



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Operationalising intersectionality in equality and domestic abuse policy in Scotland: Contradictions, contestations and erasure

Citation for published version:

Christoffersen, A & McCabe, L 2024, 'Operationalising intersectionality in equality and domestic abuse policy in Scotland: Contradictions, contestations and erasure', *Critical Social Policy*, pp. 1-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02610183241249696>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1177/02610183241249696](https://doi.org/10.1177/02610183241249696)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

Critical Social Policy

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Operationalising intersectionality in equality and domestic abuse policy in Scotland: Contradictions, contestations and erasure

ASHLEE CHRISTOFFERSEN

York University, Canada; University of Edinburgh, UK

LEAH MCCABE

University of Edinburgh, UK

Abstract

This article synthesises the findings from two studies on the operationalisation of intersectionality in Scotland: one in equality policy and NGOs, and the other in domestic abuse policy-making. Drawing upon Ashlee Christoffersen's framework of applied concepts of intersectionality, this article analyses the competing and contradictory ways that intersectionality is institutionalised in Scottish policy and practice. It highlights the contestations and debates that arise when actors with varying understandings, agendas, and levels of political will attempt to apply intersectionality. We argue that dominant approaches to applying intersectionality in Scottish equality and domestic abuse policymaking are additive and superficial, a consequence of power inequalities shaping who has access to policymaking processes and institutions. Beyond the Scottish case, the article highlights key lessons concerning how to

Corresponding author:

Leah McCabe, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD, UK.

Email: Leah.McCabe@ed.ac.uk

Critical Social Policy 1–25

© The Author(s) 2024 Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: [10.1177/02610183241249696](https://doi.org/10.1177/02610183241249696) journals.sagepub.com/home/csp

operationalise intersectionality in policy and practice in ways that are truer to its original conceptualisation in Black feminism.

Keywords

domestic abuse, equality, intersectionality, policy-making, Scotland

Introduction

Since critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term ‘intersectionality’ in 1989, there has been a surge in uptake of intersectionality in policy-making, academic scholarship, and activism. Broadly speaking, intersectionality moves beyond singular analyses of inequality and oppression to emphasise the interconnected nature of structural inequalities (racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, ableism). Structural systems of oppression are ‘reciprocally constructing phenomena’ rather than mutually exclusive and additive, meaning that they cannot be disentangled or treated independently from one another (Collins, 2015: 2). While Crenshaw (1989) provided important terminology and analytical tools to describe and examine interlocking social inequalities, there has been a long history of Black feminist scholarship and activism emphasising and subverting interconnected systems of discrimination, largely the intersection of racism, sexism, and class inequality (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984).

As intersectionality has traversed from its Black feminist roots to other geographical locations, contexts, and disciplines, actors have used it in different ways to interrogate other social structures and inequalities (such as sexuality and dis/ability) while shedding others (most notably the erasure of ‘race’ within the academy in Europe) (see Bilge, 2013). As a result, there have been varying – and sometimes competing, contradictory, and contested – conceptualisations of intersectionality. Black feminists and other feminists of colour have been increasingly concerned with the depoliticisation, co-option, and ‘whitening’ of intersectionality in policy and academic scholarship (Bilge, 2013; Cho et al., 2013; Emejulu and Sobande, 2019).

Feminists have established typologies and frameworks to evaluate articulations of intersectionality in policy and assess their effects, providing insightful observations across and within case studies in Europe and beyond (Christoffersen, 2021; cf. Hankivsky et al., 2014; Hankivsky and Cormier, 2019; Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustin, 2012). This article contributes to this scholarship by comparing and contrasting two separate case studies exploring applications of intersectionality in Scotland: Ashlee Christoffersen’s research on equality policy and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector, and Leah McCabe’s research on domestic abuse (DA) policy-making in post-devolution

Scotland. Drawing upon and advancing Christoffersen's (2021) framework of applied concepts of intersectionality, this article analyses the ways that intersectionality is institutionalised in policy and practice. It asks: whether, and in what forms, has intersectionality been conceptualised and applied in equality and DA policy in Scotland? How has intersectionality been understood by NGOs operating in these sectors? And with what effects on current and future policymaking and practice? We contend that it is salient to explore these questions in depth as intersectionality presents a paradigmatic challenge to the status quo of siloed equality policy-making and practice. For our purposes, what we mean by practice is the work of NGO sector practitioners to influence policy and deliver services relating to equality and DA.

We posit that Scotland, as a case, provides critical insights into conceptualisations of intersectionality in policy. Scotland is often characterised as a haven for feminist policy-making, largely through the integration of women's organisations in policymaking processes since devolution (see Charles and Mackay, 2013; Mackay, 2010). Feminist activists and academics often assume that the women's sector is the 'pathfinder' that best advocates for and progresses intersectional politics (Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023; see Evans, 2015, 2016). While this may be an erroneous assumption in reality (Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023), the proximity of the women's sector to the state in Scotland makes it a compelling case to explore questions around how equality NGOs shape policy discourses and directions, and at what cost. At the same time, there has been some government buy-in to integrating intersectionality in policy, such as the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls' deep dive into intersectional gender policy architecture (Scottish Government, 2022). Thus, Scotland presents a particularly important laboratory for expanding academic and policy knowledge on advancing intersectional policymaking.

By synthesising the findings from two Scottish studies, this article offers key lessons concerning how to operationalise intersectionality in policy and practice in ways truer to the initial intent of Black feminist thought and activism. Together, our data illustrate the contestations and debates that arise when actors attempt to embed intersectional frames and approaches in policy and practice. We provide further nuance to the finding that 'intersectionality' is understood and used in five contradictory ways in equality organising and policy, some of which advance intersectional justice while others serve to entrench inequalities further (Christoffersen, 2021). We demonstrate that dominant approaches to applying intersectionality in Scottish equality and DA policy-making are additive ones (what we call 'diversity within'/'gender-first' approaches), that are unable to incorporate the idea of always-interlocking inequality structures that produce both penalty *and* privilege. The latter means that, for example, women and racially minoritised people may experience penalty because of their gender and race respectively, at the same time as some

experience privileges as a result of other aspects of their identities (e.g., race and class). We demonstrate that these additive approaches are prevalent among policymakers and predominantly white feminist organisations, who have considerable epistemic power in constructing policy problems and solutions in equality policy arenas. It is important to note that this article focuses primarily on aspects of oppression highlighted by our participants (namely gender, race, ethnicity, faith and their intersections), leaving out other equality categories, notably class (see Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023 for greater discussion of gender identity, and disability; and Christoffersen, 2020 for discussion of constructed separations between identity-based ‘equality’ and socio-economic ‘inequality’ in the UK policy context).

