



Hipatia Press
www.hipatiapress.com



Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://generos.hipatiapress.com>

New Forms of Exploitation: The Synthesis of Mis-Recognition and Mal-Distribution

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger¹,

1) WU, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Date of publication: October 25th, 2013

Edition period: October 2013-February 2014

To cite this article: Hanappi-Egger, E. (2013). New Forms of Exploitation: The Synthesis of Mis-recognition and Mal-distribution. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 2(3), 284-306. doi: 10.4471/generos.2013.30

To link this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.447/generos.2013.30>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) (CC-BY).

New Forms of Exploitation: The Synthesis of Mis- Recognition and Mal- Distribution

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger
*WU, Vienna University of
Economics and Business.*

Abstract

Diversity and inclusion have become major topics in current political and economic thinking. While some practical progress has been made in combating the stigmatization and marginalization of historically discriminated groups, mal-distribution of economic resources persists. In order to devise a conceptual framework which incorporates dimensions of diversity (with respect to social categories) and equality (in terms of economically justifiable distribution of income and wealth), the paper will review the current debate on diversity and its role with respect to exploitation. It will be examined how the economic logic of Western capitalist systems is re-established in diversity studies, and suggestions for (from a feminist point of view) politically more astute economic approaches are proposed.

Keywords: diversity studies, discrimination, mis-recognition, mal-distribution, strategic essentialism, anti-categorical approach

Nuevas Formas de Explotación: La Síntesis del No-Reconocimiento y la Injusta Distribución

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger
*WU, Vienna University of
Economics and Business.*

Resumen

La diversidad y la inclusión han pasado a ser temas centrales en el actual pensamiento político y económico. Mientras algún progreso práctico ha conseguido combatir la estigmatización y la marginalización de grupos históricamente discriminados, la injusta distribución de los recursos económicos persisten. Con la intención de trazar un marco conceptual que incorpore las dimensiones de diversidad (con respeto a las categorías sociales) y la igualdad (en términos de una distribución justificable de salarios y bienes), este artículo revisa los actuales debates sobre diversidad y su papel en relación a la explotación. Se examinará cómo la lógica económica del sistema capitalista occidental se ha restablecido en los estudios de diversidad, y se propondrán sugerencias (desde un punto de vista feminista) para enfoques económicos políticamente más astutos.

Palabras clave: estudios de diversidad, discriminación, no-reconocimiento, injusta distribución, esencialismo estratégico, planteamiento anticategórico.

There is no doubt that scholars of feminist economics have contributed substantially to a better understanding of the logic of capitalist exploitation and the gender biases inherent to mainstream economics (Folbre, 1991; Nelson, 1995; England, 2002; Ferber & Nelson, 2003; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2003; Nelson, 2006; Hanappi-Egger, 2011). Nevertheless, questions have been raised regarding certain feminist approaches which seem to focus directly, or by assumption, on white women while simultaneously neglecting any diversity *among* women with respect to colour, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation and other socially relevant distinctive categories. Furthermore there is also an ongoing self-reflection on the hidden assumptions and unintended impacts of feminism with respect to the positioning of women in society. Eisenstein (2005) e.g. points to the problem that specific feminist streams were contributing to the dissemination of capitalist models: After the Second World War the slowing down of economic growth in the USA (in the face of strong economic growth in Europe and Japan) led to radical political measures and budget cuts. After 1980 expenditures for public services were dramatically reduced, and production processes were outsourced to developing countries. In particular the latter was pushed by utilizing the female work force in the developing countries, offering the women micro-credits (see also Hanappi-Egger, Hermann, & Hofmann, 2010 for a detailed discussion on the role of micro-credits for changes in gender relations). Additionally the service sector was expanding. All these changes were seen as supporting the feminist project of empowerment of women, since women tended to work in the service sector, and income for women in developing countries were seen as promoting their autonomy and power.

Nevertheless as a matter of fact these trends contributed to the spreading of capitalism, the de-industrialization of the industrialized world resulted in a shift of investments from the industry sector to financial markets – the starting point for global strategies of profit making by focusing on short run manipulation in financial markets (compare Hanappi, 2013).

The current economic and political crises demand again a critical reflection on the achievements of the feminist ideas of eliminating gender hierarchies and fostering social and economic justice. With respect to this Elson and Warnecke (2012, p.110) propose three possible ways of bringing

the gender discourse into the economic discourse: 1) gender-specific impact analyses can investigate the consequences of specific economic and political measures for the lives of women and of men. 2) Gender analyses of financial markets can reveal the impacts of the reduction of public expenditures on gendered social spheres (such as the reproduction field) and their repercussion effects. 3) The investigation of hidden gendered orders in politics can identify subtle a-priori assumptions concerning gender relations and their contribution to the maintenance of given power structures (see also [Hanappi-Egger, 2011](#)).

