New Perspectives on Imagology

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New Perspectives on Imagology

Edited by

Katharina Edtstadler, Sandra Folie and Gianna Zocco

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CHAPTER 13

Categories, Stereotypes, Images, and Intersectionality

Martina Thiele

Abstract

Starting from the definition that stereotypes are based on categorization and attribution, this article first deals with the relationship between categorization and stereotyping as well as images and imagology. The multitude of categories and stereotypes used in the process of perception raises the question of which categories are decisive in which social contexts and how different social categories are intertwined. Following an examination of categories, stereotypes, and images, these questions of interdependence lead to the fourth important topic of this article: intersectionality.

Keywords

stereotypes – categories – images – intersectionality – media studies

1 Interdisciplinary Research on Stereotypes and Images: The Contribution of Communication Science and Media Studies

In the course of the twentieth century, various scientific disciplines have dealt with the emergence and possible functions of images, prejudices, stereotypes, clichés, and concepts of an enemy. Psychology and social psychology, in particular, but also linguistics, political and social science, and history have given new impetus. Media studies and communication science have partly taken up, but also partly overlooked these new developments. However, since the aforementioned disciplines did not adequately consider media as constructors and conveyors of stereotypes and images, this constitutes an important field of research in communication science.

Walter Lippmann's classic work *Public Opinion* (1922) marked the beginning of social-scientific research on stereotypes. From printer control language he imported the term "stereotype" into a social-scientific context, and

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referred in the first chapter of *Public Opinion* to stereotypes as "pictures in our head" (Lippmann [1992] 1945, 3). Since the 1970s this area of research has been expanded considerably because in modern society the form by which most stereotypes are transmitted is through the media—television, radio, movies, newspapers, books, leaflets, stickers, and, since the 1990s, online media. Research has been conducted on geographic, ethnic, and gender-specific, as well as occupational, generational, and religious, stereotypes. Intersectional approaches have been followed with the aim of taking appropriate account of overlaps of stereotypes based on a range of categorizations. Attention has also been paid to the differences within categories, which can be described as an intracategorical approach, as well as, influenced by poststructuralist and (de)constructivist approaches, anticategorical perspectives. All in all, there have been a great deal of theoretically and methodically ambitious studies on the representation, or indeed the marginalization, of various social groups in the media, often accompanied by suggestions for what needs to change.

2 Categories

Human perception—and thus also scientific work—is based on the creation and use of categories. In turn, categorization is predicated on comparison: perceived similarities and differences lead to classifications into categories. Categories therefore combine the characteristics of objects, persons, and events to form classes. In regard to the categorization of humans, particularly salient characteristics include age, gender, and ethnicity, but political orientation, religious affiliation, place of residence, income, education, and occupation can also be used as social categories. This category knowledge can be applied to new experiences; it is called up when we perceive, communicate, learn, plan, and so on. Categories present helpful classifications, which create order and perspective, facilitate systematization, and classify new information into already existing knowledge structures. Thus, they are the basis of all learning and understanding. The social psychologist Henri Tajfel distinguishes between inductive and deductive categorization. In inductive categorization, "an element (item) is assigned to a category on the basis of some of its characteristics, even if certain incompatibilities can remain" (Tajfel 1975, 348).[1] In deductive categorization, "the known affiliation of an element to a category is

1 My translation. Original quote: "Bei induktiver Kategorisierung wird ein Element (item) einer Kategorie aufgrund einige seiner Merkmale zugeordnet, wenn auch bestimmte Unvereinbarkeiten bestehen bleiben können."

used to classify it under some characteristics which are generally applicable to the category as a whole, without therefore carrying out a more detailed examination" (ibid.; see also Schäfer 1988, 32).[2]

In the empirical sciences, categorizations stand at the beginning of the research process. The category system determines which characteristics are assigned and how. It serves to reduce complex contents to an "appropriate measure" of characteristics. When creating a category system, various standards must be adhered to. Bernard Berelson's statement on category formation in content analysis is frequently quoted in the social sciences: "Content analysis stands or falls by its categories. [...] Since the categories contain the substance of the investigation, content analysis can be no better than its system of categories" ([1952] 1971, 147). The categories should therefore be unambiguous, independent of one another, and mutually exclusive; that is, they should be selective in order to facilitate classification. The category system must be designed in such a way that it covers as many areas of content as possible and helps to examine what is actually to be examined (Holsti 1969, 95; Früh [3]1991, 80; Atteslander [8]1995, 250; Merten 1995, 98; Bonfadelli 2002, 90).