The article progresses as follows: first, we critically engage with existing frameworks assessing articulations of intersectionality in policy and practice before presenting Christoffersen’s typology. Next, we outline the methods and case studies. The final sections present the key findings, discussion, and contributions. We conclude that there is an urgent need for more productive ‘intersections of strands’ approaches (by which we mean work of and with specific groups sharing intersecting identities e.g., women of colour) to be adopted in policy and in the equality and DA sectors. We suggest that this can be achieved by funding and meaningfully engaging with organisations that work at the intersections, who continue to be marginal to policymaking.

Frameworks and evaluations of intersectionality

The extent to which intersectionality has been purposefully applied in policy-making globally is very limited, yet this is an emerging field of research (La Barbera et al., 2022). Although intersectional thinking among equality professionals is nascent (Krizsan et al., 2012: 239), scholars of intersectionality and policy have provided important tools, case studies, and parameters for doing so (Hankivsky, 2012; Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery, 2019), joined by some NGOs (CRIAOW, 2006; Opportunity Agenda, 2017). Notwithstanding available methodologies of application, operationalising intersectionality in public policy also requires political will and adequate resources (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011). It further demands new knowledge and new *approaches* to knowledge.

Great Britain’s equality legislative and policy framework shapes how these debates operate within Scotland. The Equality Act 2010 (which applies to England, Scotland, and Wales) together with its enforcement counterpart, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), are unique internationally for including many different inequalities within their scope (Christoffersen, 2019; Hankivsky and Christoffersen, 2011; Hankivsky et al., 2019). At the time the Equality Act 2010 was being debated and

the EHRC was being established, it was thought by some that a joined-up equality infrastructure could lead naturally to greater intersectional thinking (Walby et al., 2012). However, there is also a profound contradiction between the way that identity and equality are conceptualised in UK equality law and a consistent intersectional approach to anti-discrimination and social justice (Solanke, 2011).

Within existing literature on intersectionality and policy, operationalisation of the former is often considered in the context of equality mainstreaming (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2019; Parken and Young, 2008), and mainstreaming of equality forms one of the Scottish specific regulations that support the Equality Act. However, equality mainstreaming often falls short of an intersectional approach because policymakers are uncertain about which intersectional categories they should include in their analyses. This often results in a process of adding and subtracting different equality strands, which does not reflect the complexities and realities of oppression and privilege (see Hankivsky and Cormier, 2019). Rather, an intersectional approach to policy-making would be one that takes into account the complexity of people's social positions, incorporating an understanding of these as being mutually constituted; as well as one that considers social divisions in operation at a structural level, beyond shaping individual social position and experience. Even as intersectionality is taken up, at least nominally, one-dimensional approaches, such as gender analyses, continue to prevail (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2019).

A particularly challenging recommendation for policy analysis from this literature is that 'when analysing social problems, the importance of any category or structure (e.g., socioeconomic status, race, or gender) cannot be predetermined; the categories and their importance must be discovered in the process of investigation' (Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery, 2019: 7). This means that relevant categories are contingent to time, place, and the policy issue in question. This approach to conceptualising the relationship between interlocking structures directly challenges siloed thinking which prevails in policy and practice, and particularly to the dominance of a unitary understanding of gender among equality categories in addressing social inequalities (Christoffersen, 2023). It also raises significant questions about how this approach can be operationalised in a way that avoids genericism, insofar as the focus remains on approaches that ambiguously benefit 'everyone', which may reproduce inequalities (Christoffersen, 2022). Yet there are clear examples where the importance of this insight is apparent. For instance, when (binary) gender is predetermined as the only or the most important category structuring the social problem of DA, violence experienced by LGBTQI+ people from partners and family members (including parents) is conceptually elided (Stevenson, 2023), as well as being materially omitted when policy responsibility for this sits in women's/gender policy units, and resourcing is limited to criminal justice and services for (heterosexual and cisgender) women.

Moreover, the different levels at which intersectional analysis can be undertaken, particularly more macro and structural levels, are underexplored in policy contexts, where discussion of intersectionality occurs primarily at the level of identity. In other words, the dominant approach to intersectionality in policy is to consider it at the personal identity level, as an attribute of individuals (Christoffersen, 2019; May, 2015). As has also been the case with systems of inequality conceptualised singularly, it is less challenging to established structures and ways of thinking for policy makers to locate the ‘problem’ of intersectionality within marginalised individuals rather than institutions.

Applied concepts of intersectionality

This article draws upon Ashlee Christoffersen’s (2021) conceptual framework to evaluate, assess, and juxtapose articulations of intersectionality in policy and by equality NGO practitioners within and across both case studies. This framework, derived primarily from research with practitioners, outlines five distinct - and contradictory - broad conceptualisations of ‘intersectionality’, some of which advance intersectional justice while others serve to entrench inequalities further. These five concepts are ‘*generic intersectionality*’; ‘*pan-equality intersectionality*’; ‘*multi-strand intersectionality*’; ‘*diversity within*’; and ‘*intersections of equality strands*’. Each will be covered in turn.

First, a ‘*generic*’ applied meaning is given to intersectionality wherein there is no focus or very little focus on any inequality in particular: the same work is delivered to benefit ‘all’, and applying intersectionality is envisioned as addressing issues that affect ‘everybody’ (i.e., not only or even primarily marginalised groups). This version describes a more generic commitment to equality and anti-discriminatory policy, which some participants conflate with intersectionality, and best fits with generic policymaking values and traditions. Intersectionality is seen as being ‘mainstreamed’, or a general approach to the work. In this meaning, there is no attention to power and marginality, and work targeted toward outcomes for the most disadvantaged is successfully constructed as being not intersectional - since intersectionality’s beneficiary is constructed as ‘everyone’ (Christoffersen, 2022).

Second, ‘*pan equality intersectionality*’ is addressing issues (e.g., mental health, hate crime) that affect all/most marginalised groups, through for instance joint campaigning and research. This applied meaning of intersectionality avoids predetermining which issues affect which social groups, facilitates more structural (vs. individual) understandings of intersectionality, and yet flattens differences and precludes work on issues that are not ‘common’.

Third, ‘*multi-strand intersectionality*’ is addressing inequalities in parallel, separately and/or simultaneously, a common misunderstanding of how to ‘do’ intersectionality among policymakers: doing all inequalities at the

same time, as reflected for example in templates for equality impact assessments. This application of intersectionality is additive (wherein instead of being viewed as mutually constitutive, other inequalities are ‘added on’ to one another). It reduces intersectionality to diversity, and effaces intersectional marginalisation.

Fourth, applications of intersectionality as ‘*diversity within*’ address the intersections *within* a marginalised group, e.g., differences among women. However, one inequality, namely sexism, is viewed as more important than others. This is how intersectionality is often addressed within single-issue women’s organisations: through inclusion projects targeted at intersectionally marginalised women. This applied meaning of intersectionality is also additive, views marginalised people as solely oppressed, and is unable to incorporate the idea of always-interlocking inequality structures which produce both privilege and penalty (Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023).

