
Dimensionality of intersectionality

Klarita Gërkhani
(Amsterdam)

People are characterized by multiple identities, yet research usually focuses on one at a time. Studies on intersectionality ask how the *content* of identity combinations shapes differential treatment. We ask whether the number of identity dimensions visible to others matters in its own right, which we call the *dimensionality* of intersectionality. We study how dimensionality shapes gender-based discrimination in allocation decisions, distinguishing belief-based from preference-based discrimination and explicit from implicit forms. We test this in a multi-part experiment varying the visibility of gender, nationality, and socioeconomic status. When gender alone is revealed, evaluators explicitly favor women in candidate selection. Revealing additional identity dimensions sharply erodes this favoritism, and the decline tracks the number of revealed dimensions rather than their content. Competence beliefs remain unchanged, indicating that preference-based treatment changes even when beliefs do not. Dictator allocations, by contrast, do not vary by recipient gender even when only gender is shown, despite gender differences in warmth expectations. These findings show that dimensionality can shape discrimination independently of identity content, but only where preference-based differential treatment is present to begin with.