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You can't clap with one hand! Gender research and networking. Vol. A

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Acknowledgements

You can't clap with one hand! We are happy about the many hands that helped us to produce this publication. Clapping is a sign of happiness and indeed we are happy about this joint project.

The aim of this volume is to learn about the process of engendering the scientific debate in different spaces.

This first volume A deals with gender studies and networking and we are still working on volume B, which will cover gender research and networking. Both issues were discussed during our summer schools in 2006 and 2007 at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany and Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan. We are grateful for the scientific and personal exchange with the authors. They open the doors to their societies to us and give us insights into different communities and information about the processes and debates within the institutions of higher education.

As the contributors come from many different countries and cultural backgrounds, we thank Rebecca Hudson for her sensitive and precise editing, which let each text keep its characteristic style of the authors.

The DAAD has funded our summer school activities as well as the link programme with Ahfad University during the last years. We are especially thankful for the DAAD's support of our international publications, which allows us to reach a broader scientific community, as publications belong to the process of scientific capacity building.

Ten years after our first joint summer school with Ahfad University was held in Berlin in 1998, we look back on fruitful cooperation, inspiring discussions and a lively exchange of ideas. The network that developed during these summer school meetings with so many colleagues from different countries brought many challenges and results.

Now this connection can serve to build an international study programme on a global level in the future. We hope that this idea will find

some interest and invite colleagues and institutions to participate in our networking activities. A study programme on gender studies and research on an international level could help each of us to broaden our horizons and learn from each other. This is indeed a new challenge for a shared future.

Parto Teherani-Krönner Brigitte Wörteler

Berlin, Spring 2008

Parto Teherani-Krönner

You Can't Clap with One Hand

The GERES-NET Summer School Workshop

This collection of articles is one of the results of our summer school on Gender Research and Networking (GERES-NET) that we held in the summer of 2006.

The workshop was organized by the Unit of Gender Research in Rural Areas at the Chair of Gender and Globalization in the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HUB), Germany, in cooperation with the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies at Ahfad University for Women (AUW), Omdurman, Sudan.

Summer schools are one of the components of the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme, which was established in 1998 between Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan, and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture. I will come back to this higher education exchange project between our universities in more detail in my later article, which I wrote with my Sudanese colleague Balghis Badri. But let me mention here that this programme receives financial support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). It includes students and staff exchange, some research activities, as well as workshops and summer or winter schools that are held alternately in Sudan and Germany every year. The Development Studies Unit at the Department of Sociology at the Free University Berlin has been a member of this cooperative programme since 2001. In the meantime, there are also some other institutions with a close relationship to our Unit of Gender Research in Rural Areas, who gave us their encouragement for our activities in the past decade. We are grateful for their help.

The purpose of the 2006 summer school workshop on Gender Research and Networking (GERES-NET) was to open a space for

exchange and dialogue between researchers and gender specialists from Africa, Asia and Europe. Some 25 participants from Nigeria, Sudan, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Vietnam, and other countries, as well as scientists from Germany, joined us in Berlin. We were able to bring together members of different universities and institutions and try to find focal points of joint interest in research, teaching, and curriculum development. We look forward to facilitating networking capacities among the participants in order to improve our future activities.

The primary idea was to generate an inspiring discussion based on the experiences and stories of success and failure of organizations that are involved in the area of Gender Studies and Research. We wanted to learn from each other and find out how we could support one another. Our concept was that networking could be a key to success in institutionalizing Gender Studies and Research within our academic domains. The main challenge of this workshop was to formulate and construct strategies to develop, institutionalize, and improve gender research by building platforms for networking.

Our vision is one of cooperation in capacity building in research and teaching, and of development and improvement of our curricula and research methodologies. We are also open to the processes of gender mainstreaming but remain critical about what has been achieved so far. In this way, we document the most welcome success stories but we should not be blind towards the weaknesses that might also be part of the process of institutionalization.

Another perspective that is new to our summer school concepts is the introduction of information technology (IT). We want to find out whether the new technologies of communication – especially e-learning programmes and methods – could be a useful media in the exchange and development of information among our scientific communities. We are working on developing and improving e-learning scenarios whereby students from several countries in different parts of the world will be able to share scientific resources and different knowledge systems, as well as to communicate with each other and prepare joint papers.

We were helped by our multimedia centre at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and we have received some funding to develop joint curricula that we shall use both at the Humboldt and at Ahfad University.

With a new e-learning programme – called MOODLE[1]- we want to develop and prepare a platform where our students from different universities can meet and work together and enter into their own scientific debate. We have just started this project and it still needs. intensive work.

We are eager to find out whether e-learning opportunities could help to institutionalize women's and gender studies at our universities and whether this could be an approach that will protect and support the idea of improving Women's Studies, representing women's interests and achieving greater gender justice. We are aware that this cannot be reached simply by using new media but instead requires many varied efforts. Therefore, we invite those who are interested to share and communicate with us, in order to attain this vision. These are our plans for the future.

With this collection of papers, we can offer an account of experiences with Gender Studies so far at some universities in different countries. As gender studies and research have an inter- and transdisciplinary approach, we cannot shape them with regard to one or other discipline. Therefore, we are happy to have contributions from different disciplines and, with their efforts, to establish the gender perspective within their field of academic activities. We will read about some success stories but we are also thankful for those contributions that openly inform us about barriers and obstacles to this process of establishing Women's Studies and Gender Research. We will learn how difficult it is when Women's Studies and Gender Studies are supposed to be integrated and established into the core concept of the respective disciplines and become part of the curricula.

It looks as if there is still is a long way to go until Gender Studies and Research be referred to as state-of-the-art and communicated in the process of standard setting (see Lachenmann).

1 The Centre for Multimedia Teaching and Learning of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HUB) gave us an introduction to the systems of e-learning and the use of the open source programme MOODLE, a communications platform used at the HUB that was introduced to all participants during the workshop. We are pleased that the Centre is taking part in this international cooperation.

The main challenge of this workshop was the question of how far networking can help us – each of whom is in different positions and bound to different institutions in the many countries – and how we can profit from and protect each other, as well as improve our capacity building abilities.

Cooperation and networking were always the weapon of the weak. And even if we do not consider ourselves as weak, networking is quite a proven instrument of the powerful as well[2]. At any rate, access to informal and formal information and knowledge seems to be a key to reaching one's goals. This can help us to obtain some support from outside in order to strengthen our position inside our own institutional settings.

Networking for Empowerment: Some Historical Roots

Vareh – a traditional mode of cooperation

Networking activities have a long tradition, especially among women. Let me mention some aspects of cooperation and networking that are deeply rooted in my own cultural background in Iran, where the *Vareh* system was an early mode of cooperation. *Vareh* is the term used for a group of women who exchanged their milk daily in order to prepare dairy products such as yoghurt, cheese or *kashk*. In times when animal husbandry and agricultural activities were the main sources of income, such systems of cooperation were vital for survival, especially for those with small herds. For example, the preparation of yoghurt was not viable for those families with only a few animals. So women from the neighbourhood collected the milk and each day one of them was able to turn the milk into dairy products for her family or for sale in the market.

A very interesting Iranian sociologist, Morteza Farhadi, has conducted research on the many different women's organizations in many parts of the country (Farhadi 1994).

2 It is quite amusing to look at the following website: www.obn.org. "OBN" is the abbreviation for "old boys' network", which is used by a women's network platform.

Traditional ways of participation within groups of women can probably be traced back to the beginning of human culture, whenever people looked for survival strategies in regions where resources were difficult to manage and individuals needed the help of a group. Women had to develop their own strategies and rules of cooperation in order to cope with the difficulties they faced.

Even if ecological conditions and economic necessities proved to be the basis of cooperation and accommodation, people always had to communicate in order to find common ground. Thus they built their social environment and shaped their social institutions and organizations – one of them being *Vareh.* In these processes of communication and exchange in everyday life, ties among group members were strengthened and emotional closeness and sensitivities were developed. Meetings became part of their culture and the close relationship to each other became something valuable. Discovering that *you can't clap with one hand* urged women to ask for support from others. Gatherings to chat, eat and drink together, to play, sing and dance with each other, or otherwise create performances, belonged to the culture of *Vareh*, the place for all sorts of exchange. Socialization is not possible without these forms of interaction. News and information exchange was the source of the oral tradition in women's organizations, probably similar to those of the male part of the group.

Farhadi argues that after a certain period of time, such gatherings became an end in themselves – far beyond the material and efficiency criteria only. These groupings were essential whenever people were in need. Members were given help and protection according to the normative order. For Farhadi, one of the main effects of such gatherings is the exchange of information. Therefore, he calls them News Gatherings.

The informal groupings nowadays are mainly found in the new spaces around educational institutions as well as mosques, which have gained increasing importance during the past decades. These newly institutionalized forms of cooperation have the potential to displace the old traditional forms of *Vareh* that were organized so that women could help each other with the preparation of milk products. We need to find how to transfer the old mode of cooperation with its spirit of solidarity into new networking activities.

Various kinds of work cooperation are well known in many African countries as well (Elageed 2007). In rice farming in northern Iran this type of work exchange among women has a long history and still exists. Farhadi has carried out research on numerous forms of *Vareh* and cooperation in different parts of Iran. In his sociological and anthropological research, he discovered different types and modes of production cooperation that helped people to safeguard their livelihood in rural areas.

The traditional forms of exchange have changed their face, and the former locations for meeting and exchange have a new shape, a different type of entry and space for communication. But still this culture of using communication and exchange in order to protect each other – as Farhadi puts it – is still alive and should be equipped with adequate media and probably with new information technology as well.

We are looking for new means of communication and exchange and we will support each other with our work activities – something that will be beneficial to all. Gender Studies and Research is a domain where we still need a lot of protection, monitoring and sponsoring so that we can go ahead and start a new dimension of interaction and communication.

We hope that these processes will help to improve our mutual understanding among scientists, as well as among our students, and help to overcome prejudices and biases in order to build a more just and peaceful future.

What are the articles about?

Firstly, we have to mention that the articles in this book are only some of the contributions that we have received so far. In this volume, we are publishing discussions that deal with the institutional setting of Women's and Gender Studies at different universities in many countries. Volume B will contain gender research and approaches that help us to find common issues of research and investigation. The different topics in volume B will show us how broadly gender research is developing and how diversely the issues are debated.

Part I of Volume A deals with some general overviews and discusses the issues of:

Gender mainstreaming (taking Sudan as an example); gender methodology (using case studies from Sudan, Malaysia and Senegal); gender and technology (using digital networking opportunities and the International Women's University in Germany during Expo 2000 as an example).

Part II is dedicated to contributions from different countries and university case studies within some disciplines and special subjects.

In the last part we have put together some areas of investigation where Gender Studies have an inter- and transdisciplinary influence or aspect that can challenge the topics of communication and development in the future.

Parto Teherani-Krönner and *Balghis Badri* look back at the institutionalization of Gender Studies at the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, as well as the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme of the past decade. They have developed a set of criteria to evaluate this exchange programme and summarize in particular their experiences during the last summer schools, as well as giving some recommendations for their continuation.

Gudrun Lachenmann underlines the methodological aspect of Women's Studies and gender research. In her research in different countries we learn about the importance of gendered spaces for knowledge production and empowerment. Besides the positive aspects that come with women's organizations and networking, she also takes a critical stance by bringing up the question of whether these spaces are being exploited in order to serve the hegemonic systems.

Some experiences with digital networking are reported by *Tanja Paulitz*. The International Women's University that was organized around the celebration of Expo 2000 in Germany brought together many women from around the world. Tanja Paulitz will share with us her assessment of the Virtual International Women's University (vifu) and discuss the gender aspect and the notion of power in this new field of digital devices.

In the second part, there are accounts of experiences in different countries but special emphasis is put on papers from Sudan as the summer schools are closely connected to the Ahfad-Humboldt Link Programme at our respective universities.

Balghis Badri gives us an overview of gender mainstreaming in higher education and Gender Studies at Sudanese universities. Her article is based on empirical research among five selected universities with historical backgrounds in female education in Sudan and has highly interesting results. This study was financially supported by the World Bank and Balghis Badri was able to collect data from different universities as well as her own, the Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman. Politically, this information is challenging because in the near future the greater number of Sudanese graduates will be women, as shown by statistics.

Thus, we will see a feminization of university graduates in Sudan, as well as in many other Islamic countries such as Iran, where in some subjects the number of male students is decreasing and female students are becoming the majority. In fact, there has been discussion in Iran and demands from some of the female students to allow more men to enter the universities. Up until now, passing the entrance examination is the means to studying at university, but young girls do not want to stay among themselves and prefer to join classes with male students. Therefore, a group of young women have applied for a quota for male students. This might sound somewhat ironic but needs to be considered in a broader sense.

Mai Izeldeen Osman is a member of Ahfad University and the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies. She openly defines the position of her institute as being politically and socially involved with women's standpoints with the aim of removing the power imbalance and social inequality. She records topics that students have chosen so far as their B.A. and M.A. theses and shows the priorities that have been given to the different issues.

It is important to mention that it is part of the Ahfad University philosophy to become more involved with the country's social and political processes, although official political activism is not possible. But universities in many countries of the South cannot stand apart from the society and community where they are located. Ahfad has therefore institutionalized an NGO called Babakir Badri Foundation, where staff members can also become involved with social activities.

Next, the situation at Khartoum University is reported by our colleague, *Osman Mohamed Osman Ali*, who gives us some insights

about the situation at his university, especially the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. He shows how important the encouragement of UNICEF, the Ford Foundation and the Dutch Government were in founding the Women and Development Programme (WAD). Despite this protection, however, the WAD unit was not successful in overcoming academic resistance. Conservative structures did not give way to an integration of gender issues into the curriculum or permit the holding of gender courses in their own right. But he leaves it open to further investigation and reasoning about the conservatism that might have been a barrier to gender mainstreaming even within Social Sciences at Khartoum University, which is the oldest Sudanese university and has the best academic reputation in the country. Even with quite some intervention from outside, it was not possible to change the structures of the academic bodies in his university.

In the article by *Asma Hussein Adam* we learn how difficult it has proven to start Women's and Gender Studies at a specific university in Sudan. She tells us about her efforts to introduce this new topic and bring about some changes to the curriculum. Even if some success stories can be mentioned, they remain quite isolated and it was not possible to achieve general acceptance for this new perspective in teaching and research at Juba University.

Martine Wiltzius and *Sandra Lewalter* tell us the story of the restructuring of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin at the beginning of the 1990s, which provided the opportunity to institutionalize Women's and Gender Studies within several subjects at the university. On this basis, the Gender Studies programme in the mid-1990s was established as the first Master of Arts of its kind in Germany. The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies coordinates the programme and provides an institutional frame for it. The main areas of interest are the category of gender and the interdependent connection of this category with other patterns of social order and norms such as gender, race and class.

The GenderCompetenceCenter at the Humboldt University was founded in 2003 to ensure the implementation and sustainability of gender mainstreaming. It plays a significant role in combining gender theories and gender research in its everyday consulting activities.

Shahla Ezazi, a lecturer in sociology in Tehran, reports on a round table meeting of the Women's Study Group at the Iranian Sociology Association. She gives us some insights into the different groups and complains about the difficulties of getting access to information. She supports greater access to the news, especially via the internet, with regard to the needs of students at universities and research groupings, which unfortunately is not possible due to restrictions in the country.

From Malaysia, *Rashidah Shuib* demands that Women's/Gender Studies Centres in the country need to re-evaluate their roles and learn from NGOs about how to advance women's issues. She criticizes the way Women's and Gender Studies have been institutionalized until now, calls for political action and social involvement and argues that Women's and Gender Studies and research can no longer remain in the comfort of the traditional academic cocoon.

Our first contribution from Nigeria also underlines the necessity of social activism. *Fatima Adamu* shows Women's and Gender Studies as an area of investigation "with a difference" because of their connection to the feminist political agenda. She deals with the challenges of linking the academic and political angles of gender studies and research. For her, scholarship and activism are two sides of the same coin when it comes to gender studies and research. As a member of the academia in the South, she is also confronted with the necessity of becoming socially and politically involved and not staying in the ivory tower of science or remaining in a cocoon, as *Rashidah Shuib* explained.

Rashidah Shuib, like *Mai Izeldeen Osman* and *Fatima Adamu*, as well as *Heike Jensen* in particular, stress the importance of women's and gender studies being politically active and they demand that the tradition of the women's movement and activism should not be given up while Gender Studies becomes part of academia.

In the third part of this volume, gender studies will be shown in different subjects and domains of teaching and research. We learn about experiences within the field of agricultural sciences *(Olanike Deji)* as well as forestry *(Dang Tung Hoa)* in Nigeria and Vietnam respectively. These authors deal with different ways of land use and resource management. Another contribution discusses gender in medicine *(Judith Fuchs)* which also forms an important domain of Gender Studies at the

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. And finally, we will have a conclusion by *Heike Jensen* from a critical perspective.

In the second contribution from Nigeria, *Olanike Deji* shows us her investigation on introducing women's and gender studies in the field of agriculture at different universities and describes her own experiences at her university in Ile Ife. She underlines the importance of bringing this gender perspective into the field of agricultural teaching and research in order to overcome the difficulties of rural development and food security in the country. In addition, she hopes that networking will help to overcome some of the obstacles.

In case of Vietnam, we learn from *Dang Tung Hoa* about the rapid changes in society, which is facing new pressures in coming to terms with a changed environment. She pays special attention to the subject of social forestry in academic concepts at forestry universities in Vietnam. She shows her first steps to integrate gender research into the curriculum in order to recognize the active part of women in rural development and to improve their abilities to participate in the processes of change and economic and social activities.

Another field of special challenge is gender research and teaching in medicine. *Judith Fuchs* shares with us her experiences so far at the Charité Hospital of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where the "Center for Gender in Medicine (GiM)" was established in 2003. Although gender has received quite some attention during the past 20 years, *Judith Fuchs* demonstrates the structure of this new institutionalized unit within the discipline of medicine and the master study programme on Health and Society, where the GiM is cooperating intensively. Nevertheless, she is looking for further networking and knows how important the increasing interest from outside the faculty is in leading to improvements within the university.

Finally, I welcome the contribution by *Heike Jensen*. She will confront us with a crucial question about the purpose of gender studies and its establishment at university level. In a way, she will question whether the process of gender mainstreaming has brought more or indeed any gender justice or whether gender studies have been tamed. Over the course of its long bureaucratic journey, has gender studies given up its critical position and potential while running after academic awards?

All in all, I think that we have a rich variety of contributions on a sensitive question. We still need more reflection upon what we have reached so far. Is this really what we were looking for?

As gender studies are still relatively new, approaches within the disciplines – inter- and transdisciplinary networking – can offer a platform and the protection that is needed. We need discourse among scholars and dialogue with our students and probably there are many different expectations. Communication and networking within our own institutions as well as with colleagues in other places around the world will give us the support and protection needed in a comparatively new field of academia.

We hope that our voices will be heard and that the clapping of our hands will motivate others to join the rhythm of gender studies and research.

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Abbreviations

DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
GiM	Gender in Medicine
HUB	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAD	Women and Development Programme

I. Gender Studies & Research – Interpretations and Debate

Balghis Badri and Parto Teherani-Krönner

Women's and Gender Studies at the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture and the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme

I. *Women's and Gender Studies in Rural Areas* (Parto Teherani-Krönner)

Let me start with a little history about the institutionalization of women's and gender studies at our own faculty – the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture (Landwirtschaftlich-Gärtnerische Fakultät/ LGF) at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HUB). I will then refer to the special cooperative relationship that we have been able to build up during the past ten years with the Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan. Together with Balghis Badri, my colleague from Ahfad University, we will then share with you part of our evaluation report, which was developed during our meetings in Berlin in June 2007. We will concentrate on the summer school activities that we organized alternately in Omdurman/Sudan and in Berlin/Germany each year, as this volume is a result of the summer school held at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in 2006.[1] Our Ahfad-Humboldt link is still active and is in the process of changing its components, but this is a good time to look back at our joint experiences during the past decade in order to be aware of both obstacles to and potential for future activities.

Rural Gender

Since the restructuring of the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall

1 Two volumes are planned. The first focuses on gender studies, while the second will be on gender research.

in 1989, the new and innovative fields of "Women in Rural Development" and "Women's Studies" were created and given a small space within the agricultural sciences and thus became part of the structure of the new faculty. In the early 1990s, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin was one of the first universities in the German-speaking countries to integrate women's and gender studies into the concept, the course system and the structure of an agricultural faculty. The Department of Agriculture at the University of Göttingen followed and meanwhile in Stuttgart-Hohenheim, a Gender Research Chair has been dedicated to the area of "Gender and Nutrition".

In the mid-1990s, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin started a concept of promoting female professors and dedicated three chairs to women's and gender studies in three different faculties. Our Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Theology were on this list. Every semester since 1996, the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture has had a guest professor with a different profile to underline its activities in the field of women's and gender studies. Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen, Rita Schäfer, Gabi Zdunneck and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen were our guest professors until the winter semester of 2005-2006. As our faculty was in danger of being closed so many times, the process of institutionalizing an official additional chair for women's and gender studies failed whenever it seemed nearly reachable. In fact, this proved to be a lengthy struggle, which took more than ten years of difficult and heated discussions and arrangements to resolve. The process of negotiating continued with our faculty colleagues and the WISOLA (Institute for Economic and Social Sciences in Agriculture) and required complex bargaining with the Gender Studies Unit at the HUB. However, in the end we were able to establish a Chair for Gender and Globalization, which has been covered by Professor Christine Bauhardt since the winter semester of 2005-2006.

This means that it took more than a decade before an official chair with a gender studies orientation could be established within a faculty of agriculture and horticulture, although this had been an integral part of the university's concept since 1996. The protection by the active women who are involved with the interdisciplinary programme of

Gender Studies at the HUB was necessary and helped to promote the establishment of the new chair at our faculty. This is quite remarkable because the faculty itself is under pressure to reduce its staff and even is in danger of closure due to the University's restructuring plans.

International Conferences and Workshops
Internationalization as a Key to Maintenance

International conferences with a gender orientation are closely connected to the history of the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture since its merging after the unification of the eastern and western part of Berlin. Since 1994, the active members responsible for women's and gender studies at the faculty have organized an international scientific gathering or international conference every second year. We have built up valuable expertise with the following interdisciplinary conferences:

1994: Frauen in der ländlichen Entwicklung (Women in Rural Development) (Altmann, Teherani-Krönner 1995)

1996: What Have Women's Projects Accomplished So Far? (Teherani-Krönner/Altmann 1997)

1998: Women and Sustainable Rural Development (Teherani-Krönner/Altmann/Schultz 1999)

2000: Knowledge, Education and Extension for Women in Rural Areas (Teherani-Krönner, Schmitt, Altmann 2000)

Proceedings of each of these conferences have been published and have helped us to contribute to ongoing debates or to initiate discussion on new topics.

These conferences were organized by the author (Parto Teherani-Krönner), who at that time was a lecturer in women's studies as well as head of the scientific board of the Women in Rural Development Centre at the LGF. Uta Hoffmann-Altmann was the coordinator of the centre at that time. Due to cuts in our faculty's budget, the interdisciplinary centres such as our women's unit were in danger many times, and finally were closed in 2000/2001. Unfortunately, our Centre for Women in Rural Development did not receive the necessary support

from our faculty's colleagues, professors and administration and in the end, Uta Hoffman-Altmann left us in 2001.

"Women's Studies" (my lecturer position) was renamed "Gender Research in Rural Areas" in order to show the gender aspect as well as the rural development orientation. But even without the infrastructure of the centre, I tried to continue our work with the students as well as the organization of our regular international conferences. My attitude was probably close to this statement by Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), which I saw on a poster when the 150th anniversary of her birth was celebrated on 2 July 2007 in the "Deutscher Reichstag" in Berlin.

"Lassen wir uns nicht schrecken durch die Ungunst äußerer Umstände, haben wir für alle Schwierigkeiten nur eine Antwort: Erst recht." (Clara Zetkin)

"Let us not be frightened by the adversity of external circumstances. We have just one answer to all difficulties: 'We'll show you!'" (Clara Zetkin)

In fact, the year 2002 turned out to be an important and fruitful year in proving our willingness and determination in the continuation of women's and gender studies in rural areas. It was also a very successful year as regards fund-raising.

The Volkswagen Foundation supported the summer school of the European Society for Rural Sociology (ESRS) on the topic of "Contemporary Rural Development – the Issues of Nature, Gender and Community" from 22–27 July 2002 at Seddin Lake in Brandenburg, which was organized by Professor Friedhelm Streiffeler, Dr Parto Teherani-Krönner and Dr Karl Bruckmeier. Students, especially from East European countries, took part in this conference, which is a well-established component of the ESRS.

The DAAD funded our other summer school in 2002 on "Debating Gender Differences and Identities in Muslim Countries", which took place from 24 June to 5 July 2002. The school included a workshop on "Peace Culture and Conflict Resolution" and was co-organized with our partner, the Ahfad University in Omdurman/Sudan.

The Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme

The Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme that was established meanwhile gave us some new perspectives on joint activities in research and teaching. In particular, the organization of summer schools each year in Berlin and Omdurman brought a broad range of new inspiring connections and many interesting people together. Moreover, this even had an indirect effect in that it gave us support and showed the necessity of women's and gender studies activities on an international level in our respective faculties and universities. The Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme was run under the heading of "Women in Development" and received support from the DAAD until 2007. In addition, we received special funds from the DAAD's alumni programme for our summer school activities each year. This summer school element of our link will have secure funding until 2008 because of a special three-year programme that we successfully applied for.

The official cooperation programme started in 1998, when we institutionalized our relationship with the Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan by signing the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme. We agreed on the following objectives:

a) To build a cultural bridge between people in Sudan and Germany.
b) To foster understanding between the two cultures and their mutual appreciation as well as raising tolerance in experiencing differences.
c) To further develop institutes of higher education (i.e. of scientific enlightenment of the knowledge system).
d) To support the diffusion of knowledge generated under rather different environmental and socio-economic conditions.
e) To improve university staff development by exposing staff members to foreign teaching and research spheres.
f) To stress the importance of gender relations in development.

The four components of the link programme were:

1. Female Students' Exchange Programme.
2. Integrated Research Projects.

3. Summer Schools.
4. Curriculum Development and Staff and Lecture Exchange.
The components were developed to reach and integrate many actors and to make the achievement of the objectives possible.

Evaluation of the link programme: ten years of experience

The experiences with this agreement and its different components were evaluated at a meeting between members of Ahfad and the HUB in June 2007. I will summarize some aspects and refer to the evaluation report (Badri et al. 2007). Firstly, there is the student exchange programme. In the meanwhile, thirty students – fifteen each from Sudan and Germany – have visited the other country. Most of the students had the opportunity to stay with host families or to otherwise become familiar with the different everyday life in another culture.

During these years, we also carried out some research activities in Sudan as the second component of our link programme. The idea was to conduct joint research, whereby one member of the HUB together with a member from Ahfad University developed the research concept and design and looked for funding to do field research together. Some activities were carried out in this direction but we underestimated the time needed for fund-raising and organizing empirical case studies. Research projects therefore remained in the realm of small investigations or the Ph.D. projects of some candidates. We have not been able to establish the ground for a large research project within this link programme so far. The other weak point is the fact that the research topics and the fields of investigation were located in Sudan only. There was no research topic oriented towards processes in Germany.

The third component was the exchange of visiting lecturers for certain courses or a longer period of time such as a semester. In this way, we had some staff members who visited Sudan and Sudanese colleagues who came to Berlin to discuss the research design and use our libraries or to become acquainted with our Centre for Multimedia.

The emphasis on developing joint curricula that can be used in Berlin as well as in Omdurman is one of our interesting outcomes and can be

seen as a result of our cooperation during the last years. This is becoming more important as it is future-oriented, especially in combination with the e-learning component, which we started during our last summer schools.

The final component, that we – Balghis Badri and Parto Teherani-Krönner – will now elaborate in greater detail, is the summer school concept that has quite a significant gender history at our universities, as mentioned above.

II. Summer Schools: a key to intercultural and scientific exchange (Balghis Badri and Parto Teherani-Krönner)

The idea behind summer schools as a main component of the link programme is that the themes to be selected for them would be the best strategy to apply the whole objectives of mutual cultural understanding and internationalization as well as to engender science in theory and practice.

Some nine years after the start of the link programme, an evaluation meeting was organized in Berlin in June 2007. During these meetings which brought members of the link programme together in Berlin, a set of criteria for evaluating the summer schools was applied. We will refer to some of the following points in order to share the assessment of the summer schools. We – especially Balghis Badri and Parto Teherani-Krönner who were in charge of most of the many summer schools – wrote a joint report on different aspects of the annual gathering. The overall essential was always the aim of engendering scientific knowledge in theory and practice.

We looked at the following evaluation criteria:

1. National and international relevance of the topics.
2. Experiencing diversity, inter- and transdisciplinarity.
3. Knowledge production, information exchange, and publications.
4. Joint curriculum development.
5. Networking for both universities.
6. Improvements in the profile of both universities and their political involvement.

7. Impact of fund-raising for the summer schools, acknowledgement, implementation and continuity.
8. Partnership dimensions within the summer school concept.
9. Staff promotion and capacity building.
10. Final remarks.

Criterion 1: National and international relevance of the topics. Summer schools between 2000 and 2008 within the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme

The relevance of the summer school themes have been an important criterion. The topics were carefully selected to meet the interests and needs of both countries. Moreover, as part of the link programme, we equally suggested ideas, negotiated on them and agreed on them. The criteria for choosing topics are that they should be relevant to the international context, to social development issues, to the women's movement agenda and to the development of staff skills.

Especially in the second round of our link programme, the universities' curriculum development needs, particularly in the South, were put at the centre of our summer school activities. Taking these criteria into account, the themes were chosen and they proved to be relevant.

2000	Women in International Rural Development	Berlin
2001	Gender Research & Analysis	Omdurman
2002	Debating Gender Differences and Identities in Muslim Countries	Berlin
2003	Qualitative Interdisciplinary Research	Omdurman
2004	Engendering Migration in Transnational Spaces	Berlin
2005	Land Tenure and Women's Rights	Omdurman
2006	Gender Research & Networking (GERES-NET)	Berlin
2007	Gender in Organizations	Omdurman
2008	Gender Budgeting	Berlin

Other themes of direct relevance to both the Millennium Development Goals and to international peace and justice have still not been addressed by the eight summer schools. It is beyond the scope of a few summer schools to encompass all that needs to be addressed. However, we consider it crucial to deliberate on them in future gatherings of the special focused link programmes.

The 2000, 2002 and 2004 summer schools discussed topical themes from the international agenda, while the 2001 and 2003 schools met the needs of staff development at Sudanese universities. In the meantime, the advanced research methodology course offered at Ahfad University has been established for doctoral students.

The summer schools of 2005, 2006 and 2007 discussed issues of relevance to the women's movement at the national as well as the international level. Gender in organization and problems women face in institutions are topics of international relevance for women's rights movements worldwide. Engendering land tenure is a crucial issue for all rural areas in the world and a key question in the food security and development debate. In Sudan, questions of land tenure are critical to development and peace, and engendering the debate was newly discussed in that summer school. As indicated above, both summer schools led to the development of readers, course outlines, and modules to be integrated into the curricula of the M.Sc. courses on sustainable rural development and the M.Sc. degrees in Gender and Development. Two of the Ph.D. candidates chose topics of relevance to the discussion that emerged in the summer school. One is currently registered with a topic on the impact of land on development in the Blue Nile State in Sudan with the gender dimension as a focal point. Another picked the issue of women and local organization. Hence, the spillover of the impact of the summer school was reflected in the choice of future research themes.

More is also reflected in the networks that widened to expose Ahfad University to other links that included Arab, British, Asian, African and Latin American countries. Ahfad University's profile was improved through a sustained long-term link of eight years with the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Free University Berlin in Germany. They also improved their international profile and helped to gain the confidence of the Norwegian partners when AUW signed the NUFU link

support with Bergen University for five years, starting in 2007. The link with Bergen University College also started in 2007. The links with Volkswagen Foundation have continued and they have supported two projects, with another in the pipeline which would support doctoral research for one of the AUW staff, who was involved with Bielefeld University.

Criterion 2: Experiencing diversity, inter- and transdisciplinarity

Each of the issues that were chosen for the summer schools created links to different disciplines.

Summer schools led to great cultural exposure and internationalization. Our summer schools were characterized by the diversity of participants from more than fifteen different countries, with the different disciplines and backgrounds of participants including academics, media representatives, politicians, NGO members, and even private consultants. The diversity led to different understanding, perspectives and visions of the issues discussed. The debate on gender and Islam, for instance, showed the many experiences of Muslim women living in Muslim and non-Muslim countries that defy the stereotypical image of a Muslim woman as powerless, conservative and shy.

The exchange of experiences leads to the enlightenment of possible pathways to empowerment at the individual agency level as well as at the level of collectively organized emancipation.

The same cultural exposure and exchange took place at other summer schools, where topical issues where discussed. One was the issue of immigration, where displacement and refugee experiences showed both similarity as well as differences in terms of material gains achieved by those who migrated to western countries. Feelings of a lack of integration and the desire to keep one's original cultural identity were a commonality in issues of immigration and transmigration.

The exposure to diverse experiences in different countries was reflected in all of the summer schools' themes. The marginality of women in all cultures was discussed and a differentiated view was suggested. The issue of cultural identity and discrimination also became evident

as part of controversial debates. One could speak of traces of racism in the respective countries that were reflected in the summer schools. The issues of gender, class and racial cultural identity disparities and conflicts still need to be put on the international agenda. The internationalization process must be achieved through greater and more frequent cultural exposure and dialogue. The summer schools were on the right path in contributing to this.

Criterion 3: Knowledge production, information exchange and publications

In the process of organizing and implementing all these last summer schools, quite a number of papers and new knowledge have been produced. This information has been exchanged and brought into the scientific discourse among the participants of the workshops and summer schools. Not all of this knowledge has been documented in official publications.

Four publications on the summer school themes of 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007 are in progress. Some of the contributions to the 2006 summer school are included in this volume. The second volume will concentrate on the topic of "Gender Research and Networking" and still needs editorial work. We are able to cover the expenses of both volumes by now, because the DAAD has finally accepted to support our publications.

This component, namely publication activities, has been the weakest of the summer schools' outputs/effects. The lack of sufficient funds for editing and publishing was the main factor that led to delay. To overcome this shortcoming, one of the budget components for follow-up and publications should be integrated in the future. It is a pity that some good work on relevant topical issues has not yet seen the light of day. We hope that the publications work for the summer schools mentioned above will be finished in time.

Hence, out of a total of eight summer schools, two publications and three readers will be the output, which is quite substantial. The first summer school was of a course type and the fifth one – about "Gender and Transnational Migration" – was of a dialogue type. Ahfad participants learned about the situation in Germany and visited NGOs involved in

migration matters. That summer school gave the Sudanese participants a different view of migrants' lives in Berlin. It enhanced understanding of how the German government deals with migrants and what policies they apply, and how migrants conceive of their situation and react to these policies.

Criterion 4: Joint curriculum development

The summer schools led to the promotion of the following courses:
- Research Methodology (summer schools 2000, 2003)
- The M.Sc. in Gender and Development at Ahfad University for Women started a serious effort to promote the research methodology course; moreover, another course for Ph.D. students was also developed. The process started during a training course on research methodology; this was then pursued and a reader and training manual were produced. A visiting lecturer from Germany came to Sudan as part of the link support by DAAD and taught the course in 2007.
- Another two courses are in the process of being integrated into the curriculum at Ahfad University, the first of which is called "Engendering of Land Tenure". A reader and course outline have already been developed in follow-up to the summer school of 2005 and staff exchange of 2006.
- The second course focuses on "Gender in Organizations and Networking" as a result of the summer schools of 2006 and 2007. The process of developing curricula to be integrated into the M.Sc. in GAD and the MBA is underway.

On the basis of the last summer schools, which included an introduction to e-learning, the Moodle programme will offer a new platform of cooperation between our two universities. We even look forward to including other universities within Sudan, Germany and other countries into this e-learning process.

The vision of this e-learning component is to open a platform for our students – in Sudan (AUW) and Germany (HUB) – to attend a similar or an identical course. We will provide our students with the opportunity to work together and produce joint papers.

Cooperation with the Centre for Multimedia (CMS) of the HUB has started and proved to be successful in different ways. They joined us during the summer school of 2006 and helped us with the introduction of Moodle at their locations in Adlershof. One of their staff members, who was contracted to install Moodle at Ahfad, participated in the summer school of 2007 in Sudan. Finally, we at the HUB are receiving some extra grants to employ a student to work on the joint curriculum development within the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme.

We were also lucky to gain the support of the Free University Berlin with a colleague who joined us at the summer school 2007, and who is involved with the use and implementation of Moodle and the development of a homepage for the Institute of Women's, Gender and Development Studies at Ahfad.

Criterion 5: Networking for both universities

The summer schools have had quite remarkable effects on our universities and our working units. These events exposed Ahfad University to other German universities and institutes and provided the Sudanese partner with links for future activities. It was during the summer schools of 2002 and 2004 that AUW first had contact with the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies at the HUB and the Volkswagen Foundation, which has since funded another summer school in Sudan. Moreover, AUW met participants from Bremen University, Bonn University and Bielefeld University, thus increasing their links with German academia. As a result, Ahfad University became part of another link programme funded by the Volkswagen Foundation for four years, which started with Bremen University in 2005.

Links with Nigerian universities followed and members of Ahfad University have extended their cooperation activities during the regular meetings at the summer schools. Moreover, Ahfad strengthened its links with previously known universities such as York, Manchester and the University of California, Los Angeles. Networking with Teheran University started but has not materialized in a formal link programme so far.

Networking with other NGOs in Germany and contacts with Sudanese NGOs can be mentioned as one of the interesting side effects of each of our summer schools. We tried to integrate different organizations and social groupings into our programme with respect to the topic of each summer school. In this way, we opened our summer schools to participants from NGOs and went beyond a strictly academic sphere.

For Ahfad University, new connections to German institutions such as the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, as well as contacts with members of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were of significance. Members of Ahfad University participated in a postgraduate seminar at Bielefeld University. Three presentations were given there by staff members of AUW in November 1999 (see Klein-Heßling et al. 2000). Moreover, there were visits to NGOs and negotiations with them for the future. Other projects took place as additional activities to the summer schools in Germany.

At the national level, Ahfad exposed several university staff and NGO members to the international context by giving them the opportunity to visit Germany or to attend training courses given in Sudan by German lecturers. They were enthusiastic about the opportunity to meet and work together and some created independent links.

For the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the many contacts that we created during these summer schools to different NGOs such as Akarsu, Reach Out or the FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin (FCZB) have given us the chance to introduce our work outside the margins of our universities. This in itself can be seen as a successful activity in opening the dialogue of cultures from within universities and can also be regarded as effective public relations for the HUB as well as the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture (LGF).

Criterion 6: Improvements in the profile of both universities and their political involvement

The Ahfad-Humboldt-Link and the summer schools have helped the AUW to gain the confidence of other donors such as the Volkswagen

Foundation, which funded an additional summer school for Ahfad in 2005. It was at the summer school of 2004 on "Engendering Migration in Transnational Spaces" that the cooperation with the ZMO – Centre for Modern Oriental Studies – started.

The summer schools in Berlin gave the Sudanese partners the chance to attend the Heinrich Böll Foundation's activities on Peace in the Middle East. Balghis Badri was selected to be one of the panellists at a discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time (Joschka Fischer) and she participated in a workshop on "The Curse of Resources". AUW staff members also were invited by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take part in a conference on Muslim women leaders held in 2005.

Moreover, the DAAD invited the AUW representatives to attend two other main activities, one in 2002 and another with the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in 2004. At the discussion on "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education", our Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme was selected as one of the best practice examples of successful cooperation by a German university with universities of the South. This programme was organized by the DAAD together with the gtz (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Society for Technical Cooperation) and the HRK (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz/the Conference on Higher Education) in Berlin on 3–4 November 2004. The Humboldt-Ahfad presentation was placed on the DAAD web site and is still available (Teherani-Krönner 2004).

The Ahfad-Humboldt-Link also helped to open new doors to the German institutions in Sudan. Members of the AUW, especially Balghis Badri, are well integrated into the activities of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation; Balghis Badri is a member of their advisory board and was invited to Germany in 2006 as a member of a group selected to learn about the German electoral and political system. This shows the link programme's close relation to political activities for the AUW. On the other hand, this is not the case for the members of the HUB. These members are still working much more closely within the framework of academia and do not get involved so much in political arenas. However, our activities at the HUB have also been recognized by political

parties, and especially by members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who have contacted us on questions concerning the Middle East and the gender debate in this process.

To mention just two examples: At the conference on "The Women's Movement and Civil Society in the Arab World" held in 2003 in Berlin at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Parto Teherani-Krönner was invited to chair the contributions of political representatives including the Princess of Jordan, Basma Bint Talal, the Ambassador of Morocco to the EU and Professors of Sociology from Brussels and Rabat. Parto Teherani-Krönner also chaired the workshop on "Public Sphere/(Geo)Politics" at the conference on "De/Konstruktionen von Okzidentalismus" (De/constructions of Occidentalism) from 21–23 June 2007 at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, organized by the Graduiertenkolleg "Geschlecht als Wissenskategorie"/graduate school on "Gender as a Category of Knowledge". This is an example of how our work at the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture is also connected with other institutions of the HUB. In particular, the ZTG (Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies) has continuously cooperated with our unit of Gender Research in Rural Areas and has given us some help in the organization of the summer schools. They publicized the announcements of our summer schools, published our short summer school reports and participated in most of our workshops. They were especially involved in the 2006 summer school on "Gender Research and Networking" (GERES-NET), presenting their experiences with gender studies and research during the last years as an exemplary case in Germany. The ZTG even provided us with some financial support for that conference.