This article can be positioned within the third group of gender discourse and will ask how the current scholarly work on identity constructions (diversity) contributes to the capitalist exploitation logic and its ideological basis of anti-solidarity. Thereby gender is considered as a primary diversity category and thus as a primary ordering element of societies.

There is no doubt that discrimination is based on structural power systems, maintained by institutionalized social injustice and on the symbolic level by norm systems leading to the exclusion of certain groups of people. Diversity studies highlight the marginalization and stigmatization of certain social groups while questioning the status of established norm groups (see also [Taylor, Hines, & Casey, 2011](#)). This awareness-raising is expected to lead to a lowering of discrimination and hinder the reproduction of stereotypes by emphasizing the uniqueness of people and the importance of diversity for economic performance. Discrimination based on the mentioned social categories is seen as counter-productive from an economic perspective. Hence, diversity studies claim to implement empowerment for so far oppressed groups by respecting the diverse background of humans in terms of age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity and disability. Since these social categories are also protected by the European Antidiscrimination guideline, one might believe that equality is achieved or at least successes are made.

And indeed, some remarkable progress has been made: Today there is legal backing for the equal treatment of same-sex partnerships; attention is paid to politically correct wording; and e.g. diversity-sensitive marketing

aims to attract new target groups such as the elderly, homosexuals and individuals with a cultural background different to the ‘norm’.

At the same time the gap between rich and poor is widening dramatically – a disturbing phenomenon which is generally overlooked in diversity studies. It is thus essential that we re-explore the question of mal-distribution. The narrow focus on social categories and its relevance for identity building seems to promote the exploitative power of modern societies by simply ignoring the economic situation of people. This paper will therefore deal with the question of how diversity promotes anti-solidarity and contributes to the capitalist logic, and how this trend can be countered by bringing questions of mal-distribution into the picture once again. Based on the concept of “social groups” of Bourdieu, the article will devise a new conceptual framing of diversity. The paper is structured as follows: First, diversity studies will be presented with respect to its role for the capitalist discriminatory potential from a feminist perspective. In the second section we explore the recognition-distribution dilemma, discussed in the light of new forms of exploitation. The chapter will close with highlighting an anti-categorical approach to foster solidarity and re-distribution.

Diversity studies, discrimination and anti-solidarity

Mainstream economic theories are rather bad at explaining the widening gap between rich and poor, and how this development is interwoven with social identities. Charles and Guryan (2011) have pointed out the severe limitations of the two main approaches in neo-classical economics to the study of labour market discrimination: The *prejudice model* emphasizes the racial biases of human beings, in particular human resource managers, while leaving it up to economists to apply social categories (black and white as racial categories), which are necessarily specified rather ambiguously. The *statistical discrimination model* focuses on the effect of limited information in labour market transactions, and posits that, for example, an expected level of skills is frequently attributed to white and black workers based on racial characteristics. However, neither of these models are sufficient to explain

sources of prejudice, and thus Charles and Guryan conclude: “As all these examples show, despite the difficulty of establishing definitive evidence about whether discrimination exists at all, there are many avenues for creative work in future” (Charles & Guryan, 2011, p. 33).

Other attempts to formally introduce the issue of identity into economics (e.g. by Akerlof & Kranton, 2000) have been heavily criticized for their simplistic assumption of identity building as a strictly psychologically-based individualized feature (see Davis, 2007) and, in so doing, merely contributing to neo-classical economic ideology (see Fine, 2009).

In contrast to the neo-classical approach, Bowles et al. (2009) focus explicitly on the interdependence of social categories (such as race¹) and economic equality. Their work follows a long-standing programme of research aimed at reconciling economic theory with other findings in the social sciences (see Weisskopf, Bowles, & Gordon, 1983).

In particular, Bowles and Gintis (1977) have criticized Marxism for its narrow focus on *class* as the main social category, thereby neglecting other valid forms of categorization. Arguing that social categories such as sex, race, nationality and ethnicity should be recognized in economic theory, Bowles et al. (2009) have proposed a model that emphasizes the link between social segregation and the dynamics of inequality. They point out that the “combined effect of interpersonal spillovers in human capital accumulation and own-group bias in the formation of social networks may be the persistence across generations of group inequalities.”

