

Introduction: Special Issue on “Gender, Sexuality and Political Economy”

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Introduction

Decades of neoliberal governance and the current economic crisis have resulted in growing socioeconomic inequalities, increases in poverty, escalating prices for basic consumer items (including food), an infringement of labour rights, deterioration of working conditions, land grabs, mass unemployment, and a reduction of welfare provisions in many nation states. These developments impact on economies across the globe to differing degrees. They have led to political unrest and resistance in many parts of the world, including some of the economically worst off societies within the European Union.

The current situation also presents a challenge for social and political theory and particularly for the “cultural turn” which has often celebrated “choice” within consumerist society and has thereby implicitly or explicitly supported market oriented perspectives. Our view is that critical work is needed attempting to link gender and sexuality perspectives within contexts of socioeconomic crisis, growing class divisions and rapid social change.

We consider gender and sexuality to be distinct yet closely connected categories. Beasley (2005) for instance, writes of the “gender sexuality field”, which is comprised of several subfields, including feminist studies, masculinity studies, and, as we would add, transgender studies. Yet in many approaches the concepts appear as separate, with attempts to explain gender inequalities often having nothing much to say about sexual forms of power and work on sexualities having little to say about subordination of women, hierarchies among men, and marginalisation of transgender people.

Much work on sexualities has emerged from predominantly culturalist frameworks which tend to deflect from concerns with economy and wider geopolitical power relations. This results—among others—in a common undertheorisation of class in sexuality studies (Binnie 2011; Taylor 2007). And work on gender from within political economy perspectives has

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sometimes struggled to account for the importance of desire and sexuality (Hennessy 2011). In this respect, it has encountered similar fissures to other work linking the socioeconomic and the cultural/emotional.

This introduction to the special issue on “Gender, sexuality and political economy” explores such fissures in the light of historical developments within gender studies, materialist feminism and critical sexuality studies, especially queer theory. We focus particularly on tensions between materialist feminisms and queer theory, because it is here that questions of political economy and class are most explicitly addressed. Moreover, these debates have shaped the editors’ own political and academic trajectories, respectively within a Marxist feminist framework and within queer theory.

In the first brief section below, we reflect on the core concepts of “gender” and “sexuality”. The second section discusses disjunctures between conceptualisations of gender and sexuality on the level of social movement politics, while the third explores the gap through discussion of influential theories of gender subordination (within feminist work) and on sexuality (within queer theory). The fourth substantive section looks at how the interplay between gender and sexuality has been framed within intersectional perspectives. We also address some of the omissions within current intersectionality studies in this section. The last sections focus on major themes explored in the special issue: gendered household labour and family forms, individualisation, “race”/ethnicity and nation, social class, and finally, social movements and resistance.

Gender, Sexuality

The term “gender” has had a strong currency in Anglophone academic and political writing since the 1960s, when it successively replaced the term “sex roles” that was used (among others) in sexology, clinical psychology and (functionalist) sociology (Connell 2009b). The term was used both in sexology (by scholars and practitioners who worked with transsexual people) to theorise divergences between assigned [biological] sex and gender role or gender identity (cf., Brierly 2000) and by feminists who wished to highlight the cultural and political nature of women’s oppression through focus on sexual difference (cf. Oakley 1972). Feminists have theorised gender as a set of power relations and explored their pervasive articulation across the fields of politics, production, consumption, culture, inter-subjectivity, emotionality, etc.

In many feminist theories of subsequent decades, the concept gender operated in tandem with the term sex, designating a “cultural” addition—through constructions of masculinity and femininity—to the biologically grounded ontological reality of sexed bodies (Nicholson 1995). Feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir (1976) advanced notions of gender as a process or *becoming*, indicating lack of fixedness. Assumptions regarding the foundational role of “sex” (as a unique and clearly categorisable form of embodiment) in theories of gender have been challenged in some postmodern gender theories, such as Judith Butler’s (1990) theory of gender performativity. Similar arguments have also been advanced by feminists who deconstruct biological discourses on sexual difference from within a critical science studies perspective (Fausto-Sterling 2000). Advocates of “corporeal feminism” nevertheless insisted on the significance of the experience of the materiality of the sexed body for any comprehensive theory of gender (Grosz 1994). Approaches displaying a social constructionist dimension have in common that they highlight the cultural and historical contingency of gendered meanings and practices.

Like the concept of gender, “sexuality” has been a contested and unstable term in social theory. And like gender, it relates to the body and has frequently been framed in the arena of reproduction (Connell 2009b). Sexual identities and practices are embedded in wider social relations and have been implicated in kinship and family systems, economic, social, and cultural formations, processes of moral, legal and medical regulation, strategies of government and the creation of cultures of resistance (Weeks 1986). According to Foucault (1990), sexuality is a non-essentialist entity and effect of discourses regulated by a “regime of power-pleasure-knowledge” (p. 10). Although a very wide range of emotions, pleasures, and actions can be sexualised, hegemonic notions of sexuality in the West have advanced gender-coded definitions (around notions of other-sex and same-sex desire) which have crystallised into core categories of “sexual orientation” such as “heterosexual” and “homosexual”—and, although much more unstable and contested, “bisexual” (Sedgwick 1995). (See below for further discussion.)

There are historical reasons for the disjuncture between work on gender and sexuality. In the following sections, we explore the tension between gender and sexuality theories both from the viewpoints of social movement histories and theoretical genealogies. These dynamics are closely interconnected.

On the Disjuncture Between Gender and Sexuality

Theories of gender have been driven by critical analysis from within feminism and in recent decades, also within masculinity studies and then transgender studies (including transfeminism) (Connell 1987; Nestle et al. 2002). Feminist activists and theorists with distinct theoretical leanings have explored power around sexuality. The role of (hetero)sexuality in sustaining patriarchy, sexuality as a cornerstone of discourses on femininity and masculinity, the normativity of gendered scripts regarding sexual interaction, the double standard in moral discourse, the dominant construction of notions of sexual pleasure (orgasm), objectification, pornography, sexual violence, and reproductive freedom all were important items on the agenda of feminist movements in North America, Europe and elsewhere from the 1960s (Feminist Review 1987; Segal 1994).

Some strands within radical feminism posited sexuality as the key relation in the constitution of hierarchical gender relations via the institutionalisation of heterosexuality. “Sexuality is the social process through which social relations of gender are created, organized, expressed, and directed, creating the social beings we know as women and men, as their relations create society”, argues, for example, Catherine McKinnon (1989, p. 3). This line of analysis emphasised violence as a feature frequently defining women’s experiences of sexuality (see also Brownmiller 1975; Dworkin 1981, 1988). Although not all would agree on sexuality (or sexual violence) as *the* key defining issue, the focus on violence has constituted a contribution taken up by a wide range of feminist and anti-homophobic writers.

