

## **The intersections of class, gender, sexuality and ‘race’: the political economy of gendered violence**

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### **Abstract**

This article focuses on rethinking the intersectional approach towards a greater framing within the new political economy, and particularly concerns itself with the ways such an approach can contribute to theorising various manifestations of gendered violence. The article examines a range of different forms of violence, and reflects on how an intersectional framing can inform our understanding better. Some of the intersectional dimensions to domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, honour based crimes and trafficking are discussed.

Keywords: Intersectionality, Political Economy, Gender, Violence

### **Introduction**

The ‘cultural turn’ in sociology (as well as queer theory) has resulted in gender and sexuality being re-evaluated, as categories in their own right as well as in terms of their inter-relations (Nicholson 1994; Sullivan 2003, Richardson 2007). Indeed, the cultural turn has meant a move away from political economy. What I believe has characterised most contemporary approaches to gender and sexuality is that the link to

political economy, so prominent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave feminist analysis and in the debates on race, ethnicity and class of the 1970s and 1980s has receded. This has been also partially a result of some of the perceived failures of political economy. Whilst pointing to material structures, particularly capitalism and its social relations, it was seen as unable to fully attend to complexities relating to diverse fields of practice involving identifications and embodiment.

The binary of culture and the economy implied in the move away from political economy and towards the ‘cultural turn’ has been challenged by what can be referred to as the ‘new political economy’ that treats the economy as culturally embedded. One of the implications of moving beyond the binary of culture and the economy, I believe, is that it becomes difficult to sustain the view that class processes are primarily economic and that gender, sexuality and ethnicity (as well as other social relations) are cultural or symbolic forms which are determined by class forces (as is found in the old debates on the connections between gender and class and race and class). Rather all these categories operate in different ways to produce the material-cultural nexus of social relations. This also relates to the insights provided by intersectionality frameworks regarding how different modes of inequality and division intersect or interlock, creating complex articulations which are patterned but not fixed or given. People themselves are not fixed into given hierarchical places but will occupy them at specific conjunctures and via the operation of how they intersect, in contradictory as well as mutually reinforcing ways (see Anthias 2013a and b).

Whilst recognising the importance of other approaches to our understanding of gender and sexuality and the complexity of the issues involved, this article focuses on the

intersectional approach, giving it a framing within the new political economy. Such an approach further dismantles the view that social processes are discrete and that class, gender, race and other social categories can be understood without looking at how they inter-relate. The article is particularly concerned with the ways such an approach can contribute to theorising various manifestations of gendered violence. I will discuss a transnationally based intersectional framework as a way of addressing some of the issues faced by women in relation to gendered violence. I will then look at a range of different forms of violence, and reflect on how such a perspective can inform our understanding better. These diverse forms of violence include rape, domestic violence, so-called honour killings, trafficking, forced marriages, genital mutilation, stalking and sexual harassment at work and in the public sphere. I will briefly examine some of the intersectional dimensions to domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, and also refer to honour based crimes and trafficking in order to incorporate more transcultural phenomena.

### **The new political economy, gender and sexuality**

Gender and sexuality are terms that are used in a variety of different ways but often denote binary and static forms of identity. The naturalisation of gender to sex difference can be found in social constructionist arguments (such as socialisation models) or patriarchal models found in radical or materialist feminism that see gender as a social manifestation whose limits are given by sex difference. There has been a tendency (at the risk of over-simplifying quite complex arguments) to see gender as a product of the social organisation of sexuality and to regard sexuality as expressive of gender with differential and varied forms of causality implied. For example for MacKinnon (1982) it is sexuality that determines gender through the social priority

given in power relations to heteronormativity which is also then the root of gendered inequalities.

A range of approaches have challenged the sex/gender dichotomy. Whilst Butler (1993) overcame the binary formulation of sex and gender by arguing that sex difference itself is constructed and performed, others (e.g. Kraus and Williams 2000) argue that the distinction between *sex* and *gender*, can be overcome through the use of the concept of habitus in Bourdieu which allows ‘*doing gender*’ as both the action of the individual and as a socially prestructured practice: the “gendered and gendering habitus”. In his essay on male domination, Bourdieu (1990, p.11), draws attention to symbolic violence, which “constitutes the essential aspect of male domination”

One of the strengths of what has been characterised as the new political economy is that it treats the economy itself as socially and culturally embedded. Economic processes and mechanisms, therefore, are treated not as explanations in their own right, but as requiring an understanding of their social and political conditions of existence (e.g. Gamble 1988; Hay 1999). This suggests that economic forces and processes cannot be situated outside their embeddedness within symbolic, cultural and meaning structures in modern societies and across societies in the transnational field.

However, this does not mean that the economic is divested of its own dynamics relating to the production and reproduction of material life, but rather it is suggested that it cannot be identified with everything that is material. In addition, the realms of the material and the symbolic are far too intertwined to be able to separate redistribution (material-economic) and recognition (symbolic-status), as Nancy Fraser

has done (Fraser 2007). Moreover, I understand the material as comprising social resources of various types: these include not only cultural and social capitals as in Bourdieu's work but also relations of gender, sexuality and ethnicity that have outcomes on people's social location in a hierarchically structured world. These include gendered, sexualised and racialised meanings and practices, cultural and social capitals as well as other categorical formations. Material practices incorporate a range of social relations (including gender, sexuality and heteronormativity), and cannot be restricted to the economic (Anthias 2001b). Such a view, therefore treats materiality in terms of allocation and struggle over resources of different types which operate to place people in a hierarchical set of relations. The categories of gender, race and class are therefore concomitantly material and symbolic/cultural dimensions. Constructions of race difference and othering as well as those of gender and sexuality operate to naturalise social relations and to build differential access to material resources (Anthias 1998).

