

The intersectional policy gap in Higher Education and Research: a scoping literature review

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Higher Education with Impact

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Relevance in EU context

She Figures 2021

The higher the academic position, the lower number of women

- 59% female bachelor's and master's graduates
- 48% at doctoral level > < 22% in STEM
- 41% scientists and engineers
- 33% researchers
- 26% full professorship positions



NO ATTENTION TO CAPTURING THE INEQUALITIES THAT INTERSECT WITH GENDER SUCH AS RACE/ETHNICITY, CLASS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE & DISABILITY



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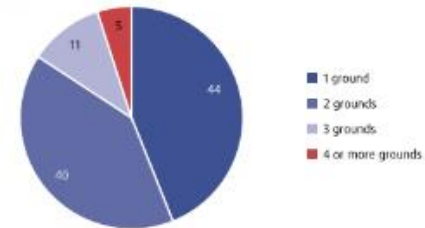
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Being Black in Europe 2023 - FRA

1/3 face daily racist harassment

- 40% underreports discriminatory behavior
- 56% based on two or more grounds of discrimination
- Higher likelihood for young women, people with higher education degree and people wearing religious clothing

FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCED IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY (%)^{shr}



Source: FRA's EU Survey on Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants, 2022.

Towards Gender Justice

Rethinking EU Gender Equality Policy From an Intersectional Perspective



cij CENTER FOR INTERSECTIONAL JUSTICE

RIJSDIENST VERTREKINGSGEBIED NEDERLAND
The office of the a.i. legal representative, Lelystad



Intersectional discrimination in Europe:
relevance, challenges
and ways forward

Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025

The EU Gender Equality Strategy delivers on the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. The Strategy presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 **towards a gender-equal Europe**. The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are **free** to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to **thrive**, and can equally participate in and **lead** our European society.

The **key objectives** are ending gender-based violence, challenging gender stereotypes, closing gender gaps in the labour market, achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy, **addressing the gender pay and pension gaps, closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics**. The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender **mainstreaming** combined with targeted actions, and **intersectionality** is a horizontal principle for its implementation. While the Strategy focuses on actions within the EU, it is coherent with the EU's external policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.

As one of the first deliverables of the Strategy, the Commission proposed **binding pay transparency measures** on 4 March 2021.

The annual **R&I Days** will be an exceptional opportunity to communicate the most powerful achievements of the R&I policy. The **She Figures 2018³** report on gender in R&I in Europe, paints a picture of overall improvement, but at too slow a pace. The glass ceiling persists in most ERA countries and gender inequality in research and innovation requires further effort. Only one third of European researchers are women, men hold more than three quarters of the top academic positions. Women make up only one third of entrepreneurs and less than 1 in 10 patent holders in Europe.

Horizon Europe will therefore go beyond Horizon 2020 by advancing an **inclusive concept of gender equality and diversity in open and democratic R&I institutions**. This is commonly known as an **'intersectional'** approach, focusing on interlocking systems of power between gender and other social categories and identities such as ethnicity and race (including migrants and refugees), social class and wealth, gender identity and sexual orientation (LGBTI+ issues) and disability to better address the multiple and interacting factors of inequality experienced by R&I actors. Related activities include:

- new activities supporting gender research to develop a broader understanding of gender equality and intersections with other inequalities;
- incentives to promote the adoption of gender equality plans, diversity and inclusion strategies, and comprehensive approaches to institutional change.

