



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Aalborg Universitet

Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging

Yuval-Davis, Nira

Publication date:
2011

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Yuval-Davis, N. (2011). Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging. Aalborg: Institut for Kultur og Globale Studier, Aalborg Universitet.

General rights

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

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

Take down policy

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



FREIA

FREIA
Feminist Research Center
in Aalborg
Aalborg University
Kroghstraede 3
DK-9220 Aalborg East
Phone: +45 9940 8310
E-mail: freia@cgs.aau.dk

Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging

Nira Yuval-Davis

FREIA Working Paper Series

No. 75

ISSN: 0907-2179

© 2011 Nira Yuval-Davis
Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging
FREIA – Feminist Research Center in Aalborg
Aalborg University
Denmark
FREIA Working Paper Series
Working paper no. 75

ISSN 0907-2179

Published by
FREIA & Department of Culture and Global Studies
Aalborg University

Distribution
Download as PDF on
<http://www.freia.cgs.aau.dk/Publikationer+og+skriftserie/Skriftserie/>

Front page design and layout
Cirkeline Kappel

The Research Secretariat
FREIA & Department of Culture and Global Studies
Kroghstraede 3-3.243
Aalborg University
DK-9220 Aalborg East
Denmark
Tel. + 45 9940 8310

E-mail: freia@cgs.aau.dk
Homepage: <http://www.freia.cgs.aau.dk>

FREIA's paper series is published by FREIA - the Feminist and Gender Research Centre in Aalborg. The paper series is designed to disseminate knowledge about the core research themes of FREIA and increase awareness of FREIA's activities both internally at Aalborg University and externally.

The paper series contains two types of papers: (1) 'commissioned papers', which are produced by visiting scholars, keynote speakers at FREIA conferences and others who are invited to write a paper for the series; and (2) 'working papers', which are working papers, papers for conferences and seminars, project descriptions, lecture manuscripts and book chapters which are produced by the staff at FREIA and affiliated researchers from Aalborg University, but also by participants of conferences organised by FREIA. The papers are work in progress and not published elsewhere. They have a maximum length of 10 000 words. FREIA's paper series is only published on the web and the authors hold exclusive copyright to their work. The views expressed in FREIA's paper series are only those of its independent authors. The editor of the series is Associate Professor Pauline Stoltz. She can be reached at stoltz@cgs.aau.dk.

Foreword

The paper: *Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging* was presented by professor Nira Yuval-Davis as a keynote speech at the National Gender Conference for the Danish Association for Gender Research 2011. The conference was hosted by FREIA: The Feminist Research Centre at Aalborg University April 30. The conference was titled: *Power and Mobilization – locally, nationally and globally*.

Nira Yuval-Davis is Professor and Director of the Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, East London University. She is the author of the influential book: *Gender and Nation* (1997), which has been translated into many different languages and she has co-edited: *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, Zed books 1999. Her new book is entitled: *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* and is published by Sage Publications, 2011.

The second key-note speech was given by Myra Marx Ferree and entitled: *Framing Inequalities in the US, Germany and the EU: Race, Class and Gender as Dynamic Intersections*. Myra Marx Ferree is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for German and European Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She is the author of the influential book *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the US* (Cambridge University Press 2001), and *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, 2006, co-edited with Alli Mari Tripp on New York University Press. Her new book is entitled: *Varieties of Feminisms*, Stanford.

FREIA is proud to be able to present Nira Yuval Davis' work for the community of gender researchers in Denmark and we are confident that this text can also serve as an inspiration for a broader audience of scholars working on issues related to power and intersectionality.

On behalf of FREIA

Birte Siim

Professor in Gender Research in the Social Sciences

Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging

Nira Yuval-Davis

This discussion on power and mobilization is based on my forthcoming book (*The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*, Sage 2011) which focuses on issues on the intersection of the sociology of power and the sociology of emotions.

Politics involve exercise of power and different hegemonic political projects of belonging represent different symbolic power orders. In recent years, the sociological understanding of power has been enriched by the theoretical contributions of Michel Foucault (e.g. 1979; 1991a) and Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. 1984; 1990). Traditionally, power was understood and measured by the effects those with power had on others. However, feminists and other grass roots activists, following Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), promoted a notion of 'empowerment' in which people would gain 'power of' rather than 'power on'. While this approach has been used too often to cover intra-communal power relations and the feminist 'tyranny of structurelessness' with which Jo Freeman (1970) described the dynamics of feminist politics, the notion of empowerment does fit alternative theoretical approaches to power which focus on symbolic power.

Max Weber's classical theory of power (1968), which differentiated between physical and charismatic powers, those dependent on individual resources and those emanating out of legitimate authority, has been supplemented, if not supplanted by other theoretical frameworks which sought to explain what is happening in the contemporary world where social, political and economic powers have become more diffused, decentered and desubjectified. The most popular of these new approaches have been those by Foucault (1979, 1986, 1991a) and Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990). Foucault constructed a notion of a 'disciplinary society' in which power increasingly operates through impersonal mechanisms of bodily discipline and a governmentality which escapes the consciousness and will of individual and collective social agents. Under such conditions, power as was formerly known, starts to operate only when resistance occurs.