Criterion 7: Fund-raising, acknowledgment and continuity

Besides the general support that the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme has been given by the DAAD, we were able to obtain some extra funding for the running of some of our summer schools, although it is important to mention that we have managed to organize the summer schools at our respective universities every year, even when we did not receive

extra funding. Especially during these years, the very special engagement of the persons involved made it possible to organize quite remarkable summer schools without a special budget.

Nevertheless, in these last years, we managed to gain a special commitment from the DAAD for three years, which has given us the chance to plan until 2008.

We had the possibility to spend some of the money from our last conference on the editing and the layout of this publication, but the printing was not supported. Fortunately meanwhile all the expenses are covered.

As most of our participants do not use English as their native language, the papers need careful editing and correction by a native speaker of English before they can be published. This has been accepted by the DAAD for the budget for 2006 and we were lucky that the DAAD followed our argumentation that publications have an important part to play in the process of evaluation and capacity building for scientists in all countries. We hope that this crucial point will be included in the next budgets as well.

With the support of the DAAD, we were also able to acquire additional funding and protection from different organizations. The Free University Berlin even helped us in part with a contract for some student help we had in the 2002 summer school, and during the 2006 summer school we received some support from the Schweisfurth Foundation to cover part of the expences for our open space activities.

The last point that has to be mentioned is that funding provides an opportunity to finance the participation of many DAAD alumni in the summer schools. It has many positive aspects – but the whole process of fund-raising and the budgeting and calculation are highly labour-intensive. The bureaucratic process for the final reports within the university and forwarding them to the DAAD is quite a complicated matter and needs special insight. This process requires a lot of time and effort by staff, which is not always available. This has placed quite a high burden on the person who has successfully received the funding but is left alone when it comes to the final reporting and calculation.

Criterion 8: The partnership dimension

The summer school concept was based on the idea of an equal partnership that would lead to a win-win situation. Starting from the choice of themes and the decision to hold the summer school alternately in Omdurman/Sudan and Berlin/Germany, this equal partnership was put into practice. The organizational work of publicizing the summer schools, the selection of participants, key presentations of papers etc. was undertaken jointly. We both benefited from each other, although the hosting university was more involved with the logistics and preparation work beforehand. The experience was fruitful and this part of the link programme deserves to be replicated. The personal commitment of the partners was vital in making each summer school a success story in terms of the programme, the level of participants, their interdisciplinarity and diverse affiliations as well as academic standards. Moreover, most papers presented were of a high academic standard and the exchange of knowledge and experience was achieved to a large extent, even if not all the papers fulfilled the standard of official publications in reference journals. However, the main focus of our summer school programme was oriented towards the exchange of knowledge and the development of skills. It is this equal partnership in organizing that has led to our great achievements.

The partnership was not between the North and the South only, but within institutions in the South. This provided a new chance to cooperate and communicate with members from the scientific communities and NGOs from countries of the South.

From the Sudanese side, other partner institutions such as the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the ded, the German Embassy, Khartoum University, Umma political party, the Gender Centre, the Sudanese Women's Union, Babakir Badri Scientific Association, Care International and Oxfam Britain are among those who participated effectively in many of the summer schools. Ahfad University arranged to meet these participants in their respective organizations to discuss further cooperation.

The partners identified the following topics as relevant for future summer schools:

- Conflict Resolution
- Identity
- Achievement of the Millennium Goals
- Displacement
- Migration and Re-Migration
- Engendering Good Governance
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Religion and Development
- Food, Food Habits and Meal Security

It was decided that the link should be opened up to other faculties in order to involve "hard topics" such as economics, and that more people who are not within the gender discourse should be invited.

Criterion 9: Staff development and capacity building

For Ahfad University, staff skills were enhanced by involvement in organizing international events such as the summer school, which included visa applications, arranging accommodation, planning and running summer school events, looking after foreign participants, and announcing and reporting the event. Staff were able to gain invaluable work experience. Those who organized the summer schools were able to apply their experience in other areas and became Ahfad University resource persons for organizing other international events.

Those who were participants at the summer schools learnt from each other and new knowledge was created. Moreover, contacts established at the events led to other links between Ahfad University staff and other Sudanese universities – a total of seven universities, fifteen national NGOs and three international NGOs were among the summer schools participants who received training or delivered papers and hence, staff skills were improved.

Teaching German students in the summer school of the year 2000 was a new experience. When it was replicated in Sudan, it developed staff skills, especially in the methodologies of teaching.

For the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, especially the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture, the summer schools were occasions of

scientific exchange with national and international colleagues. They strengthened our abilities in the organization of conferences and gave a number of staff a chance to gain experience and practical knowledge.[2] This includes the preparation work as well as the logistics. It was a challenging training programme for many students, most of whom worked on a voluntary basis.

We were successful in gaining recognition of our summer schools from other universities, research institutions, NGOs, journalists and politicians. We did not achieve our aim of convincing other colleagues from our own faculty to become more active in the question of gender issues and in collaboration within the Link Programme.

10: Final Remarks

The summer school component as part of the link programme has been a success story for our universities. We both profited in different ways and it helped us to strengthen our international profile, which brought us greater acceptance within our universities, within the scientific community as well as further afield in our respective countries and abroad. The summer schools helped us to learn about each other's culture and way of scientific argumentation and also improved our understanding of each other. They have paved a new way for us to establish our curricula and to step into a new era of e-learning. We are looking forward to developing and using joint curricula at our universities. Furthermore, summer schools could be a starting point for new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary courses.

Last but not least, the success in receiving funds for this summer school cooperation has improved our reputation within the scientific community, as fund-raising has become a highly prioritized aspect of research and teaching at German universities in recent years. But there are two sides to this coin and both have to be taken into account.

2 Our colleague who assisted at the 2002 summer school is now professionally engaged in conference organization.

One last point about our participants and the alumni and alumnae whom the DAAD wants to address with these summer schools should also be mentioned. Alumni are those who have studied in Germany or undertaken professional visits to German institutions. Particularly in our field of gender research and teaching, the topics that we choose and the concepts are very much oriented towards current debates and forward-looking ideas to improve gender relations on both the national and international level. We do want to address women – with the cooperation of Ahfad University – but the alumnae orientation creates some difficulties.

Thus, the idea of inviting alumni to these summer schools is somehow contradictory to the idea of gender mainstreaming and integrating women into scientific discourses because there are not so many women from the countries of the South who had the chance to study abroad in Germany in the past. As a result, the alumni programme might create a trap of gender discrimination that is not intended. But if only this type of participant is supposed to be invited, the percentage of female participants will be a minimum. We have tried to combine the alumni with others who have had some contact with Germany before. But our recommendation will be that this criterion of the DAAD needs to be re-evaluated from a gender perspective.

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Abbreviations

AUW	Ahfad University for Women, Omdurman/Sudan
CMS	Computer und Medienservice der HUB
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
ded	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (German Development Service)
ESRS	European Society for Rural Sociology
FCZB	FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin
GAD	Gender and Development
gtz	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Society for Technical Cooperation)
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (The Conference on Higher Education)
HUB	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
LGF	Landwirtschaftliche-Gärtnerische Fakultät (Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture)
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUFU	Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education
WISOLA	Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften des Landbaus (Institute for Economic and Social Sciences in Agriculture)
ZMO	Zentrum Moderner Orient (Centre for Modern Oriental Studies)
ZTG	Zentrum für Transdisziplinäre Geschlechterforschung (Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies)

Gudrun Lachenmann

Gender Studies and Translocal and Comparative Research: Methodological Challenges

Abstract

Gender constitutes the basis of both extensive local-translocal exchange and networking in a global civil society and gender movements, representing, advocating and creatively launching concepts and ideas that are broadly discussed and interculturally negotiated. This paper asks whether this is indeed a success story.

The idea of engendering all fields of disciplines and methodology is forwarded in order to provide new perspectives on many fields, e.g. in the sociology of social change as well as localization and globalization. This means challenging theory and methodology, looking at agency, gender relations, construction of gender, gender order, gendered structuring of institutions and fields of action/sectors, constitution of social spaces, difference and diversity. The same applies to policy making.

Elements in this debate include the increasing necessity of and interest in strengthening qualitative methodology according to dense and complex designs, and empirically grounding certain theoretical fields such as the sociology of Islam, gender, and social movements with increasingly generalizing debates following what could be called a methodology of transcultural 'comparative global' social research or 'global ethnography'.

This paper refers to a research project "Negotiating development: translocal gendered spaces in Muslim societies", financed by the Volkswagen Foundation, directed by the author and Dr. Petra Dannecker, with case studies in Senegal, Sudan and Malaysia. We analyse the constitution of social spaces, flows and landscapes in a translocal way, their structuring through gender, looking at othering and fundamentalisms as globalizing forces negotiated locally at different interfaces, as well as in the development field.

We found much diversity by conducting contrasting case studies in societies with completely different constellations regarding the relevance of Islam, its importance for state and society, the type of development and socio-economic issues, and international and societal conflicts. The othering processes are not uniform; we have found references to different (forms of) Islam(s); to different (forms of) feminism(s) regarding regional and political diversity; as well as to different modernities as regards, for example, public space, secularism, and economic institutions.

Gender studies, transdisciplinarity and engendering research fields

From the perspective of sociology of knowledge, gender is one of the few fields that constitutes epistemic communities in a transdisciplinary way, thus establishing (women's and) gender studies in academia, research and consultancy, as well as transcending academia as a field of activism and policy approach. In this capacity, gender constitutes the basis of extensive local-translocal exchange and networking through representing, advocating and creatively launching concepts and ideas that are broadly discussed and interculturally negotiated. Can this exchange, networking of gender movements, and constituting of global civil society be regarded as a success story of the globalization of knowledge? Perhaps critical reflection on experiences formed in these different fields is necessary. We should look at gender as a theory and theoretical outlook as well as at methodology in academia, including teaching and special curricula in gender studies. We also need to look at mainstreaming in policy and global governance, starting from a 'Women in Development' approach and including the monitoring of results of world conferences and global governance.

My thesis is that specialization has indeed taken place in all these fields. However, has this institutionalization and mainstreaming not led to indifference, with its innovative and transformative approach being taken for granted? Has mainstreaming not led to bureaucratization, and gender studies to marginalization in the respective fields or disciplines? This must necessarily be the case when a new approach is being generalized and becomes everyday practice. Where should our

reflections go? In academic research the focus should be on engendering instead of mainstreaming, avoiding being marginalized and taken for granted, with mainstreaming taking place more than ever without having to integrate new theoretical, methodological and political challenges. I would like to forward the idea of engendering all fields of disciplines and methodology. By engendering, we believe that gender offers a new perspective on many fields, for example in the sociology of social change, while new fields would include localization and globalization. In our research project on "Negotiating development: translocal gendered spaces in Muslim societies"[1] we claim to make a contribution to globalization theories by looking at the gendered structure of agency and gendered social spaces.

It is certain that, contrary to expectations, gender approaches still do not belong to the common canon of research to be necessarily included when, for instance, research grants are awarded. If gender is introduced, it is often as an afterthought, as the gendered nature of the structuring of society and processes is not theoretically accepted. Policymakers and activists (in predominantly Islamic societies) seem to fear that doing gender will be labelled as feminism, which is often perceived as coming from the West. On the other hand, in present global discourses on new cultural and religious movements and fundamentalism, women are often instrumentalized in their portrayal as victims, which is used to show the fundamentalist character of certain regimes (and to legitimize interventions).

Doing gender means challenging theory and methodology, looking at agency, gender relations, the construction of gender, gender order in society, the gendered structuring of institutions and fields of action

1 See Nageeb et al. 2005a. Dr Petra Dannecker and I are responsible for this project which was financed by the Volkswagen Foundation. We conducted empirical research, with our main researcher Dr Salma Nageeb spending six months in Sudan; for Dr Nadine Sieveking – a social anthropologist from Berlin – and Anna Spiegel – a sociologist from Bielefeld – it turned out to be very fruitful to split up their six months' field research in Senegal and Malaysia, so that we were able to hold quite continuous discussions in Bielefeld and to participate in project meetings and work. Also, field work in Malaysia for a diploma thesis on Islamization processes and gender by Zeycan Yesilkaya provided additional insights.

and sectors. Engendering is a methodological approach which looks at transformation from within, whereas mainstreaming is bureaucratically introduced from above, not taking into account diversity and differences. In all fields, I believe that we need to apply our gender professionalism in order to challenge disciplines, policy sectors and approaches. This does not mean that we should completely leave behind our 'gendered spaces' of women's and feminist studies where theoretical and policy advances have been made, and mainstream in a bureaucratic way (hardly allowing for differences nor understanding diversity) but that we should seriously engender disciplines, policy fields and curricula. The field has professionalized but at the same time compartmentalized in a way that it does not automatically reflect on interfaces within disciplines and policies.

It is important to follow new theoretical developments, and at the same time to bring in the results of feminist theory and methodology (sometimes re-invented), and to try to engender and link them to our own theoretical and methodological achievements. The time has now come where many achievements should be generalized: there is much to offer. It is important that gender studies creates its own theoretical agency but avoids being marginalized. In terms of transdisciplinarity, our challenge is to ask in which discipline we feel at home regarding our theoretical and methodological approach (especially in the field of postgraduate studies and research). Gender is a must, but how can we guarantee the full integration and follow-up (with a chance of engendering) within mainstream theory as well as policy development? Interlinking of academia, activism and policy is an important gender acquisition, but how do we bring these achievements to other fields of civil society, global social movements and arenas? Translocal approaches and networking are very important, but they do not necessarily allow feedback or input into "hardcore" debates about topics such as social justice, global governance, and good governance.

Gender can be considered to be at the vanguard of globalization and localization, as it is the first field to actually develop global forms of translocal interaction through networking and exchange. Thereby transnational social spaces were created, in which concepts are negotiated and knowledge is constantly exchanged, leading to strategic policy con-

sequences. To a large extent, these processes have been pushed forward by the UN Conferences on Women and especially the NGO forums of the international women's movement/s. This space brings together activists, researchers and policymakers who combine these three elements in their own trajectories. This process has subsequently led to differentiation, not without certain confrontations, while building on understandings of diversity and at the same time on global solidarity.

Translocal and comparative research on "negotiating development in translocal gendered spaces in Muslim societies"

The premise of our above-mentioned research project was to take development as one form of knowledge production. We argued that globalization is constituted through new forms of social organization and epistemic communities, with one being female global networks and the development world as a global knowledge framework, which brings in women and development as relevant global actors and agency. Given the current interest in globalization and gender research on processes of intercultural dissociation and identity-shaping, we hoped to strengthen the aspect of the Islamic frame of reference since our research took place in countries whose population is mainly Muslim. In taking up this framework, we explicitly wanted to go against crude ideas on the "clash of civilizations" and culturalist analyses and thereby to make new, less essentialist and non-confrontational contributions to the public and scientific debate. The justification for doing this was to provide a theoretical and methodological framework for comparisons in a non-dualistic way. Thereby, we did not place Islam and the West in opposing camps but were instead able to show how othering processes and fundamentalism act as globalizing forces. At the same time, we wanted to contribute to furthering globalization theory by looking at how spaces, knowledge, structuring via agency and networking between women in the development field are creating flows and landscapes in a translocal way (see e.g. Appadurai 1996). Our approach to the debate was that we did not want to merely 'add on' the 'women's question or issue' as an afterthought, but rather to methodologically

develop the concept of engendering fields of disciplines and development as well as theories of globalization and localization. We referred not only to the agency of women (as against their being discriminated or vulnerable objects) but also linked it to the sociological concept of the structuring of society. In doing so, the economy, for example, was revealed as a "gendered structure" (see Cagatay et al. 1995). Female negotiation of development concepts, meanings and policies, as well as the constitution of translocal and transnational social spaces were very pertinent elements of our methodology. This is an interactive and interpretative approach, based on the social construction of reality (Berger, Luckmann 1966) including that of gender. By this dynamic, relational and transformative approach we were able to overcome static concepts of women's or gender roles, by looking at gender relations at all levels of society, including gender arrangements and constructs in institutions and gender order in society. All of them were analysed by taking into account the underlying power relations.

At the same time we wanted to overcome the old North-South divide regarding the production of knowledge by showing that flows and spaces are horizontal and follow very complex relations, including networking, transnational migration, and even development work, which can no longer be categorized as a North–South transfer (although the hegemonic structure of global aid architecture and governance cannot be ignored). In our research project, we referred to countries where we assume Islam is indeed relevant to society in everyday life and to women as actors, and possibly in negotiating development – in the broadest sense – between government and societal actors (including Islamic authorities). So we looked at Islam or Islams not as our subject, but only in so far as it was relevant (in the constructivist sense) as a frame of reference to action and meaning. At the same time, we referred to analyses of Islamization processes, as well as concepts of modernities and reform of the Islamic public sphere (e.g. Salvatore 2001). And we take into account the often neglected empirical phenomenon that women's international movements, institutions (such as World Conferences, NGO forums, etc.) and networking are not only very important in explicitly Islamic environments and groups, but also in coming together with specific non-religious women's groups at the global level.

This approach would allow us to integrate relevant global concepts and look at processes of how they are made sense of locally and how they subsequently move back to the global sphere.

Diversity and global solidarity

Our qualitative comparative approach enabled us to show that Islam is never "the" determining or constant factor in explaining differences. What we were able to show instead was an immense diversity within and among the countries at all levels – as against the dualistic clash between East and West – which is sometimes confrontational in the different "encounters". This diversity is not only predetermined because of the highly contrasting case studies we conducted with countries and societies which are completely different as regards the relevance of Islam, its importance for state and society, the type of development and socio-economic issues, and international and societal conflicts. The theoretical sampling of these countries turned out to be complemented by the results which came out when grounding theory on empirical findings. In Senegal (Sieveking 2007), a secular state where Islam is hardly relevant at all for development efforts, Islam is, however, omnipresent in a localized Brotherhood structure, and in some newly emerging Islamizing forces which are starting to compete with state legitimacy on a national level (as can be seen with regard to Family Code debates). In our empirical results, Senegal stands so to speak for the local working of development, women's networking, and linking development to women's rights in a very basic way – even in some discourses such as those against equality (in the sense of wanting to uphold men's family obligations).

Our methodology enabled us to uncover different (forms of) Islam(s) and claims of everyday Islam rather than evidence of global homogenization and fundamentalism(s). The same applies to different (types of) feminism(s) as regards regional and political diversity.

In the case of Sudan (Nageeb 2006, 2007) Islam is the permanent force against which to negotiate room for manoeuvre and define the meaning of global as against popular Islam. At the same time, development issues

resulting from poverty are omnipresent in all women's groups. Their social spaces seem to have grown enormously in the context of the present-day conflict and peace debates being supported by the international and donor community and constitute a very interesting arena of societal transformation. However, certain relevant issues discussed, such as sexualized violence or illegitimate children (an issue raised in Malaysia but still taboo in Sudan) are completely different in the three countries. In our comparative methodological design, Sudan demonstrated the interface of the strengthening of the state and civil society and the restructuring of the public sphere.

The case of Malaysia (Spiegel 2005), on the other hand, has shown that the force of women's and feminist organizations and networks is really struggling in the complex national context based on political ethnicity and national Islam. Their power of negotiation and conquered space seems not to refer to the development model per se – there are astonishingly conventional welfare or service-oriented women's organizations following the typical developmentalist constructs of vulnerable women. Conventional left-wing 'progressive' organizations seem to have very little power to improve the working and rights situations of mainly ethnic minority labourers (for example, plantation workers). On the other hand, there are very important feminist organizations and networks (such as Sisters in Islam, Othman 1998, 2005) which have entered into an internal Islamic debate on situational interpretations of Islam related to women's rights and who seriously challenge hegemonic religious authorities and the state as well as Islamic practices. At the same time, they seem to gain their main legitimacy from their important transnational presence and reputation in networking. Here, of course, feminist Islamic exchange is one important field, but participation in regional and global debate about globally defined rights (see CEDAW), from which they draw their power for national activism, is at least equally important. Here it is astonishing how little, if at all, Islam plays a role in everyday debates.

The othering processes are not uniform, and sometimes are not present. In Malaysia, for instance, women's groups would claim not to be anti-Western but – as in global feminist discourse – anti-neoliberalism and critical of the impact of globalization. We have seen that some

activists and feminist scholars have started to describe themselves as "Islamic feminists" (see Othman 1998, 2005; Mir-Hosseini 1996) which would imply an internal debate within global female networking, possibly but not necessarily excluding non-Muslims. On the other hand, the concept of "African feminists" is quite present, and here othering is more cultural than religious and refers more to gender concepts with regard to development, while it is often still linked to the colonial past and being defined from the outside. However, here too some women activists and scholars claim (e.g. Fatima Adamu, University of Sokoto, Nigeria, during a workshop in Bielefeld; see contribution to the present volume) to have reached the very important stage of being able to discuss Muslim interpretations with (male) Islamic authorities. However, the label of 'feminist' seems to be more contested there.

Although there is consensus on the diversity of feminism in the global arena, this might indeed cause certain new boundaries to be drawn and othering processes and exclusions to be produced. On the other hand, the Malaysian women's movement claims that there is global solidarity of women and sisterhood. In Senegal, the process of othering works through the different cultural constructions of gender and conceptions of equality, without taking global feminist discourses on difference into account. This debate takes place between feeling labelled by the term "Muslim women" and claiming universal negotiation on the one hand, and working for the consideration of specific, nationally relevant contexts of culture and tradition on the other.

Knowledge production in gendered social spaces, networking and the public sphere

We should discuss the constitution of public spheres where universal concepts are negotiated, and ask whether reflexivity (in the sense of post-colonial/subaltern studies and orientalism) is present. This should be linked to definitions of 'modernity' or 'modernities', including post-modernity and challenging concepts of (mono-linear) progress. In Malaysia, the importance of the women's movement in entering and restructuring the public sphere is shown in the quite remarkable "shadow

report" elaborated for the Beijing Plus 10 process. On the other hand, in Senegal the official National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity (SNEEG) adopted in 2005 is, in my view, not very comprehensive and lacks societal agency and a vision of any gender movement, although it is supported and was even contributed to by a large women's organization. In Sudan, it might be said that women's groups have for quite some time, and in a less conspicuous way than human rights activists, been upholding a public discourse by occupying spaces concerning women's issues, poverty, and currently peace and democracy.

Methodologically, the authority of knowledge and its different representatives or carriers are very important aspects. We have seen that in Malaysia this authority has been practically exclusively captured, at least in certain fields (family, social affairs), by organizations like Sisters in Islam (Othman 1998) who have acquired legitimacy by discussing within an Islamic scholarly framework. In Sudan, women are regarded as being well-educated and their Islamic knowledge is highly valued; Nageeb (2005a) has shown how the mosque has been appropriated by them as a female space. However, in many countries it has become evident that legitimization of female interpretations of society very often has to refer to male authorities who, however, seem to be invoked quite strategically.

In Senegal, sympathetic male speakers of Islamic authority are also brought into the discussion. This means that there is, if any, only a very small female epistemic religious community entering the general debate and public sphere. In global Islamization debates, there are of course female Islamic scholars who take part in the transnational public sphere of UN conferences and women's forums, for example. However, they are often based in universities in non-Muslim countries.

Our theoretical and methodological interest concerns the dimensions of networking and of structuring of the public sphere. In order to empirically ground these concepts by putting them into practice regarding the exchange of knowledge and developing new forms of research cooperation, we have already been using workshops as a means of carrying out interactive knowledge production. How can we be sure to take diversity and the location of knowledge into account and at the same time learn from other contexts (including curricula) and develop generalized knowledge?

Does networking in fact take place to the extent that we may say that this is where glocalization occurs? Do female spaces really intersect with a societal public sphere, or do we need to further qualify this concept for Muslim societies in the sense of a gendered structure? Does the state discourse still dominate, or would the female social spaces and the interfaces they institutionalize in fact be relevant for constituting civil society, such as in Malaysia and Sudan? Are these spaces as marginalized and reduced to female vulnerability and rights discourse, restricted to gender specific difference or women in development discourses, as seems to be the case in Senegal? In other words, does no engendering of development take place? The theoretical and political importance of networking and constituting and restructuring the public sphere seems to be evident. We believe that in both a methodological as well as an empirical sense, our approach to looking at interfaces between different female social spaces and transcending national boundaries, while also looking for diversity and battles within national and transnational spheres, has proven to be very fruitful. We would like to debate these interfaces of female spaces and public spheres in order to reach conclusions concerning national societies and processes and the institutionalization of globalization. The concept of social space is clearly linked to agency, to the production of gender specific and culturally defined meanings, and to the social construction of reality and the lifeworld (see Spiegel 2005). In this way, we want to contribute to globalization theory and engendering development.

Comparative methodology

When combining comparative methodology with research on translocal networking and social spaces, our conceptual approaches focus on the relations between localities built up through discourses, cultural practices, flows, knowledge systems and so on. Thereby we hope to be able to contribute to grounded theory building with our research results (in the sense of Strauss: Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1998). Our comparative approach, according to our project application, "aims at … comparing different Muslim societies, forms of networking, public

spaces and discourses involved in constructing them. It also embraces the study of the forms of interaction between Islamism and women's groups in different contexts." It is therefore "significant for locating debates on development and civil rights, which are global and international, in local contexts" (Nageeb 2005a). We do not compare Islam with the West but instead deal with the different types of Islam which are shaping social spaces. Looking at diversity, difference and typologies across countries, we take account of the situatedness of phenomena. The historical development of the respective countries is also taken into account through the contextualization methodology used in the study. In doing so, it is important to look specifically at female activities and the gendered structure of development processes. On the other hand, we are confident that it is possible to arrive at more general outcomes beyond merely comparing the three cases. Our research process is thus accompanied by the question of how we can contribute in a productive way to theory building and at the same time to an understanding of our specific cases by using comparative research.

Not only in development policy, but also in a new standardized discipline called international comparative research, large data sets are handled in order to look at poverty, marriage patterns, household incomes, election behaviour, etc., and to apply hypothesis-verifying procedures. However, we do not wish to standardize the comparisons and thereby completely lose sight of the respective cultural milieus. Nevertheless, in grounded theory, we also talk of hypothesis generation within the framework of (repetitive) interpretation of empirical data. Then it is a matter of saturation. The extreme case study, that is, advancing the study in the search for special cases, is of course also a comparative concept. The theoretical outcome of grounded theory will enter into consecutive comparisons. This could then be called transcultural research. Within this framework, our approach consists of looking at different dimensions relevant to our subject of engendering development and how they are situated within an Islamic cultural orientation. Thus, the comparative perspective we follow does not aim at developing fixed categories or indicators for comparing the various cases under examination. Rather it is based on 'comparing by contextualizing' and explaining the ways in which the issues under examination,

be it the creation of spaces, or the negotiation of development concepts, are embedded in specific local and translocal contexts.

Thereby, it is certainly useful to work out typologies which might – at least to some extent – be the same for all of our three case study countries (with potential generalization). We decided to look at different concepts of gender and social equality, types of gender constructs with regard to occupying public spaces and carrying out economic activities, concepts of poverty and wealth and societal obligations, types of NGOs and their closeness to the state, and types of intensity of inward or outward looking social legitimacy of gender policies. We also found female forms of representing Islam, including local or popular ones, and of discourses regarding gender and development, as well as a common intensity and type of transnational networking. Apart from looking at the 'landscape' of female spaces and organizations, it was very useful to look systematically at discourses and to compare and contextualize them.

Brainstorming on possible differences and similarities was an important methodological feature when discussing the empirical data collected and it constantly became more analytical concerning different issues. For example, the gender discourse in Malaysia is influenced by the high industrial participation of women, in Senegal by poverty and in Sudan, especially recently, by conflict and peace constituencies. Depoliticization is taking place in Malaysian society as a result of successful economic development; in Senegal, it can be observed in the women's movement but not in the agricultural labourers' movement; while in Sudan, depoliticization is evident in the capturing of the women's question by the Islamic state. Local moral discourse on gender and religion in Malaysia shows clearly that instrumentalization of the image of the 'good Muslim woman' is taking place; in Senegal, a conventional Women in Development approach is dominant and feminism is regarded as Western or non-African and as non-religious; in Sudan, a process of complete othering is taking place, although more and more local NGOs, which cooperate with external donors, are being set up.

Development discourses are lacking in Malaysia as they have been taken over by the state and discourses on violence and human rights therefore are led by women's organizations which network outside the

country; in Senegal, livelihoods are of general importance but Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper processes are reinforcing the vulnerability discourse; in Sudan, income-generating activities and conflict transformation are the predominant discourse topics. Ethnic differences and religion play an important economic, national and social role in Malaysia; in Senegal, they are of minor relevance, although certain forms of Islam are clearly linked to ethnic differences; in Sudan, ethnic and identity discourses are highly political and conflictive as the current political situation shows. In all three countries, foreign NGOs are cooperating with civil society movements but face very different conditions – cooperation in Malaysia is hardly possible; in Senegal, co-optation by the state has taken place; and in Sudan, the social space constituted through this cooperation is the most relevant one for restructuring the public sphere. To a certain extent, foreign donors, including NGOs, avoid cooperation with the state and prefer to cooperate with civil society in all three countries. However, approaches to international cooperation such as good governance or peacebuilding and constitution writing are hardly gendered.

Empirically grounding globalization – doing "global ethnography"[2]

An important aspect that changed the research landscape of adhering strictly to one country or society, community or ethnic group, is certainly the fact that more and more concepts are being developed which are of intercultural and especially translocal, transnational and also transcultural relevance in social science. This is probably an empirical feature of globalization, which has already proven to be very useful in organizing empirical research around networking, discourses on development concepts in the different communities, etc. It became clear that we cannot separate an interactive and translocal approach from a comparative one, studying dimensions, processes, relations, flows and so on. Making comparisons

2 A term used by Michael Burawoy et al. (2000). Inda and Rosaldo (eds. 2002) use the term "anthropology of globalization"; Long (2000, pp.184 ff.) talks about "exploring local/global transformations".

and conducting analyses of interfaces thus implies the construction of meaning from situatedness and contextualization.

Therefore, it seems very useful to make comparisons on a middle level, using middle range theories and trying to explain the differences through contextualization, thus our methodology is interactive and transculturally diversity-oriented. The conventional comparative approach has become outdated because of the real processes of interaction and deterritorialization taking place. Theoretical sampling (following assumptions and ideas discovered during fieldwork, and which are reflected and systematized in a meaningful design) within the countries and throughout our three countries follows ideas of similarity or of difference. If we take grounded theory seriously, we can take up the outcome from empirical research and extend it to other contexts – not a comparison in the classical sense. Grounded theory generates theses which can be fed into further research.

Recently, new methodological approaches have emerged, which strengthen these methodological challenges. The legitimacy of researchers who come from other countries, cooperation with local researchers, as well as the special situation of being a 'stranger', and the question of who speaks for whom, has mainly been reflected upon in gender research. This has brought about important re-orientations in, inter alia, the questions of subjectivity and generation of text, pointing at the power structures, the interaction of researcher and the researched, and issues of activism and advocacy (see e.g. Golde 1986; Whitehead et al. 1986; Mbilinyi 1992; Bell et al. 1993; Wolf 1996). In development research, approaches such as Participatory (Rural) Appraisal (Whyte 1991) and others go against standardization and context-free methods and move into new directions, but these need further methodological reflection.

There will certainly always have to be a combination of methods and a thoroughly elaborated, complex design which often evolves during the research process. It might be captured by linking a "multi-level approach" (see Lang 2005) to an interface approach (Long 1992). We need to explicitly formulate dimensions of contextualization which are directly relevant to the researched problem, thereby constituting an instrument of validation – and not, as is often done – just one of background information.

Complex or dense methods of empirical research (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Bernard 2000) are being used for structuring analysis of data. Design and theoretical sampling, always implying comparison, have been thoroughly developed for each country and mutually discussed. Methods which have been employed quite successfully were, among others, contrasting case studies, typologies (even transcultural ones), interfaces between different actors and knowledge systems, trajectories of activists in networking, event analysis, especially of workshops (who organizes, invites, participates, excludes; major topics, discussions, conflicts, consequences), organizational analysis (leaders, discourses, networking and so on).

Marcus (1998: 79, 80, 85 f.) who introduced the very pertinent and often quoted concept of "multisited ethnography" claims that "comparison reenters the very act of ethnographic specification by a research design of juxtapositions in which the global is collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations rather than something monolithic or external to them".

Another challenging approach called "Global Ethnography. Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World" has been elaborated by a group of sociologists in Berkeley, California, directed by Burawoy (et al. 2000). Their explicit aim is to link critical ideas of globalization theories and political economy with what they call "ethnography unbound", and thereby to link everyday life to transnational flows of population, discourse, commodities and power" (Burawoy et al. 2000, pp. X, IX).

We try to operationalize our research questions by using an interface approach bringing in power structures and adding complex methods that crosscut communities, places, levels, time, space and social worlds. For example, the method of reconstructing trajectories applies to, over and beyond biographical research, persons whose personal history and career in different knowledge spaces, institutions and organizations we track, based on the narrative approach. Hence we use an approach of agency, knowledge, authority, and meaning as a complement here.

Following qualitative sociology and social anthropology (Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung; Flick et al. 2004; see Lachenmann 1997), we are further developing what can be called complex methods and a

research design subject to permanent reworking. When preparing field research and fields of research, their structure and assumptions have to be discussed, including the relevance of the subject within globalization processes and theories. The position in the field needs to be thoroughly reflected as regards the validity of data and ethics. According to grounded theory, ideas about the field and new questions are permanently developed in so-called memos and, in a circular research process, lead to key concepts which structure the whole field. Data are assembled in protocols of interviews, conversations, group discussions, ex post protocols, field notes, transcripts, protocols of observation and case descriptions. Instruments for permanent reflection are memos, text analysis, participatory reconstructions of models, ranking, mapping, as well as analysis of secondary material.

A complex design is thus developed by theoretical sampling, graphical presentation, looking at different (multi-) levels, (multi-) sites, (extended, crucial, contrasting) case studies, units and instruments. We are following the persons, interactions, goods and so on; triangulation takes place through the differentiation of perspectives and methods. The relational approach brings together comparison, interactions, connections, relations, mapping, schemes, biographies, trajectories, event analysis and discourse analysis. Interfaces and encounters at them are conceived of as taking place in different encounters, social domains and arenas (Long 2000: 191 ff.).

The analysis of data, according to grounded theory, implies coding, forming categories, (key) indicators, doing multiphase analysis and formulating (working) hypotheses. Interpretation, analysis and validation occur through the actors' perspective, comprising logics of action, strategies and room for manoeuvre. Modes of transformation and of production of knowledge are elaborated through the reconstruction of cases, structures of relevance, structuring of fields of agency and dense description. Conceptualizations are based on emic, theoretical debates and discourse analysis. Typologies are drawn up; processes and structuration dynamics are elaborated. Validation takes place by looking at multiple meanings, perspectives, horizons and possible interpretations.

Within the framework of our project, local workshops based on work-in-progress have been held in Senegal, Malaysia and Sudan, and served

for joint reflection and discussion with partners and organizations. Initial findings and interpretations were discussed with researchers and female activists who had also been interviewed. This challenge of cross-cultural discussion as a principle of sharing academic knowledge and of disseminating empirical results has been very encouraging and we are very grateful for the overwhelming "scientific hospitality" in the sense of openness to debate (and of course for the support we received in all respects). For the main workshop, many of our resource persons came to Bielefeld in order to discuss the outcome of our research with us and a larger community of researchers (Nageeb et al. 2005b). Our work would not have been possible without our own networking and the fundamental support within the gender and research community in our countries of research.

Conclusion

We believe that our methodological approach has proven to be very fruitful. There are indeed female social spaces where we can study very diverse negotiations among women, as well as carry out research at local and intermediary levels regarding gender constructs and relations, and regarding interfaces with the state and translocal and transnational networking. It is true, however, that as far as links are produced within national public debates, the former 'Women in Development' and women's status approach do prevail rather than societal concepts of gender and gender order.

Moreover, the result of our studies seems rather ambivalent. The gender networks and public debates do indeed seem to be very diverse and relevant for constructing the global arena. On the other hand, we might question how far the link to the national civil society and global public sphere does in fact take place as regards relevant issues of hegemonic concern, or whether it is only a field tolerated and used for propaganda purposes by global governance regimes.

It becomes clear that we should take up the methodological and political challenges by establishing further networks and thus create translocal gendered spaces for knowledge production, teaching and research.

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FQS	Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung (Forum: Qualitative Social Research)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNEEG	Stratégie Nationale pour l'Equité et l'Egalité de Genre (National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality)

Tanja Paulitz

Technologies of Networking

The gender-technology relation and the power dimension

Abstract

The paper presents results of a larger-scale empirical study on the construction of political and academic women's networks in the context of the development of "virtual" cooperative working spaces. It is structured as follows: Firstly, the common image of women's networking is illustrated in order to present the questions which gender research on that issue has to address and to highlight the main lines of the theoretical approach. Secondly, the case of the "Virtual International Women's University (Vifu)"[1] is taken as an empirical example of how feminist best-practice strategies for establishing a virtual network can look. Some practices of improving access and women's empowerment on the web are presented here. In the conclusion, central aspects are discussed to enhance the discussion on network-specific contours of power dimensions.

Focusing on the Vifu case, the paper shows that political empowerment approaches in Computer Science are always enforced to manage an ambivalent situation. Thus, it illustrates that challenging the "digital divide" in relation to gender is a balancing act, because it entails addressing gender issues in the course of a concrete technology design project without essentializing the practised design procedures as being "female" ways of design. At the same time, this type of project also inevitably acts in the framework of the current reformulations of the subject, which aim at the idea of an active, self-responsible and flexible subject. Referring to the notion of power in the later works of Michel

1 The Vifu took place as part of the "International Women's University" in 2000 during the EXPO 2000, mainly in Hannover/Germany. For more information, see section 2 of this paper.

Foucault, the development of network technologies can be analysed as a vital part of the formation of new technologies of the self.

Introduction

Technology design and broader societal processes are in a mutually constitutive relationship. This is the core assumption of recent approaches which theorize technology from the perspective of social sciences (see MacKenzie, Wajcman 1999). As feminist technology studies put it, gender is a relevant category in this relationship; gender and technology are co-constructed (see Wajcman 1991). Accordingly, the paper addresses technology design and gender in the field of new virtual networking platforms, namely along two questions: 1. How could this technology be designed more inclusively in order to detect and reduce gendered forms of the digital divide? 2. How are these types of design at the same time part of new regulations of power which call for further discussion?

The design of network technologies in particular takes place in the context of immense societal changes which are themselves again and again characterized by the metaphor of the net. Networking as a new social and strategic practice has undergone a boom in different spheres of professional work, in politics as well as in the context of social movements and solidarity groups. There have been observable changes in the way of governing people in various areas of society, which are deeply infected by current neoliberal politics that reframe the logic of power relations. Today, networks are an ambiguous image, one which is used to characterize broad grass-roots movements at the bottom, as well as alliances and concentrations of power at the top.

In social science, prominent texts on current trends use the term networking to describe the logic of contemporary societal transformations (see Castells 1996; Messner 1995). Virtual networking in particular – with the help of ICT (information and communication technology) – represents a central crystallization point of this transformation. However, apparently the image of the "network" remains ambivalent. On the one hand, it stands for deep and powerful transformations through worldwide networks of knowledge and financial flows, which

go along with the increase in global injustice. On the other hand, it is used as a sign of new chances for democratization and a reduction of power relations. The background to these hopes is the vision of decentralized and borderless access to information, mainly through the internet. Accordingly, in terms of power, the logic of the formation of networks implies shared knowledge about how to build social relations, which complicates clear distinctions between the strategies of the haves and the have-nots. From a social science perspective, the whole sphere of the so-called 'informal' social life and informal useful contacts has to be considered unstable and highly context-dependent. Technology is one of the central arenas where this knowledge about networks, that is, about social relationships and their functionality, is negotiated and is in a very material sense 'in the making'. The design of networks for women with the help of information technology and with the goal of reducing the existing limitations of the "digital divide" acts exactly in the midst of these new constellations of power and resistance.

On the basis of an empirical study on the design of network technology for virtual teams (Paulitz 2005), this paper asks how feminist forms of networking with the help of ICTs are challenging this current texture of trends and societal conditions. The case study to exemplify the main lines of argument focuses on the "Virtual International Women's University (Vifu)". In running a highly participatory process of software design, the Vifu generated a significant bundle of practices that could be taken as an example for 'best practice' from which other projects could learn. Thus, the Vifu shows some opportunities for the active participation of future users in a design process. At the same time, the Vifu case indicates that these formations of the user imply a certain understanding of subjectivity. This conception of the networking actor requires central forms of self-government that are to some extent congruent with current reformulations of the active, self-responsible, flexible subject of the new neoliberal politics. The overlapping of the forms of governing people and forms of counterculture as indicated in the case study calls for further analysis and further discussion from both a theoretical and a practical perspective.

Accordingly, the paper is structured as follows:

1. The common image of women's networking is illustrated in order

to present the questions which gender research on that issue has to address and to highlight the main lines of the theoretical approach.
2. The Vifu case is taken as an example of how feminist strategies of establishing a virtual network can look. Some practices of improving access and women's empowerment on the web are presented here.
3. In the conclusion, some aspects for enhancing the discussion on network-specific contours of power dimensions are explored.

Gender and Networking

"We're not gossiping – we're networking." – the slogan and the picture can be seen on t-shirts, cups and stickers available in different internet shops. The slogan plays with a stereotype in an ironic way. It suggests the reinterpretation of an activity (gossiping), which is typically regarded as female. This reinterpretation aims at a new understanding of the underlying activity as an intelligent form of interaction and of cultivating useful social connections. According to the reinterpretation offered by the slogan, the stereotype of female gossiping covers something now considered modern that is in fact very old and has always been part of the traditional sphere of women. In short: Networking almost appears as a typical but covert female strategy.