Finally, applied meanings of intersectionality as ‘*intersections of strands*’ involve work of and with specific groups sharing intersecting identities, e.g., disabled women. Crucially, no particular inequality is considered to be more important than the other(s). This meaning is manifested in intersectional organisations (those constituted at the intersection of multiple inequalities, e.g., Black and minority ethnic women’s organisations) and intersectional alliances (relatively equitable, formal and informal partnership projects across equality strands). In relation to intersectional organisations, we do not seek to argue that their work necessarily always constitutes a full acknowledgment of intersectionality; it is not the fact that the strands intersect, but that organisations are constituted at the intersection of multiple inequalities (as reflected in representation within the organisation, whom the organisation serves and represents as well as its mission statement) which makes them ‘intersectional’ as compared with most equality organisations which are single-issue ones. More importantly, we distinguish between different conceptualisations of intersectionality: intersections of strands (mutually constitutive), as compared with ‘diversity within’ (additive since one inequality is considered as the most important marker of inequality). These varying conceptualisations are not *determined* by type of organisation (intersectional vs. single-issue), but in our research and the comparative research we present in this article, we found them to be related. Nonetheless, within ‘intersections of strands’ applications by NGOs, intersectionality is often reduced to individualised experiences and identities, to the exclusion of thinking about the synthesis of inequality structures. There are also challenges of accounting for numerous salient markers of inequality (Christoffersen, 2021). Yet we see this conceptualisation of intersectionality as most productive, and in line with Black feminist theory.

Examining understandings of intersectionality enables the insight that multiple applied meanings given to the term simultaneously coexist in the

same context. Specifying each allows for identification of their strengths and conceptual and practical limitations. While some NGOs and policy-makers engage with the challenge intersectionality represents, others do so in ways that seek to merely incorporate it into the status quo. The following section presents the findings and comparisons across the two studies, providing an in-depth exploration of three applied concepts of intersectionality identified in our two respective studies/policy sectors: ‘generic’, ‘diversity within’ and ‘intersections of equality strands’. We focus on these three for several reasons. Firstly, these are the forms most significant to understand and explain the path-dependent barriers of operationalising intersectionality in Scottish equality and DA/violence against women and girls (VAWG) policy. We provide illustrative examples of how these concepts have been applied by NGOs and in policy but we also highlight how actors themselves were critical of their usage (particularly regarding ‘generic’ understandings of intersectionality). Secondly, the other two applied concepts of intersectionality (‘pan equality’ and ‘multi-strand’) are particularly related to the coming together of different types of equality organisations (e.g., racial justice, feminist, disability, migrant and LGBTQI+ rights). Christoffersen studied networks bringing together these organisations and these two concepts were associated with practice of networks rather than of individual member organisations. To its detriment, DA policy and practice does not tend to involve coalitions that include other types of equality organisations beyond the women’s sector, with the occasional exception of children’s organisations, and so these applied concepts do not organically emerge in our discussion of DA policy. If DA were to be conceived of as an issue affecting overlapping differently marginalised groups (‘pan equality intersectionality’) or even one as affecting other singularly conceived marginalised groups beyond ‘women’ (‘multi-strand intersectionality’), this would represent a markedly different framing from what we observed and will go on to discuss.

Methods

The data presented in this article draw primarily on two case studies derived from our PhD research, which both explored articulations and applications of intersectionality in Scotland. The projects were conducted separately but during the same period (between 2016–2021) and at the same academic institution.

Christoffersen’s case study explored how intersectionality is conceptualised and operationalised in the equality NGO sector and among equality policymakers in England and Scotland. Employing an ethnographic and participatory approach, the research explored three local networks of equality organisations (LGBTQI+ rights, racial justice, feminist, disability rights,

refugee organisations, and intersectional combinations) with documented commitments to intersectionality. This study employed a multi-method qualitative approach, drawing upon 41 interviews with policy-makers and representatives of organisations from 13 equality sub-sectors/intersectional combinations and network staff, 1 focus group, participant observation and documentary analysis of national and UK level equality policies, and equality network documents. This article draws upon data from Scotland, but we also make some comparisons with England in our discussion to highlight the particularity of the situation in Scotland.

McCabe employed a single-case study of DA/VAWG policymaking in post-devolution Scotland (1998–2018). McCabe explored how the ‘problem’ of DA has been framed in national policy in Scotland since devolution, including how intersectionality has been articulated, and with what effects. The study employed a feminist institutionalist approach, examining the opportunities (and constraints) feminist actors faced in introducing new policy frames within new institutions facilitated by devolution. It drew upon a process-tracing method, exploring when change happened (timing) and the order in which it occurred (sequencing) (see Pierson, 2000). The temporal approach to process tracing provided insights into the complex dynamics of change *and* continuity in (re)framing DA/VAWG policy over time, particularly the possibilities and limitations of embedding intersectional frames in policy. The process tracing method included a critical frame analysis of policy documents (predominantly national strategies produced by the Scottish Executive/Government) and 30 semi-structured interviews with experts in DA policymaking and service provision, including actors from the VAWG sector, the women’s sector, the public sector, the civil service, academia, and parliament.

While the research was conducted separately, we interviewed similar key actors and see the value of aligning our findings from the equalities sector with the DA/VAWG sector given the overall influence of NGOs in these sectors in actively proliferating notions of intersectionality in social policy arenas. Moreover, as we identified, the DA sector is particularly influential in shaping Scottish Government thinking and approaches to intersectionality more generally. As McCabe was interested in how NGOs influence policy, and Christoffersen in NGOs themselves, this article traces influence, access, and power of NGOs in policy and back.¹ Consequently, it provides insights into how these dynamics influence the understanding and use of intersectionality in policy and practice. In writing the article, we re-read each other’s work, drawing out crucial differences and similarities in conceptual approaches and findings. The following sections contrast and compare the findings from the two case studies, providing insights into the competing and contrasting conceptualisations of intersectionality in equality and DA policy and practice in Scotland.

Findings

Generic understandings of intersectionality

A 'generic' conceptualisation of intersectionality occurs where there is little to no focus on any inequality; rather the emphasis remains on policy that benefits 'all'. Since 2009, there have been key changes to equality legislation in the UK, most notably the passing of the Equality Act 2010, including its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which places obligations on public bodies to proactively promote equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination, and the Scotland-specific regulations to enforce it. Prior to the synthesised Equality Act and PSED, separate anti-discrimination legislation imposed duties on public bodies to promote equality: the Race Equality Duty (2001), the Disability Equality Duty (2006) and the Gender Equality Duty (2007). As mentioned, in theory, synthesising equality legislation could have provided a springboard to embed intersectional approaches in policy, legislative protections, and services. However, evidence from both case studies suggests that this has not been the case.