However, as Ciaran Cronin (1996:56) points out, while Foucault's genealogical perspective of power is of crucial importance in understanding contemporary politics, it is too radical and monolithic, and therefore 'it is impossible to identify any social location of the exercise of power or of resistance to power'. This is where Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, while sharing some of

Foucault's insights, such as the role of body practices as mediating relations of domination, can serve us better. The subject for Bourdieu is both embodied and socially constituted. His theory of practice (in which there is constant interaction between the individual symbolically structured and socially inculcated dispositions of individual agents which he calls '*habitus*' and the 'social field' which is structured by symbolically mediated relations of domination) offers a more empirically sensitive analytical framework for decoding impersonal relations of power.

Symbolic powers are of crucial importance when we deal with political projects of belonging, although more often than not, they are the focus of contestations and resistance. Adrian Favell (1999) defined the politics of belonging as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance'. The boundaries the politics of belonging are concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries which, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and 'them'. The question of the boundaries of belonging, the boundaries of the Andersonian (1991[1983]) 'imagined communities', is central in all political projects of belonging. The politics of belonging involve not only the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers (within and outside the community) but also their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents. It is important to recognize, however, that such political agents would struggle both for the promotion of their specific position on the construction of collectivities and their boundaries as well as using these ideologies and positions in order to promote their own power positions within and outside the collectivities.

The politics of belonging also include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of such a community. As such, it is dialogical (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, eds, 1999) and encompasses contestations both in relation to the participatory dimension of citizenship as well as in relation to issues related to the status and entitlements such membership entails.

It is for this reason that we need to differentiate between belonging and the politics of belonging. Before discussing this in a little more detail, however, it is important to discuss why intersectionality and the epistemology of the situated gaze is so central to it.

Intersectionality

Epistemologically, intersectionality can be described as a development of feminist standpoint theory which claims, in somewhat different ways, that it is

vital to account for the social positioning of the social agent and challenged ‘the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere’ (Haraway 1991:189) as a cover and a legitimisation of a hegemonic masculinist ‘positivistic’ positioning. Situated gaze, situated knowledge and situated imagination (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002), construct differently the ways we see the world. However, intersectionality theory was interested even more in how the differential situatedness of different social agents constructs the ways they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects.

I do not have time here to get into the history of various inter- and intra-disciplinary debates on how to approach intersectionality. Instead, I shall just mention three main points that characterize my approach to intersectional analysis. Unlike many feminists, especially black feminists, who focus on intersectional analysis as specific to black and ethnic minorities women or, at least, to marginalized people, I see intersectionality as the most valid approach to analyze social stratification as a whole (see my paper in Lutz & al, 2011). Intersectional analysis does not prioritize one facet or category of social difference. However, unlike those who view the intersection of categories of social difference in an additive way, I see them as mutually constitutive. As to the question of how many facets of social difference and axes of power need to be analyzed – this is different in different historical locations and moments, and the decision on which ones to focus involve both empirical reality as well as political and especially ontological struggles. What is clear, however, is that when we carry out intersectional analysis, we cannot homogenize the ways any political project or claimings affect people who are differentially located within the same boundaries of belonging.

Belonging and the politics of belonging

It is important to differentiate between belonging and the politics of belonging. Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’. As Ghassan Hage (1997:103) points out, however, ‘home is an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future’. (See also Taylor 2009). Part of this feeling of hope relates to home as a ‘safe’ space (Ignatieff, 2001). In the daily reality of early 21st century, in so many places on the globe, the emphasis on safety gets a new poignancy. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that feeling ‘at home’ does not necessarily only generate positive and warm feelings. It also allows the safety as well as the emotional engagement to be, at times, angry, resentful, ashamed, indignant (Hessel, 2010).

Belonging tends to be naturalized and be part of everyday practices (Fenster, 2004). It becomes articulated, formally structured and politicized only when it is threatened in some way. The politics of belonging comprise of specific political

projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries (i.e. whether or not, according to specific political projects of belonging Jews could be considered to be German, for example, or abortion advocates can be considered Catholic).

As Ulf Hannerz (2002) claims, home is essentially a contrastive concept, linked to some notion of what it means to be away from home. It can involve a sense of rootedness in a socio-geographic site or be constructed as an intensely imagined affiliation with a distant local where self realization can occur.

Belonging

People can ‘belong’ in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments. These can vary from a particular person to the whole humanity, in a concrete or abstract way, by self or other identification, in a stable, contested or transient way. Even in its most stable ‘primordial’ forms, however, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity – the latter is only a naturalized construction of particular hegemonic form of power relations. Belonging is usually multi-layered and – to use geographical jargon – multi-scale (Antonisch, 2010) or multiterritorial (Hannerz, 2002).

To clarify our understanding of the notion of social and political belonging, it would be useful to differentiate between three major analytical facets in which belonging is constructed¹. The first facet concerns social locations; the second relates to people’s identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings and the third relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others’ belonging/s. These different facets are interrelated, but cannot be reduced to each other.

Of course not all belonging/s are as important to people in the same way and to the same extent and emotions, as perceptions, shift in different times and situations and are more or less reflective. As a rule, the emotional components of people’s constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they become. In most extreme cases people would be willing to sacrifice their lives – and the lives of others - in order for the narrative of their identities and the objects of their identifications and attachments to continue to exist. After a terrorist attack, or after a declaration of war, people often seek to return to a place of less ‘objective’ safety, as long as it means they can be near their nearest and dearest, and share their fate.

¹ As will become clearer further on in the chapter, these facets can be reconstructed and reconfigured in many different ways by different political projects of belonging.

