

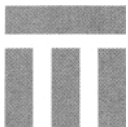
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Gender Equality Programmes in Higher Education

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International Perspectives



VS VERLAG FÜR SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

This publication was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research
(BMBF), funding ID 01FP0626. The editors are responsible for the content of this publication.

1st Edition 2008

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Editorial Office: Katrin Emmerich / Sabine Schöller

VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

is part of the specialist publishing group Springer Science+Business Media.

www.vs-verlag.de



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Cover design: Künkelopka Medienentwicklung, Heidelberg

Printing and binding: Strauss GmbH, Mörlenbach

Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-531-16251-5

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Gender Equality Programmes in Higher Education – Introduction

Gender equality has been on the agenda of national policies of higher education within and outside the European Union (EU) for the last twenty years. In some European countries, this process was initiated early on and has brought about remarkable results, while in others progress has been slower. Different countries and institutions have focussed on different strategies for raising awareness about the discrimination of women and for increasing the number of women in academia, particularly in leadership positions.

Previous research on gender equality in higher education has produced many case studies about programmes at institutions of higher education in Europe and elsewhere. Different actors like the European Commission and national organisations have also furnished reports about national policies. Building on this material, it is now time to analyse under what conditions equality programmes are successful. For a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of and barriers to gender equality in higher education, we also need studies that focus on the development of gender equality policies in different countries, as well as on conditions of implementation, change of strategy, and the evaluation of results. Comparative studies would be another useful tool for understanding the development and success of gender equality programmes.

Since 1998, the European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education, held every two years, has been an important occasion for researchers, experts, and practitioners to discuss these issues. Despite being referred to as the “European” conference, there have always been participants from outside Europe, especially from the US and Australia. And so it was at the 5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education that took place in 2007 in Berlin. The conference included papers on the Bologna process in relation to gender equality as well as on the role of gender in different disciplinary cultures. This book brings together the most important papers about gender equality programmes and on topics such as the role of national funding agencies, the evaluation of gender equality programmes, gender equality in the context of organisational change, gender mainstreaming in higher education, mentoring programmes, women’s preparation for leadership positions, and work-life-balance in academia.

In her opening address to this conference, *Susanne Baer*, professor for Public Law and Gender Studies and head of the Gender Competence Centre at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, spoke about the conditions for gender equality in academia, stressing the importance of Gender Studies in this context. Without analysing the gendered aspects in the history of knowledge and its production, the role of sexism in academia can neither be fully understood, nor can it be successfully defeated. She argues that there has been “more progress in rhetoric than in numbers” in gender equality and that there is still a bias against women and other “others”. She discusses the relationship between quality and equality and the challenge to develop new quality standards that see equality as an intrinsic factor in quality.

The Role of National Funding Agencies

Wanda Ward, from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States (US), describes the gender equality policies of this organization and introduces the Foundation’s ADVANCE programme for the improvement of the status of women in the sciences, with a particular focus on the natural sciences and engineering. While the NSF also funds women as individuals, the ADVANCE programme subsidizes new programmes aimed at the institutional transformation of universities as a whole. Ward conveys the NSF’s interest in an international exchange with institutions in other countries.

Maya Widmer (Swiss National Science Foundation, SNSF), *Regula Julia Leemann* (Zurich University of Teacher Education), *Heidi Stutz* (Centre for Labour and Social Policy Studies BASS in Berne) and *Kathrin Schönfisch* (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, FSO), present a study about the portion of women among applicants for research grants at their organization, their rate of success, and the reasons for gender-specific loss rates in the whole process. One important finding of their study is that when women submit applications they are no less successful than their male counterparts; the reason for their underrepresentation among awarded grants is rather that they are already underrepresented among the applicants. Contrary to studies in other countries that have shown female researchers with children to be no less productive than those without children (referred to by *Lind* in this volume), they found that in Switzerland, women and men, with children were in the long run less likely to be awarded research grants

Evaluation

In order for universities to be sufficiently informed about the results and the impact of gender equality programmes, evaluation studies are needed. Such studies, however, have thus far been rare, at least in Europe.

