During the last three decades, intersectionality has had a huge influence on gender studies as a way to conceptualize and analyze structural inequalities, their multifaceted interrelations, as well as how the interplay between these structural inequalities influences people’s everyday lives. The number of journal articles and special issues from different parts of academia is one indicator of this so-called institutionalization of intersectionality. Intersectionality thus has been one of the most applied approaches among researchers within women’s studies, cultural studies, and other interdisciplinary fields (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall 2013; Collins 2015; Collins & Bilge 2016; Davis & Zarkov 2017; Grib & Strid 2017). In comparison, the influence of intersectionality on studies of men and masculinity has been limited. There have been no special issues and only a few titles in the leading journals within men and masculinity studies from 2007 to 2017 that include “intersectionality”.

Despite the limited application to the field, intersectionality is in our view highly relevant to studies of men and masculinity. The research field for many years has had an interest in differences between men and between masculinities, oftentimes in a power perspective. The most widespread example is R.W. Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity and the well-known distinction between hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, and marginalized masculinities (Connell 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; see also Beasley, this volume). Other examples are Wetherell and Edley’s (1999) theoretical discussion of a multiplicity of masculinities constructed through complex, contradictory, and ambiguous processes, Anderson’s use of the concept inclusive masculinities (2008, 2009), Bridges and Pascoe’s (2014) use of the concept hybrid masculinities, and Messerschmidt’s (2014) distinction between hegemonic, dominant, and dominating masculinities. Studies of men and masculinity thus share an interest in describing and explaining differences between men and between masculinities, including the social processes that shape these differences and their connections to other forms of social differentiation such as class, ethnicity, race, or sexuality. The field, however, lacks theoretical tools that can facilitate such analysis.

Intersectionality can fill this gap as it offers a well-established analytical tool suited for grasping differences among and between men, and – perhaps most importantly – how other social differences play a role in the processes that shape and condition masculinities, i.e., the ambiguities, complexities, and differences in power relations related to men and masculinities. Admittedly, some studies of men and masculinities do exist that are either implicitly...
Intersectionality

The fundamental principle of the concept of intersectionality stresses the interaction between social categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, and sexuality (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). The term is derived from the common US English phrase “intersection” meaning crossroads. It has been emphasized that intersectionality has a long history related to both social movement activism in the 1960s and 1970s and academic analyses of the interplay between race, class, and gender in the US (Anthias & Yuval-Davies 1983; Collins 1989; Combahee River Collective 1977/1983; hooks 1989).

To some extent it nevertheless makes sense to argue that this mode of analysis remained unnamed until 1989, when the term “intersectionality” was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, who in the reception has become “intersectionality’s foremother” (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). It is important to emphasize that intersectional thinking predates the actual coining of the term and has its primary historical roots in US Black Feminism (Collins 2015; Collins & Bilge 2016). Intersectional thinking thus originated among black feminists in the US who put their particular situation in relation to gender and race at the analytical centre in order to challenge white middle-class women’s dominance in the women’s movement and black men’s dominance in antiracist organizations (Collins 1993, 1998; Crenshaw 1989, 1991). The concept shares some similarities with the notion of triple oppression, which has been central to third-world postcolonial feminists’ analyses of the combined impact of class dominance, male dominance, and racial dominance on the lives of black working-class women since the 1970s (Hendricks & Lewis 1994). This notion, however, has had relatively little influence on contemporary gender studies in the global North, illustrating that feminist theory has flowed easily from North to South or from West to East, whereas flows in other directions practically are sparse (Dongchao 2005, 2011; see also Connell 2007). It is important to acknowledge the role and inspiration of postcolonial feminist theory in the roots of intersectional thinking. But as stated by Kerner (2017), there not only is a significant overlap but also are important divergences between the two fields, because the postcolonial feminism approach to multiple inequalities is transnational and framed within North–South power relations and asymmetries (see also Mohanty 2003; Ozkazanc-Pan 2012).

