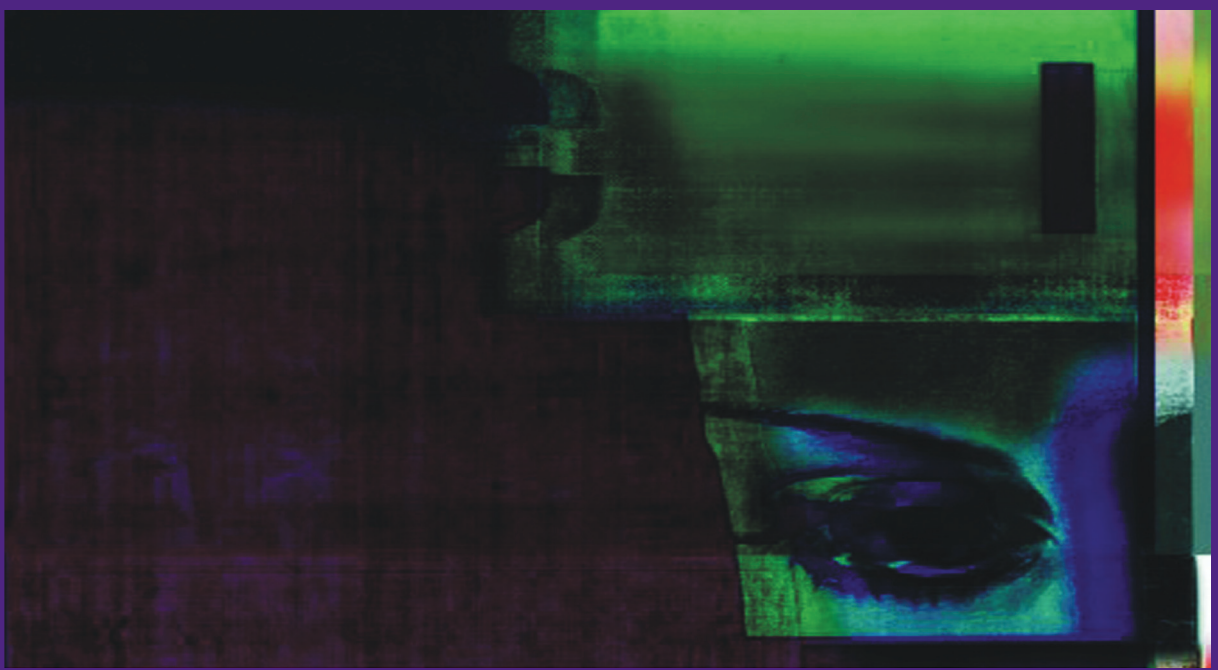


# Studies on Higher Education



## **From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies** **Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education**

**Laura GRÜNBERG**  
Editor



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**CEPES**

European Centre for Higher Education

# **From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies**

## ***Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education***

**Laura Grünberg**

Editor

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2011**

# **UNESCO-CEPES**

## **Studies on Higher Education**

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## FOREWORD

At the UNESCO international conference *Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future* in 2008, the participants emphatically endorsed the urgent need for realizing inclusive education, taking inclusion to mean a way of integrating cultural, political, racial, ethnic, gender and linguistic diversity, based on the grounds that quality education aims to engage all students fully, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, geographical location, special educational needs, age and religion, in order to build an inclusive society. The conference recommendations likewise provided concrete approaches to achieving effective inclusion, including the removal of gender bias from textbooks and resources, advocating appropriate teacher training, developing flexible and non-traditional pedagogical approaches, the adaptation and localisation of curricula and content, and no less importantly, awareness-raising at all levels. The then Assistant Director General for Education at UNESCO Nicholas Burnett, concluded with a reminder that “inclusion is not only a matter of policy and process, but also one of values, attitudes and of emotional literacy”<sup>1</sup>.

This volume on gender *in* education makes a concrete and original contribution to this “emotional literacy” and to the importance of awareness-raising from the perspective of gender biases in higher education content, by moving from gender as a *topic* of study, towards the mainstreaming of gender and gender neutralizing *within* curricula across all disciplines. This gender-micro rather than -macro dimension has hitherto received scant attention particularly at the post-secondary level. While children’s textbooks are increasingly becoming sensitized to issues of gender, ethnicity and lifestyles, higher education often finds itself reverting to stereotyping gender roles. The repercussions of such subliminal or accidental signaling cascades into society as a whole evidenced for example, by the still woefully low numbers of women in high government offices or previously perceived male orientated professions.

At a time when systems and institutions around the world are intensifying commitments to enhancing quality in higher education, these specifically commissioned case studies focused on South East Europe provide a timely reminder that quality also necessitates sensitizing curricula to reflect today’s

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO International Conference on Education, 48th Session, Geneva, 25-28 November 2008: Final Report.

societal expectations of both accepted multi-culturalism and pluri-genderism. The individual contributions to this groundbreaking collection not only uniquely engender and scrutinize the issue of gender *in* higher education, but offer the reader bold practical examples of turning “good intentions” into good practice.

Peter J. Wells  
Director a.i.  
UNESCO-CEPES

## INTRODUCTION

### From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies and beyond

Laura GRÜNBERG

#### ‘WHY’ BEFORE THE ‘HOW’ QUESTION

We all know that it is naïve to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge. Curriculum, in general, and the higher education curriculum, in particular, always serves as a means of social control, legitimating existing social relations, representing somebody's version of what constitutes important knowledge. Actually, what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations among various social categories, such as class, race, gender/sex, etc.

Does gender count as legitimate knowledge in the context of the considerable curriculum reform that can be observed, in the past years, at system level and in different fields of studies, curriculum reform that is driven by the Bologna agenda but also by complex national aspects? Is a gender-inclusive curriculum, one consciously designed to recognize and acknowledge the evidence that males and females are likely to bring in a similar, but also different, cultural baggage to their learning experience and that societies are deeply gendered at micro and macro levels, the norm or the exception in various higher education institutions? Such questions are important in any analysis of an educational reform. Listening to the messages delivered by higher education institutions about the constructions of femininities and masculinities and the various effects of explicit and implicit forms of gender discriminations, and investigating the availability of higher education institutions to adjust their academic programmes, organizational structures, and cultures, in order to become more permeable to gender sensitive knowledge, should be a compulsory exercise for all actors involved in the process of education. Reflection on how gender ingredients are, or are not, part of the meta- and micro stories conveyed by the higher education curriculum may offer important clues about what type of gendered knowledge school delivers: legitimate, marginal, or absent.

The list of aspects that could/should be considered when analyzing the gender dimension of a (higher) education curriculum is quite long. Before replying to questions such as: ‘**How** to teach gender?’ or ‘**Where**/at what level of education is



it best to talk about gender?’ or **‘Who** should teach about gender?’ or **‘What** could be the benefits of such an endeavour?’ comes **‘Why** study gender after, all?’ that deserves some initial answers.

Why study about gender in higher education? Because it is clear that only through a democratic inclusive curriculum, one that responds to the needs and values of societies, one that includes more than excludes, may we be confident that we produce open-minded individuals, able to cope with the diversities around them, to accept, and celebrate differences. Curriculum deals with the actual content of education, with the methodologies and processes through which learning takes place. It deals with facts but, more importantly, with the culture and values of society. It should consequently deal with gender.

Why study gender in higher education? Why not? To this author, paying attention to gender is just an intelligent way of looking at life and, from this perspective, it is intriguing how long gender has been ignored, pseudo included or alienated, as March says, in school curricula, in research, in social and political knowledge, in general. (March, 1982)

Why study gender? Another possible answer would be: because it does make a difference, in terms of social expectations, needs, opportunities, carrier paths, life cycles, resource allocation, etc. Looking at the gendered realities of today, one may easily notice that quantitative and qualitative data show that, beyond progress, gender equality is still more of a desideratum. There are still significant gender gaps in such sectors as employment, health, education, politics, and, maybe, more important, conservative cultural gender models persist in societies. According to different statistics, in many countries, women earn less money than men do; they are victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, and are more vulnerable to poverty and to globalization negative effects. Less men than women pursue university studies, women’s representation in politics is low, domestic work still lies heavily on women shoulders, media is full of gender stereotypes, there are visible hierarchies and discriminations among women and among men (not only between women and men), and some specific groups of women (Roma women, the elderly, rural women, adolescents, lesbians) face more problems in comparison with others. Complementary to such major visible, direct, explicit gender discriminations there are also a series of cumulative disadvantages, many apparently small things (‘boys’ networks’, cultural tolerance of sexual harassment, supportive discouragement, condescending chivalry, etc.), well researched by now (Benokraitis, 1997), which maintain, in an unjustified and outdated way, gender discrepancies, gender segregation, and even gender discriminations, in societies. Hence, data show the prevalence of gender gaps that need to be understood, studied, if we want to cope better and changing them. These data should be part of the disciplined-based knowledge transmitted by the educational curriculum.

Why study gender? Because of contained ingredients, such as the critical spirit, the desire not only to research but also to change, that could be found in the majority of feminist discourses and gender-sensitive research works. The intellectual journey of unravelling gender is a complicated and full of pitfalls one. Not an attribute, but a verb, not (only) a social variable, universal, but not uniform, about nature and culture, not (only) something that is learned, done, achieved, but something that is “always contextually defined and repeatedly constructed” (Scott, 1986, pg. 106), gender is not an explanation (or at least it should not be), as much as it should be an analytical category within which humans think about and organize their social activity (Harding, 1986). Gender is about women, men, and their femininities and masculinities, in their multidimensional contexts, something that is “constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the category of sex” (Butler, 1990: 21). At the same time, gender could be a social practice or perceived and discussed in terms of agency. Recent efforts to theorize gender involves subtle shifts from an account of ‘how’ gender operates under specific historical conditions to a universal claim about why gender performs a particular social function (Hawkesworth, 1997, pg. 680). From a maximalist stage (with the focus on gender differences), theories shifted to a minimalist approach (with the stress on similarities). From an inclusionist phase (just adding women or gender), the deliberation on ‘What is gender?’ shifted to the separationist phase (emphasis on differences, on women’s epistemological privilege), and then to the stage of deconstructing everything by following the post-modernist trend. At present, we are speaking about gender as intersectionality, enriching the discussion started by Kimberley Crenshaw some years ago (Crenshaw, 1991). We are trying now to include, more than exclude, learning from bell hooks (hooks, 1984), to be self-critical with our perspectives on gender, to be informed and use the ongoing scientific discoveries in other fields of research (Biology, Medicine, History, etc). As gender experts we are doing our best, to avoid replacing previous lack of sensitivity with oversensitivity to gender. Theories about gender are nowadays more and more sophisticated. Not only that research on masculinities is developed (Connell, 1995) but a more flexible taxonomy of masculinities including not only men, a masculinity outside the male body, is conceptualized – as in the case of Halberstam concepts of ‘female masculinity’ and ‘male masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998), or in the work of Becky Francis on the ‘monoglossic and heteroglossic gender’ (Francis, 2010).

Incomplete as it is, this quick tour of various theoretical perspectives on gender shows the affluence of the domain, its interdisciplinarity (diversities of approaches) and dynamics. It makes the answer to ‘Why study gender?’ not only as a separate subject, but as compulsory part of different other domains (History, Sociology,

Medicine, Sports, Arts, etc), even for the most conservative and sceptical ones, a rhetorical one (Grünberg, 2010).

## TO MAINSTREAM OR NOT TO MAINSTREAM GENDER?

Teaching gender within a mainstreamed paradigm is “teaching students to ‘transgress’ against racial, sexual, and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom, is to educate as the practice of freedom” (Hooks, 1994). So ‘Why study gender?’ should not be a question any more. After decades of research efforts, ‘What is gender?’ remains an ongoing open question, one with multiple answers. How to study gender is still a challenge that created the premises for the UNESCO-CEPES project *From «Gender Studies» to Gender IN Studies: Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education*, project finalized with the present volume.

We conceived this project in the framework of the designation of ‘Gender Equality’ as one of UNESCO’s two global priorities in the new Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals, and taking stock of the previous experience of our Centre in the area of developing gender sensitive programmes.<sup>2</sup> We considered that looking at higher education curriculum, from a gender perspective, could be beneficial for better adapting the knowledge delivered by universities to the competencies and abilities required by the new labour market of young persons. The rationale for our project was that, beyond successes in the area of designing and delivering women/gender/feminist studies within higher education institutions as separate, independent programmes, gender sensitive and gender differentiated approaches are currently being neglected in higher education curricula and something could or should be done. Thus we intended (i) to present and disseminate good practices in gender mainstreaming higher education curricula; (ii) to identify some of the obstacles in gendering higher education curricula, in various cultural and political contexts, within a specific region, i.e., South East Europe, and (iii) to provide arguments for the need to gender mainstream higher education curricula and a set of guidelines to do so.

In our attempt to identify examples of Gender-Inclusive curriculum, we designed the project around questions such as: What knowledge are students acquiring

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<sup>2</sup> In 2001, UNESCO-CEPES developed the project, ‘Good Practice in Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe’. As a result, two important publications have been produced: a volume on *Good Practice in Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Countries* (Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES, L. Grünberg, Coord, 2001) and *Guidelines for Promoting Gender Equity in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe* (Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES, M. Miroiu, 2003).

during their university degrees? Is this knowledge 'gender relevant'? Beyond Gender Studies programmes, which proliferated, in many countries, all over the world, as a separate/complementary educational offering, to the mainstream disciplines, are gender issues integrated within various other academic study fields? What does a 'gender-inclusive curriculum' openly mean? Do students in History also learn about 'her story'? Do students in Sociology learn about 'the gender dimension' of the social life? Is gender part of the Engineering curricula? How can gender awareness be promoted in particular subjects? What do students and academics think about the need for a gender-inclusive content of their disciplines? Are they prepared/trained to do this? Are there some institutional efforts in the area (such as, in the case of gender studies) or only some individual, conjuncture success stories? What are the legal, cultural, or organizational barriers in the process of gender mainstreaming higher education curricula? What role do Gender Studies programmes play in the efforts for gender mainstreaming in other disciplines?

In order to answer, or at least to start reflecting on such issues, we identified a series of gender experts, mainly from South East Europe, and asked them to prepare – based on a common frame of analysis provided by UNESCO-CEPES – institutional or study field case studies, focusing on the developments and difficulties in the area of integrating gender knowledge and gender sensitivity across various disciplines.

Each of the case studies produced offers a synthetic, updated situation on the gender dimension of the particular higher education system and on the current situation in the field of Gender Studies, concentrating, nevertheless, on (i) analyzing the *integrationist approaches to gender in higher education curricula* and (ii) putting forward concrete recommendations and arguments for gender mainstreaming higher education curricula.

The present volume includes a number of case studies from Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia. In addition, in terms of good practices worthwhile sharing, we have chosen a 'special' example representing an international higher education institution – the Central European University (CEU) located in Budapest, Hungary, an institution with a strong history of gender mainstreamed curricula and a good reputation in the region under consideration. We have also included an example of an integrationist approach to higher education curricula, as presented by Beate Kortendiek, from Germany. Last, but not least, the volume contains a detailed set of guidelines for gender mainstreaming curricula, produced by Mihaela Miroiu, a recognized gender expert, author of previous publications on similar topics. Her guidelines include a large spectrum of suggestions: from concrete tips on offering bibliographical support to those interested to gender mainstream their curricula, to institutional recommendations,

and also more general suggestions, concerning specialists' need for gender sensitive competences to be included in the Qualifications Framework for higher education or for 'quality assurance commissions/agencies/institutions for higher education to use criteria of gender fairness and inclusiveness in the accreditation, evaluations, or ranking process of the programmes and academic institutions.

## SOME COMPARATIVE REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE STUDIES

A (higher) education curriculum reflects a particular construction of reality, a particular way of selecting and organizing the vast universe of possible knowledge, and gender is an important ingredient of any of these particular stories. Based on this premise, the volume combines information about gender mainstreaming strategies, in different stages of implementation, with local, regional, or general 'tips' on how gender mainstreaming could be achieved. It should be regarded as a useful tool by all those interested, from various perspectives, to strengthen the inclusive types of education delivered by their higher education institutions.

As our German expert, Professor Beate Kortendiek, mentions in her article, 'an array of efforts and co-operations are necessary to ensure the success of this anchoring as the promotion of interdisciplinarity, reflexivity and scientificity of study via the integration of gender aspects by no means sells itself.'

We may conclude that, as expected, even if the 'hardware' is often in place, *i.e.*, legislation or structural regulations needed to implementing an inclusive type of curriculum do exist, the 'software', the concrete content of various disciplines is less developed in point of gender inclusiveness.

The articles in this volume illustrate the general interest in investing efforts in gender mainstreaming curricula, the general awareness of the benefits of such an endeavour. In all case studies, one may easily notice that, by and large, gender is not part of the mainstream knowledge proposed by higher education institutions, yet, there is an awareness of the need for it to be.

At it best, gender is marginalized within the area of Gender Studies – quite developed and institutionalized in the majority of the countries – but is rarely included in the higher curricula of other disciplines.

As expected, the articles reveal a clear, horizontal segregation among fields in terms of gender sensitivity. Exact Sciences and Natural Sciences are a good deal less gender-mainstreamed (many are quite 'virgin' to gender information), as opposed to Humanities and Social Sciences, where information on gender is more visible and frequent.

There are also perceptible similarities, in terms of obstacles encountered, or the development stage of mainstreaming gender in higher education curricula. Also, as a common trend, gender-inclusive courses, or modules, are, in most cases, elective,

and not mandatory. Therefore, we may conclude that knowledge on gender is still perceived more as marginal information, as complementary knowledge, and not as mainstream learning.

On the other hand, there are clearly different stages of development of Women Studies/Gender studies. Such countries as Serbia or Romania are more advanced in terms of institutionalizing the field, as compared to other countries like Moldova or Albania. It is not only about of the number of existing Gender Studies programmes, but also, more importantly, it is about the contents of the teaching on gender. As yet, some countries are catching up, doing mainly Women Studies on 'women and media', 'women and family,' etc. Few other countries have evolved to a more inclusive approach, with gender analysed from the perspective of multiple categories. Obviously, in such mature environments, the possibility to include, more than exclude, gender from the delivered knowledge is higher.

There is also a visible positive correlation between European Union member countries and the improvement, at least of the normative framework, of gender mainstreaming in all areas, education included. Several authors in the volume noticed the positive pressure coming from the European Union requirements for strengthening the gender equality aspects. The pressure has created a suitable gender-friendly environment (be it imposed, not actually internalized) in accepting initiatives on the topic of gender mainstreaming education, in general, and higher education, in particular.

Another remark that could be made in terms of similarities observed concerns the main source of the changes, initiatives, or reforms in the field. Symptomatically, in the majority of cases, the good practices presented are strongly related to individual efforts and enthusiasms and not to national or institutional gender mainstreaming policies. The problem of promoting gender-sensitive higher education curriculum is more of an individual problem than an institutional objective. There are committed and esteemed academics (the majority of them, women) who have been involved, for years, in the women's movement, in their respective countries. They are using their visibility, prestige, power, and connections to promote gender mainstreaming curricula.

There is also a general awareness of the need to budget the problem of a gender-inclusive curriculum. Many authors maintain that, for gender mainstreaming to be successful, financial support from faculties and Ministries is required, to design courses, to train specialists, to organize conferences, to support libraries, and research work. Indeed, it is a question of money, not only of good intentions.

There is also an accepted and declared need, in many of these case studies, to have the required 'gender expert' qualifications included in the national

qualifications framework and, as much as possible, a common quality standards framework to evaluate gendered education.

Professor Mihaela Miroiu, offering a set of pertinent, ethical, epistemological, and sociological reasons for mainstreaming gender in higher education curricula suggests that integrating gender in the curricula is more than a necessity, it is a legal obligation for education in general, and for higher education in particular. Undoubtedly, there is a long way to go until when offering a gendered mainstreamed story on life will be a legal *de facto* obligation of the higher education institutions. Proactively waiting for this moment, we invite all stakeholders to reflect on and respond to the various suggestions and recommendations included in this volume with actions designed to correct the documented lack of gender mainstreaming at the level of higher education curricula. Beyond that, we should just hope that, as Professor Kornelia Slavova informally wrote us, 'with the push of UNESCO something more will be done in our *gender-less Alaska territory*.'

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# **Gender Mainstreaming Higher Education Curricula: Case Studies**

# **Gender Mainstreaming Curricula in Higher Education at the University of Tirana**

Enriketa PANDELEJMONI (PAPA)

## **Abstract**

*The paper describes the state of affairs – in terms of gender mainstreaming and university curricula – in Albanian higher education institutions. It concentrates on the University of Tirana, while delving into its gender mainstreaming policy. Actually, an interest in modernising the curricula does exist at the University of Tirana (UT). UT hosts the largest Albanian gender studies programme in BA and an MA programme, to date. New courses, mostly at the Bachelor's level, have been added to university curricula, while traditional courses have been tailored to meet the demands of the new market economy. Gender issues have been taken up mostly in the curricula of Social Sciences and Humanities, while ignored in Natural Sciences and Maths. At the University of Tirana, gender inequalities are mainly evident in the university management leading positions, the majority of which are held by men. Yet, gender courses are taught mostly by women.*

## **THE COUNTRY'S GENDER EQUALITY FRAMEWORK**

The economic, political, and social changes following the year of 1991 did not go unnoticed, but made their way in the Albanian legislation, through the draw up of new codes. The smooth regulation of the relations at work did find their relevant expression in the new *Criminal Code* of 1995 (Albania, 1995) and in other laws and sub legal acts that over the last few years, have drastically improved by observing human rights international standards. Women's rights, as an essential part of human rights, have found their own place in the Albanian legislation, in general, and in the legislation on work in particular.

On 1 July 2004, the Albanian Parliament passed Law No. 9198, *On an Equal Gender Society*. The law proclaims equality of rights for men and women not as a principle, but as its scope: "The purpose of this law is: (a) to ensure realisation of equal rights of men and women, as provided in article 18 of the Constitution of Republic of Albania; (b) to define measures for the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women with a view to eliminate gender-based, either overt or indirect, discrimination in the whole country". Article 3 of the Gender

Equality Law clearly provides for specific tasks for the government and public administration to implement equal rights for men and women:

“The Council of Ministers and Public Administration shall: (a) make sure that equal rights of men and women are guaranteed by normative acts; (c) set up institutional mechanisms to provide support for public institutions and civil society programs, designed to ensure equal opportunities for men and women.” (Albania, 2004)

This law places the two sexes on an equal level, in terms of employment, education, and decision-making. The law specifies the need of setting up governmental mechanisms tasked with drafting governmental policies for gender equality, evaluation, and monitoring of the real situation.

In 2008, the Parliament rescinded Law No. 9198, *On a Gender Equal Society*, and passed Law No. 9970, *Gender Equality in Society*, considered as more accurate than the preceding one. *Gender Equality in Society* of 2008 regulates fundamental issues of gender equality in public life, the protection and equal treatment of women and men, with regards to equal chances and opportunities in exercising their rights, as well as their participation and contribution in the advancement of all social spheres (Anastasi, 2010).

### *National Strategy on Gender Equality*

In July 2006, the Albanian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MOLSAEO) initiated the development of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence*, along with an Action Plan, a clear signal of the Government of Albania's political commitment to provide the movement and achievement of gender equality with a policy synchronised with the civil society initiatives. The development of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010* (Albania, 2007) was driven by the need to upgrade women's status in Albania, to overcome gender-based hurdles and differentiation, to stick to the long path towards gender equality, to ensure compliance with gender-equality specific requirements and standards, and their incorporation into public policies and programmes, including the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, in 1995, in the process of bringing the Albanian legislation in line with the European Union legislation, and the Millennium Development Goals. The *Strategy* lays down the approaches and institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming gender issues in public policies, alleviating gender-based differences and preventing domestic violence.

In the framework of the overall upgrading of the school curricula, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Institute for Curricula and Standards, made it a condition for gender perspective to be mainstreamed through: (i.) reviewing and developing curricula in pre-university and university education; (ii.) reviewing old

text books and developing new school text-books; and (iii.) developing instructions and methodological materials for mainstreaming the gender perspective into the curricula (Albania, 2007).

The handling of gender orientation in school curricula differs by levels. In higher education institutions, gender issues are taken up in the curricula of Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Journalism and Political Sciences and in Literature, Psychology, Social Policies, Philosophy and Culture.

### *National Strategy for Higher Education 2008-2013*

According to the Albanian government, higher education and scientific research, in Albania, are still far from attaining the international standards, and progress, in this field, in the past years, has been somewhat disappointing. The new law on higher education of 2007 represented an important step forwards for the improvement of the system, although, admittedly, this has been only the beginning. In July 2008, the Albanian government approved the *National Strategy for Higher Education 2008-2013*, which outlines long-term goals and objectives for the higher education system, as well as the policies needed to achieve the strategic priorities, until 2013. The strategy fully complies with the main development trends of higher education in Europe and the rest of the world, especially with the Bologna process. The main goal is the development of Albanian higher education with a view to its joining the European Higher Education Area. The *Strategy* reflects the vision of the Government regarding mid-term and long-term policies in the sphere of higher education. The *Strategy* has embraced suggestions coming from the academic field, from other interest groups inside the country, as well as from experts and higher officials in the Council of Europe. The *Strategy* lays out the foundations for an Action Plan that includes tasks scheduled to be implemented until 2013. Based on the National Strategy for Development and Integration, the main objectives and goals of the *Strategy* are:

“Development of society and promotion of democratic standards through the education of students, in order to enable a vigorous civic life.  
Economic development of the country, in general, and of specific regions, in particular, through the education of a qualified work force.  
Fulfilling the younger generations’ aspirations towards progress.  
The development and consolidation of a wide and adequate knowledge-base for the benefit of the country.” (Albania, 2008)

To achieve the objectives and based on the needs of the Albanian society, the *Strategy* distinguishes sets forward five priorities to be achieved by 2013:

“The expansion of the system in order to meet the needs of the country, with a view to achieve adequate standards for integration in the European Union (in terms of the tertiary education indicators) and, at the same time, to create higher education opportunities for all those wishing to pursue it.

Ensuring diversity of the educational offering, in line with the requirements of the future development of the country.

Improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in the higher education system, through the continuous training of the human resources and through fostering a high-quality culture.

Improvement of governance mechanisms by granting autonomy to higher education institutions, on condition that an adequate quality of management, accountability and transparency were achieved, which will ensure their effective work as public institutions.

Development of methods and levels of financing, in order to encourage the entire system to achieve the general objectives.” (Albania, 2008)

## HIGHER EDUCATION METHODS AND CURRICULA

With most Albanian universities, both the teaching methodologies and curricula content fail to meet the needs of the society and of the country's economy. Methodologies and the style of teaching generally tend to provide students with ready-made information and only expect repetition of the information, without encouraging critical thinking. With regards to subject content, it is often narrow and traditional, without dividing subject materials by modules and credits, as called for by the Bologna process. They need to provide students with alternatives and flexibility of studies. The current teaching method in higher education institutions relies more on the introduction of facts, and seems to keep away from an interactive teaching method, focused on the student. The nature of the academic staff – student rapport needs to change, to become interactive, based on discussions, encouraging thinking, and development of ideas.<sup>1</sup> The change in teaching methods will be a real challenge for a large segment of the academic staff. There is a need for qualifications abroad, for exchanges of academic staff, experience, and teaching skills, and short-term courses on teaching methods. (MASH, home page)

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Albanian Ministry for Education and Science (MoES), in order to improve the quality of teaching, the biggest change that must be undertaken has to do with the teaching methods.

### *Gender Studies*

Publications on gender equality issues in Albania, during the democratic transition, are scarce.<sup>2</sup> However, studies have been carried out by various specialists authors (Katro, 1999; Dervishi, 2000), state institutions (MPCSSHB, 2007; Albania, 2007), non-governmental organisations GADC, 2006-2008), and international organisations (CEDAW, 2007).<sup>3</sup> Of importance are various statistics published by INSTAT (Institute of Statistics), for the years 2004-2009. A series of other studies were published during 1990-2000, addressing gender equality issues in the Albanian education system: attitude towards education, in the country (Dudwick, and Shahriari, 2000); financing and equity in education (The World Bank, 2000); education governance (Dethilleul *et al.*, 2000); briefings on the education system (Berryman, 2000; 1999); reports on gender at the University of Tirana (Calloni, 2000; 2002); an analysis of the country's education profile (Schmidt-Neke, 2007). Useful information on the state of education in Albania, during transition, has been provided by World Bank reports, as well as reports prepared by UN, UNICEF, UNDP, OSCE. (World Bank, 2000); (UNICEF, Education in Albania); (UNESCO EFA, 2007); (UNDP, 2010); (OSCE, 2010); (MASH, 2005).

### *Gender and Gender Studies at the University of Tirana*

Tertiary education level in the country includes 10 public universities and 10 private universities (INSTAT, 2008; MASH, 2010). The largest among them is the University of Tirana, with about 35,000 students, 8 faculties, and 50 departments, in the 2010-2011 academic year.<sup>4</sup>

The percentage of female students graduating from high schools and universities has increased as compared to that of male students. In the 2006-2007 academic year, female university graduates made up 56.7 percent of the total number of students (Musaj *et al.*, forthcoming). In 2009, the number of female students enrolled in public universities slightly exceeds that of male students: In 2009-20010, 56.7 percent of the students enrolled at the University of Tirana were women. (See, Annex)

As clearly revealed in the graphs, during the period between 1994 and 2010, the number of women having graduated from higher education institutions exceeds the number of male graduates.

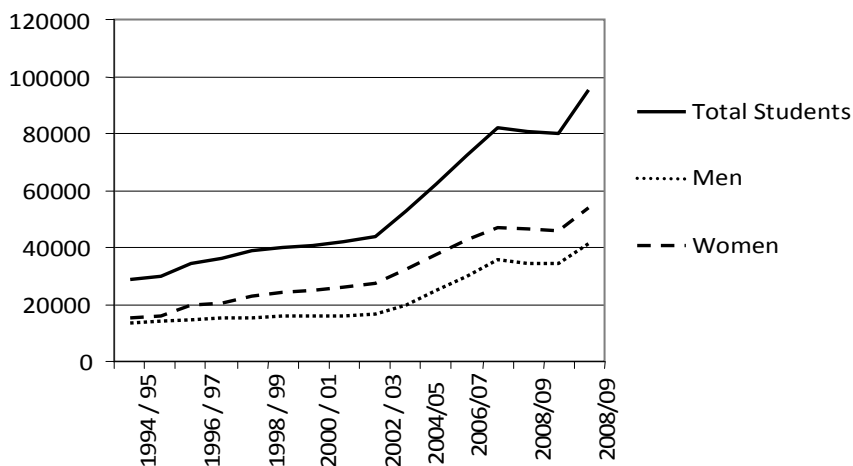
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<sup>2</sup> Further on the general gender situation in the last years, in Albania, see Musaj, F. *et al* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Reports and official platforms on gender issues published by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; see Ministry of Labour Site.

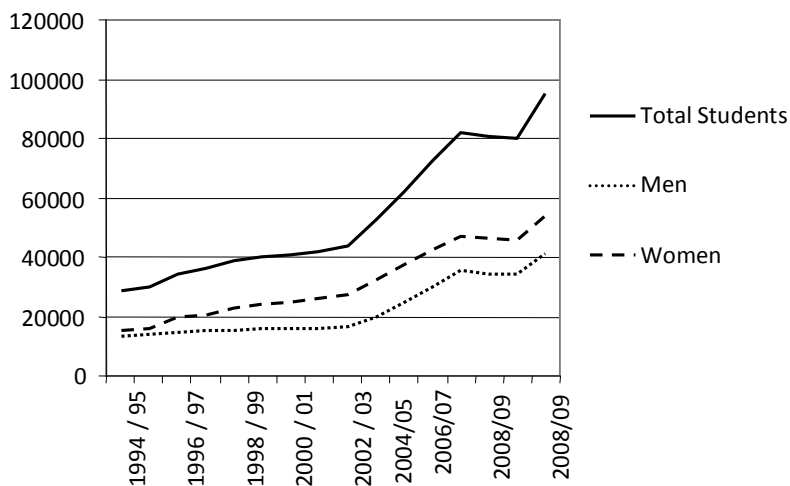
<sup>4</sup> Source: UT Directory of Human Resources.