Gender relations can be tied to ethnic and national projects and exclusions as well as those of class (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989). However, they are central in other ways in the global arena. If we examine, for example, the social location/position of gendered and racialised migrants within a transnationally understood framing, sex trafficking and women's labour in the care sector are important facets of the global reach of this new political economy.

Of course it is important to locate discussions of categories within actual real place frames and contexts. The cultural routinisation of homosexuality, for example, found within some modern neo-liberal states may denote a different relation between gender

and sexuality than that given by certain strands of queer theory that identify gendered inequalities and its operations of power as stemming from heteronormativity. As Richardson (2007, p.468) has argued

In the UK and parts of Europe, for instance, one might want to argue that a changed relationship between gender and homosexuality *is* evident at the institutional level through the operation of a neo-liberal social policy agenda that extends certain rights to (some) lesbians and gay men and deploys ‘sameness’ with heterosexuals as a central aspect of its argument.

This neo-liberal agenda has been concerned to normalise (e.g through civil partnerships) and potentially also to destabilise the radical potential identified with non-heterosexual relations. This may also be the case in terms of co-optation through new social movements that are not so much concerned with transforming social institutions and structures but with being included within them on equal terms, stressing sameness as the basis for equality.

Moreover, as Penny Griffin (2007) has argued:

“Neo-liberal discourse (re)produces meaning through assumptions of economic growth and stability, financial transactions and human behaviour that are intrinsically gendered while presented as universal and neutral” (p. 220)

Similar arguments are found in discussions of ethnicity and race with the growth of neo-liberal diversity management strategies that treat diversity of all kinds (but particularly ethnic and racial diversity) as a competence, thereby individualising it and normalising it (for a discussion see Anthias 2012). Lentin and Titley (2008, p.13) argue that

diversity has become a ubiquitous and widely adopted notion and framework not because it synthesises and furthers an array of political projects and critiques, but because it provides a gently unifying, cost-free form of political commitment attuned to the mediated, consumer logics of contemporary societies.

Diversity politics aim at mainstreaming, but it is unclear as to what counts as diversity and what its limits are. Such politics also fail to acknowledge the hierarchy and power structures within societies which act to define the parameters of difference and identity and their social valuation and effects.

### **Intersectionality**

The concern with the links between different forms of identity and hierarchy of course is not new, and there has been a long-standing interest, both theoretical and political, in exploring the connections in social relations between different forms of subordination and exploitation. This is found, for example, in work such as that of Lenski (1966) on social stratification, Lerner (1973) on black women in America, and the work of feminists working within a political economy approach relating gender to class (e.g. Gardner 1975), as well as race theorists exploring the connections between race and class (e.g. Myrdal 1962; Miles 1989).

Although recognising that interconnections between social divisions existed without this being named as ‘intersectionality’, its entry into our political and theoretical vocabulary does mark a significant development if only because it acts to further destabilise fixed and essentialising understandings of the operation of social categories of difference and identity, and provides a further challenge to traditional stratification theories.

The intersectionality metaphor is one which is being used in a number of works on gender and sexuality, for example in the work of Stevi Jackson (2006; 2011). Other writers such as Richardson (2007) use it in ways which relate not to the mutual

constitution of categories denoted by such a framing but in terms of a 'tangled web' of relations which will differ over time and place. There cannot of course be a singular definition of an intersectionality framework as there is a great deal of diversity in the way it is theorised and applied. Put simply, intersectionality argues that it is important to look at the way in which different social divisions inter-relate in terms of the production of social relations and in terms of peoples lives. Gender is seen as inflected by race and race inflected by gender i.e. they can be seen as mutually constitutive in terms of experience and practice. Intersectional theorists highlight divisions amongst 'women' by pointing towards processes of racialisation and class (although there is a tendency to use the term poverty instead), and the disadvantages that follow. They have qualified the gender agenda to achieve a more complex understanding of gendered forms of disadvantage.

Intersectionality has a long history but is a more recent 'fast travelling concept' (Knapp 2005), being a feminist development stemming from debates within black feminism. Triple oppression, interconnections, interplay, interlocking systems of oppression, fractured identities, overlapping systems, simultaneous oppressions, are all terms that have been used to signify the processes highlighted. Crenshaw (1994) has been attributed the coinage of the term intersectionality (despite its provenance lying much earlier in the writings of black feminists in the 1980s in particular (e.g see hooks 1981).

