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RESEARCH

Intersectionality and the politics of knowledge production

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Since its coinage in the 1980s, intersectionality has journeyed across borders and disciplines, which is a testament to its resonance. We examine how intersectionality has travelled within political science and the potential impact that this has had on its political project, with particular attention to the politics of knowledge production. The analysis draws on: (1) an original database of articles published in political science journals; (2) descriptive citation analysis; (3) a content analysis of the articles; and (4) an online survey of authors. We find that positionality plays an important role in shaping the field and political project of intersectionality.

Key words citation practices • feminism • gender • intersectionality • knowledge production • race

Key messages

- Positionality shapes interest in intersectionality, as well as how scholars define political and analytic priorities for the field.
- The underrepresentation of women of color in European intersectionality studies is problematic for the global intersectionality project.
- Does black feminist scholarship disappear as intersectionality becomes popular in political science? Read this article and find out!

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Introduction

Since black feminist scholars coined the term 'intersectionality' in the 1980s, it has become its own field of study (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho et al, 2013). Over the past decades, scholars across a range of disciplines have used the idea of intersectionality to explore how 'race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive categories but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that shape complex social inequalities' (Hill Collins, 2015: 2). Emerging in the space between social movements and the academy, intersectionality has been used not only as an analytical tool, but also as a heuristic to amplify and highlight specific problems that are generally overlooked and silenced (Crenshaw, 2011; May, 2015). Yet, some argue that the growing popularity of intersectionality and its application to new contexts depoliticises the field, dulling its critical edge and transformative potential.

This seeming 'depoliticisation' happens when intersectionality is used merely as an analytical tool without a social justice orientation. Critics argue that such trends ignore the history of intersectionality, such that the study of women of colour, or even race, is deemed non-essential (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). Black women, in particular, are perceived as being erased from the scholarly project of intersectionality (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Jordan-Zachery, 2013). An effort to prioritise the work of women of colour in the US, however, complicates the intersectionality project globally as scholars in the black diaspora must contend with a scholarly world dominated by US-centric approaches (Emejulu and Sobande, forthcoming). Even in the US, there are calls to widen intersectionality to include marginalised women 'othered' by the focus on black women (Puar, 2007), and to address the visibility of queer and trans politics in the struggle for black liberation (Cohen and Jackson, 2016).

This debate about the meaning and purpose of intersectionality foregrounds theoretical questions about the role of race and ethnicity, especially in a European context that disavows race. It also suggests new directions for thinking about intersectionality in the US, for example, by focusing on the importance of ethnicity and sexuality in processes of racialisation. Lastly, it highlights epistemological questions about the relationship between the identity and interests of the individual knower and her contribution to scholarship at a micro-level, and how the composition of the scholarly community at a macro-level shapes which and whose questions, dimensions and contributions are prioritised.

In this article, we examine how intersectionality has travelled within political science and across the Atlantic, and the potential impact that this has had on its political project. We use a mixed-methods approach, including the creation of an original, comprehensive database of political science articles on intersectionality, an analysis of the citation patterns and focus of these articles, and an online survey asking authors about their identity and approach to the study of intersectionality. We use these data to address key questions about the politics of knowledge production: how do political scientists approach intersectionality? Which or whose scholarship is best represented? What or who is the subject of intersectional research? What role, if any, does scholar identity, and the composition of the field, play with regard to the approach to intersectionality or the reception of one's work?

Intersectionality in political science

While intersectionality has a long history in black, ethnic and women and gender studies, its popularity in political science is more recent. In political science, intersectionality is seen as '*both* a normative theoretical argument *and* an approach to conducting empirical research that emphasizes the interaction of categories of difference (including but not limited to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation)' (Hancock, 2007a: 64, emphases in original). For political scientists, intersectionality has come to be seen as a research paradigm: 'a worldview that precedes any questions of empirical investigation' (Hancock, 2007a: 63). Political scientists have frequently used this conceptualisation as a jumping-off point for expansionary explorations.

These new 'expansionary explorations' may have come at a cost to the black feminist genealogy of intersectionality. Several scholars argue that the applicably of intersectionality beyond race, class and gender appears to erase the intellectual labour and experiences of black women and other women of colour. Alexander-Floyd (2012: 9) argues that:

> as scholars ply intersectionality as a scholarly framing device, they do so in ways that undermine the central project ... of intersectionality – that is, the political project undertaken by women of color in general and black women in particular to address the political plight of nonwhite women.

Jordan-Zachery (2013: 103) states that as intersectionality gains popularity, black women seem to be disappearing from political science texts. These critiques by two prominent black feminist political scientists are echoed more broadly within the field of women and gender studies. Bilge (2013) argues that the colonisation of intersectionality by the neoliberal academy has served to evacuate race from the concept in order to better to appeal and be acceptable to the hegemonic whiteness of the academy – especially feminist social science.