The critique of patriarchal gender relations at the heart of heterosexual sex and relationships went, for some, hand in hand with the articulation of a distinctively feminist ethics of sexuality which represented female eroticism (between women) as free of domination and aggression (see English et al. 1987; Segal 1994). This vision advanced a scheme of normativity that in many instances sustained demands for censorship or the contestation of the presence of certain sexualities in public space, including feminist spaces. Not all activists were happy with this development and feminists began to engage

in a battle around clashing sexual political agendas. In the following section, we briefly examine the historical development of what became known as the “sex wars” and which have had continued repercussions.

“Sex Wars” of the 1980s

Some radical feminists and advocates of “political lesbianism” who organised themselves in campaigns against pornography and violence against women, began to cast certain erotic phenomena, including heterosexuality, bisexuality, penetrative sex, BDSM, pornography, butch/femme culture, and transgender identification as a problem *per se* (Jeffreys 1994; Raymond 1980; Only Women Press Collective 1981).

Other libertarian and self-defined “sex radical” women contested these politics using an anticensorship argument (Rodgerson and Wilson 1991; Vance 1992). They complained that feminist analysis had been guilty of stereotypical misrepresentations: gay male sexuality was depicted as objectifying and promiscuous, lesbian sexuality as essentially intimate and spiritual and bisexuality as a cop-out. They also objected to the characterisation of BDSM as violent and destructive. They rejected the demonisation of transgender identities (Riddle 1998) and were frustrated that some feminists had entered alliances with the New Right in campaigns countering pornography and especially, violent porn (Califia 2000). In general, this grouping contested the prioritisation of gender over sexuality in the analysis of power.

Other strands within feminism have continued this critique, stressing the need to foreground the problem of violence against women, to challenge the objectification of women’s bodies in dominant representations within most porn genres, the economic exploitation and harmful working conditions of many women in the porn industry, and more recently the “leakage” of porn culture into popular culture (Long 2012; Russell 1993).

In the 1980s, conflicts around feminist sexual ethics and theory escalated into the so called “sex wars” in feminism and lesbian feminism (Hunter and Duggan 1995; Vance 1992). These had a lasting impact on feminist debates concerning sexuality; they also gave rise to a radical theory of sexuality which by many is seen as a precursor to queer theory (Smyth 1992). Aside from the specific debates, tensions and actors, the theoretical point being made at the time was that sexuality should not be seen as a simple function of gender relations. Overall, the strongly polarising dynamics of the controversies of the time nonetheless reinforced a disjuncture between gender and sexuality analyses.

In the following section, we briefly explore some positions concerning the analytical separation of—or priority to—“sexuality” and “gender” within theorisations. We first discuss theorists who in discussing sexuality and gender, prioritise sexuality in theorisations. We then note others who argue for priority of gender in analysis before noting some wishes for “reconciliation” or linking of gender and sexuality theorisations.

Debates and Positions on the Disjuncture

Theorists who wrote within, or who were precursors of queer theory often held that sexuality should be separately theorised from gender. Gayle Rubin in “Thinking Sex” (1992), for instance, wrote:

I want to challenge the assumption that feminism is or should be the privileged site of a theory of sexuality. Feminism is the theory of gender oppression. To automatically

assume that this makes it the theory of sexual oppression is to fail to distinguish between gender, on the one hand, and erotic desire, on the other (p.307).

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick took up this point in *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), sometimes seen as a core text of early queer theory. Despite highlighting an inextricable interconnection between sexuality and gender, she argues “[t]he study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender” (p. 27) and, correspondingly, that “*antihomophobic inquiry is not coextensive with feminist inquiry*” (p. 27) [italics in original]. Similarly, Abelove et al. in the introduction to an influential lesbian and gay studies reader state: “Lesbian/gay studies does for *sex* and *sexuality* approximately what women’s studies does for gender” (Abelove et al. 1993, p. xv).

In contrast, other feminist authors argue for the priority of gender within studies linking gender subordination and sexuality. While queer theory embarked on the elaboration of critical theories on sexuality, many feminists have upheld the reservation that queer theory fails to provide an adequate theorisation of the common structural subordination of women across the globe (McLaughlin et al. 2006). Sexuality and gender may also have different “weightings” in analysis of socioeconomic divisions and in framing stratification (see below).

Stevi Jackson (2006), for example, argues that sexuality is constituted through the logic of gender. For Jackson, “sexuality and gender differ because the former is a sphere or realm of social life while the latter is a fundamental social division” (p. 42). Sexuality is not seen here as a fundamental social division. Rather, it is a “sphere of life”, not necessarily displaying the systemic and stratifying dynamics which are characteristic of social divisions. The current gender order, hinges upon heterosexuality and a clear division between homosexuality and heterosexuality (Jackson 2006, p. 43). For Jackson, gender has priority and the definitions homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual are all derived from gender definitions. Sexuality unfolds its importance primarily on the grounds that heterosexuality is more than just a question of desire and institutionalises a gender order which determines and sanctions a gendered division of labour. “As an institution, heterosexuality is, by definition, a gender relationship, (...) ordering not only sexual life but also domestic and extra-domestic divisions of labour and resources” (p. 44). In brief, sexuality is seen as related to the sphere of labour and political economy only through its dependence on gender as a social division. This means that the relationship between gender and heterosexuality is of a different order from that between gender and sexuality.

A similar view comes from Budhiraja et al. (2010), in context of Southern activist work. Human rights abuses against lesbians and bisexual women, for instance, are seen as shaped by gender prescription and standards as well as through sexual identity (p. 137), and these affect men and women (including gay, lesbian, and bisexual people) differently. Abuses of women (for instance, “corrective” rape; “honour” killings, forced marriages and childbirth) are, they argue, shaped by gender prescriptions—often used to justify cultural continuity (p. 137); women who have sex with women therefore operate within a context framed by gender inequality as well as nonconforming sexuality. Therefore the authors advocate that political strategies must dismantle gender inequity rather than targetting sexual practices only. “It is time for the sexual rights discourse to borrow strategies from one of its historical foundations and [to] add a category to its banner: gender justice” (p. 143).

Some writers (including some cited above), however, feel that the separation of gender and sexuality in analysis might be a temporary measure. Rubin did not see the stance of analytical separation as a turn away from feminism (see Butler 1994), but as a re-emphasis. “In the long run, feminism’s critique of gender hierarchy must be incorporated in a radical theory of sex, and the critique of sexual oppression should enrich feminism” (Rubin 1992, p. 309).

Butler (1994) challenged the proposal for a division of labour based on the assumption of different objects of study (gender or sexuality), arguing that this would deny the important

feminist contribution to lesbian and gay studies. Moreover, she suggests that this point of view implies that “the feminist contributions to thinking sexuality culminate in the supersession of feminism by lesbian and gay studies” (p.8). Here, Butler affirms both queer theory and feminism.