There are a number of different ways of theorising intersectionality. Indeed it may be that it proposes a particular analytical sensitivity and is not dependent as such on a particular theoretical framing (e.g hermeneutic or post structuralist and so on). I can only



briefly note some of the ways in which it has been conceived here. The idea that gender, race and class are distinctive systems of subordination with their own range of specific social relations (Williams 1989; Weber 2001) is found in a range of work (see also Walby 2007 for the application of complexity theory). On the other hand gender, race and class may be treated as different ideological (e.g. Collins 1990) or discursive practices that emerge in the process of power production and enablement (as would be suggested in the work of Foucault 1972). This is a particularly important approach which treats social divisions as historically contingent, as Foucault's work suggests. A particularly influential account of intersectionality in the United States (for example around human rights) is that categories of discrimination overlap and individuals suffer exclusions on the basis of race and gender, or any other combination (Crenshaw 1994). Clearly important is that this approach leads to an interest in the production of data or policy research and practice that recognizes the specificity of the problems of such intersectional identities (e.g. racialised women). A position that I have developed with Nira Yuval Davis (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992) is that social divisions refer to social ontologies around different material processes in social life, all linked to sociality and to the social organisation of sexuality, production and collective bonds (for further developments see Anthias 1998; 2001a; 2001b; 2008; 2009; 2012; 2013 a and b; Yuval Davis 2006).

Not only does an intersectional framing at times look at processes of disadvantage emanating from the conjuncture between two or more different categorisations or identities such as those combining race and gender or race, class and poverty/unemployment/ exclusion (e.g. black poor mothers or black unemployed,

criminalised men) but it also recognises the syncretic character of social divisions which contextualises them and thereby refuses their essentialisation.

Whilst intersectionality is not a theory with dedicated concepts (maybe this is not what it should be in any case), it could be argued that its contribution lies in constructing newer and more hybrid forms of social disadvantage. In addition, it acts as a sensitising concept for addressing the complexity of social relations (see Davis 2008 for the idea that it is a buzz word and Anthias 1998 for the view that it is an heuristic device).

The construction of new categories of disadvantage is linked to the socio-legal framework within which Crenshaw's (1994) important contribution is embedded within. This looks at processes of disadvantage emanating from the conjuncture between two or more different categorisations or identities, such as those combining race and gender or race, class and poverty/unemployment/ exclusion (e.g. Black poor mothers or Black unemployed, criminalised men). The intersections are therefore formulated in terms of the different positions people hold in relation to gender, race and class and other social categories. According to this approach, the unity of two minority traits constitutes in fact a distinct single-minority entity giving rise to unique forms of position and disadvantage that can neither be accounted for by race or gender or adding the one to the other. In terms of discrimination it focuses on processes leading to experience of not only multiple but also particular distinct forms of inequalities. This has become particularly significant in recent years given the growing concern to address multiple strands of inequality within European equality practices (Verloo 2006).

The idea of intersecting groups raises the issue of how many should be taken into account. Potentially there could be an infinite number of crosscutting categories i.e. more and more 'hybrid' groups. Of course one could argue that the relevance of the category is a product of its social saliency but there may be equally important categories which are invisible in social practice, as women or non black minorities such as the Roma have been. The political salience of a category doesn't always exhaust its social saliency or the importance of forms of oppression, whether experienced and unseen.

Intersectionality uses a powerful metaphor which may be misleading as it suggests that what takes place is similar to being at an intersection. For example, the sources of the inequalities experienced by people at the intersection might not be a product of the intersection at all but may be manifested in that space e.g. something happens at the junction which is not necessarily a product of the different roads that lead to it. As an example the exploitation faced by migrant racialised women does not derive only from the links between gender, race and class but also from legal frameworks that make some of these women illegal and subject to greater exploitation, or political frameworks that exclude such women from the social rights of citizenship. Nor can the notion explain the reproduction of discrimination/subordination. Broader power relations within social processes and practices need to be considered for this. Such power relations can be treated as both emergent and institutionalized.

One element that is relevant for exploring political economy is that whilst class is denoted as a central social division, its analysis is under-explored. One reason for this may be that intersectionality approaches have generally been more concerned with

making the invisible visible (race and gender) and giving a voice to the voiceless. This is largely because the impetus in these debates is found in redressing ethnic and gender disadvantage and in the importance of delineating the different patterns this takes in terms of crosscutting delimited groups (for example black single mothers of working class origin). The relative under-exploration of class however does not mean that an intersectional framing cannot be used as a building block for understanding social hierarchy and stratification more broadly (see Anthias 2013a)<sup>1</sup>.

Despite highly relevant reflections, both critical and otherwise, on the underdevelopments, both theoretically and methodologically, of this range of approaches (e.g. see Knapp 2005; Davis 2008; Anthias 2013a and b), they provide an important corrective to essentialising identity constructs that homogenize social categories hailed by various dimensions of social life (e.g. ethnic subjects) and which do not attend to internal differentiations. An intersectional lens has been able to make visible particularly disadvantaged categories such as, for example, unemployed black working class women. Indeed it could be argued that it has made visible the highly differentiated nature of disadvantage as well as having a more general sociological application.

Whatever intersectional framing we prefer, however, the question of intersections raises fundamental problems relating to both the concrete and the analytical relations between forms of social hierarchy and division. There is a need also to disentangle the notions of social position (concrete position vis a vis a range of social resources such as economic,

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<sup>1</sup> I do not have space to elaborate on the issues involved here.

cultural and political) and social positioning (how we articulate, understand and interact with these positions e.g. contesting, challenging, defining) which relates to the structural and the identificational levels, and their possible connections.