Figure 1. Public and private university higher education enrolments, between 1994 and 2009 (INSTAT, 2009)



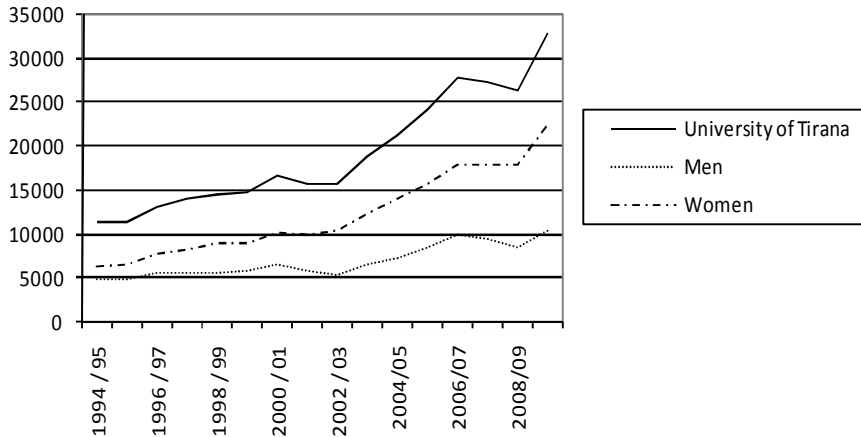
Source: UT Directory of Human Resource.

Figure 2. Students enrolled in public universities, during 1994 – 2009



Source: INSTAT, 2008.

Figure 3. Student enrolment at UT, during 1994 – 2009



Source: INSTAT, 2008.

In 2010, the total number of full-time lecturers at the University of Tirana was as high as 1,007; that of part-timers, was 1,000. The condition of gender mainstreaming at the University of Tirana is not bright; if we compare numbers, notice the absence of women, and the overwhelming presence of men in leadership positions. Rectors, deans, and head of departments are most likely men. 49 percent of the full-time staff lecturers are women; 51 percent of them are men. Out of 1,007 lecturers, only 498 are women.<sup>5</sup> A similar situation is encountered with at other public universities in Albania, where, in leading positions, men prevail over women.

Table 1. Academic staff, at Albanian universities during 2003 to -2008 academic years

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Total	1,704	1,759	1,882	2,017	2,057	2,341
Professors						
Men	233	214	244	269	258	281
Women	23	36	39	43	45	64
Associate Professors						
Men	228	234	234	236	210	237
Women	100	100	103	106	103	105
Lecturers (MA, PhD)						
Men	550	526	577	598	611	729
Women	570	649	685	765	830	925

Source: INSTAT, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Directory of UT Human Resource, Tirana, 2010.



Table 2. Leading positions at Albanian universities (2008-09 academic year)

Positions	Men	Women
Rector	10	0
Vice Rector	10	3
Senate members	166	48
Deans	29	11
Vice deans	16	13
Members of faculty board	298	241
Department heads	105	47
Elected members of the faculty board	21	17

Source: INSTAT, 2008.

Table 3. Leading positions at the University of Tirana (2008-09 academic year)

Position	Men	Women
Rector	1	0
Vice Rector	1	1
Deans *	5	1
Department heads	21	11

\* Missing data on the Faculty of Medicine and Nursery.

Source: UT, 2010.

Table 4. Female lecturers with the University of Tirana (by scientific degree) (2010-11 academic year)

Female lecturers	Prof. Dr.	Assoc. Prof.	Doz.	PhD	MA
498	40	71	20	206	161

Source: UT, 2010.

In terms of gender studies, interest has been manifest in modernizing the curricula. The University of Tirana hosts the largest Albanian gender studies programme to date, in BA, and an MA programme. Many new courses, mostly at the Bachelor's level, have been added to university curricula and many traditional courses have been adapted to meet the demands of the new market economy. Gender issues are taken up mostly in the curricula of Social and Humanities sciences. Thus gender is introduced in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Journalism and Political Sciences curricula, as well as in the literature, social policies, philosophy, history, archaeology, anthropology and culture subjects. The Faculty of Social Sciences and the Law Faculty offer training courses on gender, feminist studies, and on human rights. A number of faculties train students as future gender issue specialists, to be employed with the public sector and the civil society. Lecturers have incorporated gender issues in their courses, and have adopted

feminist theories in their teaching methods. Departments have established separate gender courses, or gender topics within existing courses. Gender related research has been supported, largely by donor grants, in collaboration with the departmental heads, faculty deans and the Rector of the university. (UT, 2010)

### *Practices of Gender IN Studies: Master Study in Gender*

In addition to financing Albanian women's NGOs, international organisations and national governments supported the initiatives at the institutional level. Among others, the United Nation Development Programme sustained governmental projects in Albania. In particular, it supported the establishment of the Women and Family Committee (1999), created in 1998, by the Council of Ministries, within the structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Women. The Committee aimed at developing gender-oriented institutions and policies, at implementing the main issues set forward in the Platform for Action (1996), signed in Beijing (Calloni, 2002). Within the framework of this new kind of international co-operation for projects devoted to women, in 2000, a Gender Institute (*Instituti i Studimeve Gjinore*) was established at the University of Tirana, with the assistance of the UNDP, Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Söros Foundation in Tirana, and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana. The Executive Agency of the United Nations Development Program – Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS), and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana (where the Gender Institute was based) approved a gender programme and university curricula planned to run in December 2000, funded by the Söros Foundation. The Gender Studies Centre was inaugurated in March 2001 (Calloni, 2002). The Gender Institute was tasked with drawing up a Master programme, training courses for the scholars later to be involved in the teaching of MA courses in gender studies. It was with this aim in view that special provisions were made for developing NGOs training seminars and courses, and, in particular, for civil servants (Calloni, 2002). The declared goals of the Gender Institute were: the functioning and development of human capabilities and empowerment; the establishment and stabilisation of democratic institutions; the relationship between the civil society and the State, assisted by centres of research and life-long learning; implementation of equal opportunities programmes (Calloni, 2002). This is how the Gender Institute has become to as a centre of excellence in gender education, training, and research.

The Gender Institute Master's programme, expected to start in 2006, needed the endorsement of the University board and of the Ministry of Education and Science.

According to Meri Poni, lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana, the preparatory work of the institute, prior to the opening of

the first Master study in gender lasted till 2008. Meanwhile, from 2005 till 2008, the Gender Institute worked hard to introduce gender in the higher education curricula.<sup>6</sup> During that time, lecturers were engaged in finding gender texts, copy them, disseminate them among the Institute members, translating them, and disseminate to students. Also, it was during that period of time that some lecturers attended specialisation courses, engaged in Master studies and trainings on gender abroad (Hungary, UK, or USA). Upon their return to Albania, they were able to share their experience and succeeded in introducing the gender subjects in higher education curricula.

### *New Master's Programme on Gender and Development in Albania*

In November 2006, the University of Tirana started to prepare the recently authorized Master's programme on Gender and Development, in collaboration with the Institute for Gender Studies and the Ministry of Education and Science and with the support of international partners. The efforts of the Institute for Gender Studies focussed on the teaching and promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Institute promoted the role of women in society, according to internationally recognised principles of human rights and applied best international practices to local conditions. The new Masters' programme, designed in cooperation with the UNDP in Albania and Roskilde University in Denmark, tried to explore the gender dimensions of the current development processes in Albania at the local level and examine the broader European context. The full-time, two-year programme shared European experiences with Albanian researchers and policy-makers on gender and development issues. The programme targeted a wider segment of students, in terms of background, as enrolment was not limited to Social Sciences graduates. The programme also aimed at providing the qualified expertise needed to complete the legal framework that addresses gender equality, necessary for Albania to be in line with the European Union legislation. (UNDP, 2006).

### *Examples of Gender-Sensitive Curricula*

In 2008, the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tirana succeeded in launching the programme on "Gender Identity and Development" (GlaD) (*Përkatësi gjinore dhe zhvillim*), which lasted two years and had 120 credits ECTS (s. table in Annex). At the end of studies, the graduates were awarded the Master of Arts in *Përkatësi gjinore dhe zhvillim* diploma.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Meri Poni, lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology (10 November 2010).

For the 2010-2011 academic year, the MA in GlAD programme offering includes nineteen courses on gender, an internship in the institutions, and a micro-thesis, at the end of the second study year. The first study year is devoted to:

- Feminism Theories
- Gender Identity, Identity, Culture: Anthropological Perspectives
- Introduction in Gender Studies and Development
- Development Theories
- Research Methods in Gender Studies
- Gender Identity, Institutions and Social Development
- Planning and Analysis of Gender Identity
- Integration in Gender Identity

The second study year is devoted to:

- Human Rights
- Programme Evaluation on Gender Issues
- Psychology of Gender Identity

During the second year, the students also complete an internship in an institution, attend a series of courses for the preparation of their micro-thesis, and confer with their tutors.

The Master in GlAD programme also includes six elective courses on:

- Gender Identity and Migration
- Sociology of Family
- Social Policies on Gender Issues
- Management of Human Resources regarding Gender Issues
- Legislation and Gender Issues
- Policies of Rural Development
- Media and Social Transformation
- Gender Violence and Human Rights

The academic corps involved in the MA in GiAD programme includes two university professors, one associate professor, four PhDs and seven MAs. Most of the course chair holders hold a Master's degree or are specialised in gender and social work. All the lecturers currently holding a Master's degree, involved in Master in GiAD programme, are preparing their PhD in gender, sociology or social work at the University of Tirana, or abroad. They have also attended trainings on gender issues, at home or abroad. Some of them have taken part in international conferences and workshops on gender mainstreaming, having contributed papers on gender problems in Albania and the gender mainstreaming process.

In the framework of this MA programme, the lecturers have already invited gender experts from the civil society, as well as experts from the NGOs dealing with gender developments in the country. Their lectures draw on specific topics regarding gender issues in Albania or feminist movements.

The lecturers of the Department of Social Work and of Department of Sociology have been involved in several projects with non-governmental organisations, and international stakeholders providing tools on implementing gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and women's equal access to resources and opportunities. They prepared and published school textbooks, toolkits for pre-universities school textbooks. Also, in collaboration with Albanian NGOs and international organisations, such lecturers organised workshops and round tables on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in leadership position.

### *Gender-Sensitive Curricula in Other Study Fields at the University of Tirana*

As above mentioned, gender courses are offered at Bachelor's and Master's degree levels in the departments of Psychology, Sociology, Journalism and Political Sciences, as in the subjects of Literature, Social Policies, Philosophy, History, Archaeology, Cultural and Social Anthropology. Most of the course chair holders transferred from the Faculty of Social Sciences, but there are also chair holders whose main specialisation is not gender. Thus, at the Faculty of History and Philology, gender courses are offered also as elective course for the Bachelor and Master and are taught by experts and academics. At the Department of History, gender is offered as a module at the Master's degree level, in Archaeology.<sup>7</sup> Although gender is included in the faculty programme, it seems that it does not carry the same weight as it does in Social Sciences, where gender courses are offered in every Bachelor's and Master's degree programme. At the Department of History, gender is taught mostly at the Bachelor's level, except for the Master in

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<sup>7</sup> Two courses are offered in Archeology Master's study: Gender Studies in Archeology (7 ECTS) and Gender Archeology (8 ECTS). Chair holder is Lorenc Bejko, Associate Professor in Archaeology.

Archaeology studies. The syllabuses of the Department of the Faculty of Social Sciences are more detailed than those of the Faculty of History and Philology.<sup>8</sup>

In Natural Sciences, gender study is absent from the university curriculum, or is offered as an elective course. The focus here is natural sciences profile subjects rather than social subjects.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Albania, the government has approved multiple acts and strategies on gender mainstreaming and gender equity. It also has ratified the majority of international conventions on gender mainstreaming and gender equality. State policies for gender equity in the fields of decision-making, education, employment are running for a number of years in the country. But the real condition of women is more complicated. The existing acts, laws, national strategies on gender equity are infrequently implemented.

In terms of gender mainstreaming, in education, attention has been paid mostly to drafting a national strategy on gender mainstreaming and to reviewing academic curricula, by designing new university programmes to integrate gender-sensitive curricula.

Up until today, gender courses at the University of Tirana are included in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes offered by the faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities. Such courses are occasional at the faculties of Natural Sciences or Math, gender being considered of no relevance to their profile. Gender cuts across all areas of social sciences and is actually integrated in modules of Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, Philosophy, Political Science, and Law. Gender issue studies are also offered in Bachelor's degree and, in some few cases, in Master's degree programmes, at the Humanities.

Gender issues are considered a priority with Social Sciences and there are introduced in most courses and training programmes. In other faculties, gender issues, seen as less important, are mostly offered as an elective module. This happens because of the existing 'stereotype' of Social Sciences seen as the realm of gender issues. Nevertheless, these courses are more of a general introductory nature. Modules mostly consist of basic theories and empirical findings. There is no course offering focused on local problems and issues; rather they treat general aspects of gender. Gender diversity modules on human rights, antidiscrimination, political perspective, although included in the gender study, are focused more on the discourse of feminist and social movements in the World, rather than in Albania.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Annex for the Syllabus of Gender Studies in Contemporary History.

Local social and gender problems are most frequently media subjects and targets of public discourse. Regrettably, at the university, such debates are absent or, in few cases, they are approached in specialist training courses or in the framework of some open lectures, delivered at the faculties, where local and international gender experts are invited to share their views on gender.

At the University of Tirana, gender inequalities are most evident in the university leading positions, where the majority of the university top level positions are still held by men. Yet, gender course are taught mostly by women.

Several NGOs in the country are dealing with gender issues. They have undertaken projects on gender and education, but mostly in the field of pre-academic education (primary and high school education levels). Among Albanian NGOs, *Qendra Aleanca Gjinore per Zhvillim* is one of the most active.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- To promote gender equality at the University of Tirana, adequate curricula, funds and competent staff are needed.
- Women-targeted programmes and projects are wanted, with a view to promoting mainstreaming.
- The set up of a gender curriculum review, at all university levels.
- Drawing up of specific modules and programmes on gender issues.
- Integration of the gender dimension in the curricula at all levels of education, not only in Social Sciences and Humanities.
- Breaking down gender boundaries in academic profiles, such as Natural Sciences.
- Introduction of gender issues and analysis in all academic subjects and at all levels.
- A broadened gender-balanced access to higher education, in terms of subject profiles.
- Gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions by enabling specialists to critically co-design gender mainstreaming programmes.
- Promote gender transformative approaches, in pedagogy, at university level.
- Improved efficiency of education financing.

- University of Tirana needs to support, financially, the further training and qualification of its academic staff in Gender Mainstreaming. Staff training remains a priority.
- A university grant system for academic research needs be introduced.
- Support should be granted to junior academic staff, with a view to obtaining gender skills and training.
- Support of gender-sensitive research in education, development of gender studies in research and publications.
- Support the publication of more books, textbooks and other teaching materials, from a gender-balanced perspective, that cater to student needs.
- Implementing gender mainstreaming in higher education through setting up research groups, or a centre of excellence, tasked to gather and analyse data on gender inequality at educational levels and decision-making levels.
- Encouragement and support of interdisciplinary knowledge and mobility of lecturers, at home and abroad.
- Adopt a higher quota system in enrolments at Master's and PhD's studies on gender.
- The University of Tirana building is over-crowded and in need of technical equipment. Therefore, there is an urgent need of re-construction work and building of a new, modern, university campus.
- A Central University Library should be built, since the absence of a digital library and of the on-line access to the academic journals encumbers improvement of staff and students' knowledge.
- Introducing new forms of learning and technical aids (software, beamer and CR ROM applications, and access to digital libraries networks). Digitalisation of the learning process through Web-based learning.



## ANNEX

Table 5. Students enrolled in tertiary education (in numbers)

	Academic year							
	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Total students	28,331	30,086	34,257	35,902	38,502	40,125	40,859	42,160
Men	13,410	13,914	14,881	15,535	15,470	16,095	15,790	16,036
Women	14,921	16,172	19,376	20,367	23,032	24,030	25,069	26,124
Total students in public universities	28,331	30,086	34,257	35,902	38,502	40,125	40,859	42,160
Men	13,410	13,914	14,881	15,535	15,470	16,095	15,790	16,036
Women	14,921	16,172	19,376	20,367	23,032	24,030	25,069	26,124
University of Tirana	11,294	11,463	13,092	13,944	14,424	14,683	16,757	15,597
Men	4,934	4,934	5,430	5,670	5,508	5,677	6,506	5,792
Women	6,360	6,529	7,662	8,274	8,916	9,006	10,251	9,805

	Academic year							
	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Total students	43,600	53,014	63,257	74,157	86,178	90,202	93,206	116,292
Men	16,420	20,168	25,129	30,832	37,312	39,283	40,596	52,162
Women	27,180	32,846	38,128	43,325	48,866	50,919	52,610	64,130
Total students in public universities	43,600	52,609	62,274	72,465	82,099	80,696	79,795	95,449
Men	16,420	19,976	24,696	30,081	35,384	34,291	34,123	41,419
Women	27,180	32,633	37,578	42,384	46,715	46,405	45,672	54,030
University of Tirana	15,776	18,877	21,313	24,189	27,745	27,318	26,197	32,884
Men	5,391	6,511	7,270	8,420	9,800	9,368	8,351	10,411
Women	10,385	12,366	14,043	15,769	17,945	17,950	17,846	22,473

Source: UT Directory of Human Resources.

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# **Gender Mainstreaming and Study Field Change: Patterns of Infusion, Diffusion, and Fusion at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia**

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## *Abstract*

*The article discusses the changing practices of gender studies, as reflected in the teaching and research process taking place in the major Bulgarian higher education institution, St. Kliment Ohridski University, in Sofia. More precisely, the author traces the acclimatization of the gender studies, through inter- and trans-discipline alliances with traditional fields of academic inquiry, as well as their potential to act as a catalyst for innovation in overall education. The author analyzes the successful strategies of both concentrating gender studies in two autonomous MA programmes, as well as the sporadic gender mainstreaming flows in the Literature, History, and Cultural studies, through patterns of infusion, diffusion, and fusion. Special attention is paid to the possibilities and achievements of gender mainstreaming to diversify the content of higher education and bolster the methods of study field cross-culture, pluralism, reciprocity, and complexity employed in academic research. At the same time, major stumbling blocks and problems in the development of gender mainstreaming are identified, and recommendations with a view to overcoming them are made.*

*In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, knowledge production and transmission have been restructured by new public agendas, due to the growing demands of the information society and global economy. Institutions of higher learning are trying to act in response to the changing realities by adopting more effective methods of research, organization of knowledge, and intellectual exchanges. The change in knowledge production and its transmission is more imperative in the post-communist world, where young people need to adjust to the political, economic, and social demands of the market economy and democracy. The present article discusses the changing practices in one such academic field of inquiry – namely, gender studies,<sup>1</sup> having emerged in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of*

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<sup>1</sup>In most Central and East European countries, Bulgaria included, the phrase, “gender studies”, is preferred to ‘women’s studies’, or ‘feminist studies,’ although ‘gender’ is the central category of analysis in all these fields. Gender Studies is more inclusive, it presupposes a relational system between men and women, and removes the stigma of ideology.

*communism, under Western influence. It traces the development of gender studies as a study subject topic, at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, the oldest and largest Bulgarian university,<sup>2</sup> its transformation through inter- and trans-discipline alliances, as well as its potential to act as a catalyst for innovation in overall educational practices. The article analyzes successful strategies of both concentrating gender teaching and research in stand-alone gender studies programmes, and of disseminating the subject matter among other academic fields (gender mainstreaming), by means of patterns of infusion, diffusion, and fusion.*

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GENDER STUDIES AS AN (ANTI)-SUBJECT IN THE 1990'S

As in most Central and Eastern European countries, the inception of gender studies in Bulgaria started off as a translation of Western theories and academic practices in the early 1990s. The term, translation, is not a mere metaphor: it involves the process of translating major critical texts, theories, and concepts (the key term, gender, included), the cultural transfer of ideas and practices from predominantly Anglo-American contexts, and their adjustment/adoption, for local purposes.

The delayed emergence of the discipline – as compared to North American and West European countries – has been caused by diverse factors,<sup>3</sup> including the lack of a women's movement to back up intellectual endeavours, the void between feminist practice and theory, the absence of gender-specific discourses in the Bulgarian society, and many others. As L. Grünberg states, there are many serious obstacles to introducing gender studies in the educational reform in Central and Eastern European countries, including

“... the low level of gender awareness among decision makers in the region, little room for coherent gender integration in an unstable context, the lack of quantitative and qualitative evidence of the gender gap in education, the lack of societal consensus, the incompatibility between Western and Eastern models in the promotion of academic feminism.” (Grünberg, 2001: 8-13)

After the fall of communism, Western liberal ideas and practices started flooding post-communist societies on political and cultural levels, as well as human and intellectual levels. In the transitional context of radical economic and political change, universities were relatively slow to react to the latest developments in the global world, owing to their conservative nature as a state apparatus and the

<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1888, *St. Kliment Ohridski* University of Sofia currently provides education for 30,000 students, in 95 degree programmes, in 16 faculties.

<sup>3</sup> The first women's studies programme, in the US, was set up in 1970, at San Diego State University; by 1977 there were 276 women's studies programmes nationwide, whereas by 1991, there were 621 programmes. A survey conducted by the American Council on Education reveals that 68% of all universities offer women's studies courses (NWSA, 1991).

overall devaluation of education, heavily neglected because of the market economy new priorities. In the West, women's/gender studies have developed out of the women's movement, of the 1960s and the 1970s, as a kind of compensatory education, as female students and faculty demanded equality and greater visibility of their experience in the academic curricula. However, in the Bulgarian context of (pseudo) gender equality, inherited from the communist regime, there was no public recognition of the need for such a political and educational transformation. This was why the first attempts of intellectual and social critique came from the non-governmental sector; thus, the feminist and gender analysis grew its roots outside the academy – nurtured by scholars belonging to the Bulgarian Association of University Women (BAUW),<sup>4</sup> predominantly academics from *St. Kliment Ohridski* University of Sofia.

Over the years of transition, the Bulgarian Association of University Women acted – and still acts – as an educational and research centre, bringing women academics from various areas, placing gender issues on the map, by organizing national writing contests on women's issues in high schools and universities, national and international conferences, public talks, lectures and hearings, exhibitions of women artists, and many other events. Gradually, these activities drew the public's attention to the significance of women's issues and created a more gender-sensitive climate in the academy. In addition, the BAUW paved the way toward introducing gender studies as an academic discipline, through the implementation of numerous educational projects. For example, one of the most important building block in establishing the discipline were the first translations of gender and feminist theory (Nikolchina, 1997); (Gunew, 2000); (Daskalova and Slavova 2002), as well as the first collections of gender research by Bulgarian scholars (Muharska, 1999); (Daskalova, 1998); (Slavova and Kirova, 2001); (Daskalova, 2003). All these books proved useful teaching resources in Bulgarian universities, seeing that, in the very beginning, there were no textbooks and basic teaching materials in the Bulgarian language.

In 1991, BAUW organized at Sofia University the first extra-curricular courses on gender issues, such as "English cum Feminism" and "Women Writers" (taught on weekends by enthusiastic members to various audiences). Later on, BAUW launched an interdisciplinary seminar "Gender, Culture, and Representation" for students from several faculties of the university, focusing on gender issues in media and cultural studies, literary and psychoanalytic theory, history, linguistics, and sociology. Thus the connection between the BAUW and the academic world turned out to be a natural (though not institutionalised) entry point for feminism in the

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<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1924, BAUW was suspended by the communist regime in 1952, and restored in 1991. See details at <<http://bauw-bg.com>>

academy, partially bridging the gap between feminist theory and practice, emphasizing the importance of feminist approaches in history, sociology, literature, cultural studies, philosophy, political science, and other disciplines at the heart of any culture.

In addition to the educational projects, initiated by BAUW, the cooperation with Western academic institutions turned out to be a major catalyst in the establishment of the discipline as a legitimate area of study and research. The first proper course in women's studies – *Introduction to Women's Studies in the United States* – was taught at the University of Sofia, in 1993, by Professor Francine Frank (from the State University of New York at Albany). She was followed by a number of visiting American scholars, who taught, in English, various courses focused on women's literature and culture, such as Judith Barlow (*Women Playwrights and Feminist Literary Theory*); Iliana Semmler (*Growing up in America*); Wendy Barker (*Feminist Poetics*), and others. It was not accidental that the very first women's/gender studies courses were introduced in such studies as British Studies and American studies, as the latter had properly trained professors (mostly foreigners, in the beginning), a wealth of resources in English, as well as competence in feminist methodology. Apart from language and competency issues, in the early stages of building the discipline, the Anglo-American 'import' had several advantages: *i.* the feminist revisions of Western canons of literature, culture, and history served as useful models to carry out revisions on local ground; *ii.* the Anglo-American critical perspective motivated Bulgarian educators' fight for infusing gender issues, as an essential component of general knowledge; and *iii.* from a gender perspective, the foreign literary and critical texts facilitated the discussion of topics considered taboo or terra incognita, under communism, such as feminist and queer theory, homosexual relations, lesbian, and gay literature.

All such processes of accumulating and developing expertise and methodology paved the way for infusing gender components into many traditional disciplines at Sofia University. Gradually, separate gender studies courses were introduced in the Literature and History departments, at the BA and MA levels. To mention just a few: *European Women's History* and *The History of Women in the Balkans*, taught by Prof. K. Daskalova and Prof. R. Gavrilova; *Woman in the Bible*, taught by Prof. M. Kirova; *Gender Representation in American Culture*, taught by Prof. K. Slavova; *Gender Awareness as a Cultural Factor in British and American Societies*, taught by Prof. R. Muharska; *Contemporary British Women Writers*, taught by Prof. V. Katsarova, and many others. The courses influenced the educational environment in the Faculty of History, the Faculty of Slavonic Studies, and the Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages; they were the first steps in the process of moving away from established gender-blind, insensitive, and androcentric exclusionary norms having dominated the Bulgarian educational system before. For the first time in the

classroom history, students and teachers questioned the socialist myths of gender neutrality and equality, or the so called 'state patriarchy,' disguised as 'state feminism'. Literature and language students attacked sexist language in public discourses and textbooks, as well as sexist and simplistic imagery and/or interpretations of women in Bulgarian media and culture.

By the end of the 1990s, Sofia University was turning into a site of changes, where a new kind of knowledge was being produced, in small, yet significant, clusters. The infusion of gender elements into the content and methodology of traditional disciplines followed both "anti-discipline" and inter-discipline approaches. To some extent, gender studies represented a type of anti-discipline, since it worked against the grain of established academic fields; the point was not to deny the material and discursive importance of the traditional disciplines, but to question their gender-blind generalizations, their homogenizing, and universalizing methods; the objective was not to seek the "death" of the respective disciplines, but to re-structure them, by filling in their gaps and questioning the systematic patterns of exclusion, erasure, or misappropriation of women's or social issues from women's point of view. These early steps of building the foundations of the discipline contributed to the overall gender sensitization in the academy, and stimulated interdisciplinary, comparative, and cross-cultural approaches, yet many scholars believed that these achievements were at the expense of the visibility of the discipline.

#### INTRA-STUDY FIELD TRANSFORMATION: TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER STUDIES

Ten years after the collapse of communism, the social, political and intellectual changes brought about new developments in the area of gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe. By that time, several universities in the region had institutionalized the discipline by launching autonomous units, the most prominent being the Gender and Culture Programme at Central European University in Hungary, the Gender Studies Centre at Ivanovo State University in the Russian Federation, the Kharkov Center for Gender Studies in Ukraine, the ENVILA Women's Private Institute in Belarus. The earliest institutionalization of gender studies in post-communist countries occurred in Russia, in 1993, through a major "gynoshift," when, a number of legislative acts and a Decree by the President of the Russian Federation promoted the development of gender studies (called "feminology") at university level. (Zdravomyslova, and Shnyrova, 2001).

In Bulgaria, the first MA Programme in Gender Studies was set up in 2001, at the Faculty of Philosophy of *St. Kliment Ohridski* University of Sofia (Director, Dr.



Nedyalka Videva).<sup>5</sup> The Programme (originally only at the MA level, now at the PhD level, too) offers 36 courses, bringing together diverse perspectives in the humanities, as well as scholars from several faculties. For the first time, a consistent group of core courses was developed (e.g., *Gender and Power*, *Women's Writing*, *Constructions of Femininity in the Renaissance*, *Women in the Middle Ages*, *Men in the Balkans/Balkan Masculinity*, *Women in Politics*, etc.), as well as courses from an explicit feminist viewpoint were taught (e.g., *History of Political Thought from a Feminist Perspective*, *Feminist Ethics*, *Feminism and the Marxist Tradition*, *Feminist Philosophy*, *Feminism and Oral History*, *Women's Writing and French Feminist Theory*, etc.).<sup>6</sup>

The concentration of so many courses around one major focus provides a good chance for the intra-disciplinary development of gender studies. The interdisciplinary nature is also strengthened by the different academic background of the students (at the BA level). In general, it can be said that the autonomous programme has imparted greater visibility to gender issues, it has contributed to curriculum transformation in more disciplines, it has helped create a network of likely-minded scholars, and it has produced a number of doctoral students in the discipline (two PhD theses have been successfully defended, and three more are in the process of being defended). Yet, because of lack of financial support, insufficient human resources (no permanent faculty), and institutional problems (it has accreditation within the discipline of Philosophy, and not as a separate, legitimate discipline), the Programme has failed in becoming popular and in attracting more students; it seems to provide a somewhat elitist education to a very small circle of interested students. In the very beginning, the MA Programme was set up with the material and methodological support of the Central European University's Gender Programme (through regional seminars, small grant projects, as well as projects on designing new courses). However, neither Sofia University itself nor Bulgaria has continued to support it, over the years, the reason why the MA Programme has not achieved yet the status of a fully fledged research or educational unit.

It was again international networks and funding that brought about the creation of a second gender-oriented programme at Sofia University – the first European

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<sup>5</sup> The Bulgarian title is "*Sotsialni izsledvaniya na pola*" – i.e., it uses the phrase "social sex". The translation of the term, gender, is still a bone of contention: there are four different Bulgarian equivalents in circulation: philologists and literature specialists insist on preserving the linguistic equivalent of "gender" (in Bulgarian - *rod*), because they emphasize the significant connection with language. Historians prefer the simpler term *pol* (in Bulgarian, meaning sex) as being less confusing. Still others prefer *polo-rod* (in Bulgarian, meaning sexual gender), insisting on the connection with the body or *sotsialen pol* (Bulgarian - social sex).

<sup>6</sup> Details at <<http://www.phls.uni-sofia.bg/downloads/2010ma/7p.pdf>>

Master's Programme in Women's and Gender History, called *MATILDA* (Bulgarian co-ordinator, Prof. Dr. Krassimira Daskalova). It was set up, in 2008, as part of the Erasmus Programme, with funding from the European Commission, DG Education and Culture. *MATILDA* has been designed for students determined to develop their expertise in women's/gender history and in European history, and interested in intercultural exchanges. Undoubtedly, this is one of the best examples of fruitful cooperation among European universities, through the network of Gender studies programmes, as it involves five European universities: Vienna University (Austria), the Central European University in Budapest (Hungary), University of Nottingham (Great Britain), University of Lyon 2 (France), and Sofia University (Bulgaria). The four-semester *MATILDA* curriculum includes core subjects on Women's and Gender History (theory, methodology, and practice), as well as more specialized options, covering mediaeval to modern historical periods, such as the *Social and Cultural History of South Eastern Europe*, *History of Everyday Life*, *History of Communism and Post-communism*, *History of Nationalism and Post-Colonialism*, *History of Gender and Work*, *History of Masculinities*, and others. The faculty includes some of the pioneers of gender studies, but also younger faculty, some of whom have graduated in gender studies from international universities (e.g., N. Radulova, N. Alexandrova, M. Grekova, T. Karamelska, N. Manolova, I. Genova, S. Dechev, T. Boncheva, and others).<sup>7</sup>

The *MATILDA* programme is an excellent example of the intra-discipline development of gender studies, and of development along international and cross-cultural lines. It supports integrative perspectives that go beyond local, regional, and national histories, in order to place the study of history in a European framework, and even broader contexts. The Programme also promotes the exchange of students, faculty, teaching models, successful practices, and ideas among the partner institutions. All Programme students are expected to take one semester, at least, at one of the partner institutions, to work with a supervisor from another European university, to participate in summer intensive programmes, an occasion to strengthen student – faculty cooperation. For some of the courses, instruction takes place in a foreign language: Bulgarian, English, German and French, which adds a cross-lingual, multilingual touch to the Programme. The principles of complementarity and comparability are assured through the European Credit Transfer System and a Diploma Supplement. In many ways, this Programme is a truly “feminist nomadic project”, as Braidotti (1994: 161) calls it: it does not simply create a greater mobility of students and faculty, across Europe, but opens up new frontiers of comparative exploration.