Andrea Löther from the Centre of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS) in Bonn (Germany) and *Elisabeth Maurer* from the University of Zurich (Switzerland) made use of their experiences as evaluator and evaluatee, respectively, to develop specific standards for the evaluation of gender equality programmes and institutions aimed at the advancement of women. This is all the more important in that, in the German-speaking countries, only few gender equality programmes or institutions for the advancement of women have been evaluated independently. Evaluations have often been conducted by the same institutions that were responsible for carrying out the programmes in question.

Angel Kwolek-Folland, Terry Morehead Dworkin, Virginia Maurer, and Cindy A. Schipani from different universities in the US present a report on the conditions of implementation of successful programmes for the increase of the percentage of women in the natural and technical sciences in the United States at their universities: the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, and Indiana University. Some of these projects were financed by the ADVANCE programmes of the National Science Foundation (NSF) described in Ward's article. The authors also present the general recommendations made by the NSF for advancing women in STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Preparing Women for Leadership

Increasing the number of women in leadership positions has always been an important goal of gender equality programmes. Different countries use different instruments and strategies to achieve this goal.

Lynnette Browning, from the University of South Australia, presents the results of the evaluation of such programmes at Australian universities. One of the goals of these programmes is to promote the career advancement of women in the respective country's personnel structure. The programmes are thus comparable to German programmes aimed at helping women to successfully apply for professorships. Yet another goal (with no German counterpart) is to increase women's motivation for participating in important committees and to prepare women for taking on leadership functions, from chairing a department to presiding over a university.

Gender Equality in the Context of Organisational Change

Real commitment to gender equality will have a high impact on universities as a whole and will lead to organisational change. Organisational change in higher education, however, also poses a challenge to gender equality while simultaneously creating possibilities for its integration.

Mary Ann Danowitz, currently Visiting Professor at Vienna University for Economics and Business Administration, presents a summary of her comparative study on gender equality programmes in the US and the EU, which has also been published as a book.¹ Half of the twelve case studies of her study address national policies while the other six refer to individual universities. Danowitz finds significant differences between the US and EU countries. In recent years the latter have been focusing on gender mainstreaming, while in the US, gender equality programmes are rather integrated into an overarching approach to diversity.

Jane Wilkinson, Charles Sturt University (Australia), conducted a qualitative case study at four Australian “enterprise universities”, whose structures are dictated largely by economic considerations. Wilkinson interviewed women in leadership positions at each university, and analyses how the different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds of these women (middle versus working class, European versus Aboriginal descent) enable them to use their positions at these institutions for their own purposes.

Gender Mainstreaming

Since the nineteen-nineties, the EU and many European countries have adapted their gender equality policies to a focus on gender mainstreaming. Two articles in this volume investigate how gender equality programmes have been influenced by this policy shift.

Susanne Gruber and *Quirin Bauer*, from the University of Augsburg (Germany) present a comparative study on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in higher education at fifteen German universities, which was conducted in 2007 and funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. They analyse the resources made available for this process and the relationship to previous gender equality programmes at German universities.

1 Women, Universities, and Change. Gender Equality in the European Union and the United States, ed. by Mary Ann Danowitz Sagaria, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2007.

Angelika Paseka, from the University College of Teacher Education, Vienna, reports on a gender-mainstreaming project implemented at all Austrian teacher-training institutes. Her study makes explicit that gender mainstreaming can only be successful within appropriate implementation conditions. The project in question failed because those in leadership positions did not give it serious support. There were neither clearly defined, common goals, nor were the necessary structures and resources made available.

Mentoring

During the last decade, mentoring has become a strong instrument for gender equality in higher education. On a European level, the EU-project “eument-net” is building a European network of mentoring programmes for women in academia and research. *Dagmar Höppel* (Germany), *Helene Fügler* and *Sabine Lask* (Switzerland), *Evi Genetti* (Austria), and *Nikolina Sretenova* (Bulgaria), all long-time participants of this project, present the results. They found different conditions for the implementation of mentoring programmes in each of the participating countries. According to their study, the acceptance and success of these programmes depend on several factors. First, the programmes need to be integrated into the institution as a whole. Second, a support culture sympathetic to the significance of such forms of assistance is crucial. Third, a sufficient infrastructure, and of course sufficient funding, must be provided. The German programmes were aimed exclusively at women, while some of the Swiss programmes targeted both sexes under the guise of “human development” – even here, however, it was women in particular who profited.

