



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

**Aalborg Universitet**

## **Gender, Intersectionality and the European Public Sphere**

Siim, Birte

*Publication date:*  
2010

*Document Version*  
Early version, also known as pre-print

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Siim, B. (2010). *Gender, Intersectionality and the European Public Sphere*. Paper presented at Eurosphere Mid-term International Conference, Brussels 11-12-11, 2010, Brussels, Belgium, . <http://eurospheres.org/>

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- ? Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- ? You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- ? You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at [vbn@aub.aau.dk](mailto:vbn@aub.aau.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# Gender, Intersectionality and the European Public Sphere

**Birte Siim, Aalborg University**

EUROFORUM SESSIONS: EUROSPHERE  
Mid-Term International Conference,  
Brussels. 11-12 November, 2010

# Issues for Debate

- **Methodological reflections and design**
- **How is gender linked to diversity in different organizations?**
- **How is gender equality & women's issues being framed in the EU & across Europe ?**
- **Confrontation of research findings with theories, models & concepts**

# Eurosphere: Diversity and the EPS

<http://www.eurospheres.org/>

- *What are social & pol. actors **views about diversity & EPS?** What models do organizations believe in - a centralized or fragmented (or another model of) European Polity? Organizations' views on EU polity/policies: views on the development of EU-polity; and views concerning EU's involvement and power in policy-making*
- *Do actors/organizations **communicate/participate** in EURO-networks spaces?*
- *What are their perceptions of **diversity, PS & EPS***

# Gendering The EPS

## *Critique of the EP models:*

- The *liberal* market model is exclusionary
- The *republican* citizenship model – is homogenizing
- The *cosmopolitan* model – is built 'from above'
- Only the *deliberative* model is able empower women as social & political actors



# Democratic Diversity in the Public Sphere

*Dimensions in public sphere (Ferree 2002):*

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

# Guiding Hypothesis

- *Gender makes a difference for attitudes of opinion makers on the four different sites*
- *Presence: Women are marginalised in the EP; but different positions on the four sites*
- *Power: Women and minorities are both marginalised in the EPS*
- *Discourses: Gender intersects with diversity with various meanings across Europe*

# Research Dimensions

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



# Research Questions

- *To explore and explain the role of women and gender groups in the articulation of the national public sphere(s) & in relation to the four sites – i.e. political parties, social movements, media and think tanks - if and how they interact, cooperate and negotiate with ethnic minority groups.*
- *To explore and explain the role of gender related concerns in the articulation of the national public sphere(/s) and how they relate to issues of diversity in relation to social and political spaces/sites.*
- *To explore and explain the role of gender groups in the articulation of the European Public Sphere (EPS), how they cooperate & negotiate with ethnic minority groups.*
- *To explore and explain the role of gender-related concerns in the articulation of the European Public Sphere and how they relate to issues of diversity, especially to ethno-national concerns.*

# Methodological Reflections: Challenges & limitations

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

# Preliminary Conclusions

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

# Gendering as a Process

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



# Intersectionality

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



# The European Public Sphere

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

# Confronting Theory and Research

- **Gender and Diversity:** Respondents articulate a dualism between gender and diversity models
- **Gendering the EPS:** Alliances between women & minorities cannot be taken for granted; questions common interests based upon marginalisation
- **Challenge to assumptions about a gap between civil society actors and national pol. institutions**
- **Diversity:** Respondents express differences in terms of nationality, pol. families, ethnicity/race