While some critics are against the *broadening* of intersectionality, others question the perceived *narrow* interpretation of the black feminist origins prevalent in intersectionality studies. Puar (2007) challenges intersectionality as a dominant paradigm that centres black women's experience such that it 'others' women of different racial and ethnic origins. Hancock (2016) advocates the need to expand the origin stories of intersectionality to include scholars from groups that are under-represented as contributors to intersectionality (eg Asian-Americans, Latinxs, Native Americans in the US and women-of-colour scholars working outside the Global North).

Broadening the debate beyond North America raises new questions, particularly in the European context. Black British feminist foundational texts from the 1970s to the 1990s address race, class and gender as co-constitutive and a resource for activism (Carby, 1982; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Mirza, 1997). Yet, these classic texts are not often cited and do not form part of the (unmarked) North American intersectionality 'canon'. For example, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1983) used a framework of race, class and gender to explore the experiences of minority and migrant women in Britain – but they did not name this at the time as 'intersectionality'. Bryan et al (1985) examine race, class and gender from a variety of perspectives in relation to black British women, while Wilson (1978) explores similar themes among South Asian

women. British intersectionality scholarship continues to flourish – notably, outside the discipline of political science (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Bassel and Emejulu, 2010; Lewis, 2013; Mirza, 2015; Ahmed, 2016, Emejulu and Bassel, 2017).

Intersectionality entered continental Europe in the 1990s in the work of Dutch scholars (Aerts and Saharso, 1994; Botman et al, 2001) and was picked up in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden in the 2000s (see Lutz et al, 2011). The issue of race and its (dis)appearance in relation to intersectionality is brought into sharp focus as intersectionality is operationalised on the European mainland. Race is contested as a category of empirical analysis in many European countries – it is forbidden in France and Germany, for example, to collect census data on race (Simon, 2008; Bassel and Emejulu, 2017). Rather than using race as a central category for analysis, scholars working in Europe use ethnicity, national origin, migration history and/or religion as proxies (Kantola and Nousianen, 2009; Krizsan et al, 2012; Mokre and Siim, 2013; Mügge, 2013; Mügge and De Jong, 2013; Celis et al, 2014; Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustín, 2016; Davidson-Schmich, 2017; Emejulu and Mügge, 2018).

The de-emphasising of race in a European context follows well-established patterns of disavowing race as a way to both 'forget' Europe's colonial history and to 'atone' for the Holocaust (Hesse, 2007; Bhambra, 2016; Wekker, 2016). Eschewing race as a category of analysis, however, is neither unproblematic nor apolitical in Europe. While processes of racialisation differ across Europe and the grammar of race is less available, race is omnipresent in continental political discourses. Thus, key dimensions of power relations go under-analysed by the omission of race.

As we turn to an analysis of publications, we consider whose voices and history are reflected back to us. Publications and citations are used as indicators for academic esteem, and are decisive for tenure, promotion and salary (Maliniak et al, 2013; Mitchell et al, 2013). Yet, women are published in political science journals at dramatically lower rates than men; in the 'top' journals, only between 18% and 33% of the articles are published by women (Teele and Thelen, 2017). A report by the American Political Science Association (APSA) shows that female scholars and scholars of colour are cited at disproportionately lower rates than would be expected given their representation in the field, a discrepancy that remains even when generational cohort is considered (Masuoka et al, 2007; Fraga et al, 2011: 40–1). Publication and citation cultures create a gendered and raced hierarchy where scholars become 'gatekeepers' by defining what is 'important' versus what is 'peripheral' in the field (Ahmed, 2016; Lake, 2016). The question is how this influences the extent to which research on intersectionality is published and cited, and by whom.

This debate is inseparable from a larger disciplinary context of inclusion and exclusion. Under the direction of its first African-American woman president, Diane Pinderhughes, APSA published a report addressing the marginalisation of scholars and research based on race, class, gender and sexuality (Fraga et al, 2011). The report noted that the political science faculty in the US was 88.9% white and 71.4% male. While the presence of women has significantly increased over the past several decades, the overwhelming majority of women were white (86.6%). While intersectional data on political science faculty is lacking, the International Political Science Association finds that political science remains male-dominated (Lindroos et al, 2014). In general, there is a dearth of data on the ethnic and racial make-up of European political scientists. Where such data exist, they suggest that patterns of racial and ethnic exclusion are not limited to the US. In Britain, the Equality

Challenge Unit (2017) has consistently found the systemic over-representation of white women and women of colour in low-paid precarious teaching-only contracts and their underrepresentation as full professors and senior managers. The Political Studies Association (2014) has found that less than 4% of British political scientists are scholars of colour.