In focusing on social divisions, as boundaries, hierarchies and ontological spaces (see Anthias 1998 in particular), and using the notion of translocational positionality (2002; 2008; 2009; 2013a), I have tried to work towards a complex recognition of hierarchical relations which has a wider theoretical resonance in terms of social stratification. A *translocational* lens is a tool for analysing positions and outcomes produced through the intersections of different social structures and processes, including transnational ones, giving importance to the broader social context and to temporality.

In this framework, there is a focus on *social locations*, rather than a focus on *groups*. Our 'location' is embedded in relations of hierarchy within a multiplicity of specific situational and conjunctural spheres. Therefore the lens is turned towards the broader landscape of power which is productive of social divisions. This recognizes the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting locales. Within this framework, difference and inequality are conceptualized as a set of processes (therefore there is a need to attend to historicity), and not possessive characteristics of individuals. A temporal and contextual analysis shifts attention away from fixities of social position (usually underpinned by assumptions about the primacy of the nation-state boundary), and enables a more *transnational* as well as more *local-based* lens. The idea of 'translocation' thereby treats lives as being located across multiple but also fractured and inter-related social spaces of different types.

There are multiple and uneven social patterns of domination and subordination which may produce *contradictory* locations (Wright 1985; Anthias 2013a and b), as in the case of racialised men or dominant women who inhabit a different location in terms of the parameters of race and gender. A person might be in a position of dominance and subordination simultaneously on the one hand or at different times or spaces on the other. A man may be subordinated in class terms, but is positioned advantageously in relation to his female partner. A person may be positioned higher in one social place than another e.g. migrants returning to their homelands may achieve class benefits as they display relative wealth to poorer villagers. A migrant woman may be subordinated in 'race' terms, but has a degree which gives her good life chances in some contexts. On visits to her country of origin, she may acquire higher social status through her relative economic success (see also Pukayastha 2010), despite being subordinated in the country of migration, thereby giving her a contradictory social location transnationally.

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In order to retain a focus on gender, sexuality and political economy in the following sections I will look at how intersectional approaches problematise and push further our understandings of different forms of gendered violence. I will start with some instances of forms of violence that pertain to all categories of women such as rape and domestic violence pointing to how an intersectional framework that pays attention to issues of class, ethnicity and racialisation (amongst others) can provide insights into the complex dynamics involved. I will then move to the issues of so-called honour killings and trafficking to consider the more trans-ethnic and transnational dimensions of gendered violence.

## **Rape and sexual assault**

Rape has been seen by the courts in most European countries as a sexual crime rather than a crime of violence against women and the sexuality of the female victim is often treated as a problem (with the exhortation to dress properly' or she may 'have asked for it'). The idea that all men are potential rapists and all sexual consent has an element of force has characterised much writing within feminism on issues of rape. For example, MacKinnon (1997) argues that 'women's sexual consent is not meaningful and rape is indigenous, not exceptional, to women's social condition' (1997, p. 42). However, research has shown (e.g Holland et al. 1998, p.132) that many young girls submit to sex not because they want to but because of pressure either by the peer group, the male partner or local youth cultures and norms. The primacy of gender becomes unclear as violence and control by a man is not the only form of violence experienced by many women, including racialised women. Lack of support from welfare and other agencies and forms of abuse in terms of racialisation and class are also important (Razack 1998).

Although at times sexual consent can be a product of normative constraints, the violation that women experience and the physical and symbolic violence of rape victims is on another level. It is moreover important to attend to different modes of assault and their differential effects on different women. As Alison Phipps has commented:

A formulation of feminine embodiment which is sensitive to the differences between women could show how power is written onto female bodies in specific and contingent ways. Violence would be positioned as central, but should be seen as a context-dependent structuring principle which has multiple impacts on the experience and aftermath of sexual violence (2009, p 667).

The male rapist or abuser has been seen predominantly as the violent working class or racialised male but there has also been a stereotyping and ‘othering’ of the working class or racialised ‘victim’. Skeggs (1997, p.99) has argued that black and white working-class women have been seen as the sexual and deviant Other which has been counterposed to the feminine respectability of the white middle class woman who has the requisite capital (cultural and symbolic). It has been argued that there is a form of symbolic violence undertaken by the middle classes on the working classes (Skeggs 1997 and 2005). This involves both fear and disgust (Lawler 2005). This has been a way in which social stratification has operated to hierarchically organise different forms of women.

There is also an important issue relating to rape as part of war and ethnic conflict. The assumptions of hegemonic masculinity become naturalised through social hierarchies and cultural mediums, as well as through force. There is also the view (Alison 2007) that such rape undertaken by groups of soldiers or ethnically motivated gangs may be part of the reinforcement of ethnic solidarity in times of conflict and serves to both reinforce hegemonic masculinity and group boundaries and allegiances.