Since its coining, intersectionality has been a rapidly travelling and evolving concept, which has crossed borders, continents, and contexts as well as academic disciplines, subject areas, and feminist positions. Whereas the original American debate put relatively high emphasis on structural power relations, in Europe the concept was developed within the humanities and social sciences, putting more emphasis on everyday practices and complex identities (e.g., Phoenix 2006; Staunæs 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006). In a Scandinavian context, intersectionality has also been applied in a specific critique of the predominant political and academic perspective on inequality as related to class; a perspective which has not been able to address inequalities related to ethnicity and race (de Los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinar 2005).
The travelling process has strengthened dynamism and encouraged creativity and development. But the successful travel has also raised critical questions about what has been labelled as “intersectionality’s institutional incorporation” and the loss of radical critical thinking (Collins & Bilge 2016). A related debate has addressed the question of “ownership” and the contested argument that intersectionality’s travel, for instance to Europe, has led to losing its origins in US Black Feminism, implying that the specific situation for women of colour has once again disappeared. As stated by Davis and Zakov, it has been “argued that the concept has been ‘hijacked’ to include everyone, even white heterosexual men” (2017, p. 2).

Although we acknowledge the origins of intersectionality, from our point of view the production of knowledge can never be a question of intellectual ownership. As we will return to below, bringing men and masculinity into the analytical lens is imperative if one believes that intersectionality is a characteristic of the social world rather than merely a characteristic of specific less privileged groups (Choo & Ferree 2010; Hancock 2007a, 2007b). It can furthermore be argued that the success and spread of intersectionality constitute an unprecedented acknowledgement of the intellectual strength and broader relevance of black feminist thought. In this chapter we thus encourage even further travel of intersectionality, this time to the field of men and masculinities studies which oftentimes—but not always—happens to include white heterosexual men.

Intersectionality is an open-ended and sensitizing, perhaps in some sense even incomplete, concept. According to Davis and Zarkov (2017), the conceptual openness is one of the advantages of intersectionality (see also Davis 2008). Several scholars have noted that there has always been considerable confusion about what intersectionality actually means and whether it is a theory, a concept, an approach, a methodology, or even a paradigm (Davis 2008; McCall 2005; Phoenix & Pattynama 2006). In the same vein, Collins recently addressed the definitional dilemmas of intersectionality and emphasized that the goal should not be to construct the one and only definition but more to provide a navigational tool for thinking about intersectionality (2015). Nevertheless, if addressing intersectionality is to be a meaningful endeavour it is necessary to outline some kind of shared minimum theoretical core.

The overall aim of intersectional analysis is to explore intersecting patterns between different structures of power and how people are simultaneously positioned—and position themselves—in multiple categories, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and class (Phoenix 2011; Phoenix & Pattynama 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006). The theoretical core of intersectionality could thus be the assertion that *different social categories mutually constitute each other as overall social structures as well as in creating complex identities*. Social identities are thus complex, multi-dimensional, sometimes contradictory, and conditioned by the way several different categories interact to shape our understanding of ourselves and other people’s descriptions of us. The same is true for social forms of differentiation on a systemic, structural, or institutional level. Here it is argued that gender, race/ethnicity, class, etc. can be considered mutually constitutive or interlocking social systems (Andersen 2005). As stated by Collins (1998), “As opposed to examining gender, race, class, and nation, as separate systems of oppression, intersectionality explores how these systems mutually construct one another” (p. 63). On this level, the concept of intersectionality thus contains a theory of institutional interpenetration (Choo & Ferree 2010; Yuval-Davis 2011).

In other words, intersectionality claims that categories are not parallel or static, neither on an identity or everyday level nor on a structural level (Hancock 2007b). Gender, race/ethnicity, class, etc. constitute, construct, and re-construct each other and therefore cannot be analysed separately. Furthermore, this mutual constitution takes place as interplay both between different categories and between different levels of the social—and the interplay may often take paradoxical or contradictory forms.
The paradoxical and contradictory nature of social differentiation has been a crucial point for some observers who have argued that intersectionality is a too structurally biased concept which cannot do justice to contradictions and complexity. Some researchers have thus argued that the concept of interference is better suited. Interference refers to the merging of waves, which can be light, sound, or water. The merging can result in higher intensity, but waves can also weaken or cancel each other (Geerts & van der Tuin 2013; Mellström 2015). The argument is that interference to a higher degree than intersectionality opens up the questions of the character of interactions related to how differences are made, interact, and sometimes dissolve each other. In her analysis of the interference between disability, gender, and class, Moser (2006) has convincingly showed how the categories are turned around, showing how disability is sometimes made irrelevant and gender relevant. We acknowledge this critique, but we also think that this way of thinking about social differentiation can be included in intersectionality’s core principle of mutual constitution.