Ethical and political values

Belonging, therefore, is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are assessed and valued by self and others and this can be done in many different ways by people with similar social locations and who might identify themselves as belonging to the same community or grouping. They can vary not only in how important these locations and collectivities seem to be in one's life and that of others, but also in whether they consider this to be a good or a bad thing. Closely related to this are specific attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity and categorical boundaries are being/should be drawn, in more or less permeable ways, as different ideological perspectives and discourses construct them as more or less inclusive. It is in the arena of the contestations around these issues where we move from the realm of belonging into that of the politics of belonging.

The Politics of Belonging

In my book I discuss what I consider to be the major political projects of belonging in the contemporary world. The first one to be discussed is citizenship. I argue that citizenship should not be seen as limited to only state citizenship but should be understood as the participatory dimension of membership in all political communities. Moreover, I argue that it is impossible to understand state citizenship without analyzing the multi-layered structures of people's citizenships that include, in intersectional ways, citizenships of sub, cross and supra-state political communities. However, I also argue that in spite of this and in spite of the reconfigurations of states as a result of neo-liberal globalization, different state citizenships (or their absence) and the rights and entitlements associated with them, can (still?) be seen as the most important contemporary political projects of belonging, mobilizing people in popular resistance campaigns as well as determining to a great extent a global system of stratification.

Central to my argument in the book is the claim that the political project of states and that of nations overlaps only partially and is hegemonic only within specific locations and in specific historical moments. It is for this reason that nationalism and related ideologies are constructed in the book as an autonomous political project of belonging from that of citizenship of states.

Nationalist ideologies usually construct people, states and homelands as inherently and immutably connected. The fluidity and mobility of globalized economy, people's migrations and political/religious/social movements which have all transcend national and ethnic borders and boundaries (in spite of various attempts by states to control or contain them), have also deeply affected

nationalist political projects of belonging as well as the ethnocisation of many states. It contributed to the rise of political movements which embrace the conviviality and richness of multicultural national lives. However, it has also, and in a growing intensity, contributed to the rise of and the emotional power of autochthonic movements which claim possession of territories and states because 'we were here first'.

This is the other side of the growing legitimacy of the notion of indigeneity, which conversely has proved to be a potent tool for claiming rights of racialized minorities who survived colonization and settlement of Europeans in various parts of the world. Their struggles, although different from those of other racialized minorities of people who immigrated to those and other western countries, can be analyzed, on the one hand, as some forms of nationalist political projects of belonging. On the other hand, however, they can also be seen as part of the global rise of cosmopolitan political projects of belonging which rely on human rights discourse to claim their entitlement for individual and collective rights.

Another rising cluster of political projects of belonging are linked to religion. These can be linked to particular nationalist and ethnic movements or constitute parts of cosmopolitan global movements. However, some of the most important political projects of belonging of our times are religious fundamentalist (or absolutist) movements which have arisen in all major religions and are part – especially some Muslim and Christian fundamentalist movements - of the global 'clash of civilizations' discourse which has come to replace the cold war as a dichotomizing discourse of the globe.

Although there have been feminist political projects focusing on all major political projects of belonging – citizenship, nationalism, religion, cosmopolitanism (Yuval-Davis, 2011) I consider 'ethics of care' to be more specifically a feminist political project of belonging. It relates more to the ways people should relate and belong to each other rather than to what should be the boundaries of belonging. Nevertheless, in the last instance, the question of boundaries cannot really be avoided once we start questioning who cares for whom and what are the emotional and the power relations which are involved in this interaction.

Virginia Held (2005) claims that the care social and political model developed out the mother-child relationships model guarantees mutual equality and respect among people. In reality, however, although children can wield a lot of emotional power on their parents and others who love them, they do not have the same power as the carer adults and can easily be deprived and abused in many ways. Pointing out, as the feminists who developed the political project of

'the ethics of care' all do, that everyone at certain times of their lives becomes dependent on care, can be the normative basis for the development of 'ethics of care' as a necessary element of social and political solidarity, but cannot guarantee it. It is for this reason that Martha Nussbaum (2001) argues for an approach to compassion in public life that operates at 'both the level of individual psychology and the level of institutional design' (ibid: 403). Although she recognizes that some emotions are at least potential allies of, and indeed constituents in, rational deliberation (ibid: 454), she extends her analysis to include the recognition that public institutions play a role in shaping possible emotions (see also Perry 6 et al, 2007), as well as the role individuals play in creating institutions according to their own values and imagination. Those, in their turn, influence the development of values such as compassion in others.

Nevertheless, in order to be able to influence, let alone construct, public institutions, emotions such as care and compassion are not sufficient, unless there is power to make them affective. It needs to be recognized, for instance, that while caring for others is the opposite of neo-liberal ethics which does not recognize notions such as 'public good' or 'public interest' and feminists have developed 'ethics of care' as an ideological and moral alternative to this, it can be argued that the adoption of 'ethics of care' by women, especially those who work in the care sector, facilitates and oils, rather than obstructs and resists, the smooth working of globalized neo liberalism which depends on local and global chains of care.

As Martin Luther King Jr, stated 'What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive. And love without power is at its best power correcting everything that stands against love' (quoted in Gregory, 2008:195).

Care and political projects of belonging

'Power at its best'. Without power as a resource to, at least, resist if not affect positive change, the normative values of care and love of feminist 'ethics of care' can have very little social and political influence and can, at best, be perceived as utopian. However, as Joan Tronto (2005) has shown, using excerpt of Thomas More's *Utopia* on denizens, situated gazes can delineate boundaries of recognition and care even within Utopias. What is most important to recognize, however, is that not every combination of power and care/love would be compatible with feminist 'ethics of care' political projects of belonging or with that of Martin Luther King, Jr.