Carmen Leicht-Scholten, from the RWTH Aachen University, Germany, analyses mentoring programmes at different universities and in different disciplines in the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia, all of which were funded by a federal equal opportunity programme. An interesting finding of her study is that women from different disciplinary fields responded positively to different kinds of programmes: women in the humanities prefer the most common kind of face-to-face mentoring, while engineers also benefit from group-mentoring situations. Women in the medical field were particularly enthusiastic about seminars, while the networking aspect was very important to social scientists.

Work-Life-Balance

Inken Lind, from the Centre of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS) in Bonn (Germany) presents an overview of quantitative and qualitative studies on parenting and academia, making it clear that there is still a lack of reliable statistical data as well as, in particular, comparative data and studies on this issue. Initial results show that there are vast differences in childlessness and number of children among academics in various European countries. The studies give important indications of the different conditions and models of the reconciliation of family and academic career, which is significant for the integration of women in teaching and research.

Recommendations for future gender equality programmes have been published based on the findings of the presentations and discussions on gender equality programmes at the 5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education in Berlin 2007. These recommendations are documented in the appendix of this book.

The contributions collected here give an overview of the international perspective on Gender Equality Programmes in Higher Education.²

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the successful completion of this book. We are particularly grateful to the authors. We would also like to thank Sandra Jasper for doing the layout and copyediting the manuscript and Rett Rossi and Millay Hyatt for their valuable support in correcting the English.

We hope that the projects presented here and the discussions of gender equality programmes will both provide new stimulus to practices in higher education and academia as well as encourage networking between gender equality experts on the national and international level.

Sabine Grenz, Beate Kortendiek, Marianne Kriszio, Andrea Löther

Göteborg, Dortmund, Berlin, Bonn 2008

2 The reader will notice that the contributions vary in their spelling. This is because the articles of authors from German speaking countries were written in British English, while the English-language submissions were left in their original form (American or Australian English).

Options of Knowledge – Opportunities in Science

Susanne Baer

At Humboldt-University in Berlin, the situation is, bluntly, as bad as at other universities if we look at the numbers, that is: at quantitative gender relations among professors, or, even worse, if we look at the lack of presence of women and the overwhelming presence of men in leadership positions in science. Nevertheless, Humboldt-University also hosts the largest German speaking gender studies programme to date with more than 15 disciplines collaborating in research, in a B.A. and an M.A. programme, and in supervising transdisciplinary PhDs in gender studies.¹ These academic programmes have also been accredited recently, thus formally acknowledged to contribute to the future of societies, in giving young people the competencies needed today. We also host a junior research group, sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG), which focuses on gender as a category of knowledge², and we run the GenderKompetenzZentrum, or GenderCompetenceCentre³, funded by the German Federal Government, for transferring knowledge from gender studies into the administration and mainstream politics.

Thus, this university, as one site of higher education among many, is bad in numbers but good in quality. However, there are people who question this very statement. In particular, there is rather widespread scepticism as to whether gender studies are truly part of real science, as to whether gender is more than a fashionable term, as to whether a field can be really good if there are predominantly women working in it, or whether anything that challenges the seemingly neutral yet heavily gendered notions of and in science can be accepted in the halls of wisdom at all. Among these sceptics or sometimes outright enemies of gender studies as an academic enterprise have been and still are to be found leaders of higher education and research institutions.⁴ This does not strike me as surprising if one takes the relationship between elite, exclusion and boundary-work in science and hegemonic masculinities seriously.

