Gender, Intersectionality and the European Public Sphere

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Issues for Debate

- Methodological reflections and design
- How is gender linked to diversity in different organizations?
- How is gender equality & women’s issues being framed in the EU & across Europe?
- Confrontation of research findings with theories, models & concepts
What are social & pol. actors views about diversity & EPS? What models do organizations believe in - a centralized or fragmented (or another model of) European Polity? Organizations’ views on EU polity/policies: views on the development of EU-polity; and views concerning EU's involvement and power in policy-making

Do actors/organizations communicate/participate in EURO-networks spaces?

What are their perceptions of diversity, PS & EPS
Gendering The EPS

Critique of the EP models:

- The *liberal* market model is exclusionary
- The *republican* citizenship model – is homogenizing
- The *cosmopolitan* model – is built ’from above’
- Only the *deliberative* model is able empower women as social & political actors
Democratic Diversity in the Public Sphere

*Dimensions in public sphere* (Ferree 2002):

- **Who** should participate, on what occasions?
- **What** should be the form of content of their contribution to the public discourse?
- **How** should the actors communicate with one another?
- **What** are the desired outcome of the process?
Guiding Hypothesis

- **Gender makes a difference for attitudes of opinion makers** on the four different sites.

- **Presence:** Women are marginalised in the EP; but different positions on the four sites.

- **Power:** Women and minorities are both marginalised in the EPS.

- **Discourses:** Gender intersects with diversity with various meanings across Europe.
Research Dimensions

- Where are the women – presence, voice & power/empowerment
- Gendering as a process – framings, arguments & discourse, silencing
- Diversity & pluralism – a focus on intersections of gender and diversity
- Desired outcomes – policies, models & visions and practice?
Research Questions

- To explore and explain the role of women and gender groups in the articulation of the national public sphere(s) & in relation to the four sites – i.e. political parties, social movements, media and think tanks - if and how they interact, cooperate and negotiate with ethnic minority groups.

- To explore and explain the role of gender related concerns in the articulation of the national public sphere(/s) and how they relate to issues of diversity in relation to social and political spaces/sites.

- To explore and explain the role of gender groups in the articulation of the European Public Sphere (EPS), how they cooperate & negotiate with ethnic minority groups.

- To explore and explain the role of gender-related concerns in the articulation of the European Public Sphere and how they relate to issues of diversity, especially to ethno-national concerns.
Methodological Reflections: Challenges & limitations

- Multi-level model – macro-meso & micro
- Multiple approaches to the EPS
- Comparative approach: 16 countries, 200 organisations, 1300 interviews
- Multiple sites: Political parties, social movements/NGOs, think tanks, and media
- Data: Elite interviews, institutional data, media and surveys
- Methods: Content analysis, critical frame analysis and discourse analysis of texts
Preliminary Conclusions

- The dominant picture: gender interacts with other factors & categories, i.e. nationality, pol. families, ethnicity/race
- The EWL is challenged: from minority women’s org. & new (Conservative) women’s organizations
- The dominant picture: a positive perception of women’s SMOs of the link between European integration and gender equality?
Gendering as a Process

- New struggles about the meaning of gender equality & women’s issues at the national level and in the EP?
- Conservative & Socialists in the EP have different values, models & visions of gender
- Majority and minority women’s org. have alliances but may have different priorities
- A Paradox? No common public sphere – yet many org. belong to transnat. networks
Intersectionality

- Dominant national discourses are gendered - some exclude the unequal other
- Incusive counter discourses intersecting gender with ethno-national diversity exist, i.e. in pol. parties & anti-racist org.
- The coupling of gender and ethnicity/race is not a dominant concern in the selected women's organisations
The European Public Sphere

- *Counter discourses* to the EPS: Euro-scepticisms & visions of a social Europe
- *Is the dominant gender discourse in the EP & the EWL is challenged by enlargement?*
- New struggles about the meaning of gender equality & women’s rights
- Intersections of gender and ethnicity /race by women’s org. as rhetoric and practice
Confronting Theory and Research

- **Gender and Diversity**: Respondents articulate a dualism between gender and diversity models.

- **Gendering the EPS**: Alliances between women & minorities cannot be taken for granted; questions common interests based upon marginalisation.

- **Challenge to assumptions**: about a gap between civil society actors and national pol. institutions.

- **Diversity**: Respondents express differences in terms of nationality, pol. families, ethnicity/race.