

Applying Intersectional Multi-Level Analysis in Midwifery Research: Understanding Trans and Non-Binary People's Experiences

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Methodology

Theoretical Framework

IMA is rooted in feminist-materialist social theory and praxeology. It conceptualizes intersectionality as the result of interrelated power relations, understood as inequality-generating social structures constitutively embedded within capitalist society. [1,2]

Methodological Framework

IMA facilitates a subject-oriented analysis through a systematic 8-step process.

Part I (Steps 1-4): Inductive reconstruction of subject constructions

To this end, it is important to remain as close as possible to the interviewees' own language. This will prevent their self-positioning from being obscured by the researchers' interpretations.

Part II (Steps 5-8): Deductive synthesis of power relations (e.g., racisms, classisms, heteronormativisms) and evaluation of agency.

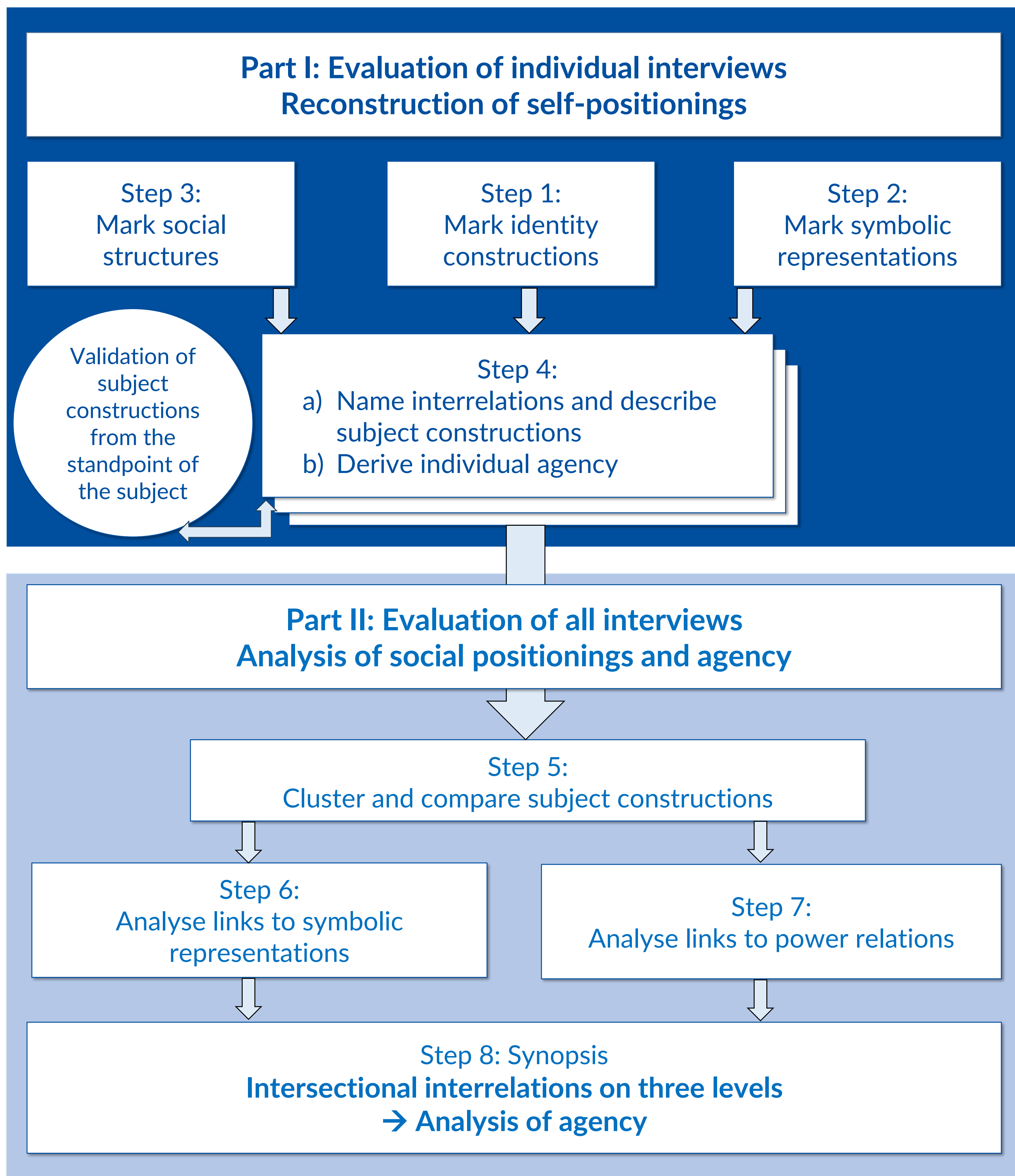


Figure 1. A model of intersectional multi-level analysis [2,4]

Conclusion

Methodological Strengths of IMA for Midwifery Research

- **Systemic perspective:** IMA shows how social structures and symbolic representations actively produce inequality
- **Nuanced agency:** IMA reveals agency e.g., as strategic compliance or resource-intensive resistance

A final assessment of the analytical potential of IMA can only be made once the method has been fully applied. IMA may provide an analytical basis for the development of inclusive and equitable midwifery care, thereby paving the path to equity.

Aim

This poster demonstrates the analytical potential of **Intersectional Multi-level Analysis (IMA)** [1,2] in uncovering complex inequalities within perinatal healthcare.

By analyzing the case of 'Eliah', we illustrate how the interrelatedness of social structures, symbolic representations, and identity constructions shapes lived experiences and individual agency.

Intersectional Insights

IMA in Action (Part 1)

Empirical Design

Based on an episodic interview [3] from an ongoing qualitative study exploring the impact of reproductive norms on perinatal healthcare for trans, non-binary, and intersex people in Germany.



Case Profile Eliah

- Age: around 40 years old
- Non-binary and queer-femme
- One child, under six years old