Within empirical social research, the discussion about the formation and selectivity of categories is conducted extensively. On the other hand, there are positions in the sociology of knowledge that fundamentally criticize the essentialization associated with categorizations. Each categorization leads to definitions, limitations, and exclusions that do not do justice to the complexity of the object to be examined—especially when it is a matter of social phenomena. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's philosophy of Germanity, developed in the *Speeches to the German Nation* (Fichte [1808] [4]2017), is regarded as a model of an essentialization that aimed at defining the "German being" as distinct from other "peoples" and "nations." These categories can also be substituted with others. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir addressed the essentialization of social phenomena: "[...] whether it is a race, a caste, a class, a sex condemned to inferiority, the procedure of justification is always the same. The 'eternally feminine' plays the same role here as the 'black soul' and the 'Jewish character'" ([1949] 2010, 32).

Categories are therefore not neutral. Especially social categories related to individuals contain valuations, as Rainer Erb (1995) illustrates by describing three basic forms of categorization: comparison, class formation, and

2 My translation. Original quote: "Bei deduktiver Kategorisierung wird die bekannte Zugehörigkeit eines Elements zu einer Kategorie benutzt, um es unter einige Merkmale einzuordnen, die für die Kategorie insgesamt allgemein gelten, ohne deswegen eine genauere Prüfung vorzunehmen."

similarity or difference accentuation. In comparison, the attribution of certain characteristics to individuals and groups is not absolute but always in relation to others. When Germans attribute the "virtues" punctuality, thoroughness, and diligence to themselves, this usually means that members of other nationalities are characterized as less punctual, thorough, and diligent. In class formation, individuals and groups are assembled into general classes based on observed "similarities." But these "similarities" are perceived because of preexisting stereotypical patterns of perception. Similarity or difference accentuation overestimates the similarities between the members of a group, while overemphasizing the differences between the groups. Erb gives an example: "Although many Frenchmen are certainly more similar to many Germans (such as the bank employees) than to their own countrymen, the Germans are regarded as equal and different from one another by the French" (1995, 20).[3]

In contrast to essentialist positions, (de)constructivists assume that categories are neither "natural" nor "eternal"; rather, categories are social constructs. The social context determines what constitutes a category, which categories become relevant, where category boundaries run, and which characteristics and qualities are primarily associated with a certain category. Categorization is a dynamic process (cf. Otten and Matschke 2008, 292).

Thus, there are both approaches that take a critical sociology of knowledge view toward essentialist and biologistic settings and attempts to largely evade categorical patterns of order (cf. Lorey 2008, 2010), but the latter are only partially successful. Paradoxically, the act of questioning categories does not exclude their reformulation,[4] which is why even research carried out from a position critical of society runs the risk of reproducing what it attempts to overcome—a positivist understanding of science that aims at objectification, typification, and generalization and has developed a set of instruments for this purpose that does not do justice to individuals in their social relationships and the diversity of social practices to the full.

To make matters worse, for political reasons a "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1993, 3) occasionally seems appropriate, and even scientists who have been striving for anticategorical thinking consider the complete avoidance of categorizations to be illusory. Irene Neverla summarizes her doubts as follows:

---

3 My translation. Original quote: "Obwohl sicher viele Franzosen vielen Deutschen (etwa die Bankangestellten) ähnlicher sind als ihren eigenen Landsleuten, werden die Deutschen untereinander als gleicher und als verschiedener von den Franzosen angesehen."

4 The same is true of stereotypes: their questioning does not exclude their reproduction.

> My question to cognitive psychologists and epistemologists is, whether we can think scientifically without doing this in causalities, dualities, dichotomies and static snapshots? Can we move from linear, causal, static, apodictic models to dialectic concepts that are circular, processual, dynamic, elastic?
>
> 2003, 66[5]

However, most categorization processes remain unquestioned or are regarded both as more helpful than problematic and as unavoidable, since categorizations and stereotyping are considered as barely controllable cognitive processes.