In McCabe's study, interviewees in the DA and women's sectors were highly critical of the PSED, believing it diluted analyses of inequalities:

There's nothing wrong with reducing harassment of all kinds. Of course, that should happen, but the analysis has turned a bit into mush... This kind of sense that we can just do it all in one box, and it will be fine, and it's obviously a risk to all of the equalities and liberation organisations and campaigns because everyone needs specific focus for it to really work. (Policy worker, women's sector)

The emphasis therefore remains rather weakly on 'everybody' and 'people', rather than on structural inequalities. Similar criticisms were made in Christoffersen's study:

Another key problem with intersectionality of PSED reports is in terms of their [equality] outcomes... We would argue that the outcome should focus on protected characteristics. However, we will find that almost all of the reports [produced by public bodies] will have so many generic outcomes. If you're saying your outcome is designed for all, you need to make sure, it is actually applicable to all... Two, you need to make sure that you're not going to exacerbate disadvantage. You need to have key actions for different groups... That's the main problem I think with intersectionality is you can see how much public bodies don't get it. When they try to do it they're just reporting on business as usual... The whole [equality] mainstreaming thing creates a particular context where they're very confused. (Practitioner, Racial justice sector)

While many practitioners were critical, Christoffersen found that in some contexts, generic approaches to equality were conflated with intersectionality by both policymakers and some practitioners (2020; 2022). Particularly in a context of austerity, wherein sweeping cuts to equality have been implemented across levels of government, naming delivery of generic approaches as intersectionality makes them appear innovative, and they are perceived by some policymakers as cost effective (Christoffersen, 2022). In McCabe's study, actors in the DA sector were particularly concerned about the disappearance of gender from the equality outcomes that Scottish public bodies are required to produce and report progress on. As one respondent explained: '*gender is actually disappearing from the equality outcomes*' (Practitioner, DA sector). However, there were also anxieties around the generic articulation of intersectionality:

So, there was much more evidence of generic equality outcomes again, so talking about 'people' as a whole again rather than looking at different impacts and different protected characteristics and intersections of these – it was completely absent. So intersectionality, you can guess... That would be nice! (Practitioner, DA sector)

Additionally, respondents in the DA sector criticised the public sector's reduction of intersectionality to individualised protected characteristics, and the tendency to assume *everyone* has a protected characteristic:

What happens with intersectionality... The way the public sector has interpreted it - and they have not been dissuaded by it because there are no accountability mechanisms for making them not do this - is that they have this notion that everybody has a protected characteristic and that they know they don't have an obligation really to improve the experience [of certain marginalised groups]. (Practitioner, DA sector)

As highlighted in the above quote, this problematic engagement with intersectionality is sustained through the lack of accountability mechanisms within the public sector, which in turn, reproduces inaction in tackling *any* inequality (intersecting or not). Resultantly, some feminist actors are concerned that increased generic approaches to policy may provide an opening to de-gender VAWG policy (McCabe, 2023), particularly given the current trajectories of anti-gender resistance in Europe (Verloo, 2018).

These findings, however, are not necessarily unique to Scotland. Studies evaluating conceptualisations of intersectionality in policy found that gender, for example, disappeared as a category of difference when other intersectional dimensions were incorporated in policy (Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustin, 2012: 489). It is important to note that de-gendering policy is not

necessarily undesirable as it may reflect successes in integrating intersectionality (Weldon, 2008), but this has not been the case in Scottish equality and DA policymaking. Rather, a generic understanding of intersectionality prevents any engagement with structural inequalities, which is particularly detrimental for these policy domains as it does not reflect the dynamics of violence and inequality nor the embodied realities of marginalised groups. Moreover, it may play into assumptions and anxieties among white feminist actors and organisations that gendered and intersectional policy frames are competing or conflicting with one another, and given their considerable epistemic power in framing VAWG and equality policy, it may (unintentionally) stymie opportunities to advance more intersectional policy approaches (McCabe, 2023).

Diversity within intersectionality

The ‘diversity within’ conceptualisation of intersectionality addresses particular intersections *within* a marginalised group but one inequality is implicitly or explicitly regarded as more important than others. This was the most common approach to intersectionality found among single-issue feminist actors in both case studies - within NGOs, gender equality policies, and DA/VAWG policies.

In Christoffersen’s study, additive approaches to intersectionality were found to be dominant in Scotland, likely a symptom of the power, influence and whiteness of single-issue women’s organisations in policy development and their strong relations with government officials. At the time of Christoffersen’s research, a director in the women’s sector felt that the extent to which intersectionality was manifested in analysis, representation and participation in the sector was very limited, which has historical roots. As Rowena Arshad, a founder of Scotland’s first Black women’s organisations remembered of the mid-late 1980s:

The [Scottish] Women’s Liberation Movement really appreciated the fact that Black women were organising about... Challenging patriarchy amongst their communities, but they wanted it as an umbrella movement rather than splinter into something separate. And, that separate refuge thing was quite difficult to get through... Black women... Could not cope with violence and the racism levels, until you guys do something about racism in white women that are coming to your refuge, Black women ain’t coming to that... And of course they were like, initial response was, ‘What racism?’ And like, come on, get real, you know... little, very little understanding [of racism], but, also not really any interest to learn. Other than the political mouthing of, yes, you know, we have to be inclusive, because, you can’t really turn round and say, ‘We’re going to be exclusive.’ (Sisterhood and After, 85, 107).²

Christoffersen found in her study that Scottish single-issue women's organisations, defending a singular approach to gender and asserting its primacy in relation to other inequalities, resisted the joined-up approach to equality represented by the Equality Act and PSED (see e.g., Close the Gap, 2010; Engender, 2014). Because the latter has been delivered in a context of austerity, some of their anxieties about de-gendering of policy have been borne out - since the singular approach has not been replaced by an intersectional one, but by a generic one (by some, itself conflated with intersectionality).

McCabe found that a 'diversity within' approach to intersectionality was the most common approach in DA/VAWG policy-making, where a 'gender-first' approach has prevailed insofar as gender is situated as the most fundamental equality strand. To understand the dominance of gender and a 'diversity within' approach to intersectionality, we must situate this within the history of Scottish DA policy-making. Since devolution, there has been considerable policy change and innovation on DA/VAWG, some of which reflects a feminist agenda (Charles and Mackay, 2013). For example, a gendered framing of DA has been embedded within policy, stating that violence is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and a human rights violation (Scottish Executive, 2000). The (predominantly white) women's movement, and particularly the DA sector, has been prolific in influencing policy development from the start, sitting on the Scottish Partnership to Address Domestic Abuse³ which formulated the definition and vision for the first national strategy on DA. As such, women's movement actors were able to incorporate gendered frames at the beginning of the Scottish Parliament's 'life' (see Waylen, 2008), allowing them to 'set the rules of the game' in DA policymaking and service provision. Fixing these frames in policy from the start has ensured that gender would remain a distinguishing feature of DA policymaking, albeit with some resistance (see McCabe, 2023), establishing a particular policy 'path' which has proved challenging to deviate from (see Pierson, 2000).