1 <http://www.gender.hu-berlin.de/>

2 <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/gkgeschlecht/>

3 <http://www.genderkompetenz.info>

4 Compare the findings from interviews with such leaders in Metz-Göckel/Kamphans (2002).

When it comes to a sober assessment of quality, we do well, as transdisciplinary gender studies, in cooperation with other universities and a variety of academic and non-academic institutions. But we rarely find ourselves in a mainstream discussion of facts, and much more often are trapped in an exchange of assumptions. Here, it makes things a bit more difficult if such scepticism or outright opposition is cast in friendly rhetoric, for example, in attributing quality and potential to gender studies elsewhere, but never in the area one is responsible for or works in. Such rhetoric is also widespread. In Europe as well as in other parts of the world, it has become a regular occurrence to emphasize the importance of women in science⁵ and sometimes even to mention women as a subject of study. More recently there has also been talk of gender relations and daringly, gender as a category in the context of other markers like class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, dis/ability and belief. However, this occurrence of rhetoric does not necessarily translate into any kind of practice.

The difference between rhetoric and practice, or, reality is, as Germans would say, an “old hat” for gender studies and gender equality in science. Professor Wintermantel, the elected head of the German Rectors’ Conference⁶, emphasized this point in her opening remarks to the Berlin conference⁷ in 2007: “We have been on this road for about 25 years.” This turns many people into experts in the field. The Berlin conference aptly demonstrates that there is much to know, and much already known about gender equality in higher education. It also seems as if all of us already agree, yet I believe there is still some controversy. Therefore, I will rather briefly sketch the situation as I see it today, to again emphasize the link between gender studies and equality in science. Then, I will use the opportunity to focus on an issue not yet as present in our discussions as I think it should be – the issue of quality. In my opinion, there is a need to intensify quality discussions in and around gender in science. Otherwise, gender bias will neither be removed regarding the presence of women and men in the academy, nor will it be removed with regards to the research we foster.

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- 5 Nonetheless, these reports have been important signals and present necessary data, e.g., European Commission (2001): Science policies in the European Union: Promoting excellence through mainstreaming gender equality and European Commission (2003): Women in Industrial Research. Analysis of statistical data and good practices of companies.
 - 6 The German Rectors’ Conference (“Hochschulrektorenkonferenz” – HRK) is the voluntary association of state and state-recognised universities and other higher education institutions in Germany. HRK (2006): Empfehlung des 209. Plenums der HRK vom 14.11.2006.
 - 7 “5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education” at Humboldt-University Berlin, August 28-31, 2007.

Gender Studies and Equality in Science

For a long time, the issue of equality in higher education has been access of women to the holy halls. With more sophisticated analyses of gender in science at hand, the focus has shifted to gender with still only little on masculinity and men. But most people active in the field seem to agree on two major points.

First, there is an obvious problem regarding numbers. At the Berlin conference, Christina Hadulla-Kuhlmann from the German Federal Ministry of Research pointed out that while there are currently explicit rules and clear language, there is no plausible explanation as to why there are so many men with similar biographies in science or why there are so many women who do not make it into these jobs, and thus so little diversity.

Second, there is a less obvious, but by now quite well documented problem regarding content or knowledge itself. Today, we have ample proof that disciplines developed with utter disregard of gender and some continue to work in this way. A lack of consideration in this area has been part of disciplinary identities and not only in the somewhat expected case of engineering. A gender bias, which is in fact a male focus (famous: Wennerås/Wold 1997), has also been and still is largely part of scientists' identities as well as the majority of and especially the most prestigious scientific cultures. Science thus simply missed and continues to miss a lot in living with that limitation, politely called a *blind spot*.

Both points are not only part of the consensus in research on gender in science, but have also made it into status quo analyses.⁸ Based on these, and not least in order to guarantee qualified "human resources" in the future, there is significant, official, political will around gender equality in higher education in the wake of global competition and demographic changes. For example, (i) the national research councils name equality as one of their goals, (ii) the EU, the US, the Swiss, the Australian and other national agencies support programmes to further equality, (iii) the German excellence competition among universities declared gender equality a criteria, and (iv) most politicians who administer science endorse sex or gender equality.

So where is the problem? There are tons of best practices, evaluation and monitoring, assessments and comparative analyses, lots of official rhetoric – why then, is it not time to celebrate success? Why are there conferences and workshops and meetings and more in order to again and again discuss efforts towards equality, and to face the challenges ahead? It seems we still have a long way to go.

8 The EU Commission (2008) just published Mapping the Maze. Women in Research Decision Making. See also: European Commission (2001): Science policies in the European Union. European Commission (2003): Women in Industrial Research.