In fact, informal or "weak ties" (Granovetter 1973) have already been the subject of social scientific research for a long time. The main strands focus on the investigation of elite networks, so-called "old boys' networks" or "insider deals" on the one hand, as well as on informal structures in traditional communities studied by social anthropology on the other (see Leinhardt 1977; Mitchell 1969; Schenk 1983; Wolfe 1978). Gender issues in social network research have been addressed by Verena Mayr-Kleffel (1991) among others. In recent years, there has been a real hype of the network metaphor, with social network research and technological innovations like the internet being seen in connection to one another and highly discussed (see Paulitz, Weber 1999; Bühl 1997; Wellman et al. 1996; Turkle 1995). On the level of everyday life, networking as a social practice and technological developments are currently converging.

Gender studies scholars have also analysed these ongoing processes of social and technical transformation, levelling out their risks and opportunities for women (see Schelhowe 1997; Paulitz 1997; Schachtner, Winker 2005). In this field of discussion, we can also find positions that link the opportunities of network technologies to the idea of specific female capabilities. In this respect, the book "Zeros and Ones" (1997) by Sadie Plant has become very popular. She is of the opinion that the recent development of ICTs can be interpreted as compatible with a female technological tradition and that the metaphor of the net also offers a way of describing network technology in particular as a women's strategy. Her version of "cyberfeminist" intervention in the field of new technologies aims at new inscriptions of female images in the technological field and at new forms of entering this field. With reference to Judy Wajcman (2004) I argue against such tendencies in "cyber-feminism" which try to essentialize and restabilize traditional stereotypes of women in the course of the celebration of new technologies. Accordingly, in my research I suggest not asking about "female" ways of designing or using technology and I do not relate to the net as a "female" technology. My approach is linked to theoretical works in gender studies that grasp gender as a socially constructed category and ask about strategies for political change in gender relations and technology.

Parallel to "cyberfeminist" approaches that are predominantly connected to the thrill of new technically-driven opportunities, we can observe a shift in the forms of women's politics: from strategies based on more formal instruments that support women's careers and power to more informal subversive strategies (see Holland-Cunz 1996; Wobbe 2003; Hark 2005). The above-mentioned "old boys' networks" are analyzed as a hidden power tool that works more or less on the "backstage". Mentoring and networking programmes for women are initiated as a response to the insight that women have a lack with respect to this power tool (see Löther 2003). But at the same time, we can also see that there is a trend to support networking as a part of official top-down (gender) politics. For example, in science politics an increasing amount of funding depends on the establishment of networks and inter-organizational cooperation. This means that potentially conflicting tendencies of top-down and bottom-up networking coexist parallel to each other.

Accordingly, the set of tools for analysing the power dimension in these new phenomena needs to be extended in order to describe these ambiguous tendencies we may find in the establishment of women's networking and their technologies. The term "technologies of the self" refers to the context of power relations according to the later works of Michel Foucault (1988) and could be used to describe relevant aspects that go along with the establishment of a network and with the construction of the related understandings of subjectivity as part of a network.

In the following section, a concrete practice of virtual network design as a strategy to support international academic and political women's networks is presented. Based on an empirical field study of the developmental process, central aspects of the design practices are described with a view to enhancing the discussion on gender research and networking on power-sensitive ways of designing technology for women's empowerment.

Strategies for virtual empowerment – The Virtual International Women's University (Vifu) as an example of best practice?

In 2000, approximately 900 women from over 100 countries came to Germany to research, study and discuss issues that were located in six interdisciplinary project areas at the International Women's University (Ifu)[2]. My example here is the project Virtual International Women's University (Vifu). The Vifu project supported the participants before, during, and after the three-month presence phase of the courses in Germany with internet access and ICT training. It also created a virtual space for worldwide networking for women scientists and activists.

In the course of the design process of the Vifu, I conducted a social scientific empirical investigation of the manner of designing a networking

2 Since my empirical study focused on the design process (the data collection ended in 2000), further details on the processes virtual community building by the participants in the years after 2000 can not be given on the basis of this material. For more information on Ifu see: Kahlert 2000; Metz-Göckel 2002; Neusel, Poppenhusen 2002. On the goals and results of the Vifu see: Kreutzner, Schelhowe 2003; Zorn 2005.

platform for the Ifu participants. I carried out qualitative, semi-structured interviews with designers of the Vifu and analysed the underlying images and the preferred practices of the design process they favoured.

The following short overview of the designed services gives an idea about the concrete technological options the Vifu established:

- The Vifu designers created a web server for the presentation of and information about the Ifu organization.
- They also offered webspace for a personal homepage for the participants, as well as link directories and opportunities for the presentations of research projects.
- They installed a discussion forum and mailing lists hosted on the server.
- An expert database was built up to provide information about the participants' affiliation, working areas, etc.
- The designers provided an e-mail service.
- They also provided a local search engine to optimize search opportunities for research conducted in the context of the Ifu.
- Finally, they installed a virtual and interactive photo gallery to make the event visible on the web, to help people to share their photos with others, and to comment interactively on these pictures and to serve as a reminder of the Ifu events.

Taking the Vifu as an example for best practice here, some central outcomes will be described now. They show aspects of the design process which have the potential to improve women's empowerment in the areas of network technology design and of virtual networking activities on an international level.

Troubled user images

As the empirical findings show very clearly, differences among women were a central point in the designers' images of the users. Initially, the uncertainty about who the users would be and what their requirements in relation to the technology would be caused serious difficulties for the design of the services on the platform. Since technology design usually needs to be modelled on a typical user and his/her needs, the fact that the Vifu was not able to establish a certain user model must be

considered a core problem for their initial decisions for fundamental design questions. At the same time, awareness of this difficulty can be interpreted as a political decision and a feminist sensitivity for existing differences among women that must not be homogenized or ignored in order to make technology inclusive and empowering. Thus, in the course of the Vifu the reflection on this uncertainty and the expected diversity of the users was taken not only as a dilemma regarding the course of action, but also as a critical position in discussions about women's politics, which was integrated into the design perspective. The developers were committed to keeping their own ideas about the users more or less open. The aim was to support the women, and to assist the participants in getting involved and making themselves visible. This way, they intended to encourage the self-articulation of the users in the design process instead of having fixed ideas about users' requirements.

Dealing with heterogeneity: strategic options in the design process
Consequently, the Vifu assumed a widespread diversity of modes of usage of ICT. They conceptualized difference as a spectrum of gradual distinctions in the field of ICT-related competencies and worked out a series of strategic options for the design of internet services. I would like to outline some striking points:

– The deployment of participatory concepts: software development is understood as an intertwining process of design and usage.
– Experimental openness to the process and a preference for low-tech solutions: This also includes considering the users' needs as growing and their media competencies as changing.
– The acceptance of diverse forms of access to the technology: The Vifu conceptualized a spectrum of means of using the server. Users themselves are addressed to decide the extent of their involvement with the server's options. Heterogeneity was taken into account in the conception of services and the way that their usage was intended.
– The gradual enhancement of the platform based on well-known technologies and upgraded to more advanced services: Concerning the selection of applications on the server, the Vifu favoured e-mail as a

basic service which most of the participants already know and have. The Vifu built other services on this basis step by step.

In later project stages, the idea of the heterogeneity of the participants turned into something close to a pre-condition and basis for new forms of networking. The designers expressed their insight that virtual networks actually call for heterogeneity (see Paulitz 2003). They are convinced that only a pool of diverse participants is able to form a vital, widespread and useful network. In this reinterpretation of heterogeneity, differences were thus conceptualized as different contributions to and resources of a common virtual space. This diversity of contributions appears as a production of "surplus value".

Diversity in the conception of the designed services

How did this understanding of heterogeneity shape the design of the services on the virtual cooperation platform? As the field study shows, the design of virtual networking supported by the Vifu server is characterized by two central conceptualizations of the structure of social relationships and of the subject of a network, that is,

a) the idea of a network of networks: Instead of supporting one unique group of participants, the designers intended to create technology that would allow a variety of social associations and a diversity of parallel associations that are specialized and that differ in their work and goals. Consequently, alliances are also supposed to become open to change in that current needs-bound and context-bound interrelations are privileged. The multiplication of the social belongings of participants and of cooperative relationships appeared to be an adequate strategy.
b) the multi-dimensionality of the actors: The multiplication of alliances has consequences for the conceptualization of the actor. The designers' (social) construction of the subject of a network tends to be complex and multidimensional. To put it more concretely: An Ifu participant's involvement in a particular Vifu forum is assumed to be partial. Actually, the designers have the idea that each single participant is herself situated heterogeneously, that is, she is part of and/or active in several social contexts. They talk about their users as being "linked", as belonging to multiple organizations and having multiple

interests, which they share with different groups of people. This way, 'hyperlinks' as an internet technology for relating information turn into a symbol for social ties. At the same time, hyperlinks are also a concrete mode of connection on the platform. They are set to produce visible and "clickable" options for social interactions, for example, in a directory or also in a database, on a personal homepage, and so on. As a result, the 'linked' subjectivity of the users in virtual networks is constituted on the Vifu server as a complex bundle in a network of relationships, as a point of intersection of several, flexible alliances.

Reflection on the borders of virtuality

The Vifu was structured in three project phases. Firstly, communication among the participants was organized only via ICTs. During this phase, the Vifu mainly used very simple electronic communication media to get in touch with their future users and to support the participants' virtual get-together: An open online discussion forum allowed them to share information, to ask questions and to give each other an idea about their research projects and professional backgrounds. This paved the way for the preparation of the second phase. In this phase, all the women came to stay in Germany for three months to attend the Ifu courses. At this stage, the Vifu supported a mixed concept that was based on a combination of virtual interactions on the server and non-virtual meetings on the campus. This mixture of virtual and non-virtual interactions between the participants was also expected to intensify the social ties using face-to-face meetings and accordingly also to support more long-term electronic networking. In other words, face-to-face interactions were understood as an anchor to strengthen the informal ties among the Ifu participants and to ground further virtual interaction.

Especially in the third project phase following the courses, communication and cooperation between the participants took place mainly through different media and very much through the Vifu's own internet platform. Therefore, the designers tried to enhance reflection on the borders of virtuality among the participants. Since not every woman always has access to electronic media, since conditions and costs of access to technology are very diverse worldwide, they argue for the

need that every user has to have these potential limitations in mind. Thus, the concept of virtual networking was extended in some cases to a mixed combination of the electronic and traditional media used for communication. In order to stay in touch women linked communication via telephone and 'snail mail' with electronic communication. The participants looked after these links, e.g. by reporting on phone calls among each others on mailing lists and vice versa. Thus, the participants themselves actively built bridges between different media to overcome the existing boundaries.

Establishing a peer support network
While offering technicological support during the presence phase of the Ifu on the campus, the Vifu tried to decentralize this support and to embed it into the participants' growing network activities. While offering support and training during the presence phase in the course of the project, the Vifu tended to understand this support more and more as a continuous process of decentralized, mutual support among the networking actors; a process that, in principle, never ends and which is independent from the limitations of face-to-face meetings. They called this the move to a networking form of training ICTs, in which the participants themselves educate one another continuously and according to the particular requirements of their cooperation practices. Vifu portrays the guiding principle of multipliers in a feminist perspective. These multipliers of technological knowledge are seen, among other things, as "model citizens" in the new electronic spheres who are working in different places all over the world, sharing their knowledge and training new multipliers.

Co-producers create a continuous networking process
The Vifu team offered more or less open services for diverse manners of usage, for diverse users, etc. The users themselves were expected to become active both in establishing issue-related or content-related links and in producing a social event. They were supposed to create a virtual community. The reinterpretation of heterogeneity as described above implies a kind of 'productive turn' from a limitation to a resource. As a result, it effectively transformed the context-specific precondition of

the design task into a formative objective for the shaping of the Vifu server. Additionally, it has an effect on the conceptualization of the user. This needs to be explained in greater detail: The designers repeatedly report on their attempts to encourage their users' active participation. They articulate the necessity that the so-called "user" has to actually create the network and in this way turn into a co-producer of the network. In the view of the Vifu designers, the production of a network only takes place when, for example, the participants verbally express themselves, when they actively relate to one another, when they link their information and so on. These practices that the "co-producers" are expected to perform are the indispensable preconditions of the production of the virtual community. In cases where no participants perform social networking activities like these, the platform will remain empty, "dead" or even inexistent: The virtual net will not work. Moreover, the designers stated that networking emerges as a continuous iterative process. The result of such perpetual production is the network itself, which is understood as being procedural. Consequently, the analysis points to the fact that the co-producers' practices become a vital part of the technology. The network technology works by the concrete cooperation of its participants depending on their interests, goals, agreements and performances. To the extent that the participants understand themselves as part of a network, the network exists, that is, networking is dependent on the participants' self-construction as a multidimensional subjectivity which is heterogeneously situated and self-responsibly acts for one's own embeddedness in a complex bundle of links. As long as the co-producers care for their network and continuously work on it, the cooperation platform is regarded as a "running system". In other words, the social and technicological processes converge to a hybrid technology to make things work.

Conclusion: Power dimensions of networking

The design strategies of the Vifu case largely go beyond pure software development. Because of this, they are a good example for best practice since the design process was based on an enormous endeavour to

develop suitable technologies for a diverse globally distributed group of women, researchers and activists. In fact, the Vifu network grew according to the participants' joint efforts to make the platform a place for a lively social event. Explicitly and courageously, the Vifu worked against the existing power relations that exclude women from technology or that make them invisible on the Internet. They sought to identify strategies that aim to counteract the effects of the so-called digital divide and reject simple, less complex images of users. The example also shows to what extent the design process of a networking platform depends on the activities of the network participants. The project's logic of technology design featured no fixed algorithms for running exchange processes in a network. On the contrary, in their conceptualization the network occurs not as technology-driven but as driven by the social concerns of the participants and their agreements on how to share information and resources. In short: Networking without active participants who enter into a common socio-technological design process with their agenda to cooperate is doomed to fail. Conversely, networking mobilizes the power that arises from the activated subjects' realization of their own social 'weak ties'. To conclude, network technologies with the help of ICTs can strengthen bottom-up power and the Vifu shows central dimensions of best practice to improve women's virtual empowerment.

Putting the case study in the context of broader social transformations, as described in the introductory remarks, the outcome of the empirical material also calls for further questions. To what extent are the subjects of the required continuous networking practices still unrestricted, self-determined subjects? To what extent are they at the same time functioning elements of a new social technology of establishing useful social ties? That is, what is the reach of a power analysis that thinks in terms of suppression and resistance in relation to these findings about activated networking subjectivities running their own socio-technicological event on a virtual platform? Does the networking technology give 'power to the people' without exception or does it also include new power regulations we need to question?

Such questioning would suggest taking a closer look at how the conceptualization of the networking subject calls for the necessity to broaden the power analysis. It gives reasons to further integrate the dimension of

productive power. What new requirements for an actively socializing subjectivity emerge? Where do self-determined ways of networking converge more and more with economic needs (such as that of funding, etc.)? Where are networking participants more or less constituted by a new government of the self that normalizes cooperation? As already mentioned in the introductory remark, I refer here to the power analysis of Michel Foucault and coin the term "technologies of the social self" to address this complex of problems and questions: Where do those forms of government of the social self converge with the actor's genuinely own interests? As we learned from the Vifu case, does the design of network technologies allow a new specific instability and dependency on co-producers? Do "users" have the power to ignore networking opportunities and not to create a community? In fact, the resulting crucial point for the design of network technologies is firstly the question whether the participants are actually powerful co-producers as they have been to a large degree in the case of Vifu, and secondly whether user models form a new norm of how to understand oneself as a socially interactive being. Or is the user model constructed as a contingent, questionable and changeable concept? In this last aspect, the case of the Vifu is ambiguous because although it certainly intended to avoid a single stable, normative and homogenized user model (and a homogenized usage of the platform), it also featured and normalized the usefulness of plurality, a concept which is very close to today's prevailing concepts of the economy of self-management in the field of work and occupation. Encouraging and activating their users and taking differences as "resources" (there is an economization of social relationships in this perspective), the Vifu promotes aspects of the construction of the self, which are no longer only genuinely characteristic for the constitution of the subject of grass-root movements, but also correspond largely to the new logic of current transformations in economic policies. Apparently, today's political empowerment approaches in ICTs are increasingly forced to manage a difficult balancing act: On the one hand, their design of technicological services intends to support empowerment in the field of technology. On the other, it could support formations of the flexible, self-active and self-responsible subject too, which also functions perfectly in the neoliberal politics of a network society.

Reflection on this power dimension seems to be necessary to gain a broader understanding of these social practices and their formation in the course of technology design and use. As a result, the design strategies of the Vifu can be understood as an intermediate state in the ongoing challenging experiment of electronic networking. It should be taken as a starting point for further design projects and for reflection on the power effects that go along with it.

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Abbreviations

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
Ifu	International Women's University (Internationale Frauenuniversität)
Vifu	Virtual International Women's University (Virtuelle Internationale Frauenuniversität)

II. Gender Studies in Different Countries: Lessons to be Learned

Balghis Badri

Gender Mainstreaming in Sudanese Universities

Abstract

This paper is based on research conducted by the author in 2004 in five universities in Khartoum state in Sudan. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted with vice chancellors/presidents, deputies, deans and directors of institutes in these universities. Other statistics were collected from the universities' records and files and from secondary sources, mainly the Ministry of Higher Education's Statistical Yearbooks. Data revealed that a gender gap in favour of males is prevalent among staff while the opposite is the case at the level of student enrolment. There is a lack of overall gender-specific or gender-sensitive policies, which could help to empower women to hold leadership positions in universities. Curricula, publications and research on gender issues have not been mainstreamed or made specific, except in two universities. Outreach activities and students' organizations are gender-insensitive in most of the universities. The universities' context reflects the overall context of government policies. More advocacy activities are needed to change both policy and practice.

Introduction

The current century has not only inherited the problems of poverty, illiteracy, the spread of HIV/AIDS and great polarization between the rich and poor, but has also witnessed a new threat of terrorism and polarization between Islamic fundamentalist and secular liberal discourse. How far universities can address all these problems is an issue for scientific research. Higher education in Sudan is confronted with several problems: the proportion of those enrolled in comparison to the total population in the 17 – 25 year-old age group; the ratio of those who passed their Sudan Certificate to those who found a university place; the quality and financing of education; the relevance of education to labour market needs and the employment of graduates.

Postgraduate studies are also faced with the demands of quality and relevance of knowledge to the labour market, and the generation of empirical information and knowledge through scientific research. Therefore, universities face serious challenges in the crucial roles they play in the new millennium of being think tanks, setting procedures for assessing the labour market, producing community-oriented leaders for social change and acting as media for community development and internationalization. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide answers to all of these questions. However, the data generated by this research reflects the extent of the challenges faced by higher education in Sudan with particular reference to one focal issue of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that is, gender mainstreaming in universities.

This current study on gender mainstreaming in universities could be considered as part of an investigation into the specific role of the universities in achieving the third MDG, which is concerned with attaining gender equality and closing the gender gap. Furthermore, integrating gender issues into university policies, curricula, research, outreach and continued education programmes is conceived of as leading to reaching the overall goals of achieving the global values of justice and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

This research is divided into four main sections, starting with an executive summary of the main research findings and recommendations. This is followed by section two, which orients the reader in the evolution of higher education in Sudan and in the general characteristics of the evolution of women's enrolment in Sudanese universities. Section three discusses the main research findings on gender mainstreaming in the five universities. Finally, section four presents the conclusion and recommendations.

Section I: Executive Summary

This is a research study undertaken in five Sudanese universities in 2004 with the aim of identifying the dimension of gender mainstreaming (GM) in universities. The criteria developed to define GM are as follows:

Gender issues specified in university missions or policies; the gender gap in decision-making positions; staff recruitment and student intake; curricula; integrating gender issues; research and publishing on gender issues; outreach activities including or focusing on gender issues; student organization membership; and honorary degrees awarded to distinguished Sudanese figures by gender. Moreover, measures directed to protect women in universities against violence and/or sexual harassment are also included. In reference to the above criteria, a checklist was developed and the questions were articulated.

This section presents a summary of the main findings of the research in five Sudanese universities: the University of Khartoum (UOK), Ahfad University for Women (AUW), Juba University, Al Zaim Al Azhari University and the Technical Science University College.

Universities' mission and policies

The universities' missions and policies showed that none of these universities has a stated policy regarding gender mainstreaming and closing the gender gap where it exists. Neither do they have women-specific policies to help female staff and students to further their careers and their graduate studies respectively. Moreover, there are no protection policies against violence and/or sexual harassment.

Decision-making positions

All the vice chancellors, chancellors and presidents of Sudanese universities, including the five researched are male. AUW is the exception among Sudanese universities, with two women as vice presidents.

The low representation of females in senior university administration, in decision-making bodies, important committees, as editors of journals and those who received honorary degrees, reveals a consistent subordinate positioning of women.

These phenomena need to be addressed through special affirmative measures. It is necessary to focus on the issues to be addressed and analysed in order to identify the reasons for such a persistent trend in all universities and to determine both the policy and action to be undertaken.

Staff profiles

Most of the staff with doctoral degrees are men who hold senior academic positions such as associate professors and professors, where the gender gap is larger. This gap is also reflected in academic administrative positions such as deans, directors of institutes, deputies to vice chancellors, vice chancellors and presidents.

Female staff numbers are high at the bottom of the ladder (as teaching assistants and lecturers) while the number is lower but increasing at the level of assistant professors. The category of assistant professor is only open to those who hold a Ph.D.

Further study is required to analyse the reasons why at a university such as Khartoum University, almost 50 % of the staff at M.Sc. level (lecturers) are women while there is only an insignificant number of female professors. This raises questions of whether women are not offered opportunities to prepare their Ph.D.s, or whether there are other socio-cultural factors, biases or psychological elements of upbringing and creating motivation and role models for female career promotion. More research is needed as to the factors that lead to this phenomenon.

It is crucial to note that most universities – with the exception of the oldest one, Khartoum University – suffer from having underqualified staff in most specializations at the senior levels of associate and professorial posts. This lack of well-qualified staff who teach at universities with an M.Sc. or diploma indicates a serious problem of educational quality and raises concern about the role of universities in research and in postgraduate studies. These issues need to be addressed. The secondary data also showed that these phenomena are recurrent in most universities, particularly the new ones.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students

Data on the intake of students revealed that there is an increase in the number of female students in all faculties with a concentration on biological and applied sciences.

Data on postgraduate students give a different picture of the gender gap in favour of male students. This is found in all universities and in most faculties, particularly as we climb up the ladder of academic degrees (those registered for doctoral degrees).

The gender gap favouring men is also found in distant and continued education. The implication of this information indicates two important findings, namely that men aspire to and engage in postgraduate studies more than women, hence they will compete more in the labour market and in academic posts in the future. In addition, men enter the labour force earlier as they combine work and education through continued and distant education. However, more research is needed to validate these implications.

Curricula

Gender and women's studies as special courses are only found in two universities (AUW and Al Zaim Al Azhari University).

However, in Khartoum and Juba Universities, some staff recognize the importance of integrating gender issues into some courses and they have carried this out in the curricula of social sciences, community development, agriculture and nursing. However, this occurred through staff initiatives and not as a new curriculum passed by the University Senate.

This deficiency has a negative impact on instilling gender equality values among students and hampers the promotion of gender experts, interest in or knowledge of research on gender issues.

Research and publications

It is striking to find that there are no special funds reserved for research in any Sudanese university. Research is basically of a commissioned nature or used to acquire a degree.

The policy is based on individual initiatives to obtain funding as well as to find publication opportunities and there is no framework or guidelines to direct research at universities, neither on research themes nor on its impact or dissemination. This impacts on the few research outputs in general and on gender and women's studies in particular.

Outreach activities

These include university programmes directed at the community in the form of short training courses, non-diploma courses, media, theatre, seminars, conferences, public lectures, production of information and educational materials, and awareness raising activities.

As most universities do not include gender or women's studies as part of their curricula and research, this led to persistently ignoring gender issues in both extra curricula activities and other outreach programmes. With the exception of AUW, gender issues were not part of the universities' outreach activities. However, Khartoum University has a few seminars on women and gender (see the contribution of Osman Ali in this volume).

Prizes and honorary degrees

AUW and Khartoum University are the only universities that awarded honorary Ph.D. and Master's degrees to women.

In other Sudanese universities, the trend is that only men are offered honorary degrees. Also, there are no prizes allocated for research on gender or women's studies at either undergraduate or postgraduate level in Sudanese universities with the exception of AUW.

Student organizations

It is clear that the leadership in students associations is predominantly male. However, membership as a whole is very weak, which raises the question of the disinterest of students in organizing themselves, in contributing to the development of their skills in extra curricula activities, in leadership and organizational skills and in links with civil society. The political context may have constrained them. The predominant types of associations are based on tribal or regional affiliation or on religion. Further research for the reasons for and implications of this is needed.

Analysis and conclusion

The gender gap in staff as well as the deficiency in mainstreaming gender into curricula and research are caused by a lack of an overall state policy or statement on gender equality.

The lack of enough gender experts in the universities, as well as the lack of direction or policies from the Ministry of Higher Education on gender mainstreaming have a negative impact on closing the gender gap in employment and on the development of gender-sensitive curricula, research publications and outreach activities that are geared to making gender issues focal.

Moreover, the civil organizations at national or local levels are highly disconnected from universities and hence the former have no influence on universities to guide them in developing their outreach programmes. Moreover, they cannot be a force in influencing university staff recruitment policies in order to close the gender gap.

Another factor for this disparity could be economical: most universities' budgets are shrinking and therefore they do not have the necessary capacities to direct resources to outreach programmes, or to research and staff promotion, especially of those with M.Sc. degrees, where the majority of female staff are found.

There are other inhibiting sociocultural factors that need to be researched in order to develop the policies and action required to address this issue. One of these is a patriarchal mindset. Another is the fact that female students or young female staff are not socialized to be ambitious and to go beyond attaining an undergraduate university degree.

Recommendations

The gender gap in academic staff, administrative and decision-making positions in academia is an issue that needs to be addressed. Using the findings of this study could be a good advocacy tool to bring the issue to the focus of policy interventions. Hence, the following are recommended:

The gender mainstreaming phenomenon requires a holistic approach to development in general and addressing women's empowerment in particular. From the point of view of this study, closing this gender gap has to be approached from different integrated perspectives.

Policy frameworks and priorities should be established at government and university levels to identify the reasons for this persistent gender gap and formulate a plan of affirmative action explicitly showing how to implement these policies/actions, to monitor their impact and assess their implementation.

Gender budgeting is needed in order to allocate fifty percent of the training and development budget for faculty members to female staff and thus bridge this huge gap in academic titles.

Closing the gender gap cannot be achieved unless the Ministry of Higher Education undertakes affirmative action policies for leadership designation through a quota system using democratic election, taking

into account the academic competency of female staff to ensure their representation in leadership positions. Moreover, appropriate interventions are needed to overcome cultural bias against female enrolment in some specializations (mining, petroleum and survey engineering).

Mobilization of resources by the government and individual universities is needed in order to implement capacity-building programmes to achieve women's empowerment, which can contribute to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in universities.

The few women in decision-making positions need to participate collectively to influence university and national policies towards more gender-sensitive and gender mainstreaming policies in universities and at the national level in general.

Affirmative government policies and political commitment are required to empower women and support programmes for women's empowerment in the area of higher education.

Section II: Evolution of Higher Education and Female Students' Enrolment in Higher Education Institutions in Sudan

The evolution of higher education in Sudan

The establishment of higher education dates back to 1924 when the Kitchener Medical School was established, followed by the College of Law in 1926 and the Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences in 1938. These were followed by the Schools of Sciences and Engineering in 1939 and the Faculty of Arts in 1940. The British then decided to amalgamate all these colleges in what was known as Khartoum University College. There is a different view that regards the creation of higher education as having commenced in 1902 with the establishment of the Gordon Memorial College, although at that time it was equivalent to a secondary level of education. With independence in 1956, the College was renamed the University of Khartoum (Khartoum University Prospectus 2004). In the same year, the Egyptians established the Cairo University – Khartoum Branch. Other higher institutes were also set up, namely the Polytechnic Institute, the Shambat Agricultural Institute and the Nursing College.

Expansion continued in the 1960s with the opening of the Teacher Training College and the Islamic University and the founding of the first non-state university, Ahfad University College for Women, in 1966, followed by the establishment of the Music and Drama Institute, and the Athletic Institute in 1969. Progress continued throughout the 1970s with the foundation for the first time of universities outside the capital Khartoum when the Gezira and Juba Universities were opened in 1974 and 1977 respectively. In addition, ten years later, the Teaching Training College became the Faculty of Education at Khartoum University.

In 1975, a policy to guide higher education in Sudan was set up, as well as an executive body and policy committee. In 1986, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) was established to develop and implement policies for the promotion of higher education and research. Moreover, the second non-state university college, Alahliya, was opened in the same year.

In 1995, the MHESR declared a revolutionary higher education policy that led to a boom in the numbers of universities and colleges in both the state and the non-state sector. The total number reached 26 public and 24 private higher education institutions that award BA and BSc degrees in different disciplines. The total number of universities outside the capital reached 19 with an almost equal distribution throughout all states, whereby most of the 26 states have one public university, unlike Khartoum State, which has six universities. Moreover, only ten universities offered postgraduate studies by 2000, of which four are outside Khartoum. It was also found that there are private universities and colleges in only a few states, that is, a total of six in five states of Sudan, with the other 19 found in Khartoum State.

However, most students are concentrated in government universities, of which five exist in Khartoum State and most state universities, have an average of six colleges. In private universities, only 11 of the 24 have five and more colleges and most students are concentrated in six of them, with a total population of about 5000 students each.

Despite the increase in the number of tertiary institutions, it is worth stating at the outset that Sudan has a major human resources development problem at its tertiary level of education as well as at the overall

level of education (literacy is 44.1 %, basic education enrolment is 59.4 %, secondary education is 22.1 % and tertiary education is 1.7 %). The gender disparity issue is part of a greater problem of low investment in all levels of education for both genders (Human Development Report 2002).

The evolution of female students' enrolment in higher education

Girls' primary education started in 1907 through a pioneering Sudanese initiative only five years after the second boys' school had been established by the British colonial administration. However, the progress of girls' primary, intermediate and secondary education lagged behind as the British were not interested in girls' education; their policy was to educate the few Sudanese men needed for the limited workforce. Hence, the first girls enrolled in Khartoum University College (currently the University of Khartoum) in 1945, followed by another two in 1946 and six female students in 1949, two of whom joined the School of Medicine. All these women had studied in British-administered secondary schools. The British opened the first state secondary school for girls in 1951, which gradually led to an increase in the number of girls' enrolment in the university. However, girls' enrolment accounted for only 3 % until 1958 and increased to 7 % by 1960 and again to 11 % by the mid-1960s as a consequence of the creation of more secondary girls' schools. (Al Agba 2004). Young women were then able to enter the University of Khartoum, Cairo University – Khartoum Branch, and higher education institutes. The opening of Ahfad Secondary Girls' School in 1955 and the opening of Ahfad University College in 1966 exclusively for girls raised the number of girls in higher education institutes. The increased number of secondary schools, the belief in the value of females' higher education, the employment of graduates, and the decent conduct of female university students have all contributed to making families encourage their daughters to compete for entrance to higher education. Female students became more motivated and excelled academically, which has led them to outnumber boys in recent years in most Sudanese universities (Table 1). In less than half a century, the great increase and achievement of girls' tertiary education rose from 3 % in 1957 to 52 % in 2001 (Al Agba 2004).

Table 1: Total number of students enrolled in higher education institutes in Sudan

Academic Year	No. of Females	No. of Males	Total	Percentage of Girls' Enrolment
1990-1991	4081	7300	11381	36
1991-1992	8255	12452	20707	40
1992-1993	10682	14336	25018	43
1993-1994	10742	14793	25535	42
1994-1995	15107	16541	31648	48
1995-1996	13736	15925	29661	46
1996-1997	16564	18891	35454	47
1997-1998	17659	19211	36870	48

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Annual Report 2000

The evolution of female staff intake in higher education institutes

Despite the bright picture of the increase in female students' enrolment, the recruitment of female staff did not follow the same pattern. However, that does not mean that great progress has not been achieved. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Higher Education, the proportion of female staff has only reached 22 %, whereby the majority (17 %) are staff in state universities, while only 5 % are found in private universities. Ahfad University for Women (AUW) represents the exception of non-state universities in that it has more female staff than male (see Table 2). The first female staff were recruited at Khartoum University in 1965 and by 2003 the total number of female staff had reached 1209 as compared to 4282 male staff. Although this is a great breakthrough, the employment of women started fifteen years after male recruitment, with the latter peaking after independence due to the Sudanization policy of 1956. This decade of gap does not justify the current gap in the employment of male and female staff in Khartoum University, the oldest and largest university in Sudan in terms of the number of faculties and specializations, where female staff account for almost 25 % (see Table 3).

Table 2: Total number of staff in higher education institutes by gender and academic title in 2001

Type of University	Professor		Associate professor		Assistant Professor		Lecturer		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Government	4	324	59	768	167	950	705	1528	935	3570
Non-government	12	74	17	161	23	112	222	365	274	712
Total	16	398	76	929	190	1062	927	1893	1209	4282
Female %	3.9		7.6		15.2		51		22	

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Annual Report 2000

Table 3: Total number of staff in Khartoum University by gender

	1965-1966	2002-2003
Female	5	250
Male	203	872
Total	208	1122
Percentage of female staff	2.4	13.5

Source: Al Agba 2004

Khartoum University may be regarded as an example of progress, being the oldest university in Sudan with the largest number of faculties (18) and the highest number of female staff. Table 3 shows that the number of female staff rose from five in 1965 to 250 in 2003. However, the gender gap is huge, particularly when we trace the history of the University, which has not witnessed female staff occupying the position of vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor, chief librarian, director of the university press, dean of students, general university director and general financial controller. The few highest posts women have managed to reach are at the level of dean and institute director.

Moreover, the gap is also manifested in academic titles where only a few women have reached the levels of professor, associate or assistant professor, and the majority of female staff are lecturers with an M.Sc. degree (see Table 2). The gap extends further, particularly if we compare the number of teaching assistants (TAs) in 2002-2003, whereby the number of male TAs was almost double that of their female counterparts (192 and 100 respectively). Despite that, there has been an increase of 27 % in female recruitment since 1965. Yet this low number can not be justified if we compare the great increase in female students' enrolment. This phenomenon needs analysis and formulation of affirmative policies to rectify this gender gap.

The disparity between male and female staff in higher education is clearly demonstrated in the academic positions held in both state and non-state universities. The data indicated that females in professorial positions represent only 3.9 % of their male counterparts, 7.6 % of associate professors, 15.2 % of assistant professors (Ph.D. holders) and 51 % of lecturers (M.A./M.Sc. holders) (see Table 2). There are many reasons that have led to this disparity, mainly the reproductive role carried by women that holds them back from being active in research and publications, attending conferences, engaging in postgraduate supervision, and administrative roles in the universities. All of these are prerequisites for promotion from the status of assistant to associate professor positions. However, the reproductive role can not be the only key factor as most female university staff have small families and reproduction ends at a relatively early age (ca. 42 years) compared to the long careers in university extending beyond 60 years of age. It can be concluded that the lack of affirmative policies to encourage the promotion of women and a patriarchal mindset, which does not allow them opportunities to hold administrative positions, are behind that disparity. This issue will be dealt with when the fieldwork data is analysed in the third section.

Another area where the gender gap is prominent is in the training of TAs. In analysing the data about training, it was revealed that four times as many male TAs as female TAs were awarded scholarships from their universities to receive training abroad: in a survey conducted in state universities, 82 % were male and 17.8 % were female, as indicated in Table 4 (MHESR 2003).

Table 4: Overseas training of young university staff in government universities to attain higher degrees in 2003

University Name	Females	Males	Total
Khartoum University	4	15	19
Quran and Islamic Studies	0	1	1
Omdurman Islamic University	2	7	9
Al Gezira University	0	5	5
Sudan Technological Sciences	9	22	31
Guba University	1	12	13
Al Nileen University	2	0	2
Al Azhari University	0	9	9
Shandi University	0	1	1
Wadi Elneel University	0	4	4
Dongola University	0	2	2
Red Sea University	0	1	1
Al Gadarif University	0	1	1
Sinnar University	0	2	2
Blue Nile University	0	1	1
Total	18	83	101
Percentage	17.8	82.2	

Source: Al Agba 2004

Table 4 clearly shows how certain universities have not even employed female TAs and others which did recruit female staff did not give them opportunities to train outside Sudan. The data also indicated that female staff who received training are confined to Sudan rather than being offered opportunities to train abroad. Few data are available for all the universities with respect to internal training as the majority of the universities (29 out of 40) do not offer postgraduate studies; Khartoum University is regarded as the most popular higher education institute for postgraduate studies, followed by the Islamic, Gezira, and Sudan universities. Further, the data from Khartoum University showed that in 2003, 49.1% of those who registered in postgraduate studies were female and came from various universities.

Section III: Gender Mainstreaming in Five Sudanese Universities

This section follows the guidelines of what could be the main areas of concern in identifying the extent of mainstreaming gender issues in universities policies. These policies are classified as general ones relating to gender disparity as a rule. A set of nine questions was asked to give a clear indication of the policy directives vis-à-vis GM. Questions about other specific policy areas related to intake, promotion, etc. were also asked, making a total of 36 questions. These detailed questions closely followed the GM checklist developed by the researcher to assess the extent of GM in universities.

The main findings are as follows:

1. General Policies

Availability of University Vision and Mission
It was found that most universities do not have a mission or vision statement. Ahfad University for Women (AUW) and Khartoum University indicated that they had a mission statement, with the former supporting women's empowerment and encouraging graduates to be change agents and the latter aiming to provide skilled graduate labour and to further Sudanese knowledge. Gender equality or targeting gender-related discrimination or injustice are not stated missions.

The Universities' Policies to Address the Gender Gap and Gender Discrimination Issues
All universities said that no policy to address the issues of gender gaps and discrimination in universities existed. The belief is that there is no discrimination which needs to be addressed through policies.

There was a general view that policies are usually imposed by the Ministry of Higher Education and issues of gender discrimination do not exist as equality is a rule based on academic criteria – therefore, the widely-held attitude is that there is no need to force gender equality with specific policies. A different viewpoint indicated that gender is an internationally debated issue and universities at the national level need

to respond to it and that policies are needed, though what these policies should be was not explicitly stated.

One university responded that while they currently do not have systems or positive measures based on integration or the creation of specific bodies to ensure gender equality, they do have to institutionalize gender issues in the university as part of a liberation measurement. AUW remains an exception in having different means of integrating and creating specific bodies and other measures to achieve the above, such as having an Institute for Women's and Gender Studies and a documentation unit. However, these are not authorized to monitor or assess gender discrimination.

Most universities believe that as there are no constraints to achieving gender equality, there is no need for statements emphasizing issues of gender equality. Moreover, there is no statement in the opposite direction to indicate restrictions in women's access to university positions. Others believed that women simply need to work hard and to prove themselves.

All universities recognized that there are no policies to encourage more women to hold decision-making position in universities – equal opportunity is the principle and females have to compete. There is general denial that a problem exists. However, AUW tends to encourage female staff, albeit without a stated policy.

Instilling the values of gender equality principles in staff and students as well as in university curricula and outreach programmes is an issue that raised controversy between those who believed that there is no need to raise such issues in universities so as not to create problems in society, and others who believed that until society changes, universities can take the initiative in instilling such values. One university stated that they did not make any effort to achieve this. Only one university made efforts to instil such values through its required courses, training, students' activities, outreach programmes and research.

However, most universities' statistical data revealed gender disparity staff in top positions and a gender gap at all levels, a complete or partial lack of gender experts, as well as a gender gap in the honorary doctoral degrees awarded, in administrative jobs and even in students holding positions in unions or other student organizations. Hence, this data

could inform universities and the Ministry of Higher Education for the need to have a GM policy.

Student Intake Policy

In four of the five universities where interviews were conduced (AUW is exclusively for female students), it was indicated that the strategic policy for students' intake is based on qualification and open to both genders equally through a higher education policy of merit as the standard for admission. However, no clear statement refers to a policy of achieving gender equity or equality. A Khartoum University law of 1995 prohibited discrimination in admissions on the basis of religion, ethnicity or sex. However, a practice of discrimination existed at certain times to exclude girls from intake in certain faculties or departments.

Universities stated that the university policy for student intake is based on equal opportunities. However, it was indicated that there is an unwritten practice for a few faculties to be male only. This is against the university law, yet it is still practised.

None of the universities have special policies to allow women study leave for childbirth/childcare, health problems related to pregnancy or to accompany their husbands working abroad, that is, the continuity of their studies is not encouraged. Most indicated that they try to help female students to find hostels in the national university hostels project.

As in most universities female students either outnumber or are almost equal in number to male students, Sudanese university managers do not feel a need to have special measures to increase female intake or to retain female students. However, analysis of quantitative data shows that women are concentrated in medical-related science, education and sciences more than in technical/engineering studies or economics/business studies. Statistics need to be analysed and more quantitative data on the labour market and the career development of graduates of both genders needs to be collected so that policies can be formulated to make girls compete in those fields that would open opportunities in business and in future decision-making positions (strategic studies, economics, etc).

University Policies to Address Women's Specific Issues/Needs

In reference to addressing women's specific issue of violence, all the surveyed universities maintained that no specific policies exists; however, ad hoc committees could be formed should needs arise. While they stated that there were no women-specific policies to address women's needs, the universities do try to help all the staff by the provision of kindergartens (in some universities) though the demand is greater than the supply. Two universities have service shops on the campus but these do not cover all demands and all campuses.