We can see the prevalence of gendered ideas in conceptualisations of intersectionality in the 2016 strategy to eradicate and prevent VAWG, Equally Safe, which states that: *'Along with their gender, women and girls have other protected characteristics that increase their level of risk of experiencing violence and abuse'* (Scottish Government, 2016: 19). The section, titled *'intersectionality between gender and other characteristics'*, demonstrates that intersectionality is considered an additional component of VAWG policy rather than being viewed as integral to addressing the policy problem. Significantly, instead of being interwoven throughout the strategy, intersectionality is confined to a short sub-section. Indeed, the original strategy was re-published after it was criticised by organisations for its limited intersectional lens. While there is some progress in advancing more intersectional policy frames, particularly as the re-launched Equally Safe (Scottish Government, 2016) explicitly

references intersectionality for the first time, its articulations are weak. The above quote illuminates that gender remains the starting analytical point in addressing the problem, and other protected characteristics intersect *with gender*. As such, gender is conceptualised as the constant and prevailing axis, while other social structures are supplementary. This is highly problematic as predetermining the relationship between gender and other inequalities has severe ramifications for misdiagnosing the problem of DA as actors may expect that a single gendered ‘magic policy prescription’ (Hancock, 2007: 70), potentially with nods to intersectionality, will be effective in solving the problem.

Similar constructions of a ‘diversity within’ meaning of intersectionality where gender is the most important marker of inequality were observed in an interview with an equality policymaker in Christoffersen’s study:

Specifically relating to women who are experiencing abuse of some sort, some form of violence, that there were further complications, if you were Black, if you were older, if you were younger, if you were disabled, rurality was actually one of those factors that we spoke about then as being a further barrier and or obstacle to escaping or getting help or something that impacted differentially on women... That can compound the experiences that you have and make it much harder for you to get appropriate support or to indeed escape from the difficult situation that you might be in whatever that might be. [Intersectionality] gradually became a term that was used and people then understood what it meant rather than having to explain it all the time. (Policymaker)

When other inequalities are perceived only as further ‘*complications, obstacles and barriers*’ this precludes considering how the problem of DA is structured by race and other factors as well as by gender.

Moreover, the ‘diversity within’ – or more specifically a ‘gender-first’ – approach to intersectionality was also evident in some interviews with actors in women’s organisations in McCabe’s study, but was most notable in an interview with an actor from the DA sector who explained: ‘*I think the fact that there’s little understanding of gender inequality is a fundamental basis before we even look at intersectionality*’ (Practitioner, DA sector). From this quote, we can see that enhancing the position and knowledge of gender inequality within DA policy-making is of a higher priority than applying intersectionality, and in some ways, conceptualising both is considered incompatible.

What we have respectively called ‘diversity within’ and ‘gender-first’ was found to be the most common approach to intersectionality among single-issue feminist actors in Scotland, with these perspectives emanating from the (predominantly white) women’s sector influencing equality policy, and DA policy more specifically. A singular gendered frame has restricted the adoption of intersectionality in DA policy, and we explore in the next

section what that might look like. Instead, gestures toward intersectionality remain additive and superficial.

Intersections of equality strands

An ‘intersections of strands’ approach to intersectionality involves work of and with specific groups that share intersecting identities and inequalities, and differs from a ‘diversity within’ approach as no particular inequality strand is considered to be more important than others. This concept of intersectionality was associated with intersectional organisations, those that have an explicit mission or vision statement affirming they represent women situated at particular intersections (English, 2021) and are led by and for this group. We argue that intersectional organisations should be considered as distinctive not only for these characteristics but as a result of their mutually constitutive approaches to intersectionality, rather than subsuming them as subcategories of single-issue sectors (see Christoffersen, 2021).

The following is a quote from a director of a Black and minority ethnic (BME) women of faith organisation in Christoffersen’s study explaining how the organisation was set up to work on intersectional issues. This is illustrative of the difference from organisations set up solely to focus on (white) women (who may only later claim to ‘do’ intersectionality):

The organisation was set up primarily for Muslim women. Within that you’ve got two identities and I think as times gone on there has been for the organisation a question around, “Okay, you have a Muslim woman.” But the Muslim woman it’s the other issues, as well, so around sexuality or around your socioeconomic status those have all been things that over the years we’ve started to look at as well. In line with the primary identities being Muslim and women. We’ve looked at other things around ethnicity... All this different layers that make up Muslim woman, it’s not straightforward as being just this is a Muslim woman... The everyday occurrences [of harassment], but it’s around your skin colour. It’s around what you choose to wear. That could be more around the veil, the hijab. Around your faith and around your gender as well. Those things can’t necessarily be separated.

This quote evidences an ‘intersections of strands’, mutually constitutive concept of intersectionality (wherein faith and gender cannot be separated from one another - in contrast to viewing gender as prevailing).⁴ It is notable that perspectives from intersectional organisations avoid reducing intersectionality to ‘additional barriers’ - a construction that relies on comparison to a white and otherwise privileged norm wherein gender is the only or predominant barrier.

In the Scottish DA/VAWG sector, there are a handful of BME and faith organisations who support BME, Muslim and migrant survivors, some of

whom are a part of the Women's Aid network. These organisations have historically employed an 'intersections of equality strands' approach to their services and continue to work within an intersectional mission that is truer to Black feminist thought, highlighting the gendered and racial dynamics of violence. These organisations have emphasised the shortcomings of a 'diversity within'/'gender-first' approach to policy-making, as one actor from a BME women's organisation emphasised: *'our organisation's definition of domestic abuse works within an intersectional analysis... The gendered analysis is not the whole picture'*. Yet, while some of these organisations have been in existence since the 1980s, they have not necessarily had the same power and influence in policy-making, especially in the early days of DA policy-making, resulting in the absence of their frames in policy (McCabe, 2023). Christoffersen found similar exclusions among women's organisations more broadly (including but not limited to those focusing on DA) ongoing at local level, with intersectional women's organisations not being part - or aware - of networks of (predominantly white) women's organisations formed to influence local policy concerning gender equality.