Baldwin and Johnson (2006) add to the problems of studying discrimination that it is rather difficult to define exactly what and who is meant by “discrimination”. The authors exemplify their critique with the topic of disability: While we might share an understanding of who is meant by the social category of “women”, it is by far more difficult to define “disabled” or “minorities”. Furthermore the meaning of e.g. disabled people is biased in terms of the a-priori assumptions: limitation of capacity is often assigned to disabled people only and refers to a standardized understanding of “productivity”, which is a specific relation of physical and psychological capability and performance without taking the working conditions into consideration. Hence, capability is a rather unspecified but prejudged concept.

What is remarkable in the various approaches to the issue of identity in economics – and in even more radical alternatives – is the unquestioned assumption of the validity of such social categorization, referring in particular to the Social Identity Theory (SIT) of [Tajfel and Turner \(1986\)](#). This basic assumption is also highly influential within the discourse on *diversity*, and thus is certainly in need of critical examination. In fact, we can detect a trend amongst economists away from investigating the material circumstances of living and economic inequality towards the study of psycho-social identity constructions and the role of diversity.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) – often linked to social categorization theory – assumes that human beings tend to discriminate against out-group members who display characteristics which differ from their own. Back in the 1980s a new concept based on SIT was devised in regard to economic performance, namely ‘diversity’ and (in a business context) ‘diversity management’. Arising out of the human rights movement in the USA, which fought for equal opportunities in the labour market and against discrimination in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, affirmative action programmes were introduced to guarantee the ‘positive discrimination’ of minorities. These political achievements were devalued during the conservative economic era of Ronald Reagan. Ignoring the aim of the political and economic empowerment of historically disadvantaged groups, diversity at that time focused on the economic success of firms, and the contribution which *individuals* could make through their diverse social backgrounds. Hence the role of group differences was downplayed and the role of individuals emphasized (see [Kelly & Dobbin, 1998](#)). The notion of diversity (referring to differences between individuals in terms of a variety of social categories such as gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religion, ...) and that of diversity management was to utilize a more diverse workforce to increase productivity (for a general discussion see [Prasad, Mills, Elmes, & Prasad, 1997](#); [Kersten, 2000](#)).

In the meantime the concept of diversity and diversity management has come under attack from many sides: By adopting a disjunctive set of social categories to ‘describe’ human beings, we ignore the fact that many discriminatory practices cannot be assigned to any one of these categories. Instead they are intersectional and overlapping (see also [Crenshaw, 1989](#);

McCall, 2005). Furthermore, the mentioned classification systems only refer to certain aspects of individuality while ignoring others. The questions to be answered here are: How are these aspects chosen? Why do some groups get a social or economic voice, and others not?²

A completely different and wider-ranging critique has come from post-modern scholars, suspicious of the validity of any ‘grand narrative’ (see also Rosenau, 1992). In regard to diversity and social categorization, they argue that identities are fluid and shaped by specific contexts, so that identities are continuously and dynamically created at each moment. Hence they conclude that any ‘difference-oriented’ approach to determining internal group homogeneity ignores the complexity and relativity of individual perceptions of the self and the world, and thus ends up reproducing stigmatization. As a consequence even the naming (understood as ‘labeling’) of groups is decried, as is the attempt to identify any other points of fixation. Distinction is seen as a purely linguistic construction, and therefore disadvantaged groups cannot – and should not – be addressed.

The political implication of this standpoint is clear: The notion of groups dissolves along with the shared and inter-subjective understanding of group identity, so that political and economic intervention to reduce discrimination is rendered pointless (for further discussion of post modernism see also Giddens, 1987; Fraser & Nicholson, 1989; Fraser, 2000).

A particularly strong critique on diversity studies stem from scholars working on classism (see also Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2013; Hanappi-Egger & Ortlieb, forthcoming): Class is simply ignored in diversity studies and thus the main focus on discrimination and exclusion is on social identity building level – on “recognition”, while the level of “distribution” is sorted out (see also Wrench, 2005; Hanappi-Egger & Hanappi, 2011; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Wilson (2000) shows that since the 18th century the meaning of “diversity” and “inclusion” has changed a lot. The strong focus on social identity led to the ignorance of issues of social distribution justice. Hence, the euphemisms at the rhetoric level do not lead to de-facto changes of oppressing and dominating practices (see also Shereen, 2002; Wetterer, 2002; Noon, 2007). Diversity studies do not necessarily question the material injustice – but might lead to more anti-solidarity.