This debate also flows over into one between queer theorists and feminists who emphasise more structural and general constraints in (most) women’s lives, echoing earlier “sex wars”. Jackson argues that while queer theory has invested in unsettling the power relations around the hetero/homo dichotomy, most authors in the field fail to show concern with what happens *within* heterosexual relations and to challenge the everyday practices and institutional structures which ground a social order which is simultaneously gendered and heterosexualised (Jackson 2006, p. 39).

Thus, a number of voices call for a constructive merger of feminist and critical (queer) sexuality studies (McLaughlin et al. 2006, Jagose 2009). Yet practical fusion of feminist and (queer) critical sexuality perspectives is also obstructed by political differences and differences in the theoretical genealogies of the respective intellectual traditions. Structuralist and economic perspectives have been much more prominent in feminist theory as compared with critical sexuality studies. Among others, this is a result of the stronger and longer-lasting impact of structuralist (including Marxian) theories in feminist work. For example, many strands of feminism (including the work of radical feminists, anticolonial or “Third World” feminists and materialist feminists) have highlighted global—including socioeconomic inequalities—affecting women as well as men (Sen and Grown 1987). Since the early 1990s, feminists of the global South have taken up systematic and widespread violence against women as a key and neglected element of the wider subordination of women (see Ferree and Tripp 2006; Keck and Sikkinck 1998; UN Women 2013).

There is also a much stronger legacy of socialist and Marxist thought in feminism than in lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer politics. Socialist feminism was a very strong current in international feminist politics from the 1960s to the 1980s (Barrett 1980; Sargant 1981). The affiliation of lesbian and gay struggles with leftwing politics on the other hand was quite short-lived and in many countries it was largely confined to the brief period of early gay liberationist politics (Hennessy 2000; Power 1995; Robinson 2007). Socialist perspectives were also less prominent in (post[gay]liberationist) bisexual and transgender politics.

In the following, we briefly explore the different roles of structural economic perspectives in the history of gender and sexuality theories.

Gender Theories, Sexuality Theories and Structuralist Critiques

This section discusses key concepts within feminism and queer theory: respectively, patriarchy (or gender subordination) and heteronormativity. It focuses particularly on the role of the economic and political economy within the respective formulations. We also refer to the related and well known debate on “recognition” and “redistribution” as foci of social struggles.

Patriarchy and Gender Subordination in Feminist Theories

Feminist movements have a diverse history. This is reflected in different—and sometimes incommensurate—theories on the origins of gender and its role in the creation and reproduction of social inequalities. There have also been differences in use of terms. Yet a structuralist critique of gender referring to the role of institutions and structural, persistent social causation in the historical and continued subordination of women, has been incorporated by many varieties of feminism.

Early “radical feminist” theories assumed systemic and structural male domination of women and saw patriarchy as a primary social division. This was seen as stemming in part

from fundamental differences between the sexes (see Firestone 1979), although they also pointed to other aspects of oppression, for instance enacted through education and cultural beliefs, and particularly through systematic violence against women. Millet in *Sexual Politics* (1970) saw patriarchy as an institution through which all women are controlled by all men. This power is all pervasive, therefore appearing natural. Male supremacy derives from appropriation of women’s bodies, from compulsory heterosexuality and ultimately, from male violence (Brownmiller 1975; Rich 1986).

Critiques of the term patriarchy developed quickly, however. Social anthropologists argued that the latter was too static and not concerned enough with social and cultural variations (e.g. Whitehead 2006 [1979]). The term “gender subordination” was seen as preferable and more flexible. Writers such as Juliet Mitchell (1971), presented an early attempt from a Marxist psychoanalytic perspective to systematise “patriarchy”, arguing that it consisted of the structures of production, biological reproduction, sexuality and socialisation. Both capitalism and operations of patriarchal practices through the unconscious were of importance. Walby’s (1990) formulation (see also Walby 2009) posits six structures of domination including paid employment, domestic labour, the state and the law, cultural institutions, sexuality and violence: it is of note that violence is seen as separate structural source of domination.

Marxist feminists who have used the term patriarchy have tended to focus not only on class divisions among women (thereby refuting the idea of women as a class in industrialised societies) but on the mediation of women’s oppression by their position within relations of production (Beechey 1979). The latter implied a close focus on the gendered division of labour in both the spheres of domestic work and wage labour (Alexander 1976; Himmelweit 1995; see later section).

In most elaborations, feminist socialism/Marxism has posited gender (with some inclusion of sexuality) as a *separate* sphere of oppression which coexists with, but is not reducible entirely to class and the economic. Thus Hartmann posited a “dual systems theory”, giving capitalism and patriarchy equal weight (Hartmann 1979; see also Mies 1986).

Another criticism concerned the overgenerality of patriarchy. From the 1980s, black and ethnic minority women critiqued the idea as ethnocentric. For instance, for many women, state and more general racism might be an equivalent or greater source of oppression than male household domination (Amos and Parmar 1984; hooks 1982; Mirza 1997; Ramazanoglu 1989); this discussion was later taken up in debates over intersectionality (see later section). Feminists of the global South and decolonial or postcolonial feminists posited parallel critiques, highlighting the significance of geopolitical and economic inequalities and outlining theories of gender which frequently fuse anticolonial, antiracist, and anticapitalist agendas (Alexander 2005; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Basu 2010; Mohanty 2003; Sen and Grown 1987).

Postmodern/poststructuralist feminists have challenged the idea of a universal patriarchal order (Fraser and Nicholson 1990). Some wishing to emphasise variability, avoid the use of the term “patriarchy”, as in the term female subordination.

Raewyn Connell’s theory of gender relations similarly attempts to avoid shortcomings of dualism, which may fail to capture the complexity of gendered experiences and realities while also adhering to a concept of structure. Her relational framework posits that masculinity and femininity are not homogeneous categories and that gender positions are often fragmented. This allows for the perception of diversity—that is, multiple masculinities and femininities—and calls for the theorisation of the relationship between them. Connell’s work on masculinity in particular stressed relationality as one element within a wider comprehensive gender studies framework (Connell 2005). This also encompasses transgender identities and practices of transitioning (Connell 2009b). For instance, she employs the useful term “gender regime” (Connell 1987, 2009b), referring to the configuration of gender relations in particular

institutions or settings such as workplaces. Relatedly, the term gender order refers to the wider arrangement or patterning of gender relations within societies (Connell 2005, p. 4).

Connell stresses that despite diversity within cultural constructions, gender relations are patterned and durable and are therefore best understood as a social structure. Thus, gendered positions may be complex and shifting but also entail social and cultural hierarchies, both between men and women and within gendered categories (Beasley 2008; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). At the same time, they are shaped by “internal complexity and contradiction”, due to the implication of *multiple* (“intersecting”) social structures. (See discussion of intersectionality below.)

