a white women's organisation, which privileged gender equality, to an organisation addressing multiple, intersection inequalities and organising immigrant women and their concerns within the organisation.

For the political parties in our project, discrimination due to ethnicity/race or gender and their intersections played, in general, a much less important role than for the NGOs. This did not come as a surprise as we selected NGOs according to

their interest in ethnicity/race or gender. However, it was interesting that in the case of political parties also, it was always the category of gender which was seen as the more important one when a hierarchy was mentioned at all. This held true for representatives of parties of different ideologies in Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, and Finland. As a member of the Finnish conservative party explicitly mentioned, this could be partly due to the fear that diversity issues may have become more prominent nowadays than gender issues (cf. Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 22).

Mutual Learning Approach. This position could be found in various national and transnational discourses, in pro- and anti-diversity organisations, in political parties of all political orientations, as well as in interviews with representatives of the media:

> *I think that those values [self-determination and independency of women] we have in Europe are so great, we can´t impart those values fast enough to them [immigrant women]. (…) I think it is an advantage [...] women coming from other countries can adapt and they can inform themselves about their rights. They can learn, they can develop* (Austrian movement Good Bye Mosque, quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 8).

> *"(…) (I)mmigrants who study here and see this country [...] spread the Nordic women [sic] democracy to the countries of their origin"* (Finnish Centre Party, quoted in Creutz-Cämppi et al. 2010, 15).

Similar positions could be found in nationalist parties, for example, in Bulgaria and Finland, as well as in the social democratic parties of Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark and Finland (cf. Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 22-23). Also, a journalist of the conservative Hungarian newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* shared this position (cf. Selmeczi and Sata 2010, 23).

Sometimes, reference to the possibility of positive change was combined with a critique of certain minority groups, notably Muslims, and, thus, with a form of exclusionary intersectionality:

> *In a society where the Christian cultural model dominates, women and men have equal rights. A cultural community cannot separate itself, differentiate and humiliate women's rights because all are the citizens of the country and should obey some rules. […] in some cultural models, for example in the Muslim religion, women's rights and men's rights are not the same ones. Women are humiliated in their rights* (quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 23).

While this is a quotation by a member of the Bulgarian nationalist ATAKA party, we could find similar opinions among Bulgarian social democrats.

These positions share the common perspective that immigrants should take over concepts of gender justice from majority societies. A similar model has sometimes been applied to the EU Member and Candidate States where, in general, the Nordic model is seen as an ideal for which other states have to strive. As Rolandsen Agustín (2009) showed in relation to Denmark, Northern states tend to define gender justice, at the same time, as a national and a European value.

Especially in Denmark, however, we could also find positions not subscribing to this one-way understanding of learning from European values but rather proposing a mutual approach:

> *I think we could achieve a lot more by trying to understand more and through the dialogue. [...] We have never gone out to say a lot against veils [...]. We prefer to talk with people and figure out where we have something in common as women in Denmark* (Women´s Council in Denmark, quoted in Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 8).

In a slightly different way – implying that rules of gender equality might be adapted in order to accommodate minority views, a Finnish social democrat claimed "our society must adapt to the new groups but also vice versa. To meet somewhere mid-way" (quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 22).

Yet, from another perspective, a member of the Finnish conservative party saw it as an advantage of ethnic diversity that it raises awareness of inequalities still existing in the majority population (cf. Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 24).

In our data on Austria, Bulgaria, and Finland, we could also find the more general argument that ethno-national diversity leads to more tolerance, which can then lead towards more gender justice:

> *I think to live this cultural and ethnic diversity, is a cultural achievement. And somebody who is able to perform this achievement is maybe also able to accept women´s rights* (Austrian League for Human Rights, quoted after Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 11).