The ambition for a strengthened and up-graded policy for gender equality in R&I was already announced in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination



Including summaries in English, French and German

Intersectional discrimination in EU gender equality and non-discrimination law

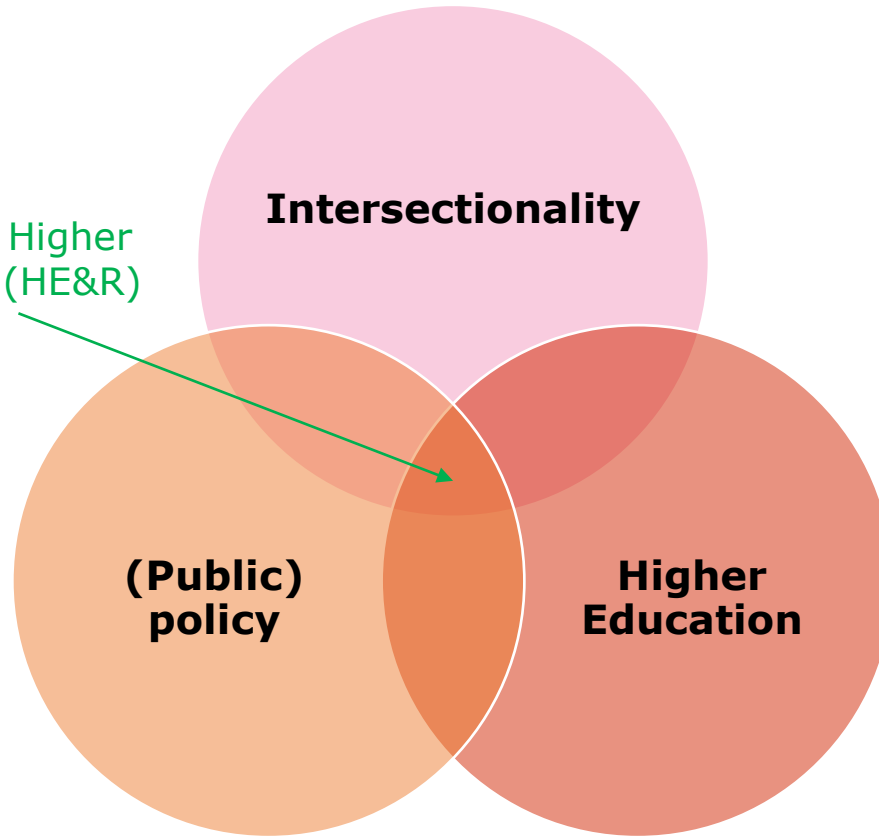
Union of Equality strategies

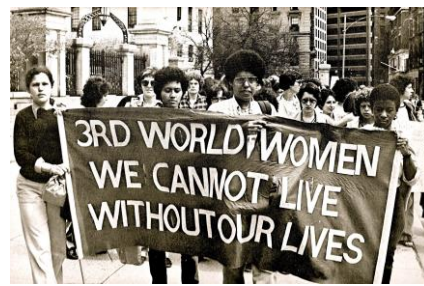


What is known from the existing literature on the use of intersectionality in equality policies of Higher Education and Research organisations?

Theoretical framework

Intersectional policies in Higher Education and Research (HE&R)





Intersectionality

*"Intersectionality is a **paradigm, theory, methodology, analytic and/or critical tool** that focuses on **the interlocking systems of oppression and privilege, power relations and social inequalities** that occur on multiple axes including but not limited to gender, ethnicity and race, social and economic status, sexual orientation, disability and age"*

- **Intersectionality** coined in Black feminism in Law → prof. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) and further established by prof. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) in Sociology
- 'Manifesto' as **critique on white feminist discourses and anti-racist discourses** and for the inclusion of the experiences and interests of women of colour, expanded to other axis of inequality
- Drawing upon earlier work of **Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Combahee River Collective** among others

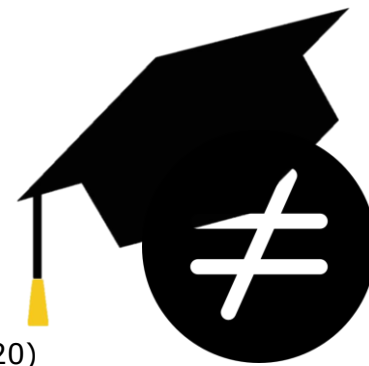
"Nothing about us, without us."