She states:

part of the reason gang-rape promotes group cohesion may be that it bonds men together in a complicity (in fact a shared awareness of responsibility) that makes loyalty to the group vital. During times of conflict multiple binary constructions are formed; not only is ‘masculine’ contrasted to ‘feminine’ within a group and ‘us’ contrasted to ‘them’ between groups, but ‘our women’ are contrasted to ‘their women’ and ‘our men’ to ‘their men’. ‘Our women’ are chaste, honourable, and to be protected by ‘our men’; ‘their women’ are unchaste and depraved. (p. 77)

The importance of women as ‘symbols of the nation’ (Anthias 1989) and as signifiers of ethnic difference (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992) is clear, and involves binary



constructions of 'our' women versus 'their' women. Perpetrating sexual violence against the women of the enemy reconfigures the object of reference of sexual violence away from all women (potentially) towards women who represent the enemy. Indeed 'militarised nationalism' is defined by the normative compulsion to exercise violence against the 'other' as a test of loyalty and commitment to the group. It is also one of the yardsticks of proper masculinity in this context- as heterosexual as well as protective of the group's vulnerable members, seen as women and children. However, it has also been noted that women in war are often complicit in such violence (see Jacobs et al 2000)

Moreover war in the name of *womenandchildren* (as Cynthia Enloe 1998 coined it) reinforces the sexual division of labour and the idea of masculinity as protecting, and femininity as nurturing and submissive. Moreover, the nation is often represented as a woman wailing for her children and women perform a number of roles in reinforcing ethnic bonds, including the reproduction of culturally based roles, policing other women in the process (see Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989).

However, women play vital roles (although often 'back door' ones) in conflict zones (e.g. see Anthias 1989 for an examination of women's roles in Cyprus). Similarly the existence of male victims and female agents of sexual violence cannot be ignored. The essentialisation of men and women here must be avoided as it is a question of the roles that are allocated to men and women within ethnic and national contexts, and particularly within struggles over ethnic and national boundaries entailing conflict and war. As Alison argues, "a more complex analysis of empirical cases of wartime sexual violence that examines the interplay between masculinity, femininity, ethnicity

and sexuality, is required and serves to bring into relief the problems with accepting this binary at face value". (2007, p. 89)

What is clear is the differentiated nature and incidence of rape (in terms of class, racialisation and ethnicity as well as gender and sexuality) and the specific role it plays in times of war and ethnic and national conflict. However, rape cannot be seen merely as a manifestation of patriarchy and binary and unequal relations of subordination between men and women. It needs to be located in terms of the differentiated masculinities and femininities that are constructed through the syncretic working of interlocking power dimensions of gender, race and class and how subjects take up identity positions, articulate and practice them. Some of these have contradictory effects. On the one hand, the ethnic enemy is constructed as uncivilised and barbarian, and therefore there is a need to protect our women and children from them. On the other hand, the perpetration of extreme forms of violence thereby mirrors the practices of the so-called enemy.

### **Domestic violence**

One of the prominent early approaches was to look at domestic violence purely as a product of patriarchy and masculinity and as part of the process of controlling women. The construction of women as 'victims' has been overtaken by ideas of survivors instead, stressing also the existence of agency (Barry 1979). The idea of survivor is used for example in the work of Dunn (2004) and most clearly in Liz Kelly's work since her important book *Surviving Sexual Violence* of 1988 stresses the way women resist, cope and survive (Kelly 1988, p.163-4).

There is also the issue concerning constructions of what constitutes abuse or violence as well as the existence of women batterers, and how they came to be violent towards their usually abusive partners. Skeggs (1997) observes that there is a discourse about normalised or respectable femininities which constructs a binary division between women who are deserving of sympathy (as with rape) about those who are not. The increasing recognition of domestic violence as a proper crime, and therefore requiring criminal intervention, is also affected by judgments made about what constitutes abuse and which women are experiencing it in terms of how respectable or deserving they are.

The intersections of gender, race, ethnicity and class enter here with particular stereotypes about black male masculinities, culturally motivated domestic violence (within families), and also with notions of women who are to blame through their provocative or unreasonable behaviour (as class and ethnic subjects therefore) in eliciting violent responses from men.

Many women who have experienced domestic violence do not disclose it. This includes women from all ethnicities and classes. Notions of honour and respectability as well as not wanting to be seen as a victim are prominent factors in non-disclosure. This is the case for working class as well as middle class women. One of the characteristics of domestic abuse which is well known is the difficulty that a woman has in leaving her abuser and the desire at times to protect and change him, with hope triumphing over experience. There are also feelings of self-blame and low worth.

However, there are also cases where cultural norms and socially structured positions are central. Being subjected to controls via particular patriarchal structures found in different ethnic groups (including the dominant group in the state) can be important in preventing women from attesting and criminalising the offender. There are also fears of abandonment and addiction involved in the process. As Bograd states, “Individuals may have internalized ideologies antithetical to disclosure of violence” (1999, p. 281).

Sokoloff and Dupont quote a number of instances:

For example, a Vietnamese woman who has been taught that saving face and family unity pre-empt individual safety will be reluctant to seek outside help for domestic violence.... As a member of a devalued racial identity, some women of color, particularly African American women, may fear that calling the police will subject their partners to racist treatment by the criminal justice system as well as confirm racist stereotypes of Blacks as violent... Furthermore, lesbians who are not out, or voluntarily open about their sexual orientations, may remain silent about the abuse in their relationships.... (2005, p. 43)

However, one problem with some of the examples given about how cultural differences affect women is an overculturalisation of these phenomena and an under-emphasis on the structural dynamics at work. For example, much of the domestic violence literature which is concerned with dismantling essentialism and noting diversity in women’s experience (as is also the case with intersectionality frameworks) focus primarily on cultural and normative expectations or identity constructions. Moreover there is a tendency to fix culture instead of treating it as fluid and dynamic. They fail to point to how social locations of both men and women are important both in terms of the labour market or political citizenship.