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<sup>7</sup> Details at <<http://www.ned.univie.ac.at/matilda/>>

## INTER-/TRANS-STUDY FIELD ALLIANCES THROUGH GENDER STUDIES: PATTERNS OF INFUSION, DIFFUSION, AND FUSION

The MATILDA Programme in “Women’s and Gender History” illustrates new forms of bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation, in the European educational system, which could not have been possible before Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union, in 2007. As a whole, the European Union has turned out to be a catalyst for many social, political, and legislative reforms (including education), as common rules have started operating across regions and countries. The very process of European Union enlargement has had a highly stimulating impact on Bulgarian feminist and gender projects – in terms of legitimacy and visibility, supporting their platforms for a “policy of difference,” opening up new alliances among European women (along regional, national, and multiethnic lines), and many other options. The European Union has set up new standards of gender parity; it has supported the Bulgarian government’s adoption of laws against gender discrimination and trafficking in women, as well as of laws stimulating equal opportunities for men and women, instrumental in promoting and monitoring equal treatment and gender mainstreaming. These gender-balancing measures have been so significant that some critics describe the European Union policy as “feminism from above” or “room-service feminism” (Miroiu, 2004: 95),<sup>8</sup> *i.e.*, a top-down strategy of infusing gender parity, which assumes prioritizing, funding, and political acting from above.

In the last few years, gender mainstreaming has become a buzz phrase in the new European Union member-countries– yet another foreign “transplant” that came out subsequent to the EEC directives on gender parity (in terms of equal pay, equal treatment at work, parental leave, prohibition of sex discrimination, etc.) – *i.e.* “incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities in order to build balanced relationships between women and men.”<sup>9</sup> This guiding principle of the European Union policies still sounds “foreign” and “untranslatable” into Bulgarian, and many think of it as an abstraction, even as an empty signifier. The European Union has posed new demands in rethinking education in interdisciplinary and comparative ways, enriching content and methodologies, but there is no official policy of gender mainstreaming in education. The Ministry of Education and Science has not issued a single policy paper, neither

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<sup>8</sup> For example, she refers to several laws passed by the Romanian Parliament, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, such as the *Parents’ Leave of Absence Act* (1998), *The Anti-Discrimination Act* (2000), *The Equal Opportunities for Men and Women Act* (2002), *The Act against Domestic Violence* (2003), and the new *Constitution* of 2003.

<sup>9</sup> On gender mainstreaming as a guiding principle in the enlargement process in the European Union, see, Directives 75/117/EEC, 76/ 207/ EEC, 2/ 85/EEC, and more at <[www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int)>

has it initiated discussions on the need for gender mainstreaming in the Bulgarian system of education (both in high-schools and in universities). Some modest efforts were made again by NGOs. For example, the BAUW initiated a round-table discussion about teaching gender studies in higher education, initiated the Bulgarian translation of Mihaela Miroiu's book (Miroiu, 2008), organized table-round discussions on launching the book, and even dispatched complimentary copies to all the fifty university rectors in Bulgaria. Alas, with no appreciable results.

Unlike in Russia and other countries, where state educational policy demands and initiates changes aimed at it, in Bulgaria, gender mainstreaming activity is sporadic and half-done *not because* of the state policy, but *despite* it. It is this author's opinion that the perceptible actions of gender infusion and diffusion come about thanks to the individual efforts of motivated scholars, as well as due to the global impact of "academic flows" and the influx of ideas and resources provided by the new communication technologies and the Internet. By using the word "academic flows," this author refers to Appadurai's influential paradigm of deterritorialised global culture, dominated by flows of people, machinery, money, media, and images (Appadurai, 2008: 218-22). Today, in a world of academic globalization and digital humanities, these new flows can be easily identified as the worldwide diffusion of knowledge, innovative models, and practices in higher education. To a great extent, the recent changes towards gender mainstreaming in Bulgarian education can be attributed precisely to the globalization of education and research, to the easier access to innovative knowledge and methodologies, and to the stronger contacts with the international academic community.

The current stage of curriculum transformation along gender lines, at Sofia University, reveals several contradictory tendencies: both disordering and re-ordering of long established disciplines, their deconstruction and re-construction, as well as appropriation and approximation of Western models and theory. At the same time, two other processes are at work, pulling in opposite directions: on the one hand, further concentrating the discipline within the two MA Gender programmes (based at the same faculty); on the other hand, the opposite movement of diffusing gender modules from these two "centres" into other programmes, departments, and faculties. Thus, after the 1990s' initial process of infusing gender into separate courses, there followed a time of consolidation of gender studies as an inter-/trans-/disciplinary site, followed by a reversal process of dispersing "gender studies" itself among other disciplines and acting upon them. The process of more massive gender diffusion and dispersion is most obvious in the social sciences and the humanities at Sofia University.

Integrationist gender approaches have been the strongest in area studies, more precisely, British Studies, American Studies, and Canadian studies, given that they follow the Western models/canons in their teaching, the language of instruction is

English, and they have the necessary teaching materials and resources. Moreover, at both the BA and MA levels, gender clusters have been integrated in mandatory and/or elective courses. For example, a brief look at the syllabi of some of the BA courses, in the department of English and American studies, reveals that gender is easily cross-classified with other categories of social analysis such as class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, region and religion. As a result, gender is present in courses as diverse as "Introductory Course on British Society" (gender in youth culture), "English Literature from Victorianism to Modernism" (women writers, women and the avant-garde), "Cultural History of the US" (first and second wave of feminism, the 1920s and women's rights, black women and feminism of colour), "History of American Literature" (women writers, slavery and women), "Canadian Literature and Culture" (Native women writers, multiculturalism and gender issues), "Popular Culture in the US: Texts and Images" (feminine/masculine genres, gender in MTV culture and Hollywood), "Popular Fiction on Page and Screen," (chick lit, James Bond movies and masculinity), "Negotiating (with) Power" (sexism in language, stereotyping and hate speech), and others. MA level courses include even a more serious cluster of gender issues, often accompanied by feminist theory: "Language and Culture" (gender and discourse, the power of naming) "Gender, Power and Communication" (normality, sexism, camp talk), "Post-modern Culture" (the uneasy alliance between feminism and postmodernism, feminist post-modern photography), "Anglo-American Popular Culture and Globalization" (erotica in Cold war rock music/movies; post-feminism, backlash and pop culture), "Literary Theory" (*écriture* feminine, feminist psychoanalytic theory), "Identity and Culture" (feminist postcolonial critique, women and the state, women and the nation).<sup>10</sup>

Another field that has been more consistently gendered by now is literature. The Faculty of Slavonic Studies offers several courses including the gender perspective. A good instance is the introductory BA course in "Literary Theory", taught by Prof. D. Kambourov; the course brings in two separate topics on feminist literary theory and feminist approaches to literature. Prof. D. Kambourov incorporates topics related to female creativity and writing in all his MA courses, including "The Bulgarian Literary Canon," "Post-modern Literature," "Literature and Modernity," and "Literature and Music." All the BA courses on ancient, Bulgarian, West European, or Balkan literature also pay attention to women writers, although feminist approaches are not pronounced at all. The "gender" focus is more visible at the MA level. For example, the MA Programme in Literary Studies offers the following courses, with special clusters on gender: "Politics of Identity and Difference," taught by Prof. M. Nikolchina, discusses the debates on gender, male

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<sup>10</sup> Course description available at <<http://sites.uni-sofia.bg/english/>>

domination, theories of male and female sexuality, queer theory, representation of homosexuality, feminism and universalism, and other important issues.<sup>11</sup> In her other course, *Modernist Literature*, as part of the MA Programme in Literary Anthropology, Prof. Nikolchina includes a lecture on the place of women in modernism, on Virginia Woolf's works, and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle).<sup>12</sup> Prof. M. Kirova teaches two courses, in the MA Programme in Literary Studies and the MA in Literary Anthropology – *Bulgarian Literature and Gender* and *Anthropology of the Biblical World*, respectively. She assigns significant importance to gender issues, including the debate on the invisibility of women's writing in the canon, the experimentation of contemporary Bulgarian women writers with 'masculine' genres, the construction of femininity in the Bible and everyday life, etc. The same MA Programme in Literary Anthropology includes other courses, addressing the issues of female creativity and revolt, gendered ways of being, the politics of erasure of women, such as *Politics of Everyday Life*, taught by Prof. A. Licheva; *Representation of Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bulgarian Literature*, taught by Prof. N. Alexandrova and Prof. K. Yordanova, and the elective course, *Gender Issues in the Context of Bulgarian Literature*, taught again by Prof. N. Alexandrova. This brief survey of the 'gender IN literature' courses at the Slavonic faculty shows that this specific angle has gained some prominence through the teaching performances of a small group of literature specialists.

Gender is a natural 'ingredient' in disciplines such as Sociology, History and Philosophy – especially in introducing topics such as identity formation, cultural representation of women/men, motherhood, work, family, class stratification, cultural diversity – students can easily connect their inquiry across several disciplines. But the diffusion of gender IN these disciplines is less prominent, as the MATILDA programme, *Gender and Women's History*, has already concentrated much of the teaching and research in these academic fields. There are several courses integrating gender perspectives in the MA programme *Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology*, at the Faculty of History<sup>13</sup>, such as *Everyday Life during the Transition*, *Gender and Folk Culture*, and *Cultural Ethnology and Ethnic Stereotypes*. The course *Oral History, Life Narratives*, taught by Prof. D. Koleva, deserves special attention, since it approaches the connection between narrative and identity, from a variety of perspectives, including a feminist point of view, and works at the intersection between history of women and history of marginal groups. Prof. D. Koleva uses gender approaches in some general BA courses, too. For example, her introductory course, for freshmen, *Basic Concepts in Cultural Studies*, discusses

<sup>11</sup> Course description available at <<http://slav.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/ma-index/ma-lit-studies/241>>

<sup>12</sup> Course description available at <<http://slav.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/ma-index/ma-lit-studies/245>>

<sup>13</sup> MA programme description available at <<http://www.clio.uni-sofia.bg/BG/m-ethno1.pdf>>

identity issues, gender stereotypes and youth subcultures. Her course, *Intercultural Communication*, analyzes media representations of different minority groups of sexual orientation, gender, stigmatization, masculinity and sports.

Media representation of gender has become a huge and hot topic in many academic settings, but this is not the case at Sofia University. Unfortunately, the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication offers few courses with a pronounced gender accent. There are some sporadic gender clusters at the BA level, and only a few MA courses that include gender analysis in print and electronic media. For example, in the *Life Style Journalism* MA Programme, Prof. L. Stoikov discusses gender in the entertainment industry and fashion culture. He also teaches a separate course, *Bulgarian Life-Style Magazines*, where women's life style magazines take a central place. Within the MA Programme, *Journalism in Domestic Politics*, Prof. L. Krasteva teaches two courses, *Minority Groups and Media Interpretation* and *Everyday Life and Media Consumption*, where the category of gender intersects with the categories of ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality.

Parallel to the several above-mentioned courses on feminist philosophy and feminist ethics, as part of the MA Gender Programme, several courses at the Faculty of Philosophy devote to some space gender issues, in their curriculum. A good example in this respect is the MA Programme, *Art in the Contemporary World*, within which Prof. M. Nikolchina teaches the course on *Art and Gender. Sexuality, Identity, and Love in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature and Art*. A similarly good example is the brand new course, *The Social and Artistic Status of the Body*, team-taught by Prof. A. Kiossev. The latter is a genuine cross-discipline course, as it approaches the issue of corporeality, its representations, normalization, movements, inscription and stigmatization from the point of view of philosophy, language, literature, anthropology, and gender theory. On top of that, it traces the status of the body in several arts, such as contemporary dance / ballet, body art, film, digital art, and others – thus operating as a model of inter-/ trans-discipline and cross-discipline. The team includes academics from various professional backgrounds, different universities in Europe and the US, and different art practices.

This brief survey of gender-infusion and diffusion in the curriculum in five faculties at Sofia University brings proof that some disciplines are more widely represented in terms of gendering their content than others. More precisely, Literature, History and Cultural Studies are nearly universally covered, as they offer both gender-focused courses and gender-inclusive courses. The analysis reveals that the subject matter boundaries of the Social Sciences and the Humanities are becoming more permeable, allowing for the transfer of gender knowledge. In addition to gendering the content of education – all the above-listed thematic clusters –, since its inception, gender studies have acted as a model for analyzing the experiences of the marginalized, the underrepresented, or the oppressed,

bringing to light or making central their perspectives and experiences. Feminist methodology serves as a model to question androcentric assumptions of dominance and subordination, not only in the relationship between men and women, but also between colonizers and the colonized, between oppressors and the oppressed, between master and slave – *i.e.*, any asymmetrical relation of power, a quality that socialist education definitely lacked in.

It also serves as a model of critique at the address of the politics of knowledge and the production of knowledge, by revealing how disciplinary norms and authority influence knowledge production. To some extent, the infusion and diffusion of gender has already transformed the knowledge base of traditional disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. For example, the male canon of Bulgarian literature and art has been already challenged; the grand narrative of Marxism and its automatic alliance with feminism have been attacked; the myth of gender equality under communism has been explored; the concept of universal power and authority has been questioned in Anthropology and Political Science. By training students to recognize the gender dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, or the strategies of empowering and disempowering women, gender studies can serve as a locus to discuss critically history and politics and to avoid segregation and universalisation.

In addition to transforming the contents of education, gender studies have had an invigorating effect through their innovative approaches and methodologies. The best example is the method of intersectionality, a theoretical tool that came into being in black feminist theory, in the early 1990s, and was quickly “exported” into other theories and disciplines.<sup>14</sup> As the very name suggests, intersectionality implies that gender positions – as any social positions – are always relational and gender works at the intersection with other categories of human difference, such as race / ethnicity, class, age, nation, religion, and many more. The insistence of intersectionality on multiple epistemologies and multiple positioning is very productive in a post-communist context, because, before 1989, many categories of social analysis existed just on paper – only in the abstract, including class, race, and gender. Any discussion that focuses on gender as an undifferentiated and monolithic variable could operate in the reverse – to reinforce binary and oppositional framing and thinking, which has been so strong under communism and has to be overcome. As J. Ringrose and D. Epstein argue, “Gender-only

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<sup>14</sup> Concept introduced by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, in 1989, and rooted in the Black American Women’s movement, stressing the multiple axes of inequality for women and how different social divisions are constructed by each other in specific social and historical conditions. Very quickly the concept / methodology traveled outside the US and outside the field of women’s/gender studies. For more on the uses of intersectionality, see the Special issue of the *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 2006, 13(3), available at <<http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/13/3.toc>>



frameworks” reproduce gender binaries by obscuring factors such as class, race, culture, impeding a more complex “politics of difference” (2008: 153). In a context where difference (along ideological, social, ethnic, class, racial, sexual, or religious lines) has not been acknowledged and respected for decades on end, such tools for social analysis are extremely significant.

Another valuable asset that gender studies has brought into education, at Sofia University, is the emphasis on cross-cultural analysis, *i.e.*, gender creating new configurations and links between and among disciplines, but also between cultures through area studies and comparative studies. One such successful example of cross-cultural interdisciplinarity is the brand new course on *Gendering Popular Culture East and West*, taught by K. Daskalova and K. Slavova. This course brings into prominence two fields that eluded research under communism, namely, popular culture and gender studies. It provides a systematic explanation of the significance of popular culture as a gendered terrain, where ideological battles between East and West have been waged (*i.e.*, the Cold War rivalry between Western “bourgeois” pop culture and communist propaganda), as well as between patriarchal traditionalism and current globalization processes. The course examines changing gender subjectivity and sexuality under two different political regimes and two different economic systems (state managed economy of deficit *versus* market culture of consumption). All the comparisons between past and present practices, between men’s and women’s experiences are made on the terrain of pop culture products, such as film, romance novels, music, advertising, sports, and fashion in different cultures (Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, US, and England). Apart from being a good example of cross-cultural interdisciplinarity (bringing together arts and social sciences), this MA course illustrates the power of cross-listed courses to serve both the concentration and dispersal of gender / feminist scholarship. Although accredited through the *MATILDA* programme on *Women’s and Gender History*, this elective course was designed for students from several faculties, as well as visiting Erasmus students.<sup>15</sup> This is an excellent example not so much of advancing gender studies per se, but of diffusion and dispersal of the discipline away from its nucleus, into other programmes.

Yet another successful example of gender-related cross-cultural and interdisciplinary education is the European Summer University’s *Gender and Genre*, held in June 2009, at *Charles de Gaulle* University Lille-3, France. It was co-organized, under the auspices of the Erasmus scheme, by University Lille-3 and *St. Kliment Ohridski* University of Sofia, with participants from seven European countries. All major topics of discussion converged around the intersection of the

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<sup>15</sup>The course was set up with the support of PATTERNS project, WUS Austria, and funded by Vienna ERSTE Foundation.

categories of gender and genre – two categories of similar origin and regulatory power. The intersectional framework of gender studies allows a rich gamut of approaches coming from disciplines as diverse as anthropology, women's studies, linguistics, literature, cultural studies, popular culture, film studies and media studies to analyze cultural products from France, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, the US, Great Britain, and Japan. The collaborative trans-disciplinary research materialized in *Gender/ Genre* (Slavova and Vermesse, 2010), a collection of thirty-three best papers delivered by PhD students and faculty.<sup>16</sup>

The examples discussed so far are proofs that gender studies can act as a space for critical reflection and creativity, triggering new combinations, alliances, and configurations among disciplines, programmes, and courses at Sofia University. Apart from the effect on teaching, there has been a noticeable impact on the production of gender-sensitive knowledge: for example, various publications in previously 'gender-less' areas by Kirova and Slavova (2007; 2010); Kirova (2006), Todorova (2004), and many others. Also, gender-focused interdisciplinary research has been produced in the form of many PhD and MA theses in areas as diverse as history, translation studies, literature, cultural studies, media studies, and area studies (British, American, German, and French studies). In August 2007, a vast international conference – *Women, Gender and the Cultural Production of Knowledge* – was held at Sofia University, attended by 150 participants. Three panels were dedicated to teaching gender studies in Eastern Europe.<sup>17</sup> Many of these educational projects have been organized by BAUW, which continues to be a coordinating force for gender studies activities and research, as its independent status allows for greater freedom and flexibility, in comparison with the rigid bureaucratic structures of the University. The latest BAUW project was to digitalize and include Bulgarian gender and feminist books in a huge digital library (comprising a collection of 92,000 books) and provide open access to it as part of the European Fragen Project.<sup>18</sup>

## TOWARDS GENDER MAINSTREAMING: FROM PATTERNS OF INFUSION AND DIFFUSION TOWARDS FUSION?

Nowadays, few people in the Western academic world would question the need for integrating gender studies into 'malestream / mainstream' disciplines, or the positive results from gender mainstreaming in university education. Discussing the changing state of the discipline in the last thirty years and its fundamental

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<sup>16</sup> More information on the Gender/Genre school available at <[www.gender-genre.com](http://www.gender-genre.com)>

<sup>17</sup> Programme and photos from the conference available at <<http://bauw-bg.com>>

<sup>18</sup> See <<http://www.aletta.nu/aletta/eng>>

impact on the social sciences and humanities in the UK, the US, Australia, Western and Eastern Europe, V. Robinson and D. Richardson delineate three main tendencies: 1) a noticeable “shift towards mainstreaming gender/women’s studies as a core part of the teaching of traditional disciplines such as Sociology, Education, History and English,” 2) “an increasing use of the term gender studies rather than women’s studies,” and, 3) gender teaching and research have become “so widespread and extensive that they are no longer necessarily associated with women’s / gender studies.” (Richardson and Robinson, 2008: xviii)

How do these international tendencies correlate to the changing practices of gender studies at Sofia University? Paradoxically, due to the delayed development of the discipline in Bulgaria and to the specifics of the post-communist condition, gender studies in Eastern Europe and Bulgaria have bypassed many of the heated debates in the West over gender mainstreaming and the need to avoid the trap of institutionalization. From the very beginning, integrationist strategies have been accepted as a more productive strategy of putting gender on the centre stage. At the same time, all the sporadic and multidirectional processes of infusion and diffusion towards fusion in the Bulgarian academy have been driven by pragmatic circumstances rather than a conscious political choice of gender-minded academics or feminist groups. Ironically, due to the same pragmatic and historical reasons, from the very beginning, the label, gender studies, has been preferred over the labels, women’s studies, or feminist studies, to avoid the connection with ideology and/or activism. As for the third tendency outlined by Richardson and Robinson (2008) – concerning the “widespread” and “extensive” appropriation of gender studies by traditional disciplines – we can argue that, at Sofia University, the first seeds have been planted in almost the same fields (History, Literature, and Sociology, with the exception of Education), but there is still a long way to go in order to achieve fusion between gender studies and other fields of academic research.

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING: POSSIBILITIES, PARADOXES, AND PROBLEMS

As discussed, gender mainstreaming carries a strong potential to transform the traditional disciplines and to produce innovative education that meets the requirements of global economy and democratic society. Gender-inclusive methodologies, based on intersectionality, generate greater interdisciplinary flexibility, pluralism, reciprocity, complexity, and comparative basis in academic inquiry. The cutting edge of the discipline is its critical methodology, which stimulates critique of all political and social structures. As put forward by R.

Braidotti, gender studies are a critical project not only in terms of “its revisions of how science perpetuates forms of women’s discrimination and exclusion,” but it is also “far more critical of ethnocentrism and nationalism than the official guidelines from the European Commission.” (1998: 363)

Unlike self-contained gender studies programmes, gender mainstreaming offers possibilities for reaching out a much greater number of students, thus bringing feminist theoretical tools and pedagogical practices to a wider audience, including male students. Moreover, an environment of mixed students can produce livelier discussions and debates, not only about ‘gender,’ but about all other significant parameters of human difference (sexuality, class, race / ethnicity, religion), so that they do not remain abstract categories, but turn into embodied experience for each student. The ability to embrace the ‘politics of difference’ on a personal level would further have a multiplier effect on changing the academic environment, as well as the overall social environment in Bulgaria, which is still contaminated by practices of homophobia, racism, sexism, nationalism, and hate speech. Judging from her own experience in teaching gender-inclusive courses at Sofia University, this author believes that gender mainstreaming can act as a social-sensitizing project – teaching political, religious, and ethnic tolerance, as well as greater respect for cultural diversity. At the same time, teaching about gender can contribute to bridging the huge gap between the highly theoretical and abstract nature of university education in Bulgaria and life practices: class discussions around topics, which were until recently taboo (for instance, sexuality, homosexuality, sexual harassment, domestic violence), help students not only to understand ‘otherness,’ but also live with it. By questioning gender inequalities in the classroom, students become more sensitive to any other forms of inequality, at work and at home, in their own country and in the world – thus opening their minds to possible models for social and democratic change. Last, but not least, gender mainstreaming offers possibilities to promote international networking: women’s / gender studies departments and research centres have turned out to be most open to international components and experiences, global in nature and more inclusive.

Despite all these promises and possibilities, gender mainstreaming is still a controversial terrain in Bulgarian academy, filled with paradoxes and problems. As it has become obvious gender-mainstreaming works best in Literature, Cultural Studies, History and Sociology. To some extent this is logical: according

to a recent study on the gender profile of teachers at Sofia University,<sup>19</sup> the most feminised faculties are those of Slavonic Studies, Classical and Modern Languages, Pedagogy, and Biology. At the same time, against the background of the overall feminization of the educational sector (caused by the low salaries in state institutions), it is surprising that the Faculty of Pedagogy and the Faculty of Biology (where women constitute 79 percent and 65 percent of teaching faculty, respectively) have made no attempts to produce gender-inclusive courses (despite the successful models of feminist pedagogy and the rise of bio-feminist theory and practices in the world).

In fact, all disciplines in Natural Sciences, Economics, and Law at Sofia University are still insensitive and indifferent to gender issues. To some extent, this can be attributed to the glass ceiling in those faculties, as well as to the overall institutional constraints on the inclusion of new subjects and courses, or the rigid institutional boundaries – all degrees are tied to a national classificatory system, which excludes gender studies and this has negative legal consequences, in terms of the job market. In order to have a new course approved and accredited, it has to go through a number of filtering and regulating systems, on various levels (department, faculty, university, and the national accreditation system). Of course, we cannot ignore bigger factors such as bias, ignorance, and hostility to gender knowledge (especially to labels feminist studies / women's studies) that still permeate academic and bureaucratic structures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no easy formula for the successful gender mainstreaming of higher education in a country where gender awareness is low and social consensus on the priorities of the future university (especially in a poorly funded academic environment at a time of financial crisis) is deficient. Gender studies are one of the few subjects that have failed to be addressed to, in any form, in secondary education. This is why, gender studies hold a huge potential in bringing about change, but it is difficult to introduce them in a straightforward and streamline

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<sup>19</sup> Gender imbalance is visible in the fact that men constitute 45% of all teaching staff, but they take up 79% of the positions of full professors (*versus* 21% of women professors), whereas among assistant professors, women dominate (61% women *versus* 39% of men). The glass ceiling is evident in the small number of women who take leading positions at Sofia University – of all the 16 faculties, only 5 have women deans, vice-deans or department chairs, whereas in the Faculty of Physics and the Faculty of Theology, there are no women-deans, vice-deans or department chairs. See the BAUW site, for a more detailed picture of gender imbalance in Bulgarian universities and for the *Report* of the survey, carried out, in 2008, by D. Koleva, K. Daskalova and A. Assenova.

manner. Drawing upon the situation at Sofia University, this author would like to make a series of recommendations.

- Provide institutional, administrative, and financial support at all levels (including the Ministry of Education and the University), to perform gender mainstreaming both at the level of BA and MA education. By collecting qualitative and quantitative data, on a national and university level, a rationale should be provided to accredit Gender Studies as an indispensable and legitimate part of the overall education (*i.e.*, to be included in the Bulgarian education taxonomy), so as to eliminate the still active formal resistance to the discipline. A special budget should be allocated to increase gender resources (new books, teaching materials, online databases), in various departments and faculties.
- Set up a task force tasked with working on gender mainstreaming in all faculties. The task force should evaluate the resources available for teaching gender-inclusive courses; it should identify existing problems and offer solutions aimed at changing the curriculum. It could serve as a co-ordinating structure to enhance the dialogue among faculties and disciplines.
- Seek balance in course offerings among Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and professional fields. By now, there has been produced substantial scholarship about gender in every field (not just in the Humanities and Social Sciences), but important work in the Natural Sciences and some social fields has been totally neglected at Sofia University (*e.g.*, in Education, Biology, Economics, Law, Religion and other fields).
- Enhance interaction between the two existing gender-studies programmes and all other programmes where gender is a prominent area of study. Such formal and informal interactions can ensure that specific locations will be identified in the curriculum where issues of gender can be addressed together with other important issues (*e.g.*, as the labour market, the state, the multicultural society, minority groups, health system, etc). Cross-listed courses should be specifically designed among several departments / programmes, as they save energy and human resources. Course overlapping should be avoided.
- Remove administrative obstacles that keep students and faculty locked within one department. At the moment, it is easier to transfer credits, students, and faculty from other European universities through the Erasmus scheme, than to transfer students and credits between departments and faculties at Sofia University. Joint appointments of faculty should be created,

where possible, to allow 'borrowing' or 'sharing' of faculty from other programmes.

- Design interdisciplinary research groups and training sessions for faculty on gender issues. Academic cooperation at university / national / international levels can speed up gender mainstreaming by organizing specific interdisciplinary research groups around gender-focused themes, as well as faculty-development seminars, lecture series, conferences, grants and projects around gender issues. This would encourage sharing of knowledge and expertise.
- Recruit and/or stimulate more men to teach gender-inclusive courses. By bringing more men into gender studies, the number of course offerings would increase, the development of masculinity studies as well as the balance between male and female faculty, involved in gender studies, will be enhanced.
- Involve graduate students to do gender projects or 'applied gender studies'. Inventive ways should be resorted to, aimed at involving students in internships, field research, senior seminars, translation and creative projects, so that they can put their theoretical knowledge into useful practice. The participation in such community-useful projects can count as course assignments, where possible.
- Design of an electronic network for gender studies-interested scholars and students. Apart from facilitating contacts among gender-interested faculty and students, this network can create an online basis for available teaching materials (syllabi, books, articles and Internet sources, both in Bulgarian and foreign languages).

## CONCLUSIONS

The case study of Sofia University reveals that, during the transitional period, there has been no single consistent or streamline approach to introducing and building up the discipline of gender studies. Instead, over the last twenty years, both autonomous and integrated approaches were adopted, leading to a rather eclectic and mixed strategy. The two approaches feed each other effectively: separate gender-focused courses (primarily concentrated in the two MA Gender programmes) enrich and further develop the substance and methodologies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, whereas gender mainstreaming strengthens the cross-cultural and inter-discipline connections in the general curriculum of education. Thus, two parallel movements, of gender ideas and specialists, can be delineated:

at first, stronger centripetal flows worked towards the creation of concentrated gender studies centres, whereas more recently, the academic scene has been dominated by stronger centrifugal forces – *i.e.*, gender diffusion movements, away from the centre, pervading a greater number of disciplines. Gender studies has been constantly on the move, looking both forward and backward; starting with an anti-discipline slant, passing through a stage of intra-discipline concentration, and moving more and more towards inter-/ trans-discipline dispersal. This is a positive tendency as cross-cultural interdisciplinarity is becoming the most valuable organizing principle of academic inquiry for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, thus the principles operative in gender studies such as matrix, connection, network, and dialogue, have set an innovative example for many disciplines.

Over the last twenty years of transition, in Bulgaria, there has been no smooth and straightforward trajectory of developing gender studies. Rather, there have been moments of disruption and innovation, of centring and decentering, of convergence and divergence, of construction and deconstruction. Yet, gender mainstreaming carries a huge potential to produce more democratic and inclusive knowledge in Bulgarian academia and to improve educational standards by invigorating existing theories and methodologies. On a larger scale, this transformation will affect not merely the future of academic education, but also the critical apparatus and thinking of public institutions to restrict the very social mechanisms that construct and perpetuate gender inequality and insensitivity in Bulgarian society and culture.

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# **The Gender-Neutral Essence of Science. Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming Higher Education Curricula in Macedonia**

Katerina KOLOZOVA

## **Abstract**

*One could argue that the initiatives – which date from the late 1990' – of introducing gender studies in Macedonia have been relatively successful: elective courses in a number of subject areas of the Social Sciences and Humanities have been introduced at several universities and institutes' graduate schools, as well as within the content of courses taught at the state university. One undergraduate and one postgraduate department have been established at the State University of Skopje and at an independent graduate school, respectively. In spite of these accomplishments, one is still far from being able to either claim that gender has been mainstreamed in most of the curricula, or that the indispensable minimum of gender sensitivity has been attained. It seems the results at issue are insufficient and the patriarchal ideology is still at the core of the curricula of the biggest and the most influential higher education institution in Macedonia. The Macedonian context is still one in which the aspect of scientific relevance of the gender studies is still dramatically problematized. Thus, one should continue to relentlessly affirm its status as a discipline in its own right. This can be achieved by undertaking research in the area of interdisciplinary gender studies, instead of merely researching gender aspects in mono-disciplinary fields of the traditional positivist kind. High activity in publishing, initiatives of joint study programmes in the field of gender/women's/feminist studies should be continuously pursued in order to confirm its position as an authentic academic field.*

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIELD OF GENDER STUDIES IN MACEDONIA**

The idea of gender studies as an academic field in its own right was first introduced in an organized and publicly visible manner (through events and publications), in 1999. It was the result of the activities of an informal academic network initiated by the newly established Research Centre for Gender Studies (RCGS), as part of Euro-Balkan – the Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities Research. Nowadays, the Centre is integrated within the Institute, as one of its departments offering

accredited postgraduate studies in Gender and Humanities and Gender and Social Sciences.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, the ideas of gender sensitive or feminist knowledge and education pre-existed the establishment of the RCGS, in a dispersed and incidental manner of the field's practical invisibility (prior to the very end of the 90') in the local academe. Nonetheless, the concept, gender studies, was virtually absent from the public and the academic scene. It was only with the establishment of the Research Centre for Gender Studies at the Euro-Balkan Institute and the Network of about 30 scholars it mobilized that the field of gender studies gained visibility and gradual recognition of its academic relevance in the last decade. The mission the RCGS and its academic Network comprised of professors and graduate students from a number of departments at the State University of Skopje consisted in the promotion of the gender studies as a legitimate academic and scientific field. What the task of 'promotion' actually entailed was battling for recognition of its scholarly and scientific relevance with the proponents of scientific universalism and its (alleged) gender-neutral objectivism.