Feminist work in general, has come to place greater emphasis on agency, diversity and contingency and has historicised the concept of patriarchy. Tinsman (2002) writes that patriarchy is not a “master grid” but “a variety of arrangements derived from broad principles (which can change) legitimating men’s authority over women” (pp. 12–13). For Hennessy (2000, p. 23), contemporary, refined feminist theories of patriarchy see it as “a historically variant form of social organization” which structures social life “such that more social resources and value accrue to men as a group at the expense of women as a group”. Despite their malleability, patriarchal gender orders have shaped most socioeconomic formations and have certainly been fundamental to capitalism’s exploitative relations (p. 27).

Overall, structuralist and economic perspectives present a variable but substantial legacy across different currents of feminist activism and theory.

Heteronormativity as a Core Concept in Queer Theory

In contrast to the materialist feminist tradition, sexuality studies have not been particularly attentive to questions of political economy. Several social constructionist histories (most of which were published in the late 1970s and 1980s) which analyse the genesis of non-heterosexual subcultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (among others) from the point of changes in the productive/reproductive nexus, are an exception (e.g. Adam 1998; Weeks 1990; D’Emilio 1983; Matthaei 2008). More recently, a small number of scholars working in critical sexuality studies have emphasised the need to foreground class and political economy (e.g. Binnie 2004; Floyd 2009; Hennessy 2000).

From the 1990s, queer theory was established as an influential paradigm within sexuality studies. In the USA, queer studies originated within the Humanities and has been strongly influenced by French poststructuralist theories. Since early queer theory was primarily preoccupied with questions of identity and the regulation of desire, class perspectives and questions of political economy moved even further from focus (Hennessy 2000; Kirsch 2000). Early queer theory presented heteronormativity as one of the core concepts for theorising oppression and resistance in the field of sexuality, often without engaging with questions of class stratification and political economy (see Klesse 2007). Berlant and Warner (1998, p. 548n) define heteronormativity as “institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only as coherent (...) but also privileged”. Heteronormativity thus stands for a set of power dynamics which normalise and naturalise heterosexuality. This definition (like many others) focuses on discursive production and normative regulation, which reveals the influence of a largely Foucauldian model of power. Michel Foucault’s work on power/knowledge has been enormously influential for the formation of queer theory (Jagose 1996). Mostly represented through the theoretical language of discourse, heteronormativity is assumed to be organised in a netlike fashion, spreading across various terrains, including interpersonal interaction, moral sentiment, cultural values, social and institutional practices, modes of citizenship, legal frameworks, state politics and economic formations.

Despite its broad applicability, there are a range of problems in the conceptualisation of power through heteronormativity. As the term suggests, its concern is first of all with “normativity”. Yet certain forms of power, such as physical and military force (violence), deprivation and exploitation (of which some are quite relevant for the analysis of power within capitalism) are not easily captured within its basic premises (see Cooper 1995; Klesse 2007). This has also implications for the theorisation of forms of resistance and explains the prominence of a rather vague concept of “transgression” as a model for opposition (subversion) in queer theory (Wilson 1993).

Queer theory has diversified significantly since the 1990s and expanded its declared areas of interest (Eng et al. 2005). Over recent years, there has been a growth of publications from within queer studies that engage with political economy from an anticapitalist perspective, often driven by a concern with the sexual politics of neoliberalism (Binnie 2004; Duggan 2003; Eng 2010; Ferguson 2004; Floyd 2009; Manalansan 2005).

Moreover, other work from antihomophobic viewpoints is not undertaken within the scope of queer theory (Cohen 2001; Hennessy 2000; Richardson 2004). These developments notwithstanding, experts in the field continue to note the absence of a persistent and systematic focus on class in contemporary sexuality studies (Binnie 2011). It is also noteworthy that many of the studies which look at class use a framework informed by Bourdieu (1984, 1986) and present discussions of class which look primarily at the cultural reproduction of social class identities (Skeggs 1997; Taylor 2007; compare Anthias 2005), rather than more structural perspectives on class (Byrne 2005; Crompton 2008; Edgell 1993; Harvey 2011; Wright 2005).

It is against this backdrop, that materialist and socialist feminists read the growing influence of queer studies primarily as a symptom of the cultural turn.

Jackson, for example, argues that the adaptation of a queer analysis implies moving “away from gender as a social division towards understanding gender as cultural distinction” (Jackson, quoted by McLaughlin et al. 2006, p.12). The editors of a book calling for an exchange between (materialist) feminism and queer theory deplore that queer theory and feminism are frequently pitched against each other along a set of allegedly mutually incommensurable oppositions. In this view, feminism is said to embrace materiality, the economic, the collective and the global, whereas queer studies is conflated with the discursive, the micro-political, individualism and the cultural (McLaughlin et al. 2006, pp. 3–4).

“Recognition” and “Redistribution”

Related to this is the debate on “recognition” and redistribution. Much has been written about Butler’s (1997) critique and Fraser’s (1997b) response and there is no need to rehearse these arguments here in any detail. We cite this briefly here, as the debate points towards controversies with regard to the relative significance of gender and sexuality within processes of social structuration and economic stratification.

Fraser (1997a) distinguishes between struggles for recognition and struggles for redistribution in an attempt to conceptualise and reconcile social movement politics around collective identities with the more traditional concerns of class-based politics with the redistribution of wealth and class inequalities. She argues that some movements operate on the level of (economic) distribution, while others are rooted in (cultural) misrecognition. Fraser argues that certain, but not all, collective identities (other than class) affect injustices on both levels. Whereas she sees gender and race as “bivalent categories” which encompass both recognition and distribution, the oppression of “de-spised sexualities” (such as, for example, lesbians and gay men) operates primarily in the cultural field, rather than through economic disenfranchisement and subordination (Fraser 1997a).

Critics have challenged this classification and argued instead that oppression on the grounds of sexuality can be rooted both in cultural processes *and* the economic structure. In the debate between Butler and Fraser, Butler (1997, p. 270) for instance, takes issue with Fraser's designation of queer struggles as "merely cultural". This claim, Butler argues, implies an active forgetting of much of the achievements of materialist and Marxist feminism of the 1970s and 1980s, which "sought to establish the sphere of sexual reproduction as part of the *material* conditions of life, a proper constitutive feature of political economy" (p. 272). Although the main protagonists take different positions on the issue, this controversy points towards the implication of gender and sexuality in the economic relations of neoliberal capitalism. We agree with other commentators that more work needs to be done to determine the role of gender and sexuality in capitalist accumulation and regulation (cf. Bedford and Rai 2010).

This section has indicated that there exist, and sometimes persist, differences in theoretical positions, topics of study, and social movement claims. Our discussion indicates that boundaries between fields of study can at times be fluid. This is part of an endeavour to explore how gender and sexuality-related practices connect and are constitutive of one another. They also unfold in relation to economic processes of class differentiation.

The concept of intersectionality is relevant at this point.