The tendency to split groups in various distinctive sub-groups and to focus on differences rather than on similarities is fostering anti-solidarity and is contributing to the capitalistic logic of exploitation. This phenomenon has been widely discussed with respect to the welfare state. [Banting and Kymlicka \(2006\)](#) argue – based on the theory of group conflicts ([Sherif & Sherif, 1969](#)) - that the competition for scarce resources leads to antagonist group behavior and fosters conflict and anti-solidarity. E.g. the public discourse on multi-cultural co-existence mostly excludes issues of just distribution but stays on the social identity level – the ethnic belonging to. Therefore competition and mistrust of disadvantaged groups are fostered – whilst they also could form pro-redistribution lobbies and fighting together for fair shares (see also [Malik, 2001](#)).

In many other cases similar effects can be observed – the diversity discourse focusses on differences in social categories and by shifting the discussion of “equality” merely to the recognition level people are divided in inner-and outer groups,- competitiveness, anti-solidarity and conflicts are the consequences.

[Sedgwick \(1997\)](#) argues that the concept of diversity and the related euphoric view (“celebrate differences”) is contrary to the idea of special needs, and furthermore only very specific differences are accepted while others are ignored (see also [Wetterer, 2002](#)). Or as [Magala \(2009, p. 30\)](#) describes it: “[...] we realize that ‘diversity management’ has also been turned into a managerialist ideology of the second half of the first decade of the 21st century. [...] This ideological turn also followed growing awareness of diversity’s entanglement with ideologically obscured (but very sensitive) links to inequalities. *Celebrating differences, we are legitimising the inequalities inherent, implicitly included in ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’*. Inequalities, which emerge as the raw energy resource of social dynamics and change (because they give rise to the powerful forces of upward social mobility reinventing and transforming societies), have to be managed and legitimised (so that the sans-culottes or anarchists or hippies or terrorists do not blow everything up). The socially acceptable price for managing and legitimizing them fluctuates as much as the price of a barrel of oil on stock exchanges.”

From a feminist point of view the inner distinction of groups in a milieu of competition is bearing the risk of losing political power – thus this tendency has to be urgently questioned.

There are mainly two streams of reacting to the growing anti-solidarity which will be discussed in the following sections.

Reacting to Diversification and Anti-solidarity: Strategic Essentialism and Anti-categorical Approaches

Strategic Essentialism

Facing the tendency of growing inner distinction and anti-solidarity caused by the focus on “diversity“ and therefore on “differences“ Gayatri Spivak has brought up the concept of “strategic essentialism“. The idea is that in certain situations it is more advantageous to form strategic coalitions at the cost of celebrating the complexity of deconstructive approaches but for the sake of gaining power and being able to push the group’s interests (Spivak, 1995). Thus it is proposed to embrace internally heterogeneous groups under a shared header (such e.g. as “women”, “blacks”) in order to form a critical mass and to have a strong voice. Also Azoulay (1997) emphasizes the importance of strategic essentialism with respect to subtle forms of racism hidden in diversity concepts (see also Sasson-Levy (2013) for discussing “whiteness” of the diversity debate). Thereby strategic essentialism is understood as political strategy accepting in specific situations the commitment of giving up complex cultural identities (see Erel, 2004) and to agree on rather simplistic but socially accepted concepts of “culture” (e.g. being a Muslim). Azoulay (1977) points to the fact that along these simplified social categories exclusion and discrimination take place – but strategic essentialism is understood clearly as a counter concept challenging the biological approach of culture linking specific human characteristics to biological traits. Eide (2010, p. 76) also highlights the strength of strategic essentialism leading to group forming of individuals sharing specific characteristics. This allows minority groups to get influence on the majority and to push their interests. The prize for this is to conform to a standardized

public image of the group under consideration. In particular in the women's movement this form of strategic essentialism has been and still is seen as important feature in the fight for equal rights (see also [Razack, 1998](#)).

Nevertheless strategic essentialism is criticized for reproducing the concept of social categorization on the identity building level and thereby contributing to the hierarchization of social categories. Specific groups get a voice, others don't.

Furthermore stereotypical attributions of the group under consideration are reproduced. [Hajdukowski-Ahmed \(2008\)](#) e.g. illustrates the problem of female asylum seekers: As they are engaged in strategic essentialism, they risk to be disempowered since it "silences narratives of strength and resilience" ([Hajdukowski-Ahmed](#), p. 40) by fostering the stigmatizing identity of being victims.

However, since strategic essentialism ignores differences within the group, in particular with respect to access to resources and welfare, it also promotes the perspective that certain needs are uniquely bound to certain social categories – which might be true with respect to the historically grown inequalities, but definitely has to be updated.