Some universities referred to women's needs for restrooms at campus, counselling, targetted scholarships, maternity leave for students, allowing extended informal maternity leave for other staff and permitting the temporary replacement of unskilled female staff while they are on maternity leave, rather than dismissing them. Other considered that issues of violence and harassment problems could be addressed by forming an ad hoc committee to solve the problem when it was intense.

Another major policy issue discussed was on protection against sexual harassment, violence and discrimination. Almost all universities indicated that there is no a specific complaints mechanism for gender discrimination, but there is a system of complaints whereby any person can file a complaint. However, all stated that no complaints had been filed on the basis of gender discrimination. Others added that gender discrimination does not exist.

However, universities have security guards, and some universities considered that female guards protect women against violence/harassment. Others regarded the university regulations and penalty system as well as the state penal system as a safeguard against such acts. No special measures or systems to address such issues were mentioned.

Universities' Policies to Increase Gender Experts, Publications and Web Sites on Gender Issues

Four universities answered that no specific policy exists on the above issues. However, one of them said that they encourage publications by staff and recently engaged in publishing on women's issues, while others indicated that they encouraged writing on gender issues. One

university has a policy and practice of having journals publishing specifically on women's concerns and gender issues only. No university yet has a specific web site on gender or women's studies but one university is indicating interest in establishing one.

Most universities answered that they do not have any policy in that direction, while one has a clear policy to increase the number of web sites on gender issues. However, the other three universities explained that while there are no specific policies yet, those who want to become experts on gender studies are not hindered and on their own initiative, several individuals have started to gain this expertise in the faculties of economics/social studies, agriculture, law, nursing and art. Some believe that though universities' current policies do not highlight gender issues as a priority, things may change in the future after peace has been established. Although one university has an undergraduate degree in women's studies (Al Azhari University), it is astonishing that it has no gender experts or a clear policy to recruit/train enough of them.

University Databanks and Information (Gender-Disaggregated)

All the surveyed universities stated that they do not have a centralized databank. However, all of them keep computer records of gender-disaggregated information about students and staff, as required by the Ministry of Higher Education. There is no rule on keeping records on administration and clerical staff in a computerized, gender-disaggregated form. One university claimed that they keep computerized records of administrative personnel although they are not required to do so. Hence, quantitative data have to be collected from the payroll or non-academic personnel files. Information regarding links, research projects, theses, etc. is not kept in computer files in a databank. The universities' curricula and academic programmes are kept on the web sites of some universities and a few have updated prospectuses. No overall policy towards formally having gender-disaggregated databanks or keeping all university records centralized exists.

It is worth mentioning that some universities indicated that gender-disaggregated data is compiled not for purposes of developing policies but rather because it is demanded by the Ministry of Higher Education. The quantitative data collection, however, highlighted the difficulty

of finding information in one place, or even in different places, or in a computerized, easily accessible and retrievable form. This is an issue that universities need to focus on if they hope to become models for developing policies based on data and research.

Overall Social Justice Policy

In reference to issues of social justice targeting disadvantaged groups, all universities responded that they have scholarships for the "needy", regardless of gender, while others have programmes for students from the disadvantaged provinces, and two have paid work programmes for students who need financial assistance, as part of their policies and practices for the capacity building of the disadvantaged groups among students who qualify to enter the university. One university has additional measures of reducing the academic admission criteria for disadvantaged students as well as offering mature students the opportunity to study part-time. One non-government university has a large number of students who are exempt from paying fees.

Policies for Postgraduate Studies

Four universities mentioned that academic excellence is the criterion for the selection and registration of postgraduate degrees as well as for the selection of teaching assistants eligible for postgraduate studies. AUW has an additional affirmative policy of offering placement for female students from the disadvantaged areas of the South, Darfur, Nuba, Red Sea and Blue Nile States. Moreover, they offer scholarships to some of these students. In mixed universities, there are no women-specific policies for increasing the enrolment of females from any region nor the provision of scholarships. All postgraduate studies are fee-paying. This could jeopardize women's opportunities, as families may not be willing to pay for postgraduate studies. Women's reproductive role may hamper their chances if no positive measures are made to help them play both roles successfully.

More scientific activities to determine both the gender and regional disparity in all postgraduate studies disciplines is needed. Secondary data analysis indicated that there are more men than women registered for doctoral degrees. In addition, there is a class and regional disparity

at postgraduate level and this trend has peaked at undergraduate level in recent years (Al Tom 2006).

2. Curriculum Analysis

Courses
All five universities with the exception of one have curricula that include gender issues either as a separate course or integrated into courses, or as a separate degree at undergraduate level. At AUW, gender studies are offered as a separate course at undergraduate level, as an M.Sc. degree and as a Ph.D. degree.

As regards outreach or continued education programme on gender related issues, this is only found at Khartoum University and AUW.

Regular Training on Gender or Women's Issues in Universities
All universities either have no such training or only offer it very rarely. An exception is AUW, where regular training takes place as the university's mission is to encourage women's empowerment. One university stated that training in gender and women's issues is under discussion as they are planning to undertake such activities. Another university indicated that in the past decade they used to offer this type of training but stopped it ten years ago.

Organization of Workshops, Seminars and Conferences and Publications on Gender and Women's Issues
Two universities stated that they held such activities at the university and/or the departmental and the focal programmes level. This is more likely to be the result of a personal initiative rather than a university policy. One university said that they do publish some of their conference and workshop research and stated that they have published manuals for training courses on gender and women's issues.

Extracurricular Activities in Gender Equality and Women's Rights
Three universities stated that they have cultural and social activities, which are arranged by student organizations or associations. These

activities could include gender and women's issues. However, most of the activities have currently stopped due to government policies to dissolve the unions. One university (AUW) has such activities, which are all gender-sensitive and include components of women's empowerment.

3. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Mechanisms and Structures for the Implementation of Gender Equality

The final set of issues discussed concerned mechanisms and structures established in the universities to reward those who implement gender equality, punish those who discriminate on gender grounds, and any bodies institutionalized in the university to implement these policies.

None of the surveyed universities has any gender-specific structures to implement, monitor or evaluate gender issues or GM policies. However, these questions were answered with uncertainty regarding punishment measures: some indicated that if discrimination is proved, it will be punished, while others believed that there is no discrimination and therefore no need to create rules for penalties. However, all answered that there are no rewards for those who try to achieve gender equality as a positive value in the university – some staff may do it at the level of personal initiative but without a policy directive or expectation of reward.

Moreover, most universities have no structure or mechanism to implement any of the indicated GM areas. Nevertheless, some considered that ad hoc committees such as scholarship committees, disciplinary committees and security committees could be formed to address specific gender issues or implement affirmative actions. Although the above are not gender-specific, they can be used if gender or women-specific issues are raised e.g. security departments should raise issues on violence or gender-based harassment, while discrimination committees could take action if discrimination cases were filed. Any ad hoc committee can be formed by the vice chancellor to address any arising issues and to promote services, curriculum or outreach activities. Moreover, one university indicated that the students' conduct statues and the legal administration are adequate available mechanisms to address issues of gender discrimination or violence if they exist. Hence, no mechanisms

or structures are established. Further, information on gender issues or gender statistics is not raised or collected so as to formulate policies in reference to them.

4. Overall Assessment

Tertiary education statistics need to be analysed with caution so that female students' enrolment is not taken as an indicator of gender equality or as women's empowerment. The whole picture of gender disparity in universities needs to be highlighted. How universities set their missions and policies and define their role in society is more important – these are the issues that need to be addressed and analysed when GM issues are discussed.

The fact that there are more female than male students enrolled in most Sudanese universities and in most faculties, especially the scientific ones, has overshadowed the gender disparity in staff and in the level of promotion, as well as in postgraduate students' enrolment. Such a context of an influx of female students has led to a denial of the existence of discrimination and the need to address it with policies and measures.

The strategy of blaming the victims for their status, which is common in many other contexts, was prevalent, with female staff being blamed for not holding decision-making positions in universities.

Moreover, issues of the role and function of universities and how programmes and curricula are to be organized in reference to a gender-sensitive vision need to be discussed when recommendations are made on how to achieve GM targets.

Comparing the gender profile of the five universities surveyed to determine the gender gap in different levels as revealed by statistics in enrolment in all levels and types of degrees, staff recruitment and promotion, administrative personnel, honorary doctoral degrees awarded, gender experts, gender or women's studies courses, student organization leadership positions, the gender gap in university councils, committees, etc., it became evident that a great gender gap exists. However, key decision makers did not regard these issues as problematic. Either

this information is not revealed or analysed to direct policy, or on the other hand, it is taken for granted that a gender gap in favour of men should exist, and hence the trend is that this gap should be encouraged and not seen as a problem, and that no policy measures are needed.

In reference to the profile of Sudanese women and the gender gap in education, political participation, work, etc., one can support the argument that what is taking place in universities, policies and practices can best be understood as part of a complex cultural, socioeconomic and geopolitical context that has led to the gender disparity which needs to be addressed. As a result, the sociocultural context that influenced mindsets and the universities' values led to the perception that there is no need for a policy to address gender issues and to a concentrated focus on equality based on academic qualifications.

Moreover, female needs or problems are basically conceived of as being of a reproductive nature. Academic problems are not regarded as showing a gender dimension. Thus, the possibility of a gender biased practice not to allow more female staff opportunities to train outside Sudan and recruitment in favour of men when both a man and a woman have equal merits and qualifications is not perceived.

It is astonishing to find little or no awareness of the existence of a problem or the need to address it. Moreover, issues of violence or sexual harassment against women in universities are also not considered to exist or to require policies. Hence, research and data is needed on this broad theme of GM to raise the awareness and willingness of decision makers at universities to address the gender dimension in these institutions.

Section IV: Conclusion and Recommendations

The main positive finding of the research showed that there are more female than male students in universities with a gender gap of 3–8 % in favour of women.

However, a gender gap in favour of male students exists in certain specializations of engineering, economics, business administration and law. It was found that female students concentrate on medical sciences, education and agricultural studies. In addition, a gender gap in favour

of males is evident in continued, distant and postgraduate studies especially at the doctoral level of studies. Moreover, more male than female teaching assistants find opportunities for postgraduate studies outside the country and the gap is drastic in this area.

Ahfad University for Women, being exclusively for female students, changes the overall picture of gender disparity in certain fields of studies, especially in business administration, and decreases the disparity in favour of females in medical sciences.

Hence, if women's universities or women's centres in mixed universities offered degrees in engineering and legal studies, the disparity could easily be closed. Further, if they concentrated their efforts to enhance postgraduate studies for women at Ph.D. level, the gap will gradually be closed.

Another main finding of this research showed a significant gender gap in favour of males as a crosscutting issue in academic staff ranks in the different faculties/departments, decision-making posts, university councils, task force committees, and top university administrative posts in all the five surveyed universities in Khartoum State.

The survey also indicated that most universities have no clear academic programmes on women's studies and/or gender and development issues, as well as an under-representation of gender experts. Another finding was that in general, female students are under-represented in membership in the different university associations and that in particular, there is an insignificant number of female students who hold leadership roles in these associations.

This requires a holistic approach towards development in general and women's empowerment in particular. As far as this research is concerned, closing this gender gap has to be approached from different integrated perspectives.

- Affirmative government policies and political commitment are required to empower women and to support programmes for women's empowerment in areas of higher education.
- Policy frameworks and priorities should be established at government and university levels to identify the reasons for this persistent gender gap and to draw up a plan of affirmative action showing explicitly how to implement these policies/actions.

- Closing the gender gap cannot be achieved unless the Ministry of Higher Education undertakes affirmative action policies for leadership designation through a quota system using democratic election, taking into account the academic competency of female staff to ensure their positioning in leadership posts.
- Mobilization of resources by the government and individual universities for implementing capacity building programmes to achieve women's empowerment that can contribute to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in universities and in executive, political and legislative bodies is necessary. The universities should start with themselves and serve as role models for achieving the above at national and state level executive bodies.
- Affirmative action and gender budgeting is needed at the university level with the aim of allocating 50 % of the training and development budget for faculty members to female staff to bridge this huge gap in academic titles.
- Having more women in decision-making posts is crucial in enabling them to participate and influence political and national policies towards more gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming in designing, implementing, and monitoring policies and plans. A women's academic association could be formed to put pressure on the universities and act to achieve this.
- Formal mechanisms at each university level need to be established to monitor and assess the employment legislation or practices towards achieving more gender equality and for overall GM in universities along the above indicators.
- Appropriate educational interventions are needed to overcome the cultural bias against female enrolment in some specializations (mining, petroleum and survey engineering).
- The universities should have policies to create programmes on women's studies and/or gender and development issues and to train and qualify more gender experts. Engaging in national and international women's studies and gender programmes will promote sensitization towards the integration of gender in the various disciplines' curricula and could also develop concerted action and responsibility in women's empowerment. It will also result in the exchanging and

sharing of women's global issues/agendas and create the development of partnerships among organizations as a means of empowering women and bridging the gender disparity

- The issue of the under-representation of female students in leadership roles in student associations is a significant issue that needs special attention at the university level to encourage and motivate students in general and female students in particular to become active members in student associations in order to acquire initiative, leadership and interpersonal skills as future community leaders. In addition, encouraging and motivating students to become active members in associations will widen their scope in networking with different civil society organizations and further their skills in becoming activists and advocates of social change with their own vision of community development. This is crucial as we expect the greatest number of graduates in the near future to be women, as shown by the statistics. To guarantee that the resources invested in the education of both genders is greatly utilized, student associations and university programmes should include civic education and leadership skills and be linked with other civil society organizations, especially those of women.

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Abbreviations

AUW	Ahfad University for Women
GM	Gender mainstreaming
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
TA	Teaching Assistant
UOK	University of Khartoum

Mai Izeldeen Osman

Feminist Research and the Institute of Women, Gender and Development at Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan

Abstract

This paper aims to identify the impact of feminist research on women's empowerment at different levels. It concentrates on feminist research by examining the experience of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development at Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman/Sudan (AUW). The reasons behind the increased number of research projects in certain fields and the decreased number in others are analysed. After identifying the gaps in research topics in terms of fields of study and areas of research, suggestions are made for future research areas.

The paper is divided into three parts: After the first part with an introduction to feminist research, the second part deals with the experiences of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development at AUW. Part three provides a conclusion, visions and ideas about future feminist research that could empower women.

Introduction

Since 1998, the Institute of Women, Gender and Development (IWGD) at Ahfad University for Women (AUW) has been conducting extensive research on women's and gender issues. These research projects are a basic requirement for the M.Sc. degree and to date, there have been more than 85 research projects.

Researchers have held many different points of views and come from many different fields, traditions, languages, ethnic groups, and Sudanese states. In this article, I will examine the research which was conducted

during the past eight years. What have been the developments resulting from the topics, fields of research and methodologies that could empower women?

Firstly, I would like to clarify what we at the IWGD mean by feminist research. What makes feminist research feminist? Having read a wide range of feminist research papers as well as feminist essays on methods and methodology, it has become apparent that what makes feminist research uniquely feminist are the motives, concerns and knowledge brought to the research process. While there is no standard agreement over what constitutes feminist research, many authors seem to draw upon certain elements as defining features common to feminist research. These features help to distinguish feminist research from traditional social science research and research on women. Research that deals with gender and feminist issues is concerned with challenging gender inequalities in the social world.

Conducting research is a process that involves an ongoing series of decisions and choices. Thus, feminist research is unique because of its feminist beliefs and concerns that act as the guiding framework for the research process. Methodologically, feminist research differs from traditional research in three ways: it actively seeks to remove the power imbalance between researcher and subject; it is politically motivated and plays a major role in changing social inequality; and it starts from the standpoints and experiences of women.

Research at the Institute of Women, Gender and Development

There were two types of research: studies carried out by postgraduate students and research conducted by the Institute's staff.

The main areas of commissioned research were:

1. The situation of rural women.
2. Reproductive health and rights.
3. Peace and good governance.
4. Women's rights.
5. Other issues such as women and economic and political participation, women's legal rights, and violence against women.

The Institute participated at the regional, national, and international levels by producing both papers and reports.

The following is a list of some of these research projects:

- Muslim women and development action research projects, supported by the Women and Development Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Female genital mutilation and changes in attitudes and practice in Khartoum, supported by UNICEF in 2000.
- Violation of laws on women's and adolescents' rights; analysis of all laws and rights, both available and non-available, provided by the constitution and the criminal law and civil law codes, as well as other rights such as citizenship rights and reproductive health rights. The research came up with recommendations for changes in laws to protect women's and adolescents' rights.
- Causes of tribal conflicts and traditional methods of conflict resolution practised in five Sudanese states, supported by NOVIB/Netherlands.
- Gender mainstreaming in Sudanese universities, supported by the World Bank Institute.
- Desk research on the analysis of Sudanese women's profiles at various political, economic and other levels.
- The Sudanese Millennium Development Goals Report (MDGs), including research on poverty, health, women's empowerment and gender equality. These projects also covered our own initiatives and recommendations for what should be done for Sudanese women.
- The impact of income-generating credit projects in empowering women and increasing their use of the reproductive health services supported by UNFPA.
- The Arab report on women and the decision-making process, which was supported by the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR)

Four research areas were supported by the UNFPA:

1. Female genital mutilation (FGM) survey.
2. Adolescents' health.
3. Quality of reproductive care.
4. Maternal mobility.

There is also ongoing research such as:

- Women's participation in local government.
- Women's access to justice, in collaboration with Bergen University.

– Women's knowledge of their constitutional and legal rights, supported by the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education.
– Conceptualization of empowerment: work empowerment and constituencies' empowerment. This four-year research project is being carried out in collaboration with the American University in Cairo.

Types of research conducted by students
The Institute of Women, Gender and Development introduced the Master Programme in Gender and Development Studies. Research is one of the M.Sc. requirements. Since 1997, students have produced more than eighty research projects covering various women's issues. Some of these fields of researches are listed below.

Research on the family and family relations
– How patriarchy operates in the family institution: a case study on the Dinka tribe.
– Marital relationships: a case study on Sudanese families.
– Domestic violence between spouses: realities and responses.
– The attitudes of female university students towards the selection of a spouse.
– Children's games: towards different gender roles.
– Employed women and domestic responsibilities: perceptions, challenges and strategies.
– Female heads of household: dependent versus independent perceptions.
– The impact of male emigration on the role and status of women in Sudan.
– Gender identity formulation and its impact on the status of women in the Zaghawa tribe.
– Women in home-based activities: conditions of work and empowerment.
– Changes in gender roles among Eritrean refugees in Khartoum.
– Patriarchy and Sudanese women pioneers from 1940 –1950.
– Men's perceptions of female genital mutilation.
– The choice of a marriage partner and the effects of social discrimination in urban society.

– Marriage customs in a changing context: a case study on the Shilluk people in the Jebel Aulia Displaced Camp.
– Forced migration and its effects on changing gender roles: a case study on women from the Nuba mountains in the Wad El Bashir Displaced Camp.

Health research
– Health-seeking behaviour regarding infertility and AIDS: a study of the Al Tina area.
– Assessing the quality of maternal health care services in Khartoum state.
– Knowledge and use of modern family planning methods in Mayo Hay El Nasr.
– The perception and behaviour of both genders towards infertility.
– Factors affecting maternal health among the Nuba people.
– Factors influencing the use of contraceptives among working women in west Kordofan.
– Factors that influence the use of modern family planning methods by Sudanese couples.
– Attitudes towards remunerating unpaid reproductive labour.
– The socioeconomic impact of obstetric fistula on patients in Abbo Centre/Khartoum.

Law and rights research
– Sudanese women's perceptions of and rights to family planning.
– Factors that influence the legislation of personal status law: a case study on Sudanese personal status laws on divorce and polygamy.
– The Sudanese Islamic movement's perceptions of women's rights.
– Sudanese men and women's knowledge and attitudes towards CEDAW.
– The legal status of female genital mutilation under Sudanese law.

War and peace research
– Civil war in the Nuba Mountains: in search of a gender dimension.
– The role of Sudanese women in war and peace situations.

Political research
- Factors that influence the political participation of Sudanese women.
- The position of women unionists in the high echelons of the Sudanese trade unions.
- Women's symbols of national identity: a case study on southern women in Khartoum.
- Women experiencing racism and sexism in Sudan: a case study on Khartoum State.
- Women's political participation in Yemen from 1990 – 2000.

Economic research
- The Sudanese economic crisis: gender dimerism and survival strategies.
- Poverty, the gender dimension and economic policies.
- Women executive managers in the Sudanese banking system: experience and challenges.
- Credit approach and its impact on women's situations: a case study of an area development scheme for centralized state butane production in Gadareif State.
- Employment retrenchment in the public sector in Sudan during the 1990s: the experiences of dismissed men and women.
- Women's work in the daily trade of their handicraft at the Omdurman market.
- Gender sensitivity in Sudanese labour and employment laws: the views and experiences of working women.
- The empowerment of women through microcredit finance programmes.
- Microcredit and women: a case study on women's budgets and the Sudanese Women's General Union.
- Women and work: an examination of how women manage their triple roles.

Development research
- Gender sensitivity in the policies of the Sudanese environmental conservation society: a case study on the Gemoia Home Nurseries Project.

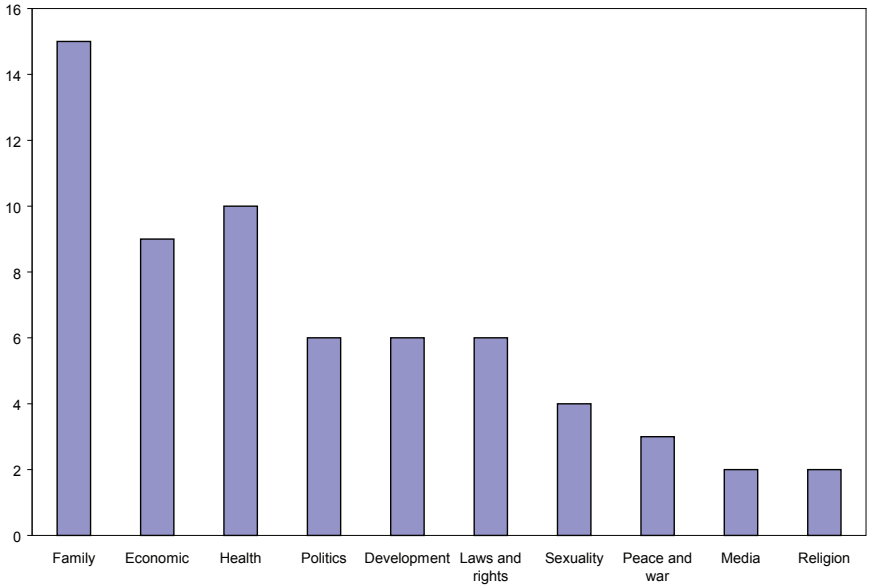
- Towards gender-sensitive policies in Sudan: a case study on the Sudanese national comprehensive strategy.
- A socioeconomic perspective of the role of women in development: a case study on displaced women and the population and development project in the Hay Al Baraka area.
- The impact of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A study on the effect of a poverty alleviation project in empowering the internally displaced women in urban areas: a case study on the Mayo Mandela displaced camp.
- Gender dimensions in agricultural extension services: a case study on the Gezira Scheme.

Sex and sexuality research
- State power over the female body.
- The opinions of Ahfad University students on sexual harassment.
- The perception of honour and honour killing among Hawazma men and women in the Abu Karshola area of South Kordofan.

Media research
- The images of Sudanese women on TV and radio.

Religion research
- Women's programmes and activities in the El Samani El Tayeb El Ghareeb route: a study of the social effects.

Table 1: Students' Research Projects



The table shows the distribution of topics in terms of theme. This can give us a vision for the research projects needed in the future in order to fill the gap in research areas.

If we look at this diagram, we can see that in general, most research was conducted on topics dealing with the family, family relationships, socialization, marriage and gender roles, and the gender division of labour in the family.

There are two reasons for the focus on these research areas. The first is the high value placed on the family by the Sudanese and the fact that most subordinate positions and discrimination occur in the family as a result of family relations and women's and men's roles in the family. Secondly, the family in Sudanese society is considered to be the main obstacle to women's participation in the public sphere, and the researchers emphasized the role of the family in women's emancipation and participation in the development process.

Thus, as we can see from the variables that were selected, the researchers changed their focus over the years and started to move beyond these

issues and to discuss power relations within the family and violence against women.

In addition, the family can be a fertile area for research because it involves many cultures, traditions and religious beliefs, which confine women to the private sphere and sustain women's oppression.

Research on health comes second in terms of number, but almost all research conducted was on reproductive health. More recently, there has been research on issues such as AIDS. This field needs more research on sexually transmitted diseases, and women's perceptions of their health. There is also a need for research on breast cancer. Moreover, Sudanese society, like many other Muslim societies, regards sexuality as a taboo subject. However, we recently came to realize that there is a need for research on the body and sexuality.

The third largest number of research projects was on economic topics. Although they covered the most important areas and topics in this field, we still need to interview other target groups, such as businesswomen, institutions like banks that provide loans to women, and women trade union representatives to find out more about their position and relations with other women.

The fourth largest research area was on politics and law. This area really needs more research and greater emphasis to enable women to participate in the new political period. There is also a need for research on the constitution, rule of law, access to justice, the quota system, women in political parties and parliament.

The fifth most important research area was on peace and war. Although the war has come to an end, the post-war period needs more research on peacemaking, peacebuilding and nation-building. Moreover, there is a need for research on methods and strategic plans to rehabilitate people after the war, especially children and women, in different fields such as education, health, and participation at political, economic and social levels.

The sixth largest research area is media, which has not been covered by a satisfactory number of research projects, despite its importance for women and its role in helping to change the system of beliefs. This field requires more research on the impact of the media on women, on women's roles in the media, and on how the media reflects women's images and roles.

The smallest number of projects dealt with religion. This was the least significant area in terms of research and we can posit that this was due to the students' perception of religion as something "masculine" and impossible to research, or because there may have been a fear of tackling this subject as a result of society's attitudes to women and religion. The area which needs intensive research is that of clarifying the role of women as described in the Koran. There are often misinterpretations; therefore, we need investigations that challenge the conservative discourses on women.

Although this kind of topic and research is to some extent new for Sudanese society, over time more and more researchers and academics have accepted feminist views, partly because of the positive feedback that has come from the social transformations this research has brought about. Issues such as violence against women and sexual harassment have become common topics of discussion and have found space, even in our patriarchal society. Apart from the role of research in changing consciousness, some concrete measures have also occurred as a result of research.

To a certain extent, the results of research have changed previous attitudes and the ways reality was perceived. We also hope that these results will influence policymakers at both the local and regional level. In addition, we can trace changes by showing how "positive discrimination" has led to changes in representation quotas and the traditionally subordinate position of women, thus improving conditions in many areas. That is the reason why knowledge and research are repeatedly regarded as a means for altering perceptions of facts, providing new data and improving conditions in human societies. Both the production of theory and the production of knowledge are perceived as political activities; moreover, they are also perceived as power itself.

These eighty research projects during the past eight years were supposed to be politically "correct" and to help us to achieve a better society. Researchers want to understand and explain but moreover, they also want to emancipate and transform. This is the reason that is often stressed why research must be designed in such a way that it provides insights and visions and establishes a dialogue with the future.

Conclusion and the future of feminist research

In the future, research should have the most flexible, the most diverse and sometimes even a surprising approach.

There is also one very specific area in which many feminists see the greatest danger in having further male-dominated research, namely the area of controlled reproduction. Men have been trying to control and dominate women's participation in procreation at least since the beginning of the patriarchal system and current developments in medical science might enable them to gain almost complete control over human reproduction.

It is not only medicine and biology where women do not have control over the research agenda. Women's participation in science in general is still very limited. However, there are many reasons why women should be included in this field, as follows:

1. Women's roles in many societies are changing rapidly and women are becoming more visible in many public areas.
2. Women can create alternatives for the future better than men because of certain individual abilities (flexibility, rapid response to emergency situations, multitasking, definition of priorities and adaptability) and social capacities (solidarity, exchange, overcoming of barriers). One should also note the impressive range of women's activities in many social movements such as peace, human rights and ecological initiatives. These activities will influence the future in terms of an important, slow process of historical change.
3. Wherever we look, no matter how bad the conditions men live in, women's conditions are always worse. Data extrapolation shows that women will continue to suffer from poverty, violence, malnutrition, physical and mental abuse, and adverse policies on health, laws and family planning. Clearly, women should have a significant say in how and what methods are used in understanding and creating future research.
4. Most social scientists agree that we are entering a new era. We are witnessing huge changes in almost every aspect of our lives.

One of the main areas where those changes are taking place is in our systems of belief and knowledge. In many respects, not only the future

of women but also that of all humanity does not promise much if we do not radically change our ways of exploiting nature, organizing society, treating one another and dealing with differences.
Feminist researchers have developed several epistemological principles for gender-conscious research:
1. Acknowledging the pervasive influence of gender.
2. Focussing on consciousness raising.
3. Rejection of the separation between subject and object and the assumption that personal experiences are unscientific.
4. Concerns for the ethical implications of research.
5. Emphasis on the empowerment of women and transformation of patriarchal social institutions through research.

Requirements

Apart from these epistemological principles, feminists have made few changes to social science methodology. Methods used in feminist research are actually those which already existed and are recognizable tools in social sciences. What is new is the way they are applied, more precisely the thematic content within which they are used. Thematic content has changed in two main ways:
1. Pre-existing data and "facts" are re-examined and reinterpreted from a new perspective.
2. Previously non-existent phenomena or those considered of no importance are analysed (including childbirth, housework, domestic violence, rape, incest, divorce, widowhood, infertility, sexual harassment, pornography, prostitution, and women's thoughts as expressed in private letters, memoirs, diaries and journals) and an emphasis is placed on some crisis situations in order to demystify the assumed naturalness of patriarchy.

If future research wishes to be non-sexist or rather to be feminist and gender-conscious, it does not have to follow all of these principles but does need to follow at least a few of them. It is also important to pay attention and avoid sexism in title, language, concepts in research designs, methods, data interpretation and policy evaluation.

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Abbreviations

AUW	Ahfad University for Women, Omdurman/Sudan
CAWTAR	Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research, Tunisia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
IWGD	Institute of Women, Gender and Development
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NOVIB	Netherlands Organization for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Osman Mohamed Osman Ali

Gender Studies & Research in Conservative Academic Course Systems: Cases from the University of Khartoum, Sudan

Abstract

The paper gives a brief, critical retrospective view of the experiences made so far at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology (DSSA) and the Development Studies and Research Institute (DSRI) at the University of Khartoum in the field of gender studies and research. It outlines some of the obstacles to gender sensitization and to the efforts of interested academic staff to introduce gender into the university's curricula.

The change from "Women's Studies" to "Gender Studies" or "Gender and Development" is shown to be connected to the recent shift from "Women in Development" (WID) to "Gender and Development" (GAD) approaches worldwide. This change has been a result of the increasing recognition of the need for the involvement of men in gender equality issues.

Recurrent endeavours in some academic units at the University of Khartoum to find spaces for gender studies and research usually ended in failure. The experiences of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology (DSSA) and the Development Studies and Research Institute (DSRI), which so far have been the sole units at the university which deal with this subject, usefully illustrate such frequently unsuccessful endeavours. This paper is intended as a brief, critical retrospective view of these two experiences. This necessitates looking back on the foundation and the development of the DSSA and the DSRI respectively. The data used in this paper was mostly collected through interviews with senior staff members at the DSSA and the DSRI, who still recall details of the two experiences. Documents at these two units were the source of some other data.

The DSSA's Experience

The Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology (DSSA) was founded in 1958 within the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies. Its main goals include: (1) enabling students to become thoroughly acquainted with knowledge in the fields of sociology and social anthropology; (2) helping students to have good knowledge about important sociological and anthropological concepts and theories; and (3) providing students with the skills and the abilities needed for data collection and carrying out social research.

In order to achieve these goals, the DSSA designed a number of undergraduate courses. A quick review of these courses at present reveals the fact that there have not been enough courses on gender sensitization. As a result of an academic reform in the late 1990s, there was a course in the fifth semester for the third-year B.Sc. students with the term "gender" in its title: "Sociology of Family, Kinship and Gender". An academic reform in 2004 described this course with the "family" and the "kinship" components taking the lion's share. The gender component was described as containing only the concept of gender and gender relations within the family. Remarkably, the extent of coverage of this very small gender component every year depends on who teaches the course. It was frequently skipped, or only lightly touched upon by uninterested teaching staff members.

The academic reform of 2004 added another course on "Gender and Development" to be taught in the tenth semester to the fifth-year (Honours) B.Sc. students who are usually nominated from amongst those students who attain a distinction in performance. This course aims at tackling the concept of gender and the historical factors that have been restraining women's roles in human societies. It also focuses on showing the importance of the participation of women in development, and on how to make this participation effective in rural communities and in underdeveloped societies. The topical issues that were mentioned for discussion in this course include: definition of the concept of development; concepts of gender; sex and gender; patriarchal systems; gender and inequality; women and law; women and modes of production; women and economic dependency; women and culture;

women and education; the participation of women in the labour market; women and the environment; women in rural communities; women in underdeveloped societies; training of women; political participation by women; the gender dimension in development planning; empowerment of women; and Islam and the rights of women.

Before the academic reform of the late 1990s, some interested teaching staff at the DSSA, almost all women, frequently tried to make use of a course in the fifth year, which provided options for dealing with different issues and which had a loose title (i.e., "Text and Problems") after failing to create courses purely on gender in the curriculum during the very few past academic reforms. These female staff used the course on "Text and Problems" in teaching Women's Studies to the fifth-year (Honours) B.Sc. students, concentrating on issues such as the definition of Women's Studies, integrationist and autonomist approaches to Women's Studies, theories and models on the position of women (for example, the biological approach, the evolutionary approach, socialist feminism, and the Marxist approach), the methodology of Women's Studies, women in the labour force, women and development, women's situation in the Third World, and women's situation in Sudan.

The change from "Women's Studies" to "Gender Studies" or "Gender and Development" in the course titles in the DSSA curriculum seems to have something to do with the recent shift in emphasis worldwide from "Women in Development" (WID) and "Women and Development" (WAD) approaches to a "Gender and Development" (GAD) approach, a shift that has been a result of the increasing recognition over the last decades of the need for the involvement of men in gender equality issues. The GAD approach views gender relations and the inequitable development process as the essential problem areas to be tackled, and seeks to empower disadvantaged and vulnerable groups – including women – and to transform unequal relations. Its ultimate goal is to attain equitable and sustainable development with both men and women involved in decision-making processes. It recognizes that gender equality is not just a women's issue, but a goal that requires the participation of both men and women. It differs from the WID approach, which regarded women as the problem area and stressed the need to recognize and integrate women's productive activities into

development policies by undertaking administrative and legal reforms in order to improve outcomes. The GAD approach also differs from the WAD approach, which emphasized the structural factors that led to women's subordination, and in particular the oppressive structures of capital and class arising out of global accumulation. Nonetheless, looking at the course outlines, one can easily recognize the fact that even the interested staff members at the DSSA are still dealing with gender studies as the equivalent of "Women's Studies". This may be due to the lack of up-to-date publications or knowledge. Besides, some conservative staff members at the DSSA are of the opinion that "Women's Studies" are suitable for the current sociocultural conditions in Sudan as they could deal with certain problems which women are still facing in their families and local communities. They believe that the arguments of the GAD approach may endanger useful values and norms and all that people once knew and respected.

The fact of either not having any or not having enough courses for gender sensitization has led to little interest in gender research at both under- and postgraduate levels at the DSSA. The research has almost entirely been far removed from gender issues. Since the late 1950s and until recently, one of the dominant features of sociological and anthropological research at the DSSA was the concentration on nomadism and pastoralism – particularly in Northern Sudan. During that time there were three basic questions:

- the response of tribal structures to the intruding colonial administration and the development of tribal strata (elite);
- the prospects for a future plan for the settlement of nomads;
- the impact of the market economy on the traditional subsistence economies.

A late parallel trend was urbanization and industrialization field research. The main issues undertaken here were:

- rural-urban migration and its impact on social change;
- the status of labour migrants in urban areas;
- the rise of new cultural identities in urban centres;
- the links between rural and urban areas;
- the social problems and institutions that accompany labour migration, settlement in urban areas and adaptation to urban life.

The DSRI's Experience

The Development Studies and Research Centre (DSRC) was established in 1976 as a postgraduate unit within the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies. Its mission was to influence the policymaking process and to guide future trends in development studies and research in Sudan. Among its specific objectives, it was entrusted to conduct courses, seminars, etc., on problems of socioeconomic development and related issues. To fulfil its objectives, the DSRC cooperated with a number of national and international institutions. One such cooperation was with the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, which lasted for about 15 years. The DSRC/ISS Cooperation Programme of In-Service Training started in 1979 with a three-year programme of teaching and research in regional and rural development and planning. The subject areas covered by the programme corresponded closely with the postgraduate programme. Four areas were identified, which are also included in the Diploma and the Master curricula: project planning and management; basic socio-economic statistics for planning; rural development and planning; and administrative, budgeting and management aspects of project and area planning. This programme was extended for a further three years, starting in 1982 and ending in 1985. In May 1986 the DSRC/ISS Programme of In-Service Training entered its last phase, which continued until 1994. It is worth mentioning that the focus of this cooperation programme changed over time from the development of the postgraduate programme and research to the development of short training courses.

Since its establishment, the DSRC has successfully managed to achieve its mission in all its activities. Hundreds of postgraduate students were trained at the DSRC in the areas of development and planning. This is in addition to participants in intensive short training courses in development studies. Various research projects, consultancy work, seminars and other dissemination activities were implemented.

In 2003, the centre was promoted to an institute (DSRI) by the University Senate, acknowledging its efforts in the field of development studies and research in Sudan. This promotion, coinciding with rapid development in the socio-economic and political life in the country, is

at present expected to influence the direction of development studies in Sudan. It is worth mentioning here that conventional policy-oriented issues (such as poverty eradication, gender and development, privatization, peace, power sharing, and distribution of wealth, to mention only a few) are expected to be at the top of the DSRI research agenda during the next decade.

In its entire programme, the DSRI adopts an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to development studies and research. Training, research and teaching programmes are open to participants from all social sciences and disciplines related to development studies. DSRI programmes and units presently include:

1. A degree programme in Development and Planning (postgraduate diploma and master).
2. A unit for short training courses.
3. The Women and Development Unit.
4. The Computer Studies Unit.
5. The Documentation Unit.
6. The Publications Unit.

In 1979, the Women and Development (WAD) Programme was founded at the DSRC, with the support and encouragement of UNICEF, the Ford Foundation and the Dutch Government. The main goal of the WAD Programme was to provide an alternative forum for students and governmental and non-governmental organizations interested in women's issues, and to provide different levels of teaching and training on women and development. After an academic reform in 2004, the WAD Programme has become more active in short training courses on new gender issues, mostly targeting NGOs, civil society organizations, ministries, and political parties. Funds from donors, such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the EU Commission of Human Rights, are sometimes collected for training. The Institute Directorate seems to be interested in, and hence support – albeit not financially – the training courses because of such funds.

With the promotion of the centre to an institute, the WAD Programme was upgraded to a fully fledged unit within the DSRI. Currently, the activities of the WAD Unit include:

1. Training: Provided in the form of short training courses, which were developed jointly by staff members from the University of Khartoum and the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), in addition to experts from Sudanese ministries and institutions outside the University. Following the same model adopted by the DSRI, the main goal of training is to raise the consciousness of participants regarding gender issues in the field of development and the situation of women and their problems in Sudan. The training has proved to be successful to date. It was instrumental in creating a lot of interest and greater consciousness in the communities outside the University. The WAD Unit offers three types of training courses, as follows:
   a. Regular ongoing training courses: Gender and Development; Women, Law and Development; Women and Microeconomic Policies; Gender and Food Security; and other courses.
   b. Tailor-made training courses, usually designed upon special request.
   c. Outreach training courses: designed for women in the different states in Sudan with the title "Community Leaders' Training Programme." These are designed with varying issues in mind, according to the community's training needs.
2. Research: In addition to ongoing research on gender, Master's students are encouraged to conduct their research on pre-specified areas of women, gender and development. The research activity is weak at present. A recently suspended gender research competition was popular amongst the university academic staff and was based on an annual fund from the Ford Foundation.
3. Documentation: Including the WAD Unit library collection, which is part of the DSRI library, and the audiovisual library that aids the trainers in conducting the short training courses. The goal of this activity is to collect as much material as possible regarding women and gender issues.
4. Workshops and seminars on current issues.
5. Consultancy with national and international institutions.

Adopting an integrationist approach, which insists that gender studies should be incorporated into the various disciplines, the WAD Unit has so far been unable to influence the curricula in the University of

Khartoum by mainstreaming the gender component. The relationship between the WAD Unit and the structured degree programmes (post-graduate Diploma and Master's programmes) at the DSRI, on the one hand, and the other related departments, institutes and centres within the University of Khartoum, on the other hand, has been rather weak and has not lived up to the expectations in terms of such influence. This is despite the fact that part of the programme mandate of the WAD Unit is to introduce gender into the curricula of the DSRI and other related departments, institutes and centres within the university. Even within the Development Studies and Research Institute where the WAD Unit is assumed to be active, gender studies are usually merely integrated informally into the existing academic courses; however, no details on gender studies are fixed in these courses. Such integration is always a matter of the teaching staff's interest.

Failure to introduce gender into the curricula of the DSRI and the other departments, institutes and centres within the university may have something to do with the resistance of academic conservatives, who defend and adhere to traditions and attempt to preserve what they once knew and respected, and who are against change and oppose the incorporation of gender studies into the various disciplines or accommodating these studies as courses in their own right. Factors linked to this academic conservatism need to be investigated. They may include the ideological orientation, or the political affiliation of the academic staff and the prevailing patriarchal assumptions and values.