One of the main and very concrete objectives carried out by the Centre and its Network was the *introduction of the gender perspective in the existing curricula*.<sup>2</sup> Gender sensitisation of the higher education was the primary objective and it was achieved in the form of introduction of courses, themes, and critical perspectives from the field of gender studies into the existing curricula of Social Sciences and Humanities, and also into original research. Establishing full departments or curricula was perceived as an inevitable result of the successful attainment of the mission, as presented above. A joint Centre of the State University of Skopje and Euro-Balkan Institute's Centre for Gender Studies was established in 2002.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to 1999, there had been a history of feminist critique in Macedonia, in particular in the fields of Comparative Literature, History Of Art, Sociology and Political Sciences, championed by scholars such as Katica Kulafkova, Elizabeta Sheleva, Suzana Milevska, Mirjana Najchevska, Natasha Gaber, and others.

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<sup>1</sup> See, <[http://www.euba.edu.mk/Gender\\_Studies.html](http://www.euba.edu.mk/Gender_Studies.html)>

<sup>2</sup> In 2003, the Euro-Balkan institute and the University of Skopje established a joint Centre for the Support and the Development of Gender Sensitive Curricula in Higher Education, <<http://www.euba.edu.mk/Curriculum-Development.html>>

<sup>3</sup> See, <<http://www.euba.edu.mk/Curriculum-Development.html>>

*Looking back at the Years of 'Mobilization' around the Idea of the Field Introduction in Higher Education Institutions*

Nonetheless, the promotion of the concept, gender, and the idea of Gender Studies occurred with the research projects and conferences organized by the Research Centre for Gender Studies- Euro-Balkan. At that time, the Institute in Social Sciences and Humanities Research Euro-Balkan was an alternative academic organization which evolved into a scientific research institution recognized by the Ministry of Education and Science, offering accredited graduate studies in several fields, among which the gender studies programmes in the Humanities and Gender and in Social Sciences and Gender. The role that the Centre, and the Euro-Balkan Institute, as a whole, played in the promotion of gender studies during the past eleven years was one of uniting the large community of Macedonian scholars already active in the fields of feminism and gender theory. The Centre and its projects – funded during the first four years mostly by the Open Society Institute in Macedonia (the Soros Foundation) – served as a forum where feminist scholars from different fields and academic institutions could gather and work together. These activities enabled the emergence of a visible intellectual scene, pursuing feminist and gender related scholarship, and advocating its institutionalization within the university education of the country. The strategies undertaken to provide recognition and visibility for the field, and for the intellectual scene involved in its scholarly activity vouching for the field sustainability, involved: continuous research production, publishing and informal education for academic excellence targeted at scholars (by organizing summer schools and workshops). The Centre focused primarily on the introduction of courses in gender studies/gender studies related courses or on integrating a gender sensitive approach in the teaching of the traditional disciplines within existing university curricula; the establishment of departments was set only as a secondary goal. The strategy has proven successful considering that, at present, courses in gender studies are offered by many departments of Social Sciences and Humanities, in several universities in the country. In addition, the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Research – Euro-Balkan includes a postgraduate studies department (established in 2007), with two programmes in gender studies, and an undergraduate programme at the Faculty of Philosophy of the State University of Skopje (established in 2008, active since 2009-2010).

### *'Gender' Conceptualizations of the Macedonian Academe*

The concept of gender has been theorized, from a number of perspectives, relevant for the developments in the field in the last two decades, internationally. The postmodernist and/or poststructuralist academics have been the most committed pioneers of gender studies scholarship in the country. The positivist, empiricist scholars have promoted the women's studies perspective and they could be found in the subject areas of Law and Social Work studies. The latter have been a lesser percentage among the faculty throughout the country and we must underscore that although the issues of gender (women) have been a topic they have tended to tackle in both their teaching and research, they have not really endorsed the approach of gender sensitivity. The opposition of the empiricist scholars against 'feminism' and 'gender' could be noticed in the publications of original gender studies research produced by the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000.

The opposition of both some of the scholars working in the area of women's studies as well as that of the mainstream scholars has been based on their universalistic and positivist view of Science as "gender-neutral," allegedly detached from the scientific subject – founded upon not only the pretension, but also on the belief, of being "objective". What gender theorists in the country attempted to challenge was precisely the belief in objectivity, in the disembodied and gender-neutral subject.<sup>4</sup> The opponents to the introduction of gender studies (either as course or as a concept) claimed that the idea of a gendered scientific subject is non-scientific in itself. Thus, what has been rendered fundamentally problematic about the gender studies is the validity of the field itself, as an area of scholarship and as an academic discipline that deserves to be represented in any way, in the academia.<sup>5</sup> A similar problem was raised within the academic community of the Central European University, in Budapest, in the year of 2000, when the faculty of the Gender Studies Department was called upon proving its 'scientific' legitimacy through a number of workshops: on the field's interdisciplinarity, on the poststructuralist perspectives and the continental philosophy-based theory that

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<sup>4</sup> This is what characterized most of the debates during the five-week long seminar organized by the Research Center for Gender Studies - Euro-Balkan Institute and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Skopje.

<sup>5</sup> The debate between feminist and mainstream scholars which took place in Skopje Weekly "Forum," in 2002, was basically a confrontation between those opposing gender studies, seen as 'non-scientific,' and those defending its legitimacy, precisely in terms of the field's task of unmasking the alleged gender-neutrality of the hegemonic scientific/academic discourse. It has been presented in its entirety in the bilingual (Macedonian and English) Journal for Politics Gender and Culture "Identities," 3, 2002. Retrieved on 12 January 2011, from <<http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=d199bfe5-e4bd-4fdc-96e6-70fae8d4ae7f&articleId=eeedf113-3761-4efc-8bc6-e33ca70ee365>>

dominated the field, as taught at CEU, at the time, and on the validity of the issue of gender itself to form an academic discipline in its own right. (Secor, 2001). The opposition to the discipline in Macedonia and the decade-long struggle for the introduction of gender studies in the academia consisted mainly in proving its scientific legitimacy, its right to be recognized as a relevant academic discipline. In fact, making way for gender studies as a discipline, making way for the relevance of the gender-sensitive and/or feminist perspective have been making way for the integration of the gender studies into the academia as both a perspective, present in other fields, as well as a complete field, in its own right.

What marked most of the gender/feminist studies-related initiatives in the country was the strong insistence on the regional perspective – that of Southeast Europe – as both a critical vantage point, as well as the cultural-political context within which the gender issues, as well as the alliance for the field legitimization was taking place. These years' long regional networking reached a certain level of consolidation with the establishment of the Regional Network for Gender/Women's Studies in South-eastern Europe, the inauguration of which took place in Ohrid, in 2004.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent projects – conferences, symposia and publications – stemmed in the activities of the Network and in other informal networking initiatives in the region (through different European Commission programmes such as FP6 and FP7, the Tempus projects, etc.; but also through other grant schemes, such as the Regional Research Promotion Programme in Social Sciences, coordinated by the Fribourg University in Switzerland).<sup>7</sup>

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MACEDONIA

### *Representation*

A previous UNESCO action dedicated to the issue of gender representation and sciences in South-eastern Europe can give us some summary insight into the more recent history of women participation in the Macedonian academe.<sup>8</sup> In 2005, women represented 57.7 percent of all MA graduates and 88.9 percent of the specialization graduates. In the previous year, 43.9 percent of the defended MA theses in Macedonia were in Social Sciences, 15.9 percent in Humanities, 12.7 percent in Technological Sciences, and 11.1 percent in Natural Sciences and

<sup>6</sup> See, <<http://www.gendersee.org.mk/conference/index.asp>>

<sup>7</sup> See, <<http://www.rppp-westernbalkans.net/>>

<sup>8</sup> It is worthwhile noting that all of the theses defended up to this moment have been a product of the 4+2 system (meaning, in spite of Macedonia's participating to the Bologna Process, the MA studies still last for two years, and one is eligible to enroll in a postgraduate study programme after earning a BA degree upon accomplishing a four- year programme of study).

Mathematics. The same gender configurations can be noticed in PhD study/research. It is important to note, that the figures show that, in the last decade, the ratio of gender representation in professorship in Social Sciences and Humanities is approximately 50 percent: 50 percent (with some variations, in different years), and in some areas women are even better represented than men are. (Kolozova, 2007) The numbers speak of a relatively high level of gender-balanced representation in higher education, in the country. Four years later, looking at the figures about the oldest and biggest university in the country – the State University of *St. Cyril and Methodius* – one realizes a gender shift, showing the preponderance of female PhD and MA graduates. (State Statistical Office, 2010). In 2009, out of a total of 119 candidates having been awarded a PhD degree, 64 are women, and 55 men. (State Statistical Office, 2010). Out of a total of 412 candidates, awarded a MA degree, 233 are women, and 179 are men. This is an implicit indication of the gender representation among the higher education teachers, since the great majority of those having acquired a PhD degree are already pursuing, or intend to pursue, an academic career. We must base our assumption on this implication (which is nonetheless founded), since the official statistics concerning professors does not segregate data by gender. One thing is, however, certain, *i.e.*, women outnumber men in the second and third cycle of education. The PhDs and the PhD candidates, who are predominantly female, according to the statistics provided by the State Statistical Office, represents the body of potential university and graduate schools faculty, in the country.

As to the number of students – out of the total of 63,437 enrolled in state and private universities, 29,844 (47 percent) are women, whereas 33,593 are men. It is interesting to note that, at the state universities, the number of female students is higher than that of males: out of a total of 51,795, women count 28,862 (56 percent), while the number of male students is 22,933. This is an indication that, at the state institutions, where studying is economically more accessible, there are more female than male students. Also, it is important to note that, at the state universities, a student is enrolled on the basis of rigorous testing, whereas the private universities have only the basic requirements (apart from that of paying a fee).

Recent analyses have shown that Macedonia is no exception with respect to the global trend of ‘feminization of poverty’ (United Nations, 2000). The unemployment rate is evermore feminized, which indicates a growing feminization of poverty, which nonetheless does not display a significant gender disparity at this point. (UNDP, 2009) The lower paid positions in public administration and those in the academe are occupied by women, whereas the transitional entrepreneurship – the growing private business sector – has been predominantly in the hands of men. The representation of women in the academe, in quantitative terms, displays a

virtually ideal gender balance. Nonetheless, this is merely a seeming equity – if one scratches under the surface and looks beyond the sheer numbers, one will notice that most of the leading decision-making positions in the academe (rectors, deans or members of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences) are held by men. In other words, wherever political power [“political”, in the broadest sense of the word, implying that the development of academic discourse and the functioning of the educational institutions represent a form of political power] is entailed in an academic position, the latter is usually won over by a man.

### *The Strategy of Gender Sensitisation of the Current Higher Education Curricula*

The activities of the Network for Gender and Women’s Studies, coordinated by RCGS – Euro-Balkan Institute (the only organized activity aimed at the integration of gender studies and of a gender-sensitive perspective in the country’s higher education and research activity) and supported by The Open Society Institute-Macedonia (the Soros Foundation), carried out in the period between 1999 and 2003, focused primarily on the propulsion of the gender perspective and content in the existing curricula (*i.e.*, gender mainstreaming into disciplines other than gender studies proper). The strategy of decentralized and horizontal mainstreaming of the gender studies in the curricula has been re-iterated and elaborated on many occasions, including at a symposium organized on precisely this topic, in December 2000 and called *Strategies for the Gender Studies in South-eastern Europe: The Macedonian Case*.<sup>9</sup> The same strategy was also at the heart of the joint curriculum development centre for gender studies established by RCGS – Institute Euro-Balkan, mentioned above.

From today’s perspective, we can argue that these and other similar initiatives in the country have been successful: elective courses in a number of subject areas of the Social Sciences and Humanities have been introduced with a number of departments of a number of universities or institutes’ graduate schools, as well as within the content of the courses taught at the state university.

In spite of these accomplishments, one is still far from being able to either claim that gender has been mainstreamed in most of the curricula, or that the indispensable minimum of gender sensitivity has been attained. It seems the results at issue are insufficient and the patriarchal ideology is still underlying the core of the curricula at the State University of Skopje that should display the greatest degree of gender sensitivity – Psychology, Pedagogy, and Social Work. The curricula at these departments are marked by blatant gender insensitivity as well as by the lack of tolerance toward any minority social group that represents a ‘deviation’

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<sup>9</sup> Detailed on the symposium at <<http://www.euba.edu.mk/Other-Events.html>>



from the social norm. In fact, it is symptomatic how often the concept, social deviation, is repeated in the syllabi and the need of 'correcting the deviations' – the difference with respect to the social norm is marked as a sort of disease that needs to be cured.<sup>10</sup> With reference to the gay people, the labels of "sick," "ill," and/or "twisted" are used explicitly in a publication authored by two members of the Faculty of Pedagogy (Kostova *et al.*, 2005). The publication in question is a textbook for the course in Pedagogy, designed for high school students, but it is also part of the mandatory or elective literature in a number of syllabi at the departments of Pedagogy, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology,<sup>11</sup> and Philosophy<sup>12</sup> at the State University of Skopje. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the notions of gender, gendered identity, and gender equality are not even mentioned in the curricula of Pedagogy, Psychology and Social Work; the only reference to gender identity is that of the 'sex' and 'sexual differences' used in the almost physical sense of the word (covered under the topic of 'sexual' development). A noteworthy exception at the Faculty of Philosophy is the presence of the topic of feminist philosophy within the course on Contemporary Philosophy and the elective course of gender studies. At the Sociology department, the issues of gender are mentioned in the course description of the Sociology of Culture, subject taught in semester V (of the first cycle of studies). The History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy offers a course in the basics of historiography taught in semester I, providing introduction in the school of everyday life history which covers the issues of women's history and that of other marginalized groups (such as slaves, foreigners, etc.)

A special mention deserves the Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the State University of Skopje, one of the first institutions to introduce gender/women's studies-related course within its second cycle studies of Media and Communication and of Sociology (in the 1999/2000 academic year). We should also note that elective courses in gender, women's or feminist studies do exist at the State University of Skopje, in the second study cycle: a number of courses is

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<sup>10</sup> See, <[http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=514&Itemid=661&lang=mk-MK](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=514&Itemid=661&lang=mk-MK)> for the Institute of Pedagogy of the State University of Skopje. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

See, <[http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=521&Itemid=162&lang=mk-MK](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=521&Itemid=162&lang=mk-MK)> for the Institute of Psychology of the State University of Skopje. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

See, <[http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=565&Itemid=816&lang=mk-MK](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=565&Itemid=816&lang=mk-MK)> for the Institute of Social Work of the State University of Skopje. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

<sup>11</sup> See, *Sociology Curriculum*. <[http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=528&Itemid=761&lang=mk-MK](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=528&Itemid=761&lang=mk-MK)>. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

<sup>12</sup> See, *Philosophy Curriculum*. <[http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=481&Itemid=154&lang=mk-MK](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=481&Itemid=154&lang=mk-MK)>. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

offered at the Faculty of Philology (in particular at the Department of Comparative Literature)<sup>13</sup> and at the Faculty of Philosophy (Philosophy Department).

The University American College – Skopje<sup>14</sup> includes gender studies courses within its Political Studies curricula, at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as gender equity and women's history related contents as part of the European History course offered in the Political Studies and Law curricula. Two other private institution offer gender studies courses or courses that entail a gender-sensitive approach: the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Research "Euro-Balkan" and the South East European University at Tetovo. We could find no evidence of other private higher education institutions offering gender/women's related courses or a gender-sensitive approach integrated in other courses.

In the description of the curricula at the departments of Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work and Philosophy of the State University of Skopje, where one expects to find the highest level of integration of the gender perspective into the existing programmes, this author has noticed a blatant absence of gender-related topics, and of sensitivity with respect to the criterion of gender equity. I trust it is the result of the old, 'objectivist' (*i.e.* positivist) school, since this type of methodological approach dominates all curricula of the department. A normative/normalizing sociological and psychological approach is the underlying epistemological (and ideological) foundation of the kinds of Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy and Social Work studies offered at the largest and most authoritative higher education institution in the country. A discourse of prescription of normality and the proscription of what is often referred to as social 'deviations' consist the logic that dominates the epistemic foundations of the disciplines in question reflected in the curricula analyzed for the purposes of this research. This a form of positivism inspired by – or rather, still heavily relying on – the Yugoslav Marxist socio-political science, that dominated Social Sciences and Humanities before 1989, and it apparently still does.

The cultural interpretation of society and the concomitant interdisciplinary approach are still not an established research approach, or sufficiently studied, within the mainstream curricula of these disciplines (that are, let us reiterate, most relevant for understanding and criticizing patriarchal ideology and, consequently, for producing knowledge that would enhance gender equity in society and in its scientific interpretation). The perspective of gender studies and feminist theory and science can hardly be integrated within courses of such universalistic, essentialist,

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<sup>13</sup> See, <<http://www.fff.ukim.edu.mk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qOv2LJnxMr0%3d&tabid=97&mid=423>>. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

<sup>14</sup> See, <<http://www.uacs.edu.mk>>. Retrieved on 12 January 2011.

and positivist content and style of teaching. Along the lines of the same argument, the absence of gender sensitive approach in Natural and Technical Sciences is serious. There is deep rooted scepticism toward the perspective of cultural critique as something that can be applied in the so-called 'hard sciences,' with any relevance whatsoever; the objectivist belief in absolute impartiality of the scientific subject has rendered gender informed critique utterly irrelevant.

#### GENDER-MAINSTREAMING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: COMPLEMENTARY INTERDEPENDENCE OF APPROACHES

The initial overarching goal of the first initiatives for making the case about gender/women's studies a legitimate academic field – that took place by the end of the '90s – has been the so-called 'institutionalization' of gender studies. Institutionalization was conceived as a two-fold phenomenon, or rather a process with two complementary tracks in its accomplishment: the introduction of gender/women's/feminist studies as an integral discipline and the introduction of a gender sensitive perspective into disciplines other than gender studies proper. Today, over a decade later, we could claim this major goal has been achieved in some rather basic forms: dozens of gender studies courses or gender sensitive courses in other disciplines have been introduced in the universities and the institutes which also function as graduate schools throughout the country (as well as the possibility to graduate in the field) in all of the three cycles of tertiary education. In spite of the lack of gender sensitivity in many important curricula as stated above, certain progress can be claimed.

There is a strong presence of feminist scholarship in certain fields of research (and higher education). The field of literary theory and studies is marked by the authoritative presence of feminist theory, championed by Elizabeta Seleva, Maja Bojadzievska, Kata Kjulafkova, Jasna Koteska and others; feminist philosophy and social theory is a field to which scholars such as Ana Dimishkova, Despina Angelovska, Zarko Trajanoski have contributed; cultural theory has also been marked by a strong presence of feminist scholarship represented by Suzana Milevska and Antoanela Petkovska; gender sensitive approach in teaching Law is exercised by Gordana Siljanovska and Dobrinka Taskovska at the Faculty of Law, the State University of Skopje.

Our local practice has proven that, without the indispensable progress in the process of legitimization of gender studies as an integral interdisciplinary field, introducing gender sensitivity into the curricula of other disciplines is hardly achievable. Namely, gender studies departments and, hence, degrees in this field are important not only in order to create scholarship and a body of potential university teachers, but also to reaffirm the scientific validity of the field and

strengthen its still frail position in the local academia. It is an often contested field, not only because of the aspect of 'gender' (which, according to the traditional, positivist, view, seems to be nothing but a commonsensical notion), but also because of its interdisciplinarity. *Degrees and departments – the latter implies accredited study programmes – brings in an important dimension of legitimization of the field and adds to the credibility of the arguments of those who criticize the aspects of gender insensitivity in the curricula of the other disciplines.* By strengthening its position as an academic field, by way of introducing entire curricula and departments, one makes way for the possibility of increasing the level of gender sensitivity of curricula in disciplines other than gender and women's studies.

### *Status of Theory and of Empirical Science in Gender/Feminist Studies in the Country*

Compared to other fields in Humanities and Social Sciences, the field of gender studies is marked by a stronger presence of theoretical discourse, as compared to that of empirical and quantitative research in particular. The stress on the theoretical approach is also reflected in the teaching style and choice of topics presented by most of the gender studies academics in the country.

The quality of the teaching style as well as that of the contents taught also depends on the quality and quantity of original research carried out by the professors. Academic publications, in the form of both journals and books – which should enable both the research activities and the dissemination of original research – are scarce, due to meagre research funds in the country. The European Union funds are available, but on competitive bases. The lack of skills in project proposal writing, on the one hand and the complexity of proposal applications, on the other hand, are serious obstacles for research institutes and institutions of higher education that should demonstrate greater initiative in applying for the EU research funds. This is the context and the situation shared by all disciplines in the areas of Humanities and Social Sciences and this is not something that characterizes specifically the field of gender studies.

Intellectual isolation, a result of insufficient participation in international conferences and other academic events, partly explains the modest quantity and quality of research, and its lack of originality. The cause of the problem lies is not only of an economic nature (the lack of funds for participation to academic events that should be provided by the Ministry of Education and Science as well as by the institutions themselves through fundraising activities), but it is also the absence of a culture of academic mobility. The reasons are also structural: until recently, a high level of international academic activity was not a critical requirement for

maintaining one's position as a university professor. With the new law on science and the rulebook of criteria for election and re-election to academic posts, this situation may change for the better. Up-to-date literature – leaving aside course textbooks – is in short supply at university libraries. This situation is characteristic of the entire area of Humanities and Social Sciences. In this respect, on the whole, the field of gender studies is significantly different: academics do resort to the state of the art literature they obtain on their personal initiative, and their command of English is something that distinguishes them from the rest of their colleagues in the other fields of Humanities and Social Sciences. Generally speaking, this is something that enables the scholars from the field of gender studies to keep pace with the theoretical state-of-the-art.

The other aspects, of a structural or systemic nature, mentioned above, engendering what this author has called “intellectual isolation” apply to gender scholars, as well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In a context where their scientific relevance is still dramatically problematised, gender studies should continue to affirm their status as a discipline in its own right. This can be achieved by undertaking research in the area of interdisciplinary gender studies, instead of merely researching gender aspects in the mono-discipline fields of the traditional positivist kind. High activity in publishing, initiatives of joint study programmes in the area of gender/women's/feminist studies should be continuously pursued in order to confirm this field of study in the position of a legitimate academic one.

Events such as symposia, conferences, and summer schools should be organized on regular a basis, and thus enable debates on the state-of-the-art theory and methodology in the field. They should occasion discussions on the issues of epistemology (more specifically: interdisciplinarity, empiric study *versus* theory, cultural critique *versus* positivism, etc.) and thematic focus (gender aspects of social, political and cultural phenomena), which are at stake in the debate between those opposing gender studies and those who endorse them. Junior faculty, which does not belong to the field of gender studies *sensu stricto*, should participate in such events and become acquainted with the foundations of the field through discussions carried out in contemporary, state-of-the-art theoretical terms.

Gender-sensitisation of the teaching and research approach of the junior faculty is central in order to achieve the necessary level of sustainability of the process of gender mainstreaming in higher education and science, in the country, as well as regionally. And this process should be accomplished in an academic context that would be as international – in particular, regional, *i.e.*, Southeast Europe – as

possible, in order to be able and establish scholarly exchange that goes beyond the intellectual localisms which tend to preserve the *status quo* of the conventional scientific approach.

The regional perspective (of South-eastern Europe) should be as integrated as possible in all suggested initiatives, since it adds an aspect of internationality to the activities which help in increasing the level of recognition in the context of the national academia. To culturally contextualize the field, it is more fruitful and relevant to speak of the regional culture rather than the national. It is a specific trait of the Balkans to be marked by a regional culture, rather than national cultures, since the Balkan states have rather brief national histories; for centuries, they existed as a region at the margins of two empires – namely, the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empires – and marked their borders.

Such an approach could render gender studies an important tool of critique of nationalism in the region, and represent a significant contribution to the field of studies in nationalism. Besides its political significance, the epistemic stance of contextualizing research regionally rather than nationally is also justified methodologically: the cultural context of the region and the shared communist past of most of the countries, as well as the experiences of transition are amongst the main factors that have shaped the social, cultural, and political context of contemporary South-eastern Europe (or rather the Balkans).

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# Gendering Higher Education Curricula at Moldova State University

Valentina BODRUG-LUNGU

## Abstract

*The gender discourse has been gradually integrated in Moldova's system of education, in parallel with its active introduction in the political discourse. At present, some specific gender courses are part of university curricula. The teaching and educational practices, in Moldova, are paradoxical: on the one hand, gender education has been implemented through a range of measures; on the other hand, gender education theory and methodology have not been sufficiently explored. Currently, gender pedagogy is seeking its place among the academic sciences. The gender scientific community has been emerging as an independent force, while closely interconnected with the action of nongovernmental organizations. At this stage, national gender studies could be written off as upgrading from the level of 'social activism' to a conceptual, higher, level of a 'scientific field'. National experts still need to get more involved in gender-related international projects and networks. The situation is affected by the rather undersized number of gender specialists, in addition to the shortage of methodological and financial resources. Among the strategies aiming at mainstreaming gender education in higher education, we should mention the insertion of the gender dimension into initial and continuous training programmes, and the initiation of gender studies at Master's level, in co-operation with Romanian specialists.*

## THE GENDER DIMENSION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (OVERVIEW)

The analysis of the situation in the context of the contemporary political and socio-economic transformations in Moldova reveals a series of inconsistencies in the process of implementing gender equality. On the one hand, the political leadership of the country acknowledges the need to promote gender equality in society; a number of government documents have been adopted in this area. There are favourable political conditions in the light of the Moldovan course of action towards integration into the European Union. On the other hand, the country is challenged with several troubles: gender gaps in wages and pensions, women under-representation in decision-making positions, domestic violence, human trafficking, with women being targeted victims, etc.

Gender inequality has its effects on countries all over the world. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report* (2007), out of 128 countries, Moldova ranked the 21<sup>st</sup>; in 2006, it ranked the 17<sup>th</sup>; in 2008, the 20<sup>th</sup> out of 130 countries; in 2009, the 36<sup>th</sup> out of 134 countries. The indicators of the *Global Gender Gap Report*, for 2009, addressing Moldova, reveal the following situation: in the economic sphere, the country ranked the 26<sup>th</sup> (as compared to 2007, when it ranked the 5<sup>th</sup>); in terms of educational opportunities, Moldova ranked the 63<sup>rd</sup> (in 2007, it ranked the 41<sup>st</sup>); in the field of health and survival sphere, the country ranked the 41<sup>st</sup> (in 2007, it ranked the 37<sup>th</sup>); in the field of political participation, Moldova ranked the 64<sup>th</sup> (as compared to 2007, when it ranked the 56<sup>th</sup>) (*The Global Gender Gap Report*, 2010).<sup>1</sup>

As it can be noticed from the above figures, Moldova has lost on all counts. The issue of women's low representation in decision-making positions and in education is the 'weakest point' of the Republic of Moldova. On the one hand, the above-mentioned data indicate the country's serious efforts to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, in these areas. On the other hand, the data draw attention to the need for their in-depth analysis, from a gender perspective.

After having achieved its independence, the Republic of Moldova joined a series of international organizations: Moldova is a UN member, since 1992 and a member of the Council of Europe, since 2001. The Government takes part in international activities aimed at promoting gender equality.

The political willpower of the Government and Parliament of promoting gender equality in the Moldovan society was substantiated by the adoption of a number of national strategic documents in the field. *The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova* (1994) specifies that

"All citizens of the Republic of Moldova are equal before the law and authorities, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, political affiliation, property or social origin." (Article 16.2)

According to the *Constitution*, the right to education is guaranteed through the compulsory general education, high school and/or vocational education, higher education, as well as other forms of education and training (Article 35).

In Moldova, the introduction and development of the official discourse on sex and gender in the educational area took place in several stages.

- 1991 – 1995 – a period of declarative equality, at the level of the official political doctrine, maintaining sex-role approach in educational practice; official documents do not mention the term, 'gender';

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<sup>1</sup> See, the World Economic Forum website.



- 1995 – 2000 – a period of proclaiming the right to education, regardless of sex (based on the *Law on Education* of 1995), focused on preparing young females and males for family life;
- 2000 – 2006 – the period having brought in the term, ‘gender,’ in official government documents, including the education system: *The Concept of Education*, 2000. Despite the inclusion of elements of gender issues in the educational area, the real teaching practice is dominated by sex-role based approach;
- 2006 – to the present – the period of active use of the terms, ‘gender’, ‘gender equality,’ in the official political discourse (based on the *Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities between Women and Men*, 2006). There is a gradual development of a gender perspective in the academic community, in educational practice, ‘balancing’ between the discourse on sex and gender.

#### *Relevant Legislation at National and Institutional Level Covering Gender Equality in Education/Higher Education*

The gender analysis of the education system, at the institutional and procedural levels, reveals the functionality of the system *de jure* and *de facto*. Among the basic documents regulating the system of education in the Republic of Moldova, the following should be mentioned: *The Law on Education* (1995), *The Concept of Education* (2000), *The National Strategy ‘Education for All’* (2003), etc.

The *Law on Education* of 1995 guarantees the right to education, regardless of nationality, sex etc. (Article 6). The state guarantees equal opportunities to access state institutions of secondary education, vocational education, and higher environmental specialist, depending on skills and capabilities. There are no legal requirements that should discriminate among female or male students, in terms of access to general education or to the university.

The *Concept on Education* (2000) aimed to shape up the students’ gender culture. That was a progressive step, since the previous document contained some confusing provisions; e.g., instead of a gender-related culture, it envisaged creating sexual culture. However, the *Concept on Education*, approved by Decision of the College of the Ministry of Education, covered the system of education alone.

The *National Strategy ‘Education for All’* of 2003 provided for the elimination of gender gaps in primary and secondary education and for the implementation of gender equality by 2015. The document contains the principle of non-discrimination and of the free access to quality education for all children, regardless of place of residence, level of development, family income, sex, etc. Although not mentioned separately, gender education can be traced in health education, civic

education, family education, where, of course, the gender dimension was appropriately treated, according to the new economic, social, and cultural realities.

The *Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities between Women and Men*, passed in 2006, marked the formal start of the official gender policy in Moldova, as a new stage in the development of gender equality. The Law stipulates several new provisions to the national legislation: gender equality, gender mainstreaming, affirmative actions, discrimination based on sex, sexual harassment, etc. The Law provides for Equal Access to Education Art.13: (1) Education and training institutions ensure equality between women and men: a) access to education and / or training, b) in the process of education and / or training, including knowledge evaluation, c) in teaching activities and didactic science, d) development of teaching materials and curricula, in accordance with the principle of equality between women and men; e) inclusion of gender education as part of the system of education, f) education of girls and boys in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

Noting the importance of the Law mentioned above, the author would like to mention that the document fails to reflect a number of important issues: it does not provide gender quotas, a mechanism for bringing to liability for gender discrimination, nor the position of the Ombudsman for gender equality (which reduces the efficiency of the document enforcement), there is no clear mechanism for financial support, etc.

All these elements lend a merely decorous, declarative nature to the Law. Those aspects were mentioned by the members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW, 2006).

*The National Program on Ensuring Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova for 2010-2015* (Guvernul, 2009) identifies eight areas of interventions, including the sphere of education. The document includes the following policy measures:

- Gender mainstreaming in education policies, in the stages of formulating, implementing, and monitoring, including, in terms of human rights and equal treatment of boys and girls;
- Increasing capacity to address gender dimension in the educational system, including development of training courses, curriculum, educational standards, content topics, teaching resources, and learning;
- Organizing information and awareness campaigns on the gender dimension in education;
- Collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistical sex disaggregated data in educational area.