Constructing the canon: research design and data collection

This is the first empirical analysis of how intersectionality is studied in political science. Yet, the use of quantitative analyses places us at the centre of debates about intersectionality (see Alexander-Floyd, 2012). This study does not seek to displace other kinds of scholarly work, but, rather, to identify broader patterns that will complement existing work in this area. To study how intersectionality has travelled in political science and where it stands today, we employed a mixed-methods research design that includes a mapping exercise, descriptive citation analysis, content analysis and a survey.

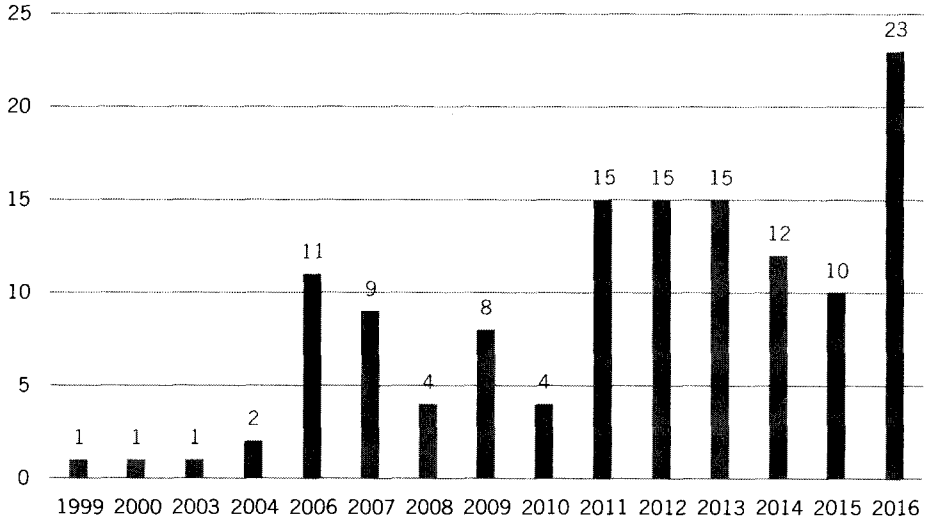
To establish which political science journals publish articles on intersectionality, we listed all journals that are ranked under the political science and international relations (IR) category in the most recent (2016) database of the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), a total of 214 journals (for a detailed description of the sampling and method, see Appendix 1, available online as supplementary material). Using E-Journal Finder, we searched for research articles that mention the term 'intersectionality' at least four times in total, including the keywords, abstract, title and text, yielding 131 articles by 168 different scholars published between 1999 and 2016. Through Google Scholar, we retrieved the number of citations to each article. To examine hierarchy and power, we sought to delineate the 'canon', or those works seen as foundational or influential by those working in the field (for a complete overview, see Appendix 1, available online as supplementary material). We define this canon in two distinct ways. The first canon consists of the 10 most-cited articles in our database. This canon has two limitations: (1) it excludes journals that are not yet SSCI-ranked, such as the *National Political Science Review* and *Politics, Groups and Identities*; and (2) it excludes influential pieces not published in SSCI political science or IR journals, such as those in women and gender studies journals. To address these limitations, we extended the scope and constructed a canon that *informs* the articles in our database. We analysed the complete reference lists of all the articles in our database, using a Java application to scrape Web of Science data, resulting in a sample of 2,737 different publications.

Intersectionality in SSCI-ranked political science and IR journals

As represented by these journals, intersectionality entered the discipline through research on human rights. The first political science article that mentions intersectionality is written by a Canadian male scholar of international law (Craig, 1999). Apart from this initial piece, few articles on intersectionality appear in IR journals (eight of 133 articles overall). Journals most likely to feature articles on intersectionality are those focusing on gender and politics: *Politics & Gender* (25) and the *Journal of Women Politics and Policy* (17).

Figure 1 shows the publication of articles over time. There is a peak in 2006 and steady increases thereafter, with additional spikes in 2011 and 2016. Special issues/sections dedicated to intersectionality explain the peaks in several years (Hardy-Fanta, 2006; Davidson- Schmich, 2011; Ackerly and McDermott, 2012; Bassel and Lépinard, 2014; Erzeel and Mügge, 2016; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016).

Figure 1: Articles on intersectionality published in political science/IR SSCI-ranked journals, 1999–2016



Intersectionality is being discussed in the most widely cited and recognised journals in the discipline: 34% (45) of the articles on intersectionality are published in the top 50 SSCI-ranked journals, so-called 'Q1', or the most prestigious journals in the discipline (see Table 1). However, none of the widely cited (Q1) European journals appear on this list. While the intersectional agenda is being recognised in top US journals, albeit slowly, this trend is completely absent in top-tier European journals.