Conclusion

The conservative element within the University of Khartoum has been hindering the unceasing efforts that interested academic staff expend in order to introduce gender into the curricula of different departments, institutes and centres. Even the unit whose programme mandate is to influence these curricula through mainstreaming the gender component (i.e., the WAD Unit at the DSRI) has – up to now – been weak and not met expectations in terms of this proposed influence. It has failed to build useful relations with the structured degree programmes at the

DSRI and other related departments, institutes and centres within the University of Khartoum, where conservatism exists unobserved, ready to attack with its sharp horns and teeth.

The very few and faint moves towards "Gender Studies" within the University of Khartoum seem to have been more the initiative of international bodies. This is true mainly because, for instance, the WAD Programme/Unit at the DSRI was founded with the support and the encouragement of UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, the Dutch Government, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the EU Commission of Human Rights and the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague. Swift change in the direction of more gendered studies and research is, therefore, subject to intervention from outside.

The descriptions of courses with the term "gender" in their titles always make light of the gender component, usually in the interest of other issues revealed in these titles. Even the gender component in such courses is frequently skipped, or only lightly touched upon by uninterested teaching staff. "Gender" in other cases is integrated informally into existing academic courses with no fixed details.

Even many interested staff members still deal with "Gender Studies" as the equivalent of "Women's Studies" because of the lack of up-to-date knowledge or as a result of their conservative attitudes. One conservative attitude is that the arguments of the GAD approach may endanger useful values and norms and all that people once knew and respected.

Interest in gender research in the academic units within the University has been a function of either not having any or not having enough courses for gender sensitization. There has been little interest in gender research at both under- and postgraduate levels.

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Abbreviations

DSSA	Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
DSRC	Development Studies and Research Centre
DSRI	Development Studies and Research Institute
GAD	Gender and Development
ISS	Institute of Social Studies (in The Hague)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development

Asma Hussein M. Adam

Integrating Gender into Juba University's Curriculum: Realities and Challenges

Abstract

The University of Juba came into existence as a result of the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement (1972) that ended the civil war in southern Sudan, which had lasted for more than ten years. The University's main objective is to promote the development of the southern region as well as other Sudanese areas.

Although the University's curriculum has been developed several times to match current academic development, nevertheless, it still has not laid down a programme for fully integrating gender studies into its curricula. This paper tries to open a space for understanding the problems and challenges related to such an integration process. The primary aim, therefore, is to highlight the needs and gaps related to the development of more gender-sensitive curricula. The second aim is to highlight the practical challenges facing the University's few gender-oriented courses.

Focusing on analysing the curricula, the researcher depended fully on primary sources for data collection and did not make use of secondary sources. Consequently, the main methodology was to review the curricula of all the University's colleges, diplomas and centres in order to discover the main gaps regarding the availability of gender-related courses and the development of gender-sensitive syllabi.

The second data gathering methodology used was that of conducting direct interviews with some of the University's key academic and administrative staff. The criteria for their selection was either that they are responsible for initiating and/or teaching the syllabi of the available gender courses or that they hold administrative posts which enable them to promote and develop gender-related academic programmes.

Historical Background

In the 1930s, a programme for training clerks and typists was established in Juba. After a while, this training programme was upgraded and recognized as the Juba Training Centre (JTC). In 1954, the centre was phased out and its premises were converted into a secondary commercial school.

The idea of establishing a university in South Sudan was first raised at the Round Table Conference in March 1965. The demand was emphasized later on during the Arkweit Conference, which was held in Juba in 1971. However, the first practical steps were only undertaken after the Addis Ababa Agreement, when the University of Juba Project was formed in 1973.

In 1975, Gaffer M. Nimerie, the Sudanese President at the time, decreed the foundation of the University. The first colleges established were the College of Resources and Environmental Studies and the College of Social and Economic Studies. The University now consists of thirteen colleges in addition to four centres.

Table 1: Colleges at Juba University

College of Applied and Industrial Sciences	College of Arts and Humanities
College of Art, Music and Drama	College of Community Studies and Rural Development
College of Education	College of Computer Science and Information Technology
College of Law	College of Engineering
College of Medicine	College of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
College of Management Sciences	Preparatory College
College of Social and Economic Studies	

Table 2: Centres at Juba University

Centre for Distance Education	Centre for Human Resources Development and Continuing Education
Centre for Languages and Translation	Centre for Peace and Development

Table 1 and 2 list both the colleges and the centres at the University of Juba: through these organizations, the university offers academic certificates that range from short course certificates to postgraduate degrees.

The University's main objective is to train a workforce for the developmental needs of South Sudan and similar regions in the country. This objective takes into account the building of social life within the national goals of economic development, furthering national integration and promoting human and international understanding. And since the University's main mission is to raise and develop Southerners' educational and training capacities, it currently attracts large numbers of black students compared to other Sudanese universities. The long South-North war has compelled the University to move from its original location in Juba (in the South) to Khartoum (in the North). However, this displacement is temporary and the University will return to its original location as soon as possible.

Integrating Gender into the University's Curriculum: Status and Challenges

The University of Juba does not have a centre or a college for gender studies, or even a department specialized in women's or gender studies. The main library, as a result, is very poorly stocked as regards gender-related reference material and women's database information.

However, a few colleges offer a limited number of gender and women-related courses. My focus will be on these courses: the aim is to explore, analyse and review them, and to explain the main challenges that gender-integrating efforts face in the University's curricula. The article's methodology is based on in-depth interviews with key persons, mainly those who were responsible for initiating and/or teaching gender courses in the University.

By reviewing the academic curricula of the entire University's colleges and centres, I found only the following colleges who have developed an interest in gender courses:

1. College of Community Studies and Rural Development.
2. College of Social and Economic Studies.
3. College of Law.

College of Community Studies and Rural Development
History of the College and its Main Objectives

In 1973, the College of Adult Education and Training was established as a result of the efforts of the University of Khartoum and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) of the Federal Republic of Germany. The college has undergone several changes since its establishment. It started with a three-year Diploma in the Area of Adult Education and Community Studies until 1997. Then the college was expanded to include the Bachelor programme as well as the postgraduate programme. The name of the college was also changed to Community Studies and Rural Development. The college's main objectives are to develop a technically competent and socially-oriented workforce at various levels; to prepare individuals to take effective action with respect to a wide range of socio-economic problems in the country; to impart essential knowledge and skills; and to encourage and strengthen the capacities of the community to influence rather than to merely adjust to their environment.

A gender course called "Gender Studies" is provided to fifth-year students in the Department of Community Studies and the Department of Rural Development, in addition to the course of the same name offered by the Department of Development Communication during the third year.

The gender course was introduced in 2001/2002. When interviewing Elniema[1], one of the active female staff members, she stated that

1 Elniema Ibrahim Awad, lecturer at the College of Community Studies and Rural Development, University of Juba. The interview took place in her office in Khartoum in April 2006.

integrating gender in the college was a result of her joint effort with Dr Eltayeb Wani, the former Dean of the Faculty. She stressed the importance of offering more courses about gender, especially because of her direct observation of a growing interest from her students to learn more about the issues raised in the lectures. She pointed out that the new Department of Community Studies plans to include three branches: community development, social work and family science. In each branch, gender courses will gain a wider space.

The other main challenge is that there is great similarity in the course content provided to postgraduate students of the above-mentioned departments and that offered to undergraduates. Consequently, to overcome the gender gap successfully, there is a need to develop a curriculum that will offer a different syllabus according to each level of education. There is also a need to bring the college into close connection with gender research institutions inside and outside Sudan.

One additional disadvantage is the lack of training in gender methodology and mainstreaming among the teaching staff themselves. The college library also lacks reference material on the topic, which holds back efforts toward gender integration in the college.

Table 3: Course outline of the gender course as offered to the college's students.

1. Gender Concepts and Mainstreaming
2. Gender and Development
3. Gender-Related Theories
4. Structural Causes of Women's Subordination and Repression
5. Introduction to Women in Development (WID)
6. Introduction to Women and Development (WAD)
7. Introduction to Gender and Development (GAD)
8. Women and Development Theories
9. Types of Gender Discrimination and the Gender Gap
10. Women's Empowerment Framework
11. Methods of Integration of Gender into Strategic Policies and Plans
12. Policies and Methods for Dealing with Women-Related Problems in Third World Countries
13. Women and Media

Note: The above syllabus is offered to second-year students, semester II, Department of Development Communication, in a course called "Gender Studies". The same course is also offered to fourth-year students, semester II, Department of Rural Community Development, with some modifications, with the title of "Women in Development".

College of Social and Economic Studies
History of the College and its Main Objectives

The college came into existence with the establishment of the University in 1977. The original plan was to offer a diploma after a three-year study programme. The plan was subsequently modified and the college offered a four-year academic programme leading to a Bachelor of Science in Social and Economic Studies. In 1998/9 a fifth year (Honours) degree programme was introduced. A student who achieves a grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 or above is eligible for the Honours degree. Since then, M.Sc. and Ph.D. postgraduate diplomas have been added to the curriculum. The college has five departments offering specializations in Accounting and Public Finance, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Statistics and Demography. The college's main objectives are to train human resources for regional and national development; to promote scientific research; and to conduct research on social, economic, political and cultural aspects of human development.

Referring to the objectives stated above, it is amazing to see that most of the college's curricula are insensitive to gender issues. Contrary to what many individuals (even among teaching staff) believe, gender studies is not merely a women's concern, but a broad study that tries to organize society's relationships.

The only department that has a gender course is the Sociology Department, which offers the course "Women in Development" to students in the second semester of their fifth year.

Halla Hassan Mohamed[2] is one of the main lecturers responsible for teaching this course. In her interview, she complained about the following:

2 Halla Hassan Mohamed, M.A. in Gender and Development, lecturer at the College of Social and Economic Studies, University of Juba. Interviewed at the University of Khartoum in April 2006.

- The syllabus is flexible to the extent that every lecturer can choose his/her own syllabus according to his/her own opinion. Of course, this means that the course syllabus depends to a great extent on the lecturer's qualifications, taking into consideration the fact that few of them have had outstanding training in gender studies. However, this flexibility gives the lecturer the opportunity to update the information provided to the students (see Table 4).
- The course is designed to be offered to fifth year students only. The fifth year itself is not open to all students, in line with the university's regulations. Therefore, very few students in the Sociology Department are actually given the chance to develop their gender knowledge.
- The course is designed to provide information about the role of women in development. Students who have reached the level of the fifth year have already attended several courses that discuss development theories. Meanwhile, they know nothing about gender issues, so the course does not provide balance between its two parts (gender and development).
- The course is offered to fifth year students in their second semester. During the first semester, all of them should have selected the topic of their graduate research project and at least presented their project proposal. Therefore the opportunity to select their project topics relating to gender issues is virtually inexistent.
- The course is just an introductory lecture course and not an upper division course; it enables the student to acquire very broad information about gender issues without giving them the chance to make the field their coming specialization; it also lacks any opportunities for deepened understanding and further critical analyses.
- The course does not contain gender research methodology.

Table 4: Two syllabi of the same course

Lecturer A's Syllabus	Lecturer's B's Syllabus
Introduction: Concepts in Development	Gender Definition and Theories
Introduction: Concepts in Gender	Women and Poverty

Feminist Theories and their Critics	Structural Adjustment and Women
Applied Issues in Gender, Sex and Ethnicity	Women, Islam and Fundamentalism
Introduction to WID	Women and Conflict
Introduction to WAD	Women and the Environment
Introduction to GAD	Women and Development in Third World Countries
The Islamist Movement and Women's Status	International Agreements Concerning Gender Issues
Structural Adjustment and Women	Women's Empowerment

Table 4 illustrates how different the syllabus of the same course is when given by two different lecturers. The course is offered to fifth-year students, semester II, Department of Sociology, Social and Economic Studies.

College of Law
History of the College and its Main Objectives

The college was established in September 1998. Its main objectives are to train students to become judges and lawyers in the South and other Sudanese regions; to render services and legal aid to citizens who can not afford to hire lawyers to defend them before the courts; to impart general legal awareness at large; and to undertake developmental legal studies.

Reviewing the whole undergraduate curriculum of the college, I found it to be totally gender-blind. This is the case while one of the most important dimensions of discrimination against women exists in either state or customary laws. Developing gender sensitivity is therefore highly important for those who work in legal fields. In fact, as explained by Professor Elhawati[3], Dean of the Faculty of Law, many students choose women-related issues as their graduate projects. But the gender-blind curriculum and insufficient awareness prevent them

3 Professor Barakat Musa Elhawati, Ph.D. in Constitutional and Administrative Law, the Present Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Juba. He was interviewed in his office in April 2006.

from making practical use of gender tools and analyses to draw conclusions for their research. To fill the gap, the faculty is proposing the establishment of students' scientific societies within the faculty, so as to raise students' awareness of law-related issues, and gender will be among the main interests of such societies, once established.

At the M.Sc. level, students are offered a gender course called "Women's Rights". The course seems to be an isolated island in a gigantic sea. The following table includes the main syllabus:

Table 5: The main syllabus of the women's rights course

Women's Rights in International Charters and Agreements
Women's Rights in Traditional African Societies
Women's Rights in Sharia Law
Women's Rights in Sudanese Legislation

Table 5 illustrates the main syllabus of the only gender-related course in the College of Law. The course, "Women's Rights", is offered to postgraduate students.

University's Centres

Apart from the colleges, the university has established the following four main centres:

1. Centre for Languages and Translation
2. Centre for Distance Education
3. Centre for Human Development and Continuing Education
4. Centre for Peace and Development

The Centre for Languages and Translation is a linguistic centre which tries to improve students' capabilities in basic languages and translation, so it is not surprising to discover that the centre has nothing to do with gender issues.

The Centre for Distance Education is designed to offer a chance to those who missed, for one reason or another, the opportunity to enter regular studies at a university. The centre's curriculum is simply similar to that of an ordinary centre, so one finds the same problems concerning gender integration as discussed above.

The Centre for Human Development and Continuing Education was established in 2000. The overall goal of the centre is to participate in the promotion of human resources through practical training programmes. It offers undergraduate diplomas in Accounting and Financial Management, Political Science, Public Administration and Translation.

The curricula of all of the centre's departments are totally gender-blind. However, I am responsible for teaching the Political Science Department's students a course called "Contemporary Political Issues". I have managed to add two or three lectures about gender mainstreaming, basic gender-related concepts and reasons for a global tendency towards reviewing women's status in societies to the syllabus. Indeed, I found many misunderstandings concerning gender-related issues, which need to be removed. For example, many students believe that gender is a western tool used to dominate Islamic culture or to counteract traditional African culture.

The Centre for Peace and Development was established in 1997 as a reaction to the needs of specialized scientific inquiry in the areas of conflict, peace and development. The centre consists of three main departments, as follows:

- Peace and Diplomatic Studies Department.
- Humanitarian and Conflict Studies Department.
- Department of Strategic Studies.

Reviewing the centre's curriculum, it is easy to discover its blindness regarding gender studies, despite the fact that peace and conflict studies and gender studies have recently been significantly incorporated into the curriculum.

Conclusion

Sudanese culture is generally patriarchal and divisions based on gender and ethnicity are a dominant aspect. The traditional conditions of Sudanese women are highly connected to culture and religion. Therefore, gender-related studies are viewed by many with suspicion. With the exception of women's universities in Sudan, most of, if not all, Sudanese universities' curricula are traditional in the sense that they

are gender-blind. The University of Juba offers no exception regarding this issue. Although a few colleges have gender courses, these appear not as a fully integrated part of the college curriculum, but merely as an isolated component of it.

There are many problems facing gender integration in the University of Juba's curricula. The most important ones are:

- It is very difficult to change the existing curricula, especially at undergraduate level.
- The university has no independent research-based centre which could review the university's traditional courses and incorporate new analyses and methodologies.
- Most of the lecturers and academics are either unaware of the importance of gender studies or simply think that they are a women's affair. They are unfamiliar with feminist research. Moreover, many of them do not believe that gender studies are an area of scientific inquiry and a source of intellectual work. Some simply want to support the status quo.
- Many of the academic staff who are responsible for teaching gender studies lack appropriate training, manuals and references.

Recommendations

The first step for successful gender integration is to make the issue more legitimate, that is, to increase awareness among the academic staff of the need for such integration. They should be trained to enhance their theoretical knowledge on gender and should be supported with publications in the field of gender studies. There is also a need to establish and develop good communication with international centres.

Because it is difficult to undertake large steps towards improvement regarding the problem of integrating gender issues into the university curriculum, the Political Science Department has already proposed a gender-related course for third year political science students. This issue is still being discussed. It is a small but important step in the right direction.

Abbreviations

FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GAD	Gender and Development
GPA	Grade Point Average
JTC	Juba Training Centre
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development

Martine Wiltzius and Sandra Lewalter

Gender Studies and the GenderCompetenceCenter at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Abstract

The restructuring of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HUB) at the beginning of the 1990s provided an opportunity to institutionalize women's and gender studies within several subjects at the University. On this basis, the Gender Studies programme in the mid-1990s was established as the first Master of Arts of its kind in Germany. The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies coordinates the programme and provides an institutional frame for it. The main areas of interest are the category of gender and the interdependent connection of this category with other patterns of social order and norms such as gender, race and class.

The GenderCompetenceCenter at the HUB was founded in 2003 to ensure the implementation and sustainability of gender mainstreaming. It plays a significant part in combining gender theories and gender research in its everyday consulting activities.

The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Gender Studies programme

The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG) combines the former Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies (ZiF) and the Master of Arts in Gender Studies[1].

1 In the context of the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education in Bologna in 1999, the Master of Arts study programme is to be transformed into a B.A. undergraduate and an M.A. graduate study course.

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies was founded in December 1989, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, by academic staff at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, who had already been active for many years in adopting and working out feminist research approaches. During the re-structuring of the HUB at the beginning of the 1990s, it was possible to establish the ZiF as a long-term institution and to institutionalize women's and gender studies within several subjects. On this basis, both experienced and newly qualified academic staff established the Gender Studies programme in the mid-1990s. The programme was set up without extra expense in the winter semester of 1997/1998 as the first Master of Arts in Gender Studies programme of its kind in Germany. The ZtG was founded with the primary intention of providing financial, structural and staffing security for the Gender Studies programme and of creating a shared space for teachers and students.

The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies brings together gender competencies from all disciplines, coordinates the Gender Studies programme and provides an institutional frame for the transdisciplinary programme. One of the ZtG's goals is to facilitate, support and develop activities which are crucial for gender studies, as well as to build networks with different fields of public life. The Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies aims to provide a point of contact for those teaching, researching and studying gender around the world. Active networks exist with other Gender Studies Centres, especially in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Warsaw University), Northern Europe (e.g. the University of Oslo) and in the Anglo-American area such as the University of Sussex and the University of Toronto.

A group of national and international researchers and academic staff, students, and others from universities and the general public who are interested in gender find a forum at the ZtG where they can exchange views, transfer knowledge and engage in a critical reflection on gender. In this context, the ZtG combines all the aspects which are indispensable for a scientifically founded analysis of gender relations, bringing together various disciplines and people involved in research and diverse forms of critical discussion from the category of gender in all theoretical and social areas.

Under the auspices of the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Gender Studies programme is characterized by its variety and breadth of disciplines. Eight faculties are involved, with a core of seventeen subjects[2]. This sets the scene for the transdisciplinary orientation of gender studies, based on the fact that the question of the category of gender, its characteristics, origins, the way it changes and its impacts simply cannot be defined by any one subject or discipline. Therefore, research and teaching come together at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in a transdisciplinary way. The main areas of interest are a critical way of thinking about the category of gender and the interdependent connection of this category with other patterns of social order and norms, for example, gender, race and class. Covering various fields of study from history to medicine, the Gender Studies programmes involve:

- an understanding of the constitutive meaning of the category of "gender" in various disciplines, and concepts, stereotypes and prejudices involved in notions of femininity and masculinity (see von Braun, Knapp 2005).
- the connection between gender, race and class and combined discrimination (see Knapp 2003).
- a critical reflection on traditional criteria for academic standards such as "objectivity", "rationality" or "neutrality".
  the mechanisms of the reproduction of gender-based inequality.
- an understanding of the impact of existing gender categories and the cultural patterns that constitute "gender".

The GenderCompetenceCenter

History

The GenderCompetenceCenter, just like all institutions of its kind, does not have only one history, but can trace its development back through several different histories, without which it would not exist.

2 A full list of the faculties and scientists involved in the study programme is provided at the website http://www.gender.hu-berlin.de/eng/center/people/areas ofstudy/

One root of the foundation of the GenderCompetenceCenter lies in the Coalition Agreement of 16 October 2002 between the SPD and Bündnis 90/die Grünen. In Section VII, "Equal Treatment of Women and Men" there is a section that reads "Gender mainstreaming should be established in a sustained way as a method for implementing Article 3 of the German Constitution in all Federal Government Ministries and departments. (...) We will set up a gender competence centre which will support the introduction of gender mainstreaming into all policy fields, initiate research, bundle knowledge and train experts."

Before the GenderCompetenceCenter was established by the Coalition Agreement, academic advisers had been working since 2001 as an Inter-Ministry Working Group (IMA), the Federal Government's committee responsible for guiding the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The committee members included Prof. Dr. Susanne Baer, LL.M., Brigitta Kreß, Dipl.-Soz., Mara Kuhl, M.A., Dr. Brigitte Sellach and Dr. Uta Enders-Dragässer. The working group was led by the Society for Women's Research in the Social Sciences (GSF e.V.).

A third step was the implementation of Section 2 of the Joint Rules of Procedure for the Federal Government (GGO), i.e. the principle of gender mainstreaming, in the German government in 2002. Under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), gender mainstreaming tools have been developed in the form of instruments for the Federal Ministries. One example is the working tool on gender mainstreaming for the preparation of legislation with regard to impact assessments (see Schweikert 2002).

In addition to these political developments, the formation of the GenderCompetenceCenter also has a history within the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin itself. In early 2003, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies (ZiF) became the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG). This is the place where the GenderCompetence-Center has its home as an independent research centre and consultancy institution at the HUB. It is an externally-funded project attached to the chair of Professor Dr. Susanne Baer, Faculty of Law, and is financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

The Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin constitutes a good base for the GenderCompetenceCenter for several reasons:

- The HUB has a fully fledged Master degree course in Gender Studies which is more than just a network or an extension course. This means that cooperation among faculties, training of junior academics, transfer of gender knowledge by means of practical experience in government ministries and competence in continued and further training are practised as a matter of course.
- All the main subject areas and (political) fields of action are represented in the Gender Studies programme, including in particular the legal system, the employment market, socialization and organization and staff issues.
- The Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin is part of a dense network of cooperative ventures in Berlin (including the Free University, the University of the Arts, the Technical University, and various higher education institutes *(Fachhochschulen)*; in Germany, for example, the University of Potsdam and the University of Erfurt; and in other European countries such as Norway and England. It also works with non-university institutions such as the Center of Excellence Women and Science in Bonn and the Gender Institute in Hamburg.
- The Humboldt-Universität is located in the capital, where it is able to provide ad hoc advice and training for Federal Ministries and politicians. The GenderCompetenceCenter sees itself primarily as a point of contact for knowledge and information between those involved in application, research and consultancy. It does not compete with consultancy services on the free market.

From science to practice: the work of the GenderCompetenceCenter

The aim of the GenderCompetenceCenter is to transfer knowledge from gender research into practice, specifically regarding target groups. The GenderCompetenceCenter's target groups include the European Union, the German Federal Administration, the German Parliament and parties, civil society, associations, companies and the media. In this regard, the GenderCompetenceCenter offers:

- consulting services for the Federal Administration and other target groups
- provision of gender knowledge
- a database profiling gender mainstreaming experts
- university teaching
- cooperation and conferences
- and works at the interface between GM consultants and gender research.

The main focus of the GenderCompetenceCenter is on ensuring the implementation and sustainability of gender mainstreaming[3] in successive federal administrations in fields of policy such as legislation, research or staff management (see Baer, Englert 2006). Thus, it is important to clarify what gender mainstreaming means, not only as a strategy to enhance gender equality but also in the specific fields of policy. Gender mainstreaming in the field of legislation, for instance, means taking into account gender perspectives at all legislative stages and promoting gender equality through legislation. All proposed legislation, even when it is apparently neutral, has an impact, whether intended or not, on existing gender relations and should therefore be analysed as regards to its effects on women and men (see Baer, Lewalter 2007). The German Federal Government has developed a tool called "Gender Mainstreaming for the Preparation of Legislation"[4]. This tool provides practical support to all employees who are in charge of assessing the impact of legislation on women and men. The GenderCompetenceCenter offers consulting and training for employees of the federal administration in order to enable them to work with this tool.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming with its intention to bring about a considerable change towards gender equality naturally also faces opposition. The GenderCompetenceCenter tries to deal with these reservations in an open and productive way by explaining

3 For a detailed description, see http://www.genderkompetenz.info/eng/gendermainstreaming/strategy/

4 The tool is only available in German and can be downloaded from the web site http://www.genderkompetenz.info/w/files/gkompzpdf/instr_ah_rechtsetzung.pdf

and illustrating the positive effects gender mainstreaming has both on policymaking and gender equality.

Since dealing with gender must be as diverse as gender itself, bringing across the complexity of the category of gender is one of the most difficult tasks of all. Gender is not only about women and men, but also takes into account other social dimensions such as age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and individual ability or disability. For employees in administration it is still a challenge to consider gender in its diversity when they draft a bill or write a report. Therefore, it is crucial to provide gender knowledge and to raise awareness of gender relevance in policymaking. The main source of providing gender knowledge is via the GenderCompetenceCenter's web site, which provides information on gender and gender knowledge, on the implementation of gender mainstreaming within an organization, as well as on the role of gender in policy fields and subject areas such as employment, education and migration. The subject areas present the current state of research in gender studies. Furthermore, the GenderCompetenceCenter co-organizes public events such as conferences, expert meetings and a series of public lectures known as the "Gender Lectures" with the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies. These lectures deal with gender equality issues and introduce current gender research findings from various subjects areas such as feminist economics in Europe, inter-sexuality, African feminist theory or changes in the family as an institution. Providing gender knowledge from science to practice is also a task of the GenderCompetenceCenter's scientific team. Each semester, staff members offer seminars in the context of the Gender Studies programme, which aim to prepare students for practical experience in the field of gender mainstreaming.

Conclusion

The Gender Studies programme has become an integral part of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. With reference to the number of students who enrolled in the winter semester of 2006/2007[5], one can state that the study programme has gained a significant popularity.

The high number of enrolments since the creation of the study programme in 1998[6] underlines the growing interest in gender issues as an academic subject and field of research. In this regard, the GenderCompetenceCenter plays a significant part in combining gender theories and gender research in its everyday consulting activities (see Degele 2003). In 2005, the German government re-integrated the GenderCompetenceCenter into the Coalition Agreement and thus emphasized the role of the Centre and the necessity of the implementation of gender mainstreaming at federal level. Therefore, the GenderCompetenceCenter fulfils a considerable function by supporting the implementation of the gender mainstreaming process and constituting a role model in the international context.

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5 87 students enrolled in the Gender Studies B.A. programme in the winter semester of 2006/2007, representing the highest number of enrolment compared to other study programmes within the Institute for Cultural Sciences and Arts.

6 The enrolment of students for the Master of Arts degree averaged out at approximately 400 students per semester until the B.A./M.A. study programmes started in the winter semester in 2006.

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Abbreviations

BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth *(Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend)*
GGO	Joint Rules of Procedure for the Federal Government, i.e. the principle of gender mainstreaming in the German government (2002) *(Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien)*
GSF	Society for Women's Research in the Social Sciences *(Gesellschaft für Sozialwissenschaftliche Frauen- und Genderforschung)*
HUB	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
IMA	Inter-Ministerial Working Group *(Interministerielle Arbeitsgruppe)*
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany *(Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)*
ZiF	Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies *(Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Frauenstudien)*
ZtG	Transdisciplinary Gender Studies *(Zentrum für Transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien)*

Shahla Ezazi

Women's Studies in Iran: A Round-Table Discussion

Abstract

In spring 2006, the Women's Studies Group of the Iranian Sociology Association held a round-table discussion about the problems of Women's Studies in Iranian universities. Members of educational groups, students and activists were invited to the round table, where they discussed the difficulties of the subject.

The following is the summary of this discussion, which covered both the positive aspects as well as the difficulties of this discipline. In addition, some aspects of the development and changes in the field of Women's Studies in Iran are described.

Introduction

Although the women's movement has a long tradition in Iran, Women's Studies as a university discipline is relatively new. It was first established as a multidisciplinary field of studies in Iran in 1999 with the first students attending programmes from October 2000. Women's Studies started in three universities in Tehran: Allameh Tabataba'i University, Alzahra University and Tarbiat Moddares University. Each university initially enrolled ten students, most of whom had previously studied social science.

It should be mentioned that the initiators of this programme of studies were activists from NGOs, who made the first draft and syllabus for this programme.

Women's Studies has three majors: Women and Family, Women and History, and Women and Islam. In the first year of the programme, three universities announced their willingness to offer Women's Studies: Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU) and Alzahra University (a women's university) were both willing to offer courses in Women

and Family. The third university, Tarbiat Moddares University, offered Women and Islam as a major.

During the first semester, Allameh and Alzahra Universities gained a better understanding of the difficulties regarding the courses and syllabus and tried to change some of the courses and their content accordingly. Allameh Tabataba'i University changed some courses, partly because the syllabus of some courses overlapped with others, while some new and more important courses such as Introducing Women's Studies, Feminist Theories and the Women's Movement were added; in addition, some subjects were replaced by others, for example, English was offered instead of Arabic and Qualitative Research Methodology took the place of Statistics.

The students are mainly women and most of them are activists from institutions or NGOs. However, a few men can be found in this faculty too. Most of the students want to learn more about the situation of women in Iran. Most of them think that this programme is beneficial to them, although they are also critical of some aspects of the programme.

In Allameh Tabataba'i University the women's studies group is linked to the Faculty of Sociology and the lecturers are mainly from this faculty. Of course, lecturers from other disciplines such as the Faculties of Psychology, Literature and Law, also give classes. However, the programme is based on sociology. The course of studies takes five semesters. The students have to write a thesis about women's issues in the fourth semester. There are some very good theses which focus on new topics such as "Mothering", "Power Relations in the Family" and the "Effect of Religious Groups on Women".

The number of universities offering Women's Studies has increased: there are now five universities in Tehran, one in Isfahan (the University of Isfahan) and another in Shiraz (the University of Shiraz) offering this programme.

Women's Studies Group of the Iranian Sociology Association

Besides the universities, there are different women's groups which are also very active. One is the Women's Studies Group of the Iranian

Sociology Association. This group consists of sociologists and other social scientists and is a scientific NGO. It holds workshops, seminars, discussion groups and speeches about women's problems.

For example, this group holds seminars about violence against women, women and literature, and women in the public sphere. It also organizes round-table discussions with active NGOs and speeches about different issues such as gender analysis and the gender approach. Other activities include workshops about qualitative research methodology and research conducted outside Iran, which help participants to familiarize themselves with new concepts, theories and methodology.

The group also has some publications, the most recent of which, *Feminism and Perspectives*, is a translation of important feminist articles by Hartman, Delphy, Ortner, Walby and others.

The women's movement was the topic in 2006 and the group held several speeches on this issue.

It is very important to mention that the audience is not only made up of students but also of women from different age groups and different social positions. Some are employees, some are housewives, some are activists and there are also some men in the audience.

As the director of this group and a lecturer in Women's Studies at Allameh Tabataba'i University, I have tried to hold some round-table discussions about the difficulties and problems of this field.

Our last round-table discussion was held in June 2006. Members of educational groups, students and activists were invited and they discussed the problems of Women's Studies. The results are shown below.

Summary of the Round-Table Discussion

Through the discussions, we realized that there are both positive and negative aspects of Women's Studies.

First of all, we have to emphasize the positive aspects of Women's Studies on students and on academic life: The students of Women's Studies are now critical of events in society. They are aware of the inequality in society and are trying to change it and help others. They think about the situation of women in Iran. They no longer believe

that this situation is the natural way of living and that no changes are possible. Furthermore, they believe that if the situation were changed and a more equitable society were achieved, it would be better for everybody, even for men. This is a very positive point because they do not believe that there is a division between men and women but rather that only by working together can we achieve a better world.

Students of Women's Studies have learnt to listen to others. They are open-minded and try to have rational discussions with people who think differently. They believe in differences as well as in similarities. Only in this way will it be possible to understand that the problems faced by women are not personal but rather the structural problems of society as a whole, which should not place women against men.

Another positive point is that many activists and NGOs are watching this programme and as a result, there is a great tendency to correct problems facing this field in a flexible way. Although Women's Studies are only a few years old, many changes and corrections have already been made and some problems have been solved.

Furthermore, the attitudes of some academics have changed since Women's Studies became part of the university landscape. For instance, there are some courses about the sociology of gender in the new sociology syllabus. Women's Studies tries to use different research methodologies and sociology is also concerned with focus group discussions and qualitative research methods. There is much research on gender problems and some on gender stereotypes.

Another positive effect of Women's Studies is that some sociologists are rethinking theories. It is not only that women tend to be invisible in theories, but that stereotypes are about both men and women. Men are classified in gender stereotypes and many aspects of men's lives such as their role in the family as fathers or husbands are never mentioned. Some sociologists are now reviewing the situation of men. Efforts should be taken to study the concept of masculinity in Iran as well as in other societies, which will be a necessary step toward a better understanding of gender relations and the structures of our societies.

In summary, we can say that Women's Studies in Iran have led to new concepts in sociology, that is, a perception that women are not against men, that social problems affect both women and men, and

that changes are needed in order to make a better world and society for both. In short, there is a new understanding that the aim of feminism is not against men.

However, there are still some problems regarding this subject. The first problem is that there are few instructors familiar with this field and although they are competent in their own discipline, they are not gender-aware. Another problem is that they are not familiar with the literature necessary for this field and are therefore not able to help students to find the important textbooks. We suggest that the educational groups should encourage lecturers to pay more attention to this field and help them to become more familiar with women's and gender studies. The other problem is that university libraries are not well-stocked and students only have access to the library at their own university.

Despite changes in the curriculum, there are still some overlaps between courses, for example, the two courses on women's rights in Islam and family law both have the same content. This means that there are still some changes to be made. All the round-table discussion participants insist on reviewing the curriculum.

The students have to write a thesis about women issues during their fourth semester. A committee usually authorizes the title, question, importance and research methodology of the thesis. Because the members of the committee are not familiar with women's issues, there are some difficulties in getting approval from them. For example, they cannot understand the importance of research about "mothering" or the everyday life of a housewife because they believe that these roles are natural and do not regard them as important enough for a university research topic.

The most important negative aspect is the humiliating attitude of other academic staff toward the students, especially toward male students. It is recommended that the educational groups should try to change this negative attitude by holding seminars to introduce this new subject. International conferences and the presence of international guests could help to upgrade the image of gender and women's studies among students and staff members.

Students are willing to publish their newspaper, to hold seminars, to invite activists for speeches and to have book exhibitions, but

unfortunately these activities are forbidden because the authorities believe that women in Iran (and Islam) do not have any problems and that the ideas of feminism should not be disseminated. For example, in 2006 the students wanted to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March as a day of unity and solidarity. It was a great campaign but they were not permitted to organize any event because the government believes that International Women's Day is an idea from the West. And if the students want to celebrate Women's Day, they should celebrate the birthday of Holy Zeynab, the granddaughter of the prophet Mohammed. This is an example which reveals attitudes toward Women's Studies. Zeynab's birthday is another day to celebrate, but 8 March is the day to show solidarity with women's problems.

Other problems

In Iran, students have to sit a state-run and centralized university entrance examination. Some students think that the subjects they have to study for the entrance examination are not relevant to their subsequent field of studies. It would be better if universities had more control over the questions.

Another very important issue is the problem of internet filtering in Iran. In the internet era, it is possible to get information from all over the world. However, in Iran all words regarded as obscene are filtered and web sites containing them are not available to the public. Unfortunately key words such as *women*, *girl*, *sex*, and *gender* are also filtered. The filtering process thus includes key words necessary to women's studies, so access to relevant web sites is severely curtailed. All web sites and articles with these key words are not available to the public nor to students. But for students it is more important to have access in order to conduct their own research on these topics.

Academic institutions should make it clear to the filtering organizations that these words are not obscene and web sites containing them should be available to students. Beside the fact that websites are filtered, some institutions' servers are not subject to filtering. It will be important that scientific and research institutions are among them.

We recommend that our students be in contact with women's NGOs. They should build a bridge between practice and theory so that they can benefit from learning about NGOs' practice-oriented activities, while NGOs can become familiar with theories about the causes of the situation of women in Iran.

We also recommend that students have contact with each other. For instance, they could establish an NGO for students of Women's Studies in Iran. Moreover, they should be in contact with students outside Iran. The main problem is that their English skills are not good enough, so they are afraid of writing in English.

Women's Studies has positive and negative aspects. We do believe that if we endeavour, some changes will be possible. Each year many interested students attend classes in Women's Studies. Most of them are women in different positions, including employed women, housewives and young students. All of them are interested in the situation of women in Iran. We try to give them a picture of the causes of inequality, to provide them with opportunities to think critically about the phenomena they see in everyday life and hope that the new generation can have a better society.

There are no courses on feminist theories or the women's movement for students, but we can offer a picture about these subjects in other classes. For example, by discussing "Introducing Women's Studies" we can give students a short history of the women's movement in Iran and in the world, besides other subjects that need to be taught. In sociology one can include the debate on feminist theories. But most of all, it is important to show how students can look at society from the women's perspective. There are controversial positions concerning these issues.

Reading list

There are some books about the importance of women's education, political participation, empowerment, the role of women in development and other related subjects. I think the most important problem is that many instructors are not familiar with women's issues so they are not able to help students with book recommendations.

Publications of translations are not curriculum-oriented but depend on the taste of translators as that of publishers. There are some publishers who are specialized in women's and gender studies. The most important one is Roshangaran, others are Tooseeh, Ney and Shirazeh.

Of course, there are translations of very important books such as *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Friedrich Engels or *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir. Fatima Mernissi's and Nawal El-Sadawi's books are also available in translation. There are many translations on subjects such as psychology, ethnology, economy and the women's movement.

Instead of giving a list of references, some titles available in Iran will be mentioned below. There are many books about women in Iran, both in translation and by Iranian authors.

Translations in Farsi include:

Abbott, Pamela; Wallace, Clare 1999: *An Introduction to Sociology: Feminist Perspectives*, Ney, Tehran.
Ezazi, Shahla (ed.) 2006: *Feminism and Perspectives*, Roshangaran, Tehran.
Figes, Kate 2004: *Because of Her Sex: The Myth of Equality for Women in Britain*, Gol Azin, Tehran.
Freedman, Jane 2000: *Feminism*, Ashtian, Tehran.
Lloyd, Genevieve 1995: *The Man of Reason. "Male" & "Female" in Western Philosophy*, Ney, Tehran.
McAfee, Noëlle 2006: *Julia Kristeva*, Markaz, Tehran.
Thönnessen, Werner 1982: *The Emancipation of Women*, Roshangaran, Tehran.

Books about Iran by Iranian authors (in Farsi)

Ebadi, Shirin 2002: *Women's Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Ganje Danesh, Tehran.
Ebadi, Shirin 1990: *Children's Rights*, Rooshangaran, Tehran.
Ezazi, Shahla 1997/2006: *Sociology of the Family*, Rooshangaran, Tehran.
Ezazi, Shahla 2002: *Family Violence – Battered Women*, Saly, Tehran.
Kar, Mehrangiz 2001: *Which Right, Which Duty,* Jamee Iranian, Tehran.

Kar, Mehrangiz 1997: *A Study About Violence Against Women in Iran*, Rooshangaran, Tehran.
Nercessiance, Emilia 2004: *Gender Anthropology*, Afkar, Tehran.

There are some journals published in Farsi by women's research centres such as:

Alzahra University (Women's Research Centre): *Women's Studies*, Safiri, Khadije (ed.), Alzahra University, Tehran.
Tehran University: *Women's Research. A Quarterly Journal of the Centre for Women's Studies*, Ravadrad, Azam (ed.) Tehran University, Tehran.

Other journals in Farsi specializing in women's issues

The Season of Women, Ahmadi Khorasani, Nooshin (ed.), Rooshangaran, Tehran.
Farzaneh. Journal on Gender Issues, Agha Sheikh Mohammad, Maryam (ed.), Olive Leaf, Tehran.
Zanan Magazine, Sherkat, Shahla (ed.), Khatam and Chapgostar, Tehran.

Web logs

It is very important to mention the increasing participation of women in web logs.

Abbreviations

ATU	Allameh Tabataba'i University
NGO	Non-governmental organization

Rashidah Shuib

Achieving Gender Equality: Revising the Role of the Gender and Women's Studies Centre in Advocating Gender Mainstreaming in Malaysia

Abstract

Gender mainstreaming has been identified by the UN ECOSOC as one of the critical strategies to achieve the goal: gender equality. This has been reaffirmed by countries including Malaysia at various world forums. But gender equality seems to be facing an uphill battle, particularly given the recent backlash of conservatism globally. Nationally, Malaysia has been witnessing a more conservative trend, both religious and non-religious, often reflected in vocal voices opposing discussions on religious related issues such as the Islamic Family Law or even secular international instruments such as the CEDAW, an instrument which the Malaysian government has ratified. It would seem that Gender/Women's Studies Centres in the country need to re-evaluate their roles vis-à-vis this development and learn to use some of the strategies used by women's NGOs in advancing women's issues. These Centres need to make an impact on policies, programmes and interventions and can no longer remain in the comfort of the traditional academic cocoon. This paper argues for the re-examination of these roles as well as the challenges ahead, using the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) as a case study.