The provisions of the *National Program* (Guvernul, 2009) are undoubtedly a step ahead. However, the implementation of the adopted measures remains challenging, because of lack of funding.

These issues require special attention also in the context of Moldova's retaining patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes with regard to the role and responsibilities of women and men, in the family and society. That has a negative impact on women, particularly, on the labour market and their participation in the political and public life. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urges the State counterpart to disseminate information on the content of the Convention through its educational system by mainstreaming a gender perspective into textbooks and curricula at all levels and by ensuring gender training for teachers, with a view to changing existing stereotypical views and attitudes regarding women and men roles in family and society (UN CEDAW, 2006).

### *Current Status of Women and Men in Higher Education Institutions*

The condition of Moldova's system of education is contradictory. *The Law on Education* provides equal rights to education for girls and boys, but this area suffers from certain troubles: gender imbalance in the choice of professions, gender imbalance at the level of the teaching staff, etc.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, in secondary vocational education, boys represented the majority (66.3 percent). In secondary vocational education (colleges), girls represented 56.0 percent, while in higher education (57.8 percent). (See, Table 1).

The process of feminization and masculinization of some professional pathways becomes visible at the higher education level. In higher education, there is a segregation of areas (branches) by sexes. The feminized ones include: Education (72.5 percent girls, in the total number of students), Health Care (71.4 percent), Economics (60.3 percent), and Arts and Cinema (58.3 percent). Male students numerically dominate Theology (87.5 percent boys), Sports (79.2 percent), Industry (67.6 percent), Law (60.0 percent), and Agriculture (55.3 percent). (See, Figure 1).

That situation is due to several factors, but primarily, to stereotypes of social roles of men and women (who are actively supported by media, family, and school) and social rewards for teenagers of both sexes in an attempt to explore the area, traditionally considered purely female, or male.

Consequently, there is a traditional approach when choosing a professional education. This segregation is valid also for the labour market, passing cyclical reproduction. At the same time, girls more boldly go to 'traditionally male' profession.

Feminization is a significant at the level of teachers: in the 2008/2009 academic year, amongst the female teaching staff, the following percentage was registered: 81.8 percent in primary and secondary education; 70.0 percent in colleges; 52.2 percent in secondary vocational education; 54.7 percent in higher education (S. Figure 2). However, even though women are the majority in terms of teaching staff, men continue to be predominant in the higher, decision-making, positions (women represent about 80 percent of teaching staff, and the remaining 20 percent is men, mostly in managerial positions). The feminization of the education system is the result of low wages, a substantial outflow of men from this area, and of the stereotype that women are chiefly responsible for children care and education.

Major gender discrepancies are demonstrated in the gender distribution of the didactic personnel by scientific degree. In the 2007-08 academic year, 42 percent of the teachers in higher education had a PhD degree or a postdoctoral one (2,7 thousand of the total 6,4 thousand). Among women, the ratio is only 31 percent, while among men, it is 55 percent.

Even the share of male teachers holding a scientific degree is higher, as compared to that of female teachers; it has been noticed that a larger number of women is engaged in doctoral studies. In 2007, women predominated amongst the graduates of doctoral studies (61 percent), amongst those enrolled (64 percent), and amongst post-graduates (63 percent). (BNS, 2011)

At the same time, despite their high level of education, the status of women in Moldova is not adequate for their leading role in the structure of employment and social development. This situation was mentioned by the members of the Committee for Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW, 2006).

### *Qualitative Aspects of the Gender Dimension in the Higher Education System*

In the frame of education policy and practices, a specific learning environment is established in each educational institution, which in terms of the gender dimension can be gender neutral, gender sensitive, or gender-asymmetrical (Stileva, 2008).

The characteristics of gender neutrality include, as a rule, the conditions and standards of life in educational institutions, addressed to students without distinguishing gender (requirements regarding discipline, access to library resources, dining room, appearance, etc.). The gender-sensitive characteristics refer to living conditions and standards in an educational institution, which, along with recognition of common rights and freedoms of students, include the specific sex characteristics of boys and girls (e.g., different standards for sports, involvement of youngsters in various social programmes during teaching practices (care for the disabled children, the elderly, etc.), short-term leave of absence for girls, on their critical days, etc. Gender-asymmetrical are rules, regulations, and conditions that

limit opportunities, rights, and the dignity of people, based on sex criteria (a different approach in assessing girls' and boys' achievements, in requirements with respect to discipline, access to educational resources, etc.)

At this stage, the specificity of the educational environment in Moldova consists of a unique symbiosis of gender-neutral, gender-sensitive, and gender-asymmetrical characteristics. Thus, according to the legal framework, the higher education institutions established uniform requirements for students, in terms of order in class, extra-curricular hours, availability of fitness devices, etc. The institutions are endowed with material (furniture, appliances, and sport inventory) and information resources (books, textbooks, etc.), no matter the student and/or teacher gender. The level of development of higher education institutions, as a rule, depends mainly on socio-economic factors, its internal management.

The university environment includes facts of gender-asymmetrical nature, which, according to specialists, often have an unintended, subjective approach. There are cases of using various labels / stigma on the basis of sex, double standards in relation with personal qualities / abilities of men and women, double standard requirements regarding order in class / didactic practice, etc. (Bodrug-Lungu, 2009). However, such situations are less common in high schools, as compared with other types of school. Most often, these aspects depend on the personality of the teacher, the level of his/her culture and gender-sensitivity.

The material and information-symbolic content of the educational space is a significant factor in gender socialization and re-socialization of male and female students, during their studies in high education institutions. Special attention needs to be paid to the information environment issue in education institutions. From the teaching staff point of view, the information environment in educational institutions does not offend the dignity and interests of any of sexes; however, 86 percent of respondents could not identify any gender-sensitive indicators of the education information space. At the same time, a comparative analysis of the information space of universities and schools indicates the prevalence of gender-neutral environment in universities, as compared to schools.

Higher education institutions, along with the school, family, and other factors, are also important institutions of gender socialization / re-socialization of the young generation, under which the consolidation of gender norms, values, and real experimentation of behaviour and relationships between men and women in the private and public life take place. The existing studies indicate that education institutions often reproduce traditional stereotypes that limit girls' and boys' potential (Bodrug-Lungu, 2009; Wiltzius, 2006; etc.).

The 'hidden curriculum' is recognized as one of the most important tools of gender / sex-role socialization in educational institutions. It can be described by the following dimensions: 1) organization of education institution, (gender) relationship

between teachers, (gender) stratification of teacher profession; 2) content of curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials; 3) style of teaching communication.

Talking about the gender stratification of the teaching profession, in the Republic of Moldova, we should again mention statistical data, which confirm the predominance of women over men, at all educational levels: 81.8 percent in primary and secondary education, 70.0 percent in colleges, 52.2 percent in secondary vocational education, 54.7 percent in higher education (BNS, 2011).

There are many explanations for this situation: starting with the existence of the stereotype that women are responsible for child care and education, incapacity of men to educate children, to social unattractiveness, as a consequence of low salaries, etc.

At the same time, men, though in minority in the educational system, take up most of the management positions. Thus, according to data available from the Ministry of Education, the situation regarding gender representation of people in decision-making positions is as follows: out of 29 rectors of higher education institutions in our republic (both state and private ones), only 4 are women, that is only 13 percent; out of 46 directors of colleges, 15 are women, *i.e.*, 32 percent; out of the 67 directors of vocational and trade schools, only 13 are women, *i.e.*, 20 percent.

Teacher distribution by taught subject is important in gender stratification: for example, at Moldova State University (as in most universities), women prevail, in numbers, in Pedagogy and Psychology, Sociology and Linguistic Sciences; men represent the majority in Physics and Mathematics, History, Political Science and Law. Such a divide is not a mere demonstration of 'normative' models of masculinity and femininity; it contributes to their consolidation and reproduction.

The content of curricula and textbooks is another important dimension of the 'hidden curriculum'. It should be noted that, in general, educational standards in education institutions, including universities, are gender-neutral, except for such fields as sports.

It should be noted that gender analyses of the school curriculum and textbooks and other studies were carried out in the country (Ștefănescu, 2005; Bodrug-Lungu, 2009), and gender stereotypes and gender disparity were identified with respect to representation, image, and status of women and men, in didactic materials. Unfortunately, there is no gender analysis of curricula and textbooks in higher education.

The overall gender analysis of specific curriculum and textbooks, carried out by this author, suggests the following points:

- Teaching materials in Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry, Economics, Law, as a principle, are gender neutral. In this context, we should especially highlight Law, which focuses on the human rights concept. However, at this stage, the

content of materials and the learning process in general, is focused on considering the relationship between the person and the state / different legal structures. Gender aspects were not included in such fields as: relevant UN documents (CEDAW etc.) and the Council of Europe documents; national legislation on gender equality and domestic violence was not reflected in educational materials;

- Values and behaviours presented in History, Political Science, Philosophy, Literature textbooks are of a gender-asymmetrical nature. However, in most cases, the gender imbalances and disparities are not deliberate.

At the same time, it should be noted that the presence of models and values in textbooks and materials, containing gender asymmetries, contribute to the increase of gender inequality and discrimination in other areas.

This analysis confirms that “different science and research communities possess varying degrees of sensitivity to the inclusion of a gender subject in their intellectual field” (Zdravomislova, and Temkina, 2000). Thus, History and Moldovan Literature are cited among the most ‘gender insensitive’ ones.

The third dimension of the ‘hidden curriculum’ is the style of communication in teaching.

Illustrative in this respect are the results of the express-analysis of gender relations in some higher education institutions, under which the existence of stereotyping of a part of teachers was established, reflected in the situations presented below.

- In their knowledge evaluation, teachers sometimes use the sex-role approach, assessing students’ knowledge and behaviour in the context of sex characteristics, based on the fact that girls are more diligent and obedient than boys, etc.
- Application of labels on the ability of students based on sex criteria, highlighting the tendency of men to study real sciences or to select traditionally ‘masculine’ spheres of activity – Law, Political Science, etc.

Thus, we can state that the very teaching body is a bearer of social schemes and gender stereotypes, and reproduces those within the learning process, thus limiting the self-realization of the younger generations. The development of the teachers’ gender awareness plays a decisive role in the configuration of their professional competence.

## GENDER STUDIES: SEPARATIONIST APPROACHES

The cultural and political context is an important factor in the promotion of gender within the system of education.

### *Cultural and Religious Context*

Moldova's *Constitution* stipulates the official separation of the Church and the State. At the same time, it plays a significant role in peoples' lives. According to a piece of research conducted in the late '90s, a revival of religious life is taking place in the Republic of Moldova; about 93 percent of the population stated its support for the Orthodox Church (UNDP, 2000). The Church tries to influence the process of training and education of the younger generation.

The increasing role and influence of the Church in the society, on the one hand, contributes to the 'consolidation' of the society. On the other hand, when evaluating gender equality, the Church reproduces patriarchal stereotypes, such as an attack on the integrity of the family and the emancipation of women – as reason for devaluating family values. The Orthodox Church has strongly opposed the observance of women's reproductive rights and family planning (*e.g.*, the right to contraception and abortion), being against the sexual education of the youth.

For example, in the 2005-2006 academic year, with the support of international organizations, the subject, *Life Skills Education*, with themes on sexual-reproductive health, etc., was introduced in secondary education. However, under pressure from representatives of the Orthodox Church and other religious groups and conservative circles, the textbooks on this subject were removed from schools and the subject itself was invalidated.

At the same time, the debate around this school discipline demonstrated a strong opposition, within the society, to the influence of the Church over the school space, the fact that in everyday life young people are considered to be less than the data positions.

### *Political Life*

The analysis of the political life reveals a direct link with the situation of the system of education. Formally, the existing legal provisions on equality of civil, political and socio-economic empowerment of women and men meet international requirements. However, there are certain issues and gaps.

In recent years, the Republic of Moldova registered positive a dynamics of the women's involvement in decision-making processes, in public and political life (Tables 5 and 6) (BNS, 2008b).



Thus, given that the 2008 Moldovan Prime Minister was a woman, females accounted for 21 percent of the MPs, 31 percent among ministers, 14 percent among mayors. In September 2010, women accounted for 25.7 percent of the MPs, but only one minister out of 16 was a woman, which amounted to 6.25 percent. In December 2010, women accounted for 19 percent of the MPs, and 6.25 percent of the ministers. Ambiguous manoeuvres with respect to promoting women to power revealed no consistent policy in this area.

The overall analysis of the statistical data indicates the existence of a relatively balanced distribution of senior positions in ministries and other central government structures (about 41 percent held by women; 59 percent by men). However, as we move up the hierarchical ladder of leadership posts, the gender gap is amplified: at the level of heads of divisions and departments, 38.5 percent are women and 61.5 percent are men; at the level of deputy ministers / deputy directors, women represent 18.4 percent, as compared to men's 81.6 percent (BNS, 2011).

Thus, women are still underrepresented in the electoral and decision-making process. Moreover, the above figures do not reflect the demographics of the population, where women constitute 52 percent and men, 48 percent of the population. Women in Moldova continue to be discriminated against, as compared to men, in political and social activities, to a large extent due to gender stereotypes.

### *The Area of Economic Development*

In recent years, there has been some growth in the number of jobs. The employment rate of men has been higher (48.6 percent), as compared with that of women employment (41.0 percent), despite the specific weight of female students, which is higher (58 percent of the total), as compared to male students. At the same time, despite the fact that the male unemployment rate is higher (in 2007, it was 6.1 percent) than that of the female rate (4.9 percent), women face more difficulties on the labour market, mainly due to gender specifics. Women's ratio among the economically inactive peoples is higher than the men's ratio, accounting for 56.9 percent / 48.2 percent, respectively (BNS, 2008b).

The insufficient professional orientation and the persistence of gender stereotypes prevent women's choice of professions with male predominance. Low wages is the main explanation of the decreased attractiveness of the labour market in Moldova. There are gender pay gaps between women and men on the labour market. Thus, in 2008, a woman's monthly average wage represented 73.3 percent of a man's wage, or 2,134 lei, as compared to a man's wage of 2,910.1 lei (BNS, 2008b). In 2008, the monthly average wage per economy amounted to 2,529.7 lei.

The wage gap between men and women can be explained by several factors. The main factor that makes the differences in the labour remuneration for men and

women is the horizontal and vertical segregation. Thus, almost half of the women from rural areas are hired in the agricultural sector, for less skilled work, thereby, earning less than men on qualified jobs. Another factor in women and men's wage gap is the existence of fields dominated by women – 'female activities' (education, health), where salaries are lower, as compared to the sectors where dominated by men (constructions, transport). Additionally, women are under-represented at the top of the professional pyramid. Or, particularly the wages of top managers have been increased over the last period. The number of women exceeds the number of men among the low-rank officials. Finally, the existing pay gap in the republic entails preservation of a low accrual of pension benefits which, in its turn, has a direct impact on the level of pensions and welfare of women and men.

The analysis of the real situation of women and men would be incomplete without considering the issue of migration, taking into account that, at this stage, the experts noted an increased risk of women discrimination.

For example, men have greater employment opportunities, starting with low-skilled jobs and ending up with the highly skilled ones. Women can be employed in a limited number of occupations, which, generally, are associated with traditional gender roles, such as: household jobs (housekeeper, maid, and babysitter), jobs in agriculture, hotel services and leisure activities. Women migrant workers suffer, in fact, due to double discrimination at work: first of all, because they are foreigners (the same form of discrimination as migrant-men); secondly, because they are women and, thus, they may become victims of violence or trafficking, both in the migration process and on the labour market, in the countries of destination. Moreover, being employed abroad, in sectors that do not match their qualifications, education and capacities, they often feel disgraced and/or lose their professional qualifications. According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2008, the number of people declared as working abroad or seeking for a job abroad amounted to about 309,7 thousand people; about 2/3 of the migrants were men and this fact required reassessment and mainstreaming the gender issue in the professional orientation programmes and employment policies. The migration of their mothers and fathers has a significant negative impact on the children left without parental care. The results are visible in such forms as children's school abandonment, psycho-emotional problems, violence, alcohol addiction, etc. We witness a major transformation of the family, which negatively affects equally women, men, and children.

According to the analyses of gender equality reflections in Moldovan mass media, more and more gender-related materials were published by the 2010 printed press, which is beneficial. There is, however, the other side of the coin – materials with tendentious, discriminatory, and sexist contents – that happens quite often as well. Studies demonstrate that out of the total number of reviewed

articles, only 20 percent represent men and women equally, 63 percent – professional men, between 3 percent and 27 percent – professional women. Pictures representing men prevail over the total number of pictures (27 percent – men, 17 percent – women). Professional men are represented exclusively in their professional environment. Pictures of professional women represent them in the private sphere, in a relaxed atmosphere, which is irrelevant to professional activities. (Radu, 2010)

In most cases, authors do not intend to disparage women as a social group or to stress men's superiority, but, due to stereotypes, the biased treatment of women and men is still frequent. Experts consider that, because of their inadequate knowledge of the field, implicitly, because of their lack of gender awareness, advertising agents keep on producing ambiguous, stereotype, and unfair pictures. Another explanation is the addressee manifest interest for this type of pictures, too.

In the context, we can mention that, despite some progress in promoting gender equality, there have been problems recorded in this field. We note the misunderstanding of the essence of gender mainstreaming as a holistic strategy to achieve gender equality that should be an ongoing process and not a single action, and the need to organize work at all levels.

Under the above-mentioned conditions, the exploration of gender issues, started in the early 90's, by the education system is quite controversial. On the one hand, there is an increasing interest in gender issues, a separate study was carried out, and gender was a component of different national reports. At this stage, a number of universities are teaching separate courses on gender issues, undergraduate thesis, articles are published, etc.

In 2000, the first research-training centres on gender issues, such as the Gender Centre at Moldova State University, the Centre for Gender Studies at the Pedagogical State University (at present, the latter is closed because of lack of funding) were established.

On the other hand, we should be aware of the lack of human and material resources to implement gender programmes and also the insufficiently developed theoretical and methodological basis of gender studies. There is a lack of purposeful long-term policy on gender studies (curriculum development, teacher training, teaching materials, etc.), and gender budget lines are nonexistent. The organization of long-term Gender Education and Science includes: expertise, research, training programmes, the set up of a data bank, publication of programmes, student publications, a strengthening of the specialist capacity building, etc. All the above require serious financial investment on the part of the state.

Coverage of sex and gender issues is quite contradictory. Initially, this subject was directed to research the status of women in the society, which was largely descriptive by nature. Most often research studies, focused on women, were called

Gender Studies , built on essentialism and reductionism, which led to different interpretations. Despite the progress in the gender research area, these problems are still here today, when the gender perspective of a study is replaced by the sex-role approach. (Vovc, 2004; BNS, 2009b)

It should be noted that, initially, women / gender studies have been started and developed with foreign support from international programmes. A special place among them belongs to the Women's Programme of the Soros Foundation, which actively supported the first women's studies, publications, and translations. Specifically through this programme a gender perspective was reflected in education. Organizing different activities, such as the first internship abroad for experience exchange between local specialists, support of participation in international conferences, summer schools on gender issues at local level, translation of foreign literature in the field, the publication of books by national experts, etc. has undoubtedly contributed to the gradual introduction of the gender discourse in the education system.

Among the gender-education projects and programmes, covering higher education, we should note, first of all, *Gender and Education*, a project developed by the Women's Programme of the Soros Foundation, which supported many projects. Within the project *Preparing Men and Women for the Democratization of the Society*, the Centre for Gender Studies organized two summer schools, on the topics of *Problems and Prospects of Gender Education*, in 2002, and on *Gender Education in Moldova* in 2003, addressing teachers, undergraduates, and NGOs leaders. The project *Gender Education* (1999-2003) supported the publication of the magazine *Gender studies*, № 1-6, 2000-2002; the development and publication of a university educational curriculum and teaching the course, *Gender and Culture*, and the publication of book entitled *Gender in Relations and Proverbs of the Peoples of the World*.

Within the project *Gender Education of the Youth* (2000-2003), the Gender Centre specialists developed the curriculum and taught the course *Gender and Education*, at the Moldovan State University, published the course guide and a glossary of gender terminology in the field of education. In 2004, *Pro Didactica*, the academic magazine, initiated a dedicated column, entitled *Gender Studies*.

The UNIFEM project in Moldova, *Promotion of Gender Equality in National Development Programmes and Strategies* (2007-2009), dedicated to education and gender, conducted a gender analysis of the Millennium Development Goals (UNIFEM/UNDP, 2007), and edited the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the monthly newsletter, *GENDER* (2008-2009). The project also intended to establish a Gender Academic Consortium; however the initiative remained at the declarative level.

The implementation of the above-mentioned and other projects, of course, represents a major step forward in establishing the basis of the gender education,

in the country. Under these programmes, various groups of professionals, including teaching staff and students, were trained on gender issues. The specific features of these programmes are manifested in the interconnection of gender academic discourse with the public discourse. Often, people with psycho-pedagogical education, beneficiaries of specialized training in the frame of the various NGOs' programmes in the country and abroad, work as trainers. Books on gender, by foreign and national authors, have been published. Two specialized libraries with literature on gender issues have been set up: the Gender Centre Library within the Moldovan State University and the library of the National Centre for Information and Documentation on Women / Centre for Partnership Development.

At the same time, though, the projects have a temporary character: some isolated events were organized; there is a dependence on international grants / absence of long-term policy actions and funding. There is a lack of coordination of interactions, at the programme level, the lack of a database, the lack of information due to the absence of electronic resources. Over the last years, the donor interest in gender education was low and that led to a drastic reduction of programmes and information resources. State agencies do not possess the necessary resources either, for the development of a gender perspective at the level of specific areas, including education. The activities carried out by NGOs, even the most effective ones, can not, and should not replace the work of the state educational institutions.

During the last years, in Moldova, some research on gender issues was carried out on: gender-based violence (Bodrug-Lungu, 2003; USAID, 2005); public awareness of population in gender issues (CPD, 2006); political participation (Bulai, 2007); women and men on the labour market (BNS, 2008); gender and mass-media (Handrabura, 2007; Saharneau, 2007); gender and the pension system (Baskakova, 2007); gender and local budgets (Baurciulu, 2009), etc. Although, the above mentioned research studies did not cover the situation in the education system, they played an important role in developing a gender paradigm in the Moldovan society. It should be mentioned that, very often, gender studies are implemented by NGOs. Neither the university laboratories, nor the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova are sufficiently involved in gender studies.

The institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in the educational space started in 2006, with the *National Plan on Promoting Equality between Men and Women in Society in 2006-2009* (Government, 2006). The 2006 *National Plan* provisioned for the elaboration of programmes and courses on gender equality, for all levels of education, for the development and publication of teaching materials on gender issues, etc. However, due to lack of adequate funding and sustained action by the Ministry of Education, many of the proposals remained only on paper.

Over the past ten years, several research theses were defended in the country<sup>2</sup>.

The author would like to draw attention to the insufficient number of scientific thesis on the topic at hand. Amongst reasons leading to this situation, the following could be identified: a weak methodological basis for gender studies and the lack of resources (*e.g.*, higher education institutions faculty have high workloads, and this kind of research requires special knowledge, time, and finances). However, the academic community maintains a loyal attitude towards the topic, despite some scepticism. An important argument here, as already noted, might be the necessity to accede to the European Union.

In that context, an increasing interest in gender issues should also be noted (the new, fashionable, not developed subject) and the emergence of 'mature' specialists, which can lead to distortions, discrediting the ideas as such.

Amongst the specialists, there are still ongoing debates about the methodological basis of gender research and the ambiguity of the term, gender, and of its derivatives. The Romanian language makes use of two terms, *gender* and *gen*, where the second term is a sort of attempt to avoid the use of the foreign word. At the moment, the methodology of gender mainstreaming is developed enough, which causes some scepticism and constraints.

In Moldova, as in many other post-soviet era countries (*e.g.*, Russia), there is a negative attitude relative to the term, feminism, yet not to feminist ideas, especially if they are not marked this way.

Gender experts' activities helped to develop the gender statistical data base in all socio-economic spheres, including education. This work resulted in a series entitled *Men and Women in the Republic of Moldova* (1999, 2005, 2006, and 2008), published by the National Bureau of Statistics. The publication of the 1999 volume was supported by NGOs; the others were supported by international organizations (UNIFEM, UNDP).

In 2009, the *Harmonized set of development indicators in a gender sensitive manner in the context of the Millennium Development Goals*, including education system, was published. For the first time, the inclusion of qualitative indicators (*e.g.*, number of gender courses) was proposed, thus to contribute to a more realistic evaluation of gender mainstreaming in education. However, in practice, there are considerable difficulties in their collection and use in developing strategic documents.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, in 2009, V. Bodrug-Lungu defended, in public, her Doctoral Degree thesis on *The Theory and Methodology of Gender Education*, the first thesis devoted to gender pedagogy and to the elaboration of practical aspects of gender mainstreaming in education; at present, M. Nicolaescu is working on her thesis for the Doctor's Degree on *Socio-Economic Issues of Gender and the Role of Management in Their Solution*.

Active attempts to incorporate a gender perspective in teachers' education today are being taken by the representatives of non-governmental sector and professionals of higher education (as a rule, within various social programmes). They are doing that with a view to educating teacher trainers, so that the latter, in turn, could promote a gender perspective, gender methodology amongst the students, *i.e.*, the future professionals.

In this context, it should be noted that the gender discourse is more actively promoted at the level of higher education. Over the recent years, the gender issue has started developing in certain scientific disciplines: Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, Pedagogy and Psychology. To date, the gender subjects in the higher education system in Moldova are explored in several directions. The first, more active, direction is students' writing theses covering different components of gender issues, including at the Master's level. In recent years, the greatest interest in gender subjects was shown by students in Psychology, Pedagogy, Sociology, Journalism, Political Science, etc. Courses as well as theses for various degrees cover a wide range of topics: human rights and women; discrimination; gender and politics; gender roles and conflicts; political participation of women; gender socialization; gender-based violence; women on the labour market, etc. The second direction: elaboration, adjustment, and completion of gender courses: for example: Gender and Education (Moldova State University), Gender Responsive Budgeting (Academy of Economics Studies). The third direction is the inclusion of gender aspects in some study fields: Anthropology, Political Sciences, Psychology, and Social Assistance.

During the last years, some books and articles covering gender education in higher education have been published. (Handrabura, and Bodrug-Lungu, 2010; Bodrug-Lungu, 2007; 2009; Jardan, 2006; Rusnac, 2005, etc.)

At the same time, it should be noted that, usually, the decision on teaching courses on gender disciplines is the initiative of researchers and teachers. Some teachers teach what they deem important and on the basis of their own knowledge on gender issues. Teaching is still fragmentary, in various specializations. There are no common standards / approaches to gender education. We should also identify confusion related to gender terminology, and gender mainstreaming methodology.

All these aspects, of course, affect the quality of the gender discourse at the level of the education system, since yesterday's students, future teachers, replicate their university-imparted knowledge in their practice.

As noted earlier, the educational system is focused on a deeper consolidation of the discourse on family revival. There is a certain symbiosis between the discourse on gender and family, in the education system. Consequently, the discourse on gender is mainly represented at the official government level, while, at the level of educational institutions, the approach is still a sex-role one.

An important element is the extremely small number of experts on gender issues in education, who should possess knowledge and skills to train students and teachers on the basics of gender literacy, sensitivity, and gender competence. At the same time, teaching gender courses within the training programmes for teachers and managers of education institutions represents an effective method of developing their gender awareness.

#### GENDER IN STUDIES: GENDERING HIGHER EDUCATION – INTEGRATIONIST APPROACH. MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY AT CHIȘINĂU.

##### *Gender-Sensitive Fields*

Moldova State University (MSU) includes 13 faculties: Economics, Sociology and Social Assistance, International Relations, Political Sciences and Public Administration, Psychology and Educational Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Letters, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Journalism and Communication, History and Philosophy, Physics, Law, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, and Biology and Pedagogy.

Moldova State University is a leader in promoting gender studies. The first "Gender and Education" study programme started in 2001 (supported by the SOROS Foundation). Over the recent years, the gender issue has permeated certain scientific disciplines: Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, Pedagogy and Psychology. To date, the gender subjects in Moldova State University are explored in several directions. The first, more active direction is students' writing theses covering different facets of the gender issue, Master's level included. In recent years, the greatest interest toward gender subjects was shown by students in Psychology, Pedagogy, Sociology, Journalism, Political Science, Anthropology, etc. The courses as well as theses for other degrees cover a wide range of topics: gender and psychology, gender and politics; gender roles and conflicts; political participation of women; gender socialization; gender based violence; gender education, women on the labour market, etc. The second direction: design, amendment, and teaching of gender courses: e.g., *Gender and Education* (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences), *Feminists' Approaches* (Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance). The third direction is the insertion of gender aspects in some disciplines: Anthropology, Political Sciences, Psychology, and Social Assistance. Between 2000 and 2007, the gender / women dimension was present in some other disciplines, such as History (*The Woman in History, Wives of Famous Dictators*), Pedagogy (*Gender and Education*), Sociology (*Gender Policy*) etc.

At the same time, it should be noted that the decision on teaching courses on gender disciplines is, usually, the initiative of researchers and teachers. Some



teachers have been taught that they consider important, and on the basis of knowledge about gender issues, available to them. Gender teaching is still done sporadically, in various specializations. There are no common standards/approaches to gender education.

The analysis of the University curricula aimed to identify the gender dimension present in the taught fields of studies. In the 2010-2011 academic year, the situation is as follows:

- The majority of the subjects analyzed are not gender-mainstreamed: History, Law, Philosophy, Economy, Journalism and Communication, Mathematics and Computer Sciences and other exact disciplines.
- Some study fields are focused on gender issues: Pedagogy and Literature (course on *Gender and Education*, 4 credits); Sociology (course on *Feminists' Approaches*, 4 credits).
- Some disciplines include gender elements: Social Assistance (course on the *Social Assistance of the Socially Marginalized*; course on the *Social Assistance of Domestic Violence Victims*, 6 credits).

At the Master's Degree level, the following courses are offered:

- Psychology (*Domestic Violence*, 4 credits)
- Anthropology (*Anthropology of Family, Age, and Gender Groups*, 4 credits).

### *Institutional Support to Gendering Higher Education Curricula*

According to the legal framework, the state should politically support the induction of gender in education. As mentioned above, the state provided this support through the adoption of strategic documents in the field, as the *National Program on Ensuring Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova for 2010-2015* (Guvernul, 2009). Moldova State University is a leader in the country in promoting gender studies and gender-fair policies. Meanwhile, in the context of institutional autonomy, the universities have the right to decide independently on the courses taught. In this regard, MSU administration does not create any barriers to inclusion of gender dimension in the curriculum. In general, courses are drawn up and promoted at the teachers' initiative. The curriculum is discussed and approved by decision of the Specialized Department.

In point of barriers, the author would mention the absence of a methodological basis on gender issues, as related to different disciplines, as well as the scarce literature in the field. Every teacher is responsible for the didactical basis of courses. At the moment, courses on gender issues lack the financial support, and so do the

publication of the teaching materials and participation in the conferences/trainings.

A specialized library on gender studies, with almost 300 books was set up, by the representatives of NGO Gender-Centre, at Moldova State University. The library offers specialized literature, from various fields, particularly with reference to gender dimension in Political Science, Philosophy, Psychology, and Education. Bibliographical sources are of Anglo-Saxon and Russian origin. A mini-library with Romanian works on Gender Studies exists, being very useful in a geographical and cultural context. Most books are purchased with donated funds. Some books have been purchased by teachers. All those interested (students, teachers) have access to the library.

### *Human Resources*

- Course on *Gender and Education* (4 credits) / Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences: author – Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, PhD, Associate Professor, gender expert
- Course on *Gender and Education* (4 credits) / Faculty of Literature: author – Dorina Bostan, MA, University Professor
- Course on *Anthropology of Family, Age, and Gender Groups* (4 credits)/ Faculty of History and Philosophy: author – Svetlana Coandă, PhD, Professor
- Course on *Feminists' Approaches* (4 credits) / Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance: Anastasia Oceretnii, University Professor

Such courses are taught by academic staff trained in gender issues. Self-instruction remains the main method of continuous professional training. Several organizational barriers in the process of gender mainstreaming higher education curricula have been identified: the need for training opportunities for academics; scarce financial resources; unsatisfactory teamwork between different experts / institutions, therefore not enough opportunities to exchange gender knowledge and gender education experience, etc. Gender knowledge/feminism are 'imported' in Moldova, from different regions depending on several factors: donor/training programmes, contributed literature, foreign languages spoken by the teacher, etc.

