

zhb Higher Education Research Colloquium Series



Guest Talk: Marion Kamphans

Between Beliefs and Legitimation: The Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Science and Universities

The obligation to implement gender mainstreaming at German universities has existed for more than ten years. There is already a routine for dealing with this concept of achieving more gender equality in place. However, the more recently approved requirements to consider gender aspects in scientific research by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) have been increasing its actual implementation. There is a variety of ideas on how to successfully implement gender mainstreaming in research, teaching and administration. Although we can observe this kind of formal commitment to gender equality, there is nevertheless limited implementation of gender mainstreaming aspects. Thus the self-defined goals have not been achieved yet.

The following questions constituted the starting point of my research:

- How do members of the university community react to the political request to implement gender mainstreaming?
- What kind of resistance to as well as support of the concept can be identified?
- How do university members assess the concept? And how do they actually realize it?

I conducted 26 problem-focused expert interviews to answer these questions. Representatives of different universities were interviewed, such as members of management, faculties and administration. I employed a combined theoretical approach. It merges the structural perspective of Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus, the neo-institutionalists' view of organisations and the discrepancy of talk and action and various concepts of gender research, e.g. "patriarchal dividend", increasingly "subtle gender differences" and "asymmetric gender culture".

The objective of my study was to figure out the subjective understanding of the gender mainstreaming concept among university members. One of my main findings concerns the strong interrelation of attitude and reaction concerning gender mainstreaming and its implementation. Thus, the findings provide broader insights into the gradual process of implementing gender aspects into teaching, research and administration.

Marion Kamphans is a social scientist and holds a doctoral degree in sociology. She works as a researcher and project manager focusing on research concerning sociological issues of gender, diversity, processes of teaching and learning in higher education, and academic roles and disciplinary cultures at universities.
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