Reacting to Diversification and Anti-solidarity: Anti-categorical Approaches

Bringing "Class" Back into Diversity Studies

[Hanappi-Egger and Hanappi \(2011\)](#) highlight the problematic impact on welfare when a neo-liberal course is followed. Shifting the discussion on factual economic inequality merely to the identity building level leads to strong anti-solidarity dynamics, thereby furthering the exploitation logic of finance capitalism in forms of a 'divide and conquer' ideology. Thus it is argued that the notion of diversity in relation to social categories has to be investigated in more detail in order to elaborate its interplay with the traditional concept of 'working class', as well as that of exploitation. [Nancy Fraser \(1995\)](#) has made an important contribution to the discussion of social

differentiation by outlining the distinction between the injustice of distribution and the injustice of recognition: “Here, then, is a difficult dilemma. I shall henceforth call it the redistribution–recognition dilemma. People who are subject to both cultural injustice and economic injustice need both recognition and redistribution. They need both to claim and to deny their specificity. How, if at all, is this possible?” (Fraser, 1995, p. 77) (for further discussion see also Fraser, 2000; Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

To overcome the specious duality of *either* diversity *or* economic equality, as well as to criticize neo-liberalistic notions of individualism, it is necessary to review the concept of *exploitation*. To this end Hanappi and Hanappi-Egger (2013) have proposed an updated concept of working class based on the position in the production process (i.e. power) while additionally taking account of the living circumstances expressed by indices such as income, education, consumption and leisure time. The authors point out that popular slogans such as “we all are middle class now” as well as negative campaigns against working class people (see also Owen, 2011; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2012) serve to produce and reproduce a systematic devaluation of working class consciousness. This makes the shift to the level of recognition and identity easy while at the same time creating a situation of competition and anti-solidarity between different social groups. In other words, in order to avoid anti-solidarity and competition, the narrow focus on social categories and recognition has to be substituted by an *anti-categorical approach*.

Solving the Recognition-Distribution Problem

Pierre Bourdieu (1990) emphasizes the need to investigate the regulating principles of social spaces. In his approach this principle of differentiation is the structure of the distribution of power, or the distribution of economic capital (i.e. income, wealth and material resources), cultural capital (i.e. skills, knowledge, education), social capital (number and power of people in one’s social network) and symbolic capital. As the involved actors are rivals who either contribute to the maintenance of the status quo or act to change the field, there is always a certain potential for change. Hence any group mobilized by the interests of their members can vote for change, particularly if the members of the group hold a similar position in the social field. This

means that ‘groups’ are not merely specified by social identities, but by their similar stock of various capitals (see also Bourdieu, 1985). In Bourdieu’s social theory, groups are merely a way of artificially bracketing together individuals of similar position in the social field, who can then be mobilized for change – in our case for less stigmatization and marginalization (i.e. greater recognition) and for economic equality (i.e. fairer economic distribution). To address these groups defined by similar positions (Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2013 call them the ‘new revolutionary class’) an anti-categorical approach is proposed. This means that as a first order distinction the distribution level is made and as a next step the recognition level in terms of social categories is investigated. Table 1 sketches the differences:

Table 1.
Recognition-distribution combinations

	Categorical Approach	Anti-categorical Approach
<i>First order distinction</i>	Recognition: Social categories (terms such as ‘women’)	Distribution: living contexts (education, income, ...)
<i>Second order distinction</i>	Distribution: living contexts (education, income, ...)	Recognition: Social categories (e.g. ‘women’)
<i>Result</i>	Exclusion along ‘non-term’	Inclusion

Source: own presentation

Let us demonstrate the concept by giving an example: The current economic crisis has forced severe budgetary cuts of social transfer programs in countries all over the world. Impact analyses to investigate which groups are affected by these policies can approach the topic from two perspectives: Following the categorical concept we would ask: Who is most disadvantaged? To which most likely the answer would be: women – more specifically women who are single mothers, jobless and with low-level

education. The first order distinction would therefore exclude, in this case, men in similar living contexts, and thus foster competition and anti-solidarity. If the ‘distribution’ level is taken as the first order distinction, the question is: Which living contexts are most disadvantaged? Here the answer would be: unemployed singles with low educational levels and who have caring responsibilities. This includes, for example, women as well as men with similar ‘positions’ in the social space and consequently solidarity and coalition-building would thereby be promoted, even if the analysis of the recognition level shows that women are more likely to be exposed to risk of poverty than men. This means that discrimination based on certain social categories (such as on gender) is made visible in the second step – namely after identifying the positioning of disadvantaged groups.

Clearly the anti-categorical approach opens up a range of further questions, such as how social justice is defined, how new ‘class consciousness’ can be fostered and how political movements can evolve. Therefore, this concept is a promising approach to help combat subtle new forms of exploitation.