3 Stereotypes

Gordon W. Allport explains the connection between categories and stereotypes: "The stereotype is an overpowering belief associated with a category. [...] But a stereotype is not identical to a category; it is more a fixed idea that accompanies a category" (1971, 200). The difference to a category can be found in the aspects of "conviction" and "imagination." Stereotypes, one might conclude, go a step further by attributing evaluative characteristics to the categorized object, person, or group. But it could also be argued that in the process of stereotyping, the first step, categorization, is the decisive one: even the creation of and division into categories are not "neutral"—only after categorization does attribution occur.

But what is a stereotype? The term "stereotype" comes from Greek (*stereos* = "hard, solid, rigid," *typos* = "solid form, characteristic imprint"). The printer Firmin Didiot used this expression in 1798 to describe printing with fixed letters. In French, *le stéréotype* was soon also used in a figurative sense. But despite the expansion of the meaning of the word to refer to a "repetition of the same due to rigid forms," stereotype in the nineteenth century remained largely a technical term primarily for printers and typesetters. Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* of 1922 gave the term a further meaning and reach by transferring it

5 My translation. Original quote: "Können wir, so lautet meine Frage an Kognitionspsychologen und Erkenntnistheoretiker—wissenschaftlich denken, ohne dies in Kausalitäten, Dualitäten, Dichotomien und statischen Momentaufnahmen zu tun? Können wir von linearen, kausalen, statischen, apodiktischen Modellen zu dialektischen Konzepten kommen, die zirkulär, prozesshaft, dynamisch, elastisch angelegt sind?"

to the field of human perception. Lippmann, who knew the printing process, used the term stereotype to describe structures of thought, schemata, and routines. Lippmann defined stereotypes as "pictures in our head" (1945 [1922], 3) and explained further:

> They are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves. They may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which we are adapted. In that world people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things. We feel at home there. We fit in. We are members.
>
> IBID., 95

Nowadays and particularly in everyday speech, the term "stereotype" is often used interchangeably and indiscriminately with "cliché" or "prejudice." It is used to express that a statement, an image, a behaviour has little to do with "reality." Academic definitions of the term vary greatly from discipline to discipline. Andreas Zick states that in social psychology there are "myriads of definitions of stereotypes" and that there is now a consensus that "stereotypes are cognitive concepts that represent generalizations about other persons and groups" (1997, 44). From a sociopsychological point of view, stereotyping as social interaction is of particular interest. Penelope J. Oakes, Alexander S. Haslam, and John C. Turner define the process of stereotyping as the attribution of characteristics: "Stereotyping is the process of ascribing characteristics to people on the basis of their group memberships" (Oakes et al. 1994, 41).

In sociolinguistics, it is precisely these "processes of ascribing," the attributions that are of importance. Thus, the focus is on the role of language in the process of stereotyping. According to a comprehensive definition by linguist Uta Quasthoff made in 1973, stereotypes are the expression of a conviction and pictorial imagination and take the form of a judgement. Her definition is also helpful from the point of view of communication studies because Quasthoff understands the "images in our heads" as something describable. A stereotype can be expressed in words, regardless of whether it has been conveyed in the form of an image (caricature, photo), a sequence of images, or a text. Quasthoff summarizes:

> A stereotype is the verbal expression of a conviction directed at social groups or individuals as their members. It has the logical form of a judge-

> ment which, in an unjustifiably simplistic and generalizing way, with an emotional-valuing tendency, assigns or denies certain characteristics or behaviours to a class of persons. Linguistically, it can be described as a sentence.
>
> 1973, 28[6]

Helmut Gruber, in his study on antisemitism in the media discourse, explained Quasthoff's statements regarding stereotypes using examples (cf. Gruber 1991, 14–15). According to him, the basic form of a stereotype can certainly be formulated as a simple predication, for example in the form "Austrians are enthusiastic about winter sports." However, restrictions are also possible through the use of the subjunctive or rhetorical questions (e.g. "Americans are considered superficial") or sentences in which a consciously subjective statement is made (e.g. "I have the impression that women do not want to face competition"). Finally, stereotypes can occur in a form that Gruber calls the text-linguistic type. Here, the sentence that contains a stereotype needs interpretation. As such, the stereotype is not directly recognizable—Gruber gives the following example: "He's Jewish, but he's very nice" (ibid., 14). The use of the word "but" points to an exception from the rule which contains the anti-Semitic prejudice. Stereotypes and prejudices are therefore not always clearly formulated but are implicitly contained in a statement. They elude an analysis "which is limited to the sentence level" (ibid., 15). For this reason, the various manifest and latent forms in which stereotypes can occur need to be considered in the choice of research methods.