Introduction

The ratification of the CEDAW and the signing of various UN documents such as the Beijing 1995 Platform for Action (PfA) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

1994 PfA could be read as governments' commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Similarly, the establishment of various mechanisms such as the Women's Ministry, Gender Focal Points or Gender Units by some countries may also give the impression that 'real' efforts are being made to advance the gender equality agenda and that the path ahead is smooth. This could be far from the truth. The fight for gender equality takes place within the context of increasing conservatism globally and uncertain political national contexts in many countries. Nationally, the fog of conservatism is also evident in many countries, including Malaysia. On the other hand, many of these countries have seen Gender Centres or Women's Studies Centres being established in universities with the mandate to move women's issues forward, basically through research and teaching, the traditional academic ambit.

At the international level, organizations such as the UNESCO encourage and support these centres as "… one way UNESCO seeks to promote gender equality" (UNESCO 2004). Given the present ideological and political climate both internationally and nationally, and the fact that gender equality issues are highly contestable, Gender Centres in tertiary institutions have to evaluate their positions and their roles with the aim of seeking more effective strategies to ensure that gender equality as a goal will not be diminished without deviating from the given mandate. This paper intends to use the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia as a case study. It begins by presenting a brief overview of the status of the Gender Centres/Units in Malaysia and then focuses on KANITA. The paper continues by suggesting some of the strategies that KANITA could adopt and ends with a section on the challenges ahead. In this paper the terms Gender Studies Centres and Women Studies Centres are used interchangeably. It is assumed that all these centres in Malaysia, regardless of the labels, use gender, either openly or subtly, as their ideological and operational framework.

Gender Centres/Units in Malaysia

"In Malaysia, Women's Studies and Gender Studies are new fields struggling to be accepted as legitimate academic fields equal to mainstream disciplines." (Thambiah 2004: 302)

"All Malaysian universities have accepted Gender Studies as a legitimate field of study, but how the field has been developed and to what purpose it has been put to use differ from one university to another." (Hassan 2004: 294)

The two conflicting statements above were made by the heads of two Gender Studies Centres/Units from two universities in Malaysia in their respective country institutional reports submitted to the UNESCO Regional Consultation on Women's/Gender Studies Programmes in the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Bangkok in December 2003. Depending on how one views Gender Studies in Malaysia, one could end up with the above contradictory conclusions. It is true that the main government universities in the country do have Gender/Women Studies in their academic prospectus. But none of the universities offers it as a major academic area. The section below presents a brief description of the Centres. A special section presents the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) as a case study.

Gender Studies Programme, University Malaya

Founded during the academic session of 1994/1995, the Gender Studies Programme, under the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, offers a minor programme in Gender Studies. It also offers a graduate research programme (Master's and Ph.D.). Its formation was "conceptualized to meet contemporary needs in our fast industrializing nation" (Thambiah 2004). In terms of research, the programme has looked at gender and labour; gender, development and population; domestic violence; gender roles; gender and politics; as well as focusing on the minority indigenous groups. The main dissemination channels were publications in journals, chapters in books, and published and unpublished reports and theses. The programme is linked to the

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO), and other women's NGOs.

Gender Research Centre, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Established on 1 July 2003, the Centre is located in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, with a mission "to become a center of excellence that seeks to enhance knowledge and expertise in the field of gender studies so that information gathered and the skills acquired through its activities could contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the peoples of Malaysia and Southeast Asia" (Hassan 2004). Academically, the Centre began by offering the Master of Social Sciences (Gender Studies) programme of course work and research. Unlike the Gender Studies Programme at University Malaya, this Centre's main focus is on research concerns. The six areas identified are cultural constructs of the body; democracy, politics and law; economy, labour and work; family, well-being and household strategies; education and human development; and science, technology and human development. In terms of links, the Centre is linked to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development; the Gender Studies Programme (University Malaya), Institute of Language and Literature (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka), the Southeast Asian Association for Gender Studies (Malaysia Branch), SAMA; NCWO; Institute of Gerontology; Universiti Putra Malaysia, and it plans to link up with a few other Ministries. It is also linked to the Mahidol University International College, Thailand; the Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS), Sweden; and the Toyota Foundation (Hassan 2004). What is noticeable in the Centre's links is that it is not connected to other international Gender Studies Centres/Programmes.

Women's Studies Unit, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Founded in 1975, this Unit began with a strong applied research and application orientation. This may have been shaped by the nature of the

Centre for Extension and Continuing Education which was involved in research, teaching and community development. Unfortunately, the Unit has been downsized and moved to the Department of Professional Development and Continuing Education. According to Thambiah (2004), the Unit now offers only one course on Gender and Human Resource Development. Research seems to cover various areas such as gender and development planning; gender division of labour; women's access to resources, and women and industrialization. It is not clear from the web site whether the Unit has established formal links with institutions other than through funding purposes.

Other universities such Universiti Malaysia Sarawak; Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Utara Malaysia do not have dedicated units or programmes looking at Women's studies or gender issues.

Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia: A Case Study for "Re-Visioning"?

Like many Women's/Gender Studies Centres in the Asia-Pacific, KANITA was born in the throes of the 1970s when countries were pushing for economic development. In the 1970s, Malaysia embarked on an aggressive industrialization policy which saw the opening up of the electronic sector in the country. This marked economic departure from agriculture resulted in the very visible mass migration of young women from rural to urban areas for employment as factory workers. Globally, women's movements were making their marks with the Nairobi conference 1985 and the declaration of the UN decade 1975–1985 for Women being added to the movement. For Malaysia, both international and internal factors were gelling together to trigger academic work in women's issues. And given the very active, vibrant and young School of Social Sciences in Universiti Sains Malaysia, it was just a matter of time until academics would see the need to pay attention to women's issues.

The evolution of KANITA began with its embryonic stage in the form of research funded by UNICEF "to develop rural women in the poorest Northern regions of the peninsula." According to Wazir (1999), the founder of KANITA, this research "created a new intellectual history in

Malaysian Social Sciences." It was multi-disciplinary, generated new ideas and concerns in women's issues and placed "Malaysia on the global map of charting feminist discourses with its own indigenous philosophy."

This early formation of KANITA is similar to the formation of women's studies in India, where the majority of women's studies began primarily as research programmes (UNESCO 2004). From a research cluster, KANITA evolved to become the Women's and Human Resources Studies Unit still located in the School of Social Sciences on 18 January 1991 (KANITA 1991). On 17 April 2001, the Unit's status was raised to that of a Centre, now known as the Women's Development Research Centre but KANITA is kept not only for nostalgic reasons but also to continuously remind us that women's and children's issues will continue to be at the heart of the Centre's work even though the research parameters may extend beyond women and children. As a Centre, it is now autonomous, with its own Director and a Board, and no longer accountable to the Dean of the School of Social Sciences.

Academically, the Centre offers a Master in Social Sciences (Gender Studies) and Ph.D. It does not offer a minor because structurally it is established as a research centre and not a school. However this should not prevent the Centre from finding creative ways to ensure that gender related courses are offered by other schools.

In terms of research, KANITA has worked within the gender framework right from the beginning, covering both applied and theoretical research. Its strengths lie in its multi-disciplinary faculty members who are associates of the Centre and in the support provided by the University's administration to the Centre. This will be further strengthened because the University has just authorized the Centre to recruit its own academic staff and visiting professors and lecturers. Though the number allotted is small, it will make a big difference for the Centre to have its own academic staff who can now give their full attention to the Centre's work. In terms of research dissemination, KANITA has used not only the regular platform of publications, seminars, conferences and workshops but has also embarked on training and short courses for the community. Links were and are well established. Currently, the Centre is strongly linked on a national level to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and the Ministry of Health, as

well as with a few major women's NGOs who are activists. Internationally, KANITA is linked to several institutions namely WHO Geneva and the University of Bristol through the CICHE programme. It has also established links with both local and regional women's NGOs such as ARROW, a regional NGO for the Asia Pacific.

Revising KANITA: Rationale

But why the need to revise KANITA? One may begin by questioning the rationale for proposing that KANITA be "re-visioned". KANITA already has its vision "to achieve excellence in the field of research on women and gender in the development process." It is proud to have acquired 26 years of knowledge building and critical thinking of scholarly work and research on gender related issues. As a research centre it has been entrusted to fulfil the following activities:

- Mobilize and facilitate university faculty to conduct research relevant to women's development.
- Offer graduate programmes in gender and women's development.
- Provide space (physically and intellectually) for scholars and the public to come together for dialogue, discourse through seminars, workshops and conferences.
- Build a gender studies resource centre.
- Publish or facilitate publication of research output and any other gender related texts of value for use in scholarship, policy adoption or public advocacy.
- Provide strategic training and capacity building among research associates, graduate students and the university faculty as a whole. (KANITA 2006)

This paper argues that though KANITA already has a strong research and link culture with both academia and the community, it cannot afford to remain as it is, if it wants to position itself as the leader in gender research and make an impact on policies and programmes. This paper posits that KANITA need to adopt the stance of an activist women's NGO without violating the given mandate. There are several reasons for the proposal in this paper:

Changing and Uncertain Factors External to KANITA

As alluded to in the early part of this paper, though gender equality has been accepted as vital by the government, it is a highly contested goal and is subject to the agendas of various factions in the country. The ideological nature of gender equality calls for an ideological shift and this in itself is very threatening in a patriarchal society like Malaysia. Rising conservatism, both religious and non-religious, will impact on how much government is willing to commit to the path of gender mainstreaming. A recent daily newspaper and a public seminar revealed views held by professionals such as lawyers and academics, who questioned the validity of CEDAW. It is regarded as going against God's words. The debate on the 2005 Islamic Family Law by women activists received strong criticisms. A centre like KANITA, though it is not an NGO and therefore would not want to be drawn into a debate, nevertheless is in the position of producing evidence and proactively using this evidence for dialogue or making sure it is known. This implies that members of KANITA need to be on top of issues being discussed at the grass roots.

The Time to Act is Now

While the conservative climate seems to be changing for the worse, the time is right for KANITA to take a proactive role. The "gender infrastructure" (Rao 2003), though not complete, is in existence. There is the lead agency, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, which is supposed to champion gender equality. Due credit must be given to the Ministry's role in fighting, among other things, for the amendment in the constitution to include the word "gender", and the implementation of the seven-day paternity leave, as well as its success in influencing the establishment of the Gender Equality Cabinet Committee chaired by the Prime Minister himself and that all Ministries are to have their respective Gender Focal Points. Gender mainstreaming is included in the 9th Malaysia Plan "… gender mainstreaming will be given emphasis and gender considerations included in the formulation

of policies and programmes" (Government of Malaysia 2006). KANITA is supposed to play the monitoring role and this could be done by strategically planning research which would facilitate such a role.

Within the University, KANITA has support from the top administrators. This is a window of opportunity that must be exploited to the fullest. Recognizing the danger of leadership change, KANITA has to think, like an NGO, about its long-term survival and cannot remain comfortable with the present situation.

History of Links and Networking

KANITA has established a strong link with the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Health. It has strong allies in women's activist NGOs as well as grassroots women's organizations. KANITA is also linked with international and regional NGOs and other international bodies (e.g UNFPA, UNDP, the Commonwealth Secretariat, WHO). These relationships must be strengthened and careful analysis should be made of the nature and workings of these links and networking for the future. It is suggested that KANITA should embark on this as an important project to study.

Current Themes in KANITA's Plans

For the next five years, KANITA has decided to embark on the following themes/tracks in its research work:

- Sustainable Development
- Empowerment (economic etc.)
- Policy and Legislation
- Family
- Health

These are areas with policy and theoretical implications. KANITA must therefore be strategic in its choices of research topics and build capacity in mapping out all the relevant stakeholders and working out an advocacy and communication strategy. KANITA has to build

capacity in turning research data into language that will fit the target stakeholders. It is building research into knowledge dissemination and utilization. These are skills that researchers and academics do not have – how to make sure that research has an impact on policy and programmes. Advocacy work can take several forms and levels. With appropriate and strategic partners, KANITA may sometimes have to rely on the partners to implement advocacy work.

Implications

- Capacity building within KANITA in gender research, as well as in networking and links – upstream operations (identification of research needs, questions and priorities), downstream action (knowledge management, dissemination and translations of research data), as well as advocacy to connect research with policies, programmes and training (Delisle 2004).
- Renegotiating and clarifying the roles of KANITA with the administration
- Mapping of stakeholders and potential partners; moving towards a data base.
- Building strong alliances with other Malaysian gender centres and those outside Malaysia.
- Strengthening the links to other universities and their Gender Research Centres and Units.
- The existing SAMA (South east Asian Association for Gender Studies) (Malaysia Branch) has to be strengthened with more "activist" leadership.

Conclusion

Achieving gender equality through the process of gender mainstreaming as a strategy is a challenge for gender advocates. The road ahead seems to be too long and winding. But Gender Studies Centres in academic institutions in Malaysia can play a more active and strategic

role in helping to push the agenda forward. This paper has posited that a centre like KANITA needs to revisit and "re-vision" its directions and assume a more NGO-style stance in making sure that its research has an impact on policies, programmes and practice. It is a question of spelling out the nature of the advocacy that KANITA can play, given its mandate and the roles of networking and links which Gender Centres could exploit.

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Abbreviations

ARROW	Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women
Beijing 1995	Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September 1995
CEAS	Centre for East Asian Studies, Sweden
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CICHE	Committee for International Cooperation in Higher Education
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (organ of the United Nations)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
KANITA	Women's Development Research Centre, Penang/Malaysia
NCWO	National Council of Women's Organizations
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PfA	Platform for Action
SAMA	Southeast Asian Association for Gender Studies (Malaysia Branch)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Fatima Adamu

Gender Studies in Nigeria: Approaches and Dynamics

Abstract

This contribution focuses on the direction of gender studies and their relevance to women's interests and above all to social transformation. Women's and gender studies are shown as an area of investigation "with a difference" because of their connection with the feminist political agenda. What is the state of affairs in relation to this in Nigeria? What challenges exist in linking the academic and the political angles of women's and gender studies?

In the four components – teaching, scholarship, research and advocacy (activism) – three main approaches are analysed: mainstreaming gender-related issues in conventional professions and disciplines; the establishment of separate departments, centres, units and programmes or the formation of networks; and the organization of women's and gender studies.

In fact, a feminist agenda for research involves more than knowledge production: it also requires activism and must have a political agenda.

Introduction

The development of Women's and Gender Studies[1] as a field of teaching, research, scholarship and advocacy in Nigeria was linked to both

1 I tried to understand the criteria used by Nigerian universities in naming programmes either Women's or Gender Studies, but I was not successful. However, what one can observe is that the early programmes tended to be called Women's rather than Gender Studies, while more recently introduced programmes tend to use the name of Gender Studies. Because of the lack of difference, the two

international and local events during the 1970s, which characterized the United Nation Decade for Women. For instance, the first institutional structure established in Nigeria dedicated to the promotion of women studies, the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) at the University of Ibadan was a result of the national conference that was organized to mark the United Nation Decade for Women from 1975-85 (Odejide 2002). Since then, the area of gender studies has flourished in Nigeria as a result of increasing concern for the status and condition of women in the country. As interest for the plight of women increases, so does interest in the field of gender studies. This was the case during the 1980s and early 1990s, when there was little interest in the content and quality of the field of study until the publications by Awe (1996) on Nigeria and Mama (1996a) on Africa in the mid-1990s. Since then, other publications, such as Pereira (2002) on Nigeria and Lewis (2002) on Africa, have placed the issue of women's studies under scrutiny. The content and the nature of the knowledge the field produces, as well as the relevance of this knowledge to women's interests and above all to social transformation has been under debate.

One of the central aims of this paper is to contribute to that debate, focusing on two interrelated issues: the direction and relevance of gender studies. What is the current state of affairs and direction of women's and gender studies in Nigeria? What are the challenges in institutionalizing these topics in Nigeria? What is the relevance of the knowledge being produced? By gender studies, we mean the four components of study and activism – teaching, which covers the process of imparting knowledge; research that concerns itself with the search for knowledge; the scholarship component which covers the process of knowledge production and deals with issues such as literature, theories, concepts and methodology; and the advocacy component, which covers the political angle of women's and gender studies.

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terms, Women's and Gender Studies, are used to refer to either of the two or a combination of them. The term "Women and Gender Studies" is often used interchangeably with the more commonly used term "Women's and Gender Studies".

Approaches of and Scope of Women's and Gender Studies in Nigeria

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, studies on women, for women and by women witnessed an upsurge as a result of concern for the condition of women in Nigeria. The link between women's and gender studies in Nigeria with concern for the plight of women makes it difficult to delineate the difference between the two terms as a field of study. This is the case because universities and research institutes, a major site for the institutionalization of the discipline, have tended to adopt both names. For this reason both names – women's and gender studies – are used together in this paper. However, Mama (1996a: 1) has attempted to provide an explanation of the factors that may influence the name of a centre or department. According to her, women's and feminist studies are "defined by their historical link to the women's movement ... that emphasizes the link between activism and intellectualism in the service of women's liberation". Thus, women's studies connote some political nomenclature and they are embedded within the context of the struggle for women's liberation. However, gender studies are more inclusive and neutral and their intention is to "convey greater neutrality, and to turn the lens on the oppressors (men) as well as on the oppressed (women)" (1996a: 1). This observation may be valid if one considers the fact that centres or units that bear the label of women, such as WORDOC, WIN and NWSN, tend to be more concerned with knowledge production, while those institutions that are concerned with development and practical issues tend to use the label of gender, for example the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies.

With the upsurge in gender studies, what are the directions of these studies, that is, what approaches are being adopted in the institutionalization of gender studies in the country? Three major approaches are adopted in the institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Nigeria. The first approach involves mainstreaming gender-related issues and subjects into a conventional profession and discipline. The second approach involves the establishment of a separate department, centre, unit or programme on women's and gender issues. The formation of networks and the organization of women's and gender studies constitute the third approach to the study of women and gender in

Nigeria. However, the effectiveness of any of the above approaches in transforming academia and gender relations has remained unexplored.

As explained earlier, different sites exist in Nigeria for women's and gender studies. The major sites are universities and other higher educational and research institutions, where most of the teaching, research and scholarship on gender is conducted. In an effort to integrate women's and gender issues and concerns, some Nigerian universities have introduced gender-related courses across social science disciplines such as in the Sociology and Geography Departments, Usmanu Danfodiyo, Sokoto; the Department of Psychology and History, University of Ibadan; and the Departments of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The usefulness and impact of these courses remain to be assessed. However, looking at the design of the courses, one can see that they were primarily aimed at describing gender situations rather than challenging and subverting oppressive gender hierarchies.

Another approach used to institutionalize women's and gender studies in Nigeria is the establishment of a structure either within an existing departmental discipline or of a separate multidisciplinary unit within the university system. This takes the form of centres, units and programmes. Some of the structures were multidisciplinary autonomous units, while others were established within existing social science disciplines. Some of these structures include:

1. Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC), University of Ibadan.
2. Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, University of Ile-Ife
3. Women's Studies Unit, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
4. Documentation and Analysis of Women's and Gender Studies Unit, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
5. Centre for Gender Security Studies and Advancement, University of Abuja.
6. Centre for Gender Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi.
7. Gender, Environment and Development Programme, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
8. Women Resource Centre (WOREC), Imo State University.

All of these centres and units have the objectives of imparting knowledge through teaching, particularly in postgraduate programmes; developing the capacities of women/gender specialists and scholars, activists and policymakers; and providing consultancy services to government ministries and agencies, as well as to national and international non-governmental organizations and donors. In occasional cases, some of these centres engaged with women's organizations to champion a cause.

The third approach involves the formation of a network of a group of feminists and gender/women's studies scholars, researchers and activists, either locally or nationally to act as a forum for sharing information, research, networking and general support. The first of such groups to be formed was Women in Nigeria (WIN), which was founded in 1982 at a conference held in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and had both male and female members. According to one of its founding members (Pareira 2002) "WIN emerged during the 1980s as a significant force in challenging the subordination of women on the basis of class and gender. WIN's basic philosophy was that women should organize to struggle for their rights but in order to do this, it was necessary to work from a knowledge base that would provide an understanding of how women's and men's lives were structured by the socio-economic and political conditions under which they live". Consequently, in the words of Odejide (2002), the central contribution of WIN to the field of women's and gender studies in Nigeria was in the area of galvanizing "feminist scholarship in Nigeria, and (it) made many case studies on the history, demography, ethnology, economic activities and legal status of women in Nigeria more widely accessible among researchers". The proceedings of WIN's annual conferences from 1982 to 1987 are notable contributions to the field of women's and gender studies in Nigeria and are still used as reference literature in Nigeria. However, over the years the influence and stature of WIN has deteriorated and its members have disintegrated into smaller groups due to an internal power struggle and gender conflict within the organization.

Another organization, the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria (NWSN), was formed in 1996 with the primary objective of promoting the study of women and gender through knowledge production and

the development of and support for the institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Nigeria. The main objective of NWSN is to build capacity for teaching and research in this field. Other interests of NWSN members, according to Pareira (2002), include the introduction of concerns about women and gender into their teaching and research activities, as well as the desire to challenge the traditional paradigms of knowledge and research, which are sometimes inappropriate and not suited to the Nigerian context and Nigerian women's reality. In line with the above objectives, NWSN had held a series of conferences geared towards achieving its objectives. In its inaugural workshop in 1996 called "Setting an Agenda for Gender and Women's Studies in Nigeria", NWSN started a process of developing and establishing a national agenda towards the formation and institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Nigeria (Mama 1996b). To strengthen the gains made at the inaugural workshop, the second one focused on the re-examination of certain basic terms and concepts used in women's and gender studies in Nigeria. Participants involved in this field of studies and research from across Nigerian universities and research institutions deliberated on concepts such as 'woman', 'gender', 'feminism' as well as feminist theory and methodology (Pareira 2002). It was purely an academic exercise that tried to define concepts within the context of our everyday reality and on the basis of our ethnic diversity. The whole essence was to create synergy and a connection between women's everyday reality and the knowledge being produced and taught in the field of women's and gender studies in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the pioneering work and boldness of the NWSN in producing knowledge that is relevant to Nigerian women was weakened by its dependence on foreign funding. The British Council funded most of the endeavours. Withdrawal of funding by the British Council brought the whole project to an end. So far, nothing of that nature has been taken on again by NWSN.

Nature and Dynamics of Women's and Gender Studies in Nigeria

The connection of the history of women's and gender studies in Nigeria with international events, as well as the process with which women's

studies came to be integrated into the university system in Nigeria, had an impact on the nature of its development. The Nigerian university environment, like other university environments across the world, was male-dominated both in its academic and managerial context and was generally conservative in its orientation. Consequently, the introduction of women's and gender studies in whatever form is generally viewed as a challenge to the status quo of male dominance and 'African traditions' and may therefore require tactical manoeuvring and a status figure to champion its cause. As a result, most of the institutional structures for women's and gender studies that exist in Nigerian universities had, at the time of their formation, a strong and powerful woman that pushed for their establishment.

Linked to that is the fact that most of these structures sprang up as autonomous bodies within the university system both by design and necessity. The fact that Nigerian universities are primarily funded by the government means that the establishment of an additional academic programme or its extension within the existing university system requires permission from a government body called the National University Commission (NUC), which was established to regulate and manage the activities of Nigerian universities. As a result, most of the existing women's and gender studies structures began as autonomous bodies. Going through the NUC route is a long process with lots of uncertainty, especially given the fact that the NUC would have to make a financial allocation to the approved programme and a gender study programme may not be a priority. Consequently, for programmes on women's and gender studies to secure university approval without NUC approval, there must be a person with a national and international reputation who can demonstrate to the university management that she/he has the capacity to attract funding for the programme. It was easier and possible to convince the university management in the 1980s and 1990s because women's and gender issues were the favourites of donors. Funding to support the establishment of these studies in Nigeria was easily available, particularly if it was solicited by the right person.

The result of this is that most of the women's and gender study programmes in Nigeria have become dependent on individual personalities

and international funding. This has a serious implication for the sustainability of women's and gender studies in Nigeria. Almost all the women's and gender study programmes and structures are currently struggling with a lack of funds and institutional support. In a survey by Amina Mama (2002), Pareira (2002) reports that "in terms of resources, it is disturbing to note that as many as 11 out of the 27 describe themselves as having no access whatsoever to the libraries or other resource centres with gender studies materials and publications, something that poses a serious challenge to their capacity for delivering up-to-date teaching and research within existing academic traditions. Four have no access to computers at all, while six have no access to the Internet, and as such are rendered unable to take advantage of the information technology that might have offered a valuable way of overcoming their isolation and limited access to published resources".

Centres that used to be active and busy with many activities are now silent and have few current projects. Some of them are responding by readjusting to refocus on teaching through the provision of short course and diploma certificates, rather than the production of knowledge through conferences and workshops that characterized women's and gender studies in Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the oldest structure on women's studies in Nigeria, WORDOC, University of Ibadan, announced that it is introducing a short course (Odejide 2002). Similar short courses and lower level certificates were being offered by these centres across Nigerian universities in order to generate income. It is hoped that there will be enough market interest to make it a worthwhile endeavour. Other steps being taken, particularly by the oldest centres, include lobbying for the inclusion of the centres in the university system, thereby entitling them to financial allocation from the university. The Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, OAU Ife, has had its centre approved and accredited by the NUC. Even though the centre may still have to compete with other university programmes for the value of the allocation, it is nonetheless a big step towards the establishment of permanent structures for women's and gender studies in Nigeria.

Similarly, the personality factor in women's and gender studies in Nigeria has an implication for the progress and sustainability of the

programmes. Some of the centres experienced a backward slide as soon as this personality either retired or resigned from the service of the university. Some have also experienced in-fighting and divisions between two camps, generally between the camps of the founder, who feels she has the right to continue dominating the centre and the 'other' camp, who feels that the tenure of the founder has expired and that she should therefore interfere less in the management of the system. This in-fighting has a serious implication for the development of a structure and has meant that good and credible personalities who could have contributed to the development of the centres have had to back down.

Another factor is the development of a future crop of women's and gender studies scholars who can be expected to take up the leadership and management of such centres. While there are some 'elder' professors who have taken the trouble to mentor future generations of women's and gender studies scholars in academia, others have sabotaged younger academics out of fear of losing their own relevance and dominance. This is more significant when one considers the fact that there are fewer women in academia than men. For example, women constitute less than 30 % of the Nigerian university academic staff (Bureau for Statistics 2001). Similar figures applied to the student population, where 65 % of the Nigerian university students were male and 35 % were female. The situation is worst in Northern Nigeria. For example, in my university, women constitute just 7 % of the academic staff, as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: UDUS Student Population by Gender and Session

	2001/2002		2002/2003		2003/2004	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Diploma	3874	530	1979	542	1092	338
Undergraduate	7244	1951	7770	2024	6961	2002
Postgraduate	591	172	1021	245	NA	NA
Total	11709 (81 %)	2653 (19 %)	10770 (79 %)	2811 (21 %)	8053 (77 %)	2340 (23 %)

Table 2: UDUS Staff Population by Gender and Session

	2001/2002		2002/2003	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Academic*	420 (92 %)	38 (8 %)	437 (93 %)	32 (7 %)
Senior Non-Academic	180 (79 %)	48 (21 %)	190 (78 %)	53 (22 %)
Junior Staff	749 (91 %)	77 (9 %)	786 (91 %)	81 (9 %)
Total	1349 (89 %)	163 (11 %)	1413 (89 %)	166 (11 %)

* Includes part-time lecturers who consist of 31 males and 14 females.

The above situation is aggravated by the lack of good relationships between female staff and students in Nigerian universities, thereby making it difficult for the female staff to act as role models to the female students. In research conducted in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto by this author, it was found that students do not like lecturers of the same sex. The students claimed that lecturers are more attracted to and more attentive towards students of the opposite sex. Students believe that male lecturers show more understanding towards and listen more to female students than male students. Similarly, some students claimed that female lecturers give preferential treatment to male students and are "more angry with and jealous of female students".

One female student said: "I prefer male lecturers because the female lecturers are like jealous [of] the female students but the male lecturers will just come and lecture you and go, but the female lecturer can hate you because of your dressing and continue failing you academically." (Adamu, Adamu, AbdulQadir 2006).

Another one said: "I prefer the male lecturer because the [doors of the] female lecturers are not open for complaints and they don't really love the female students because there is one female lecturer, if you wear clothes similar to her own or more expensive than her own, I'm sorry, you won't pass her exams." (ibid.).

Table 3: Matrix of Students' Opinions on their Lecturers by Sex

Male Students on Female Lecturers		*Male Students on Male Lecturers*	
What they like	*What they dislike*	*What they like*	*What they dislike*
They are more caring and they can attend to you at any time.	They are jealous of female students.	Because he is male and I am male, there is always that free access.	They (male lecturers) can embarrass you in front of 'babes', in front of anybody. That is what I hate.
They can sympathize with your problems.	She is looked at as a woman first, in different ways and perspectives.	Male lecturers are more confident. They have that courage and confidence to face their students and teach them whatever is necessary.	Males show their emotions easily.
Their level of bias is lower compared to that of male lecturers.	They do not cover the syllabus and this might lead to failure.	They have the ability to control, and naturally, males are stronger.	They tend to lose their confidence and concentration when there are a lot of ladies in the class.
80 % of sexual harassment comes from the male lecturers.	Most of them [are] timid.	Because we are of the same gender.	They are generally wicked.
They command more respect among the students.	Naturally, they are very weak.	They attend to students' problems easily.	They have their eyes on the 'babes'.
	They are also too greedy in terms of money from students compared with the male lecturers.	Hardworking. Less busy. Their voices are loud.	They tend to be more aggressive when you ask them a question.
		A man has a better way of putting knowledge into the head of students.	

Female students on Female Lecturers		*Female students on Male Lecturers*	
What they like	*What they dislike*	*What they like*	*What they dislike*
They have self-confidence.	Concern about the way female students dress.	They are lenient in teaching and marking aspects.	Male lecturers normally try to show more preference to female students.
They are more reliable and more serious.	They are too harsh to the female students.	They are nice, understanding and ready to listen to you, for example, if you are sick and don't attend lectures.	If they want to go out with you or need something from you and you refuse, they will be hard with you.
They are time-conscious	There are other social factors that make her inaccessible.		All the sexual harassment is from them.
The female lecturers are more honest.	Female lecturers are like kind of angry with the female students.		They are too harsh and they behave like they don't have children at home.
They are more sympathetic when marking exams.			
She has a cool temper – no matter how angry she is, you can cool her down.			

All the tables are extracted from Adamu, Adamu, AbdulQadir 2006.

The concern here is that if female students do not have favourable opinions of the female academic staff, then the future of women's and gender studies in Nigeria is at stake. However, whether this pessimistic picture may be overturned by the female students' experiences as

women when they grow up to compete in a male-dominated society remains to be seen.

Having discussed the nature and dynamics of women's and gender studies in Nigeria, I shall now provide an assessment of the field of studies.

Linking Scholarship with Activism?

Women's and gender studies are not just another area of study. There is a difference because of their connection with the feminist political agenda of producing knowledge that will empower students in the struggle for gender justice. What is the state of affairs in relation to this in Nigeria? What challenges exist in linking the academic and political angles of women's and gender studies in Nigeria?

As previously mentioned, women's and gender studies have four components – teaching, scholarship, research and advocacy (activism) and all of these components are dominated by the female educated elite. We begin with the teaching component.

Teaching involves imparting knowledge to others and therefore covers three issues: the content of the knowledge, the students who receive it and the teachers imparting it. Unlike other countries in the western world, women's and gender studies in Nigeria enjoyed popularity among both male and female students. For example, all our women and gender-related courses are popular with men. Classes on women's and gender studies and other related courses are generally full. In all the courses I teach, men have consistently constituted more than 70 % of the class of nothing fewer than one hundred students for undergraduate studies. Thus, the potential of using women's and gender studies through teaching is great. My experiences in teaching these courses have shown that the classes can provide a platform for gender dialogue. The extent to which attending these classes can help students to become more gender-sensitive and appreciative of the need for gender transformation very much depends on the syllabus contents of these courses. Although I do not have access to the syllabus content of women's and gender studies at all Nigerian universities, my experience of teaching such courses in Usmanu Danfodiyo, as well

as serving as an external examiner for a few of these programmes and courses has shown that the content of such courses hardly challenges the existing gender relations and structures. As noted by Pareira (2002: 1), women's and gender studies are differentiated by the extent to which knowledge "is aimed primarily at describing the relevant phenomena concerning women and/or gender relations, as opposed to subverting oppressive gender hierarchies. The latter are more likely to address issues of change and transformation, and in the process, to challenge the conceptual framework for organizing what traditionally counts as knowledge". Going by this observation, the content of most of the courses related to gender studies in Usman Danfodiyo University is generally aimed at describing the nature and structure of gender relations rather than questioning the knowledge being produced and imparted. However, as Mama notes, re-examining the basic terms and concepts used in the study of women and gender in Nigeria is necessary in order to make them "more meaningful and effective tools for analysing and comprehending the oppression and subordination of women and the nature of gender relations in Nigeria" (1997: 3).

The uncritical nature of the content of women's and gender studies syllabi can be salvaged if it is taught by gender-sensitive teachers who have a vision of achieving gender justice. It is obvious that the data on staff population by gender shown in Table 2 represents a significant challenge. The number of women academic staff is inadequate to provide the required staff size needed to run these courses and programmes. Thus, the issue of the quality of staff running women's and gender studies in many of the Nigerian universities is secondary. Some of these programmes do have the problem of finding qualified staff who are passionate about women's issues to manage and run them. This is relevant considering the fact that women's and gender studies are not just like any other academic discipline; they have the history of being relevant and useful to women's issues through championing women's causes (see, for example, Odejide 2002). In fact, the feminist agenda for women's and gender studies has traditionally focused on challenging the lack of links between scholarship and political activism found in most conventional disciplines (Pareira 2002). However, while there is

concern about the quantity and quality of staff available to run women's and gender studies programme in Nigeria, the direction and response to this problem has not been clear. Should efforts be targeted towards supporting women scholars to establish themselves sufficiently in their respective disciplines to gain the credibility needed to mainstream women's and gender programmes into their disciplines or should efforts be targeted towards training high level quality gender studies experts? Such a debate has yet to surface on the Nigerian scene.

Related to this is the scholarship component of the field, which involves knowledge production. For women's and gender studies to be relevant to society and to the concerns of women, they must produce knowledge that is grounded in women's experiences. One of the primary aims of WORDOC and NWSN was the production of knowledge. While NWSN has focused more on investigating concepts and theories relevant to women's studies, WORDOC has concentrated on publishing books on women's and gender studies. However, the lack of funding for these projects has stalled the ability of these bodies to deliver, despite having had a good start. In fact, Nigeria has not recorded much success in the area of knowledge production. Many of the programmes have little access to the literature produced both within the country and outside it. Publication of their work has remained a serious problem for scholars attached to these programmes. The low performance of Nigerian women's and gender studies scholars in the area of knowledge production has an implication beyond Nigeria. I have noted that the "limited resources for scholarship and hostile institutional environment have weakened the ability of many Nigerian women scholars to make their voices heard in the world where knowledge is constantly being reprocessed and repackaged" (Adamu 2005: 10). Despite the lopsidedness in the production of women's and gender studies scholarship, I argued that "there is no doubt that Nigerian women scholars have drawn from western feminist scholarship, and western feminists no doubt have benefitted from women's political and intellectual struggles which have helped to bridge the gap between theory and practice in feminism".

The weakness in knowledge production in women's and gender studies in Nigeria is connected to the low research output of these programmes. Few of these programmes have been able to secure funding

for research. It is a fact that sources of funding for research are largely foreign and come from international donors based in Nigeria for consultancy work. For example, in one of its publications, WORDOC reported that its research and consultancy work have embraced different areas: funding from the Ford Foundation has supported work on agriculture and the economy; situation analysis of female children has been supported by UNICEF; and the World Bank has funded work on labour and the economy. No mention was made of any local or national source and yet this centre meets all the requirements to attract international donors. Few research activities are taking place in the other women's and gender studies centres and units. However, the widespread involvement of these programmes in development-related research suggests that the objective of the research is very much tied to the agenda of the funders rather than to scholarship.

In fact, a feminist agenda for research involves more than knowledge production: it must also have political agenda. It is research by women, on women and for the purposes of assisting women. So, feminist research must not only be concerned with documenting and reporting women's conditions and experiences, but also with the question of how such documented knowledge can be used for practical purposes to raise the issue of gender transformation and to politicize women's conditions and experiences. The relationship between feminist research and the women's movement was an issue that occupied the minds of the first generation of Nigerian feminists. Amadiume (1987), quoted in Pareira, notes that "any work by Third World women must be political, challenging the new and growing patriarchal systems. We cannot afford to be indifferent researchers, glossing over the local struggles in which women in our countries are involved. As well as looking into the socio-cultural systems which guaranteed women power, … African and other Third World women still have a role to play in exposing the contradictions in their societies, recording their own social history with a view to challenging, where necessary, discrimination against women and positively aiming for more power for women and more egalitarian societies for everyone".

The ability of women's and gender studies programmes to utilize research for practical purposes has remained low. Pareira (2002: 12)

notes that "at the level of forging connections between research and activism, more needs to be done" (ibid.). Whilst recognizing that research and activism are part of a continuum rather than being partitioned from one another, it is also the case that not all researchers engage in activism, and the converse is true for activists engaging in research. The lack of comprehensive research on the connection between scholarship and activism leads one to speculate. At the level of activism, one can observe three trends. Firstly, there are women in academia who are also involved in gender advocacy through their participation in government affairs and their roles as the heads of government programmes on women. So feminist scholars like Bolanle Awe, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie and Joy Ezeilo were involved in government and thereby added their voices to policy at the national level, while many more have served in various policy capacities at the state and local government levels. Secondly, there are women scholars who are based in the university and are at the same time engaged in women's organizations and involved in championing women's causes through mobilizing and organizing women to protest against government programmes. Examples of such women include Ayesha Imam and Amina Mama. The third trend involves non-academic women, who have demonstrated their activism through the establishment of women's organizations and have been very influential in championing women's issues. Such women include, for example, Balkisu Yusuf and Saudatu Mahdi.

Other challenges to linking women's and gender studies in Nigeria with activism include the following:

– Despite the popularity of women's and gender studies among students and its proliferation in Nigeria, the field has remained burdened by the issue of its legitimacy, as indeed have other issues related to women. The linking of the field to international events such as the UN Decade for Women influence the perception some people have developed about the study programmes, namely that they have a foreign agenda. According to Pareira (2002), there is a widespread tendency to disparage as 'foreign' or 'Western' any form of women's activism that subverts conventional understanding of appropriate gender relations. Consequently, women's and gender

studies are perceived by some as a process of de-Africanizing and de-Islamizing African and Muslim women respectively. The extent to which women's and gender studies will overcome this perception very much depends on their success in creating a link between their study programmes and women's movements in Nigeria and in particular on their ability to provide a platform for voicing women's issues and concerns. This has remained a challenge.

– Another challenge is the heterogeneity of women. Women in Nigeria, like everywhere in the world, are not an homogenous group. They are divided by class, ethnic and religious backgrounds, as well as by their regional background of coming from either a rural or an urban area. The gap between these divisions in terms of interests, priorities, potential and problems is too wide, to the extent that it makes one wonder about the possibility of building an alliance between women of these diverse identities. And considering the weaknesses of these groups of women – urban and rural, educated and illiterate, rich and poor, Hausa and Igbo – it is inconceivable for women to achieve much in their struggle without, at the very least, forging an alliance. For example, it has been observed that "urban, educated middle-class women have the national leadership potential but not the mass support needed for effective political action, while the urban market women and rural community-based women have the potential for mass mobilization … but they lack the national leadership and political objectives" (Pareira 2002). Confronted with these divisions, Pareira argues that women's and gender studies in Nigeria face the challenges of producing knowledge that will "strengthen the agency of diverse categories of women, particularly those impoverished and disempowered within the status quo" and facilitating the recognition of women's diverse forms of oppression across social divides for collective action. When women's and gender studies will deliver and meet those challenges remains to be seen, yet it is a challenge facing each of us involved in this field in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The question that remains in Nigeria is what are the most effective means of mainstreaming and institutionalizing women's and gender studies. Is it through the introduction of programmes on gender within the conventional disciplines and departments or through the establishment of separate structures? Whatever direction we finally decide to take, the usefulness of the programmes cannot be realized without having quality women's and gender studies programmes both in terms of staff, academic resources, classic and up-to-date materials and research. The strategy for achieving this remains that of networking with sister bodies within and outside the country. In fact, establishing links with other international centres and institutes not only exposes our younger colleagues to new and up-to-date literature, but may provide us with the political support needed to institutionalize and make women's and gender studies relevant. For example, the presence of a professor on a few months' visit to a university could achieve more than the results of years of struggle by the staff of that university.

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Abbreviations

CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
NUC	National University Commission/Nigeria
NWSN	Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UDUS	Usmanu Danfodiyo University
WIN	Women in Nigeria
WORDOC	Women's Research and Documentation Centre (University of Ibadan/Nigeria)
WOREC	Women's Resource Centre/Imo State University/Nigeria

III. Engendering Disciplines: Experiences with Inter- and Transdisciplinarities

Olanike F. Deji

Women's and Gender Studies in Agriculture in Nigerian Universities: Implications for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Agriculture remains the economic mainstay of the Nigerian population, with the major aspects of it taking place in rural areas. It has been empirically established that women form the majority of the agricultural workforce in the rural areas of Nigeria, with their activities cutting across all stages of agricultural production.

This paper examines the level and intensity of women's and gender studies in agriculture in Nigerian Universities. Intensive women's[1] and gender studies in agriculture in the universities provides an opportunity to enlighten prospective agricultural officers and policymakers on gender issues in agriculture and rural development, thereby empowering them to encourage gender equality in their respective positions, which is germane to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Introduction

Over seventy percent of the Nigerian population lives in and derives its livelihood from rural areas. Farming is the primary occupation of the majority of rural dwellers in Nigeria. Rural areas are the centres for the production of food and fibres utilized for consumption, exchange, and industrial purposes in Nigeria. Agriculture is the most important, though not the only, economic rural activity and a healthy agricultural sector provides food self-sufficiency, employment and a surplus

1 The term "women and gender studies" is often used interchangeably with the more commonly used term "women's and gender studies".

for export (Faborode 2005). Gender equality is central to improving agricultural production, which is germane to the attainment of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, hence to the attainment of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria.