While feminists focused on care and love associated with traditional gendered western femininity as it is constructed in women's roles in family and society, we need to be aware that the heteronormative constructions of 'femininity' and

‘masculinity’ as complementary opposites, as is constructed in hegemonic discourses on these roles, have detrimental effects on women’s powers and autonomy, let alone completely excludes the experiences and values of sexual minorities.

At the same time it is clear that even in such hegemonic discourses care is not exclusive the property of womanhood. There can be no clearer sign in such hegemonic discourses that men care about their community and society than their traditional readiness to perform the ultimate citizenship duty - to sacrifice their lives and to kill others for the sake of the nation. Moreover, as Cynthia Enloe (1990) pointed out, fighting for the nation has been often constructed as fighting for the sake of ‘womenandchildren’. More concretely, it has been shown that men care not only for the notions of home and homeland but for the other men in their unit with whom they are fighting (Kaplan, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 1997, ch.5). One of the main worries of military commanders about including women in combat military unit has been that their presence will disturb the male bonding which is at the heart of military performance. On their side, women as carers are not only constructed as the biological and cultural reproducers of the nation, but are also the men’s ‘helpmates’ – their roles in the formal and informal labour market has been usually defined according to the range of duties demanded from the men, fulfilling, in addition to their traditional reproductive duties, all the tasks the men left when called to fulfil national duties in times of war and other crises (Yuval-Davis, 1985). Caring, in its different gendered forms, therefore, has been at the heart of the performativity, a well as narratives of resistance, of national belonging.

Nowadays, in many states, serving in the military is not any more a male citizenship duty. Just when women started to be allowed to join the military formally in more equitable manner, the military was transformed from a national duty into a form of a professional career, like other agents of national external and internal security. This is also a time in which usually in these states, women bear less children and the national population as a whole starts to age.

This is also the time in which women come to participate in higher and higher percentages in the national labour market, just when, due to neo-liberal globalized economy demands, the nature of service work itself changes and becomes more demanding. This is the time when the ‘care gap’ appears, not only in the domestic sphere, but in the national sphere as well and when the growing dependence on migrant and immigrant workers in various sectors of the economy but especially the care one, raises issues of racialized boundaries of the nation and the various inclusionary and exclusionary political projects of belonging – secular and religious - and the emotions associated with them.

However, maybe even more importantly, this is the time in which in many countries, especially in the West, the percentage of citizens who care enough to vote in the elections falls beyond any previous known rate of the population, especially among younger generations who have grown up under the transformed state institutions as a result of globalized neo-liberalism. Neo-liberal morality of the 'selfish gene' seems to be celebrating, as people cannot see any relationships between engaging in the state and their own interests and concerns. A cynical illustration of this reality has been the demand – from all major political parties in the UK, for instance - to agree for savage cuts in state benefits and services and/or freezing workers' salaries, when the profitability of banks and most of the incomes of the highest earners are largely not been affected or significantly interfered with. Of course, the distance – if not contradiction - between the care demanded from citizens, driven by feelings of entitlements (Squire, 2007) of states and the interest of those who rule states can take also very different forms, such as when in ethnocracies, citizens who belong to non hegemonic minorities are still demanded to show loyalty and care to the state which frames of reference is constructed in terms excluding their collectivities.

The probably obvious, and yet groundbreaking at its time, element in Benedict Anderson's theory of nationalism in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) has been a recognition that nationalism, although modern and correlative of the age of enlightenment, is not based on rationality. Like other 'modernist' theorists of nationalism (e.g. Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Althusser 1971), Anderson linked the rise of nationalism to a particular stage of the rise of industrialisation and capitalism (print capitalism in his case), and saw it as replacing religion. In this respect, he was wrong, as we can see that most contemporary nationalist ideologies incorporate, rather than fully replace, religious belonging. However, he was right to emphasize the passion which is at the base of the nationalist sentiment in which, like religious or familial attachment, there is no actual rational reason and self interest involved.

As Anderson (ibid) argues, this care is not based on any notion of self interest, and this is where it gets its strength from, as it is a substitute construction of 'the sacred'. 'The sacred', constituting the heart of the religious sphere, then, inspires probably the strongest notions of loyalty and sacrifice. The notion of martyrdom is widely spread in various religions, especially the monotheistic ones. The notion of absolute sacrifice is not limited to sacrifice of self but also of those the self cares most about, as is illustrated in the stories when a father is prepared to sacrifice his son (Abraham and Isaac) as well as a mother her children – at least

in the Jewish tradition in the story of Hanna and her seven children² where she preferred them to be killed rather than to betray the Jewish faith.

One of the factors contributing to the growing strength of religious movements all over the world is that religious movements and organizations are often the only ones who put time, energy and funds in caring for the poor, the homeless, the slum neighbourhood, especially after the growing privatisation of the welfare state and the collapse of socialist and communist movements.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are growing secular global social movements concerned with war, poverty and global warming which transcend borders and boundaries, sharing common human values rather than ethnic, national and religious belonging in cosmopolitan practices and discourses of global and human care.