However, a window of opportunity arose in 2009 to integrate intersectional frames, with the broadening of the problem of DA to incorporate all forms of VAWG (Scottish Government and COSLA, 2009). In theory, it provided an opportunity to redress power imbalances and move intersectional organisations' frames from 'margin to center' (hooks, 1984). It enabled policy-makers to examine forms of violence that were previously under-interrogated in policy, and those that disproportionately affect BME and migrant women and girls, providing a more comprehensive exploration of violence. In particular, broadening the scope of the policy problem opened up possibilities to delve into the interconnection between forced marriage and DA with public sector actors, as explained by a respondent from a BME organisation: *'it made it more comfortable to speak to professionals (about forced marriage) when I delivered training'*. Resultantly, this actor conveyed a sense of progress, observing that the change in terminology enhanced the credibility of their organisation's policy frames: *'from a BME women's perspective, it made our arguments more legitimate'*. A respondent from another BME organisation also expressed a positive view on the change, explaining that the re-framing of the problem: *'allow[ed] for more intersectional approaches towards what the problem is'*, with a particular emphasis on how some forms of violence may be perpetrated by extended family members. Yet, despite these opportunities, intersectional organisations remain at the fringes of VAWG policymaking, and are rarely included in national policymaking processes. For example, the Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board, which oversees the delivery of the national strategy, only recently (in 2022) included an intersectional organisation in recognition of the need to drive forward an intersectional approach to its remit (Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 2022).

Previously, the Board only included (single-issue) feminist and VAWG organisations from the third-sector, which were predominately white-led. The structure of the national DA organisation – which operates as an umbrella organisation, representing local groups and BME DA groups within its membership⁵ – provides one explanation for their omission from the policy table. Regardless of the reasoning, intersectional frames remain at the margins of VAWG policymaking, as evidenced by the shortcomings of the 2016 national strategy.

We argue that it is imperative to distinguish this meaning of intersectionality from both generic ones and the ‘diversity within’/‘gender-first’ one discussed above, and to distinguish between single-issue and intersectional women’s organisations. The latter have the expertise to inform the conceptual and material shifts required to more authentically operationalise intersectionality in Scottish equality policy, and DA/VAWG policy more specifically.

Concluding discussion

This article compared and contrasted two separate case studies, drawing upon and advancing Christoffersen’s (2021) framework of applied concepts of intersectionality to interrogate how intersectionality is conceptualised and institutionalised in policy and practice in Scotland. By applying this framework to a new case of DA policy and synthesising our results, we enhance this conceptual work and provide invaluable contributions to the growing scholarship that evaluates how intersectionality is articulated in policy and practice. Our empirical findings offer some critical reflections on the multiple, contrasting and sometimes competing meanings that are given to ‘intersectionality’ in Scotland, and their short and long-term consequences. Some of these concepts are potentially transformative, yet others do little to challenge the siloed status quo of policymaking and service provision. We argue that, overall, an additive and superficial approach prevails to applying intersectionality in policy in Scotland, which is unable to grapple with the complexity of always-interlocking structures of oppression and privilege. While we provide a deep analysis of how intersectionality is articulated in our two studies, concentrating on particular aspects of oppression focused on by those organisations that work around DA, we recognise that we do not address in detail other markers of inequality (such as class and transgender status; see Christoffersen, 2020 and Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023). Future research on intersectionality and DA policy would be beneficial to explore in more detail the (limited) services delivered by e.g., LGBTI organisations and those focused explicitly on socioeconomic disadvantage.⁶

Christoffersen’s research, which enables a comparison with England and other equality sectors and policy areas, shows that ‘diversity within’/‘gender-first’ approaches are particularly dominant in Scottish (gender) equality

policy. In contrast, more productive ‘intersections of strands’ conceptualisations were found to be less prevalent in Scotland overall than in England. In England, and particularly in London, anti-racist and autonomous organising by and for Black women and women of colour compelled conversations about racism and its intersections with sexism among white feminists at an earlier stage to these conversations being had in Scotland, where the single-issue women’s sector remains overwhelmingly white.

McCabe’s research reveals that since devolution, a ‘diversity within’/ ‘gender-first’ approach has become fixed within DA/VAWG policy-making, to the detriment of intersectionally marginalised victims/survivors. We point towards the repercussions of the dominance of singular gendered frames and additive applications of intersectionality, suggesting that over time a policy ‘path’ has emerged in equality and DA policy-making, making the advancement of more transformative approaches to intersectionality (e.g., ‘intersections of equality strands’) more complex and contingent. Resultantly, intersectionality is constructed as an additional component rather than a fundamental part of the diagnosis and prognosis of the problem. Thus, the case study draws attention to the ways in which early framing decisions can act as barriers for transformative articulations of intersectionality – whether intended or not (see McCabe, 2023).

The article also provides a rich analysis of how and in which ways intersectionality is contested and subject to debate by those in positions of power within the equality and DA sectors, and its effects on current and future policy constructions and practice. We found that some actors within women’s organisations and government perceive gendered and intersectional policy frames as competing or conflicting with each other, resulting in some reluctance to engaging with intersectionality (see McCabe, 2023). We argue that the dominance of ‘diversity within’ intersectionality in Scottish DA/VAWG policymaking is a consequence of who has had influence, access and epistemic power in framing policy problems within policymaking institutions - namely (predominantly) white-led national feminist organisations that have historically opposed including other inequalities on par with gender in equality policy. While pockets of resistance remain, our findings indicate that active resistance to ideas of intersectionality may be decreasing among more powerful actors shaping equality and DA policy. However, rather than engage meaningfully with the challenge of intersectionality, what has taken the place of resistance is a particular appropriation of ‘intersectionality’ wherein gender continues to be constructed as the most important marker of inequality such that other inequalities can only be considered additively (see also Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023). Thus, our article provides some important insights into how varying epistemic authority among feminist actors and organisations shapes not only the current framing of intersectionality but also the future direction of policy.

Yet, the refresh of Scotland's national strategy on VAWG, *Equally Safe*, published in late 2023, presents a potential juncture to disrupt dominant framings of the problem. Notably, the strategy demonstrates some appetite among policy-makers to contemplate how to operationalise intersectionality. Indeed, the Scottish Government and COSLA (2023: 26) commit to 'promot[ing] an intersectional approach to preventing, recognising, and responding to the compounding inequalities and risks that some women, children, and young people may experience...'. A thorough delivery plan is anticipated for spring 2024, so it remains to be seen whether a more conscious engagement with intersectionality might yet be path-breaking.

Simultaneously, there is an urgent need for more productive 'intersections of strands' approaches in policy and in the equality and DA sectors, rather than additive ones. Findings from both studies point to the importance of resourcing and engaging with intersectional organisations. The recent independent review into the funding and commissioning of VAWG services in Scotland presents an opportunity to transform the current funding model (Scottish Government, 2023). Significantly, the review embedded intersectionality as a core principle and called for more adequate funding of services working 'by and for' intersectionally marginalised survivors. Greater engagement with such organisations and concepts of intersectionality would help to enable a re-framing of the problem of DA, providing more comprehensive and nuanced conceptualisations of the problem, centrally including forms disproportionately experienced by racially minoritised women, and extending beyond women (and men) in heterosexual relationships to encapsulate gendered DA experienced by LGBTQI+ people from parents and other family members. Such reframing would be a necessary precursor to changes in the allocation of resources to better serve all those affected by DA.