In summary it can be said that stereotypes are based on categorization, simplification, and generalization. They are individual and socially divided opinions about the characteristics of the members of a social group. These characteristics are associated with positive or negative evaluations.

The following section deals with the connection between stereotypes as "pictures in our heads" (Lippmann [1922] 1945, 3), images, and the academic orientation regarding the critical engagement with stereotyping in media as well as productive links to imagology.

6 My translation. Original quote: "Ein Stereotyp ist der verbale Ausdruck einer auf soziale Gruppen oder einzelne Personen als deren Mitglieder gerichteten Überzeugung. Es hat die logische Form eines Urteils, das in ungerechtfertigt vereinfachender und generalisierender Weise, mit emotional-wertender Tendenz, einer Klasse von Personen bestimmte Eigenschaften oder Verhaltensweisen zu- oder abspricht. Linguistisch ist es als Satz beschreibbar."

4 "Pictures in Our Head," Images, and Imagology

Imagology is an area of research that traditionally examines the composition, emergence, and transformation of images of countries and nations or "ethnotypes" in literary texts. The study of travel literature has proven to be particularly productive for imagology. As a result of both an expanded concept of text and an increasing interest in intermediality, various media and nonfictional texts have also been investigated alongside auto- and hetero-images in literary texts. In addition to images, stereotypes in particular aroused the interest of philologists (cf. Blaicher 1987; Fischer 1987; Schiffer 2005). Also in the social sciences, especially in the field of political communication research, the analysis of images—and particularly images of nations—has become popular (cf. Wilke 1989; Nicklas and Ostermann 1989; Hafez 2002a, 2002b). These studies clearly show the power of the media not only to convey national images but also to create them. And: the greater the political, cultural, and geographical distance to a nation, the more important secondary socialization instances such as the mass media are. They provide the images and attitudes that cannot be gained through direct experience.

According to Kai Hafez (2002a, 35), political image research is strongly influenced by Kenneth E. Boulding's publication *The Image* (1956). Boulding's reflections on self-images and images of others have, however, inspired economics even more than social sciences, especially in the areas of marketing and sales. Working on a company's image, appearance, products, and services has become the core task of public relations (PR) and marketing departments. If the focus of attention is on the intentions of those who want to create a certain image of themselves, this image first of all refers to the public image of a person, a group, a company with its products and services, an association, a political party, or a nation. Following this view and in reference to Helmut Schoeck ([2]1970, 157), Uta Quasthoff describes a difference between image and stereotype. While a stereotype is understood as "imposed from outside," an image is shaped by self-interest and the deliberate creation, maintenance, and manipulation of one's own "appearance" (1973, 21). However, viewing this process exclusively from the side of the communicator has not gone unchallenged. PR theorists like James E. Grunig call for a differentiated treatment of the concept of image:

> Many public relations practitioners and educators do not distinguish carefully between concepts of image as a message produced by the organization and image as some sort of composite in the minds of the

> public—the difference between the artistic concept of images as symbols and the psychological concept of image as something constructed by receivers of those messages.
>
> 1993, 267

This distinction between the encoded and the decoded image is indeed important, since these two images do not necessarily conform but are nevertheless connected and in some ways determine or influence each other. The image of a product or, indeed, a whole company that consumers create thus also gains in importance. Seen in this light, image production is not a one-sided process controlled solely by the PR departments.

Erving Goffman further describes images as developed through social interaction. One may hold, adjust, or lose an image depending on the influence of others and their expectations: "But always the own social image, even if it can be the most personal possession and centre of one's own security and pleasure, is only a loan from society; it is withdrawn from one, unless one behaves worthily"[7] (Goffman 1971, 15). Here Goffman refers to an image as something that is created by an individual while still taking into account the expectations of others. He defines it:

> The term image can be defined as the positive value that one acquires for oneself through the behavioural strategy from which the others assume one pursues it in a certain interaction. Image is a self-image described in terms of socially recognized characteristics—an image that others can adopt.
>
> IBID., 10[8]

The connection between a self-image and an external image becomes clear here, as does the fact that an image is to be understood as an offer to the out-group.