In discussions of familial, national and religious sentiments, it is sometimes taken for granted that people would not be prepared to sacrifice their lives for any more abstract – or cosmopolitan – cause. And yet we know that strangers and outsiders volunteered to fight for various socialist revolutions – Che Guevara probably embodies this sentiment more than anyone else - and in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, for example, the international brigade had an important role to play, ideologically and militarily (Richardson, 1982). In recent years the international solidarity movement in support of the Palestinians³ for instance, has also been politically important as other similar organizations in other militarized conflict zones, such as Iraq and Afghanistan⁴. Although some of the volunteers have religious motivation, for others it was the visceral cosmopolitan sentiment of caring and identification with oppressed strangers and the need to fight for their human rights to be recognized.

Feminist ‘ethics of care’ morality does not ground its ontological base in membership in specific national, ethnic or religious communities but on transcending familial relationships into a universal principle of interpersonal relationships. We need to explore, however, what, if at all, is the relationship between the discourse of ‘ethics of care’ and collectivity boundaries. Such exploration should not be carried out only in relations to feminist ethics of care but also in relation to other similar moral philosophies which put ‘love’ at the basis of the good society.

As illustrated by Donovan and Adams’ work on animal welfare, (2007) there is one basic similarity which is assumed in all ethics of care theories which is, to

² <http://www.jewish-history.com/occident/volume7/jun1849/hannah.html>

³ <http://palsolidarity.org/>

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_shield

use Alison Assiter's words (2009:101) that 'all human beings are needy and all suffer' (ibid:101).

Following Kierkegaard's call to love all human beings and Levinas' insistence that care and love should not be mutual or conditional, she also argues that 'sometimes, loving another will involve respecting their differences from oneself to the extent that one is able.' (ibid:102). The position expressed in the above quote raises two issues which are of fundamental importance to feminist and other emancipatory politics of belonging. Firstly, what criteria should be used to decide when such difference should or should not be respected, and secondly, how does one determine their ability to respect such differences. I would like to examine these two issues via examining transversal feminist politics (Yuval-Davis, 1994, 1997, 2006; Cockburn & Hunter, 1999).

Care, belonging and feminist transversal politics

Transversal feminist political movements are one form of cosmopolitan dialogical politics. The participants, while being engaged with 'others' belonging to different collectivities across borders and boundaries, act not as representatives of identity categories or groupings but rather as advocates, how they are reflectively engaged in 'rooting' and 'shifting' and how their strength lies in the construction of common epistemological understandings of particular political situations rather than of common political action. It was also mentioned that transversal politics, unlike 'rainbow coalitions', depend on shared values rather than on specific political actions, as differential positioning might dictate prioritising different political actions and strategies. Most relevant to our discussion here, it was described how transversal politics encompass difference by equality and while continuously crossing collectivity boundaries, the transversal solidarity is bounded by sharing common values.

Shared values as the basis of solidarity and cooperation is generally rejected by ethics of care feminists. The bond of mothers to their children and of carers to their dependents is not that of shared values but that of love and need. The ethics of care feminists and others might share the value of helping the needy, but there is no such a demand for the needy to necessarily hold such values. This is an asymmetrical politics of solidarity based on the Levinas principle.

Transversal politics, on the other hand, are based on the symmetrical politics of the Buberian 'I-You' approach. But the symmetry and reciprocity is not that of commercial interest, as Levinas claimed in his critique of Buber, but of the reciprocity of trust. While one might be engaged in defending the rights and/or helping to fulfil the needs of any individual and collective human beings whatever their values, common political belonging depends on shared values,

although these shared values encompass intersectional individual and collective differential positionings. This trust, based on common values, also differentiates transversal politics from the Habermasian (Habermas et al, 2006) deliberative democracy approach⁵.

This is of crucial importance because in this way the transversal perspective helps us to judge which differences matter when and where, and to differentiate between care and compassion towards the oppressed, whoever and wherever they are, and that of accepting them all as long term potential political allies in any case of political mobilization⁶. Southall Black Sisters in London, for instance, are very active in the defence of women of all ethnic and religious communities from domestic violence and abuse, rejecting any cultural and religious justification of such acts. At the same time, they are not the political allies and oppose those who have sought to solve domestic violence caused by migrant men by deporting them from Britain – after all, men of all classes and ethnic communities commit the crime of domestic violence but are not punished by deportation. Racist solutions should not be the answer to sexist problems and SBS would not establish a transversal political alliance with those who do not share their anti-racist values.

However, although Southall Black Sisters have been an effective campaigning organization in many ways and even managed to overthrow attempts by politically hostile local authority to stop their funding, they do not have the power to stop such deportations.

Examining feminist ethic of care and feminist transversal dialogical politics brings us back to the question of power and its relations to ethics and to the words of wisdom of Martin Luther King quoted earlier that –

‘What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive. And love without power is at its best power correcting everything that stands against love.’ (quoted in Gregory, 2008:195).

⁵ In the importance of trust in public political life and the ineffectivity of accountability as its replacement in public culture, please see Onora O’neil’s 2002 BBC Reith lectures <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2002/>

⁶ Recently there have been major debates and political crises in two major human rights organizations, Amnesty International in London and the Centre for Constitutional Rights in the USA when major feminist activists working in both organizations accused them of crossing the boundary of defending human rights victims and championing them as if they are not only victims but also human rights defenders and thus giving their views political legitimacy please see <http://www.human-rights-for-all.org/> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/nov/15/international-criminal-justice-yemen>

I would argue that a feminist political project of belonging, therefore, should be based on transversal ‘rooting’, ‘shifting’, mutual respect and mutual trust. It should be caring, but should differentiate clearly between caring towards transversal allies and caring towards the needy. Above all it should not neglect to reflect upon the relations of power not only among the participants in the political dialogue but also between these participants and the glocal carriers of power who do not share their values who need to be confronted, influenced, and when this is not possible – resisted.