A plurality (43% [56]) of the articles in our overall sample focus on the US, and more than a quarter of the articles (28% [36]) focus on Europe or single European countries such as Britain, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Norway and Sweden.

Coding the content of the articles produced 13 distinct categories explored by intersectionality scholars: gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, citizenship, regional location of origin, sex, (im)migrant and unspecified. In our sample, only 57% (74) of the articles study race. The most commonly studied combinations in our sample are gender/race (12% [16]) and gender/race/ethnicity (5% [6]), both predominantly in the US. In total, authors named around 125 different intersectional groups, sometimes using different terms for similar or overlapping groups.

The lion's share of the articles study marginalised rather than advantaged groups. Articles that include majority groups are predominantly quantitative comparative analyses of legislation. Twelve articles with a focus on the US study 'white' groups,

particularly 'white women' and/or 'white men' (11) or 'white LGBT' (1) alongside or in comparison with other racial groups.

Table 1: Articles published on intersectionality in top SSCI-ranked (Q1) political science and IR journals, 2000–16

SSCI rank	Articles ($N = 48$)	Journal name
1 (PolSci)	1	*American Journal of Political Science*
6 (PolSci)	3	*American Political Science Review*
8 (PolSci)	4	*Perspectives on Politics*
9 (IR)	1	*Common Market Law Review*
14 (PolSci)	1	*Annual Review of Political Science*
15 (PolSci)	3	*Political Psychology*
16 (IR)	1	*International Affairs*
19 (IR) (PolSci 46, Q2)	2	*International Journal of Transitional Justice*
20 (PolSci)	1	*Comparative Political Studies*
30 (PolSci)	1	*Policy Studies Journal*
32 (PolSci)	2	*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*
33 (PolSci)	25	*Politics & Gender*
39 (PolSci)	1	*Journal of Politics*
41 (PolSci)	2	*Environmental Politics*

The intersectionality 'canon'

Who is most cited in work on intersectionality in political science? Defining the 'canon' in terms of citations shows that these works are published exclusively in US journals and that the majority of the authors (nine out of 10) are US-based (see Table 2). Five of the top 10 articles are by African-American feminist scholars well known for their work on African-American women and black feminism: Hancock, Hill Collins, Jordan-Zachery and Simien. By any measure, the single most frequently cited author is Hancock, the author of two articles on the list.

Most of these pieces are theoretical discussions of intersectionality, defining the meaning and application of the concept for political science. The top-cited piece is Hancock's (2007a) argument for understanding intersectionality as a research paradigm and calling for its broader application in political science. Its extensive citation reflects the central place the article plays in current debates about intersectionality. Hill Collins's (2000) article also discusses intersectionality as a paradigm but describes it as an interpretive framework that centres black women's experiences while also providing broader insight to the overall organisation of social structure and culture. Dhamoon (2011) advocates a shift from a study of identities and categories to a study of processes and systems. Yet, she also articulates intersectionality as a political project, emphasising it as a political critique of power. Weldon (2006) aims to provide a conceptual basis for the use of the idea of intersectionality in comparative politics, theorising its application outside the US and extending what she sees as the structural approach to intersectionality developed by Hill Collins and Crenshaw to new contexts.

Three of the most-cited articles come from a single 2007 symposium in *Politics & Gender*. Hancock (2007b) advocates for a broader understanding and application of intersectionality that moves beyond a content-based specialisation focused on particular intersections. Simien (2007) similarly enjoins political scientists to shift towards adopting more intersectional research (quantitative and qualitative), making her case by highlighting and engaging with scholarship on African-American women and politics. Jordan-Zachery (2007) acknowledges diverging approaches to

Table 2: Top 10 cited articles on intersectionality published in political science and IR SSCI-ranked journals

Rank	Author	Year	Article	Number of citations in November 2017	Average number of citations per year	Journal
1	Hancock	2007a	When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: examining intersectionality as a research paradigm	946	95	*Perspectives on Politics*
2	Hill Collins	2000	Gender, black feminism, and black political economy	446	26	*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*
3	Hawkesworth	2003	Congressional enactments of race-gender: toward a theory of raced-gendered institutions	381	27	*American Political Science Review*
4	Hancock	2007b	Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm	326	33	*Politics & Gender*
5	Dhamoon	2011	Considerations on mainstreaming intersectionality	272	45	*Political Research Quarterly*
6	Jordan-Zachery	2007	Am I a black woman or a woman who is black? A few thoughts on the meaning of intersectionality	188	19	*Politics & Gender*
7	Weldon	2006	The structure of intersectionality: a comparative politics of gender	176	16	*Politics & Gender*
8	Simien	2007	Doing intersectionality research: from conceptual issues to practical examples	143	14	*Politics & Gender*
9	Hughes	2011	Intersectionality, quotas, and minority women's political representation worldwide	140	23	*American Political Science Review*
10	Strolovitch	2006	Do interest groups represent the disadvantaged? Advocacy at the intersections of race, class, and gender	139	13	*Journal of Politics*

intersectionality, placing herself more in the context-specific work of the Combahee River Collective (1981 [1977]) and Crenshaw (1989) than in the broader empirical approach. She describes her use of intersectionality to understand the lived experiences of black women and their liberation.