---

7 My translation. Original quote: "Immer aber ist das eigene soziale Image, selbst wenn es persönlichster Besitz und Zentrum der eigenen Sicherheit und des Vergnügens sein kann, nur eine Anleihe von der Gesellschaft; es wird einem entzogen, es sei denn, man verhält sich dessen würdig."

8 My translation. Original quote: "Der Terminus *Image* kann als der positive soziale Wert definiert werden, den man für sich durch die Verhaltensstrategie erwirbt, von der die anderen annehmen, man verfolge sie in einer bestimmten Interaktion. *Image* ist ein in Termini sozial anerkannter Eigenschaften umschriebenes Selbstbild,—ein Bild, das die anderen übernehmen können."

Thus, in the examination of images, first the underlying intentions of those who wanted to create a certain image of themselves seem to have been the focus of attention; however, in the meantime a more holistic perspective has been adopted in which processes of interaction and the formation of symbols are given greater consideration (cf. Michel 2006; Sachs-Hombach and Totzke 2011). Criticism of image creation thus no longer revolves exclusively around image producers but also consumers, whose demand for images, both positive and negative, determines supply. Hence, they also become image producers. As a consequence, Klaus Merten and Joachim Westerbarkey define the image as a construction, as "a consonant schema of cognitive and emotive structures that the human being creates from an object (person, organization, product, idea, event)" (Merten and Westerbarkey 1994, 206).[9]

All things considered, definitions of images—similar to those of stereotypes or clichés—combine the following aspects: first, they attribute actual or presumed characteristics to an individual or a collective. And second, these attributions either concern one's own person or group ("in-group") and thus may result in the creation of self-images (or "auto-stereotypes"), or they concern another person or foreign group ("out-group"), as a result of which foreign images (or "hetero-stereotypes") are created. These images of oneself and of others are interdependent. Their ties to "reality" are limited, but the consequences of "forming an image" are quite real.

Kai Hafez has named a number of special challenges of the image concept: the "image-reality problem," the "image-structure problem," and the "individual collective problem" (cf. Hafez 2002a, 36). Another challenge, in my opinion, is to clarify precisely the kind of image that is under discussion. The distinction between, on the one hand, material, concrete, "graphic," "optical" (Mitchell 2008, 20), and "external" (Sachs-Hombach 2001, 11) pictures, and on the other hand, immaterial, imaginary, "perceptual," and "spiritual" (Mitchell 2008, 20) pictures can also help to clarify the concept of stereotype. It is used both in everyday language and in science in a similarly undifferentiated manner as the concept of image.[10] However, stereotypes occur in very different ways. They are, as coined by Lippmann, "pictures in our heads" ([1922] 1945, 3), but they are also concrete, material "(language) pictures in the media," which

9 My translation. Original quote: Image als "ein konsonantes Schema kognitiver und emotiver Strukturen, das der Mensch von einem Objekt (Person, Organisation, Produkt, Idee, Ereignis) entwirft."

10 There is also a translation problem. For the German word *Bild*, *image* or *picture* can be used in English. But even native speakers are not sure whether they are synonyms or not, and if not, what the difference is between *image* and *picture*.

are conveyed both in the text and through a single picture (photo, caricature) or a sequence of pictures (comic, film sequence). The distinction between stereotypes as cognitions or materialized pictures is relevant for communication studies because it determines the relevant fields of research and research methods: while stereotypes *in* the media are identified through methods like content analysis or critical discourse analysis, stereotypes as "pictures in our heads," as cognitive images in the minds of communicators and recipients, are identified through methods like survey research, observation, or experiment. Depending on whether stereotype research focuses either on media content and representation research or on those who (re)produce stereotypical content ("communicators" as well as "recipients"), a different concept of stereotype comes into play.