(Public) policy

- Unpacking the Russian doll: (Verloo, 2006)
 - Other axis of inequality hidden behind gender
 - **Mitigating invisibilization and marginalization** of diverse groups of (wo)men
- Decentre current essentialist and universalist agenda of inequalities: (Atewologun, 2018)
- Expand single/additive to intersectional policies: (Lombardo & Meier, 2022)
- Importance of **self-representation**: (Christofferson, 2021; Fine et al., 2021)



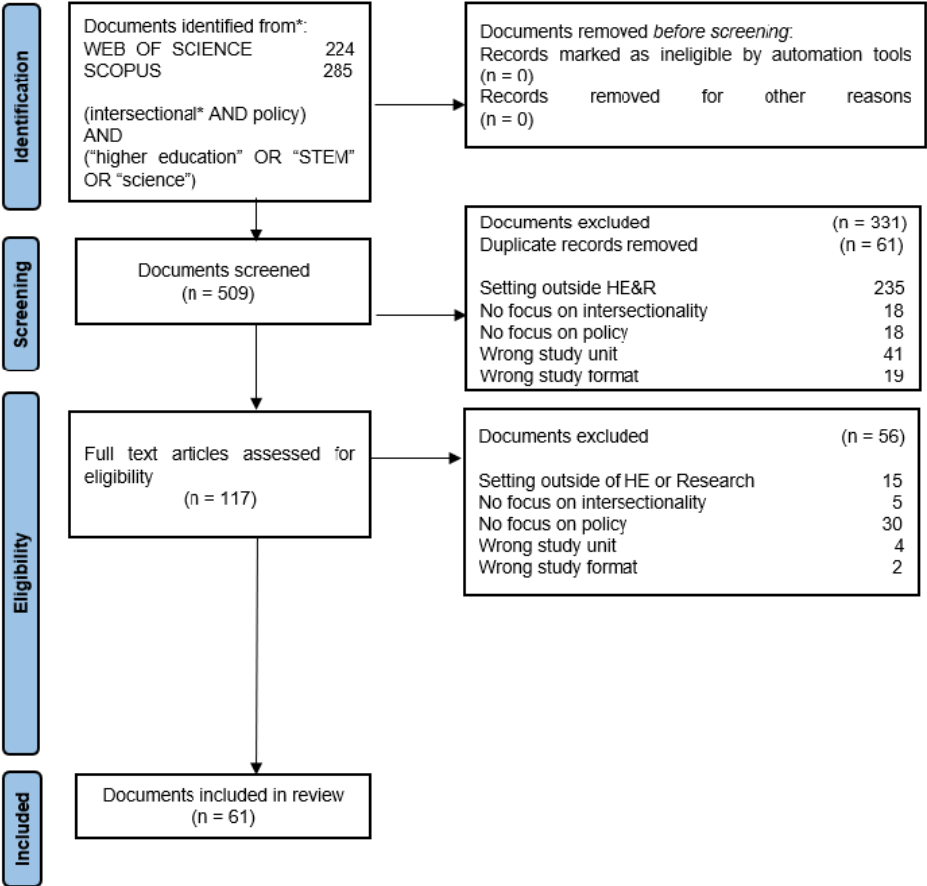
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- Diversity-Innovation paradox: (Hofstra, 2020)
 - **Increasing diversity and inclusion policies yet** contributions of minoritized students and staff remain systematically ignored or undervalued
- Current equality policies:
 - **Overlook the needs** of historically underrepresented groups as academics (Bourabain & Verhaeghe, 2022)
 - **Create ineffective measures** that could reproduce dominant groups' needs (Tauber, 2022)