Concluding remarks

Politics of belonging is about the intersection of the sociology of power with the sociology of emotions, but it is the normative values lens which filters the meaning of both to individuals and collectivities, differentially situated along intersectional glocal social locations.

However, it is not, or not just, ideological and emotional ‘consciousness raising’ which homogenizes discourse, but specific relations of power. But power, in order to be effective in the long term, has to be internalized and naturalized. The problem of feminist, as well as other emancipatory political movements of belonging, is how to gain power enough to change society, without internalizing, on the way, at least some of the assumptions about ‘what works’ which, at the end, would have them co-opted. The case of ‘gender mainstreaming’ is but one example, but there are also many others⁷.

I would like to conclude by quoting St. Lukes, who predicted that ‘The Wretched will inherit the Earth’, which some, like Anat Pick (2010) would claim is the religious formulation of the mission of the Left. However, she also claims that this is an impossible mission, as granting power to the powerless without just transfer rather than a transcendence of relations of power is a contradiction in terms except in extraordinary and very short moments of grace (eg the 18 days of resistance of the Egyptians masses during February 2011). While I find this warning sobering but valid in many ways, this view also involved a homogenous construction of power which I take exception to, ignoring the complexities of different systems of power which have different systems of checks and balances which might be mobilized, to a lesser or greater extent in the containment, contestation and redistribution of power and other social resources. On a more basic level this view of power of the powerless ignores the insights of Bourdieu which views power as constituted by constant interaction between the symbolically structured and socially inculcated

⁷ See, e.g. AWID, 2004; Walby, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2005.

dispositions of individual agents and the social field structured by symbolically mediated relations of domination.

So – is our mission impossible? Probably. But we must carry on in the Gramscian way – with the pessimism of the mind and the optimism of the will. As the Zimbabwean women’s slogan says – ‘If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance’. As my friend Helen Meekosha has shown – you can dance even in a wheelchair.

REFERENCES:

- 6, P., S. Radstone, Squire, S. and A. Treacher (Eds). (2007). Public Emotions. New York, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Althusser, L. (1971). Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. London, New Left Review.
- Anderson, B. (1991[1983]). Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism. London, Verso.
- Antonsich, M. (2010). "Searching for Belonging – An Analytical Framework." Geography Compass 4(6): 644–659.
- Assiter, A. (2009). Kierkegaard, Metaphysics and Political Theory: Unfinished Selves. London, Continuum.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste. trans. Richard Nice. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). The Logic of Practice. Cambridge, Polity.
- Cockburn, C. and L. Hunter (1999). "Transversal Politics and Translating Practices." Soundings (Special issue on Transversal Politics), 12(Summer).
- Cronin, C. (1996). "Bourdieu and Foucault on power and modernity." Philosophy and Social Criticism 22(6): 55-85.
- Donovan, J. and C. J. Adams, Eds. (2007). The Feminist Care Tradition on Animal Ethics. New York, Colombia University Press.
- Enloe, C. (1990). "Women and Children: Making Feminist Sense of the Persian Gulf Crisis." The Village Voice 25th September.
- Favell, A. (1999). To Belong or Not to Belong: The Postnational Question. The Politics of Belonging: Migrants and Minorities in Contemporary Europe. A. Geddes and A. Favell. Aldershot, Ashgate: 209–227.
- Fenster, T. (2004). The Global City and the Holy City: Narratives of Planning, Knowledge and Diversity. New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Foucault, M. (1979). Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1986 [1969]). What is an Author? The Foucault Reader. In P. Rabinow (Ed). Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1991a). The history of sexuality, Vol. 1, 2, 3: The use of pleasure. trans. Robert Hurly, London, Penguin.
- Freeman, J. (1970). The Tyranny of Structurelessness, http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/hist_texts/structurelessness.html USA, Women's Liberation Movement.
- Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed M. Bergman Ramos, trans, New York, Continuum.
- Gellner, E. (1983). Nations and Nationalism. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Gregory, E. (2008). Politics and the Order of Love: The Augustinian Ethic and Democratic Citizenship. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Habermas, J., C. Cronin and M. Pensky (2006). Time of Transitions. Oxford, Polity Press.