The remaining articles are empirical applications of the idea of intersectionality. Hawkesworth (2003) is one of the few pieces published in the prestigious *American Political Science Review* (APSR). It centres women of colour and their 'raced-gendered' experiences in the US Congress. Hughes (2011), also published in the APSR, uses intersectionality as an approach to understanding the role that quotas play in minority and white women's representation worldwide. For the cross-national analysis, Hughes establishes minority status by determining salient social cleavages (eg racial/ethnic, religious and linguistic) and 'axes of disadvantages'. Finally, Strolovitch (2006) looks at interest groups in the US and focuses on national organisations that represent marginalised groups. These three articles in the discipline's most visible, top-ranked journals are all authored by white women.

Our second construction of 'the canon' is aimed at incorporating more non-SSCI articles and books to expand what might be considered foundational work for researchers working on intersectionality in the discipline, which potentially may also include work that is not explicitly about intersectionality (see Table 3). As the last three articles received an equal amount of citations, we listed not the 10, but the 11, most-cited works. These were journal articles only, even though we used the entire reference lists of SSCI-ranked journal articles in our sample. Compared to the first canon (see Table 2), this canon is more interdisciplinary and includes scholars and journals in the wider field of women and gender studies. Other than the first canon, this canon includes European journals (*European Journal of Women's Studies*) and scholars (Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Only four articles appear in both canons (Hawkesworth, 2003; Weldon, 2006; Hancock, 2007a; Simien, 2007). The share of women of colour – around half (five) – is comparable to the first canon.

Two scholars of black feminism top the list: Crenshaw (1991) is cited in 33% (37) of the articles, while Hancock (2007a) is cited in 30% (34). McCall (2005) is the next most-cited piece, cited by 22% (25) of our sample. The other articles are cited by 7–12% (8–14) of the sample. Mansbridge's (1999) article is the one piece in this list that is not about intersectionality; it serves as reference point for some scholars about the relationship between gender, race and representative politics.

Taking the four most-cited studies in our sample (see Figure 2), we see that over the period from 2006 to 2016, citations to articles authored by the women of colour in our construction of the canon (eg Crenshaw and Hancock) grew steadily, while citations to the articles authored by white women – even in leading political science and women's studies journals – level out or drop off. Citations to McCall are relatively steady and Hawkesworth's citations peak in 2011 but decline radically thereafter. In spite of some highly visible pieces on intersectionality by white women, in political science journals, black feminist scholars based in the US appear increasingly to lead the field of intersectionality studies.

What do these data tell us about the claim that as intersectionality gains popularity, black feminist scholarship becomes less cited? The evidence for this thesis is mixed at best, especially if we want to focus on political science journals, and if we distinguish between American and European political science. Women of colour based in the US are well represented in our constructions of the canon, although they are less

well represented in top-ranked political science journals. It is important to note that intersectionality in political science research is relatively new. It is therefore no surprise that the scholars who were among the first to publish about intersectionality in the

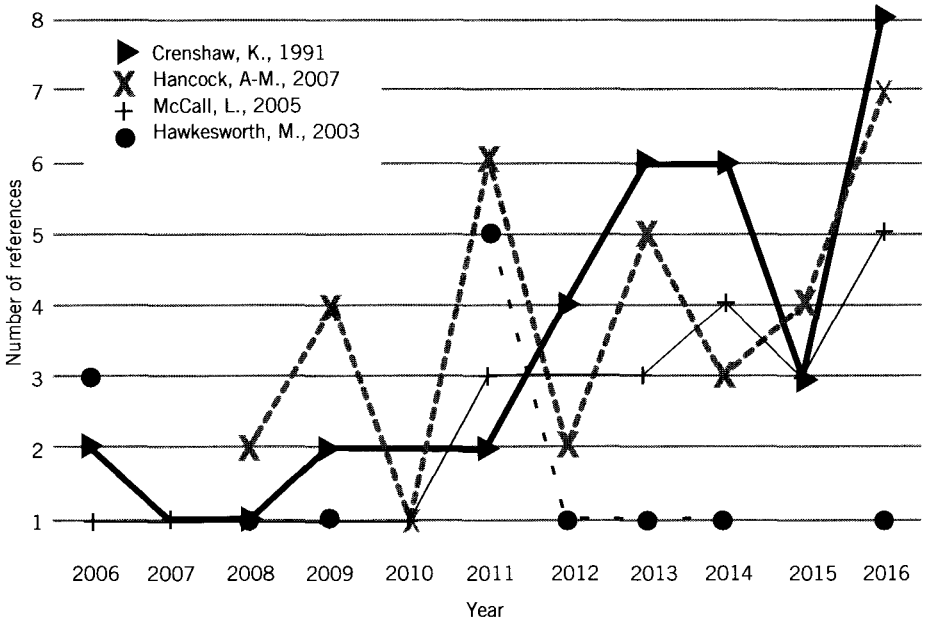
Table 3: Top 11 cited works by articles on intersectionality published in political science and IR SSCI-ranked journals