What, then, does this principle of mutual constitution imply for studies of men and masculinity? Why is intersectionality important to this field of study? And how can the intersection of different categories be said to shape, form, and (co-)constitute masculinity? An intersectional perspective implies that other categories, such as race/ethnicity, class, age, and sexuality influence and shape masculinities (Choo & Ferree 2010). The meaning, experiences, and power relations related to masculinity thus vary for different ethnic groups, according to class, age, etc.

Consequently, the category of masculinity is unstable and successively altered by the intersection with other categories. As Koføed (2005) puts it, “categories can exaggerate each other, subvert each other, or even cancel each other” (p. 44, our translation) – what some would refer to as interference. One way to think about this is that race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality can support the dominant position and male privilege of some men because it strengthens the legitimacy of their masculinity. Intersectional analysis may thus provide insight into the complex processes which advance some masculinities to the top of the hierarchy – for instance, by looking at the interplay between masculinity, whiteness, heterosexuality, and class position among the financial business elite. Likewise, masculinity can intersect with other categories in specific configurations that challenge or even subvert male privilege. It can thus be argued that race/ethnicity, class, etc. can weaken or subvert the legitimacy of some men to the extent that they are either unable to gain any form of advantage from being men or can only lay claim to a symbolic or stylistic form of (hyper)masculinity in a social situation where very little else can be claimed. In such situations, masculinity as a symbolic form and a dimension of social identity is often exaggerated, for instance through the interplay with blackness and working-classness (Christensen & Jensen 2014; Christensen & Larsen 2008). In other words, intersectionality can help us to expand our knowledge about masculinity, power, and social differentiation by grasping both the processes and interplays that solidify and amplify masculine privilege and how being a man can be a category of disempowerment and lack of privilege rather than a privileged position.

Basic principles and challenges of intersectional research

Despite diversity and variation among intersectionality scholars, it is possible to highlight some basic principles and challenges that most scholars in the field would agree are central to intersectional analysis and methodology.

First, most intersectionality scholars would agree on the importance of multi-level analyses that link structural differentiations and systems of oppression (Collins 1998, 2015; de
Los Reyes & Mulini 2005) with the level of formations of complex identities and everyday life. Intersectional analysis thus implies not only an attempt to unravel the interplay of different social categories but also to grasp the interplay between the macro, the meso, and the micro level of the social world (Christensen & Jensen 2012; Winkler & Degele 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011).

Second, intersectionality is a process-centred analytical approach focusing on the meeting and interacting of categories (and not single categories such as, for instance, only gender or only class). For example, Choo and Ferree (2010) have argued for the need to focus on dynamic forces rather than closed and final categories, “racialization more than races, economic exploitation rather than classes, gendering and gender performance rather than genders” (p. 134; cf. Ferree 2011). One way to think of such processes is to emphasize how racialization and social marginalization, for instance, feed into social processes that are formative for specific marginal but expressive masculinities. Discursive and actual hyper-masculinization of minority men is an example of this.

Third, many intersectionality scholars would agree on the necessity of non-additive analysis of the interplay between social categories (de la Rey 1997; Staunæs 2003). This implies that it is not possible to simply take the effect of class, then add the effect of ethnicity, gender, etc. The combined effect of a given configuration of social categories is always qualitatively different from just the sum of the effect of each difference. The theoretical argument for this assertion is that since categories are mutually constitutive, there can be no “pure” effect of class, outside of gender and race, that can then be added to the likewise “pure” effect of other categories. In the words of Yuval-Davies “[t]here is no meaning to the notion ‘black’ for instance, which is not gendered or classed, no meaning to the notion of “women”, which is not ethnocized and classed etc.” (2007, p. 565).