Methodological framework

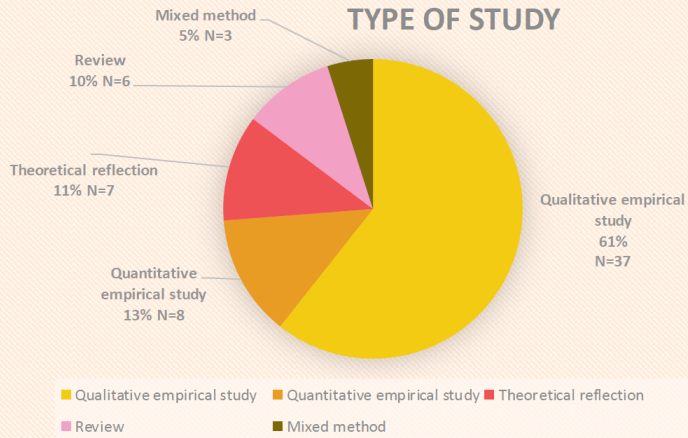
Identification of documents via databases and registers



Results

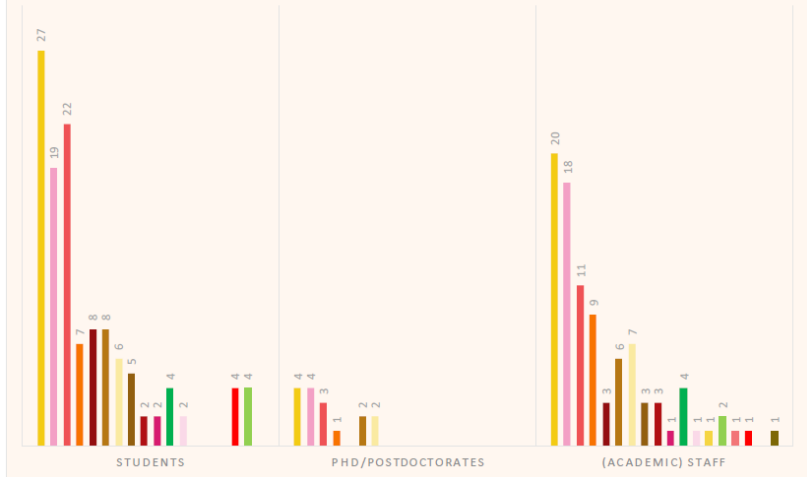
Characteristics of literature

TYPE OF STUDY

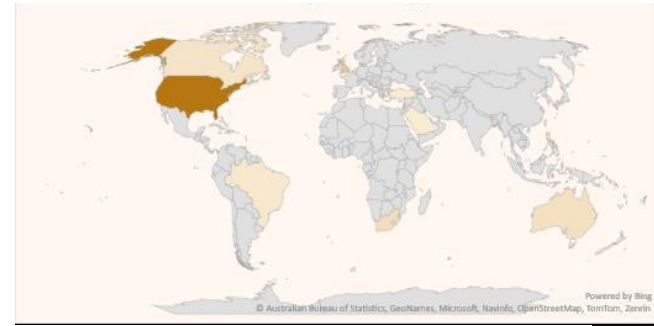
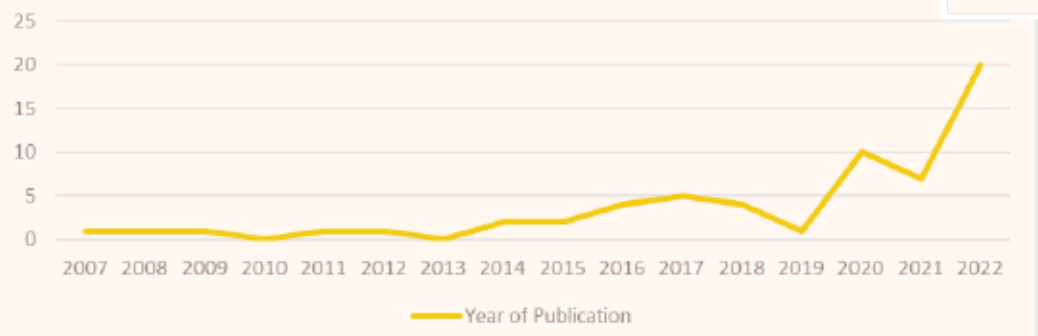