Intersectionality, Gender, Sexuality and Political Economy

Debates on intersectionality have their roots in conversations among black and other racialised women in the late 1970s and 1980s who strove for the articulation of an adequate political strategy to challenge what the Combahee River Collective (1979) called the "simultaneity of interlocking oppressions". This was elaborated during subsequent decades (see for example hooks 1982; Collins 1990; Mohanty 1988). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992, p. 20) argue that early debates on intersectionality tended primarily to look at the interplay of oppressive practices around gender, race and class (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 1992; Davis 1982).

The coinage of the term is attributed to the critical legal studies scholar Kimberley Crenshaw (1989, 1994), who presented a black feminist critique of unidimensional legal anti discrimination frameworks. Debates on intersectionality within feminism have diversified, the concept has travelled and been applied to a wide terrain of subject matters, informing research agendas, theories and methodological approaches and political strategies (Brah and Phoenix 2004; Cho et al. 2013; Grabham et al. 2009; Lutz et al. 2011). Individual approaches differ significantly and there is no homogenous approach to intersectionality. For example, McCall (2001) distinguishes approaches that highlight "intercategorical complexity" from those that are primarily concerned with "intracategorical complexity".

Controversies exist regarding how to account for intersectionality in detail. For example, Crenshaw (1994) uses the metaphor of a "crossroads"; Yuval-Davis (2006, 2011) speaks of different "axes" or "social divisions" and Davina Cooper (1995, 2004) of "organizing principles" or "social dynamics". There has also been a debate which and how many social divisions (or forms of oppression) are relevant for social analysis. Yuval-Davis (2011, p. 160) rightly comments that the questions of how many social divisions may matter in a certain context, which ones are salient, and for whom, cannot be decided in advance. Ultimately, this is the outcome of both political struggles as well as of analytical processes. Intersectionality may best be understood as an heuristic device, a sensitising concept or a "corrective methodology", which designates a field that is necessarily ambiguous and incomplete (Anthias 1998; Davis 2008; Yekani et al. 2011).

Intersectionality approaches have in practice tended to focus on questions of ethnicity/ "race" and gender. This has sometimes meant that sexuality (among others) as an identity

and division has been marginalised. This absence is striking, since sexuality was treated as an important social division in the contributions of lesbian feminist antiracist theorists and activists (and their allies) (see Anzaldúa 1987; Lorde 1988). “Intersectional” perspectives are also a core feature of contemporary queer-of-colour critiques (e.g. Ferguson 2004; Haritaworn 2007; Johnson and Henderson 2006). This cannot be said of sexuality studies in general, as these have barely started to engage with this debate (see Taylor et al. 2011) and do not usually show a great deal of concern for social divisions beyond sexuality—mirrored, too, in the widespread silence on race, class or age (see Binnie 2011; Kuntsman and Miyake 2008; Plummer 2010).

As the debate on intersexuality has unfolded, the original focus on multiple oppressions and the conditions of inequality slowly eroded and has given way to an ever expanding preoccupation with identity categories. The political texts of the early contributors to the debate are now rarely read and cited, allowing for an accelerating individualisation within academic approaches to intersectionality (Cho et al. 2013; Erel et al. 2011). This implied moves away from questions of class and political economy and marginalisation of class analyses.

Linking this topic with earlier discussions, if we frame the question of relative “weight” of the cultural and economic (as in the redistribution/recognition debate) through the lens of intersectionality, the question presents itself as one of how we understand the respective roles of gender and sexuality in processes of stratification. Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that the study of global (intersectional) processes of stratification would be more promising than a binary opposition between recognition and redistribution. Yet the fact that social class is a relatively neglected subject in work on intersectionality (Anthias 2001; 2005, McCall 2005; Skeggs 2004; Taylor 2009), is not conducive to attempts to redirect the focus to questions of stratification and political economy.

Our view is that the debates on intersectionality will be able best to enrich our understanding of questions relating to gender, sexuality and political economy to the extent that they reconcern themselves with class and stratification (Yuval-Davis 2011; see Anthias 2001 and in this volume).

The Special Issue

The special issue is based on a workshop “Gender, Sexuality and Political Economy”, which took place 24–25 May 2011 at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. We organised this workshop to create a space to bring work on gender and sexuality in dialogue. The workshop, which was sponsored by MMU’s Institute of Humanities and Social Science Research, explored possible complementarities and overlaps (or else, contradictions or incompatibilities) between approaches within feminism, gender studies, transgender studies, lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer studies, with the aim of strengthening our understanding of the current conditions for collaborative agency and coalitional struggles and for more egalitarian social change(s). Contributions addressed questions linked to gendered and sexual positionings and gendered labour in the context of economic crisis and growing social class divisions in different locations. They also explored the construction of gendered and sexual subjectivities and politics in the context of specific welfare, migration and consumption regimes in a range of geographical settings. Other discussions included links between economic factors (for example poverty, deregulation, neoliberal programmes) and intimate and sexual practices and shifting identities.

We are pleased now to be able to present some of the research contributions which were first presented at this workshop. The papers chosen for this special issue include keynote presentations from the workshop, a selection of papers presented and some specially commissioned work. The special issue has been designed to reinforce the “gendering” and “queering” of debates on political economy and to infuse work on gender and sexuality with class and economic perspectives.

The contributions address a number of questions, more than can be fully address here. Several are addressed below.

Main Themes Discussed

The articles contained in this special issue cover a wide range of themes of relevance to gender, sexuality and political economy. In this section, we highlight those that are discussed across many or most contributions, and which are of greatest salience to bridging discursive and material divides between different analyses. The themes discussed are: labour within households; individualisation; ethnicity, “race” and nationalism; social class, and social movements.

Labour Within Households; Family Forms

Labour within households—mainly although exclusively that of women—is important in understanding the workings of socioeconomic systems, including capitalism. This is, of course, also key to analysis of gender systems (Connell 2009a; Hochschild and Machung 2012; Scott et al. 2006). Closely linked with the topic of household labour is that of family forms within capitalism and other economic systems: both encompass gender relations as well as sexual (and sexualised) relations. These themes are taken up by several articles within this journal issue.

Household labour has usually been naturalised and so seen as not in need of analysis (see, e.g. Engels 1972). Initially the question of domestic labour was taken up by Marxist feminists (Gardiner 1975; Himmelweit and Mohun 1977), discussing how this supported capitalist systems, reproducing workers on a daily basis: the debate here centred around whether this labour was “productive” in the sense of creating surplus value or otherwise. This discussion moved into wider feminist contributions to the nature of housework—that is outlining its scope, the “discovery” of unpaid labour; the long hours worked by women, types of work undertaken and its social and economic necessity, despite the continued lack of recognition (e.g. Beechey 1987; Oakley 1985; Himmelweit 1995; Gutiérrez Rodriguez this volume).