- Hage, G. (1997). *At Home in the Entrails of the West: Multiculturalism, "Ethnic Food" and Migrant Home Building*. In H. Grace, G. Hage, L. Johnson, J. Langsworth and M. Symonds (Eds) Home/World Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West. Western Sydney, Pluto Press.
- Hannerz, U. (2002). *Where are we and who we want to be*, In U. Hedetoft and M. Hjort (Eds) The Post National Self: Belonging and Identity.. Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Haraway, D. (1991). Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Women. London, Free Association Press.
- Held, V. (2005). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hessel, S. (2010), Indignez-Vous!, Montpellier, Native Editions (French).
- Hobsbawm, E., J. (1990). Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ignatieff, M. (2001). Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Kaplan, D. (2006). The Men we loved: male friendship and nationalism in Israeli culture, Berghahan books.
- Nussbaum, M. (2001). Upheavels of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Pick, A. (2010), 'The Powerless Image', paper presented at the seminar series 'Imaging Migrants', CMRB, UEL, November.
- Richardson, R. D. (1982). Comintern army: the international brigades and the Spanish civil war, University Press of Kentucky
- Squire, C. (2007). HIV in South Africa : talking about the big thing London, Routledge.
- Stoetzler, M. and N. Yuval-Davis (2002). "Standpoint Theory, Situated Knowledge and the Situated Imagination." Feminist Theory 3(3): 315–334.
- Taylor, H. (2009). *Landscapes of Belonging: the Meaning of Home for Cypriot Refugees in London*. School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of East London.
- Tronto, J. (2005). *Care as the Work of Citizens: A Modest Proposal*. Women and Citizenship. M. Friedman. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 130–48.
- Vieten, U. (2008). *Situated Cosmopolitanisms*. School of Social Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies. PhD Dissertation, London, University of East London.
- Weber, M. (1968). Economy and Society. New York, Bedminister Press.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (1994). "Women, Ethnicity and Empowerment." Feminism and Psychology Special Issue on Shifting Identities, Shifting Racisms 4(1): 179–98.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (1997). Gender and Nation. London, Sage.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). *Human/Women's Rights and Feminist Transversal Politics*. In M. M. Ferree and A. M. Tripp (Eds) Transnational Feminisms: Women's Global Activism and Human Rights.. New York, New York University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2010). "Theorizing identity: Beyond the 'Self' and 'Other' Dichotomy." Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 44(3):261-280
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011), 'Beyond the recognition and re-distribution dichotomy: intersectionality as stratification', in H. Lutz, M.T. Herrera Vivar & L. Supic, Framing Intersectionality: Debates on a multi-faceted concept in Gender Studies, Farnham: Ashgate
- Yuval-Davis, N. and P. Werbner, Eds. (1999). Women, Citizenship and Difference. London, Zed Books.

FREIA's working paper series:

1. Karin Widerberg: Udfordringer til kvinneforskningen i 1990'erne - foredrag på Center for Kvinneforskning i Aalborg 10.5.90, 1992
2. Feminist Research. Aalborg University. Report 1976-1991, 1992
3. Ann-Dorte Christensen: Kvinder i den nye fredsbevægelse i Danmark - mellem køkkenruller, resolutioner og teltpæle, 1992
4. Ulla Koch: Uformel økonomi og social arbejdsdeling - en fortælling om tværfaglighed og det umuliges kunst, 1992
5. Marianne Rostgaard: Kvindearbejde og kønsarbejdsdeling i tekstilindustrien i Danmark ca. 1830 - 1915, 1992
6. Inger Agger: Køn og krænkelse - om politisk vold mod kvinder, 1992
7. Margrethe Holm Andersen: Heks, hore eller heltinde? - et case-studie om tanzanianske kvinders politiske deltagelse og kønsideologier i forandring, 1993
8. Ulla Koch: A Feminist Political Economics of Integration in the European Community - an outline, 1993
9. Susanne Thorbek: Urbanization, Slum Culture, Gender Struggle and Women's Identity, 1993
10. Susanne Thorbek: Køn og Urbanisering, 1994
11. Poul Knopp Damkjær: Kvinder & rektorstillinger - et indlæg i ligestillingsdebatten, 1994
12. Birte Siim: Det kønnede demokrati - kvinders medborgerskab i de skandinaviske velfærdsstater, 1994
13. Anna-Birte Ravn: Kønsarbejdsdeling - diskurs og magt, 1994.
14. Bente Rosenbeck: Med kønnet tilbage til den politiske historie, 1994
15. Jytte Bang og Susanne Stubgaard: Piger og fysik i gymnasiet, 1994
16. Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen og Monica Rudberg: Jenter og gutter i forandring, 1994
17. Jane Lewis: Gender, Family and the Study of Welfare 'Regimes', 1995
18. Iris Rittenhofer: A Roll in the Hay with the Director: The Manager in a Genderhistorical Perspective, 1995

19. Ruth Emerek: On the Subject of Measuring Women's (and Men's) Participation in the Labour Market, 1995
20. Maren Bak: Family Research and Theory in Denmark: A Literature Review, 1995
21. Ann-Dorte Christensen & Birte Siim: Gender, Citizenship and Political Mobilization, 1995
22. Hanne Marlene Dahl: Contemporary Theories of Patriarchy - Like a Bird without Wings? Power, Signification and Gender in the Reproduction of Patriarchy, 1995
23. Lene Klitrose: Moving far beyond the Separated Fields of Patriarchal Scholarship: the Qualitative Leap of Philosophical Daring, 1995
24. Ulla Koch: Omsorgsbegrebet i lyset af international økonomisk integration - begrebs- og metodediskussion, 1995
25. Karen Sjørup: Patriarkatet og det kvindelige subjekt, 1995
26. Susanne Thorbek: Women's Participation in Slum Organizations - Does it Make a Difference?, 1995
27. Mette Groes: Kvinder laver daghøjskoler for kvinder, 1995
28. Signe Arnfred: Conceptualizing Gender, 1995
29. Durre Ahmed: Essence and Diversity in Gender Research, 1995
30. Ann Schlyter: Women's Responses to Political Changes in Southern Africa - Common Grounds and differences, 1995
31. Diana Mulinari: Thinking about Feminism, 1995
32. Susanne Thorbek: Global Context - Local Concepts, 1995
33. Sylvia Walby: Key Concepts in Feminist Theory, 1996
34. Yvonne Hirdman: Key Concepts in Feminist Theory – Analysing Gender and Welfare, 1996
35. Anna Alten: The Incompatibility of Entrepreneurship and Femininity: A Dilemma for Women, 1996
36. Jane Lewis: Equality, Difference and Gender in Twentieth Century Welfare States, 1996
37. Eileen Drew: Key Concepts Employed to Understand Gender in Relation to the Labour Market, 1996