Ambiguous Intersectionality. Some of our interviewees held the position that diversity both furthers and hinders equality. This was most clearly formulated by the representative of the Bulgarian NGO OJB Shalom:

Ethno-national diversity should contribute to women's rights and gender equality, but it is not realised everywhere. […] Respect between genders and gender equality is realised if the ethnic group is intelligent and cultured.

While this statement rather implies a devaluation of certain ethnic groups, respondents from a Danish Muslim NGO claimed more mutual respect of ethnic/national groups, also, with regard to their approach to gender issues:

> *The Danish debate [about immigrant women] is very un-nuanced and often based on ignorance, clichés and prejudices [...] it is like it is not respectable to be a housewife here [...] there is lack of mutual recognition* (Democratic Muslims, quoted in Mokre and Pristed Nielsen 2010, 7).

It seems plausible that ambivalence in this regard is, at least, partly due to the blurredness of the term gender equality opening up the possibility for different interpretations.

No Relation. Some representatives of NGOs and political parties in Austria, Bulgaria and Finland held this position. Most prominently, it could be found among interviewees of the Austrian Poverty Conference where three respondents answered in a way exemplified by one quotation: "That [diversity] does not mean at all that […] women are automatically in a worse position." A similar position could be found in an interview with the Bulgarian Women´s Alliance for Development.

Summary. Our results show clearly that for political actors who think at all about ethnic/national diversity and gender, the intersectionality approach is a common perspective. This even holds true for those who explicitly reject this perspective, as this position at least shows that they feel the need to do so. Notably, this prominence

only holds true for intersections between ethnicity and gender. The third part of the classical triad, class, gender, and race, that is, class or socio-economic differences, was rarely ever mentioned by our interviewees. This result corresponds with EU and national policies and discourses of discrimination, which frequently exclude questions of social and economic inequality.

The ways in which the relation between diversity and gender is understood and framed are contested and contextual. National contexts are an important factor in this regard. In some European countries, gender equality has become a dominant national value, which is used as a national demarcation to construct a borderline between, "us and them." Here, we can find the status of women as a symbolic border guard of the nation as described by Yuval-Davis (1997). A number of national discourses explicitly exclude the unequal immigrant other, while other national counter discourses aim to include the unequal immigrant other (cf. Rolandsen Agustín 2009). These discourses also express interactions between majorities and minorities. A prominent figure here is the excluded other (woman) symbolising an intersection of gender with ethnicity/race/culture or religion, and used to emphasise the difference between "them and us": The minority oppresses women whereas we, the majority, are gender equal. On the other hand, we can find the – potentially – included other (woman) standing for a more dynamic interaction between gender equality, ethnicity and culture and symbolised, for example, by young immigrant girls as bearers of integration (Rolandsen Augustin and Siim 2010).

The inclusion of immigrant women is an important concern for immigrant and anti-racist organisations. However, the coupling of gender and ethnicity/race was not articulated as a dominant concern in the selected women's organisations (cf. Arribas Lozano and Kutay 2010). Still, diversity and pluralism play an important role for women's organisations. New alliances between majority and minority women and their organisations have also developed, for example, within the EWL, and between the EWL and Black Women's Organisations (cf. Rolandsen Augustin 2011). Thus, our results suggest that ethnic diversity is an important concern for women's organisations but that, up to now, they have not found a common language on this issue, whereas anti-racist movements unequivocally claim the equal importance of ethnicity and gender.

Political families also still play an important role, especially with regard to party discourses, although there are new patterns and conflicts between the Centre/Left and the new Right, as well as cases of surprising congruence among parties of all political orientations. There also tend to be new religious cleavages, that is, between conservative Catholic forces and secular forces.

Finally, the concrete aims of organisations – above all NGOs – and the specific context in which they are operating also play an important role. This is of special impact if we bear in mind that many of the interviewees framed intersections between gender and ethnic diversity, above all, with regard to Muslim communities. Concrete positions in the EU in regard to Islam however, do not only depend on a general pro- or anti-diversity outlook, but also, for example, on the religious convictions of an organisation, as can most clearly be seen in the case of the Jewish organisation OJB Shalom in Bulgaria. Thus, comparisons according to different countries, political families, pro-/anti-diversity positions etc. are only possible to a very limited degree.