Given that in Christoffersen's study the VAWG sector was identified as an important influence on Scottish Government thinking about intersectionality in general, this area has important ramifications for Scotland's growing work on intersectionality (Scottish Government, 2022). Nevertheless, the work of organisations applying 'intersections of strands' concepts of intersectionality often has shortcomings which reflect the material and discursive constraints upon the NGO sector and which the sector in turn reproduces, particularly an individualised approach to intersectionality which focuses on the latter in relation to identity and experience to the neglect of structures of inequality (Christoffersen, forthcoming). This is particularly the case in organisations such as those who work at local level in the DA/VAWG sector that are largely service providing organisations, in contrast to those equality NGOs that primarily engage in policymaking.

We contend that Scotland provides key lessons on the opportunities and shortfalls in applying intersectionality in policy and practice, given its perceived status as a feminist nirvana for equality policy-making. Moreover,

our article is instructive for growing applications of intersectionality in other country contexts (e.g., Canada), where intersectionality has similarly been ‘added on’ to a gender mainstreaming approach (Christoffersen and Hankivsky, 2021). Growing research in the field internationally suggests that in order to operationalise intersectionality effectively, what is required is unseating the dominance of a singular approach to gender, in doing so decentering single-issue women’s organisations and centring those with intersectionality expertise. This requires white feminist policymakers and organisations to relinquish space and power, which we are yet to witness. Nevertheless, questions are raised concerning the extent to which the ‘gender-first’ path-dependency can be influenced and changed to be authentically intersectional; perhaps what is needed is to ‘rip it up and start again’ (Emejulu, 2020) to enable a fresh approach to policy problems like DA. Doing so would necessitate a substantial shift in the framing of the social problem of domestic abuse from one where white, heterosexual and cisgender women are implicitly assumed to be the most affected and most important social group on which to base strategies and interventions.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to our research participants. We also wish to thank Fiona Mackay, Kaveri Qureshi, participants, chairs and discussants of our panels at the European Conference on Politics and Gender 2019 and 2022, the anonymous reviewers, and the editors for their helpful comments on earlier drafts. We would also like to thank our PhD supervisors: Akwugo Emejulu, Richard Freeman, Nasar Meer, Meryl Kenny, Claire Houghton, and Anuj Kapilashrami for their valuable feedback and support.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Leah McCabe’s work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, (grant number ES/X006891/1) and Ashlee Christoffersen’s work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Notes

1. Exploration of the relationships and power dynamics between domestic abuse service providers and service users was outwith the scope of the research questions of each of our projects. In the US context, some scholars have drawn attention to classed and racialised power imbalances between service providers and users in domestic abuse organisations that are not specifically focused on serving migrant or racially minoritised women (Koyama, 2016), helping to explain the origins of service provision led by and for minoritised women. In the UK

context it is important to note that practitioners, particularly within the cities in Scotland in which we undertook our research, often work in poorly funded and usually poorly remunerated equality organisations, which is especially the case for intersectional organisations (e.g., Sudbury 1998; Kairos in Soho 2011; centred 2014). Indeed, a recent review of funding and commissioning of VAWG services in Scotland highlighted problems of high staff turnover due to poor pay and job insecurity (Scottish Government, 2023). However, Scottish VAWG service organisations do not, by mission, specifically serve or represent any particular class demographic.

2. In contrast to Scotland, the first Black women's group in London formed in 1973, and Black and women of colour critique of racism among white feminists was at this stage well established in England (Amos and Parmar 1984; Thomlinson 2016).
3. Established by the Scottish Office in 1998.
4. We acknowledge that there are ongoing debates particularly in England about constructing religion as a defining element of organisations and prioritising faith in social policy (see the work of Women Against Fundamentalism) (Dhaliwal and Yuval-Davis, 2014). However, in this instance, faith is not prioritised over gender, rather the organisation was set up at the intersection of the two with minoritised ethnicity, and such critiques were not voiced by our participants across the sectors that we included.
5. Some BME and faith organisations include VAWG prevention and policy work within their wider remit of supporting and empowering minoritised and migrant women but are not members of the Women's Aid network.
6. In Scotland, the socioeconomic duty contained within the Equality Act has been enacted, unlike in England, where this provision has not been enacted. However, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Scottish Government, 2018) is delivered as a separate duty to the public sector equality duty.

References

- Amos V and Parmar P (1984) Challenging imperial feminism. *Feminist Review* 17(1): 3–19.
- Arshad R. Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project. British Library, London, C1420/21.
- Bilge S (2013) Intersectionality undone: Saving intersectionality from feminist intersectionality studies. *Du Bois Review* 10(2): 405–424.
- centred (2014) *The London Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Voluntary and Community Sector*. Almanac 3rd ed. London: centred.
- Charles N and Mackay F (2013) Feminist politics and framing contests: Domestic violence policy in Scotland and Wales. *Critical Social Policy* 33(4): 593–615.
- Cho S, Crenshaw KW and McCall L (2013) Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs* 38(4): 785–810.
- Christoffersen A (2019) Are we all 'baskets of characteristics?' Intersectional slippages and the displacement of race in English and Scottish equality policy. In:

- Jordan-Zachery JS and Hankivsky O (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 705–731.
- Christoffersen A (2020) Barriers to operationalizing intersectionality in equality third sector community development practice: Power, austerity, and in/equality. *Community Development Journal* 55(1): 139–158.
- Christoffersen A (2021) The politics of intersectional practice: Competing concepts of intersectionality. *Policy & Politics* 49(4): 573–593.
- Christoffersen A (2022) Is intersectional racial justice organizing possible? Confronting generic intersectionality. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45(3): 407–430.
- Christoffersen A (2023) Applying intersectionality in policy and practice: Unseating the dominance of gender in responding to social inequalities. *socialpolicy.ch* 1: 1–13.
- Christoffersen A and Emejulu A (2023) 'Diversity within': The problems with 'intersectional' white feminism in practice. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 30(2): 630–653.
- Christoffersen A (forthcoming, in press) *The Politics of Intersectional Practice: Representation, Coalition and Solidarity in UK NGOs*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Christoffersen A and Hankivsky O (2021) Responding to inequities in public policy: Is gender-based analysis + the right way to operationalize intersectionality? *Canadian Public Administration* 64(3): 329–532.
- Close the Gap (2010) *Close the Gap Single Equality Duty Consultation*. Glasgow: Close the Gap.
- Collins PH (1990) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Collins PH (2015) Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology* 41(1): 1–20.
- Crenshaw K (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 8(1): 139–167.
- CRIAW (2006) Intersectional Feminist Frameworks. Available at: <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications/intersectional-feminist-frameworks-an-emerging-vision/>
- Dhaliwal S and Yuval-Davis N (2014) Introduction to women against fundamentalism: Stories of dissent and solidarity. In: Dhaliwal S and Yuval Davis N (eds) *Women Against Fundamentalism: Stories of Dissent and Solidarity*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 7–51.
- Emejulu A (2020) Rip it up and start again: The challenge of intersectionality. Webinar for the First Minister's National Advisory Council On Women And Girls Circle. Available at: <https://www.generationequal.scot/exploring-intersectional-gender-architecture/>
- Emejulu A and Sobande F (eds) (2019) *To Exist Is to Resist: Black Feminism in Europe*. London: Pluto Press.
- Engender (2014) *Gender Equality and Scotland's Constitutional Futures*. Edinburgh: Engender.