### **Gendered violence in the context of globality and transnationalism**

There is a growing recognition of the ways in which globalisation affects women disproportionately and unequally. Women have been most affected by its' detrimental effects, such as increasing poverty, forced migration, sexual and economic forms of exploitation. There are a range of forms of violence, some of which are linked to these, such as trafficking, honour killings, rape either as part of ethnic or racist crimes but also in terms of the vulnerability of women occupying particular categories of work, including domestic maids, carers and sex workers. There has also been a global inequality that accompanies globalisation linked to the hierarchy of countries in the global world and the increasing exploitation and economic disadvantages faced by many Third World economies and societies. The experiences of women in migration are gender specific, many involving forms of violence, both physical and symbolic. These crimes are also racialised as well as culturalised. In the next section I will look at two of these: honour based violence and trafficking.

### **Honour based violence**

So-called honour based crimes are generally differently regarded to other forms of sexual violence undertaken within the domestic or family arena, despite the fact that as crimes they share some of their characteristics. They are dependant on patriarchal forms of control and highly gendered notions of appropriate feminine and masculine roles and practices which of course differ within different social and cultural and national contexts. In relation to the criminal courts, in the UK for example, there are no specific offences of 'honour based crimes' or 'forced marriage' and these are covered by existing legislation, regarded as a violation of human rights and seen as particular forms of domestic and/or sexual violence.

The Crown Prosecution Service in the UK defines honour based violence:

Honour based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community....t is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and / or community by breaking their honour code...Honour Based Violence can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and / or community members. Examples may include murder, un-explained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive. Such crimes cut across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities. They transcend national and international boundaries'.  
(*Crown Prosecution Service, March 2010*)

Unlike domestic violence as it is usually conceived as a crime of anger (which is uncontrollable), it is usually premeditated and involves the family as a whole rather than just one person. For example there may be collusion or participation of siblings and maybe even the mother and extended family members. It is not just Islamic as it is also associated with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, some of which are Christian (e.g. see Peristiany 1966).

Over 500 women are killed a year, according to the UN Population Fund, mainly in Asia and the Middle East but also in Europe. This is likely to be an underestimate as many women are abducted or disappear (e.g. see Begikhani et al. 2010). Honour crimes are embedded in broader social cultures and cannot be seen to derive from either mainly cultural or patriarchal forms alone. There is also the issue of policies, for example in the UK, which as Pragna Patel (forthcoming) says has involved “non-interventionist and culturally relativist State approaches to the issue of gender-related violence in minority communities”. Indeed, because of this, it has been argued that

they should be seen as part of a more general phenomenon of violence against women (VAW) (Gill et al. 2012).

One of the issues relating to such crimes is their culturalisation and their use in fuelling Islamophobia. Often arguments about the oppression of women within multicultural societies are used to critique Islam or the incorporation of Muslims and other groups in society as they are judged to be non-assimilable because they are not willing to conform to the supposed universalist principles of western democracies. Such culturalisations often draw on stereotypical versions of religious faith or 'ways of life' of the 'other'. They are prominent in ways in which honour based crimes, forced marriages and genital mutilation are often hailed in public debates and discussions in requiring a limit to ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. Such debates also include those of the headscarf or the chadur. Treating such practices as forms of gender based violence is more appropriate.

But the most pertinent matter here is the contradictory ways in which the plight of women is constructed. Racialised women are seen as victims of culture and not just individual men in a way that doesn't happen in instances of domestic abuse where men are pathologised as individuals. Also there is an opportunistic use of such instances of culturally motivated crimes. Women are supported, but a demonisation takes place of a group's cultural tendencies, thereby justifying forms of surveillance and control in the private arena of the home as well as within the private arena of tradition and cultural life. Similarly women within these groups are exhorted by anti-racists not to disclose these issues for the sake of political gains to be made on the integration and anti-racism front, since such disclosures are regarded as potentially

feeding racism. The contradictions and tensions between political mobilisations on the bases of anti-racism and feminism are here apparent (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992).

An intersectional framing here is not just about the recognition of differences of women across lines of race, faith, culture or class. Such a framework must seek also to look at wider discourses and practices as well as structures of dominance and how these feed into the social frameworks involved for tackling gendered violence, as well as the practices and understanding of the actors themselves.

### **Trafficking**

The ILO estimates that

At least 2.4 million people are victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour around the world generating an estimated US\$32 billion in annual profits. [...] nearly half, or 43 per cent, specifically for sexual exploitation, 32 per cent for labour exploitation and 25 per cent for a mixture of both. Half the victims of trafficking are under 18. (ILO, 2012).

At world level, the 2000 United Nations Convention against Organised Crime in Palermo (United Nations 2000) gives a legal definition of trafficking in human beings and the guidelines for a global approach. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons the UN defines states:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (United Nations – General Assembly 2000)



Trafficking in women typically involves the movement of women from poorer countries to comparatively richer ones, including those from poorer to less poor countries in the south. Women in the ex Soviet block countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, have been particularly trafficked into the sex trade during the post-socialist transition process (Kligman and Limoncelli 2005)

Trafficking lies at the crossroads of migration, gender, policies *and* crime, in the context of globalization. The GAATW (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women) starts from the premise that trafficking is embedded within gendered migration and labour contexts, and women's complex realities. The 2010 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report suggests a complex approach: "trafficking is a fluid phenomenon responding to market demands, weakness in laws and penalties, and economic and development disparities" (United States of America Mission, 2010, p. 6).