Rank	Author	Year	Article	Percentage of citations (from the total of citations of 114 articles)	Absolute number of citations	Journal
1	Crenshaw	1991	Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color	33%	37	*Stanford Law Review*
2	Hancock	2007a	When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: examining intersectionality as a research paradigm	30%	34	*Perspectives on Politics*
3	McCall	2005	The complexity of intersectionality	22%	25	*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*
4	Hawkesworth	2003	Congressional enactments of race-gender: toward a theory of raced-gendered institutions	12%	14	*American Political Science Review*
5	Verloo	2006	Multiple inequalities, intersectionality and the European Union	11%	12	*European Journal of Women's Studies*
6	Yuval-Davis	2006	Intersectionality and feminist politics	11%	12	*European Journal of Women's Studies*
7	Mansbridge	1999	Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent 'yes'	11%	12	*Journal of Politics*
8	Smooth	2006	Intersectionality in electoral politics: a mess worth making	9%	10	*Politics & Gender*
9	Weldon	2006	The structure of intersectionality: a comparative politics of gender	7%	8	*Politics & Gender*
10	Simien	2007	Doing intersectionality research: from conceptual issues to practical examples	7%	8	*Politics & Gender*
11	Bratton and Haynie	1999	Agenda setting and legislative success in state legislatures: the effects of gender and race	7%	8	*The Journal of Politics*

discipline, like Hancock, receive most citations. As intersectionality gains popularity, citations to these foundational works logically grow as well. In future work on this topic, it will be important to examine broader trends in citational patterns that expand beyond the parameters of this study and to map any changes over time.

Author identity and approach to intersectionality

Figure 2: Top four cited works by articles on intersectionality published in political science and IR SSCI-ranked journals, 2006–16



To further probe questions about the diminished visibility of women of colour in political science and any attendant depoliticisation of intersectionality, we designed an online Qualtrics survey of authors to ask about their identities and approaches to intersectionality scholarship (see Appendix 2, available online as supplementary material). The aim was to get at the *self-reported* identities of political scientists who publish on intersectionality. Not only may gender, racial or ethnic categories differ from what outside observers conclude, but other salient differences, such as disability, religion and sexuality, may not be readily observable at all. Our survey allows us to explore whether these identities are related to their particular approaches to intersectionality.

The survey was sent to all of the authors (158/168) in our database for whom we could identify valid email addresses between December 2017 and January 2018. Our results reflect a response rate of 52% (83 responses), which is quite high for an email survey; an average response rate for a web survey is 34% (Shih and Fan, 2008). About 53% (44) of the respondents worked in the US, while another 32% (27) were based in Europe. An additional 10% (8) of the scholars were based in Canada, Japan, Australia or elsewhere, and 4–5% were based in an unknown location.

About 14% (12) of the respondent authors to our survey identified as men. Slightly more than half (7) of the men identified themselves as members of marginalised racial, ethnic or religious groups, and/or as sexual minorities. The majority (77% [64]) of our respondents identified as women, and one person identified as transgender. Overall, about a quarter (20) of our respondents identified as lesbian, gay or gender-nonconforming. Only 6% (5) of the authors in our survey reported being white, straight, cis men.

Our respondents are predominantly middle-class: 14% (12) report a working-class identity or background. The vast majority (86% [71]) see themselves as middle-class or as better off than that. More than a third (34% [28]) reported being first-generation students, suggesting that coming from a working-class background may be under-reported, though it is possible that respondents did not know what 'first generation' meant (one person indicated both that their parents had a college degree *and* that they were a first-generation student).