Polygamy and the preference for having a large number of children are common traditions in rural areas in Nigeria. This excess rural population continually replenishes the need for labour in urban areas through the rural-urban drift of the able-bodied. This makes the rural areas the seedbed of the national population and also helps to supply human resources to the urban centres. In addition, rural areas serve as places of refuge during crises and national emergencies. Rural areas rarely witness crises; hence, there is absolute peace in the countryside, unlike urban centres, where heterogeneous peoples with different cultures and value orientations live. During periods of crises, rural areas are often used by many urban dwellers as places of refuge. The pristine cultures and traditions which are often easily discarded in the urban areas are maintained and still observed in the rural areas. All these characteristic features of Nigerian rural areas buttress their significance in the achievement of sustainable food security and development in Nigeria.

Women in the rural areas of Nigeria represent the majority of the agricultural workforce. They engage in all types of agriculture and are active at all stages of agricultural production.

Women provide the future workforce (agricultural and non-agricultural) through their reproductive role, and produce food and materials essential for their families' livelihood. Likewise, women are physically, financially and socially involved in the development activities of their communities. Hence, women perform triple roles of production, reproduction and community development services (Odeyemi 2002).

The realization of the significance of gender equality in the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria calls for gender mainstreaming into policies at all levels and of all kinds, especially in the agricultural sector. Awareness as the first stage of any change process is vital in enhancing gender sensitivity, especially in agricultural issues in Nigeria. As an educational institution attended by the majority of the future stakeholders in the development of any country, the universities

therefore have a significant role to play in sensitizing people about gender issues, especially those related to agriculture.

Women's and Gender Studies in Agriculture in Nigerian Universities

Ten universities were randomly sampled in the course of investigating the availability of women's and gender studies in agriculture in the instructional materials used in teaching agriculture in Nigerian universities. These ten randomly selected universities were: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi; Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria; Cross River University of Technology (CRUT), Calabar; Delta State University (DELSU), Asaba; the Federal University of Technology (FUTA), Akure; the Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna; Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife; Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ayetoro; the University of Abeokuta (UNAB), Abeokuta; and the University of Ibadan (UI), Ibadan. Ten lecturers from the Faculty of Agriculture, one from each of the selected universities, were purposely chosen. Relevant data for the study were elicited from these selected lecturers through the use of a questionnaire. The results of this survey are presented below.

Data in Table 1 reveal the availability and level of intensity of women's and gender studies in agriculture in the ten randomly selected universities.

Women's and gender issues in agriculture featured in the instructional materials of the majority (eighty percent) of the sampled universities (Table 1).

However, the intensity of the instruction on women's and gender issues in the universities was very low, in that it is taught either as a topical issue or as a component of other subjects. None of the universities teaches women's and gender issues in agriculture as a course in its own right or as a degree-awarding subject. In addition, the study revealed that women's and gender issues in Agricultural Studies are discussed at the undergraduate level of study in about sixty-two percent of the sampled universities. Women's and gender issues featured in the teaching materials at all three levels of studies (Undergraduate, Master's,

and Ph.D.) in only one of the eight universities that indicated its availability in their teaching materials among the ten sampled universities. Although the intensity of women's and gender studies in agriculture is low, as reflected in the report above, its availability in the instructional materials of the majority of the sampled universities indicates a positive background to comprehensive engendering of the discipline of agriculture in Nigerian universities.

Table 1: Intensity of Women's and Gender Studies in Agriculture in Selected Nigerian Universities

Name of University	Level of Study	Department/Course Title
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi	Undergraduate	Agricultural Economics and Extension Programme
Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria	Master's and Ph.D.	Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
Cross River University of Technology (CRUT), Calabar	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Delta State University (DELSU), Asaba	Undergraduate	Agricultural Extension
Federal University of Technology (FUTA), Akure	Master's	Agricultural Economics and Extension
Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife	Undergraduate	Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology
Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ayetoro	Undergraduate	Women's and Youth Programme in Agriculture
University of Abeokuta (UNAB), Abeokuta	Undergraduate and Master's	Aquaculture and Fisheries Management respectively
University of Ibadan (UI), Ibadan	Undergraduate, Master's and Ph.D.	Sociology in Extension, Rural Sociology, and Advanced Rural Sociology respectively

Furthermore, data in Table 2 reveal that all the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that women's and gender studies in agriculture at the university level of education enhances awareness about the roles of women in agricultural production. The majority (71.3 percent) of the respondents strongly agreed with all eight positive statements about the significance of women's and gender studies in poverty alleviation and food security in Nigeria. The lecturers' positive attitude towards women's and gender studies in agriculture is central to effective gendering of the discipline of agriculture in Nigerian universities.

Table 2: Attitudes of Lecturers in Agriculture Toward the Significance of Women's and Gender Studies in Agriculture in Universities to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in Nigeria.

Significance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Score
Enhances awareness about the role of women in agricultural production.	10	0	0	0	0	50
Enhances awareness of gender inequality.	9	0	1	0	0	48
Improves women's agricultural productivity.	8	1	1	0	0	47
Enhances poverty alleviation.	8	1	1	0	0	47
Improves gender awareness among agricultural policymakers.	7	1	2	0	0	45
Improves the choice of agriculture as a career and profession.	6	3	0	0	1	43
Improves agricultural policy formulation and implementation.	5	2	2	1	0	41
Promotes gender equality in university enrolment and completion.	4	2	1	2	1	36
Grand Mean	7.13	1.25	1.00	0.38	0.25	44.63

Maximum score = 50; Minimum (individual) = 8; Source: Deji 2006: Field Survey

Women's and gender studies in agriculture at the university level has the potential of widening the awareness and deepening the understanding of the prospective stakeholders in agricultural policymaking and development about women's and gender issues in agriculture, hence promoting gender sensitivity and gender equality with respect to agriculture in Nigeria.

Women's and Gender Studies at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Obafemi Awolowo University, formerly known as the University of Ife, was established in October 5, 1962 as the second university in Nigeria. The current student population is about 25,000, while the staff strength is around 5,277. It comprises thirteen faculties, ninety-three departments, eight research institutes/units and five centres (Faculty of Agriculture Handbook 2006-2008).

There was practical evidence of gender compliance in the administration of Obafemi Awolowo University right from its inception. These gender compliance strategies include the automatic employment given to the wives of members of staff with the aim of enhancing the possibility of retaining the husband as well as improving his job performance. In addition, there was a special preference towards female staff and students in the allocation of accommodation on the campus, and provision of special welfare care to widows and others in need (Soetan 2002; Aina 2006). All these formed the foundation for the ongoing gender mainstreaming strategy in the university.

Teaching and research on women's and gender issues were confined to the Faculty of Social Sciences of Obafemi Awolowo University until around 1990, when awareness about women's and gender studies started with the establishment of the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies (CGSPS) located in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Massive enlightenment on women's and gender issues was recorded in 2005, when the CGSPS, with financial aid from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, started the Gender Policy Action Plan for Obafemi Awolowo University in line with the university's 2005 Strategic Plan, which involved workshops on gender issues for all categories of stakeholders in the university.

The Gender Policy Action Plan for Obafemi Awolowo University is an affirmative action initiative, which was inaugurated officially in 2004. Its overall goal is to promote gender equity within the Obafemi Awolowo University system in order to guarantee organizational effectiveness, fundamental human rights, with the expectation of institutionalizing gender iustice in the university system (Gender Policy for Obafemi Awolowo University 2006).

The Gender Policy for Obafemi Awolowo University consists of seven sections, namely: students' enrolment and welfare; staff employment and welfare; university administration at all levels; teaching and research culture in the university; awareness and sensitization; gender-sensitive information and communications system; and monitoring and evaluation.

The teaching and research section of the university's Gender Policy is the main focus of this paper, hence the need for more detailed explanations. The Situation Report of the preliminary survey to the Gender Policy Action Plan (2002) showed that the teaching and research culture at Obafemi Awolowo University is not gender-responsive. It also confirmed gross gender blindness both among members of university's staff as well as among students. The Situation Analysis Report (2002) indicated that the university curricula and classroom conduct were very gender insensitive, with the use of gender-exclusive language predominating, especially in staff-student interactions (Gender Policy for Obafemi Awolowo University 2006).

In order to mainstream gender into the teaching and research activities in Obafemi Awolowo University, the following are the specific objectives set out in the university's Gender Policy 2006 (ibid.):

1. To promote a gender-sensitive teaching and research culture.
2. To make teaching curricula materials and research programmes gender-responsive.
3. To encourage the use of gender-inclusive language for all purposes.
4. To mainstream gender into teaching and research.

Each faculty in the university was actively involved in the Gender Policy Action Plan; hence, thereafter the challenge of mainstreaming gender into each discipline within Obafemi Awolowo University was widely disseminated.

Women's and Gender Studies in Agriculture at the Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

The Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly the University of Ife) was established in 1962 along with four other faculties as the first faculties in the university (Faculty of Agriculture Handbook, 2006-2008). The faculty was established two years before Obafemi Awolowo University came into full existence in 1964. It was one of the first faculties of agriculture in Nigeria. It is in a unique position to make a significant contribution to solving the labour, scientific, technological and educational problems confronting Nigeria in its attempts to improve agricultural production. Faculties of agriculture contribute to the achievement of sustainable agricultural and rural development in Nigeria in the following ways:

- on-campus education, which includes the training of high-level agricultural labour;
- research activities, which yield new agricultural knowledge and practices necessary for improving agricultural production; and
- extension services, which adopt the university-based extension strategy of disseminating agricultural innovations to farmers for the purpose of improving their agricultural production and livelihood.

Faculties of agriculture in Nigeria serve as a link between the university research units and departments, and the neighbouring communities, the majority of which are rural and whose major occupation is agriculture.

The emergence of women's and gender studies in agriculture, especially in the research activities of the Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University, can be dated back to 1993. Using the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology as a case study, the first research on women in agriculture was an undergraduate project conducted in 1993. In the area of teaching, women's and gender issues were first introduced as a topical issue in some of the teaching materials of the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology around 1995. There were also instances of deliberate enlightenment talks on gender and agriculture during lectures and other lecturer-student interaction forums before this time.

In addition, the university's periodic curricula review was used as an opportunity to formally introduce women's and gender studies as topical issues into the curriculum of the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology. During the 2001/2002 academic session, an undergraduate course called "Organization of Youth and Women's Programmes" was introduced as a core course. At least fifty percent of the course features women's and gender issues in agriculture.

In the 2003/2004 academic session, there was a curricula review of the postgraduate programmes in the university, when individual departments were requested to come up with a reviewed curriculum, if necessary. The Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology used this opportunity to introduce a course called "Women in Development" as a core course, compulsory for all Ph.D. students in the department. More than eighty percent of the course focuses on women's and gender issues in agriculture, although it has not yet commenced because it is awaiting final approval by the Senate body of the university.

There are also other courses in the Departments of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology and Agricultural Economics that contain some elements of women's and gender issues in agriculture, especially at the topical level, although this is not stated explicitly in the instructional materials.

The above state of affairs is not yet perfect compared with the international standards for effective human empowerment that could support and reinforce gender equality, which is vital to sustainable development. Hence, efforts are currently being made by intellectuals who are committed to the course of engendering the discipline of agriculture, at least in Obafemi Awolowo University, which is one of the pacesetters for academic excellence and quality in Africa.

In summary, the steps taken so far to gender the agricultural discipline at Obafemi Awolowo University could be said to have followed the strategy of "informal to formal introduction" or a "bottom-up approach" in social change. As reported above, the mainstreaming strategy used the knowledge and experience of the available well-informed lecturers who are committed to the course of women's and gender issues in agriculture in order to initiate women's and gender issues/discussions during lectures and informal lecturer-student interactions. This is the

first step in any change process; there is a need for well-informed and committed people who could pave the way for such a change. This calls for the need to first create awareness among the lecturers and to make them gender-informed and convinced, so that they can successfully pass the information on to the students, either formally or informally.

The second step undertaken in the process of introducing women's and gender issues into the agricultural curriculum at Obafemi Awolowo University was that of the formal introduction of relevant topics into some of the teaching materials used by the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology. This was especially important to courses that are taken by all undergraduate students in the faculty, as well as in some postgraduate courses. Later attempts were made to introduce women's and gender studies as core courses, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Although we have not yet recorded a hundred percent success rate on these moves, some breakthroughs have been achieved, some of which are reported above.

In the area of research, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of projects on women's and gender issues in agriculture, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. In addition, outreaches to neighbouring communities via the Department's Isoya Rural Development Project (IRDP) have been more gender-responsive than ever before. Some cases of gender-related problems have been identified. A more detailed explanation about the programme is given below.

Gender Research Activities under the Isoya Rural Development Project of Obafemi Awolowo University

The traditional functions of any university in Nigeria are teaching, research, and community service via dissemination of research findings to neighbouring communities using university-based extension strategy/university-community linkage. Every academic unit within a university derives its role from these triple functions, which are maintained in the framework of the laws and statutes that established the university, as well as in universally accepted university traditions. It is the general mission of a university and its sub-units to contribute to

the development of their immediate communities and beyond, and to human development in general.

The Faculty of Agriculture is the unit through which universities pursue their functions of educating and training agricultural scientists and workers, agricultural extension officers and policymakers, as well as conducting community service through its famous university-based extension strategy. The university-based extension strategy at Obafemi Awolowo University is called the **Isoya Rural Development Project.** Examples of university-based extension programmes in other universities in Nigeria include the:

– Rural Change Project (RCP) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria;
– Okpuje Rural Development Project (ORDP) of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka;
– Badeku Rural Development Project (BRDP) and Igbo-Ora Medical Project (IMP) of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

The Isoya project began full operation in 1972 and has its base in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. The project is managed by the Head of the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology. A chief agricultural superintendent is the Programme Coordinator and (s)he is assisted by other technical members of staff in the department.

Other cooperating faculties and departments are the Department of Animal Science, the Department of Plant Science, the Department of Agricultural Economics, the Home Economics Unit, the Department of Agricultural Engineering, the Department of Food Science and Technology, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Department of Continuing Education. The cooperating agencies include the Osun State Ministry of Agricultural and Natural Resources (Tree Crop Division), the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (I.A.R.& T.) at Ibadan, the Osun State Agricultural Mechanization Unit and the Osun State Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Finance and Cooperatives.

The Isoya Rural Development Project started with fourteen pilot villages in the Ife zone. However, some villages dropped out along the way leaving the following eleven villages in operation: Erefe, Isoya, Olorombo, Walode, Aroko, Iyanfoworogi, Esera, Laodin, Aganran,

Adegba and Akeredolu. In 1983, the project extended its arm of operation to Ede North, where it covers four villages, namely: Aro, Awo, Ikotun and Abudo-oope.

The action programmes executed by the Isoya Rural Development Project are:

1. Agricultural improvements which consist of
– the introduction of hybrid seeds, seedlings and cuttings of cassava, maize, cowpeas, soybeans, and cocoa;
– the introduction of improved technology in terms of soil management, crop management, weed control, improved storage, and improved market systems;
– the introduction of other intermediate technology inputs in farming such as farm mechanization, the construction and use of grain dryers, the use of modern spraying gadgets, etc.
2. An adult literacy programme;
3. Rural cooperative societies;
4. Home economics and health education; and
5. The formation of rural youth clubs and women's groups.

The specific objectives of the project in the realization of gender equality in agriculture are:

– To create a gender-sensitive model for dealing with rural development in selected villages, which could be applied on a wider scale at a later stage.
– To serve as a laboratory for training potential rural development and agricultural extension workers on women's and gender issues in agriculture.
– To serve as a research site for testing social science concepts, particularly those related to gender and agriculture.

Hence, the Isoya Rural Development Project is of strategic value in successfully mainstreaming gender into the agricultural discipline at Obafemi Awolowo University.

However, recent research in the programme's pilot villages revealed a gender inequality problem. This problem was traced back to 1986, when more than sixty percent of the cooperative groups were taken over completely by men, while thirty percent went out of existence and ten percent remained unchanged. The historical communal conflict in

the area, which emerged in 1990 and continued until 2002, worsened the situations of these microcredit groups. A post-conflict survey carried out in the area revealed that the men took advantage of the conflict period to take control of more of the microcredit groups completely away from women, while some women's groups folded because, for a long time during the period of the communal conflict, women were scattered and could not gather or meet for any purpose.

The study also revealed a higher level of socio-economic poverty among the women than among the men in the area. This is the consequence of the sudden break in financial and social assistance that women enjoy from microcredit schemes. This predisposes women to infections, diseases and death, which therefore widens the gap between "the poorest of the poor – the majority of whom are women in the rural areas" and "the enterprising poor – the majority of whom are men in the rural areas" in this region (Deji 2004: 9).

This report is necessary as evidence of the gender responsiveness of community outreach programmes at Obafemi Awolowo University through the Isoya Rural Development Project.

Roles of the Faculties of Agriculture in the Achievement of Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development in Nigeria

Sustainable rural development is germane to sustainable national development in Nigeria (Hemmati, Gardiner 2002). Agriculture has the potential to solve both the economic and social problems ravaging Nigeria. Economically, agriculture serves as a source of basic income for more than eighty percent of the Nigerian population.

Moreover, a reliable source of food is required for the good diet necessary to withstand disease and infection in the human body; a healthy diet has the potential to help eradicate the social menace of HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases facing human beings. Hence, developing agriculture is vital to sustainable livelihood, which in turn is fundamental to national development. The question then is in what ways are the faculties of agriculture in Nigerian universities contributing to the development of agriculture? To specifically address this question, I will

limit the discussion to the Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University because of its acknowledged leading role in agricultural and rural development in Nigeria and beyond.

The Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University contributes to agricultural development in Nigeria in two major ways, namely:

1. Direct agricultural and rural community development services (1972 to date): the Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University is one of the few faculties of agriculture in Nigeria that has a rural development programme unit resident in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, called the Isoya Rural Development Project (IRDP). IRDP is an outreach programme which links the university research units and departments with the neighbouring rural communities. The programme is a prototype of a university-based extension strategy, which links university research units with farmers. Through the programme, research findings generated from the university are disseminated to farmers in an appropriate package for practical use with the primary aim of improving agricultural production and the rural livelihood.

In addition, the project has links to other faculties and departments outside the Faculty of Agriculture, e.g. the Faculty of Education (Adult Education Project) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (on community health-related issues). Evaluation reports of the programme to date reveal that the programme has contributed significantly to the improvement of agricultural productivity and the general standard of living of the people in the pilot villages, which is having a positive spillover effect on some other farmers outside the pilot villages.

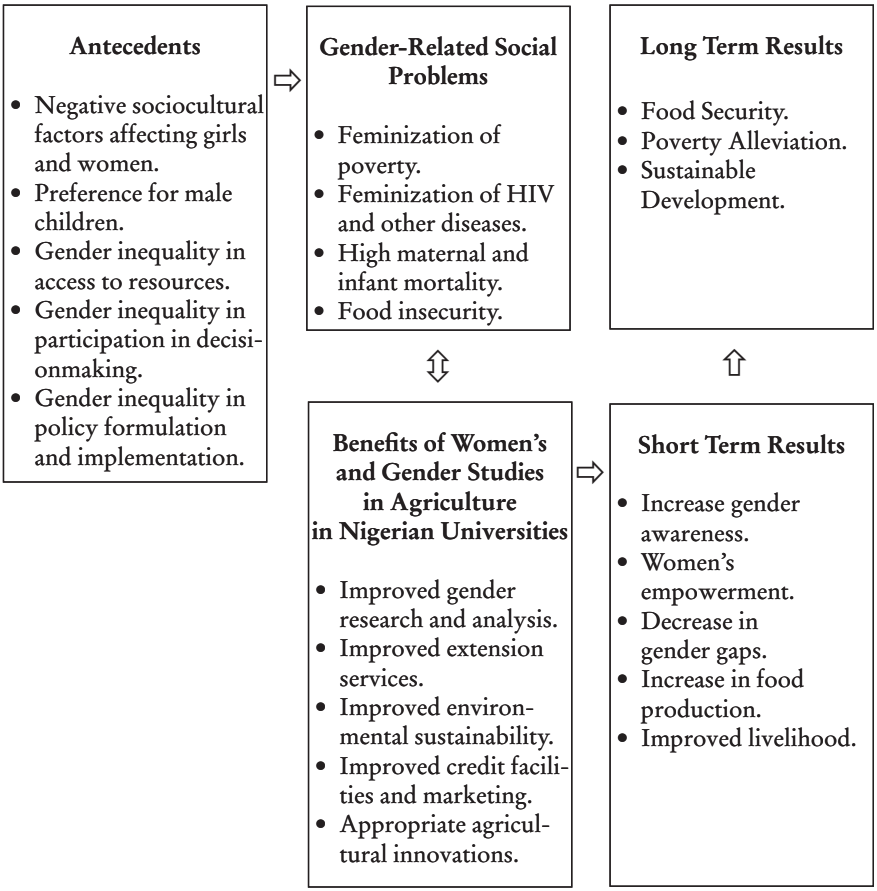
2. Personnel development/empowerment (1962 to date): More than ninety percent of the students who pass through the undergraduate, Master's and doctoral levels of studies in the faculties of agriculture in Nigeria end up in important strategic positions in agricultural and rural development policy planning and implementation. The following strategic positions are common: agricultural officers and farm managers; agricultural extension officers and workers; agricultural subject matter specialists; agricultural programme planners; agricultural policymakers and economists; agricultural teachers (at all levels of education) and farmers.

The Faculty of Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University is blessed with both the human and material resources required to contribute to the successful achievement of sustainable agricultural production and rural development in Nigeria. Some of these resources are:

1. The University Farm (teaching and research farm): The farm is located eight kilometres north of the Faculty of Agriculture building. It covers about 1,400 hectares of land and comprises many units and sections, such as farm offices, a feed depot, a machinery repair shop, processing units for the preparation of various farm products for sale and storage, field laboratories and farm classrooms. The farm laboratories consist of units that deal with beef and cattle, sheep and goats, swine, poultry, rabbits, oil palm plantation, cocoa plantation, citrus plantation, plantain and banana plantation, coconut, coffee, cashew, and rubber plantation, and an arable and vegetables section.
2. Libraries, including The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL).
3. A standard university-community link programme via the Isoya Rural Development Project, which is fully equipped with competent technical staff in various aspects of agriculture, who work jointly with the academic staff of the department in disseminating research findings to the farmers in the pilot villages in the programme.
4. Competent staff in all aspects of agriculture, including home economics.

Introducing women's and gender studies in agriculture at all levels of studies in the Faculties of Agriculture in Nigeria would be an effective and direct means of empowering prospective agricultural development. Stakeholders should become informed on gender issues in their chosen fields and therefore to become effective advocates of gender equality in agriculture. In addition, gender awareness could improve the service delivery of these stakeholders, especially to the farmers, the majority of whom are women living in the rural areas of Nigeria. Hence, sustainable development could be a feasible experience in Nigeria.

Figure 1: A model of the relationship between women's and gender studies in agriculture in the universities and sustainable development in Nigeria



Source: Deji 2006: Field Survey

Challenges

From the above, it is obvious that women's and gender studies in agriculture at the university level of education are significant in the attainment of sustainable agricultural and rural development in Nigeria. However, there are challenges facing improvements in the current

status of women's and gender studies in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria.

The challenges are the need to introduce:

- a core course on women's and gender issues in agriculture at undergraduate level;
- a core course at the Master's level of study on women's and gender issues in agriculture;
- women's and gender studies as a main study area in agriculture;
- more gender-responsive research activities both among the students, the staff, and in community outreaches;
- developments and modifications of the curriculum and instructions for teaching and research on women's and gender issues in agriculture in Nigeria to meet the international standard at all levels of studies in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology; and
- re-enforcements of international networking and collaboration between home-based lecturers teaching courses on women's and gender issues in agriculture classes at Obafemi Awolowo University and scholars in other universities outside the nation, where women's and gender studies in agriculture are flourishing.

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Abbreviations

BRDP	Badeku Rural Development Project of the University of Ibadan
CGSPS	Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies
IMP	Igbo-Ora Medical Project of the University of Ibadan
IRDP	Isoya Rural Development Project
ORDP	Okpuje Rural Development Project of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka
RCP	Rural Change Project of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
TEEAL	The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library

Nigerian universities mentioned in the text:

ATBU	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi
ABU	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
CRUT	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar
DELSU	Delta State University, Asaba
FUTA	Federal University of Technology, Akure
FUT	Federal University of Technology, Minna
OAU	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife
OOU	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ayetoro
UNAB	University of Abeokuta, Abeokuta
UI	University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Dang Tung Hoa

An Overview of Gender in Development and Social Forestry in Vietnam

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of gender and development in Vietnam. Rapidly changing into a market-oriented economy, the country faces the different effects of industrialization and modernization. At the same time, gender relations are in transition, with dramatically changing tasks and new forms of pressure, especially for the younger generation of Vietnamese women in both urban and rural areas.

Moreover, the paper deals with the challenges of the concept of gender studies in the fields of forestry and social forestry and its integration into the curriculum of the Vietnam Forestry University/Xuan Mai. Gender development aims at empowering women and providing them with more opportunities to participate actively and equally to men in projects and programmes. This idea is to help women to improve their work performance and their chances of participating in social activities.

Introduction

The total population of Vietnam is about 80 million, of which 49.2 % is male and 50.8 % is female (General Statistics Office 2004). Vietnam is a relatively poor country with a comparatively new market-oriented economy. Since launching key reforms through its *dổi mới*[1] or renovation

1 After the end of the Vietnam War and the reunification of the country, the governing Communist Party introduced the planned economy. The period was characterized by low productivity, trade barriers, environmental damage and extreme poverty until the introduction of *dổi mới* (the Vietnamese for renewal) in 1986. As a result of this change in policy, central planning was disbanded, collectivisation came to an end, and processes of market economy reform began.

strategy in 1986, the country has made remarkable progress across a broad range of socioeconomic development measures. The rate of poverty fell from 58 % (in 1995) to 20 % (in 2005) (Vietnam Women's Union 2006), one of the sharpest declines for any developing country on record. Much of this poverty reduction can be attributed to Vietnam's strong agricultural performance since the late 1980s. Reform in the agricultural sector transformed Vietnam from a country experiencing extreme food shortages to one of the world's largest exporters of rice, coffee and other agricultural commodities.

In 2006, Vietnam ranked 109 out of 177 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) (see UNDP 2006a) – well above what would be expected from its current level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US $ 550 (in 2004, see UNDP 2006b). Its Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) is ranked at 80 out of 136 countries (see UNDP 2006c).

Part I: A Brief Overview of Gender in Development in Vietnam

National Policies Support Gender Equality

Officially, the Government of Vietnam places human beings at the centre of development, promoting human potential and the well-being of all. This is part of the success of the *đổi mới* reforms and the new Ten-Year Socioeconomic Development Strategy (2001–2010) approved by the Ninth Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in April 2001. The main economic aspects of the Ten-Year Strategy are to accelerate socialist-oriented industrialisation and modernisation in order to establish the foundation for Vietnam to gradually become an industrialised country by 2020. At the core of the government's strategy is the imperative for a minimum standard of living and equal opportunities for all. This approach is in line with the human development perspective,

Since then, Vietnam has been in a highly dynamic development process. It became the 150th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007.

which defines development as the process of expanding people's capabilities and choices to improve their overall well-being. The human development approach advocates that all people, regardless of their race, class, religion, sex and nationality, have equitable access to opportunities. It maintains that development without equity across these groups can lead to the disenfranchisement of whole sectors of society and thus will fail.

There is a strong history of gender equity in Vietnam resulting in part from the ancient matriarchal system during the years of the Chinese occupation. This gender bias is influenced by Vietnamese society. With the advent of the Communist Party, socialist policy enshrined gender equity in the Constitution of Vietnam and many government policies. This has led to the current relatively high GDI in Vietnam, compared to other countries in the region and countries with a similar gross national product (GNP).

Vietnam is a country in which gender relations are in transition. Gender stereotypes and gender values like those of earlier decades or centuries still exist in Vietnam, although women's everyday tasks have changed dramatically in recent years. Juggling these multiple, and sometimes contradictory, expectations has created new forms of pressure for younger generations of Vietnamese women, many of whom experience profound confusion as a result of trying to fulfil their own and others' expectations of themselves.

Gender Equality Means Changing Roles for Men and Women

Equality, of course, means changing gender roles for men as well as women, and women are recognizing this in the way they are approaching their relationships with the men in their lives. A study of gender conducted by the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) looked at men and women's perceptions of the ideal man. While men perceived the ideal man as a person who earns a lot of money for his family, women – particularly young women – considered the ideal man to be a good father and husband who loves, understands and actively supports his wife.

Table 1: Regional Indexes of Human and Gender Development

	Human Development Index (HDI) Rank in 2004 among 177 nations	Gender-related Development Index (GDI) Rank in 2004 among 120 nations
Vietnam	109	80
Cambodia	129	97
Lao PDR	133	100
Myanmar	130	–
Thailand	74	58

Source: UNDP 2006c

As in many countries in the region, the majority of men and women in Vietnam live in rural areas. The paid positions that women hold are predominantly in hotels, restaurants, tourism, banking, schools, hospitals and health care centres, as well as in textile and garment manufacturing, where they run 80 % of the businesses. Men dominate in the areas of forestry, chemistry, science and technology, sport, culture, heavy industry, energy, irrigation and construction. The sociopolitical structure of Vietnam has shaped many of the current trends in the country. Vietnam has a very stable government, which contributes to sociopolitical stability, and strong mass organizations such as the Women's Union, which has thirteen million members (CWS 2006).

Vietnam performs well on many indicators of gender equality. For example, childhood health indicators do not show discrimination against female infants, and basic primary education rates are almost equal between boys and girls from the dominant ethnic group, the Kinh. However, there is evidence that economic development and the renovation process have impacted differently on men and women and perhaps most negatively on people from ethnic minority groups, for whom the gap between the socioeconomic development of their communities and that of the majority of the population is in fact widening.

Although Vietnam's Gender-related Development Index (GDI) is high in comparison to its Human Development Index (HDI) and its GNP, gender-based discrepancies still prevail in all sectors. For example, women still fare worse than men in higher education and health, and

traditional stereotypes dominate the distribution of labour, leading to gendered occupation strata and hence to different and discriminatory average real wages for men and women.

In the past years, the Vietnamese government has had a good awareness of and strong commitment to achieving gender equality. Vietnam was one of the first six countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – the key global legal instrument for gender equality adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. The Government of Vietnam also participates in other international legal instruments for equal rights for women. In 2000, along with 189 other countries, Vietnam committed to implementing the Millennium Development Goals, one of which is to enhance gender equality and improve the position of women.

The Government has set up a mechanism from the central to the local levels in order to supervise and monitor the implementation of laws related to gender equality. In 1993, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) was established and its organizational structure has been put into place from the central level to ministries and provinces. The apparatus has made a significant contribution to the improvement of women's status in family and society. In addition, in order to ensure that gender issues and women's advancement are reflected timely and properly, the Government decided to include the assessment on activities for women's advancement in its annual review reports on management activities from 2004 onwards.

Besides contributions to gender equality promotion in Vietnam by UN agencies, the Government's organizations and national and international NGOs have been recognized.

To date, we have learned many positive lessons on gender issues, for example, the integration of gender issues into development projects, gender networking between certain organizations and training on gender issues for communities.

A prominent achievement of the struggle for gender equality is the promulgation of the Law on Gender Equality in 2006 and the concurrent passing of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention.

Thanks to gender interventions, social awareness of gender equality and gender issues, Vietnam has changed positively in many fields of

social life. However, long-term changes in gender equality behaviour are still a concern in communication and education in all sectors and levels.

Challenges to Gender Equality

We have many challenges to gender equality in Vietnam:

- Vietnam has the advantage of having a young population. If full advantage is taken of this abundant labour force, Vietnam will experience many opportunities to develop rapidly. However, if this period is wasted, Vietnam will face many socioeconomic difficulties.
- Integration and national industrialization/modernization require that women's lives should undergo qualitative changes in order to be able to participate equally in the processes of a new economy and meet the increasing demands of the labour market. This is a challenge to population groups in remote areas, especially women in these areas.
- Urbanization and the restructuring of agricultural-industrial production have reduced the amount of land in agricultural use, where workers are mostly women. Women in rural areas who usually have a low educational level with no professional skills might not be able to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by land compensation. As a result, these women might fall back into the poverty trap.
- Labour export and emigration, especially of women, have increased in almost all provinces. This poses a risk to women and their families.
- The reduction of natural resources increases working time for women and is one of the reasons for changing to other jobs.
- Trafficking in women and children for prostitution has become increasingly complicated in many areas of the whole country, seriously damaging women's honour and health. The amount of women who get married through brokerage to foreigners, especially to Taiwanese and Koreans, has increased, which has led to complicated problems.
- The persecution of women takes place in most provinces and cities of the nation, mainly in the form of violence against women of an increasingly serious nature and level.

– Cases of HIV/AIDS continue to rise and tend to spread quickly among women, negatively affecting future generations and putting a burden on society.

Some Recommendations on Gender Issues

– Developing and delivering undergraduate education programmes on gender and development, with the aim of producing knowledge with basic skills in order to implement gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive planning and policymaking.
– Strengthening the information exchange system and networking between organizations and training institutions such as universities.
– Enhancing cooperation with government agencies and mass organizations to improve gender awareness – raising and strengthen gender mainstreaming in various aspects of social life.
– Expanding and improving the quality of legal aid services in order to better meet the demands of women, especially disadvantaged women.

Part II: Gender Integration in Social Forestry Curriculum Development at Vietnam Forestry University

The concepts of "gender studies in forestry" and "social forestry" are new in Vietnam – and so is their integration into the forestry curriculum of the Vietnam Forestry University/Xuan Mai. The Social Forestry Training Centre (SFTC) at the Vietnam Forestry University/Xuan Mai began to implement gender issues in its research project in 2000 with the Social Forestry Support Programme (SFSP, an international project, supported by Helvetas, the Swiss Association for International Cooperation). After ending this project in 2002, many subsequent activities have been undertaken independently until today. The first teaching subject to integrate gender issues was "Introduction to Social Forestry". Since then, gender issues have been integrated in various teaching fields such as Forestry Extension, Participatory Rapid Appraisal and Agroforestry. Now we have a subject called Gender Analysis in Social

Forestry for students who are interested in specializing in Forestry Extension.

The challenges to the integration of gender issues in the programme of studies are that only a few lecturers have knowledge of gender, while many management leaders are not yet gender-sensitive. The recommendations for the Vietnam Forestry University are to enhance the gender awareness of lecturers and the capacity for training male and female lecturers, as well as to strengthen gender networking with other national and international institutions.

In the early 1970s, a new viewpoint on women, environment and sustainable development emerged. In many countries, including Vietnam, both men and women play an important role in natural resources management. In the remote areas where ethnic minority groups live, women have a more important role in the household economy and in forest product utilization. They collect fuelwood for daily use and they are directly affected by the exhaustion of natural resources. Thus, more attention should be paid to women, and they should be encouraged and considered as the primary target group in rural and forestry development projects.

Why Gender in Forestry?

In most developing countries, women are the primary managers and users of natural resources. During the widespread drought and energy crises of the 1970s, forestry development concentrated on tree plantations. However, simply planting more trees did not succeed in meeting forestry development objectives. During the 1980s, forestry development policies began to move away from a strictly production-based and industrial sector and focused instead on a rural development approach which incorporated the links between trees and people. Community and social forestry efforts were made to address the interrelated problems of environmental degradation and rural poverty, as well as to encourage local people to act as the agents and beneficiaries of forestry activities.

Yet gender is an often overlooked element in agriculture, water and forestry programmes and projects. Furthermore, forestry institutions

are male-dominated. In most cases, men receive training and women do the everyday work, so that forestry activities are not effective.

Gender analysis improves our understanding of the gender-based division of labour, indigenous knowledge, resource access and opportunities to participate in community institutions with respect to natural resource management. In many regions of developing countries, women know more tree species, and more locations and uses of trees than men. Recent forestry policies have been established upon the knowledge of local women and men, their needs and priorities, and based on the integration of forestry with agriculture, livestock production and small-scale industries.

Obviously, gender relations are important to any forestry development effort. However, they vary greatly and should be examined in each specific context to avoid generalizations or stereotype assumptions.

Why Gender in Curriculum?

Gender development aims at empowering women and providing them with more opportunities to participate actively in projects and programmes equally to men. Women should also be beneficiaries of the projects and programmes. Ideas and comments from the women who join social forestry activities are often more realistic, objective and comprehensive because they are the key persons who carry out the activities.

The integration of gender in the social forestry curricula at university level provides students with appropriate awareness and attitudes about gender issues, so that in the future they will be able to contribute to making the right decisions for both women and men. This will help women to improve their work performance and improve their chances of participating in economic and social activities.

According to the Gender Assessment Report by seven partners of the SFSP in 1999, gender had not been mentioned sufficiently in the curricula of universities, so they agreed to integrate gender into some subjects. The first subject to integrate gender in the curriculum was "Introduction to Social Forestry" with the objective of "analysing gender roles

in natural resources management". Gender analysis will help people to reach effective work division and to greatly improve work efficiency.

Gender Is a Great Concern at the Social Forestry Training Centre (SFTC)

Both concepts of "gender studies in forestry" and "social forestry" are new in Vietnam. The SFTC has brought gender into its research projects since 2000. In its work plan for 2001, gender became a research topic and was integrated into some research fields such as Land Use Planning, Community Forest Management and Non-Timber Forest Products Management.

The Social Forestry Training Center was established in 1995 and has more functions (education, research and extension) as one faculty and belongs to the Vietnam Forestry University (VFU). The SFTC consists of three departments (Department of Social Forestry, Department of Extension, Department of Agroforestry). About 200 students study social forestry at the VFU.

Gender integration into social forestry courses at the SFTC with support from the SFSP has progressed through the following steps:

Table 2: Activities of the SFTC in the Integration of Gender Issues into Social Forestry

Year	Activities
1998	Gender began to be integrated into the outline of the Social Forestry course.
1999	Surveys and exchanges on gender awareness were carried out among the seven SFSP partners. SFTC staff were trained in gender knowledge and integration of gender into human resources development and curriculum development in the course "Introduction to Social Forestry".
2000	A section on gender was written as part of the Introduction to Social Forestry course workbook. Gender was integrated into the curricula of different subjects, such as Agriculture and Forestry Extension, Social Forestry Project Management and Agroforestry. The Department of Social Forestry organized training on gender awareness. A gender core team was established at the Vietnam Forestry University.

2001	The SFTC conducted a research project on the topic of gender-based labour division in the forestry production of the Dao communities in Hop Nhat village, Ba Vi commune, Ba Vi District, Ha Tay provinces. The Department of Social Forestry (DSF) organized a survey and workshop on gender awareness at the Vietnam Forestry University.
2002-2003	Closing the SFSP (end of second phase, beginning of third phase in other regions). DSF organized training on gender for some international organizations (e.g. Plan International, UNDP). DSF developed the outline for the subject Gender Analysis in Social Forestry (Specialization in Forestry Extension).
2004	The DSF wrote the first draft of the textbook: *Gender Analysis in Social Forestry*. The DSF conducted the first course for students with cooperation with the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Dr. Parto Teherani-Krönner) The DSF consulted on gender for some international projects.
2005-2006 2007	The DSF conducted the second course for students in cooperation with international consultancy (non-timber forest product project). The DSF completed the workbook *Gender Analysis in Social Forestry* (Dang Tung Hoa).

Briefly, on the subject of gender, to date we have issued a textbook called *Introduction to Social Forestry* (including gender), some training materials on gender in agriculture and forestry, and many research theses on social forestry and gender. As a result, three lecture courses on social forestry and gender can be offered. The challenges to the integration of gender issues into the programme of studies are the lack of experienced lecturers on gender, and many management leaders not yet being gender-sensitive.

Recommendations

Some recommendations for strengthening gender networking and raising the standard of lectures on gender:

– Conducting research on gender and social forestry in certain contexts of different regions in Vietnam: gender and land tenure, gender and natural resources management.

– Training on gender for lecturers, especially for managers and female lecturers.
– Strengthening gender networking with national and international institutions for improving gender research.
– Participation between forestry and agricultural universities in the curriculum development of subjects related to gender.
– Strengthening supervision of diploma and master's theses related to gender issues.
– Improving communication activities: meeting, sharing experiences, website.

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FSSP & P	Forestry Sector Support Programme and Partnership
GENDCEN	Gender, Environment and Sustainable Development Centre
GDI	Gender-Related Development Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
HDI	Human Development Index
NCFAW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
SFSP	Social Forestry Support Programme
SFTC	Social Forestry Training Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VFU	Vietnam Forestry University

Judith Fuchs

Gender Research and Teaching in Medicine at the Charité Berlin

Abstract

The Center for Gender in Medicine (GiM) at the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin was established to sex- and gender-specific differences in basic and clinical research, prevention, diagnostics, therapies and the health care system and to integrate the findings into medical education at the Charité.

This contribution describes the structure of the GiM, its aims and tasks and describes the efforts which are being undertaken to promote gender research in medicine at a medical faculty in Germany.