- Solo-parent supported by a network of chosen reference persons
- German citizenship, *white*, European, Christian-influenced
- First-generation academic, middle-class

From Coding to Subject Construction

Step 3: Social structures	Step 1: Identity constructions	Step 2: Symbolic Representations
„There wasn't a medical history form yet that was suitable [...]“	„[...] I was then able to say: 'Oh, it would be nice [...]'“	„[...] if it didn't just say partner but included other reference persons as well. [...]'“
„[...] and then they had a quick look at my file [...]“	„[...] I then said, 'This is my new partner.' [...] In a situation like that, with the contractions now becoming quite intense, having to explain myself over and over again and not really fitting in , [...]'“	„[...] and they said, 'Well, your partner has died, so who's this then? That can't be right.'“
„[...] why isn't this simply a standard part of various training programs and medical degree courses [...]“	„[...] why do I have to be the one doing this educational work here? “	„[...] to include a module on diversity and to start learning about it, [...]'“

Step 4a: The Pioneer of Unpaid Educational Work

Eliah is forced into a "pioneer role," constantly having to "explain and suggest things" to medical staff because the system lacks routines for non-binary solo parents. Agency is experienced as a burden of extra labor to ensure safety and appropriate care.

Table 1. Example of a coding table and a subject construction (quotes translated; original interview in German)

Step 4b: Individual Agency as Strategic Navigation

- **Strategic compliance:** Situational adaptation to binary norms for self-preservation
- **Cultural capital:** Academic background as a tool to gain respect and authority in medical contexts
- **Economic capital:** Hiring a queer doula for a future birth to ensure emotional support against cis-heteronormative pressures

References:

- [1] Ganz, K.; Hausotter, J. (2020): Intersektionale Sozialforschung. Bielefeld: transcript.
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[3] Flick, U. (2000): Episodic Interviewing. In: Bauer M.; Gaskell, G. (ed.) Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound. SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 76–92.
[4] Hausotter, J. (2018): Prekäre Privilegien. Dissertation. Retrieved May 7, 2026 from <https://doi.org/10.15480/882.1699>.