One important issue in the trafficking literature is the elision with prostitution. Not only are men and women both trafficked, but women are brought in under particular labour conditions, and not just with regard to the sex trade, for example as workers and maids (see Anthias et al. 2012). This makes clear that the common elision in some of the literature on trafficking as primarily about sexual work is problematic. Treating sex work as work and as part also of the role that migration plays in the formal and informal sectors of the economy is important, also.

The focus on trafficking makes all forms of sex work appear as necessarily related to the lack of agency of the women involved. Women migrants are actively engaged in

using social networks to travel and to advance their social positions, sometimes for pure survival but at times to escape from violent and abusive relationships back home or to flee from political persecution (Anthias and Lazaridis 2000). However, in the process some fall victims to traffickers and yet others seize what they regard as one of the few options for survival they have in difficult circumstances.

Some women are aware of the sexual nature of the work that they are being trafficked for, although some come in purportedly as dancers or 'artistes' to work in clubs or bars (Kontos 2009). Like all migrant workers, they have a degree of agency and work to negotiate and struggle against the economic, social, and sexual oppressions they face. Their status usually as undocumented or 'illegal'/ irregular presents particular problems in terms of escaping some of the degradations and subordinations they face as trafficked women for sex purposes. Their over-riding problems are therefore linked to illegality as migrants and the illegal nature of the sex trade itself in many countries, making them doubly vulnerable. Not possessing forms of cultural capital or social capital in their new homes on migration brings to the fore the class and race issues with which they are confronted with as well.

As Agustin argues:

Apart from strategies to make money and structural conditions shaping the labor market, women also want to travel. Exposed to media images that depict travel as essential to education, pleasure, and worldliness, people in poor as well as rich countries want to see famous places, experience a little glamour, be admired, meet new people, and marry. .. (2003, p. 100)

She goes on to say, giving the example of Lucia:

From Lucía's point of view...she knew that selling sex would be an aspect of her first European job, but she didn't think

there would be no other aspect to her life or that she wouldn't have the capacity to change it eventually. She saw herself as an artistic dancer and intended to get into "straight" show business.

However, this discussion needs to be located in terms of the interlocking relationship between gender and sex violence found in sexual trafficking and the kinds of class and global reach of trafficking in general. This involves an unequal global system of countries and people within them, the migration project of escape and betterment as a class and at times an ethnic project (relating to forms of ethnic violence and persecution in their own countries), and the migration policies of many countries that construct migrants as undocumented and illegal, thereby making them more vulnerable to unsustainable and exploitative conditions of work (including sex work). To privilege gender in understanding sex trafficking, as many radical feminists do, fails to locate their social location intersectionally in terms of the interlocking noted above and in relation therefore to the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity and class issues articulate in specific contexts for the specific women involved. There is a need to look at prostitution and trafficking, therefore, in relation to the workings of global capital.

One way of approaching sex trafficking for prostitution, is to question the assumptions that globalisation benefits all women (Elson 2002) and to be aware of the gendered nature of transnational mobilities and processes. As Andersen says (2005, p.452), there needs to be a framework that is '*grounded in the connections between race, gender, sexuality, and class in the political-economic context of women's lives*'. This includes focusing on intersections of power along cultural, economic and political lines. There is a need therefore for a feminist political economy that is globally oriented. Using a gendered framing in regards to globalisation highlights the

diverse mechanisms that create vulnerability for different categories of women. These include economic inequalities within sending and receiving countries, and the global growth in informal labour markets which is related to the role of remittances for some economies, particularly remittances from women migrants in the new migrations (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002).

Within the scope of the FeMiPol project (Anthias et al. 2012), we undertook biographical interviews with six trafficked women. There was a variety of experiences from a variety of countries- Brazil, Nigeria, Latvia, Guinea. These women were living in four EU member states: Italy, France, Germany and the UK. From these interviews, it is clear that the women came to Europe as part of a large migratory movement characterized by the feminisation of migration. It is also evident that migration regimes increase vulnerability when women are already in the countries of migration, making them susceptible (through being undocumented) to sex traffickers even after migration (Campani and Chiappelli, 2012). Central concerns found in the narratives relate to issues of exploitation rather than sex work as such, as well as the legal context in which women find themselves (e.g. without a residence permit once inside, social services provision, shelter and support).

The sex trade and prostitution are a very diversified sector. What the women in the FeMiPol study experienced was a condition of over-exploitation because of their particularly difficult socio-economic situation. Here it is not gendered processes alone at work but the interplay between the division of labour, poverty, irregularity, hopelessness and vulnerability on the basis of class, ethnic disadvantage and lack of

cultural and social capital. It is how they intertwine in the new political economy that is important.

### **Conclusion: a global political economy of intersections**

The intersectional nature of social relations and particularly those affecting women from marginal and racialised groups means also the recognition of intersectional forms of violence and discrimination. These have been illustrated through using examples from a range of forms of violence.