SOCIAL IDENTITIES

- Total
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- SES
- Age
- Religiosity
- Motherhood
- Sex
- Disability
- Trans
- Caste
- Nationality
- Marital status
- Gender identity
- Sexuality
- Migrant background



Year of publication



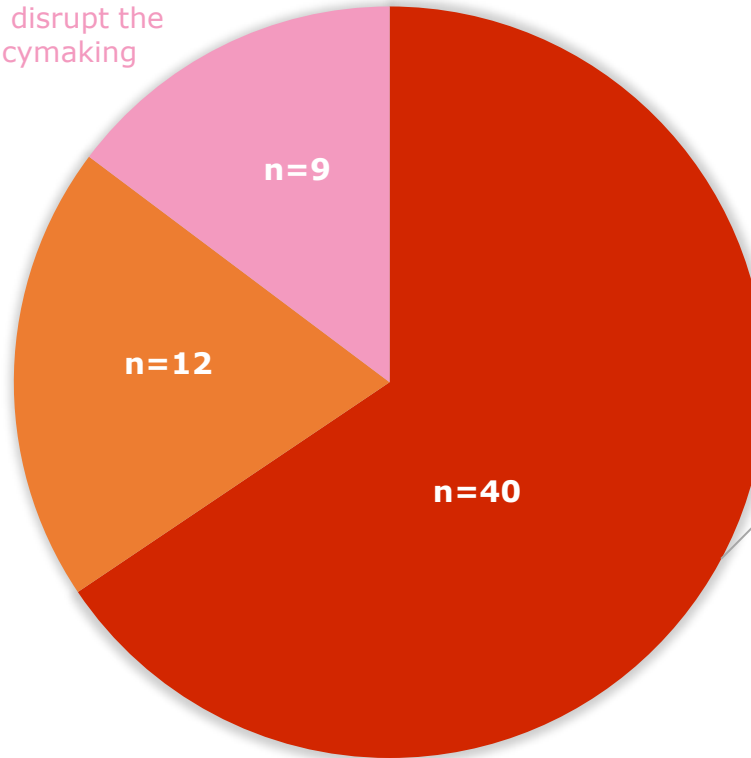
Results

*Intersectional
approaches*

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES

Intersectionality to theoretically reflect on how to disrupt the hegemonic policymaking

Intersectionality as critical tool to analyse equality policies



Intersectionality as method to capture lived experiences of intersecting inequalities

Individual level

- **Sense of not belonging** in science
- Negative self-concept
- Deficiency-thinking
- **Isolation, assimilation,** underreporting of discriminatory behavior

Interpersonal level

- **Lack of constructive dialogue** between different stakeholders of diverse backgrounds
 - No shared responsibility
 - Individual burden on minoritized staff
 - No accountability measures
- **Lack of support** for community building and safe spaces
 - Unrepresentative curricula
- **Lack of hiring/retention** of role models
 - **Micro-aggressions**

Structural level

- **Intersectional approach was missing** or no concrete implementation
- **Lack of (disaggregated) data**
 - **Ignoring targets' needs** into the design of equality policy

Discussion

Knowledge gaps

Move **beyond gender** → **understanding of intersectional needs** into policies and practices that go beyond well-established categories

Move **beyond individual level** → **understanding of** individual, interpersonal and structural **levels of oppression and privilege** into design and implementation processes

Move **beyond policy critique** → **understanding of** how **the design and implementation processes of intersectional policies** in European HE&R can be made more constructive, collaborative and inclusive



Conclusion

A portrait of Audre Lorde, a Black woman with a large afro, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a patterned purple and green top. The background behind her is a vibrant, pop-art style pattern of red polka dots and yellow and blue floral motifs.

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives”

- Audre Lorde



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