Unfortunately, cooperation with specialized institutions in Romania it is not pursued. In the cultural-linguistic and geographic context, cooperation, student and faculty exchanges between Moldova State University and the National School of Political and Administrative Studies, in Bucharest would be highly recommended.

*Bachelor's Degree Programme (license level): Gender and Education Course at the Moldova State University, Chişinău:*

Participants

Undergraduate students pursuing a Bachelor's Degree, first study year in Psychology and Pedagogy, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (4 credits)

Institutional support

Moldova State University is a leader in promoting gender studies and gender-fair policies. The study course was designed and promoted at this author's initiative. The curriculum was discussed and approved by decision of the Specialized Department of the MSU.

In 2001, the course curriculum was developed and implemented with financial support of SOROS Foundation. A special *Guide on Gender and Education* was elaborated and published. The course is included in the teaching schedule.

At the moment, the programme does not have any financial support for the publication of teaching materials and participation in conferences / training courses, etc. It is based on the author's personal decision that the programme is being implemented.

A specialized library on Gender Studies, with almost 500 volumes, found within the Gender-Center, at MSU, is also available for the students.

Subjects in the Gender Education Curriculum (content)

Introduction in gender theory / feminist theory / feminist pedagogy; Gender mainstreaming: gender dimension in political field, health, social policy; Gender and Psychology, Social construction of gender; Gender Socialization; Gender stereotypes; Gender dimension of the family life; Gender based violence; Gender and Education system ("hidden" curriculum, gender analysis, gender methodology / indicators etc.).

Results of the Pedagogical Experiment

The Gender Education course contributed to understanding and identifying the mechanisms of creation and reproduction of gender stereotypes; to developing the skills needed to detect and reduce their impact on personal and public development of students, to increase students' self-esteem / psycho-social comfort.

The author elaborated the Paradigm of gender education as an ensemble of some of the interconnected models: Pedagogical model of gender education in the formal – non-formal – informal plan, Interdisciplinary model of gender education in a context of modern directions of education, the Deontological code of the teacher, Technological model of gender education.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the contemporary gender politics in Moldova's system of education, the author would like to advance a series of conclusions.

At the official level, the gender discourse is prevailing, as confirmed by a number of government documents. Thus, the idea of promoting gender equality is recognized as an important component of the public policy. However, more often than not, gender is used as a term in fashion; while the content we are talking about in sex-role approach, 'dilutes' the ideas of young people's social integration during the harsh transformation.

Despite some progress in implementing the gender dimension in the educational system, there are many problems in this area. This way, often the promotion of gender equality at the education system's level is reduced to ensuring equal access to education for boys and girls. However, the quality of education is in direct correlation with the gender dimension in education: access to education content, forms, methods of teaching, characteristics of the teaching staff, physical and informational space of educational institutions, etc.

In Moldova, the introduction of the gender discourse in the education system occurred in parallel with its active introduction into the political discourse. At present, we can see the emergence and development of specific gender studies as new socio-human sciences; some universities offer a few courses on gender issues. However, public structures were not the main engines of gender ideas in the education system, but individuals, or a group of enthusiasts. In Moldova, like in other former Soviet countries, almost all initiatives to implement gender programmes place a 'bottom' line: non-governmental organizations, or in the case of teaching gender courses in universities – teachers.

Gradually, the gender dimension is included in the pedagogical discourse. In didactic and educational practices in Moldova, a paradoxical situation is created; on the one hand, gender education is implemented through various measures, but on the other hand, the question about theory and methodology is not explored enough. Gender pedagogy is at the stage of formation within the frame of pedagogical sciences.

Despite some progress in developing gender mainstreaming in the country, the methodology of gender research is in its incipient stage. Moldovan gender studies

continue to adapt foreign concepts to the national scientific traditions. In most studies and, consequently, in the content of education at various levels, the prevalence of biological determinism is noticed.

The lack of scientific debates should be noted within the framework of the national gender discourse. This situation is caused by the low number of methodological theses; by low number of gender specialists, respectively, by difficulties of a professional and personal nature.

The gender scientific community is still passing through its formative period as an independent power, being closely connected to NGOs activities. National experts are not sufficiently involved in international projects and networks.

At this stage, national gender studies can be catalogued as being in the process of transition from the level of 'social activism,' to a higher level, conceptual; they are shaped as a 'scientific field.'

The educational system is under the strong influence of the public opinion. In the media, amongst cultural and intellectual elites, an ambivalent attitude to gender issues is noticeable. On the one hand, there is a formal recognition of gender equality necessity in the context of the human rights; on the other hand, references are being made to the need to return the woman to her family and, accordingly, to strengthen the family as unit of society and traditions.

The declarative nature of some documents, the lack of targeted long-term policy on gender education (development of curricula, training teachers, and teaching materials), the lack of gender budget lines, etc. seriously affect the content and the consistency of the gender discourses in the official educational policy of the Republic of Moldova.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Legislative and Regulatory Framework*

- Adjustment of documents related to education according to the provisions of the *Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*
- Implementation of policy measures within the National Program on Ensuring Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova for 2010-2015. (Guvernul, 2009)
- Institutionalization of gender education at the system level.
- Elaboration and implementation of policies related to teaching staff, which will insist on gender balance in educational management, on preparation of professors and teachers on gender emancipation strategies, aiming at the same time to reach a gender balance within the didactic corps.

- Implementation of curricula policies which will focus on changing education programs by introducing elements that relate to gender education partnership, and the modification of cultural patterns that reflect gender stereotypes in textbooks and didactic materials at all levels of education.
- Promotion of concrete actions and measures within educational strategies and information activities, advising/counselling and career guidance, aimed to reduce differences, polarization in the case of certain professional fields, revealed, depending on gender grounds, both at secondary school and high education level, as well as elimination of gender stereotypes – of teachers, pupils and parents – in the field of vocational guidance.
- Inclusion of gender-sensitive budgeting in the Medium term expenditure framework / Education field.
- The gender mainstreamed knowledge should be included in higher education curricula for several reasons:
  - The presence of gender stereotypes in the education system contributes to the reproduction of traditional patterns of behaviour and relationship. Re-evaluation and adjusting processes of gender socialization to the realities of the life, modern trends of development, can be more effectively achieved through the implementation of gender mainstreaming in education/by means of gender education.
  - Students' gender education will encourage the development of gender-sensitive professionals with basic skills, as part of their professional competence.
  - The accession of Moldova to international standards in this area includes gender sensitization of the population, the formation of a gender culture; there is a need to adapt the quality of national education to European standards, etc.
- The express inclusion of gender sensitive competences of specialists in the Qualifications framework (for higher education qualifications), which would contribute to the institutionalization of gender dimension in university curricula and, respectively, the training of gender sensitive teachers.

### *Human Resources*

- Inclusion in the initial and continuous training programs for didactic personnel of training modules, focusing on theoretical and practical aspects of Gender education (courses, methodological committees, exchange of

experience, demo classes, etc.), which would allow for an inclusive improvement of the informational, counselling, and career guidance activities. This improvement – involving the elimination of gender prejudices, ‘professional stereotypes’ present at some of the teachers, and achieving an orientation which would take into account students skills and abilities, regardless of gender – may have a number of positive consequences perceptible in the balanced distribution, by gender, of the participants in the process of education, provided by various subsidiaries and branches of education, slowing down the process of ‘feminization/masculinization’ of some certain professions, etc.

- Organization of training sessions for curriculum concepts, the authors of textbooks and their evaluators focusing on practical aspects of realization of gender in education.
- Development of a specialised Gender Studies Programme at the Master’s Degree level. Establishing cooperation between Moldova State University and the National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, in the field.
- Adjusting academic programmes / curricula, organizational structures and cultures, so as they become more permeable to gender sensitive knowledge. Set up of a core group of gender sensitive specialists, from different study fields, in order to engendering specialized curriculum. To create the national network of gender sensitive specialists / teachers and to connect it to the international community in this field.
- To create a special fund for gender studies and education programmes (with international support), in order to organize relevant gender sensitive research in different fields, study visits on gender issues, gender trainings for teachers at all education levels, publishing of didactic materials, etc.

### *Teaching-Informational Resources*

- Achieving the gender expertise of curricula, textbooks, courses, training materials in undergraduate education, vocational, secondary, and higher education.
- Introduction, in the assessment scales of academic books, of the gender perspective (presence / absence of gender stereotypes and discrimination, finding modalities to substantiate the educational perspective gender, balanced representation of gender in the selected pictures and texts, selected variety of learning tasks in terms of gender, etc.).

- Development of programmes/modules for optional subjects, on various aspects of the gender dimension, responsive to student interest at various stages of development (for example: health education, sex education, family education, civic education, gender partnership, models of successful female and male, etc.).
- Development of supplementary materials (guidelines, methods, translations, summaries, best practice guidebooks, etc.) related to the gender perspective throughout all subjects, not only through specific contents, and especially through methodological approaches and use of life experience of girls and boys, identification and elimination of gender stereotypes and discrimination, etc.
- Creation of a virtual thematic platform dedicated to dialogue, sharing good practices and information. Designing a web-site on gender education issues in Romanian language, in order to disseminate relevant qualitative information

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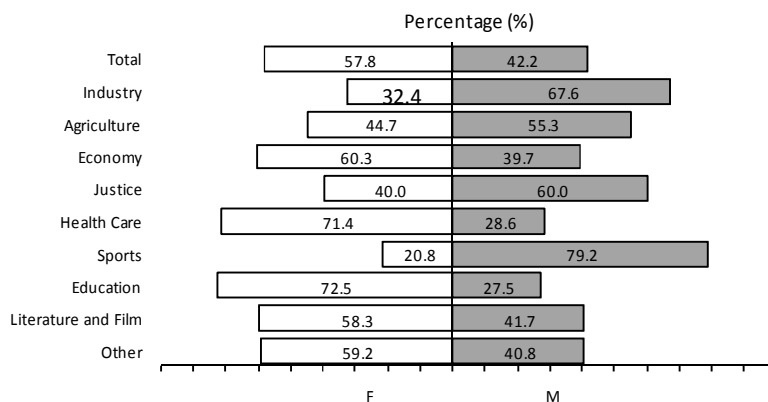


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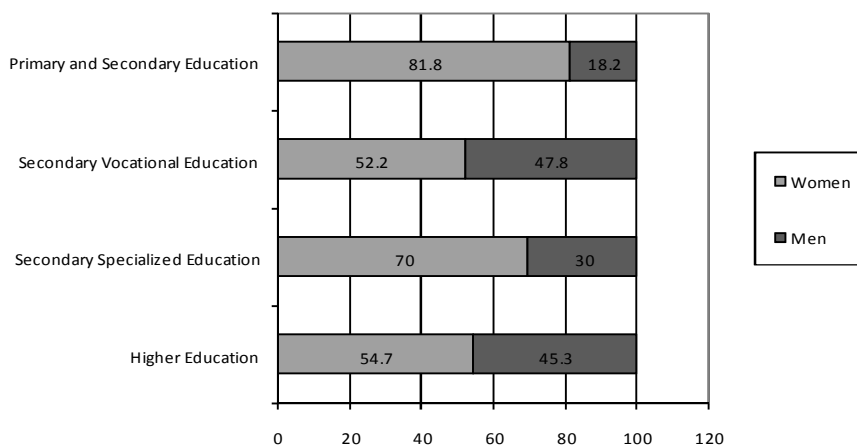
## ANNEX

Figure 1. Percentage of students in higher education institutions, by industry branches and gender (2008 -2009 academic year)



Source: BNS, 2011.

Figure 2. Ratio of female teachers to the total teaching staff (2008-2009 academic year)



Source: BNS, 2011.

Table 1. Number of students (by type of institution)

Education	(Thousands)			
	2007-2008		2008-2009	
	F	M	F	M
Primary and secondary education	230.5	230.5	216.7	217.6
Secondary vocational education	8.4	16.1	8.2	16.1
Secondary specialized education (college)	17.6	13.7	18.3	14.4
Higher education institutions	72.4	50.5	66.4	48.5

Source: BNS, 2011.

Table 2. Number of women elected in parliamentary elections

Position	Total	1998		2001		2005		2009	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Member of Parliament	101	9	92	16	85	21	80	26	75
	in percent	8.7	91.3	15.8	85.2	20.8	79.2	25.7	74.3

Source: BNS, 2011.

Table 3. Number of women elected in local elections

Position	1999		06.08.2003		14.10.2005		14.04.2008	
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
District chair	38	-	32	1	32	1	32	1
Town/ village mayor	851		898		898		898	
	in percent	10.9		15.3		14.8		17.5

Source: BNS, 2011.

## Teaching Gender at the Central European University. Advantages of Internationalism

Andrea PETŐ and Dóra DEZSŐ

### Abstract

*The paper explores gender teaching at the Central European University (CEU), particularly investigating, through this case, the ways in which gender-related topics can be incorporated into higher education curricula. These authors consulted institutional documents and databases, to look into the CEU “gender regime” (Connell, 1987), and they also conducted semi-structured interviews with University faculty and students, to reflect perceptions on the gender dimension in higher education teaching and research. The authors have found that CEU’s unique international character provides ample space to teaching gender both by way of the autonomous Gender Studies Department and via integrating gender into other fields of study. Institutional strategic commitment has been identified in gender mainstreaming higher education curricula, as the key to further development, which might materialize in gender-conscious hiring processes, and in providing ‘gender expert consulting,’ for example. It is only by institutional commitment – which is to replace the present practice, based on individual faculty’s professional commitment, guaranteed by ‘academic freedom’ – that systematic progress in gendering higher education curricula can be attained.*

### INTRODUCTION

The present paper has been commissioned by UNESCO’s European Centre for Higher Education and has been developed within the project *From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies: Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education: Problems, Politics, Possibilities*.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than presenting a country’s profile, these authors opted for the case study of the Central European University (CEU). While, actually, it is a highly atypical Hungarian university, in many ways it is a unique international institution: chartered in the United States of America, located in Budapest, Hungary, it is a leading academic institution in Eastern Europe, advancing a multitude of social issues, gender equality included, in the spirit of open

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<sup>1</sup> See, a full description of the project at <<http://www.cepes.ro/themes/gender/default.htm>>

societies. Against this background, the authors have inquired into the processes in place to incorporate gender into specific disciplines.

The materials presented here are based on two sources of information. First, we consulted various documents and databases with regard to CEU, as an organization and its Gender Studies Department, to get an updated picture of the institution and its gender-related components. Second, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the University faculty and students. In conducting the interviews, we followed the project's core interview guidelines and, in the period between 4 October and 12 November 2010, eighteen individual interviews were organized (s. Annex 1, for details). The interviews reflect perceptions on the gender dimension within higher education and academic research, as well as the University as an organization. Information gained from these interviews constitutes the bulk of the authors' research findings.

On the one hand, these authors requested statistical data on gender representation, enrolment figures, gender-related courses taught in various departments, etc. In addition, the authors searched the University theses collection, and examined readily available syllabi of the different departments and policy documents. On the other hand, when approaching interview partners, the authors proceeded as follows: four members of the top management were interviewed, namely, the Provost/Academic Pro-Rector, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chair of the Senate's Equal Opportunities Committee, and the Academic Secretary/Research Director. The authors met with heads and faculty of various departments, and with students, at both MA and PhD levels. Specific attention was paid to listening to the heads of departments the disciplines of which might be considered as falling out of the gender scope, as well as to current and former male and female students of the Gender Studies Department, and other students, who took courses offered by the Gender Studies Department, while affiliated to another University department.

The fact that a handful of individuals declined, or failed to respond, to the invitation for an interview reflects on the topic's lasting contentious nature, and the indifference surrounding it. Some respondents claimed not to possess expertise in gender studies, or to have limited knowledge on the subject matter focusing on their own disciplines only. Therefore, this suggests that gender as a topic for discussion has not yet developed into a general theme, on which everyone would feel at ease discussing. The current state of affairs projects the CEU's institutional culture in transition. As a result, it bears transitional values of three different points of reference: Hungary, the United States of America, and last, but not least, the normative standards of the European Union. It is evident that the University does make progress, but with difficulty, in this transition.

Nonetheless, its specific international feature appears to provide ample space to teaching gender.

Leaving aside the negative responses, most of our interviewees requested anonymity, which underlines the presence of politics in the debate and the sensitive nature of the question, *i.e.*, the gender studies position not only at the University, but also in the wider academic community. Some stressed that the inherent arguments are not only present vis-à-vis gender studies as a discipline, but also in relation to some other disciplines, when looking from their own fields of study, thus pointing out to a more complex context and the issue of ever-changing disciplinary boundaries. Abiding by our interviewees' wishes, we decided to leave out all the interviewees' names. Three types of data are indicated on the List of Interviews (*see*, Annex 1), namely: interview date; interviewee' position (management, faculty, or student) and sex. Almost all references to courses and departments by which individuals might easily be identified were removed, except for those explicitly agreed on. With reference to grammatical use, the authors have chosen to use 'he' throughout the text (except for quotes), as a political stance, signalling that the gender question, and gender studies, in this particular context, are not solely women's issues.

Although the interviews focused on the Central European University, many respondents commented on other national institutions too, mainly students, who compared their previous higher education institutions to the University. Therefore, sometimes a wider scope is examined, not only that of the University.

It is not the purpose of the present paper to provide an overall, systematic analysis of available documents and relevant data, and/or to reach a final conclusion on the roles and places of the gender dimension within the curricula of the Central European University, in particular, and of higher education in general. Rather, the authors wish to keep this aspect on the academic agenda and present arguments and thoughts, for further debate, on the ways in which gender questions can be included in academic work, both in regular teaching, and in research initiatives.

With respect to definitions, we need to note, at this point, that the fogginess and debated nature of the phrases used, *i.e.*, 'gender mainstreaming in curriculum development,' 'gender-sensitive research,' and 'gender-sensitivity knowledge,' have pose specific challenges in the project implementation, since many project partners would expect clear definitions of the concepts used for the purposes of the given project and context. Within the present text, the authors understand 'incorporation of gender' as 'gender mainstreaming,' therefore, they use them interchangeably.

Following the project structure, Chapter I presents the gender dimension of the higher education institutions concerning Hungary and the Central European

University and draws on the concept of gender as a process. When discussing separatist approaches in Chapter II, the authors briefly describe the condition of gender studies in Hungary and present the Gender Studies Department of the Central European University. When focussing on integration approaches in Chapter III, key definitions of ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘gender sensitive research’ are firstly expanded on; secondly, gender presence in the curriculum is discussed; thirdly and fourthly, the authors identify the kinds of support and types of obstacles exist for gender studies, respectively. Finally, gender sensitive research and interdisciplinarity are examined. Conclusions and recommendations shortly present the debate on gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration. The authors describe possible ways and techniques of gendering higher education teaching and research, as well as the benefits of gender mainstreaming. Finally, the authors reflect on political correctness and additional project impact.

## THE GENDER DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This chapter presents a brief general overview of higher education in Hungary, by looking at the state and its higher education institutions. Next, in terms of private actors, there follows a detailed introduction of the Central European University. Finally, the authors draw on the concept of gender as a process in institutions.

### *Gender Equality and Higher Education in Hungary*

Besides the constitutional guarantee of equality between men and women, discrimination is prohibited in various legal acts.<sup>2</sup> Eurydice (2010) placed Hungary in the category of “general equal treatment and equal opportunities,” when examining legislative frameworks for gender equality in education. There also

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<sup>2</sup> Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, specifies “education and training” as one field in which discrimination is prohibited. However, there is no separate act on equal treatment of men and women. With regard to legislation pertaining to education, sector laws, Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education (See, <[http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/letolt/english/act\\_lxxxix\\_1993\\_091103.pdf](http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/letolt/english/act_lxxxix_1993_091103.pdf)>), and Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education (See, <[http://www.okm.gov.hu/letolt/nemzet/naric/act\\_cxxxix\\_2005.pdf](http://www.okm.gov.hu/letolt/nemzet/naric/act_cxxxix_2005.pdf)>), fail to explicitly mention gender equality. Still, the latter emphasizes the representation of women in decision-making bodies of higher education institutions and the principle of balanced representation in higher education policies, in general.



exists the *National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality – Guidelines and Objectives – 2010-2021* and its implementation plan for 2010-2011.<sup>3</sup>

When discussing the general Hungarian legislation, note needs to be taken of the country's recent accession to the European Union, of the great impact of the accession, and of the European Union's normative power, with which Hungary needs to comply. The country implements European Union policies. For example, the *Equal Treatment* act satisfies two major European Union anti-discrimination directives,<sup>4</sup> while the gender equality strategy follows the thematic frame of European Union's *Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010*.

As a general statement, we can claim that Hungarian women's education level is higher than that of men. Overall, this applies to higher education as well: in the past decade, women represented 53-54 percent of the student body (HCSO, 2009). However, in the higher education system, gender segregation persists both horizontally and vertically.

Despite the noticeable backlash against substantial gender equality in the post-socialist times,<sup>5</sup> reflected in traditional gender representation and "re-feminization" of women in the education and work-related fields, too (Thun, 2001), there are constantly changing trends concerning fields of study, which do not direct unanimously toward a 'return to traditional gender stereotypes' (HCSO, 2009). While in tertiary education women dominate (with representations of ca. 60 percent or more) in study fields such as Teacher Training, Health and Social Care, Economics, Business, Humanities, and Social Sciences, men are

<sup>3</sup> *Nők és Férfiak Társadalmi Egyenlőségét Elősegítő Nemzeti Stratégia - Irányok és célok - 2010-2021*; the full strategy document is available at <<http://www.szmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=21368>>. As the previous government adopted the strategy and its first implementation plan, in its last year in power, how the strategy will be implemented depends on the new government that entered the office in May 2010. Acknowledging gender inequalities, among its objectives, the strategy paragraph, 3.3. *Promoting Equal Participation of Women and Men in the Field of Sciences*, aims at the elimination of women's disadvantages in the educational and research institutes. More specifically, paragraph 1.2. *Eliminating the Gender Pay Gap and the Gender Employment Gap* advocates for promoting a more gender-equitable filling of the positions, in the educational and vocational training system. Paragraph 6.1., *Developing gender expertise and training experts, dissemination of gender-based knowledge in public administration*, of the strategy plan explicitly calls for the inclusion of the gender dimension into the curricula, albeit only in a specific field of study: "Gender mainstreaming should be part of legal and public administration higher education curricula and should be integrated in the requirements of the basic examinations of civil servants".

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

<sup>5</sup> The socialist regime of the country aimed at achieving 'full employment' of all citizens. Women were recruited to almost all professions. Women also entered tertiary education in high numbers; between 1960 and 1990, their number tripled, and their ratio increased, from 29% to 48%, during the period. Certain fields, such as education and medicine, became feminized in that time.

overrepresented in Engineering, Informatics, Law Enforcement, and the Military. Since the 1990s, gender representation became balanced in the disciplines of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, previously both male dominated. Moreover, since 1990, women took over Law and Services, too (Kasza, 2007). Therefore, except for very few fields, women are equally present, or overrepresented, in all higher education specialities. Nonetheless, certain major specializations are clearly segregated, in effect, and, on a discursive level, stereotyping is also very much frequent.

With regard to the gender balance of the persons holding higher and/or teaching positions in higher education institutions, there is a slow, but steady increase of women. From 1980 to 2008, the percentages of women among faculty rose from 31 percent to 39 percent. Still, they are underrepresented in top positions, by only 5.7 percent ratio. Moreover, of the 70 rectors of Hungarian accredited universities and colleges, only 7 are women. In point of academic ranking, women represent 20 percent in top academic positions (professors) and 50 percent in the lower ones (assistant professor). (HCSO, 2009)

### *Central European University – Gender and Organization Aspects*

Since its foundation, the Central European University has been committed to promoting the values of the Open Society, and has extended its mission and geographical focus from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia to a global view, with special attention to emerging democracies worldwide. Originally chartered in 1991, as a U.S. higher education institution, all its degree programmes have been accredited in the U.S. In 2005, the University (as *Közép-európai Egyetem*) gained Hungarian accreditation and immediately started some PhD programmes. Starting the 2007-2008 academic year, MA programmes were also accredited, and their number has been increasing ever since. Furthermore, the University awards joint degrees with other leading European universities. The University is singular in the region, as it is a private higher education institution, hence it does not depend on any state funding. As a result, while it has to observe the relevant Hungarian legislation to a certain extent, it enjoys much freedom, as compared to state-funded universities, for instance, with regard to its internal governance structure. Moreover, it is a small institution with 14 departments, focussing on Social Sciences and Humanities, and offering only graduate level courses.

With reference to student enrolment in the past five years, the overall gender representation is well balanced within the university: the number of female students is a bit more than half (52-55 percent) of the whole student body. When looking at disciplines and departments, one by one, some imbalances could be

noticed, the significant ones being in the Gender Studies Department, the Department of Mathematics, and Applications. While in the Gender Studies Department, women represent 85-90 percent of the student body, there is a reverse ratio in the Mathematics Department, with men representing 90 percent of the student body. The departments of Sociology, Environmental Sciences, Public Policy, Nationalism Studies, and Medieval Studies attract more women (over 60 percent); the department of Philosophy and the Business School attract more men (above 60 percent). Finally, gender representation tends to be well balanced and stable over the past five years in the departments of History, Legal Studies, Political Science, and International Relations, grouping joined by Economics (male-dominated just five years ago) in the past three years.<sup>6</sup>

When considering the faculty, the overall picture suggests that the University cannot reach the Hungarian average numbers in its overall gender distribution. With 31 percent of resident faculty<sup>7</sup> being women (*NB*: the ratio reflects the Hungarian average in 1980), the situation is most balanced at the level of Assistant Professors: 43 percent women and 57 percent men. In higher positions, those of Professors and University Professors, women representation is 20 percent and 14 percent, respectively (*NB*: these ratios are consistent with the current Hungarian average ones). This renders visible the glass ceiling effect in academic ranking. In 'research' positions, however, women are more present, both at junior and senior levels, with 75 percent and 67 percent ratios, respectively. When examining visiting faculty, we meet with the striking data of only 11 percent female faculty in this category. This instance shows how the glass ceiling might work in this academic context: by not being equally represented in this category, women do not have comparable access to networking opportunities, which, consequently, has a negative effect on their career advancement. Regarding the top management, the University fares well: the Provost/Academic Pro-Rector is a woman; 5 out of the 14 the department heads are women, as a result of recent changes. Unlike some other universities, the Central European University practices a rotation system for its department heads. However, given that the position is purely administrative, while filling the position, the professor cannot fully devote to research and teaching. Thus, we could interpret this change also as 'women moved to administrative duties.'

Whereas the proportion of women is on the rise in the University top management and decision-making bodies, such positive signs of development are not yet visible in other areas. The Senate adopted the *Equal Opportunity Policy* in

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<sup>6</sup> For more details, see, *Student Enrollment Statistics* at <<http://www.ceu.hu/studentlife/students>>

<sup>7</sup> 'Resident faculty' are under an employment contract (usually full-time), and their main academic affiliation is CEU, in most cases, while 'visiting faculty' are under an assignment contract, or consultancy agreement, and contracted for a limited number of credit-courses.

2008, which is to fight direct and indirect discrimination – gender included – on a wide range of grounds, a document which explicitly allows for positive action. Referring to the present project's objectives, the policy, *inter alia*, aims to “encourage faculty to acknowledge that preconceived notions about gender, class and ethnicity enter into the construction of knowledge and to take critical account of this in the process of curriculum planning” (CEU, 2008: 3). Nonetheless, implementation of the policy lags behind, as the outlined “comprehensive equality policy strategy” has not been developed, as originally planned by the Senate, by the 2009-2010 academic year. Additionally, the Senate maintains an Equal Opportunities Committee,<sup>8</sup> which is presently chaired by the Head of the Gender Studies Department. All the committee members, except for one, are women, a feature that perhaps reflects on the institution's standpoint that equal opportunities is purely a ‘woman's issue’, despite the fact that the policy is a comprehensive anti-discrimination one. Earlier policy measures, covering anti-discrimination issues, include CEU *Non-Discrimination Policy* (1997), CEU *Policy on Sexual Harassment* (1997), and CEU *Code of Ethics* (2003).

The University management is in the process of revising the major policies, such as the academic selection procedures, and, in its new compendium, a gender bias handout will be included for the benefit of, among others, selection committee members. By this move, the management acknowledges the fact that unconscious bias against women in academic hiring might exist, and thus it attempts to counteract the phenomenon. In addition, the management considers exchanging experience with Swedish institutions, for example, on leadership initiatives; such exchanges are regarded as very helpful.

From our interviews, it also became obvious that not only the management, but the faculty and students, too, promote the ideas of gender mainstreaming and raising gender consciousness in formal aspects of the University life, such as in organizational, administration, and management issues. Therefore, the University is committed to institutional feminism, focusing mainly on institutional barriers to women's equality that includes issues such as discrimination, workplace harassment, equal pay, and equal opportunity in employment and education.

In opposition to the perceived consensus on gender mainstreaming in formal organization-related aspects, we find that standpoints change immediately when it comes to central administration involvement in introducing the gender dimension into the curriculum, as one of the management body states with full conviction:

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<sup>8</sup> At an earlier time, the Senate set up various committees – e.g., the Committee on Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination, in 1997 – the names and mandates of which evolved in time.

"I absolutely see no reason to interfere with the autonomy of research and departments. [...] I do believe in research and intellectual autonomy. I wouldn't want to interfere with the actual academic topic and choice of faculty." (Interview 8)

And this strong belief is shared by many and a central top-down approach of introducing gender studies across all curricula is rejected by most faculty, and students alike, who claim that "it is difficult to parachute this project onto the people" and stress that the channels through which and the ways in which it is executed are key factors in achieving success should there be a management decision on the issue.

Finally, we need to emphasize that it was admitted that there is no systematic monitoring in respect to equal opportunities.

"There is kind of absence of initiative, which has to do with perhaps the fact that most people feel we are ok, and that also has to do with the fact that there is no institutional, clear, formal strategy and direction of what we should do." (Interview 9)

This is the reason why these authors feel that the present project is a contribution to keeping the gender questions on the University management agenda, providing space for reflections on the issue to a range of its affiliates. The authors consider this feature an additional project outcome, which is nicely echoed in the following statement given at the end of one of our interviews, "This [discussion] was a very useful reminder to me."

### *Institutional Strategies about Gender*

When discussing gender issues, we cannot separate formal organization and content-related sides. Interview partners were not able to treat the two separately within the Central European University structure and curricula, though most of the time they were aware of the different nature of the two. Moreover, some identified a clear link and interplay between these two aspects.

Connell's concepts related to gendered institutions and the institutionalization of gender clearly show relevance here. Connell (1987) argues that gender is not only present in the usually acknowledged interpersonal relations and at the level society as a whole, but also in-between, that is to say, at the level of institutional gendered practices, be it at the workplace or in the media. He defines "gender regime" as "the state of play in gender relations in a given institution" (p. 120). In a school, for example, the politics of gender can be manifested in the sexual division of labour among the staff members, debates on sexism in the curricula, staff promotion, or leadership questions. Additionally, Connell claims that while 'gender' is mostly understood as an individual property, he also understands 'gender' as a collective's, an institution's property, and it being a practice: "Gender in this conception is a process rather than a thing" (p. 140). He continues arguing that

"The 'process' here is strictly social, and gender a phenomenon within sociality. It has its own weight and solidity, on a quite different basis from that of biological process, and it is that weight and solidity that sociology attempts to capture in the concept of 'institution'." (p. 140)

The collection of an institution's customs, routines, and cyclical practices then determine its gender regime.

When analyzing gender regimes' structures, Connell (2002) looks at the following themes: labour (production), power, cathexis (emotion), and symbolism. The power aspect is particularly important in a compact formal organization, such as an educational establishment. With the use of such institutionalized power in the complex processes of gender, gender inequality is maintained. Inequality is present in gender-biased laws and regulations on the one hand, and on the other, it can be traced in gender studies being relegated to invisibility and set aside from the mainstream, if not pushed to the margins, of academic study.

