

# Intersectional Approach in Social Inequalities Research

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Dear Readers,

For over three decades, feminist schools of thought have discussed and developed an intersectional approach and its importance for science, education and practice (e.g. Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Denis 2008; Lombardo, Verloo 2009; Choo, Ferree 2010; Winker, Degele 2011). The aim of this thematic issue is to open discussion on the intersectional approach within Czech feminist critique of social inequalities. This issue is the first-ever thematic issue devoted to intersectionality in the social sciences in the Czech Republic. Although tens of thematic issues on intersectionality have already been published in European and international socio-scientific journals, the intersectional approach is not sufficiently developed yet even in the global feminist thought, particularly on the methodological level and in terms of its possible practical use. The focus of this issue echoes the current developments in intersectional research and debates reflecting, in particular, the developments in the Anglo-American community of feminist scholars. It also seeks to further develop and nurture this discussion through theoretical and empirical studies focusing on the Central European context.

The underlying assumption of the intersectional approach is the notion that there is no single category (race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality or sexuality, etc.) that could explain human experience, structured by differences and the distribution of power, without reference to other categories (e.g. Collins 1993; McCall 2005; Krekula 2007; Walby 2007; Milevska 2011; Yuval-Davis 2012; Collins, Bilge 2016; Hancock 2016; Romero 2018; in the CR Kolářová 2008, among others). Patricia Hill Collins (Collins 1990: 276) speaks of a „matrix of domination“ that refers to different areas of power distribution (structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal). In her work, Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), who is considered to have coined the term intersectionality, focuses on the overlapping categories of discrimination drawing attention to the „intersectional invisibility“ of some groups, particularly racialized groups of women. According to this approach, inequality systems are inseparably



interconnected and (re)produced at different levels, ranging from the structure of society, through institutions, symbols, and individual practices.

The intersectional approach underscores both the importance of integrating and sharing the experience and perspectives of multiple marginalised groups and the importance of understanding different institutions as interconnected in their co-creation of complex inequalities. The intersectional approach addresses the relationship between identity, social context, power relations, the complexity of social inequalities and social justice. With reference to that, we need to work on a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of identity and a more fluid definition of gender, race, sexuality, class, and other disadvantaged categories. The intersectional approach represents a transformation in the production of knowledge and in the use of this new type of knowledge for the purposes of transforming society and achieving social justice (Thornton Dill, Zambrana 2009). In addition to the call for a comprehensive scientific study of inequalities (e.g. Bowleg 2008; Dubrow 2008; Choo, Ferree 2010; Winker, Degele 2011; Anthias 2012; in the CR e.g. Hašková, Křížková, Pospíšilová 2018), the intersectional approach embraces a challenge to link the production of knowledge with public policy in order to achieve social justice (see for example Milevska 2011; Collins 2012; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, Tomlinson 2013; Romero 2018).

The presented issue contains seven articles, three of which are theoretical while four present findings of empirical research. The first research paper *Paradoxes of a Successful Theory: Intersectionality between Criticism and the Reinforcement of Hegemony* by Kateřina Kolářová maps out the development and contemporary criticism of the intersectional theory and its use. What the next three papers have in common is a theme of age and old age. The theoretical article by Jasna Mikić, Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčely and Monika Kalin Golob *Gendered and 'Ageed' Language and Power Inequalities: An Intersectional Approach* puts forward possible directions of the intersectional exploration of inequalities reproduction in terms of gender and age through language. In her article *Sexuality and Ageing – Places of Silence*, Jaroslava Hasmanová Marhánková examines and proposes ways of using the intersectional approach when studying the ageing of LGBT people. The third article that addresses the topic of age and ageing and is also the first research paper in this issue, is Ema Hrešanová and Alena Glajchová's *Elderly and Foreign: Vulnerability and Intersectionality in Healthcare*. These scholars propose a new concept of vulnerability based on their research of the elderly and mothers of women migrants in the Czech health care system. The issue of health is also tackled in another research paper by Alena Křížková, Hana Hašková and Kristýna Pospíšilová titled *Disability, Gender and Education in the Labour Market from an Intersectional Perspective*, combining a quantitative and qualitative intersectional analysis in order to examine the position of women and men in the labour market in terms of health status, attained education and gender. In

their article *Unequal Start? Intersectional Analysis of the Professional Life of Young Vietnamese in the Czech Labour Market*, Lenka Formánková and Marta Lopatková explore the interaction of factors affecting the professional status of university degree holders of Vietnamese origin who were either born in the country or came to the Czech Republic at a very young age. Kateřina Glumbíková, Barbora Gřundělová and Alice Gojová, show through their research *The Intersectionality of Oppression Experienced by Single Mothers in Homeless Shelters* how mutual containment and interaction of factors such as gender, maternity, single parenthood, poor socio-economic situation, ethnicity and homelessness engender different forms of oppression of mothers from asylum homes. This thematic issue also includes Alena Křížková's interview with Mary Romero, the professor at the Arizona State University, who currently chairs the American Sociological Association, in which they speak about the potential of the intersectional approach for studying social inequalities and achieving social justice. Alena Křížková's interview is followed by a review of Mary Romero's book *Introducing Intersectionality* (2018). Another review, closely related to the theme of this issue, is Klauďie Teichmanová's review of *Intersectionality* (2016), a book by Ange-Marie Hancock.

We believe this thematic issue will contribute to the development of the intersectional approach – both in social inequalities research and in the pursuit of tempering inequality and achieving social justice. We wish you a pleasant read providing a lot of inspiration for your work.

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