About a quarter (20) of all respondents reported being from a marginalised race, ethnicity or religion. Of these respondents, about a fifth (4) identified as men. In terms of the immigrant or refugee experience, a quarter (21) of the respondents report an immigrant background and a tiny proportion (4% [3]) report coming from a refugee background. The majority of our respondent authors are white women: only 14% (12) identify as women of colour. A slightly larger proportion (18% [15]) appeared to be women of a marginalised racial, ethnic or religious group. Only 7% of our respondents reported a disability. Our analysis suggests that the demographic composition of our respondents likely represents the make-up of the broader group of authors on intersectionality.

Fewer European than American respondents identified as women of colour (only two European scholars so identified). A few European respondents contested the idea of race and/or ethnicity. Other European respondents reflected upon the difficulty of answering questions about race. Two or three other respondents to the survey did not specifically contest the category of race, but responded to questions about the racial identity with terms such as 'human', 'majority' or 'European'. These responses suggest that race is a challenging category for many Europeans, even for some who have published about intersectionality. The low rate of identification as women of colour in Europe may reflect the difficulty of devising racial or ethnic categories that travel well across different national contexts. On the other hand, this low rate may reflect the underrepresentation of women of colour scholars in the European academy.

How did this group of scholars define their approach to intersectionality, and how did their identity influence their work? Overall, about one in six respondents (16% [13]) said that they saw intersectionality primarily as a research paradigm, whereas only 4% (3) said that they saw it primarily as a political project (see Table 4). The majority (67% [56]) see intersectionality as *both* a research paradigm and a political project.

A sizeable minority (40% [33]) of all respondents identify centring women of colour as essential to an intersectional approach, and another 57% (47) see critical discussion of race as necessary. Other aspects seen as important, and about which we asked, included looking at any group defined by multiple social structures, or context-specific analysis. Other aspects that we did not specifically ask about, but which some respondents saw as essential, were sexuality, gender, class, national and linguistic identities. Even those who agreed that centring women of colour and/or race was essential to intersectionality emphasised the importance of giving gender

Table 4: Self-reported approach to intersectionality by selected groups of respondents

Q17: 'Would you say that intersectionality is: a research paradigm, political project, both, other, no answer?'

	Total respondents identifying	Research paradigm	Political project	Both	Other	No answer
All respondents	83 (100%)	13 (16%)	3 (4%)	56 (67%)	3 (4%)	8 (10%)
Women of colour	12 (100%)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Marginalised ethnic, racial or religious group	20 (100%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	14 (70%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Male gender identity	12 (100%)	3 (25%)	1 (8%)	8 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
LGBT identity	20 (100%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	14 (70%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
US-based	44 (100%)	7 (16%)	2 (5%)	32 (73%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)
Europe-based	27 (100%)	5 (19%)	1 (4%)	19 (70%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)

and especially sexuality equal weight. One respondent noted: "I definitely think that it's crucial to center women of colour, but I also think that it's important to center gender. I also think that sexuality and gender identity are under-included. To some degree disability and class too". It is interesting to note that for some respondents, centring women of colour seemed to be a different activity than centring 'gender'. Respondents identifying as women of colour overwhelmingly (83% [10]) agreed that centring women of colour was essential to the study of intersectionality, and the same number and proportion thought that critical discussion of race was necessary.

Those who did not identify race or women of colour as an essential element sometimes emphasised context-specific marginalisation, or even individual-level salience, as being the relevant criterion. For example, one respondent who did not identify centring women of colour or a focus on race as essential said that it was essential to an intersectional approach to "focus on communities that have been historically marginalised in their specific context". Another respondent who did not identify centring women of colour or critical discussion of race as priorities indicated that:

> "Intersectionality is important as it broadens our thinking of 'diversity' and should be extended to multiple individual traits (socio-economic status, race, gender, age, religion, education attainment), all of which collectively have a role in the behavior and ideals of individuals."

Emphasis on race was greater for US-based researchers, of whom 61% (27) thought that centring women of colour was important and 66% (29) thought that race was an essential part of intersectionality. As in the discussion on self-identification, race (and the category of 'women of colour' in particular) has less salience in Europe, even among intersectionality researchers: only 26% (7) of the Europe-based respondents thought that it was essential to centre women of colour, and only 59% (16) thought that it was essential to intersectional analysis to include critical discussion of race.

The majority of our respondents see intersectionality as both a political project and a research paradigm. This was true for respondents who identified as a member of a marginalised racial or ethnic group (see Table 4). Of these 20 respondents, 70% (14) identified intersectionality as *both* a political project and as a research paradigm. About 10% (just 2) of these respondents saw intersectionality as a political project, and

another 15% (3) saw it as a research paradigm. The same pattern, roughly speaking, also emerged if we looked only at women of colour respondents: 75% (9 of 12) identified intersectionality as being both a research paradigm and a political project, and only three respondents identified intersectionality as either a research paradigm (17% [2]) or a political project (8% [1]).