Just as epistemological challenges have been described for the study of media and stereotypes (cf. Thiele 2015, 386–396), recent studies on imagology also call for adaptation to current developments. Joep Leerssen suggested the following five adjustments:

> 1. the replacement of the national-modular categorization of literary traditions by a polysystemic approach; 2. the decline of print fiction as a [sic] the premier narrative medium, and the rise of film, TV, and other media; 3. the realization that ethnotypes are often encountered in occluded form (deployed ironically or as "meta-images"; or in a "banal" or latent background presence, as dormant frames; 4. new, "intersectional" notions of identity formation; 5. the demise of Eurocentrism and the rise of postnationalism.
>
> 2016, 13

There is consensus between researchers of different academic disciplines: the main goal of new research in the field of media and stereotypes or imagology must be to establish antiessentialist perspectives. In this context, intersectional approaches play a decisive role and are therefore dealt with in more detail in the next and final section.

5 Which Categories to Examine and How? Intersectional Approaches and Stereotype Research

Intersectionality can be understood as a perspective that enables us to look at different phenomena and their interconnectedness instead of focusing exclusively on one and thereby losing sight of possible connections to other

phenomena. Based on concrete experiences with multiple forms of discrimination and in continuation of classical triple-oppression research, concepts of intersectionality have been developed primarily in the United States, asking which categories are relevant when, how they overlap, and which methods can be used to analyse them. The American jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality. Using the analogy of several intersecting roads, she wanted to draw attention to the particular problems of Black female workers, who are discriminated against on the basis of their social position, ethnicity, and gender.

> Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination.
>
> CRENSHAW 1989, 149

This metaphor has also been criticized because although it shows the individual strands—the "axes of difference" (Knapp and Wetterer 2003) or "axes of inequality" (Klinger et al. 2007)—overlapping at several points, it does not make it clear that these strands may either overlap or be closely interwoven. Seen in this light, interdependence appears to be a more appropriate term (Dietze et al. 2007, 9), but the problem of naming categories remains even if they are thought of as interdependent, according to Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele: a "shift of interactions into the category" merely shifts the problem (2009, 13). Winker and Degele therefore adhere to the term "intersectionality." It has been used internationally, including in German-speaking countries, since the 1990s. The problem of intersectionality, however, has been discussed by feminists both in the United States and in Europe much earlier, as Gudrun-Axeli Knapp points out (2008). Knapp (2005) is critical of a 1:1 application of the US-American concept to conditions in Europe and especially in Germany. She argues that this analytical perspective is first of all bound to the culture and society of its context of origin, the US, where Black feminists criticized the research approaches of white middle-class women, which were perceived as ethnocentric, and demanded that further dimensions that cause inequality, such as class and ethnicity, be considered (Knapp 2005). Thus, European scholars continued discussions initiated by Black feminists as early as the 1960s.

Intersectionality thus focuses on the analysis of interactions between different categories, which Leslie McCall (2001) described as an intercategorical approach. However, in the debate on intersectionality, questions of difference within categories have also been addressed, which can be described as an intracategorical approach. Influenced by poststructuralist and (de)constructivist approaches, anticategorical perspectives have also been developed.

But what is intersectionality from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge? Kathy Davis outlines the different conceptions that exist side by side:

> For some, intersectionality is a theory, others regard the approach as a concept or heuristic instrument, while others see it as an interpretation strategy for feminist analyses. […] Moreover, it is far from clear whether intersectionality should be limited to the interpretation of individual experiences, whether the approach should serve to form theories about identity—or whether intersectionality should be understood as a characteristic of social structures and cultural discourses.
>
> 2010, 55

Also, the selection and naming of categories is still a matter of discussion today. While in the US race, class, and gender are widely accepted as the pertinent categories, in Europe, and especially in Austria and Germany, the term "race" is disputed. Here, the term is usually replaced by "ethnicity," but sometimes quite different subcategories are included in this category, such as "nation," "citizenship," "place of residence," "guest worker," "internal status," "migration," "religion," and so forth. Winker and Degele, on the other hand, deliberately use the term "race"/"Rasse" without quotation marks because they want to emphasize "processes of racialization as processes of exclusion and discrimination that construct race in the first place, as well as their violent naturalization and hierarchization" (2009, 10).