With respect to the Central European University, as the specific institution in question, Connell's concept of the gender regime can be applicable in a variety of ways. It is certainly reflected when the University is examined as an organization, for example, gender segregation might be found, both horizontally and vertically, among staff and faculty members, or how certain internal rules and regulations impact differently on the employees and students along gender lines, *i.e.*, to what degree such key documents are written in a gender-blind or gender-biased way. Additionally, the University gender regime can be identified in the academic, educational programmes it offers, that is, along what norms and values the university commits itself to educate the younger generation; whether gender equality is one of them, and if yes, by which means it is to be achieved. How gender studies are handled at the University is revealed in the way a given educational unit, in the still male-dominated and -managed field of higher education, can work with a relatively new discipline, the ultimate aim of which is to transform education in order to enhance women's positions in society.

These practices and approaches all add to the maintenance of a specific, gendered institutional culture at the University, which, in turn, determines further directions in its as an organization, including its educational offerings, by means of which it can institutionalize gender.

*Gender Studies: Gendering Higher Education – Separatist Approaches*

This chapter is devoted to the Gender Studies Department of the Central European University, as it represents the autonomous unit development in gender studies. To contextualize the Gender Studies Department, we shall briefly describe the situation of gender studies in Hungary, aiming at highlighting the uniqueness of the Department in the entire country.

*Gender Studies in Hungary*

Subsequent to the political changes of 1989, gender studies attracted more and more academics, in part with the aid of Western academics teaching in Hungary at the time. Gender studies evolved, not in a systematic manner, rather in an ad-hoc way, around certain lead academics, in various academic locations. There is a loose network of individuals, whom Pető (2006) calls “pioneers off the beaten track” (p. 8), interested in the subject and trying to bring gender issues in their own current courses, or designing new ones. This way, these academics raise their students’ awareness, as well as that of their colleagues in certain disciplines and research areas, despite the habitual present institutional and professional resistance. Accordingly, Hungary falls into the category of gender studies inclusion into higher education, whereby particular gender studies modules appear within the framework of traditional disciplines.<sup>9</sup> As, at the institutional level, there seems to be no demand for their presence, gender studies remain very much ad-hoc, dependent on the individual faculty members. As Fodor, and Varsa (2009) conclude,

“... gender studies as a discipline, although gradually and willy-nilly acknowledged by university administrators and educational policy makers, lacks full legitimacy as a veritable scientific endeavour.” (p. 303)

When applying with educational programmes to the national accreditation committee, consortiums are set up. Such was the case with the gender studies, too. Alongside the CEU, the Social Sciences Faculty (ELTE TATK) of Eötvös Loránd University’s and Corvinus University of Budapest participated in the gender consortium. However, from among the gender consortium members, only the CEU managed to start an independent gender programme accredited by the Hungarian

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<sup>9</sup> Griffin differentiates four categories in the respect of gender studies’ position in higher education infrastructure, where: 1) gender studies is almost non-existent, 2) there are certain modules in traditional disciplines, 3) there are independent gender studies departments and degrees and 4) gender studies are mainstreamed and traditional disciplines are reformed in accordance with gender studies expectations (See, reference in Pető, 2006: 8)

Accreditation Committee.<sup>10</sup> Most gender programmes in Hungary are (and were) only fractional ones, *i.e.*, specializations, tracks of other disciplines.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, one can claim that gender studies are not considered to be an established discipline in the country. What is more, we feel this statement can be easily extended to the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe, as a Western student expresses on the distinctiveness of the CEU Gender Studies Department,

“It [Gender Studies Department] is one of the oldest, independent standing gender studies departments, as I understand, in Eastern Europe. And it is not part of another faculty, and it is actually sort of free existence, which is I think is very interesting in this context.” (Interview 11)

### *The Gender Studies Department of the Central European University*

The evolution of gender studies in Europe is faced with two dilemmas: one refers to the name of the discipline; the other one, to the agenda and content of this field of study. The second dilemma refers to a political question: whether gender studies should be autonomous, or gender studies should be integrating into other disciplines (Waalwijk, and Just, 2010). CEU has chosen the term Gender Studies for its programme and opted for the autonomous unit, in terms of the agenda of gender studies. Whereas the term, gender studies, is frequently used in Hungary, the way gender studies are included in the CEU institutional structure is unique in the country (compare with the above: how gender studies courses appear in traditional disciplines elsewhere in Hungary). The autonomous Gender Studies

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<sup>10</sup> Fodor and Varsa (2009), draw attention to a small, yet significant, detail of the accreditation procedure: Gender Studies was labelled as a ‘field of study’ as opposed to a ‘scientific discipline’, which the authors claim cannot be a mere translation issue, since Media Studies, for instance, received the ‘scientific’ label. Rather, it reflects on the fact that the accreditation committee members did not regard Gender Studies as a ‘real discipline.’ (pp. 290 and p. 303)

<sup>11</sup> For instance, “Gender and Culture” tracks at ELTE TATK and Corvinus (for more information, *see*, <<http://gender.tatk.elte.hu>> and <<http://gender.uni-corvinus.hu>>). The gender programmes predominantly fall under Sociology, Social Work and Social Policy, and Foreign Languages and Literatures. At the University of Szeged, the Institute of English and American Studies, for example, offers an MA degree programme, where diplomas are awarded in “English Studies – Gender through Literatures and Cultures in English” (for more information, *see*, <<http://www.arts.u-szeged.hu/ieas/gender/>>). Moreover, the Universities of Debrecen and Pécs offer individual courses in Gender Studies, again, in the Sociology and English departments. The University of Miskolc maintained the Gender Studies and Equal Opportunities Centre, which, for some years, had been offering interdisciplinary teaching and research, based in the Humanities (for more information on the Center, *see*, <<http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/bolgender/english/aims.htm>>). As a typical story of person-dependency of gender studies, once the lead professor left the Centre, the gender unit vanished from the University structure.



Department – indicative of the separationist approach – is selected as the case to be presented in this paper.

In the 1997-1998 academic year, the MA degree awarding *Programme on Gender Culture* came into existence. Later on, in 2001, it was converted into a full university unit, that of the Gender Studies Department, which offers MA and PhD programmes. In its Statement of Purpose, the Gender Studies Department

“[...] seeks to contribute to the process of developing Gender Studies as a full scale subject field, in its own right, which is oriented towards the production of socially relevant knowledge on the basis of epistemologies allowing for diversity and integration. Teaching and scholarship in the Gender Studies Unit are built on strong disciplinary roots, genuine interdisciplinarity, and on integrative and comparative perspectives allowing for the unfolding of Gender Studies as an inclusive subject field.”

In the 2008-2009 academic year, the two-year MA programme in Critical Gender Studies was initiated at CEU, and so far it has been the only full Gender Studies MA degree accredited and awarded in Hungary.

Since its inception, the gender studies programme had independent MA course offering, with an average of 27 courses in each academic year, covering a wide range of topics. The programme covers special areas such as the gendered dimensions of post-state socialism; theories of gender; gender, nationalism and the political; and raced and sexed identities.<sup>12</sup>

Over the years, the Gender Studies Department MA student body increased significantly: from the initial number of 15 students, in recent years, the department serves about 34, one-year, MA students, per academic year. Since 2007, due to special joint European Master's programmes, such as *GEMMA* and *MATILDA*,<sup>13</sup> and the introduction of the Hungarian accredited two-year MA programme in 2008, the number increased to an average 45, showing a steadily growing trend.

However, when looking at the gender distribution, female students make up the vast majority of the Gender Studies Department student body: of the total of 647 students (of all years), only 73 male students enrolled in the department.

The background of the students enrolled in the MA programme varies: Foreign Languages and Literature (a vast majority), Political Science, Psychology, History, and Sociology. As to the country of origin, many students come from Hungary and neighbouring countries, such as Romania and Serbia, and some others from the

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<sup>12</sup> CEU Gender Studies Department website <[http://www.gend.ceu.hu/areas\\_of\\_specialization.php](http://www.gend.ceu.hu/areas_of_specialization.php)>

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see, <<http://www.gend.ceu.hu/erasmus.php>, <http://www.gend.ceu.hu/matilda.php> and [http://www.gend.ceu.hu/2\\_year\\_ma.php](http://www.gend.ceu.hu/2_year_ma.php)>

U.S. In general, it can be said that the European Union and Southeast Europe countries are dominant, followed by CIS, the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

Most of the Gender Studies Department MA graduates (20-40 percent of the graduates, per year) continue their studies, usually at the PhD level, some at MA level, while another significant number finds employment in education and research institutions (10-20 percent), although there is a huge fluctuation year by year.<sup>14</sup> Besides academia, a similar number of graduates find employment in the non-governmental sector, with advocacy groups and the business sector, whereas there is hardly anyone in the six-year span to have found employment with the government, or with international organizations. Therefore, the gender studies alumni employment trends at the University only partially correspond to what is described and expected by Pető, for example, according to whom, such specialists in the 'New Europe' find employment (outside the academic sphere) in government structures, and local and international non-governmental organizations and work on equal opportunities (Waalwijk, and Just, 2010: 40). From these figures, we can conclude that the University faces a gap between theory and practice, which the current gender studies cannot bridge, while training mostly theoreticians, and not practitioners.

Besides having established its own Gender Studies Department, the University is active in providing assistance to efforts, elsewhere in the region, to establish gender studies programmes, through the agency of the *Curriculum Resource Centre*, and by means of special projects, e.g. *Gender Studies Programme Development*,<sup>15</sup> focussed on the geographical area of Eastern Europe and CIS. Naturally, the Gender Studies Department plays an active role in such activities. Note needs to be made of the point, though, that the University and its Gender Studies Department can be active in such norm transfers as reforming the curriculum, only in countries outside the European Union.

On the questions whether there should be a separate gender studies department, whether gender studies are a discipline, and what impact the department makes overall, views much diverged among our interview partners. Thus, despite the institutional commitment made, by establishing the Gender Studies Department, the debate is still present within the University, revolving around the dilemma of gender studies aiming at autonomy or integration.

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<sup>14</sup> CEU's Alumni Relations and Career Services Office, *Alumni database*. The data refers to graduates in the period between 2005 and 2010, and contains only information shared with CEU (thus, unemployment status, for example, is not known). As a result, there is a great number (31%) of graduates whose career destinations are unknown to CEU.

<sup>15</sup> For details, see, <<http://web.ceu.hu/crc/> and <http://web.ceu.hu/sep/spo/gspdp.html>>

In favour of an independent department, on the one hand, a management member recalls the time and decision made to establish the Gender Studies Department, and it was pointed out that

“... there was a big discussion in the Senate, several rounds of discussions. Some people argued no, we should not have a PhD in gender studies, because this is not a discipline. And only disciplines should have PhD studies. And those people said instead of having a separate PhD programme, even a separate department, all departments, each department should do something in gender studies. [...] I, in a way, constructed the argument in favour of a gender studies PhD, which I learn from others, that it may not be a discipline, but it contributes to the creation of new knowledge in the same way as disciplines did, so without gender studies we would not have some new knowledge, therefore it is justified. Part of this argument was real, and the other, I think, many people were afraid that unless we do a department and programme, there will be no gender studies teaching.” (Interview 9)

The faculty at the Gender Studies Department point out, in line with the department Statement of Purpose, that

“We need to have departments, because departments are necessary to legitimize a certain kind of knowledge which is produced in the field of gender studies. Without departments, without the ability to give the degree, or without also this whole institutional support which is related to the existence of a discipline, we have problems to legitimize certain kind of knowledge which is being produced and which is necessary.” (Interview 12)

and

“... because having a separate department, you produce a kind of gender knowledge. Our department is really committed to interdisciplinarity. So we are training students in a mould of scholarship that is above and beyond the topic itself of gender. So, it is kind of intellectual work that you don't get so easily in traditional disciplines. And there is no other department that does that at CEU. And in most universities. I mean you get cultural studies programs that also do that, but we don't have anything like that here.” (Interview 6)

Thus the issues of legitimization and gender knowledge production are key factors in supporting independent Gender Studies Departments.

On the other hand, hesitant, or opposing, views are voiced by a number of faculty members. For instance, one is puzzled by the question,

“There was another side of this [question] that made me hesitant, whether this was an independent discipline. You can do research on gender issues in all fields of science, but it remained a question whether this constituted an independent discipline, or it is an eclectic collection of studies in different disciplines that should stay within their area, within law, history, sociology, economics. I cannot decide this

debate. Perhaps the development of sciences is in favour of such examples of becoming independent – there is a similar process with environmental sciences.” (Interview 16)

Or another one reflects on ‘boxing the gender dimension into one department’:

“Normally [I am] rather allergic to caging or straitjacketing dimensions or approaches into particular boxes. So as I am uncomfortable with having specific gender studies units or departments, as I am with having ethnic or racial studies departments or nationalism departments. So, I think that the dimension is relevant to a number of disciplines and as a result, it should be touched upon or discussed within most departments. That is a must [emphasis added]. Social Sciences. I mean. ... Caging it or boxing it into one department, then entails two risks: it is a very easy way out for departments not to deal with the question, because someone else does it; and also it risks giving that particular department the monopoly of wisdom on that particular subject. So I think that the costs are way [larger] than benefits of having a dedicated unit on this one.” (Interview 18)

The debate over gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration still continues, both at CEU, and at the European level. When considering the role of gender studies in other degree programmes, Waaldijk, and Just (2010), point out some pros and cons.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, integration can undermine gender studies’ status and make it invisible, as Pereira argues, “this has been the case when issues of gender are integrated in existing curricula but described, explicitly or implicitly, as secondary and less credible or prestigious than other fields.” (Quoted in, Waaldijk and Just, 2010: 48) On the other hand, gender studies seminars present in other degree programmes can maintain and increase the importance of the field, as well as contribute to achieving the study field main objectives, including transformation of higher education.

Overall, Gender Studies Department faculty reflects positively on the department standing (in the form of cooperation, formal and informal deals with Gender Studies Department) within the CEU, as well as on the University position with respect to gender studies (position materialized in financial commitment to the Gender Studies Department and in the number of scholarships), which underlines the University standpoint that gender is a priority issue. Thus, as opposed to gender in a ‘placeless place’ in many other universities,

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<sup>16</sup> The *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Gender Studies* brochure is part of the European Tuning project, and the result of decade-long cooperation and exchange in gender studies in Europe, cooperation which was established and enhanced in the framework of ATHENA, the Advanced Thematic Network of Women’s Studies in Europe (See, <[http://www.let.uu.nl/womens\\_studies/athena/index.html](http://www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/athena/index.html) and <<http://www.athena3.org/>>). More information on the European Tuning project available at <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>>

"I see CEU as well positioned, because we have our own department and it is a large department and most of the people are only in our department. ... This is wonderful on one hand, because it means that there is not one person in each department trying to represent what gender is, and can actually be a location where people have different ideas on how to approach gender, like we can cut across lots of different subfields. So I think there are still subfields that are not represented in our department, and I'd like to keep building. But in terms of having a department, in my experience it was not sort of a poor step-sister to other departments. I mean there is a hierarchy of funding in CEU, just the way it is in many universities, and Gender Studies is not exactly a big gun in terms of soft influence and money, but I think we are on par with other disciplines, like Sociology and Philosophy or History, that are basically trying to make their way." (Interview 6)

## GENDER IN STUDIES: GENDERING HIGHER EDUCATION – INTEGRATIONIST APPROACHES

Chapter III pinpoints the gender studies position in various disciplines within the Central European University. Attention is drawn to the issue the authors faced during the interviews: the problematic definitions of 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender sensitive research,' in the academic context. Secondly, the authors ascertain the position of the gender dimension in the curriculum. Thirdly and fourthly, these authors identify the support for and obstacles against gender studies, respectively. Finally, gender sensitive research and the related concept of interdisciplinarity are considered.

### *Definitions of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Sensitive Research*

While approaching faculty and students and conducting the interviews, the authors noted that there were some uncertainties about the definitions used within the project framework. On the one hand, it seemed that some of the interviewees were not fully aware of the phrase, 'gender mainstreaming,' in general. On the other hand, the use of 'gender mainstreaming,' outside the policy context, seemed problematic. While it is comprehensible from the organizational aspect of an institution, the way it works, it is managed, etc. it is more challenging in the academic context. The same applies to 'gender sensitive research,' where gender sensitivity can be defined in various ways. As one faculty member justifiably questions the relevance of such terminology, in the academic context:

"[The questions] are interesting, and some are difficult to answer and in part I think the difficulty [arises] from thinking in policy terms as the European Union does or UNESCO might, and thinking in terms of academia and the way in which new research domains develop. So I think that sometimes they can't really translate all

that well into how we think about how research domains develop. But it is interesting to try to talk across the paradigm.” (Interview 6)

And goes on, deliberating:

“I have been trying for years to figure out exactly what gender sensitive research means. I understand it in relation to maybe policy, and this informs gender mainstreaming that programs need to take into account how they would affect men and women differently and how they might reproduce or undermine the negative impact of gender inequality. So I understand how it works in terms of policy, but I think this is one of the terms that does not translate so perfectly into academia, because well, we are an organization so there might be an element of gender sensitivity to, say, human resource policies or pedagogy, but gender sensitivity in the way in which I think about research, seems, does not tend to be a phrase I use when thinking about my own research. I think of gender in academia, more as a kind of analytical lens through which to understand various problems, so in some way being sensitive is not just being aware of how a research question might impact men and women differently, etc.” (Interview 6)

In fact, the interviewees tried to provide us with their understanding of the concept of gender sensitivity, when reflected on and thus linked it to the domains where the gender dimension should be present. Naturally, the uncertainty surrounding these concepts had its impact on the interviews. At the same time, the authors felt that the discussion on these subjects, while elaborating on the definitions, contributed to the enhanced understanding of what gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive research could signify. One management member gives a definition, in which the potential place of gender mainstreaming is outlined,

“Gender mainstreaming in my understanding, from curriculum point of view is that gender issues should be there everywhere where they are relevant. Here, of course, the issue is where that is, where they are relevant. And I think here again we have a lot of uncertain and probably different points of view.” (Interview 7)

Drawing also attention to the question of gender and its relevancy in different contexts, which then opens debates in various forms.

### *Gender Dimension in Various Study Fields*

The authors have found that their own and their interviewees’ perceptions, or expectations of where the gender dimension should be present do not necessarily coincide with some actual findings based on the examination of seminar documents, theses titles, and descriptions. However, there seems to be a consensus on the issue that gender has only entered the curricula for Social Sciences and Humanities.

As one interview subject puts it,

“Studying anything that has to do with social reality, Sociology or Political Science, whatever you do, gender is obviously one of the main factors that you have to look at. This is an issue that any decent empirical science would address in its methodology. I am assuming that this is not a big problem.” (Interview 8)

In addition to the already mentioned fields of study, History was most referred to, but Legal Studies, or Public Policy, was hardly ever pointed out as a location by the interviewees, be them management, faculty, or students.

The authors need to draw attention to the fact that, in some fields, gender is not present as much as it is expected by, for example, the departments’ own students. One speaks about his department, as

“The tendency I noticed so far... I have not seen it is treated very much at all! [...] Maybe [there is] an undertone of a certain type of disregard. “This is a niche concern, sort of a footnote, this about political correctness.” (Interview 11)

The interviewee also recounts the inquiries made prior to his being admitted and poses potential reasons for the situation,

“What is the place of these kinds of concerns (or what you wanna call them, identity politics, gender and sexuality) within the department, I posed this question, to professors, students. Student said it is not really a discussion in [name of department], not really part of any course, not explicitly. The professor gave a more diplomatic answer, but in a forward-looking way, she said she had a lot of interest in it. ... There is a great (potential?) for exchange between these two departments, but not something which has really come to fruition yet. [I think] there is no any structural reason for them [...] maybe more political reasons, that people don’t encourage this sort of exchange. But this is not something that would be actively prevented, or discouraged. This is something an individual would really want to do in order to make it happen.” (Interview 11)

Thus the ‘individual’ is featured here, too, as opposed to the ‘institutional.’ (See our earlier claim on individual dependency under II.a.) Among other potential reasons for the absence of the gender dimension in various departments, or seminars, we find arguments for the division of labour within the university, in terms of organization, *i.e.*, among the departments; and for professors’ focusing more on classical, conservative materials as opposed to newer, alternative readings,

“I think professors are much aware of the issue. Nonetheless, the assigned readings do not reflect this. But I think the issue was that he wanted to assign “classical economic materials.” So I did not have negative experience in this, which is good, especially when compared to ELTE [a leading Hungarian university].” (Interview 2)

When examining course offerings by their title (s. Annex 2, for a list of gender-related courses), the authors find that certain departments regularly offer gender-related courses, e.g., Medieval Studies, Legal Studies, and History. At the same time, it is visible that these courses tend to be associated with specific faculty individuals. When such professors leave the university, their departments can no longer offer these courses. This might have happened to the departments of Sociology and Economics, which used to have related courses. Finally, recently, the departments of Public Policy and International Relations started to offer gender-related courses.

Browsing through the CEU theses, by title (s. Annex 3, for a list of gender-related theses), reveals that the large majority of the gender-related theses has been written in the departments of History and Political Science. While in History, topics such as women and war, politics, women's identity, emancipation and images of women are present, in Political Science, topics like political representation, women war victims, trafficking, justice in the family are considered. Other three departments are also present with a considerable number of gender-related theses: International Relations, with trafficking, gender, and nation and gender identities questions; Economics, with wage inequality, occupational segregation, and women labour supply; Sociology, with expatriate women and spaces, honour crimes, and female circumcision. Three departments have a number of theses on gender: Legal Studies, on employment, discrimination, and refugee women; Nationalism, on memory work, women under holocaust, gender ethnic violence; Public Policy, on social capital, gendered analysis of health insurance scheme. Some departments, such as Environmental Sciences and Policy, have recently joined in the gender theses collection, with thesis titles like *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Coping Mechanisms*.

It is worth mentioning that some of the above listed theses were fully or jointly-supervised by the Gender Studies Department staff. This is the case with the departments of Nationalism (*Gender, Nation, Rape: Intersections of Gender and Ethnic Violence during the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*) and (*Is Survival Resistance? Experiences of Gypsy Women under the Holocaust*); Political Science (*Human Trafficking, Prostitution, and Public Opinion in Hungary. Interviews with Hungarian University Students*); Public Policy (*Public Health Care for the Poor? A Gendered Analysis of the Implementation of Integrated Health Insurance (SIS) and Its Effects on the Access of the Poor to Health Services in Peru*), and History (*Politically Active Women in the Ukrainian Independence Movement, 1988-1991*).

A certain incongruity has been noted between the various classes offered and the gender-related theses written in the various departments. Especially interesting are the cases of Political Science and Economics, where, despite a pronounced student interest, no gender-related courses are offered.



With regard to who teaches such courses, and who might be in the vanguard of curriculum reform, one professor states bluntly, “Gender is apparent where there is someone who can teach gender,” implying a critical stance and discontent with the current state of affairs. Another one states his belief that it is “a matter of individual conviction,” and then points to the fact that gender is not dealt with in a systematic manner. One faculty member describes what he teaches and the reasons behind his choice and commitment, in the following way:

“In general, I think that feminist jurisprudence contributed a lot to human rights protection. It developed within the critical legal studies movement, intending the critique of the law as a system. Feminist jurisprudence criticizes the way law works. Not just one or another provision, instead, the whole system is under scrutiny. I embraced this notion. As a lawyer, I am often confronted with the impression that fundamental institutions of law, for instance, property law are unjust.” (Interview 16)

Students voice their concern in this matter: “There are only a few professors [of gender interest], but it is not sure at all whether they can teach this,” while another claims:

“I don’t see gender in the curriculum as a formally required theme. In practice I see [that] there are certain professors whose field of interest is related. [...] There are other professors, too, in other departments and from the departmental brochure you can learn that his or her research interests include gender, but the courses taught do not reflect this aspect. I don’t really see why this is the case, whether he does not want to teach such a course in this academic year, or... So, I don’t know how it works, how it is organized. Obviously there is a departmental approach in what the current curriculum should look like, but it is another question, whether when [name of department] curriculum was determined in the long run, if this was an aspect or not, for example, to have such a course on offer, each semester.” (Interview 2)

So the perceived uncertainty is, to a certain extent, inconsistent with what some faculty say about academic freedom in choosing what topics elective courses are developed on. Academic freedom is an integral part of the University institutional culture and identity, and as such, it is difficult to introduce any changes that may have an effect on this type of freedom. Nonetheless, as the complaint above indicates, a gender-conscious academic hiring, resulting in a higher number of faculty members paying attention to gender might not altogether be able to solve the ‘gender mainstreaming in curriculum’ issue.

Once gender is dealt with, within one department, it needs to be noted where such courses are placed in the ‘course hierarchy’. One management member also draws attention to the fact that, in the Hungarian accreditation process, gender is not part of the criteria in any sense. Moreover, disciplines are already set: there is a consensus on what the core curriculum should include, by the agreement of a

national committee overseeing and safeguarding the strictly set borders and contents of accepted disciplines. In such a set-up, the national level regulatory frame prescribes the core content for the higher education institutions. However, the national regulatory frame has little impact on the University, given its highly atypical nature. Nonetheless, besides the national frames, general 'disciplinary codifications' exist as well, and they can equally restrict curriculum development. Institutions have more space for flexibility when they can decide on the sub-specializations they wish to offer. At this point, the question arises if there is a will to include the gender aspect in the departmental/institutional strategy, or not. As a result, gender is usually among electives, not in the core bloc. A faculty member explains that professors can develop gender courses as electives very easily:

"Everyone can offer electives. [...] No-one gets 12-credit core subjects so one has some freedom to teach according to one's own interest, so that is how a department's portfolio comes together." (Interview 13)

Still, he claims that this is not the only way. In fact, it should not be the only way for gender inclusion:

"I think you can include gender into the core, everywhere, at good universities, it is done like this. The theme is always there throughout the class, if we speak about policy processes, there are many readings where we look at how the policy process works in a gender-related issue. So, by way of this, these themes are channelled into the core classes, I think this is the optimal [scenario]. [...] The people who are the main gender researchers, at least in my field, usually channel [gender] into bigger classes, so classes which are core, in different ways, or add a special twist to the core class, or more professors teach one class, where there is the opportunity to do this." (Interview 13)

Some students also point out the possibility of gender inclusion into courses that are not gender-focussed at all. However, they add, smiling ironically, such courses are very rare. Examples are, nevertheless, there, and promptly recounted:

"Gender is included, for example, in the research design class, there are many readings. We had to read in all sorts of topics. There were invited speakers too, and, on one occasion, there was a reading on the abortion policy, and it was in connection with qualitative research method, and [name of person] was invited. She did not speak about her own research, but about methodology and the reading assigned. So it was a sort of surprise for me [smile]. I did not think the professor would include this topic." (Interview 2)

At the departments of Political Science and Legal Studies or Environmental Sciences and Policy, for example, some other, more subtle, traces of gender inclusion are present – when gender is not explicitly mentioned in the course title, or course description – which might actually be regarded as a much better, or more

advanced, way of mainstreaming, if we follow the above line of thinking and reasoning. Thus, in classes covering Constitutional Law, Research Methodology, Environmental Philosophy, Sustainable Development, International Relations Theory, there is gender mainstreaming indeed materialized in core, compulsory classes.

The issue of relevance also plays an important factor in tracing where gender is present. One professor stresses that “the dimension is included not because it is mandated from above, but because some of us in the department think that this is relevant to what we do.” Many academics and students alike are of the opinion that within one department, there are areas where ‘gender does not add anything to teaching’. Courses on Sustainable Development and International Relations Theory are mentioned, where gender is present and should play a role. However, Econometrics is listed to exemplify an area where gender is totally irrelevant. Therefore, one suggestion stresses that ‘the most sensible approach is when you look at whether gender is applicable to this discipline, and whether it enhances the teaching.’ Students also support the idea of selective gender perspective application to the fields where it is really relevant otherwise it can easily develop to be non-productive. As one puts it,

“The gender aspect cannot refer to all disciplines. It is not obvious. It is rather research and discipline dependent. Nonetheless, these can be refreshed by gender, and blind-spots could be shed a light on by applying gender. There is uneven distribution of gender among disciplines and I think categories could be shaken, and the systems could be fine-tuned by adjusting the small screws [if gender were applied].” (Interview 10)

Here we refer back to a previous quote on gender mainstreaming and relevancy, where the faculty member poses the next theoretical question on how one can define where gender is relevant. What is clearly visible is that the debate is ongoing, some prefer a selective gender mainstreaming while others already prove that gender can be so relevant that such a course can become a core course in a traditional discipline.

It is also proven that there are various ways and various levels in which gender can be included into the curricula, in different disciplines. Some of these inclusions are already at work at the Central European University, while benefiting from different types of support, yet also being hindered by specific factors.

### *Resources and Support for Gender Mainstreaming*

- General Political Support and Academic Freedom as Key Factors

One management representative summarizes the support provided as follows:

“I think the political support is here in several ways. But it is rather generic and diffuse. So, the administration, starting with the President, is obviously in favour of making gender issues something central to what we do. So there is support from the administration. There is pressure I think, there is a lot of pressure from students, which is also very important. And this is important, because you know you may ask what the attitude of the faculty is. Well, I think the attitude of the faculty is politically correct, overall.” (Interview 9)

Obviously, due to the absence of a strategy in this area, it is difficult to make an account of technical and financial types of support. Indeed, the interviewee adds he is not aware of any technical support (*e.g.*, special training opportunities, toolkits, consultancy services) with this aim in view and that there are no earmarked financial resources, either. Nonetheless, he indicates that any gender-related research, training, and initiative should be positively evaluated and funded should it be proposed.

Although there is no immediate reward, academic freedom does exist to devise gender related courses. And because it is not explicitly blocked, rather ‘well-received,’ we list freedom as a supporting factor here. As a professor recalls the time he started to lecture at the University,

“When I was invited [...] I was asked what I wanted to teach. My courses were not compulsory and I could freely design them. [...] I said I wanted to teach gender and law, or non-discrimination, and my proposal was accepted without any reservation. Of course, of course! It made me happy too, as I could devise what I wanted completely freely. What is more, later the department made Feminist Jurisprudence compulsory. I am proud to say that it happened on the students’ request. Human Rights students claimed that from a Human Rights perspective they received so much through this course, so they thought that all Human Rights students should sign up for this course.” (Interview 16)

This example can be viewed as a success story of how an elective course makes it to be compulsory for all the students of a particular specialization track. Thus it proves its relevance and how gender can move from the periphery to the centre to be fully re/integrated in academic teaching. Others also report no resistance when gender related seminars are devised and offered to their departments. Thus we can conclude that once there is a professor with a strong gender interest, an elective course will be well-received at the Central European University.

- When Support Is Intra-Disciplinary Regarding the Subject Matter

In the case of some study fields, for example, International Relations (IR) and Environmental Sciences and Policy, our interviewees mention recent internal developments of the past decade or so, which indicate a tendency towards opening up in favour of gender issues. It needs to be noted, however, that both examples refer to multidisciplinary departments, hence we can assume a greater chance for permeability in these cases. While our IR interview subject claims that “feminist IR plays an increasingly influential role in the discipline”, the Environmental one notes that environment is treated more broadly, and they

“... started to discuss UN millennium development goals, where gender is a key dimension. This shift and broadening up might provide for more space for gender inclusion and the theme of gender equality. MDGs might be discussed in an independent course, including gender equality.” (Interview 4)

The above described internal developments and shifts of focus within disciplines can enhance gender mainstreaming in all other fields, to a great extent. However, the factors at play in gearing towards these changes should be examined, so that we could better understand the dynamics which might be reproduced elsewhere, too.