Conclusion: Arguing for anti-categorical approaches

The paper is strongly arguing that the growing interest in diversity leads to a tendency focusing on differences rather than similarities of people. Hence, individualization is fostered, which under the pressure of scarce resources leads to competition and anti-solidarity. Furthermore diversity studies usually focus on the recognition level – meaning that specific social categories on the identity building level are addressed while the economic back up of people is ignored. In other words, class is left out. Thus, the distribution level, economic distribution and fair shares of welfare are not on the agenda of diversity studies (see [Hanappi-Egger & Ortlieb, forthcoming](#) for an overview). On the other side, scholarly work on classes respectively classism often sticks to the traditional concept of working class people without taking the identity building level (social categories) into considerations. This leads to a rather unspecified generalization (“we all are middle class”) – or what [Skeggs \(1997\)](#) labels as a trend of

“disidentification” stemming from a negative connotation of belonging to the working class (see also [Anthias, 2013](#)).

Facing the world-wide crises and the growing divide between rich and poor, it is - from a feminist point of view - urgently necessary to critically reflect on the trend of diversification and difference-oriented approaches on the social identity level and their impact on solidarity and the promotion of further exploitation in capitalism. As discussed in the paper, strategic essentialism might be one answer to the proceeding fragmentation of disadvantaged groups, such as women. Subordinating inner distinctions for the sake of getting a powerful voice and being a critical mass might be in some context an advisable reaction to political streams trying to play a group off against another. However, this article argues strongly for an alternative approach, the anti-categorical view: As a first order distinction not the social identity category but the living contexts in terms of Bourdieu’s capitals are considered as being most relevant. This allows for addressing people in similar disadvantaged situations, i.e. inclusion of people with similar positioning in societies – in other words, the distribution level is analyzed in a first step. In cases, where more specific actions are necessary, of course as a next step the social composition of this group has to be studied.

Hence, the first pro-argument is that the anti-categorical approach is based on inclusion rather than exclusion of those who do not share the same social category.

Another argument for the anti-categorical perspective is the fact that socio-demographics have changed and consequently it seems not to be adequate anymore, to stick strictly to a view that specific needs always come along with specific social identity categories. E.g. although statistically far from being balanced, but incidentally existing already we do have higher educational levels of women and consequently female breadwinners, just as we observe already single father households.

This requires an approach focusing less on sex than on gender. Hence, gender as socially constructed order system results in gendered spheres (such as the distinction between production and reproduction field and its hierarchization). Very often female coded living contexts, gendered spheres, are disadvantaged – and consequently ALL people characterized by those living circumstances are disadvantaged, no matter if they are women, men or

transgender people. The presented anti-categorical approach does not neglect the recognition level, - thus it sticks to the idea of intersectionality as defined by Winker and Degele (2011, p. 54): “as a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis”. But as argued in this article, the first labeling in the political debate on mal-distribution should start from the materially weakest group – and not from social identity categorization.

Since the article is a conceptual paper, presenting basic ideas and approaches to the question how to react to the political tendency of fragmentation and discrimination, it of course opens up a new space for further discussions. There is demand for further research concerning the formation of the disadvantaged groups, their shared group identity and consciousness and how they can be activated for fighting against mal-distribution. Furthermore this research clearly has to be linked to the topic of social categorization in terms of gender, sexuality, race, disability and age.

Acknowledgement

Early versions of this paper were presented at the European Feminist Research Conference (2012, Budapest) and at the AEA/IAFFE Conference (2013, San Diego). The author thanks the participants of the conference streams as well as the anonymous reviewers of the journal for helpful feedback.

Notes

¹ Note that the social category “race” is avoided in German due to negative associations from its use in the Nazi era. Instead ethnicity/skin colour is adopted, while of course being aware of the impossibility of assigning any skills or aptitudes to these biological traits.

²Hanappi-Egger and Ukur (2011) have looked at diversity in Kenya, showing the irrelevance of certain social categories such as sexual orientation, a topic which is strictly taboo. On the other hand, the notion of “tribes” – irrelevant in “First World” societies – is highly influential in Kenyan social life.

References

- Akerlof, G., & Kranton, R. (2000). Economics and Identity. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115(3), 715-753. doi: [10.1162/003355300554881](https://doi.org/10.1162/003355300554881)
- Anthias, F. (2013). Hierarchies of social location, class and intersectionality: Towards a translocational frame. *International Sociology*, 28(1), 121-138. doi: [10.1177/0268580912463155](https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580912463155)
- Azoulay, K. G. (1997). Experience, empathy and strategic essentialism. *Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 89-110.
- Baldwin, M. L., & Johnson, W. G. (2006). A critical review of studies of discrimination against workers with disabilities. In W. M. Rodgers III (Ed.), *Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination* (pp. 119-160). Cheltenham, UK: Edward-Elgar Publishing.
- Banting, K., & Kymlicka, W. (2006). Multiculturalism and the welfare state: Setting the context (Introduction). In K. Banting & W. Kymlicka (Eds.), *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies* (pp. 1-45). Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985). The social space and the genesis of groups. *Social Science Information*, 24(2), 195-220. doi: [10.1177/053901885024002001](https://doi.org/10.1177/053901885024002001)
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1977). The Marxian theory of value and heterogeneous labour: a critique and a reformulation. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1(2), 173-192.