With impetus from feminists working in the fields of anthropology and development studies, this strand of debate broadened, pointing out the gender-biased nature of many official statistics, which usually ignored women’s work within homes and on farms (e.g. Nelson 1981; Dixon-Mueller 1985; Benería 1992; Elson 2002; Benería et al. 2003); related work discussed the nature of internal workings and dynamics of households (e.g. Folbre 1986; Morris 1990; Sen 1990; Bergeron 2010). Still other work extended these insights to the world of “informal” (noncontractual) work, in which women play a large part (Chen et al. 2004; Scott 1994).

One of the (relative) successes of feminist writing and agitation has been some official recognition—for instance, by the International Labour Office (International Labour Office ILO 2013a, 2013b)—of the need to measure women’s real and hidden economic contributions, which form one of the underpinnings of gender subordination.

More recently, this discussion has encompassed other forms of “domestic” work including caring labour, noting its typical gender-coding. It has also encompassed the transnational nature of some of these forms of labour, with globalisation and increased migration (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995). Other pathbreaking feminist work, for example by Glucksmann (1995, 2005) argues that the terms of reference of work should be shifted to the total social organisation of labour (TSOL). This work as a body moves in somewhat different directions, but serves to underline the gendered nature of such work as well as the need for unpaid and caring labour as a support to other types of economic activity—typically paid, formalised and with higher status.

Closely linked with the question of the necessity for, and gendered nature of, much “household” labour is that of family forms in capitalism and other economic systems. Functionalist work in sociology (e.g. Parsons and Bales 1956; Goode 1970) asserted that the nuclear family, usually conceptualised as a male breadwinner, a wife with responsibility mainly in the home and containing requisite number of offspring, was a good or functional “fit” with modernity and that extended family forms would decline with modernisation. The fit that was seen as appropriate included the sex role division. This was in fact not a widespread form of family life in most societies, outside Western societies in the 1950s–1970s (Barrett and McIntosh 1982; Therborn 2004). In any case, with changes in late capitalism or postmodernity the nuclear family has become much less typical. Socioeconomic changes include the mass entry of women into paid labour forces, either on part-time or full-time bases; rising rates of divorce and separation; growing numbers of people (of various sexes) living together outside marriage and growth in numbers of children born outside legalised marriage relations in the West (Kiernan 2007; Scott et al. 2006). The exponential growth in lone or female-headed households in various parts of the world is also of note (Chant 1997; Therborn 2004). Framing—or perhaps, underpinning—these changes are changes in flows, forms of and regulation of capital internationally (Harvey 2011), with deindustrialisation in the old industrial areas of the West, the growth of Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) from 1960s; then China, and now Brazil, India and Viet Nam. These economic developments have been accompanied by policy loosening labour regulation and contracts, undermining job security and unsettling previously “male” forms of labour—skilled manual labour and longterm jobs (Standing 1989; Wilson 1996; Elson 2002).

The loosening of family forms has occurred in tandem with growth of neoliberal forms of capitalism and weakens previous assertions about the necessity of particular family forms for capitalism (Floyd 2009). Or, it could be said that although “capitalism” (or agents within capitalist systems) can make use of particular family forms such as the nuclear family, capitalism has also proven flexible and adaptable. Apparently different family forms—including lesbigay, poly, female-headed households, lone person households—have potential to meet needs for labour within capitalist systems. We therefore argue that capitalism is not intrinsically linked to particular family and household forms, although capitalist enterprises do have “needs” for labour and preferably, well socialised, healthy bodies.

Within this volume, four articles take up the issue of gendered and sexualised household labour, and two discuss family/household formations. Gutiérrez Rodríguez discusses the feminisation of housework within a feminist and queer analysis which also takes into account the coloniality of contemporary labour and migration regimes. Klesse discusses potential tensions over household labour within polyamory households, and reflects on class dynamics which underpin polyamorous family and household formation. He notes that polyamory is a relatively “new” form of life (at least, as intentional community). However, it does not necessarily disrupt capitalist relations as such. Gutiérrez and Klesse both argue that stereotypical gendered divisions of labour persist within nonheterosexual households. Portocarrero discusses care work as part of women’s traditional identities: this extends beyond but also encompasses household labour, including childcare, housework and elder care. Jacobs notes how “the domestic” extends to the agricultural sphere in some agrarian socioeconomic settings. Women’s work is a crucial underpinning of smallholder farming, and it is difficult to disentangle farm, housework, gender, and sexuality within this formation, which exists both in noncapitalist and capitalist systems. The concept total social organisation of labour (Glucksmann 2005) is likely to assist future analyses of such systems.

Feminist materialist analyses have thus explored other aspects of economic life relevant to (if sometimes complicating) political economy and class analysis. These include (as above) the

role of unpaid labour in households, within agriculture, in the informal sector and in the TSOL. It also highlights the continued gender coding of such labour. These emphases are relevant as well to analyses of heterosexuality/heteronormativity.

Individualisation, Capitalism and Sexuality

Individualisation of identities—with effects particularly for sexual identities—is an underlying theme in a number of contributions. Work from the time of Giddens' (1992) contribution has asserted the increased individualisation of forms of association and of identity, with effects for family and sexual relations.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) analysis is complex, and rests on the assumption of erosion of class identity through widespread employment and buffering of risks through the welfare state. Individualisation stands for a wide-ranging cultural process of erosion and evolution which has destabilising effects on the family, marriage, parenting and communities as well as on labour (2002, p. 31). Individualisation also helps to explain the rise of social movements, posited as replacing class politics.

Individualisation of identity has also been linked to globalisation of tastes and identities, perceived and marketed as constructed particularly through consumption practices (Featherstone 2007). These processes are underpinned and made possible by the spread of manufacturing to "new" global areas, by weakening of labour movements and accompanying weakening of states and state provision for welfare, subsidies or for industry (Harvey 2007; Sklair 2002). Hennessy (2000) notes capitalism's prescription of autonomous, self-sufficient individuality as important in framing new identities "suitable" for consumer society. This affects worldviews and identities, including sexual and gender identities, which often become more individualised. Images of women and women's bodies have been key within advertising and marketing. Lesbian identities, too, have been drawn into commoditisation circuits (see Hennessy 1995). The increased visibility of LGBT culture in the consumer sphere is often read mistakenly as an indicator of the necessarily "homophilic" tendencies of capitalism (Binnie, this volume).

Individualisation is discussed in different ways and settings within this volume. For Jacobs, this is of relevance within policies of land privatisation, which in turn are often linked with more secure rights for women (Jacobs 2004). However, privatisation of property holds pitfalls, since many poor women and men are likely to lose any land gained, particularly when this has to be used as collateral against loans (Fortin 2005). For Portocarrero Lacayo, the individualisation implied in sexual empowerment and knowledge, is a trend that potentially orients women away from community solidarity as well as providing benefits for them as individual actors. Binnie and Klesse both note that class analyses have been relatively rare in discussions of LGBTQ communities, since theorisations and policy discussions seen as of relevance, have often been framed at the microlevel and in terms of sexual choice, necessarily operating at individual level. Although not taking up this topic explicitly, Hoang hints at the work choices made at individual level by the bar girls who form a backdrop to the activities of businessmen in sexualised settings.