Quality in Science

In the world of knowledge that we live in – the knowledge society, the knowledge economy which is, after the technological revolution, globalized, fast, and diverse – I will argue that we need to revisit the issue of quality. It is quality which governs science, inspires excellence and is the criteria in competition. Sometimes, such quality is called “innovation”, as in OECD assessments of national growth potential. Sometimes, scientific quality is labelled “excellence”, as in national competition games and in many processes of massive organizational change in universities and research institutions. But whatever the additional implications, and the normative underpinnings, quality is the norm by which we are governed, the norm we tend to believe in, and it is quality we want. However, it is not clear what “quality” is today. I want to raise six points on the matter, starting with the nature of quality between myth and norm, the relationship between quality and equality, and problems with, as well as uses of, quality in science. Following that, I will suggest meanings and indicators to assess quality in science and to strengthen a vision of science which encompasses gender equality rather than continues to live without it.

Quality between Myth and Norm

Quality is a myth, but it is also the powerful leading norm we want to or should adhere to in higher education, in science. Certainly, there are differences in the type and ways in which quality reigns science. Depending on the disciplinary culture you live in, you may accept that people measure the quality of your work, as is most likely the case in the natural sciences, or you may reject any attempt to measure your scientific efforts as fuzzy, irrational or a violation of academic freedom, as is most likely in the humanities. This is part of the disciplinary tradition and habitus, which accepts quality assessments sooner or later. Beyond such differing historical developments though, there is generally a strong belief in science that “quality really counts”.

One might argue that this is a myth, but not reality. And yes, most people will admit that there are politics in science, too. However, when it comes to one’s own decision about the next faculty member, about the next grant, about the next review, *there is a tendency to uphold a norm of quality*. After all, it is quality which also brought oneself to a position, which is part of the scientific persona, an identity neither easy nor wise to destroy. Therefore, all attempts to document the role of institutional and social factors, of money and politics, of emotions and needs, of reputational capital or other context factors somehow

vaporize when it comes to the foundational myth that after all, it is quality which reigns in science. This seems to be an interesting case of partial cognitive resistance.

Such resistance has reasons. An attack on the quality regimes in science tends to reveal the privileges and the politics one may not want to see out in the open. I at least have not seen a researcher say in public that he is a “quota man”, just as only very few women have publicly stated that they are “quota” or affirmative action women. Saying so would convey they got their position not because of objective quality assessment, but because of equality policies. Never mind that affirmative action is based on a fact of equal qualification and that equality rules do not apply without a preliminary quality assessment. Nevertheless, there is a rational resistance to discussing policies in science not only because the men’s quota is in fact so large, but also because we want to maintain the myth: that quality counts.

Quality and Equality

Whereas most researchers and scientists see quality as a fundamentally good thing which they at some point believe works, equality is not only perceived as being rather different, it is also seen by many as a bad idea with regards to science. Especially in science, equality is not sexy, it is not a winner and it is not fun to pursue. It is not seen as intrinsic to the field. This is why in the world of science, men and often, successful women, tend to react funny when you really call for more equality: Suddenly, they turn impatient, angry, even aggressive, they take “it” personal, they do not want to be bothered with “such affairs”.

Adverse reactions as these rest on solid cultural ground. Deep down and buried in Western philosophy, liberty and thus academic freedom and equality (and thus also, calls for fairness) have been conceptualized as actually colliding with one another rather than coexisting and fostering each other. Liberty is framed as an individual good, related to rational autonomy, while equality is construed as the site of the social, limiting personal freedom. Therefore, a call for equality is a disturbing call to most scientists. It is external to their cause, has nothing to do with their work, does not concern academic freedom and thus is not about academic performance.⁹ Equality, then, is the business of women’s representatives or some other administrative burden. Or it is the cause of those women in gender studies, who are therefore often confused with equality officers. Alternatively, the call for equality in science is seen as an outdated call

9 I have made this point a bit more in depth in Baer, Susanne (2006).

from the 80s, while those of us in the 21st century care more about “real” problems.