Looking at those who did *not* identify as women of colour also revealed a majority (64% [36]) who see intersectionality as *both* a research project and a political project. A similar proportion (18% [10]) of this group – a group who do *not* see themselves as women of colour (either because they are men or because they do not see themselves as people of colour) – see intersectionality as primarily a research paradigm, as compared to a similar proportion of women of colour. Taking male-identified authors – not identifying with a marginalised racial group – together, one quarter (2 of 8) saw intersectionality as primarily a research paradigm, but given the small numbers of men in our survey, we cannot draw any firm conclusions. About 16% (8) of the 48 women respondents not marginalised by race or ethnicity see intersectionality as primarily a research paradigm, while 77% (37) of these women see it as both a political project and a research paradigm.

It is notable that intersectionality scholars are far from representative of the field of political science. With only 7% (6) being straight, white, cis men, it is clear that work on intersectionality appeals to people who experience marginalisation along one (or multiple) axes of difference (eg race, gender, sexuality). In this sense, positionality appears to influence interest in intersectionality. Furthermore, most of our respondents see an intersectional approach as being *both* a political project and a research paradigm – even if they do not always state this explicitly in their published work. So, positionality does play an important role in establishing intersectionality as a political project. It might also, however, play a role in determining what exactly comprises that political project. Our survey suggests that the vast majority of scholars writing about intersectionality do not identify as women of colour or even as a member of a marginalised racial group. How does this affect the study of intersectionality? While most scholars see it as essential to place gender and race at the centre of the analysis, our survey does suggest that women of colour, scholars based in the US and women of marginalised racial, ethnic and religious groups collectively place more emphasis on race as a part of that political project.

Conclusion

As one of the first empirical assessments of intersectionality in political science, our study has provided an introspective analysis of the politics of intersectionality. While intersectionality has increased in its visibility in political science journals, it has most frequently appeared in the specialised journal *Politics & Gender*. Intersectional scholarship has less frequently appeared in the most-cited, long-established political science journals, and only in the US. Our analysis of the canon – operationalised as the top-cited articles – found that work by women of colour (particularly North American) is well represented, at least in the American political science journals (though not in the most well-established mainstream journals). The wider canon – operationalised as the complete reference lists of all articles in our sample – also represents European scholars, albeit at a very low level (two out of 11). In both canons, roughly half of the authors are women of colour. These findings are instructive;

however, more extensive research is needed to explore the potential power differentials in the citation practices of intersectionality studies, for example, to explore changes in these practices over time, and more finely grained analysis of who is citing whom.

Our findings also demonstrate how the underrepresentation of women of colour in European political science is consequential in terms of how intersectionality is framed and understood. Earlier, we discussed how race is less central, and perhaps invisible, in the operationalisation of intersectionality by continental European scholars. The significance of this is underscored by several factors. First, according to our survey, women of colour were more likely to centre race in their intersectional analysis. Second, women of colour in Europe and Britain are largely absent – with a few notable exceptions – within political science and its processes of knowledge production. Third, the black feminist scholars that are most visible in the global intersectionality project are from the US. Thereby, we miss the story about diasporic blackness and its intersections in Europe and beyond (Emejulu and Sobande, forthcoming). Citation politics amplify these problems of voice and visibility. Which publications count in political science, who gets to publish in those outlets and who is actually writing these texts constitute a politics of exclusion.

Has the increased popularity of intersectionality come at the expense of its radical praxis, of its commitment to placing race and women of colour at the centre of feminist analysis? While not all scholars agree that intersectionality is inherently political, a vast majority of them do. That intersectionality is part of a political project is not explicitly in dispute, nor is the perception that intersectionality should focus on marginalised groups and processes of marginalisation. This seeming agreement may obscure a deeper disagreement, however, about what intersectionality's political project is, which particular groups it is meant to represent and whose history and intellectual labour it should reflect. Gender and race are still largely seen and treated as essential and central components of any intersectional analysis, although our survey suggests that this is truer in the US and among women of colour. How centrally to place sexuality, class and disability seems less well established. Here, too, the social location of the scholar has some impact on how they conceptualise intersectionality and what intersections they prioritise, with LGBT scholars more likely to emphasise the importance of sexuality.

In this article, we mapped how intersectionality has travelled in political science. Future research should dig deeper into the content of this map and presumable different approaches and foci across authors and borders. Key to our argument is that one cannot separate political science knowledge production from the systematic underrepresentation of women of colour in the discipline on *both* sides of the Atlantic. More work is needed to fully understand and intervene in the exclusionary politics of knowledge production in political science and the wider academy. Who is (under-) represented in the discipline of political science, and how they are (under-)represented, is vital to this question.

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Conflict of interest

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