Fourth, many intersectionality scholars would stress the interplay between different forms of difference. Although intersectionality is interested in the interplay and mutually constitutive nature of social categories, it is important to stress that the categories point to forms of social differentiation that are ontologically different and work through different social logics and mechanisms. Some categories are naturalized (people often refer to gender categories, men and woman, in a naturalized and unproblematic way), while others are euphemized or denied (such as the common denial of class even within some strands of contemporary sociology) (Yuval-Davis 2006). Furthermore, social categories are contextualized and may have different meanings according to context. In the US, for instance, race is an official statistical category, whereas in Europe and especially in Germany race is, for historical reasons, a problematic, implicit, and often euphemized category. In the US, class has mostly been used as a descriptive category, whereas European scholars have historically been more influenced by Marxist conceptions of class as a relational concept linked to power and exploitation (Collins 2015; Knapp 2005).

Fifth, some intersectionality scholars would agree with what Staunæs refers to as the majority-inclusive approach (2003). Staunæs thus argues that social categories are not minority issues but are, on the contrary, constituted in a relational interplay between minority and majority. In her words “[s]ocial categories do not count only for the Others, the non-powerful and the non-privileged: they also count as conditions for the more privileged and powerful people” (Staunæs 2003, p. 105) In an overlapping argument, Choo and Ferree (2010) emphasize the importance of “studying the unmarked categories where power and privilege ‘cluster’” in intersectional studies (p. 133). The majority-inclusive approach provides a strong argument for bringing men, whites, heterosexual, and the middle and upper classes inside the analytical scope of intersectionality: not for the sake of privileging already-privileged groups but in order to
investigate how configurations of privilege may strengthen and multiply each other. In other words, this principle runs counter to the argument about “ownership” to intersectionality and that it should focus only on women of colour.

Sixth, intersectionality scholars have to handle the fact that intersectional analysis in principle could include an indefinite number of social differences. It is oftentimes not enough, perhaps not even relevant, to focus on what Davis and Zarkov (2017) refer to as the “Big Three” (gender, race, class). Collins (2015), for instance, mentions “Race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, nation, ethnicity, and similar categories of analysis” (p. 14, emphasis added). To this list, we might add religion (Nyhagen & Halsaa 2016; Yuval-Davis 2011) and geographical locality (Faber & Nielsen 2016; Pini & Leach 2011; Valentine 2007). The list of categorical differences is in principle permanently open-ended, and researchers always run the risk of being criticized for not including the next category that could have been important. In addition, the relevance of categories might vary depending on context and research theme, but then again, categories that are not explicitly or overtly important may play an important role more implicitly, hence Matsuda’s idea of “asking the other question” – i.e., asking about the possible relevance of categories that do not present themselves as obviously relevant (Davis 2008; Matsuda 1991). There is no consensus among intersectionality scholars about how to deal with this challenge of managing complexity. Some scholars maintain that empirical openness towards the concrete context is preferable. Staunæs (2004), for instance, argues against granting specific categories a-priori priority. Other scholars argue for the necessity of pre-selecting a number of strategic anchor points of analysis in order to make analysis manageable (Christensen & Jensen 2012; Ludvig 2006; McCall 2005; Phoenix 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Seventh, the field of intersectionality studies is home to a multitude of scholars, with considerable variation in terms of disciplinary, geographical, and institutional affiliations. Even if the concept has undergone changes and permutations as it has travelled from context to context, it has become a kind of unifying key concept in gender studies across different positions such as structuralist, post-structuralist, and queer gender studies (see also Davis & Zarkov 2017).

Consequently, intersectionality hosts different epistemologies. Some scholars have been mostly interested in deconstructing and destabilizing cultural identity categories because these are seen as oppressive per se. For other scholars, categories such as class, gender, and race point to structural forms of social differentiation that are ontologically real and can be investigated empirically. In one of the most widely referenced and influential contributions to intersectionality, McCall has argued that it is possible to carry out intersectional analysis in three different ways. The anti-categorical approach (most often grounded in post-structuralist, deconstructivist, or radical constructivist epistemologies) aims at destabilizing categories. The intra-categorical approach, more realist in its epistemology, focuses on differences within one category – not in order to destabilize but to provide a more precise analysis and criticism of social injustice. The inter-categorical approach studies complexity, variation, and inequality by comparing different categories – oftentimes statistically and grounded in a realist philosophy of science (McCall 2005). It is thus important to stress that it is possible to study intersectionality in different ways and that different approaches to intersectionality may produce different types of important knowledge.