Conclusions

Our results allow some conclusions with regard to the EPS, although limited to our concrete question on intersectionality. First of all, we could observe vivid and transnational debates on this issue, debates which are mainly driven by civil society, that is, by different NGOs. Secondly, we could also see that these debates form discourses in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), that is, that they evolve around a common – contested – theme. Many of the positions we found can be understood as agonistic, in the wording of Mouffe (2000), in that they represent different positions without, however, excluding the opinion of the respective other. However, we also found antagonistic elements. These were most obvious in the framework of exclusionary intersectionality defining some social groups as unable to become an integral part of society. But, obviously, there are also antagonisms between exclusionary and inclusionary understandings of intersectionality. If we see the public sphere as a space of contestation (cf. Risse 2003, Della Porta and Caiani 2010), all these findings point towards the possible emergence of European Public Spheres dealing with issues of importance for the political present and future.

However, this basic positive evaluation leaves us with many open questions. As the European public spheres we found are still relatively small and specific, their impact on the citizenry at large, as well as on the political system, remains limited. For most political parties as well as media representatives, the issues at hand played a much less prominent role than for NGOs. Also, the issue was not dealt with by think tank representatives arguably playing an important role for policy making in many countries. And it was virtually invisible in the media content analysis; thus, it seems probable that the average citizens will only get in touch with different positions in this regard when they are already interested in the issue.

Thus, the question arises as to whether this form of EPS can serve as a linkage between the citizens and the political system or remains confined to a relatively small, though transnational, group of interested people and organisations. If this is the case – as our results suggest – then, we lack here, two paramount features of classical public spheres, namely inclusiveness and accountability.

Inclusiveness means, in the first step, the possibility for everyone concerned to take part in the public sphere. In a representative democracy, this participation can also take place in an indirect way, namely via representative organisations. However, for the main representative organisations of contemporary democracies, namely political parties, ethnicity and gender seem to play a subordinate role. Furthermore, per definition, they do not represent non-citizens. It seems doubtful, how far this role can be taken over by NGOs usually representing a very small constituency of members, while not being linked in any formal way to the general public. Most non-citizens who, as residents, are part of this general public are, thus, neither represented by political parties for which they are not allowed to vote, nor by NGOs to which they also do not have a formal link. While, therefore, especially Muslim women are discussed within the public sphere, many of them do not have a voice in it.

Furthermore, they are presented in a specific way, also identified by Horsti (2008, 44), with regard to undocumented migrants:

> *[…] undocumented migrants are presented as objects (of charity, criminalisation or control), which means that they are treated as having no social or personal history and life; they are non-persons, as characterised by Dal Lago* (1999).

This form of discursive framing, in combination with few possibilities to actively participate in discourses, enhances discrimination.

When public spheres do not provide links between citizens and the political system, the question of accountability also remains open. This problem is aggravated by the multitude of differentiations between positions on ethnicity and gender due to national and political differences, discursive contexts and the aims of the respective NGOs. The lack of meaningful classifications is not only a problem for comparative research but, probably even more so, for political aggregation.

In sum, we have found promising discourses on the intersections between ethnicity and gender which, however, can, at best, be seen as a sign for the emergence of broader European public spheres. Only if these debates can be generalised can European Public Spheres, fulfilling the classical functions of this concept, develop.

Notes:

1. This section is a further elaboration of results in Mokre and Pristed Nielsen (2010). It builds on reflections and results in Mokre and Siim (forthcoming).

2. However, KADER has become a member of the EWL.

3. While this result might partly be due to a research bias, given the focus of the project on ethnicity and its explicit concern with gender issues, it is also in line with recent EU policies and public discourses in the member states.

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