If we want to harmonize quality and equality, and install change in the world of science, we need to modify this. We need to argue and convince relevant actors that equality fosters academic freedom, because excellence can only develop under fair conditions. Equality, then, is an intrinsic factor of quality in science. One already hears this call at times, but we need to hear it more often. We also need to support it with data. Most importantly, we then need to be clear about what we mean when we say “quality”.

Problems with Quality

Quality standards are changing, but both traditional and new standards are biased in several ways. Traditional standards of quality have not only been inconsistently applied, but are also inherently tainted. In short, the truth regime has been built on very specific assumptions of a universal mind, of a genius, applying specific kinds of othering, of exclusion. The traditional culture of science is heavily influenced by all kinds of forces, including religions, Occidentalism and colonialism, and, last not least, heteronormative constructions of gender. It is the culture of the disembodied scientist in a lab or in a library. This scientist leaves the body and emotions at the door (compare Barres 2006). And since bodies and emotions have been coded female, women stay out too, as researchers. More precisely, this scientist has no needs (since a private life takes care of those), has no vulnerability, is White and entertains particular civilized, mostly bourgeois habits. Thus, all others stay out of research too. Science, then, is the activity of affluent and able-bodied, White and Western rational beings, coded as Male. And since science requires this scientist to not acknowledge such limitations, to not have research be “disturbed” or “tainted” by such other irrational aspects, research focuses on “purely” disciplinary or “precise” work and “clearly” relevant topics.

In the traditional world of truth, gender is other, irrational, subjective, not relevant. Absent of a recognition of body and emotions, of location, relationships and needs, it is a specific myth of Western middle-class able-bodied heterosexual masculinity which came to count. Deep down in the cultural sediments of this knowledge universe, quality has been coded as such.

However, as much as science is a changing concept, and as much as our notions of gender change over time, quality standards are also changing. In the 21st century, there is an intense debate around new standards of scientific quality. As already mentioned, not all favour that debate. In the context of the knowledge

economy, in which knowledge becomes subject to measurement, such attempts to measure performance are sometimes rejected. Despite the fact that there is indeed much to add to visions of quality in science today, such rejection often seems to serve privilege rather than save academic freedom. What is more relevant to my point is that even today, quality standards tend to be biased.

In some cases, and particularly in the knowledge economy, research is deemed excellent if a product based on it is marketable. This is particularly true for engineering, natural sciences and medicine, but it also tends to swap into social sciences, including law and economics, as well as the humanities, such as in cultural studies. However, as long as traditional marketing as well as canonized “school” medicine take a paradigmatic Male, heterosexual, middle-class Western customer and a paradigmatic White, middle-aged, male patient into account, such criteria support inequality.

In other cases, research is deemed excellent if many colleagues take explicit note of it. This is what bibliometric performance tells you, to a degree. Bibliometric standards do not reveal the intensity of the reading, or the reception of thought. Moreover, as long as studies show that work beyond the mainstream and work by women is not referred to explicitly, but rather rephrased, and that women serve as illustrating rather than foundational, bibliometric quality standards are also a mechanism which fosters inequality.

In yet other cases, research is deemed excellent if *a selected few* consider it as such. This is called peer review in funding, peer review in publishing, and peer selection in hiring. As long as women and other others are not part of the selected few in positions of power, as long as people carry unconscious bias along, as long as admission procedures are not thoroughly blinded, and as long as people generally tend to favour similarity to themselves over difference, this is yet another mechanism which fosters inequality.

Current Uses of Quality: Objectivity and Blind Spots

In light of such problems with quality standards today, we need to rethink quality. From a gender equality perspective, quality is an ambivalent standard. There are at least two distinct strategies in which it is precisely quality which blocks equality, a repercussion of the historical normative stance.