38. Ilona Ostner: Individualization, Breadwinner Norms, and Family Obligations. Gender Sensitive Concepts in Comparative Welfare, 1996
39. Feminist Research. Aalborg University. Report 1996-1999, 1997
40. Ruth Lister: Engendering Citizenship, Work and Care, 1997
41. Ruth Lister: Citizen or Stakeholder. Policies to combat social exclusion and promote social justice in the UK, 1997
42. Anne Showstack Sassoon: Beyond Pessimism of the Intelligence: Agendas for Social Justice and Change, 1997
43. Lilja Mósedóttir: Breaking the Boundaries: Women's Encounter with the State in Sweden, Germany and the United States, 1997 Labour Market, 1996
44. Ruth Emerek, Jeanette E. Dahl og Vibeke Jakobsen: Migrant Women on the Danish Labour Market, 2000
45. Birte Siim: Dilemmas of Citizenship in Denmark – Lone Mothers between Work and Care, 1999
46. Iris Rittenhofer: Historicizing the “Glass Ceiling”. The engendering of difference in German and Danish media presentations of leadershipdebates 1960 – 1989, 2000
47. Chiara Bertone: Familiens rolle i og kvinders krav til de sydeuropæiske velfærdsstater: et studie om Italien, 1999
48. Margareta Bäck-Wiklund: Senmodernt familjeliv och föräldraskap – om traditionella roller och nya identiteter, 2001
49. Pernille Tanggaard Andersen: Retten til at vælge fællesskab – Yngre ufaglærte kvinders opfattelse af og praksis om fællesskab og solidaritet, 2002
50. Birte Siim: Feministiske bidrag til politisk teori, 2003
51. Anna-Birte Ravn: Economic Citizenship: Debates on Gender and Tax Legislation in Denmark, 1903-83, 2004
52. Christina Fiig: En feministisk offentlighed – Ph. D-forelæsning, Aalborg Universitet den 23. september 2004
53. Ann-Dorte Christensen: The Danish Gender Model and New Political Identities among Young Women, 2004
54. Hege Skjeie: Trosfrihet og Diskrimineringsvern, 2005

55. Kathleen B. Jones: Reflections on Violence and Gender in an Era of Globalization: A Philosophical Journey with Hannah Arendt, 2005
56. Gunhild Agger: Køn i *Matador* og *Krøniken*, 2005
57. Tina Kjær Bach: Kvinder i kommunalpolitik – rapport udarbejdet for Ligestillingsafdelingen, 2005
58. Birte Siim: Køn, magt og medborgerskab i en globaliseret verden, 2005
59. Kirsten Sværke: Nyfeminisme og nye kønsidentiteter, 2005
60. Anette Borchorst: Daddy Leave and Gender Equality – the Danish Case in a Scandinavian Perspective, 2006
61. Yvonne Mørck: Why not intersectionality? A concept at work in modern complex societies. Intersectionality and class travels, 2006
62. Daniel Gustafsson: Gender Integration and the Swedish Armed Forces: The Case of Sexual Harassment and Prostitution, 2006
63. Lise Rolandsen Agustín: Demokrati i det transnationale rum: En diskussion af civilsamfundsaktørernes demokratiseringspotentiale i den europæiske kontekst.
64. Ann-Dorte Christensen & Mette Tobiasen: Politiske identiteter og kønspolitiske holdninger i tre generationer. Forskningsrapport, pilotundersøgelse, Aalborg Universitet, 2007
65. Birte Siim & Anette Borchorst: The multicultural challenge to the Danish Welfare state – Social Politics, Equality and Regulating Families, 2007
66. Birte Siim & Christina Fiig: Democratisation of Denmark – the Inclusion of Women in Political Citizenship, 2008
67. Anna-Birte Ravn & Bente Rosenbeck: Gender and Family Policies in Denmark in the 20th Century, 2008
68. Sune Qvotrup Jensen: Andenhed, hybriditet og agens – Ph.d. forelæsning, Aalborg Universitet, 28. November 2007, 2008
69. Anette Borchorst: Scandinavian gender equality: Competing discourses and paradoxes, 2009
70. Carol Bacchi & Joan Eveline: Gender mainstreaming or diversity mainstreaming? The politics of “doing”, 2009

71. Lotte Bloksgaard: At 'gøre' køn i det moderne arbejdsliv – Ph.d.-forelæsning, Aalborg Universitet, 19. juni 2009, 2010
72. Valentine M. Moghadam: Feminist Activism in the Arab Region and Beyond: Linking Research to Policy Reform and Social Change, 2010
73. Lotte Bloksgaard: Integration, mentoring & networking. Erfaringer fra KVINFO's mentornetwork for indvandrere- og flygtningkvinder i Danmark, 2010
74. Carol Bacchi: Foucault, Policy and Rule: Challenging the Problem-Solving Paradigm, 2010
75. Nira Yuval-David: Power, Intersectionality and the Power of Belonging, 2011

FREIA, the Feminist Research Centre in Aalborg, is an interdisciplinary, social science-based research centre at the Department of Culture and Global Studies at Aalborg University, Denmark. The affiliated researchers work in the fields of anthropology, European studies, history, political science, sociology and statistics. The present research program (Gendered Power Relations in Transition - Equality and Difference in Modern Welfare States) frames a number of individual and collective research projects.