However, within intersectionality there is always the danger of deconstructing analytic categories towards a post-modern version whereby all categories are refused and therefore being unable to identify processes which construct them, including relations of power in neo-liberal markets or other social institutions. This is indicated in the fact that much of the literature on gendered and sexual violence underemphasises the role of class whilst stressing the intersections between racism, gender inequality and normativity (Anthias 2001b; Gimenez 2001). These forms of violence are also shared by women from working class backgrounds in particular who are most vulnerable to forms of economic exploitation, domestic violence and work in the sex industry or trade.

Inequalities, exclusions and forms of discrimination are systemic and multidimensional in modern societies. Ethnicity, 'race', gender, sexuality and class involve processes and relations of hierarchisation, unequal resource allocation and inferiorisation relating to a range of economic, political and social interests and projects and to distinctive (and variable) forms of social allegiance and identifications. These are

played out in a nuanced and highly context related fashion. They involve political strategies for representation and for exclusion and they are centrally linked to discourses and practices of power and struggles around them.

There is a need to refer to broader social relations in terms of contexts, meanings and practices. One way of thinking about these hierarchical social locations is to treat them as products of particular constellations of social relations, and in terms of relationality and experience at determinant points in time; that is to locate them within a spatial and chronographic context. What this inserts into our understandings of hierarchy is that one can be positioned differently in the hierarchical social structure depending on such constellations.

However, this needs to be supplemented by insights from the new political economy which turn our attention to structures of power and institutionalised frameworks which act upon individuals and which individuals in turn engage with, negotiate and thereby develop strategies and counter strategies towards. This needs to be located, I believe in terms of globality and transnational relations rather than being based on assumptions about the boundary of the nation state. The local, national and transnational should be related to in this exercise as well as how they link.

In relation to our understanding of gender and sexuality as well as other category making and identity making practices requires contextualisation within broader relations of boundary making and hierarchy making in a range of social contexts, including transnational ones. This asks us to use a more integrated frame relating to power and agency in understanding social positions and positionings.

However, there is a tension between recognising the specificities of different gendered relations, including forms of physical and symbolic violence and building a forum for women's political actions that spans these specificities. This suggests a shared terrain relating to gendered norms and routines which are hegemonically constructed, including forms of femininity and heteronormativity as well as gendered divisions of labour, glass ceilings, sexualised citizenships and their related exclusions and racialised, aged and disabled gendered norms. Issues of disgust, of stigmatisation, of denigrated valuation, and of discipline and control of female bodies are part of the process. So are responses around respectability, disidentification and passivity and dominant femininities manifested in gendered relations, particularly within heterosexual arenas.

The need for feminist commitment to networks and alliances across borders (ie transnationally) and across boundaries of race, sexuality, ethnicity, faith, ability and class is central here. As Niamh Reilly (2007) has stated, "more than three decades of second-wave feminist critiques have underlined the message that no feminist project, academic or practical, can be based on an assumption of women as a monolithic group with a "natural" common agenda." (p.189)

The need for dialogues and strategic alliances across particular kinds of struggles has been much written about (e.g. see Cockburn 2007). Various global feminist networks signal what some have called transnational feminism or global feminism, found in campaigns around women's human rights where violence against women has been a central plank for uniting women's groups across boundaries and borders..

Violence against women, although suffered differently in different social classes and ethnic and national communities also cuts across them and women's groups have responded via campaigns, refuges, challenging cultural traditions such as genital mutilation and the stoning of adulterous women or honour crimes. There have been organisations against girl child killings in parts of Asia, trafficking of women and abuses and killings linked to dowries and other economic facets in marriage and familial social exchanges.

The local and context based approach to these gendered and sexualised forms of violence has become a hallmark of the global feminist movement which has moved ahead from debates about multiculturalism versus feminism for example that demonised the practices of minority groups (e.g. polygamy, genital mutilation and honour crimes). These failed to be sensitive to the pervasive forms of violence found in western cultures such as dating, romance, heteronormativity, domestic violence, rape and abuse.

It can be argued, however, that the focus on human rights issues has tended to see violence against women in terms of individual rights rather than focusing on the broader social and economic landscape which relates to such violations and tackling these head on, at times reproducing notions of private and public realms. The effects of neo-liberalism on the one hand and the 'war against terror' and Islamophobia combine to make struggle on a number of fronts necessary i.e. on international human rights, challenging gendered and racialised westocentric constructions as well as socio-economic and political disadvantages. Listening to women's voices and



experiences, whilst being alert to broader societal, political and economic developments, as well as categorisations and inferiorisation practices around race, ethnicity, class and other social divisions, is central to this. Both a focus on experience, alerting us to agency and identity, and a focus on structures of power is needed here. It is such an intersectional framing, attending to class processes and to political economy, that can contribute to both a greater understanding and to political alliances.

This position also recognises the possibility of more reflexive forms of political struggle and avenues to greater dialogue and collaboration on the basis of organising around particular kinds of struggles rather than particular kinds of identities. Such a framework also destabilises the boundary between the material and the cultural. Nonetheless the political economy underpinning this framework is precisely a move away from the economic as a reified set of practices. It involves a recognition that the economic is both embedded in meaning structures but also has material dimensions relating to the production and distribution of a range of resources in society and these resources are not only economic. This becomes important for a greater understanding of how power and inequality are produced and reproduced in neo-liberal states.

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