In the last 20 years, 'gender' has attracted more and more attention in medicine, as research results described gender differences in a variety of medical disciplines. Gender differences in cardiology are evident; recent studies show that women develop cardiovascular diseases (CVD) 10–20 years later than men, but, if present at a younger age, these diseases have a more malignant clinical course in women. Women have a relatively greater increased risk of CVD associated with diabetes and hypertension compared to men. Similar results can be found in, for example, allergology, immunology or pharmacology. The fact that 'women are not just small men' should therefore be included in research, clinical, and epidemiological guidelines, as well as in medical curricula. To improve the quality of research and treatment, gender-specific medicine includes the biological differences between men and women and how the manifestations, mechanisms, and treatment of disease vary as a function of gender. In Berlin, a variety of scientists were successful in establishing an institution working on gender issues: the Center for Gender in Medicine (GiM).

The Center for Gender in Medicine (GiM)

In 2000 the Endowed Chair for Gender Studies and Osteology was established at the medical school at the Free University Berlin; in 2002 the Professorship for Women's Health with a focus on cardiovascular diseases was set up at the Charité (at that time the medical school at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, HUB), funded by means of a special programme for the advancement of women in higher education, which later on became a regular position at the medical school. In 2003 the medical schools of the Free University and HUB were merged to form one medical faculty that belongs to both universities. The two professors and the women's representatives from the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Free University started an initiative to establish a new centre for gender in medicine. Several researchers and working groups within the Charité considered gender-specific health research as a very relevant issue for future research and teaching activities. Putting all these people together in a centre means using the synergy effect to promote gender issues in Berlin's medical faculty.

This plan was supported by the deans of both medical schools. After a successful workshop on gender research in medicine, the Charité decided to set up the centre for a preliminary period of three years, with a possible extension following an evaluation of the scientific work of the GiM.

The GiM was founded at the Charité Berlin in November 2003 as an interdisciplinary research association at the joint medical faculty of the Humboldt and Free University Berlin. It is the first centre of its kind at a medical faculty in Germany. The medical faculty finances the management (one scientist and one secretary plus an office) of the GIM. In 2005, two leading professorships for 'Women's Health Research' and 'Gender Studies and Osteology', the professorship on 'Molecular Basis of Gender Differences' and two postdoctoral positions on preventive medicine and heath care research were established at the GiM. These were important steps for the establishment of the centre. Nowadays – three years after the foundation of the centre – the GiM is an independent institution alongside the Charité's seventeen centres and implements gender in research and teaching.

The foundation of the GiM is a huge step forward towards the implementation of gender issues in medicine in Germany. Nevertheless, we are still far away from widespread implementation. One of the main reasons is that most researchers at the Charité have several tasks: health care, research and teaching. They all usually work for more than eight hours a day, which leaves little time for input in gender. Grants are therefore essential for the establishment of gender research in medicine.

Targets and Tasks of the GiM

The targets of the GiM's work are located on different levels: sex and gender should be included in:
– medical and public health research.
– teaching and medical education.
The aims within the research area are to study sex- and gender-specific differences in the biological basis of clinical syndromes, in the manifestation and course of diseases, in prevention, diagnostics and therapy, as well as in health care structures. Furthermore, it is important to promote this specific research in all medical disciplines. Therefore, the GiM organizes an annual international symposium with the opportunity to present and discuss researchers' findings in the field of sex and gender in medicine

To implement the research findings in medical practice and teaching, GiM members offer lectures and seminars on gender issues. A GiM working group is developing a gender-sensitive medical curriculum with the aim of integrating it into medical education at the Charité.

Research and teaching results are presented on various occasions to the public, policymakers, authorities, and institutions of the health care system.

The Four Columns of the GiM

A comprehensive approach is needed in order to understand the nature of gender-related differences, including their genetic basis and gene-

environment interactions. An understanding of the pathophysiology of sex hormones through all developmental stages is also necessary in order to optimize pharmacological therapy for women and men. The GiM supports such a comprehensive approach by building up a network of researchers with an interest in gender and sex research in medicine and public health.

In the GiM, work is carried out in four major areas:

1. Gender issues in clinical research.
2. Gender issues in basic research.
3. Gender issues in health care and prevention.
4. Gender issues in teaching.

Gender Issues in Clinical Research

It is important that those involved in disease treatment and drug discovery and development are aware of possible gender differences in diseases. For example, physicians need to understand gender differences in pathophysiology and pharmacology in order to provide optimum treatment. At the GiM, research focuses on gender differences in cardiovascular diseases, stress response, immunological dysfunction and complications of pregnancy, allergology, rheumatic diseases and pharmacology. Further disciplines will be included soon.

Gender Issues in Basic Research

There are numerous health problems that are affected by gender. Women are more susceptible than men to depression, osteoporosis, asthma, lung cancer due to smoking and autoimmune disease. Basic researchers must recognize the significance of sex differences in the pathophysiology of their animal models and cell-culture systems.

Gender effects in disease are complex and not all medical problems show gender dimorphism. Moreover, little is known about the basis for this difference, for example, in cardiovascular disease. To tackle this question, a GiM research group has generated age- and gender-specific gene expression profiles of cardiac tissue of mice and human samples.

Groups are working on the following projects: 'the molecular basis of gender differences', 'sex hormone effects on RAS-connected inflammatory effects in the kidney', 'gender differences in aortic stenosis: effects of

sex hormones and hormone receptors' and 'gender-specific analysis of T-cell regulatory molecules in the mouse model of rheumatoid arthritis'.

Gender Issues in Health Care and Prevention

In health care and prevention, recent research has shown gender differences in health and risk behaviour, self-management of chronic diseases and in the medical treatment of female and male patients.

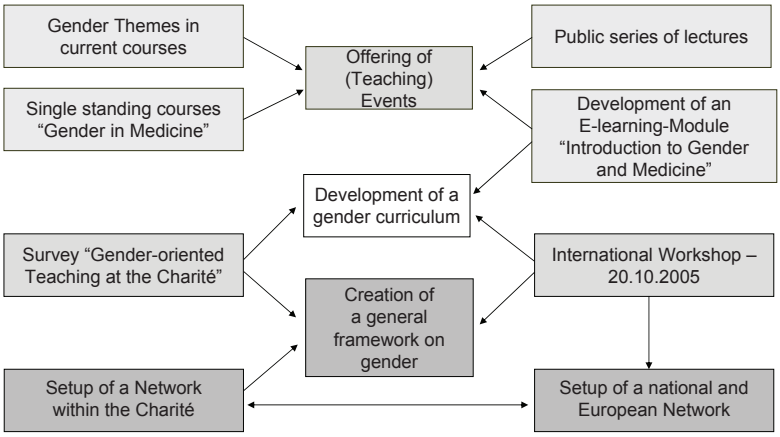
In the research area of prevention, there are several ongoing projects at the GiM such as 'gender differences in smoking behaviour and smoking cessation', 'physical activity after cardiac event', 'self-management of chronic diseases such as arthritis' and 'psychosocial risk factors and management of lower back pain'.

In the area of health care, scientists are working on projects such as 'mapping health services access – national and cross-border issues' and 'utilization of emergency departments by German patients and migrants'.

Gender Issues in Teaching

The GiM coordinates research and teaching activities on gender in medicine at the Charité Berlin. GiM members are committed to different teaching activities. They offer medical students lectures and seminars on gender issues using both traditional and e-learning methods.

Figure 1: Teaching Activities at the GiM



For postgraduates, Charité staff and other interested people, the GiM established a lecture series on the topic of 'gender in medicine' (e.g. 'Sex and gender: is medicine neutral?', 'Violence and the task of medicine'). Figure 1 gives an overview of the teaching activities at the GiM.

GiM Structure

The GiM is a research and teaching association made up of scientists from the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. Most of the GiM members remain at their home institution and meet each other at GiM meetings and conferences. Membership in the GiM is voluntary and a gender-related project is required.

Three professorships, two postdoctoral positions, management and various grant-funded positions are directly assigned to the GiM. The professorships are: 'Women's health research' (Professor Vera Regitz-Zagrosek), 'The molecular basis of gender differences' (Professor Patricia Ruiz) and 'Gender studies and osteology' (Professor Martina Dören).

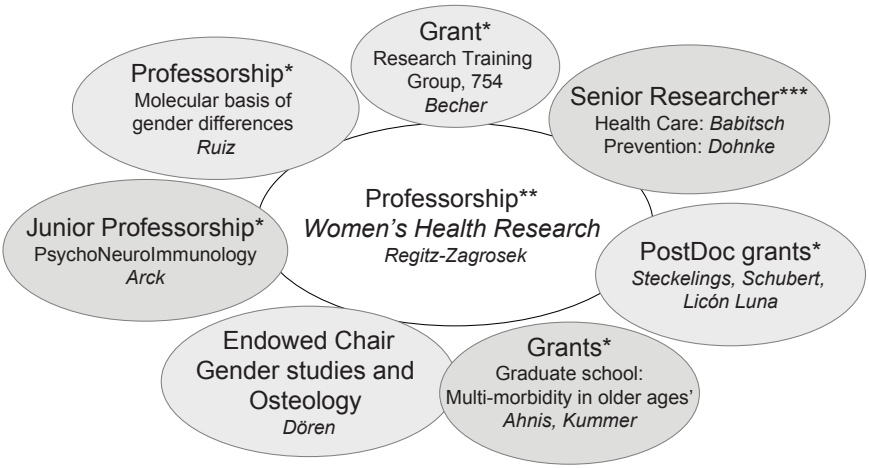
Figure 2: GiM Structure

The GiM currently has approximately eighty members from the Charité. They elect their board, which consists of seven professors, two senior researchers, two students, and two others. Advising members of the board are the Dean of the Charité, the Dean of Research Affairs, the Charité's Women's Representative and the GiM Manager. The board elects a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. The executive committee consists of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson, the Dean of Research and the GiM professors.

Scientific Structure

In the GiM, people from diverse medical and public health disciplines work together. Figure 3 gives an overview of the personnel funded within the GiM.

Figure 3: Scientific Structure of the GiM



* Funded by Berliner Programm zur Förderung der Chancengleichheit für Frauen in Forschung und Lehre (Berlin Programme for Promoting Equal Chances for Women in Research and Teaching).

** In Cooperation with the German Heart Centre Berlin (DHZB).

*** Funded by the "Programm zur Förderung von Nachwuchswissenschaftlerinnen und -künstlerinnen" (Programme for the promotion of young female scientific and art talents) at Berlin's universities.

Scientific Board of the GiM

The scientific board of the GiM includes scientists from different institutions. They are:
Professor Susanne Baer, GenderKompetenzZentrum, HU Berlin
Professor Ursula F. Habenicht, Schering AG, Berlin
Professor Roland Hetzer, Deutsches Herzzentrum Berlin (German Heart Institute Berlin)
Dr. Regine Rapp-Engels, Deutscher Ärztinnenbund und Deutscher Frauenrat, Münster (German Association of Female Doctors and the Women's Council of Germany)
Professor Ulrike Maschewsky-Schneider, Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften, TU Berlin (Institute for Health Sciences, Technical University Berlin)
Professor Karin Schenck-Gustafsson, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm

Public Relations

Since 2003, the GiM has organized an annual Symposium on Gender Research in Medicine. Within this symposium, national and international researchers present and discuss their gender-specific findings. The results of the 2005 symposium have been published as a book (Regitz-Zagrosek, Fuchs 2006).

The latest research results by Charité researchers can be presented and discussed at several GiM colloquiums each year. GiM members are willing to promote new results and to discuss them with scientists from other medical disciplines.

The GiM established a lecture series (certified by the Berlin Medical Association) at the Charité. These lectures are open to scientists and students, as well as to interested persons from other institutions.

The first lecture series in 2005 was on the topic of 'Sex – Gender. Is medicine neutral with a view to sex and gender? Responses from different scientific disciplines'.

The second lecture series in 2006 dealt with 'Violence and Gender – implications for academic medicine' and ended with a very interesting

panel discussion which brought clinicians, scientists, students, police officers, politicians and social workers together.

GiM members publish their results in various peer-reviewed journals, depending on their current research focus.

For the interested public, GiM results are presented in newspapers and journals.

As a very practical task, the GiM published a brochure called 'Women's Disease: Myocardial Infarction' for the Berlin Senate for Economy, Work and Women. The brochure was distributed in all the pharmacies in Berlin. Due to the great demand, a reprint was necessary.

Management and Administration

The management is responsible for all contacts and requests. It builds up and maintains cooperation with researchers from Berlin, Germany and abroad. It organizes the annual symposium, colloquiums and guest lectures.

Furthermore, the management gives support to research proposals on gender issues and forwards calls for proposals to researchers.

In the field of teaching and education, the GiM office coordinates all GiM teaching activities within the Charité and offers help to people looking for speakers on gender research.

Cooperation

In the field of gender in medicine, the GiM is constantly working on international and national contacts and cooperation. The international and national exchange of findings consolidates the implementation of gender issues in the field of life sciences e.g. medicine, molecular biology, medical sociology and psychology.

International cooperation exists with the Gender Research Centre, Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm (Professor Karin Schenck-Gustafsson); the Gender Centre, Columbia University, New York (Professor Marianne Legato); Gender Mainstreaming, Medical University

of Vienna (Professor Brigitte Litschauer); the Department of General Practice and Social Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands (Professor Toine Lagro-Janssen); the Department of Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes, Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland (Professor Ewa Malecka-Tendera); and the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Basel, Dept. of Women, Gender, and Health (Dr. Elisabeth Zemp Stutz).

In Germany, the GiM cooperates with the Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWIG), Cologne; the medical faculties with a focus on a gender curriculum, i.e. Hamburg, Hanover, Lübeck, Kiel and Cologne; and several German scientific associations, i.e. DGK, DGIM, DGSMP, DGMS.

In Berlin, there is a variety of institutes working on gender issues. The GiM exchanges findings and compares notes with institutes at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (i.e. the GenderKompetenzZentrum, the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies and Gender and Globalization) as well as the Technical University (i.e. the Institute for Public Health, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Research.)

At the Charité, our centre works together with the Master's Study Programme on Health and Society – International Gender Studies Berlin, with the CharitéCentrum 1– Humanities and Health Sciences (ZHGB), the German Heart Institute Berlin (DHZB), and the German Rheumatism Research Centre (DRFZ).

Master Study Programme on Health and Society – International Gender Studies Berlin

The Master's Study Programme on Health and Society is one of the GiM's important partners. GiM members are committed to teaching in this programme and some students receive or have received a GiM grant for their gender-specific work.

The study programme has been designed for women and men from all over the world who have work experience in health-related professions. The concept of the programme is multidisciplinary, intercultural and gender-sensitive. The language of instruction is English.

The current full-time twelve-month programme started in October 2006. For further information, please visit the website: www.charite.de/health-society.

Conclusion

The establishment of a centre for gender in medicine can be considered as a great step forward to the promotion of gender issues in medical research. Since 2003, the GiM has been well known at the Charité for its work in research and teaching. Many students and scientists attend the GiM lectures and seminars and the GiM is attracting more and more members. As a result of the annual symposium, our research results are widely disseminated within the scientific community. The medical faculty shows great interest in GiM's results. Starting in 2006, the GiM will offer an elective course on gender in medicine for medical students, a milestone for the permanent implementation of gender in the medical curriculum. Nevertheless, there is a long way to go to implement gender research in every single institute at a medical faculty. The increasing interest both within and outside the faculty shows that the GiM is on the right path and we hope to be a structural part of the Charité in the future.

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Abbreviations

CVD	Cardiovascular diseases
DGIM	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Innere Medizin (German Society for International Medicine)
DGK	German Cardiac Society, Düsseldorf
DGMS	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Medizinische Soziologie (German Society for Medical Sociology)
DGSMP	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozialmedizin und Prävention (German Society for Social Medicine and Prevention)
DHZB	German Heart Institute Berlin
DRFZ	German Rheumatism Research Centre
GiM	Center for Gender in Medicine
IQWIG	Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care, Cologne
ZHGB	CharitéCentrum 1 – Humanities and Health Sciences

Heike Jensen

Quo Vadis Gender Studies? Some Provocative Theses Directed at the German Academic Context

Abstract

The article takes the initial impetus of Women's Studies to produce knowledge in the service of making the world a better, more gender-just place as its point of reference. It argues that Gender Studies in Germany no longer follows this trajectory: Gender Studies has adopted an institutional and discursive setup that favours its self-contained academic existence beyond any broader political or social significance. This claim will be substantiated with respect to eight aspects that bolster the depoliticization of Gender Studies by favouring its isolation from larger society and by making it blind to social justice issues: the definition of excellence, the practices of publishing, the status of teaching, the claim to objectivity, the setting of the research agenda, and the conceptualizations of gender orders, power and intersectionality. It will be argued that at the current juncture of a neoliberal restructuring of the university landscape and a broader ideological backlash against women's rights, such a status quo seems untenable: Gender Studies in Germany would be well-advised to take stock, repoliticizes itself and reach out to other political actors concerned with gender equality and social justice, both nationally and transnationally, in order to survive and develop in a socially meaningful way.

Introduction

Once upon a time, feminists described Women's Studies as "the academic arm of the women's liberation movement" (Bird 2002: 139). This happened in the late 1960s in the USA, where Women's Studies was born out of a social movement for change. The initial, utopian impulse

to embark on a quest for new knowledge which would help transform the world, as well as the nostalgia that the idea now inspires, are captured well in the following quotation:

"Some people saw their curriculum formation work as being their activism which was the case for me. It was amazing the feeling that we could really change things through the power of knowledge, those books are still on my top shelf, I keep them there to remember." (interviewee quoted in Bird 2002: 148)

So what has happened in the meantime that warrants this nostalgia? With fully fledged Women's Studies and Gender Studies departments and degrees in many countries, aren't we well on our way to rounding off the knowledge we need to transform the world into a truly gender-just place? Questions like these, related to the history and political value(s) of Women's Studies and Gender Studies, have recently received quite some attention. For the U.S., the founding mothers of the disciplines (Howe (ed.) 2000) and their successor generations have employed their scholarly expertise to assess more than three decades of incorporation within universities. Some have arrived at largely positive verdicts, pointing to rapid institutional expansions, the opening of new fields of knowledge, lively academic debates, and personal and social transformations (Boxer 1998; MacNabb et al. (eds.) 2001; Kennedy, Beins (eds.) 2005). Others have pronounced more negative assessments, focussing on institutional cooptation, depoliticization and rising political challenges (Martin 2000; Messer-Davidow 2002; Wiegman (ed.) 2002).

In other countries and regions, similar attempts at assessments have been made. In the case of Europe, these have also taken into account the diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, origins and trajectories of women's movements and Women's Studies in the different European countries (Griffin, Braidotti (eds.) 2002; Griffin (ed.) 2005). Everywhere, the positive achievements of Women's Studies and Gender Studies have been chronicled, but inevitably, the difficulties and limitations of these disciplines have also come into view.

In what follows, I will concern myself with the situation in Germany, on which I will present a critical, even provocative assessment. Far from being impartial, this assessment is indebted to my personal position as an untenured, postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in Gender Studies

who is trying to straddle both the academic and the political worlds. Beyond a doubt, I recognize the tremendous theoretical legacy available in Gender Studies and I am grateful for the opportunities the field offers. However, my aim here is to identify institutional and discursive obstacles and trends that in my view prevent Gender Studies from being a politically viable and effective site of social intervention. This does not mean that I advocate an unqualified blurring between academic quests for knowledge and political activism. However, I do take issue with Gender Studies as a discipline that turns a blind eye to systems of discrimination and social injustice as pressing fields of academic inquiry and intervention, in society at large as well as within its own institutional setup.

The backdrop to my assessment is formed by the hopes and aspirations which from the late 1960s onwards led women to engage with academic institutions from within. At the outset, feminists contested the institutions of higher learning on many levels. They lifted the deceptive veil of "objectivity" that hung over these institutions and saw them for what they were: institutions largely run by privileged men, with these men dictating the fields of research, points of view, research premises, standards and degrees of academic excellence, and the pedagogical approaches for the dissemination of what they designated knowledge to the students they chose to admit. In other words, feminists saw these institutions as agents for the reproduction of patriarchy and understood that they would have to seek the transformation of every aspect within them.

The question of whether feminists should actually enter academic institutions and try to alter them and the knowledge they produced was hotly debated in the early women's movements. It seemed obvious to the women that they would be able to contribute a wealth of new knowledge, starting from their own lives, perspectives, experiences and worldviews. In the process, they would effectively disqualify much of what had passed for knowledge up to then. However, the women were less certain that they would be able to challenge the institutional structures and their male-dominated, at times openly misogynist hierarchies.

Women's Studies and Gender Studies in Germany

In the German context, feminists did not favour any single strategy, but for a long time sustained a rich plurality of decentralized approaches inside and outside the university to solve the question of how best to organize women's studies: from autonomous research centres and summer universities to women's studies courses coordinated by special offices within universities. Until recently, when many autonomous research centres had to close down due to lack of public funding, this plural and decentralized approach constituted a unique feature of the German landscape of Women's Studies. Compared to countries like the U.S., the establishment of Women's Studies and Gender Studies happened quite late at German universities: While the first university professor in Women's Studies took up her job in 1986, the first gender degree programmes only started in 1997 (Heimberg 2001: 154, 161). The late centralization of Women's Studies and Gender Studies has meant that for a long time, research has thrived in the absence of a steady transmission to students of the knowledge produced (Jähnert 2004: 10). Concurrently, a generation gap between early feminist researchers and later Gender Studies scholars and students exists in Germany (Metz-Göckel 1997), which may be one of the root causes for the current, largely apolitical state of affairs within Gender Studies that I will address in this paper.

The vast majority of Gender Studies courses in Germany deals with issues belonging to the social sciences and humanities, and only a comparatively low number of courses incorporates questions from the natural sciences. As a discipline in its own right, Gender Studies are situated at the fringes of the institutions of higher learning, and gender knowledge has not been "mainstreamed" into other disciplines to a significant extent (von Braun, Stephan (eds.) 2000). Hence, universities in general have by no means been thoroughly transformed by feminism; and the knowledge produced in these institutions has not altered much. The hierarchical systems of credit and academic excellence have not been reinvented in Gender Studies, but again conform to the received rules. The same appears to be true for pedagogical approaches to students.

Outside academia, the women's movement has disappeared in Germany. Like its counterpart in the U.S., it was this movement that created the political and cultural context from which women's studies courses emerged. What are now left in German society are a few non-governmental organizations that pursue feminist goals on a modest budget, as well as a comparatively substantial number of "femocrats" who have entered the political and administrative apparatus. Evidence of a severe backlash against women's rights and the gains of the past decades appears to be mounting.

Systematic collaborations between feminists outside academia and Gender Studies scholars and students seem to be the exception rather than the rule. From the point of view of Gender Studies, such collaborations do not automatically suggest themselves, but are solely based on the individual choice of some of its practitioners. So what has happened to the larger feminist project to empower women and to end discrimination against women with the help of Women's Studies? How helpful are Gender Studies in this respect now?

Trends towards depoliticization, non-solidarity and hegemonic complicity within Gender Studies

Notwithstanding the vital personal attempts of some scholars and students to combine the academic and political worlds, in my assessment, Gender Studies has accepted and adopted an institutional and discursive setup that favours its self-contained academic existence beyond any broader political significance. While other academic fields in the social sciences and humanities behave that way as well, it is worth pointing out that not all of them view political detachment as an ingredient of the academic way of life and respectability. In particular, the strong conservative forces within certain branches of Economics and Political Science see it as their role to provide political advice. From a counter-hegemonic position, fields such as Peace Studies also try to exert an influence. In addition, many sciences are based on a normative framework, e.g. Political Science on the value of democracy, Medicine on the value of the healthy organism, and Critical Theory and Postcolonial Studies on critiques of systems of domination.

Thus, it is more than justifiable to ask if and how an academic field with a strong political legacy and normative foundation might end up becoming politically meaningless. Within the German academic context, the question of whether this is or even should be the case for Gender Studies has largely been framed within a specific epistemological debate. Two protagonists, Maria Mies and Barbara Holland-Cunz, have come to represent two extremes within this debate. This type of setup is common in the German context and may be due to the scarcity of academics compared to the high degree of their respective specializations, which often leads to a close identification of one person with a whole field of inquiry or with one of two polarized standpoints within one field.

In 1978, Maria Mies published an influential paper in which she argued that Women's Studies scholars need to eradicate the distance between themselves and their research "objects": They need to be partial to the women they study, adopt their "viewpoint from below" and join forces with them in political activism. In her text, Mies seems to imply that no qualitative difference exists or should exist between the knowledge that researchers and non-researchers produce, and that political engagement should be paramount for everyone (Maria Mies, reprinted in 1984 with a postscript).

Barbara Holland-Cunz has subsequently taken strong issue with this stance, arguing that Gender Studies are a "normal science" and as such follow their own epistemology and scientific rationale, which of necessity have nothing to do with politics (see, for instance, Holland-Cunz 2003). Like others, I have not found either of these two positions politically or intellectually convincing. Much more nuanced and fascinating engagements with feminist epistemology have been forwarded, particularly for the U.S. context, by Sandra Harding (1991) and Donna Haraway (1991), but also in Germany, for instance by Karin Schlücker (2003).

In what follows, I do not want to limit myself to simply revisiting this abstract, epistemological debate. Instead, I would like to take a somewhat different approach and try to explain some everyday, taken for granted practices, mechanisms and understandings that in my view cause social justice considerations. With them notions such as solidarity and

cooperation slip off the collective Gender Studies radar, thus favouring a self-contained, competitive and unjust viewpoint. I will take into account structural and thematic issues and will organize my points of observation and criticism around eight aspects: excellence, publishing, teaching, objectivity, research agenda setting, gender orders, power and intersectionality.

Excellence

For a career in Gender Studies, as in any other field of academic inquiry, what is now required is "excellence" in the production of "objective" knowledge. The standards in question are the received standards of old. Yet the concept of "excellence" has come to the forefront in recent years in the context of a neoliberal restructuring of the university landscape in Germany. In this context, "excellence" is used to justify the exclusion of an ever-increasing number of scholars from adequate funding and well-paid jobs. The overall goal is the creation of lean hierarchies of competitive people.

"Excellence" is operationalized and measured according to the requirements for scholars to (a) present papers at prestigious conferences, (b) publish papers in prestigious journals, (c) publish books with prestigious publishers and (d) fill our CVs with these accomplishments while we are still young. These demands amount to at least three interlacing forms of containment: a containment at the level of peer group, at the level of institutions, and at the level of the larger economic structure. The academic peer group, i.e. the group of people in the same line of research and publishing, sets the standards for all four requirements, while academia, publishers and larger market structures provide the institutional frameworks for this peer group.

An obvious consequence of these forms of containment is that academics are encouraged to become out-of-sync with the political realities beyond the university: The pressure on career development means that researchers are not supposed to spend significant amounts of time outside academia. Forms of political activism – but also parenthood, other jobs or travel – lie outside this career trajectory. Therefore they are

regarded by many peers and superiors in charge of hiring people or bestowing research grants on them as being in opposition to academic activity rather than enriching it. Such an approach drains German academia of vital impulses. This state of affairs becomes particularly evident when scholars thus contained by their institutions meet scholars from other countries where a richer interaction between academics and the outside world is structurally fostered.

The original impetus at the heart of Women's Studies, to bring the world and one's political experiences of it and one's reflections on it into institutions of higher learning, thus has not only been lost but has in fact been negated. It needs to be added that the negative assessment of motherhood, and otherwise non-streamlined career trajectories, have long been identified as discriminating against many women in their working lives, so that it is particularly depressing to see the same patriarchal logic applied in the context of academic "excellence" in Gender Studies. Students, it is worth adding, are judged by the equivalent logic of how speedily they complete their course work and get their degrees.

Publishing

The pressure on career development also makes it hard for scholars to pursue other forms of sustained outreach and exchange beyond academia, for instance through non-academic publishing in everyday language. This kind of publishing is devalued within German academia, and is therefore a waste of time in career terms. Structuring this logic is the fact that in the course of the academic establishment of Gender Studies, a distinct academic public for gender concerns has been created, whose language, and often concerns, are at odds with that of non-academics. Since academic publishing is associated with more bottlenecks than non-academic publishing, it may take a substantially longer time for a publication to appear before the public. Such a time lag means that it is almost impossible to make a timely scholarly intervention in writing into a pressing political discussion of the day.

In addition, a reputation based on academic publishing may well be connected to prior economic privilege, because it may entail an author

having to pay a substantial amount of money to be published by a particular publishing house, while she might be published free of charge by another with a lesser reputation. Thus, career building is also linked to a person's access to financial resources, which may entrench existing social hierarchies in the absence of additional funding opportunities.

Moreover, a blind adherence to the requirement to present prestigious publications makes it difficult for scholars to critically examine the intellectual property rights regime that they uphold and to negotiate with publishers around this issue. Recently, an increasing number of established, progressive scholars have been championing new, open access forms of publishing over adhering to proprietary copyright. Creative Commons licences are an example of the alternatives that are now being used, which some established publishing houses have come to accept upon writers' demands. Gender Studies scholars need to make sure that in our quest for traditionally defined prestige, we do not fall behind in the larger critical debates around core economic issues affecting academia. Instead of helping to further entrench highly uneven and unjust class and property structures, we should be among the pioneers of both the critical debates and the alternative initiatives.

Teaching

Even though the ideal of a close association between research and teaching has been upheld as a German tradition, the career trajectory and reputation of German scholars are entirely unrelated to their didactic aptitude and achievements as teachers and mentors. This means that professors pursue their careers with respect to research as described, while the quality of their teaching and the care which they give their students is almost a matter of personal choice. Thus, while individual professors may indeed exhibit a personal interest in their students and in teaching, structurally, students and teaching requirements represent a burden that detracts from career-enhancing research endeavours.

Given the comparatively high number of students and the low number of professors in the humanities and social sciences in Germany, a substantial amount of teaching is done by postdoctoral researchers

and postgraduate students. At this intermediate career level, obtaining teaching experience is required in order to advance up the career ladder. Consequently, teaching is often badly paid or even not paid at all because people have to do it anyway. Such a structural setup, needless to say, makes it very hard for people seeking careers in Gender Studies to maintain a positive appreciation of students and of the task of teaching them because both the reality and the connotation of undervaluation are so obvious in this context.

It appears that with the introduction of the "Bachelor" and "Master" degrees in the course of the European "Bologna process" of restructuring the university system, set in motion in 1999, more lecturers will be needed than before. To save costs, it is likely that a permanent intermediate job level of non-tenure-track lecturers/teachers will be created, while the number of professors might be cut even further. What will hence remain constant is the message that teaching, and by extension the bulk of the students, are not valued highly and constitute administrative burdens rather than inspiring partners. On these grounds, it is also very doubtful that the more recent attempts to assess and supervise the quality of teaching done by professors will go very far.

Objectivity

In Gender Studies, old standards for "objective" knowledge seem to rule, meaning first and foremost a scholar's stance of a supposedly detached and non-political treatment of issues. As touched upon above, this state of affairs seems quite peculiar in the light of the birth of Women's Studies out of the rejection of claims to this form of objectivity. But in fact, it may well be that Gender Studies seeks to appear as a legitimate field of academic inquiry by expressly shunning the politically involved legacy of Women's Studies. However, what Gender Studies concurrently often ignores are the useful and in fact formidable attempts that have been made by feminists to conceive more honest forms of objectivity.

It is worth revisiting the argument on this topic developed by Sandra Harding (1991), who coined the term "strong objectivity" and

distinguishes it from the "weak objectivity" that she sees as dominating traditional science. "Weak objectivity", in her analysis, has allowed the white men who have controlled the sciences to consolidate their own position of power through specific blind spots in their research. They have done this by applying objectivity only to the steps of testing and justification, but not to the context of discovery, which guides the choice of problems, hypotheses and main concepts. Hence, within the context of discovery, all aspects that appear commonsensical and not in need of explanation have been ignored, including the powerful position of the researchers themselves.

"Strong objectivity", consequently, requires that researchers also analyze the cultural prejudices that they and their academic disciplines have internalized. Thus, Harding asks scholars to include a systematic inquiry into the powerful background assumptions held by themselves and their disciplines in each quest for knowledge. This encompasses attempts to understand why certain questions and methodologies are privileged, as well as attempts to understand what kinds of values and interests might be bolstered by the research. This kind of far-reaching accountability has by no means come to characterize Gender Studies, let alone other academic disciplines.

Research agenda setting

The forms of institutional containment described so far mean that research interests are often generated solely within academia or among the peer group. Directions in research may be influenced by what people in superior positions, including those who award funding for research, find interesting; they may be based on what someone thinks will earn them prestige or distinction in their peer group; and they may be based on unspoken and unexamined rules of what to ask and what not to ask at a given moment. In Gender Studies in Germany, at least as far as the social sciences and humanities are concerned, I think that it is fair to say that to a large extent, research and research trends are not based on the identification of pressing social and political problems and the will to find academic explanations for them, let alone to produce knowledge

that might contribute to solutions. This is as much the case regarding the national context as it is regarding the international arena.

Furthermore, it is important to stress that a good part of the institutional containment is based on the national academic context and on the German speech community and publishing community. These aspects might further a certain academic "provincialism", in which outreach to other academics in other countries and world regions is not required for an academic career. In this setup, outreach across countries and world regions, just like the outreach to non-academic constituencies discussed above, largely rests on the personal motivation of scholars and is conducted by them at the risk of falling out-of-sync – both thematically and in terms of career building – with the home-based peer group. In that sense, even the Ahfad-Humboldt-Link Programme is a risky business!

At a time when globalization and global feminist strategizing as well as the EU enlargement process are on the political agenda, this potential insularity of Gender Studies in Germany is an odd occurrence. And it seems not without irony that academic outreach across countries has currently been promoted more by general, even "hegemonic" EU research funding than by feminist curiosity and engagement from within Gender Studies in Germany.

Studying gender orders

If we now take a critical look at the content covered by Gender Studies, the following issues warrant comment. The shift from Women's Studies to Gender Studies theoretically allows for more precise investigations into how gender systems bolster different manifestations of patriarchy: Studies of how forms of femininity and masculinity interact in complex webs of privilege and discrimination could lead to more developed theories of patriarchy than those formulated during the earlier epoch of Women's Studies. But in fact, the study of gender nowadays does not even imply that discrimination and systems of injustice are necessarily at issue. Instead, men, women and "gender orders" are sometimes studied without any reference to power differentials and hierarchies.

In these instances, what may be pursued are questions of how different forms of femininity and masculinity function and complement each other. This approach may reflect a truly apolitical mindset of the researcher – but it may also reflect the fear of the researcher that a naming of relationships of power could be seen as political activism and as non-objective and therefore as bad research. Concurrently, there has been a marked reluctance or disinterest within many sub-areas of Gender Studies and particularly within Political Science to investigate political gender projects (Rudolph, Schirmer 2003: 42).

The same is true for political norms and value bases, such as human rights or the debate over the terminology and concepts of gender equality, gender equity and gender justice. Even the debate about gender mainstreaming in Germany has often been led more heatedly outside academia than inside it. Avoiding a theoretical grappling with feminist projects and normative stances while privileging arcane and esoteric topics again might be understood as strategies to establish Gender Studies as a true and legitimate academic endeavour, something that is historically far removed from and conceptually unconnected to its roots in political activism.

Studying power

The current apolitical nature of Gender Studies is often explained with reference to the predominance of deconstruction or postmodern theory as the guiding frameworks of much of the work within this discipline. However, what I would like to stress is that it is not deconstruction and postmodernism as such, but the specific uses made of these theories, that render the research politically meaningless. I would like to illustrate this with reference to concepts of power. When power issues are addressed within Gender Studies, this does not mean that the large social chasms created by systematic forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, class, geopolitical location and other factors are by default tackled to a significant extent from a social justice perspective. Instead, theories of power such as those formulated by Michel Foucault (e.g. 1972) or Judith Butler (e.g. 1990) are often drawn upon in a way

that does not do them any justice, in order to stress that power is generated everywhere, with the implication that it is created everywhere equally. Hence, these theories lose their usefulness for understanding complex webs of power and sites of the political when they are employed in a manner that obliterates any sense of power differentials and nodes of power, so that power and politics appear to be simultaneously everywhere and nowhere.

Such a stance may even justify the possibly widespread ignorance within Gender Studies of decisive political developments such as the engineering of a global information society or the revamping of the health care and the social security systems in Germany and their gendered implications, which are in fact disastrous for many groups of women and will no doubt spur the feminization of poverty in Germany. Similarly, Gender Studies as a discipline has completely failed to comprehensively address the dramatically declining social status of women from the former communist bloc, including that of women from East Germany. In my view, if Gender Studies does not develop tools to identify which sites of the political and which processes exert substantial and immediate structural ramifications on large groups of women or men, and how they come to do so, it constitutes a science with a very doubtful record of accountability regarding its own area of inquiry.

Studying intersectionality

While my previous paragraphs made it clear that intersectionality may not be addressed within a framework of social justice and of power differentials, it is nevertheless a mainstay of Gender Studies that the gender system intersects with other forms of systematic social discrimination such as those based on race and class. Historically, this has been a very important insight that was initially gained by feminists who closely examined the different positions of privilege and discrimination held within the women's movement. This examination led women to identify different priorities and approaches in their political struggles, but importantly, it simultaneously led to a charting of how and in

which fields political collaboration would be possible among different groups of women. In the present context, I would like to draw attention to two pitfalls associated with the way the theoretical model of intersectionality has been adopted in Gender Studies in Germany.

One danger is that the U.S. model of intersectionality is adopted without paying enough attention to the systems of discrimination that are particularly relevant for the German context. Thus the U.S. concept of race and blackness potentially appears more exotic, interesting and safer than forms of discrimination that have played a fundamental role in Germany, e.g. those targeted at Jews, gypsies (Sinti and Roma) or Turkish people. This partiality hampers sophisticated analyses of the prevalent conditions here. A clear indication of this state of affairs in my view is the fact, already touched upon in the previous section, that Gender Studies has made no concerted efforts to come to grips with the differences between women who were socialized in East Germany and in West Germany. In the academic realm, this includes the pressure on East German women to "blend" into Gender Studies without altering them at all on account of their background, understanding and definitions (cf. Diedric, Strecker 1997).

Another danger associated with how the model of intersectionality has been used is that all that is produced are ever more finely tuned academic accounts of how systems of social stratification intersect and create a multitude of distinct positions for women. In my view, such an account of atomization needs to be augmented by explanations of how coalitions and alliances are formed across multiple social chasms. At issue here is the degree to which Gender Studies is not only able to explain the status quo in its dimension of fractures but also to explain initiatives overarching these fractures, noting if and how these initiatives may serve as models for progressive or conservative action. At times, it appears that much of the research concentrating on women stresses the fracturing aspects of intersectionality, while research on men and masculinities often emphasizes how hegemonic masculinity is achieved by men in overcoming fractures to jointly reap a "patriarchal dividend" (Connell 1995).

Interestingly, this stress on atomization in a substantial amount of the content of Women's Studies seems to find a counterpart in the personal

assessments of Women's Studies practitioners about their own situation, particularly by those at intermediate career levels: As an intriguing study by Sünne Andresen (2001) shows, the absence of a larger epistemological project and worldview within Women's Studies that these women diagnose does not only lead to feelings of personal isolation, but may even be experienced as putting them at the mercy of academic rules and as heightening feelings of powerlessness.

For me, such a state of affairs powerfully relates to Donna Haraway's epistemological consideration that individuals can only develop partial perspectives and hence need to come together and form networks to arrive at satisfying accounts of the world. Significantly, Haraway evokes the political and the scientific realms simultaneously and with equal weight when she describes "partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology" (1991: 191). Atomized researchers and students with disconnected and free-floating agendas hence are not only prone to personal isolation and the non-recognition of and non-solidarity with their (potential) peer group, but also very likely do not form sophisticated accounts of the world, let alone become meaningful agents of change in it.

Conclusion

The production of knowledge and the generation of power are closely allied. Furthermore, institutions shape the knowledge that can be produced within them and dictate what counts as knowledge and what does not; and institutions and the knowledge they produce can change. This was understood by the first generation of Women's Studies scholars, and it has inspired a substantial body of self-reflexive work in many countries over the decades. Given the current global political developments as well as the substantial restructuring of the national university landscapes in countries such as Germany, I think that Gender Studies scholars now need to make the self-reflexive examination of the power effects generated over the history of our institutionalization by the knowledge, discourses, fields of research and practices we have developed a top

priority. For such an undertaking, my brief and deliberately critical and provocative assessment of trends in contemporary Gender Studies in Germany – made against the backdrop of the aspirations of the early Women's Studies out of which they grew – wants to pave the way.

At issue is whether Gender Studies has by now become so depoliticized that it in fact serves as an agent of the prevailing hegemonic forces by betraying social justice considerations both structurally and thematically: structurally by duplicating patriarchal and other forms of discrimination as well as fostering hierarchies and individual isolation by disabling collaboration, and thematically by progressively excluding social justice issues of any kind from examination and theorization while fostering a self-referential existence around pursuits of atomized, esoteric knowledge unfit to inform any debate on pressing political and social issues.

At the current point in time, self-reflexive stocktaking might be crucial for quite immediate purposes of survival: We need to acknowledge and come to terms with the fact that the neoliberal restructuring of the university landscape in Germany translates into a severe deprioritizing and hence underfunding of social sciences and humanities. This, of course, means more and more competition for fewer and fewer jobs and resources, with a concurrent bowing of academic fields to external criteria of evaluation and to an agenda setting for research from beyond the university. Turning a blind eye to these developments and their gendered impact seems like a risky thing to do, particularly for a small field of inquiry at the margins of academia.

At the same time, patriarchal fundamentalism of various kinds seems to be gaining more and more power, which causes all kinds of ideological and material backlashes against women's rights in many societies. Thus, I would argue that the possibility of Gender Studies surviving in a meaningful way, defining itself and positioning itself, depends on honest stocktaking. It appears to me that this can only lead to a repoliticization and to outreach within Gender Studies and academia as well as towards other parts of society beyond academia, nationally and transnationally. This in turn would make Gender Studies more useful for the initial aim of Women's Studies to contribute knowledge that can be helpful for the pursuit of gender equality and social justice, which I would welcome.

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