"Race"/Ethnicity/Racialisation/Nationalism and Community

The categories of ethnicity, "race", nation/ nationalism refer, variously, to aspects of identity which are—or are thought to be—distinguished through cultural criteria, or phenotypical markers in the case of "race" (Barth 1969; Miles 1982; Murji and Solomos, 2005; Smith 2010; Yuval-Davis 1997). Although variable, these criteria are transmitted generationally in and through households, families and communities of various types, including religious/ethnic

communities. These are also distinguished by operating both at individual and group levels: for instance, although individuals may “carry” ethnic or national identity, these are viewed as attributes of a larger group or formation (in the case of nation states or national identities). Debates among feminists from minority and majority ethnic and racialised groupings have played formative roles in the development of intersectionality perspectives (see above) and in the directions taken by feminist activism and writing more generally. Although “race”, ethnicity and nation are not the main focus within this special issue, they are always “present”—and form a strand within the discussions here. Ethnic/religious and racialised othering play key roles in stigmatising and marginalising some groups, often minority ethnic/national/racialised groupings, while often privileging others. Additionally, these categories have become closely intertwined with global inequalities—themselves formed in part through Western colonial projects (see from a large literature Galeano 1997; Grieg et al. 2007; Hage 2000; Wallerstein 2004). They may cut across and add complexity to (or alternatively, reinforce) other sources of identity and social division such as gender, class, sexuality or dis/ability.

As noted above, queer and sexuality studies have perhaps been less active in acknowledging racialised and national differences and inequalities than contemporary gender and feminist studies, although exceptions exist in the writings of queers of colour. Klesse notes marginalisation of some groups in his discussion of potential exclusions within polyamory communities and households. Gutiérrez discusses the coloniality or racialisation of domestic work within the European Union; this has gone along with the development of transnational migration and the precarisation of domestic and care labour. This process has ethnic and national as well as class(ed) dimensions since people undertaking low paid, insecure and often low status work often migrate from poorer countries. Alternatively, they are often drawn from ethnic minority groups within a nation. Anthias highlights how intersectional perspectives contributed to analysis of the variety of types of violence against women. For instance, ethnic minority women facing household violence—as has often been remarked (Amos and Parmar 1984; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1994)—may face state racism as well as abuse within the household. Or in another instance, honour-based violence has become identified with racialised minorities. Honour-based violence is considered by the UK Crown Prosecution Service to be distinguished from other forms of violence by a degree of approval or collusion from family or community members, when it is deemed that the group has been shamed (cited in Anthias, this volume). This issue has been highlighted in Western media and popular culture as linked with Muslim community groupings; therefore, this discourse has itself become identified with Islamophobic expressions. However, the honour/shame complex has been common throughout the Mediterranean area, including in Christian southern Europe (Peristiany 1966), as Anthias notes. More, it may not be easy to distinguish “honour” killings and “ordinary” abuse and murder (by ethnic majority men and sometimes, women) of women deemed to be sexually unfaithful.

Some articles emphasise the categories of nation and nationalism. Binnie outlines how Polish national identity has been used by rightwing populist groups (or governments) such as the Law and Justice Party to mobilise nationalist sentiment against LGBTQ visibility and identity. LGBTQ people are stigmatised not only as “not truly Polish” but (with echoes of historical anti-Semitism) also as linked to “transnational” forces beyond the boundaries of Poland such as the European Union: i.e. “Eurogays”. Epprecht (2005) similarly notes how nationalist movements have sometimes fomented homophobic mobilisations in southern Africa. Jacobs observes that land movements and land claims are often bolstered by links with national and/or racialised identities. National and racial identity are evident, for instance, in mobilising demands concerning land claims in the settler societies of South Africa and Zimbabwe (Hammar et al. 2003; Hanlon et al. 2012; Jacobs 2010). The theme of national resistance forms an important backdrop for Hoang’s study of Vietnamese businessmen in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Hoang deploys a relational masculinity framework and outlines how businessmen deliberately “lead on” Western, especially American,

businessmen seeking to close deals in the expanding capitalist economy of Viet Nam. The Vietnamese men have no interest in closing deals with the Americans; rather, they use displays of prosperity both to bolster their own masculinity and to underline Viet Nam's new position in the global economy. The spectre of excolonial and imperialist wars against Viet Nam looms large.

Social Class

One of the aims of the special issue is to bring class back into analyses. Recent emphases on individual identities, flexibility, choice, consumption, and the cultural (when seen as unattached to other structural aspects) have at times acted to obscure class divisions (see Pakulski and Waters 1996). This is paradoxical: in fact class and wealth divisions have been increasing in most wealthier countries since the 1970s (Stiglitz 2012; Westergaard 1995) while the gaze of much social research has focussed in other directions. Thus, social class has moved from occupying a central position in social analysis (see, e.g. Crompton 2008; Edgell 1993; Marshall 1989, 1997; Wright 1985) to one marginalised or often ignored. At times, this has taken place in favour of analyses of other axes of differentiation.

Work connecting ethnic and racialised divisions with class has a long history (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Marable 1991; Rex and Moore 1979; Wilson 1996). Some feminist materialist analyses (Mann and Crompton 1986; also Davis 1982), explorations of masculinity (Connell 1998), or works incorporating cultural aspects of class (Skeggs 1997) have drawn connections between gender and class. Intersectional research, as discussed above, has highlighted the interconnected nature of social divisions (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 1992; Collins 1990). The idea of intersectionality has acknowledged the intertwined nature of different "divisions" from the standpoint of individuals, but as Anthias notes (2001; this volume), often sidelines class analysis in practice.

The current economic crisis has sharply exacerbated class divisions. Structural analysis of class, class inequalities and how neoliberal socioeconomic policies have increased these, have recently received greater attention (Harvey 2011; Jones 2011; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009; Wright 2005).

Within this volume, social class is a strand that runs through most articles. As noted, Anthias discusses the marginalisation of class analyses in intersectional perspectives. Gutiérrez Rodríguez observes the differential positioning of care workers by informal/formal employment status and social class, in analysing feminised caring labour. Jacobs notes the positioning of women as labour—potentially a (gendered) class position—within peasant and smallholder households. Portocarrero examines how empowerment strategies may "carry" class elements so that poorer Nicaraguan women doubt "traditional" or indigenous knowledge—coded as lower in status—about sexuality and bodies. Hoang's analysis centres around elite men in Ho Chi Minh City and how they underline and display their class and financial positions. Klesse notes the classed exclusions in many polyamory households and movements, evident in differential ability to purchase property, to travel and to access other resources. And Binnie's complex analysis notes both the frequent marginalisation of class analysis in sexuality studies, as well as how Polish working class people's interests, under attack through neoliberal economic policies, are mobilised against an internal LGBTQ grouping cast as "outsiders" and as privileged.