I call the first strategy the objectivity-strategy. Here, quality is the argument used by the science establishment to preserve sex inequality regarding numbers. “Equality is political – and should not interfere with objective and neutral science”. Or: “It is not important who does research or teaches – the output counts”. Such arguments are employed to reject measuring quality per se. Again, I am

afraid this defends privilege rather than saves freedom. Such is the case with many references to academic freedom, targeting the economisation of the academy. After all, we intellectuals are deeply sceptical when market rhetoric enters our world. The economisation of the academy, the privatization of research, the output pressure – such innovation hinders creativity, it is said. We do not want to be a market. Rather, we emphasize the special nature of ideas, imply the image of the inspired mind, of thinkers and sometimes even poets. And in that ancient world, there is nothing to be measured, and there are few formal rules. At the same time, it is rather obvious that knowledge needs resources, is thus a market, and that there are many rules, however obscured. There has always been a market dynamic with competition as a driving academic force. The fight against “economisation” today is either a fight against inapplicable rules, and then rightly so, or, it is, and more often the case, rather obviously a defence of privilege.

Such resistance to quality then, resembles the chorus of anti-Bologna-songs, in their resistance to EU induced reform of higher learning. If performance is measured, reputation may suffer. If income is output related, some may put out more than the old boys, and they may not like this. Just as in the Bologna case: If I have to define what students will take home from class, I will need to rethink what I give them, and I may have to change things, and many do not like that. So the routines and privileges which come with the traditional style of academic freedom may end the minute the academy applies some rules, including the rule of fairness and transparency. If performance is measured fairly, specific men do not fare better by default. If teaching is valued, some women may fare better in the academy, but be sure, if teaching well is also valued and paid adequately, many men will go into teaching, too. And if leadership or excellence are about performing well, things may be a little different from the image many still hold.

The strategy of objectivity – “equality has nothing to do with science” – is also used when researchers reject gender equality in research teams as a funding criteria. This is when “purity” and “simply science” enter the room, and women and all other others tend to leave. I also see this strategy at work when some declare that the disciplines should be strengthened to ensure the quality of research, for “objective reasons”. It is the disciplines which guarantee for canonical exclusion and which function as reproductive institutions of privilege. A call back to the disciplines may be a call away from exactly those emerging fields in which diversity matters and counts. And the moment the disciplines come back, women and other othered may tend to stay outside.

There is a second strategy in which quality is used to block equality. I call it the “blind spot” strategy. It is employed when gender equality is a criteria (success!), but when it is reduced to referring to numbers only. Then, researchers or

institutions argue that everything is fine since after all, there are some women there, and women in the field are an issue and work-life-balance is a goal too. This is a complicated case indeed, one which was not there 25 years ago and is instead a current phenomenon. Again, it is part of current rhetorics, the official political will: Everyone wants equality these days. Or put differently: It is my impression that all favour equality as long as it does not mean more than that, i.e., no serious change. It is very nice to point to blind spots – they are so tiny and so easy to fix. But I think we need to do more. Gender seems to be okay as long as it does not hurt. As soon as we target the real issues and would induce lasting change, efforts are rejected aggressively. Again, this makes things extremely difficult. It is important to note that when the blind spot-strategy is employed, we do not encounter a paradox. There have been discussions of whether we live in that paradox of success and immobility, but I believe it is not one. Rather, we do encounter an interesting effect of our fights for equality: We have come a long way, know a lot, and everyone has learned from us. As Peter Strohschneider, president of the German Science Council¹⁰, said earlier this year, we now face the “lateral effects of our success”: We made it on the level of rhetoric, but things tend to just stay there. Some (meaning a few) women in science are a nice idea (“nice” indeed), but more than that – really ... And the tone implies that “more” would be crossing a tolerable line.

Under the veil of nice rhetorics, bias prevails. Indeed, we definitely do see better rhetorics. Yet we also see outright aggression, as some studies presented at the Berlin conference aptly document. You may say this is the usual story, that’s how it goes. But I think we need to understand that nice rhetorics are the reaction to equality demands *of a specific kind*, while aggression is the reaction to *other demands*, demands for equality with quality.

There are many examples for this. Today, if you want extra funding for mentoring, or money for junior women, or a little centre of gender and equality at your institution, you may get it. And you will have the rhetorics in place. But if you want mentoring *and* money for junior members of scientific minorities, including women, *and* an equality office and a gender studies unit, and gender in all curricula and as part of required research questions, and transparent and accessible funding schemes and performance evaluation and men and women represented on all levels of the institution and and and ... you face a fight.