- English A (2021) Implementing intersectionality: Women's organizations' representation of women of color and poor women during two rulemakings. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 9(4): 739–758.
- Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (2022) Ministerial portfolio: Equalities and older people. 29 March. Available at: <https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=13684>
- Evans E (2015) *The Politics of Third Wave Feminisms: Neoliberalism, Intersectionality, and the State in Britain and the US*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Evans E (2016) Intersectionality as feminist praxis in the UK. *Women's Studies International Forum* 59: 67–75.
- Government Scottish (2018) Fairer Scotland duty-interim guidance for public bodies. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-interim-guidance-public-bodies/pages/2/>
- Hancock A-M (2007) When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics* 5(1): 63–79.
- Hankivsky O (ed.) (2012) *An Intersectionality based Policy Analysis Framework*. Vancouver: Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy.
- Hankivsky O and Christoffersen A (2011) Gender mainstreaming in the United Kingdom: Current issues and future challenges. *British Politics* 6(1): 30–51.
- Hankivsky O and Cormier R (2011) Intersectionality and public policy: Some lessons from existing models. *Political Research Quarterly* 64(1): 217–229.
- Hankivsky O and Cormier R (2019) Intersectionality and public policy: Some lessons from existing models. In: Hankivsky O and Jordan-Zachery JS (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy*. Cham: Springer, pp. 69–93.
- Hankivsky O, de Merich D and Christoffersen A (2019) Equalities 'devolved': Experiences in mainstreaming across the UK devolved powers post-equality act 2010. *British Politics* 14: 141–161.
- Hankivsky O, Grace D, Hunting G, et al. (2014) An intersectionality-based policy analysis framework: Critical reflections on a methodology for advancing equity. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 13(1): 1–16.
- Hankivsky O and Jordan-Zachery JS (eds) (2019) *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy*. Cham: Springer.
- hooks b (1984) *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. London: Pluto Press.
- Kairos in Soho (2011) *The London Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Voluntary and Community Sector*. Almanac 1st ed. London: Kairos in Soho.
- Koyama E (2016) Disloyal to Feminism: Abuse of Survivors within the Domestic Violence Shelter System. *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
- Krizsán A, Skjeie H and Squires J (eds) (2012) *Institutionalizing Intersectionality: The Changing Nature of European Equality Regimes*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- La Barbera MC, Espinosa-Fajardo J and Caravantes P (2022) Implementing intersectionality in public policies: Key factors in the Madrid City Council, Spain. *Politics & Gender* 19(3): 675–702.

- Lombardo E and Rolandsen Agustin L (2012) Framing gender intersections in the European Union: What implications for the quality of intersectionality in policies? *Social Politics* 19(4): 482–512.
- Lorde A (1984) *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.
- Mackay F (2010) Gendering constitutional change and policy outcomes: Substantive representation and domestic violence policy in Scotland. *Policy & Politics* 38(3): 369–388.
- May VM (2015) *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries*. New York: Routledge.
- McCabe L (2023) An intersectional analysis of contestations within women’s movements: The case of Scottish domestic abuse policymaking. *Policy & Politics*: 1–25.
- Opportunity Agenda (2017) Ten tips for putting intersectionality into practice. Available at: <https://opportunityagenda.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/Intersectionality-into-Practice-Edits05.30.17.pdf>.
- Parken A and Young H (2008) *Facilitating Cross Strand Working*. Wales: Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Assembly Government.
- Pierson P (2000) Not just what, but when: Timing and sequence in political processes. *Studies in American Political Development* 14(1): 72–92.
- Scottish Executive (2000) *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.
- Scottish Government (2016) *Equally Safe: Scotland’s Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government (2022) Using intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/using-intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence-synthesis>
- Scottish Government (2023) *The Independent Strategic Review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls Services*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government and COSLA (2009) *Safer Lives: Changed Lives: a Shared Approach to Tackling Violence Against Women in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government and COSLA (2023) *Equally Safe: Scotland’s Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Solanke I (2011) Infusing the silos in the equality act 2010 with synergy. *The Industrial Law Journal* 40(4): 336–358.
- Stevenson J (2023) *Voices Unheard Peer Consultation 2022. LGBTQ+ Young People’s Experiences of Domestic Abuse: In their own Relationships, and Within Families*. Glasgow: LGBT Youth Scotland.
- Sudbury J (1998) *‘Other Kinds of Dreams’: Black Women’s Organisations and the Politics of Transformation*. First Edition. London: Routledge.
- Thomlinson N (2016) *Race, Ethnicity and the Women’s Movement in England, 1968-1993*. London: Palgrave.
- Verloo M (ed.) (2018) *Varieties of Opposition to Gender Equality in Europe*. New York: Routledge.

- Walby S, Armstrong J and Strid S (2012) Intersectionality and the quality of the gender equality architecture. *Social Politics* 19(4): 446–481.
- Waylen G (2008) Feminist perspectives on transforming global governance. In: Waylen G and Rai S (eds) *Global Governance: Feminist Perspectives*. London: Palgrave, pp. 254–275.
- Weldon SL (2008) Intersectionality. In: Goertz G and Mazur AG (eds) *Politics, Gender, and Concepts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 193–218.

Author biographies

Ashlee Christoffersen is a Banting Postdoctoral Researcher in Politics at York University (Toronto). She holds a PhD in Social Policy from the University of Edinburgh. Her research is concerned with the historic and contemporary operationalisation of the Black feminist theory of intersectionality in equality policy and practice: its influence and possibilities, as well as the discursive and material resistance it faces. She is the author of *The Politics of Intersectional Practice: Representation, Coalition and Solidarity in UK NGOs*, forthcoming (Bristol University Press) and ‘The politics of intersectional practice: Competing concepts of intersectionality’, *Policy & Politics* (2021).

Leah McCabe is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh. She holds a PhD in Social Policy from the University of Edinburgh. Her research is centred on contentious politics, framing conflicts, social movements, intersectionality and feminist institutionalism. She is the author of ‘An intersectional analysis of contestations within women’s movements: the case of Scottish domestic abuse policymaking’, *Policy & Politics* (2023).

Address: Chrystal Macmillan Building, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, 15a George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD, United Kingdom.

Email: Leah.McCabe@ed.ac.uk