As far as the triad of race, class, and gender is concerned, the concept of intersectionality provides "no theoretical reason why race, class and gender mark the central lines of difference. Other categories such as age, generativity, sexuality, religion, nationality or disability could also be considered" (Winker and Degele 2009, 15). Helma Lutz and Norbert Wenning offer a compilation of "13 bipolar, hierarchical lines of difference" (2001, 20; reproduced with minor typographical changes in Table 13.1). They emphasize the social constructedness of these differences and also consider other categorizations and subdivisions to be possible.

TABLE 13.1 Thirteen bipolar, hierarchical lines of difference (Lutz and Wenning 2001, 20)

Category	Basic dualism
Gender	male/female
Sexuality	hetero/homo
"Race"/Colour	white/black
Ethnicity	dominant group/ethnic minority
Nation/State	member of this nation/no member of this nation
Class	upper class/lower class
	established/not established
Culture	"civilized"/"uncivilized"
Health	nondisabled/disabled
Age	adults/children
	old/young
Sedentariness/	sedentary/nomadic
Provenance	ancestral/immigrated
Possessions	rich/poor
North-South/East-West	the West/the Rest
Stage of Development	modern/traditional
	(progressive/backward, developed/not developed)

One proposal is to distinguish between "body-oriented" (gender, sexuality, "race"/skin colour, ethnicity, health, age), "(social)-spatially oriented" (class, nation/state, ethnicity, sedentariness/origin, culture, north-south/east-west), and "economically oriented" (class, property, north-south/east-west, level of social development) lines of difference (ibid., 21). These, however, also overlap, as the example of "north-south/east-west" or "class" may be seen to be both (socio)spatially and economically oriented.

It makes sense to point out these many distinct lines of difference in order to avoid neglecting those categories which are usually hidden behind the "etc." that generally follows the enumeration "race, class, gender." What remains controversial, however, is which categories are more important, more decisive, and what would be arguments for or against a hierarchization of categories. This already concerns the triad "race, class, gender," since it has been discussed whether patriarchal or racist structures can be derived solely from economic conditions. Thus, the discussion about master categories or what is framed as main and secondary contradictions in the Marxist tradition continues. An

expression of this debate is the distinction between “structural” and “difference categories” (Aulenbacher 2008; Lenz 2010, 159). Cornelia Klinger (2008, 46) mentions work, body, and foreignness as general structural categories. They must be taken as a starting point to criticize capitalism, exploitation, patriarchy, nationalism, and imperialism, which are linked to these categories. Only in this way can the “metaphor of intersectionality” be used productively—which means that it becomes the basis for changing existing relations.

But how can multiple structures of inequality, different categories, and their interactions be analysed concretely in empirical research? How can several levels of investigation be taken into account, that is, social structures including organizations and institutions (macro and meso level) as well as processes of identity formation (micro level), and cultural symbols (representation level)? For their research, Winker and Degele (2007, 2009) use Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *Habitus* (1976), which combines “supposedly individual ways of thinking, perceiving, experiencing and acting with social milieus, situations and structures in which people are integrated” (Winker and Degele 2009, 23), as well as Anthony Giddens’s *Theory of Structuring* (1995), which also assumes interaction between action and structure.

The concept of intersectionality and the multilevel approach proposed by Degele and Winker (2009) are particularly relevant in social inequality research. According to Thiele (2015, 82; 2020), they are also pertinent to research on media and stereotypes (species) and to imagology, both of which have long focused on national stereotypes. However, stereotypes conveyed by the media do not only concern the level of representation and individual processes of identity formation (Winker and Degele 2009, 54) but also societal structures as a whole and processes of collective identity construction—which speaks for a research design that actually takes multiple levels into account.

Yet despite all the advantages that intersectionality offers for more appropriate research in line with complex social conditions, such a design would be highly elaborate and hardly feasible, especially for individual researchers. In addition, the theoretical dilemma of categorization remains, and even multiplies when the interdependencies of several categories are taken into account. Anticategorical thinking, as proposed by Isabell Lorey (2008, 2010), by myself (Thiele 2015; 2020), or as an antiessentialist imagology (cf. Leerssen 2016, 4), for example, does not initially help research practice. Admittedly, it theoretically points in the right direction and enables at least—according to Lorey (2010, 54)—political capacity to act and the constitution of new, different, more just orders.

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