Social Movements and Resistance

Social movements are usually considered to be collective actions for some type of social change, operating outside established bodies or institutions (Jasper 2011). Diani (1992)

stresses the aspect of development of shared identity and definition of movements, as actors being on the same “side” of a social conflict. This (dynamic) is reflected in a definition of social movements as consisting of networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations engaged in political and/or cultural conflict on the basis of shared collective identity (1992, p.3).

Della Porta and Diani (1999) cite four key aspects of social movements: (1) informal interaction networks; (2) shared beliefs and solidarity; (3) collective action focussing on conflicts (promoting or opposing social change) and (4) use of protest (e.g. Tilly 1993 among others), discussed how the dynamics of social protests are tied in with political and socioeconomic contexts.

Social movements and resistances form a strong theme within this volume, although not using formal aspects of analysis such as network analysis (Diani and McAdam 2003; Tanaka 2004) or opportunity structures (Tarrow 1998), such as shifting alignments, divisions between elites or access to influential allies. Tarrow showed how social movements can influence various spheres of life such as policy reforms within states as well as personal lives—both, relevant to the study of sexuality and gender.

It is important to note as well, that not all “resistance” takes the form of social movements or collective action (Jacobs 2004; Pankhurst and Jacobs 1988). And what constitutes a social movement has added complexity in the contemporary world, given the growth of NGOs in developmental contexts (Hickey et al. 2008); often these come to substitute for a state weakened through neoliberal policies. More positively, a lead is sometimes offered by international agencies such as UN Women (see for instance, Ford 2013).

The movements and resistances discussed here range from LGBTQ movements to feminist/woman-centred movements for empowerment and resource rights; to polyamory as an organised contestation and movements for land rights. Most of the movements discussed here fit broadly into a human rights frame aiming for greater individual autonomy, control and expression, but sometimes also touch on group rights (e.g. for land; women’s legal rights; rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and poly people).

For instance, Klesse discusses polyamory networks; his article is an intervention in their development towards greater inclusivity, especially in class and ethnic terms. Anthias discusses different kinds of claims made concerning violence against women when intersectional perspectives are taken into account. Portocarrero focuses on contradictions within the work of two Nicaraguan feminist NGOs which seek empowerment of women through greater openness about sexuality in its different manifestations. Jacobs’ work on gendered land rights cites a number of social movements organised around gender, nature and land, ranging from ecofeminist trends to contemporary movements asserting women’s claims to livelihood autonomy or greater sexual autonomy on the basis of “new” family forms.

Not all movements are “progressive” in terms of advocating greater democracy or inclusiveness (see, e.g. Butalia 1995). Binnie’s article illustrates this through discussion of mobilisation of right-wing populist organisations against demands made by LGBTQ people. Or, movements may be democratic with respect to one demand (such as that for land redistribution) but these may have cross-cutting—often, unintended—consequences. Tilly (1999) noted that movement claims and movement consequences were not necessarily the same. Here, movements for livelihood security and economic justice (as above, sometimes they are populist movements) often exclude women and lessen their autonomy, as Jacobs argues. Many forms of overt and covert resistance and contestations also take place outside any social movement. For instance, the Vietnamese businessmen discussed in Hoang’s example acted as individuals, but were also connected through close social networks. Their individual actions—intended to contest and display hierarchy—result in effects for a wider group or network.

Last, social class appears as a division or sometimes, as contradiction within social movements: not surprisingly, class divisions pervade and cross-cut social movements as other aspects of society. The articles by Binnie, Jacobs and Portocarrero all indicate surprising consequences or twists when class is taken into account. Portocarrero's research indicates that NGO empowerment strategies have the capacity to be effective at individual levels but to underline class and income inequalities. Jacobs notes the sometimes contradictory impacts when women are not included within class-based movements; their own demands simultaneously encompass class and gender positionings and interests. Binnie analyses how LGBTQ people come to be assigned an (often fictitious) elite status contrasting with that of provincial Polish working class people.

The articles discussed above are presented in the following order.

Floya Anthias' work, alone and with Yuval-Davis, has done much to shape discussions of intersectionality. In the first article in the volume, Anthias focuses on how an intersectional approach rooted in political economy can be used to analyse different forms of violence against women.

Susie Jacobs' article next explores the little studied links between sexuality and gendered land tenure and land claims. Using a range of case studies, Jacobs argues that fears about women's sexuality and their key roles within households and farms, form important elements in resistance to claims for equitable land rights.

Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez examines the "feminisation" of domestic labour in Europe in the face of the persistence of heteronormative gender cultures, the neoliberalisation of working conditions, and racist regulations of citizenship practices.

Christian Klesse discusses socioeconomic inequalities within poly relationships and communities. He suggests that the poly movement will only be able to measure up to its self-declared egalitarian ethos, if it advances a more class-conscious critical reflexivity regarding nonmonogamy under conditions of neoliberal capitalism.

Ana Portocarrero Lacayo's study of two Nicaraguan NGOs focuses on strategies seeking to empower urban and rural women through encouraging greater sexual awareness and assertiveness. These strategies hold benefits, including feelings of greater self-confidence; at the same time, however, there exist risks. These include increased individualisation and devaluation of women's traditional caring roles, links, and knowledge; Portocarrero argues that the latter have synergies with neoliberal economic changes.

Jon Binnie's article explores the ambivalences, tensions and contradictions inherent within the sexual politics of neoliberalisation in the context of the contestation of LGBTQ politics in Poland. Binnie reminds us that neoliberal policies impact in very different ways on political struggles and discourses and cautions that critical theories on economics, class and sexuality need to pay close attention to national and regional contexts.

The volume concludes with Kimberly Hoang's study of Vietnamese masculinities, set against a backdrop of sex work venues in Ho Chi Minh City. Hoang finds that use of hard cash rather than credit in transactions allows wealthy local Vietnamese businessmen to deconstruct dominant Western ideals as well as to assert their place against Western businessmen and within the emerging global order.

Conclusion

This special issue has been designed to integrate the "gendering" and "queering" of debates on political economy and to infuse work on gender and sexuality with class and economic perspectives. Current socioeconomic developments and crisis highlight the pressing need to

integrate such perspectives. In the issue, we have also argued that scholars (and activists) still tend to categorise themselves, and to be categorised, as located in either “feminist”/“gender studies” frames or alternately, as fitting within “queer”/“sexuality studies” frameworks. Although there are differences and sometimes, disagreements between theoretical traditions and perspectives, these can overlook the close affinities between the concepts (Casey et al. 2006).

We do not claim to have bridged political and theoretical gaps, but we hope that the work presented here indicates how empirical, historical, and theoretical work can begin to do so—and sometimes, can pose new questions. We hope that this special issue further stimulates crossdisciplinary and crosscategorical work and debates.

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