- Bowles, S., Lury, G., & Sethi, R. (2009). *Group Inequality* (Economic Working Paper of the Institute of Advanced Studies). Princeton. Retrieved from <http://www.sss.ias.edu/publications/economicworking>.
- Charles, K., & Guryan J. (2011). *Studying discrimination: fundamental challenges and recent progress* (Working Paper 17156, National Bureau of Economic Research). Cambridge, MA.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *HeinOnline, University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139-168.
- Davis, J. (2007). Akerlof and Kranton on identity in economics: inverting the analysis. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31(3), 349-362. doi: [10.1093/cje/bel019](https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/bel019)
- Eide, E. (2010). Strategic essentialism and ethnification. *Nordicom Review*, 31(2), 63-78.
- Eisenstein, H. (2005). A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Corporate Globalization. *Science & Society*, 69(3), 487-518. doi: [10.1521/isis.69.3.487.66520](https://doi.org/10.1521/isis.69.3.487.66520)
- Elson, D., & Warnecke, T. (2012). IMF Policies and Gender Orders. In B. Young, I. Bakker & D. Elson (Eds.), *Questioning financial governance from a feminist perspective* (pp. 110-131). London/New York: Routledge.
- England, P. (2002). The Separative Self: Androcentric Bias in Neoclassical - Assumptions. In N. W. Biggart (Ed.), *Readings in Economic Sociology* (pp. 154-167). Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Erel, U. (2004). Paradigmen Kultureller Differenz und Hybriditaet. In M. Sökefeld (Ed.), *Jenseits des Paradigmas kultureller Differenz: Neue*

Perspektiven auf Einwanderer aus der Türkei. Kultur und soziale Praxis (pp. 35-51). Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.

Ferber, M., & Nelson, J. (2003). *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.

Fine, B. (2009). The economics of identity and the identity of economics? *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 33(2), 175-191. doi: [10.1093/cje/ben036](https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/ben036)

Folbre, N. (1991). The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Economic Thought. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 16(3), 463-484.

Fraser, N. (1995). From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age. *New Left Review*, 212, 68-93.

Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3(May/June), 107-120.

Fraser, N., & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or recognition?: a political-philosophical exchange*. London, New York: Verso.

Fraser, N., & Nicholson, L. (1989). Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism. *Social Text* (21), *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism*, 83-104.

Giddens, A. (1987). Structuralism, post-structuralism and the production of culture. In A. Giddens (Ed.), *Social theory and modern sociology* (pp. 73-108). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M. (2008). A dialogical approach to identity: implications for refugee women. In M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, N. Khanlou & H. Moussa (Eds.), *Not born a refugee woman: contesting identities, rethinking practices* (pp. 28-54). New York: Berghahn.

- Hanappi, H. (2013). *Can Europe survive?* (Papers in Evolutionary Political Economics, 9 (2012). Retrieved from www.econ.tuwien.ac.at/hanappi/publications.html.
- Hanappi, H., & Hanappi-Egger, E. (2003). Elements of an I-O-based Framework for Marxian, Feminist and World-System Approaches. In G. Kohler & E. J. Chaves (Eds.), *Globalization: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 315-334). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Hanappi, G., & Hanappi-Egger, E. (2012). Middle Class or in the Middle of a Class? *AHE-Conference "Political Economy and the Outlook for Capitalism*, Paris, France, 5.-7. July, 2012.
- Hanappi, G., & Hanappi-Egger, E. (2013). Gramsci meets Veblen: On the search for a new revolutionary class. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 47(2), 375-381. doi: 10.2753/JEI0021-3624470210
- Hanappi-Egger, E. (2011). *The Triple M of Organizations: Man, Management and Myth*. Vienna, New York: Springer.
- Hanappi-Egger, E., & Hanappi, H. (2011). Exploitation re-visited: New forms, same ideologies? *Manuscript, AHEconference*, Nottingham, Great Britain, 6.-9. July, 2011.
- Hanappi-Egger, E., & Ortlieb, R. (2014). Age, ethnicity and class in organizations. *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity Studies in Organization and Management*, forthcoming.
- Hanappi-Egger, E., & Ukur, G. (2011). Challenging Diversity Management: on the meaning of cultural context: the Case of Kenya. *Proceeding of the 7th Critical Management Studies Conference*, Naples, Italy, 11.-13. July, 2011.