**Intersecting masculinities**

Given the relatively abstract nature of the introduction and discussion above, we will now outline two more concrete examples of areas of analysis that illustrate some of the principles and challenges in relation to masculinity studies. The argument will focus on methodological implications rather than presenting actual research findings.
The first example could be based on an anti-categorical intersectional approach focusing on, for instance, Danish public discourses about ethnic/racial minority young men. One could analyse how specific configurations of gender, age, and visible minority background (race) are equated with trouble, danger, and crime in such discourses. A non-additive point may be that youth, maleness, and ethnic minority background in combination constitute a strong sign of social trouble, which cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts (Alexander 2000). Geographical location may be an important category to include, as the stereotype of the criminal young immigrant/black man is often tied to the territorial stigmatization of specific residential areas labelled as ghettos (Wacquant 2007). In terms of “asking the other question”, one might ask how class is inscribed in these public discourses oftentimes without explicit mentioning. Furthermore, one could analyse how the public trope of the “the gang” is a racialized, gendered, and classed concept and how the idea of the criminal young black man is related to the postcolonial imaginaries of the dangerous racialized other (Jensen 2010, 2011). Such an analysis would be mostly anti-categorical, as it would strive to deconstruct the discourses under scrutiny.

The second example could be about masculinity, war, and political radicalization. Following McCall’s and Yuval-Davis’ methodological principles, such an analysis could combine the dynamics of an intra-categorical and inter-categorical approach by focusing on both the variation between different categories (inter-categorical) and the differences within groups (intra-categorical) (McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2011). Investigation of war, violence, and masculinity could furthermore benefit from a multi-level intersectional approach (Christensen & Rasmussen 2017). At the macro level, focus could be on public policies, debates, and ideologies which directly or indirectly reflect gendered discourses and specific configurations framed within the intersection between masculinity, nation, religion, class, and ethnicity. This could be seen, for example, when discourses about warriors and heroes were used as a part of cultural re-masculinization of post 9/11 US politics. As Messerschmidt has shown, heroic masculinity was put on the agenda when the American president George W. Bush branded himself as a “real man” who could – and would – defend the nation against its enemies (Ducat 2004; Messerschmidt 2010). The micro level could include masculine subjectivities, processes of mobilization, and radicalization. A highly relevant example of this could be the case of extremism, radicalization, and politico-religious violence in an intersectional perspective. Recent years have seen an increase of radical Islamist violence, for instance, both in Western countries and in the global South. One might analyse how processes of intersectional marginalization, classed and racist in nature, relegate ethnic minority youth – mostly male – to the social margins from where the promises of radical Islamist ideology can be perceived as a better alternative; a vehicle for vengeance and for obtaining social status within jihadist subculture. A multidimensional, intersectional approach can then facilitate an analysis of how male subcultures that articulate resistance or opposition against social marginalization can, at the same time, reproduce or strengthen gendered and sexual hierarchies. The masculinism of some minority male countercultures may illustrate this point (Hughey 2009; Jensen 2010). In an intersectional perspective, it must therefore be emphasized that radical Islamism is oftentimes characterized by extreme versions of homophobia and misogyny as well as extreme forms of gendered violence (Necef 2016).

Conclusion
In this chapter, we have introduced and discussed intersectionality as a relevant approach for studies of men and masculinity. The concept was coined in US Black Feminism, although
ways of thinking similar to the intersectional perspective is older and has existed in other parts of the world. The concept during the last three decades has travelled beyond its original context of coining. Intersectionality is in many ways an open-ended and sensitizing, perhaps in some sense even incomplete, concept. Adopting intersectionality can thus be complicated, as there are many challenges involved in designing and carrying out intersectional research, some of which we have accounted for above. But for a research field whose very raison d’être is grasping, describing, and explaining gendered power relations as well as differences between men and between masculinities complexity is a condition, not something to be avoided. At this point, intersectionality offers analytical tools well suited to grasping differences among and between men and – perhaps most importantly – for grasping how other social differences play a role in the social processes that shape and condition masculinities.

Note
1 In addition, the argument that taking intersectionality seriously could be productive for masculinity research is not entirely new; see, e.g., Bartholomaeus & Tarrant 2016; Berggren 2013, 2014; Christensen & Jensen 2012, 2014; Christensen & Larsen 2008; Hearn 2011, 2015; Madfis 2014; Mellström 2003, 2009; and Näre 2010.

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