10 The German Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) is an advisory body to the Federal Government and the state governments. Compare Allianz der Forschungsgemeinschaften (2006): Offensive für Chancengleichheit von Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern. 29.11.2006, but also Wissenschaftsrat (2007): Empfehlungen zur Chancengleichheit von Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern.

The pro-equality rhetoric is a reaction to a specific kind of demand, and it waters down any more radical calls for real change. It is rhetorical progress in the face of factual immobility. One lateral effect of success is, then, loosing a radical grip on the issues. So I suggest putting some radicalism back on the agenda, true to the meaning of the term: Address the problem at the root, the radix.

The Meaning of Quality today

The quest for serious quality standards as a quest for fairness is, I believe, more than having some junior women, a small institution and interesting books out. Calling for quality means addressing the utter inequalities which still pervade academic life. Then, when we say quality, what do we mean?

There are many aspects of quality in science discussed today. Among them are educational profile, scope of issues covered in research, research and teaching activities manifest in publication records, knowledge transfer records or funding records, administrative activities, activities in networking, mobility or lack thereof, etc. What do you think really counts as an indicator of quality in research? A rather transparent and critical discussion is needed here. To be sure, quality is a standard we demand for all of science, including gender studies. But in all of science, we need to point out that the effect of gender as a category of knowledge deeply impacts upon how people judge work and what people think are the standards in their field. This means that we need to address the gender of quality.

If we say gender, we should do gender. This requires people active in gender studies itself to critically re-examine the state of the art in our own field. It means not accepting work on “women” as assumed quasi-natural entities, nor on the heuristic happy couple, “women and men”. Work on the gendered nature of science reveals the brain’s sexism out there, as bipolar heterosexism, men invisible, women othered, and it systematically points to the interwoven racism, classism, ageism and ableism in the fields.

Quality in science regarding gender thus challenges the basics in all fields, including some basics which have been called “gender”, but in fact, are not. For example, it is great that in medicine, the “gender knee” has alas been “invented” in 2006, to fit women’s knees as well as men’s knees after decades of such surgery. Now some areas of medicine think of women, too, which is great and it does not hurt them either, quite the opposite really. But it is nothing more than a starting point.

As another example, it is also wonderful that in some areas economics is now starting to take account of the private sphere as a sphere of consumption and

production. Previously the private sphere has been neglected because the market seemed to be happening elsewhere for a long time. The ideological distinction between the public sphere as Male and the private sphere as Female pervades economics, political and social sciences, law, history and philosophy. If all these disciplines now start thinking of the private sphere as well, it is great. It may hurt a bit, since policies really tend to shift then. It is also an indicator of quality, since it is based on systematic considerations of gendered space. But again, it is not all there is.

Furthermore, and similarly, it is very interesting that there is work on women in history, or work on female figures in religions, or on women in national iconographies. It is an important first step on the way to adequate systematic research, including gender. Yet today, top quality is more than that. To reach that standard, work has to scrutinize the shape and effects of gender as a regime, a sexualized and heterosexual matrix. If research does that, it may be excellent.

Some research then, is not only good and interesting, but, when integrating a gender quality standard, may even be truly excellent. It systematically considers that gender is nothing without and yet more than only about men and women. For example, if gender is taken seriously, studies in engineering reflect upon practices of othering, upon ideas of masculinity and femininity in design, upon gender roles, role ascription and effects of stereotyping in engineering processes or user schemes, and more, I guess. Again, this means using gender as a category intersecting with ethnicity, class, age, or ability. Then, you may find excellence, based on the quality criteria you use.

Thus, a quality debate is not only an issue just for “them”, but also a debate for “us”. Researchers need to discuss quality and leaders as well as responsible administrators, including gender equality administrators and representatives, need to ensure that this discussion is participatory, transparent, and takes place under conditions of fairness. This will be easy in gender studies, since this field fosters a rather deliberative culture, but it will be more difficult to create such discussions in other academic fields. The grand scene which needs a quality debate is, as we all know, the mainstream of science. And there, transparency is key.

Indicators of Quality

Finally then, when we ask for quality in all fields and in all decisions which affect science and higher learning, what do we want to see? This discussion is only starting. Therefore, I shall rather tentatively suggest some indicators which might help to assess quality beyond bias in the future.