- Hanappi-Egger, E., Hermann, A., & Hofmann, R. (2010). Mikrokredite für Frauen: Instrument zur Akkumulation von symbolischem Kapital?! Empowermentmaßnahmen als Basis für genderspezifischen sozialen Wandel am Beispiel des Mikrokreditsektors in Mittelägypten. *Gender - Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft*, 2(3), 77-91.
- Kelly, E., & Dobbin, F. (1998). How Affirmative Action Became Diversity Management. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 4(7), 960-984. doi: [10.1177/0002764298041007008](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764298041007008)
- Kersten, A. (2000). Diversity management. Dialogue, dialectics and diversion. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(3), 235-248. doi: [10.1108/09534810010330887](https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810010330887)
- Magala, S. J. (2009). Diversity, Darwin and democracy. *European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management*, 1(1), 28-33. doi: [10.1504/EJCCM.2009.026731](https://doi.org/10.1504/EJCCM.2009.026731)
- Malik, S. (2001). *Representing Black Britain: Black and Asian images on television*. London: Sage.
- McCall, L. (2005). The Complexity of Intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), 1771-1800. doi: [10.1086/426800](https://doi.org/10.1086/426800)
- Nelson, J. (1995). Feminism and Economics. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 9(2), 131-148.
- Nelson, J. A. (2006). Can We Talk? Feminist Economists in Dialogue with Social Theorists. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, 31(4), 1051-1074. doi: [10.1086/500599](https://doi.org/10.1086/500599)
- Noon, Mike. (2007). The Fatal Flaws of Diversity and the Business Case for Ethnic Minorities. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(4), 773-784. doi: [10.1177/0950017007082886](https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017007082886)

- Owen, J. (2011). *Chavs. The demonization of the working class*. London, New York: Verso.
- Prasad, P., Mills, A., Elmes, M., & Prasad, A. (1997). *Managing the Organizational Melting Pot: Dilemmas of Workplace Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Razack, S. (1998). *Looking white people in the eye: gender, race and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Rosenau, P. M. (1992). *Post-modernism and social sciences: Insights, inroads, and intrusions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sasson-Levy, O. (2013). A Different Kind of Whiteness: Marking and Unmarking of Social Boundaries in the Construction of Hegemonic Ethnicity. *Sociological Forum*, 28(1), 27-50. doi: DOI: [10.1111/socf.12001](https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12001)
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1997). Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, you're so paranoid, you probably think this Introduction is about you. In E. K. Sedgwick (Ed.), *Novel Gazing: queer readings in fictions* (pp. 1-37). London, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shereen, B. (2002). 'Valuing diversity': a cliché for the 21st century?. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6(4), 309-323. doi: [10.1080/13603110210145949](https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110210145949)
- Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1969). *Social psychology*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of Class and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Spivak, G. (1995). Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography. In D. Landry & G. MacLean (Eds.), *The Spivak Reader* (pp. 203-235). New York: Routledge.

- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1986). The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Taylor, Y., Hines, S., & Casey, M. E. (Eds.) (2011). *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality* (Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences), London: Palgrave.
- Weisskopf, T., Bowles, S., & Gordon, D. (1983). Hearts and Minds: A Social Model of US Productivity Growth. *Brooking Papers on Economic Activity*, 2, 381-441.
- Wetterer, A. (2002). Strategien rhetorischer Modernisierung. *Zeitschrift für Frauenforschung und Geschlechterstudien*, 20(3), 129-148.
- Wilson, E. (2000). Inclusion, exclusion and ambiguity – The role of organisational culture. *Personnel Review*, 29(3), 274-303. doi: [10.1108/00483480010324652](https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480010324652)
- Winker G., & Degele N. (2011). Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 18(1), 51-66. doi: [10.1177/1350506810386084](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506810386084)
- Wrench, J. (2005). Diversity management can be bad for you. *Race Class*, 46(3), 73-84. doi: [10.1177/0306396805050019](https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805050019)
- Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Unpacking Diversity, Grasping Inequality: Rethinking Difference Through Critical Perspectives. *Organization*, 17(1), 9-29. doi: [10.1177/1350508409350344](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409350344)

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger Professor at the Department of Management at WU, Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Contact Address: WU Vienna, Institute for Gender and Diversity in Organizations, Welthandelsplatz 1/D2, 1020, Vienna, Austria.
edeltraud.hanappi-egger@wu.ac.at