- The Student Body as Support Factor

A faculty member points out that the students are part of departments and there is always a potential to forming a community both within and across departments. Students can, in various forms, bring in the gender dimension even into disciplines which might be considered very resistant. It is also important, how such a gendered addition is evaluated within the class, especially by a gender-biased professor. It is a commonly-shared opinion that the University atmosphere encourages students to speak up and feel unrestricted, partly due to the founder’s intellectuality and institutional mission determination. However, implementation is done at individual level, and so this creates spaces for individual students as well to step in. One way of doing so has already been mentioned, by presenting students’ theses, and thus also outlining research interests in the various University departments. Another, more active, way of interfering with teaching and the curriculum is when students deliberately choose to present gender-related topics in their free assignments, or to bring in the gender dimension, in class discussions, as the following example suggests,

“At [name of course], in connection to social policy and pension reform, it [gender] came up, though I think it was not as emphasized as it should have been, as I expected. With reference to employment policy I think there should be more. We read a lot of theoretical articles, and it was good that I was there as I raised certain

issues, for instance, it was nice to have a research conducted solely with men, and results would be completely different if there had been women included too. So, how much results can be generalized in such cases, can be much questioned. There were also examples, in connection with our presentations, there were readings to elaborate on, and it was possible to link the readings to our own themes. Of course, it was difficult, but for instance, to a rather dry economic material, I selected three extra materials which dealt with women and labour, linked to economic theory. ... so I tried to bring in the gender aspect, if the professor did not emphasize this already.” (Interview 2)

- The Autonomous Gender Studies Department, as Potential Support for Gender Mainstreaming

Among our interviewees, Gender Studies Department is not thought of being the driving force behind gender mainstreaming at the Central European University. At this point, we again note the presence of the seemingly inherent opposition between ‘theory’ and ‘practice,’ in our respondents’ views. Many share the opinion that it should not be their role, as one puts it, “They should not start a movement,” implying that activism is not part of academic work and such a move would be against academic standards. On the other hand, some would like to see the department more active,

“I think they should play a bigger role in trying to draw attention to problems that are not paid enough attention in society. Their very existence, the fact that there is a Gender Studies Department means that gender is something that can be studied. So their very existence would advertise that ‘look here, there is a problem we need to address.’” (Interview 5)

Stressing the Gender Studies Department sluggishness:

“But since they are not very ... hmm, I don’t know what the problem is. Maybe, they should be going out more and talk, and give lectures on what the Gender Studies Department is. [...] They should establish that this discipline has something to say to society.” (Interview 5)

From this thinking we assume that many link a department’s visibility within the academic community, through its extra-curricular activities, with the degree of its importance and relevance. Hence, gender mainstreaming of the various curricula can also be initiated outside the strict teaching environment and formal settings. Nonetheless, this opinion again directs attention to the fact that the Gender Studies Department is still perceived as unstable and needing further legitimating.

The Gender Studies Department faculty themselves have outlined several more informal, less direct, ways in which the department can contribute to gender mainstreaming efforts at the University. For example, making visible the importance and relevance of gender studies is one key priority, which can perhaps

be best understood in Public Relations terms, by supporting Human Rights Initiative<sup>17</sup> projects (in a way contracting out all activism activities regarding gender equality), as well as working more closely with other departments by way of cross-listing courses and co-supervising theses (the latter ones indeed qualify for gender mainstreaming in our understanding). Moreover, the Gender Studies Department aims to engage in more administrative work of CEU, as the organization, by for example, being invited on various committees.

### *Obstacles to Gender Mainstreaming*

- ‘Male Management’ as a General Obstacle

A management member points to the obstacle posed by a male-dominated management in higher education, which then determines viewpoints:

“There are many barriers. And they’ll have to be contextualized. I think a lot of university administrators believe this is a non-issue. There is tradition, there is inertia, and the higher education sphere is a male-dominated sphere. If you ask how many women rectors there are in the region, now, you can name quite a few but still, that is not much. [...] I would say the main barrier is the kind of understanding that you know if this is an issue at all, it is not a priority issue.” (Interview 9)

- Accreditation as a Legal Obstacle

When we accept the situation that higher education is still a male-dominated realm and if we note the national accreditation procedures character as being gender blind (as described above), we can consider this factor as a general legal obstacle for gender mainstreaming as such. And in order to redress the situation, national accreditation committees should be worked with and raise the committee’s gender awareness, so that gender can be mainstreamed at the highest legal and academic proceedings.

- The Autonomous Gender Studies Department as an Obstacle

When thinking about barriers, an automatic reaction is to claim the presence of the independent Gender Studies Departments as one major effective organizational barrier to gender mainstreaming.

“In some ways, having a [dedicated] department [of] itself makes it easy for a university. It is sort of logical [...] this is where gender will happen, so [other]

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<sup>17</sup> The Human Rights Initiative (HRSI) is an awareness-raising and capacity-building organization, based at Central European University, and financed by the University and the Open Society Institute. At the time of writing this report, for example, they conducted the campaign entitled “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”. See, <<http://hrsi.ceu.hu/> and <http://hrsi.ceu.hu/16-days>>

departments don't need to feel pressure to hire somebody who can do this. So I think that that is a kind of block." (Interview 6)

Not only can Gender Studies Department pose a simple block, but it can also risk academic ghettoization, position from which it might be even more difficult for gender studies to address and infiltrate the other disciplines. Indicative is the following: at the Central European University, the Gender Studies Department (and some other departments) fell outside the scope of a recent reorganization, when certain departments were grouped into 'schools,' such as the 'Doctoral School of Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations,' or the 'School of Historical and Interdisciplinary Studies'. The Gender Studies Department was not taken into consideration, when forming the new schools, probably because it had already had an interdisciplinary nature.

- 'Conservative Disciplines' as an Intra-Discipline Obstacle

One faculty comments about his own field of study that due to its being 'an imperial subject,' it is conservative and social issues are left for other disciplines. It was further stressed that the gender dimension cannot be found in the mainstream of some given disciplines: if one does research on gender, chances are weak that papers will get published in the top five journals of the discipline (such work might be published in the gender studies journals). This results in the scholar's weaker position on the job market, *i.e.*, the person's inability to compete for the most prestigious departments of the discipline, as he lacks an impressive publication list. This example induces the conclusion that, because of his gender research interest in certain fields, the scholar cannot make an academic career in his own discipline. This description well illustrates how a gender-focused professor and researcher could be put on the back burner in some rigid 'traditional disciplines,' since their research interest does not fit to the mainstream. Gender studies can be viewed in a similar same. Griffin (2005), for instance, argues that the degree of the gender studies institutionalization and the impact of the different processes have a significant impact on the individuals (students and/or professors) engaged in gender studies: the invisibility of gender studies can result in a non-mainstream, if not a marginal, position in academia, and on the labour market.

- 'Methodology' as an Inter-Disciplinary Obstacle

Gender Studies Department individuals, in particular, note the fact that it is difficult to cross boundaries, referring to their colleagues in other, more 'traditional disciplines,' where they might be obliged to be

"... really staying within the methodological and subject area, much more tightly than we probably do in our department. They still change it, which is why an independent Gender Studies Department is a good support for people who have mainstreamed in



other departments, because they are changing it. In Political Science just the use of qualitative research methods, when the people who do gender tend to prefer this method and this is our sort of pushing the borders of the mainstream in Political Science. [...] This kind of crossing over disciplinary borders. I think gender research does that and it is exciting, but it also means it meets with a lot of resistance often in [other] departments.” (Interview 6)

Thus it is pointed out that disciplines are not necessarily open to interdisciplinarity, which, as a consequence, can be an impeding factor for individuals who would otherwise be interested in crossing the field boundaries.

- Competing ‘Dimensions’ as an Obstacle

One possible barrier to gender mainstreaming could be the existence of multi dimensions, and the way how to treat such a phenomenon in academic teaching, as well as in research. A faculty member points out,

“However important, the gender dimension is not the only one worth attention. So, it is a tricky question, because the other dimension that comes to mind is race. And if once one tries to prioritize, or mainstream, one, then the obvious question is [what happens to] the others.” (Interview 18)

On the one hand, for some academics this puzzle might be a paralyzing factor and lead to the lack of initiative, in general, and no dynamics at all, with regard to curriculum development, in the various departments. On the other hand, gender studies and research offer a ready solution to tackle the issue of multi dimensions via applying intersectionality in one’s analysis, and, in fact, gender studies most often, and historically, do examine the intersection of race (a category that first come to mind, in the quote above) and gender, as if they were inseparable. Butler (1990) describes these endless dimensions,

“The theories of feminist identity that elaborate predicates of colour, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and able-bodiedness invariably close with an embarrassed ‘etc.’ at the end of the list. [...] This illimitable *et cetera*, however, offers itself as a new departure for feminist political theorizing.” (p.143)

Butler stresses that one’s identity is a mobile, ever-shifting construction of the various characteristics, as opposed to the rather static gender categories in use. The ‘new departure’ should be looked at more as an opportunity, whereby intersectional analysis attempts to catch the relationships between these social, cultural, categories and identities, often portraying positions of minority and marginality. Braidotti also maintains that these issues are interconnected and would be difficult to separate, “‘gender’ cannot function alone, but acts rather as a bridge between different levels and layers of social inclusion and exclusion”

(Quoted by Waaldijk, and Just, 2010: 29), thus the gender dimension does not, and cannot, compete with the other ones.

- Gender Sensitive Research and Interdisciplinarity

As pointed out above, the very definition of 'gender sensitive research' is challenging. When asked to think of any gender sensitive research within the University community, almost automatically, the respondents listed gender-focused research projects, for example, 'very high profile gender projects' at the Centre for Policy Studies.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, research projects on the Roma, poverty, and rural development are mentioned, as well as the activity of the Centre for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine (CELAB).<sup>19</sup> The examples reflected more on individual professionals' work and affiliation, whereby the individual faculty member or researcher is well-known for his interests and has already conducted quality research in gender-related issues. These responses reinforce the idea that gender sensitive research, along with gender studies teaching, is more an individual undertaking, motivated by personal dedication than that of an institutional commitment, on the part of the University.

With reference to working together with the Gender Studies Department people, the topic of interdisciplinarity is brought up and pointed out as a big challenge. The same sort of logics applies to the idea of Gender Studies Department faculty being involved in mainstreaming in other disciplines.

One management member unfolds the problem:

"If you really want to advance gender, let's say, in Energy research, or Environmental research, probably the way to do it is through platforms where you have interdisciplinary research. Where a gender specialist would work. But here you face the standard challenge of interdisciplinarity. [...] Now the problem is as in any interdisciplinary research, you cannot really talk the same language. It is very difficult, I mean we can, but it requires a lot of effort." (Interview 17)

And continues, explaining the context, further problematising:

"Interdisciplinarity is more a question of cooperation between researchers who are trained in different disciplines, rather than cooperation between departments. In our department, we have one or two faculty members who I totally trust to do gender-related research, as I think they have the tools, methodologies, and conceptual knowledge about this. But there are people who have very little idea about it; so, by making these people research together something, the problem still remains." (Interview 17)

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<sup>18</sup> See, <<http://cps.ceu.hu/researchb173.html?cmsessid=Tb2272515d66831d3883a2fb86be93d1f8ec960e8a12132310ea8112911e2f0f>>, for CPS research programmes.

<sup>19</sup> For CELAB's work, see, <<http://www.celab.hu/>>

Therefore, faculty members schooled in a traditional discipline and who own the gender knowledge and methodology are seen as desirable research partners. Researchers can 'speak the same language' only in this combination.

On the other hand, for some faculty, interdisciplinarity is seen as an opportunity, a positive development, since, especially for gender studies, people "promoting interdisciplinarity ... should also mean promoting gender." Moreover, they firmly believe that working in an interdisciplinary framework is one of the goals of the Central European University.

Students equally appreciate having this chance at the University:

"I also have a very strong tendency towards interdisciplinary work, so knowing your home department, or knowing your sort of intellectual base, is not really the end of the discussion ... For me it is important to know that foundation I can (leave) and then come back to, from where I can go and participate in other types of intellectual inquiry in other locations for research, whatever that might look like." (Interview 11)

More of a critical tone, a faculty member elaborates on methodology and the main, mainstream discipline, also resonating the arguments above in connection with interdisciplinarity.

"And I think it is important, that whoever studies gender s/he must have a main discipline. So as they must have a strong methodology, not only that of gender. If someone wants to be in gender and politics, then one has to know exactly what methodology is used in Political Science and Public Policy research, because the legitimacy and the strength of research is much more powerful if one comes with a proper disciplinary background and results can be more easily marketed. This way, the place of gender studies in academic hierarchy will improve much. And this is what you see in the whole world: who is really good, is the one who joins a main discipline and adds to it the gender component. So gender is the field of interest in a given disciplinary background. And this is not to say that the Gender Studies Department has no legitimacy on its own. But the real good researchers do communicate with the mainstream." (Interview 13)

Similarly, students voice concerns on not having proper methodological backing, since in gender studies not everything is available, especially referring to quantitative methods. Then, when they try engaging in research with other disciplines, this causes huge challenges for gender studies students. Nonetheless, interdepartmental research is considered an interesting way of gender mainstreaming in research, in which Gender Studies Department individuals could be responsible for the gender component. As reported, such connections are already present, albeit in an informal way. However, formal ways of cooperation could give additional impetus to developing interdisciplinary research, with which gender promotion would follow on.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has explored how and where gender issues are integrated in the curricula at the Central European University. Besides paying attention to gendering the University curricula, the formal, organizational aspects have also been discussed, as they might have mutual effects on each other.

As an immediate recommendation, the authors should emphasize that strategic thinking is needed in the University, as one puts it in connection to a specific proposal, “with high level of gender consciousness.” Therefore, the Senate-envisioned ‘comprehensive equality policy strategy’ should be devised, with no delay, focusing not only on organizational gender mainstreaming, but also on teaching and research content, as well. By establishing such a strategy, the institutional support system of gender studies might take its place, which is missing, at present. The current state of affairs reflects a context within which the existence of gender studies remains to be tied to individual interest and commitment of very few faculty members, outside the autonomous Gender Studies Department.

In following, we shall first present the debate on gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration. Next, we shall describe some possible ways and techniques of gendering higher education teaching and research, and the benefits gender mainstreaming can potentially offer with a view to provide general arguments and recommendations for gender integration into higher education curricula. Finally, the authors will reflect on the ‘political correctness’ and the additional impact, they feel their research has had on the University.

### *The Debate: To Separate or Integrate Gender Studies?*

In order to generate deep thinking, we proposed a direct question, namely, whether the gender aspect should be dealt with either in a separate department or in all departments. The reactions to this strong ‘either/or’ question, not leaving much space for ‘and’ options, provided pointed academic insights and practical considerations.

While some seem to be insecure in making a decision on the question, others are very decided in solving the issue. Nevertheless, the vast majority of our partners opt for having the two approaches continue living in parallel and mutually strengthen each other, *i.e.*, they voice the need to have both Gender Studies Departments and ‘a general infusion of gender’ across different disciplines.

As a Gender Studies Department faculty member stresses, when first reasoning for a separate department and then shifting towards arguing for the ‘and’ position:

“... I am thinking about this whole academic institutional machinery which makes certain production of knowledge visible, recognizable and makes the space for it. On

the other hand, I think that creating just departments and somehow pushing this kind of knowledge into these ghettos, departments as ghettos, is not enough. I don't want to say that it is counter-productive, but I don't want at all to think about either-or relations. So, it is not about either having the departments or having it the other way around. [...] So, I basically think that we need gender perspective both in across academia, in different disciplines and [emphasis added] that we need the departments for [...] promoting gender perspectives, but with different final aims, so the outcome of one or the other is not always the same." (Interview 12)

A non-Gender Studies Department professor reasons as follows, interestingly, having exactly the same points as the Gender Studies Department one:

"Mainstreaming does not mean there should not be gender studies, but the dual-track [approach]. Mainstreaming means that there is a hub where it thickens and where there is concentrated attention, and beyond this there is everywhere else. This policy does not say that gender machineries should be closed down so that gender should be dealt with everywhere, including the Ministry of Finance, but it says that the machinery is needed and beyond that, one should think about this in the Ministry of Finance, too. So I think these two does not kill each other; there are only different priorities served with gender studies department." (Interview 13)

Most respondents agree on this combination strategy as the only one by means of which change could be brought about. This stand echoes the European network, which also reached a similar resolution:

"The integrationists aim at including Women's Studies into existing curricula and thus force the disciplines to evolve; the autonomists, on the other hand, believe in radical disruption and in the specificity of women-based knowledge. [...] The European network of Gender Studies agreed to disagree – both autonomous and integrated programmes work together and different names and terms for the field are accepted." (Waldijk, and Just, 2010: 29-30)

These authors also firmly believe that the integration of gender into higher education curricula can be best achieved by following the dual-track strategy, which in the present context, would mean strengthening both integration and autonomy of gender studies within higher education teaching and research.

As a final general remark, we also need to note that since gender studies are interdisciplinary, it is difficult to mainstream. If someone deals with gender studies, he/she is likely to fall out of the mainstream, a position from which it is difficult – in the political sense – to find one's way back. Moreover, as is the case with the Central European University and its founding principles, it is characteristic of the former socialist block region that a top-down approach is not acceptable and that individual freedom is highly respected, which points to 'academic freedom' in our case. With these points in mind, we summarize various possible ways in which

gender mainstreaming can be achieved and some benefits it can offer, in general terms, to all higher education institutions.

*Possible Ways to Gender Mainstream Higher Education Teaching and Research*

- Institutional strategic commitment to ‘more gender’

A viable solution for mainstreaming is proposed by a management member, option that, in our opinion, leaves enough space for faculty members and the departments, and, in a way, it cuts across many of the issues mentioned earlier, which all tackle the question where and how exactly gender mainstreaming / gender inclusion should take place:

“Now, once you have a course, it is very difficult to mainstream gender there, however nothing prevents to make an institutional commitment to want more gender; that would mean not creating courses, but looking at the level of programmes, and there one of the outcomes of this programme is related to gender, and then decide whether it should be a special course, or the modification of existing courses or special faculty, special visiting professor, whatever.” (Interview 17)

From this proposal we can see that the University, as an organization, might still be in a position to commit itself to advancing gender in its educational programmes and at the same time leaving ‘academic freedom’ unaltered. Nonetheless, this approach still presupposes gender-conscious hiring procedures, which focuses not on the sex of the applicant, but on the research interest the individual would bring along to the University. Still, the same professor cautions on being ‘extremely intelligent’ when doing this, and on always ‘asking yourself how gender helps you achieve your goal,’ *i.e.*, that of the departmental education programme and of the particular course.

At the same time, instead of imposing any particular issue, in this case gender, to mainstream, some faculty members voice the following opinion:

“I think that in the end what the management should do, would be to ensure that there is a constant discussion within the faculty over how update the curriculum is, and how they respond to whatever relations.” (Interview 18)

Leaving the department to choose on what particular dimensions they wish to pay special attention to, thus clinging to the institutional culture and, inside it, to the often cited ‘academic freedom.’

With his reminder, the above-quoted management member, too, accepts the fact that it is not only a technical, professional, but also a political issue within the University. Politics enter the debate as soon as the institutional setup and culture are targeted for a perceived major transformation. With Connell’s expression

(1987), CEU 'gender regime' may be affected, institutional processes may be altered, which would ultimately shake the present order, and as a result, various interests immediately compete with each other. However, the Central European University is such a special institution, with respect to its actual settings and organizational backing that it would indeed be difficult to categorize in any given culture. Nonetheless, its strengths and opportunities lie in CEU's 'particularity', its internationalism as far as reforms and new directions can be concerned, including that of gender mainstreaming in the university curricula development.

- Hiring more women as faculty members

There are some cases when respondents introduced a 'third option,' leaving aside the either/or question, *i.e.*, to separate or integrate gender studies. Although a minority, some faculty members believe in the idea that if the CEU could become more gender-aware, as an organization, with visible signs of an increased number of female professors and of women in leadership positions, "these things would come more naturally", that is, gender mainstreaming would then happen in the curriculum development, too.

- Hiring more individuals with a professional gender interest

Overall, hiring new faculty members with a high level of gender consciousness and with gender as a research interest is welcome by many as opposed to encouraging already working professors to change their research interests and focus, change that would be visible in the curriculum, or to add gender to it. The latter possibility would face the strong resistance of the CEU faculty and would likely cause some conflicts with existing accreditation documents, which cannot be changed so easily, an aspect pointing to a factor beyond the University.

- Gender studies department co-operating with other departments

A significant number of faculty and students describe the already existing and institutionally supported ways by means of which the gender dimension can be included and actively supported. Namely, theses joint supervision, course cross-listing with other departments, joint-teaching courses, and degrees jointly awarded by other universities and CEU departments, *e.g.*, MATILDA. These techniques in themselves alleviate the difficulty that arises from the fact that in certain departments there might not be 'people that can really do gender.' However, this co-operation is conditioned by the existence of an independent gender studies department within the higher education institution.

- Institutional support for faculty in developing interest in gender

A possible technique of gender inclusion would be to attract academics' interest towards gendered research, for instance through 2-day interdisciplinary seminars with gender networks outside the higher education institution, for which events specific faculty would be targeted, *e.g.* of Economics. As some academics state economics shows interest towards gender issues lately, so representatives of the discipline would likely sit in such meetings. Along similar lines, others speak about 'some initiatives':

"As long as there is such a department [Gender Studies Department], others might think that gender is only their business. With some initiatives, these others might learn that gender after all might have some relevance in his or her research topic and might receive extra feedback in this regard." (Interview 2)

- Institutional support for faculty in providing 'gender expert' consultations within traditional disciplines

Considering who would provide that 'extra feedback' and who to work with on curriculum development is up for discussion. Almost all people who elaborated thoughts on this matter, voiced their concerns that it would be impossible to work with someone who does not come from the same discipline, and has not a PhD in the same field. Gender mainstreaming consultations can only be imagined with such intra-disciplinary profiles, leaving Gender Studies Department scholars aside, unless they are of the same discipline by schooling. The same principles apply to conducting joint research.

However, some would assign roles to Gender Studies Department in gender mainstreaming not the curricula, but the institution:

"I think for the future it is important to have both [*i.e.*, gender studies department and mainstreaming in all departments]. Of course, it should also be a goal not to have such an isolated department, and because of this it would not be a bad idea to create another space, a task in which they could step out from their isolation and to take part in gender mainstreaming of the institution. [...] I think it is important, though I am not aware if at other universities Gender Studies Department have such an extra function or not." (Interview 2)

### *Benefits of Gender Mainstreaming the Curriculum*

Having gender classes incorporated into various (other than gender) departments' course offerings might yield various results, including as the main result the fact that a larger pool of students (not necessarily interested in gender professionally)



will have access to such knowledge, which might significantly increase the importance and impact of gender studies,

“... in this set-up it [the course] does not end up in an isolated box [*i.e.*, gender], but it gets in front of students who do not only deal with gender, but with other issues, as well.” (Interview 13)

A student calls on the danger of separation and too much institutionalization, and gets to the same point: the new institution creates ‘special research’ and, with it, a new method, which is then treated separately. Instead, he suggests introducing gender into the scopes of other departments, which would be more efficient and hence ‘gender would become more popular and understood.’ Offering his own experience as an example, he points to the following issues: out of professional curiosity in order to check out the theory and the approach at Gender Studies Department, he took a course to see what added value is there in connection to showing processes and the presentation of memory. He concludes that after having taken the course, he does make use of the gender category in his professional work, admitting at the same time that, had he not taken the course, he ‘would be way more sceptical using gender as a scientific category in historical research.’ Moreover, he argues that universities in Central and Eastern Europe are conservative, in terms of methodology, and that is how he himself has been academically trained, too. He was happy to find something interesting on gender at the Central European University, as opposed to his previously attended university, where there was nothing on gender.

Another student, supportive of interdisciplinary research, and open to ‘borrowing and experimentation’, describes his Gender Studies Department class and his being at the intersection of two literatures as follows:

“This one maps very interestingly, sort of thrusts in relation to another course I am taking at [name of department], called the [title of course]. And there is this sort of co-evolution, and it is interesting to trace the ways in which each professor approaches the subject. And they are not specifically concerned with the same categories of analysis. But they often meet and they do it on very different scales and in very different ways. And there are other interesting contrasts drawn out there. In teaching styles, one is a man, the other one is a woman, one is in [name of department], the other in gender studies. Ultimately, the work of connecting these two is enriching and interesting.” (Interview 11)

The same individual sums up the benefits he is getting by experimenting in another discipline and by applying gender as an analytical tool:

“Well, at the minimum it is an interesting class, which is enabling me to think about some problems of my own research, my own interest outside of the scope that I would have been able to access, and with a different kind of vocabulary than I think

is really at my disposal at the [name of department]. So for me, being able to talk about it in a couple of different modes and for instance, drawing out some contrasts between the way in which I can think about bringing my interest forth in a class like [title] course, *versus* the way in which I can think about bringing my interest forward in a class like [title] course. I mean, those differences in and out themselves are meaningful of how I then think about discussing my interest in whatever particular set of analytical problems or empirical questions I want talk about in my research.” (Interview 11)

The above mentioned positive examples of students taking gender courses are conditioned by the fact that there are such courses on offer, either within the independent Gender Studies Department, or within other academic units; and that students are interested or ‘curious’ to sign up for specific gender classes so that, professionally, they would benefit from their being exposed to critical gender analysis.

### *Political Correctness and Additional Project Impact at the Central European University*

We think it would be good and a sign of development if there were no discourse on ‘political correctness’ in relation to gender studies or to applying gender as an analytical tool and category in academic research. This reflects on the gender studies status being unsteady, one that is accepted not because of academic merit, but because of political correctness.

Naturally, students are more explicit on this issue. Students reflect on how their gender presentation was received by faculty members in the following way:

“Professors, well, I think this is an international university, there are norms, and I think no professor can afford being openly hostile towards the issue.” (Interview 2)

We think there is a long way to go and more work to be done in making the gender dimension fully accepted by higher education institutions, in general, and by the Central European University, in particular. The current situation at the University suggests that the normative value transfer (as expected by the European Union norms as well as being present in the U.S. academia) has yet to take place.

Overall, these authors’ opinion is that the Central European University, as an institution, is not ready to adjust its academic programmes so that they can be more permeable to gender sensitive knowledge. This readiness is more visible in the case of certain departments, where motivation comes from within the discipline. We find that gender mainstreaming in academic programmes would be in utter opposition with ‘academic freedom,’ a notion that is held in high esteem by the present-day institutional culture. While the University, as a whole, shows readiness to apply gender consciousness in its organizational structure and to

reform it accordingly, such eagerness is not detectable in the curriculum content adaptation and the ways in which knowledge is delivered to the young generation. Having said all the above, our perception is, to a certain extent in contradiction to the above, that the University does not fare so well, when we consider gender mainstreaming in the institution (which, we think, would be much easier to implement), but points to a good degree of gender studies teaching and research development state, both in the autonomy and integration directions (which we consider much harder to achieve). We ascribe the relatively high level of gender incorporation in teaching and research to the institution's international character, in which merge influences of the U.S., European Union, and Hungary's post-socialist heritage and values; and in which 'academic freedom' still means a lot, as long as there are committed individual faculty members, eager to be engaged in gender studies. However, it is the institutional commitment of the Central European University that is needed in order to secure an enduring and systematic progress in gendering its curricula.

Although not everyone we approached responded positively to our invitation to an interview, the authors consider they have had open and fruitful discussions with all those who agreed to interview. Moreover, we think that we managed to make an impact at the university by raising the issue of gender equality in organizational terms and gender inclusion in the curriculum. The individuals we have interviewed came prepared, some even checked beforehand with colleagues from the respective department, so that they could represent many people's voices, and were ready to provide us with any information requested or opinion invited. Thus, the authors believe that the project has already served the goal of maintaining the gender issue on the organizational and academic agendas of the Central European University and hope that the project has given impetus to further institutional development.

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## ANNEX

## 1. List of Interviews

No.	Date 2010	Position	Sex
1	October 4	Faculty member	M
2	October 14	Student, PhD (non-Gender Studies Department)	F
3	October 15	Management	F
4	October 18	Faculty member	M
5	October 19	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
6	October 20	Faculty member (Gender Studies Department)	F
7	October 20	Management	M
8	October 20	Management	F
9	October 20	Management	M
10	October 20	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
11	October 21	Student, MA (non-Gender Studies Department)	M
12	October 21	Faculty member (Gender Studies Department)	F
13	October 21	Faculty member	F
14	October 22	Student, MA (non-Gender Studies Department)	M
15	October 25	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
16	October 26	Faculty member	F
17	November 5	Management	M
18	November 12	Faculty member	M

## 2. Gender-related courses at the Central European University\*

Department	Course title
Medieval Studies	Medieval Images of Outcasts and Biblical Women
	Images and Gender
	Medieval Images of Woman and Family
	Gender and Family
	Gender and Visual Culture
Legal Studies	Comparative Equality
	Privacy – The Body
	Equal Opportunity Law
History	Early Modern Comparative Family History
	Social History of Gender in Central Europe (1867-1930)
	Comparative Masculinities: Sex and Gender in Europe and the Mediterranean
Sociology	Gender and Social Change
	Gender, Sexuality, and Sexual Politics
	Economics of Inequality
Economics	Economics of Inequality
Public Policy	Equality Policy in Comparative Approach
International Relations	Gender in IR: Sovereignty, Security, and Militarism

\* NB: This is not an exhaustive list. These are examples of courses taught at the Central European University, between 1997/1998 and 2010/2011 academic years.

Source: CEU Information System

## 3. Gender-related theses at the Central European University \*

Department	Thesis title
History	<p><i>Budapest's Girl's Gymnasiums: A Study of the Relationship between the Composition of the Student Body and how This Related to School and Girl's Secondary Schooling</i></p> <p><i>Divided Spheres: Whose war? And Whose peace?: Women in Croatia during the War of National Liberation (1941-1945): the Women's Anti-fascist Front</i></p> <p><i>Equality or Inequality?: Resolution of the Women's Question: Women's Political Activity in Russia during Perestroika and Post-Perestroika Period</i></p> <p><i>First Feminist Groups in Leningrad (1979-1982): Samizdat journals Zhenshchina I Rossiya and Maria</i></p> <p><i>From the Sickle to the Silver Tray: Temporary Domestic Servants in Inter-War Romania</i></p> <p><i>Gender History in the Statutes of the East Adriatic Communes</i></p> <p><i>History of Woman's Emancipation in Russia in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Narrative and Discourse On Women's Emancipation in Journalism</i></p> <p><i>Image of the Woman at the Turn of the Century</i></p> <p><i>Images of women and the Family during Communism as Reflected in the Romanian Newspaper Scînteia</i></p> <p><i>Political Persecutions of Women in Slovakia, 1948-1953: Case Study of Prievidza Region</i></p> <p><i>Politically Active Women in the Ukrainian Independence Movement, 1988-1991</i></p> <p><i>Romanian Women during the Great War</i></p> <p><i>Some Aspects of Shaping Women's Identity in the Soviet Society between the 1970s and 1990s.</i></p> <p><i>The Memory of 1956: A Gendered Transcript</i></p> <p><i>Visions of Women's Social Role in Poland and Lithuania at the Beginning of the 1920s</i></p> <p><i>Women's Journals and Their Image of Women in the Second Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Hungary</i></p>
Political Science	<p><i>Explaining Women's Rise in Political Representation: The Case of Croatia</i></p> <p><i>Gender and Politics in Russian Transition to Democracy</i></p> <p><i>Human Trafficking, Prostitution and Public Opinion in Hungary: Interviews with Hungarian University Students</i></p> <p><i>Isocratic Quest: Patterns of Participatory Inequality in New and Old European Democracies</i></p> <p><i>Rawls, Feminist Criticism, and Justice in the Family: Do We Really Need a Kitchen Police?</i></p> <p><i>The Politics of Constructing the Bulgarian Female Officer: Contemporary Discourses about Women in the Bulgarian Military</i></p> <p><i>Trafficking in Women from the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan: An Analysis of Current Policy and Recommendations</i></p> <p><i>Women Victims in the Balkan War: State, Rights, and Abortion</i></p>
International Relations	<p><i>'Fantasy behind Misery' – the Meanings of the European Union Measures on Trafficking in Women</i></p> <p><i>Gender and Nation in Transition: The Politics of Identity in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan</i></p> <p><i>The Political Economy of Welfare States: The Divergence of Family Policies in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic</i></p> <p><i>The Role of the OSCE in Fighting Trafficking in Women in Albania and Moldova</i></p> <p><i>Why Gender Is Absent in Copenhagen School: Theoretical Reflections on the Construction of National Securitization Processes through The construction of Gender Identities</i></p>

Department	Thesis title
Economics	<p><i>Children of the Decree: How the Romanian Abortion Ban Affected Labour Market Success and Health</i></p> <p><i>Examining the Gender Pay Gap in the U.S. in 1979-2009: The Unconditional Quantile Regression Approach</i></p> <p><i>Human Capital Prices and Wage Inequality in Russia 1985-2004</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Segregation and the Gender Pay Gap in Russia, 1994-1998</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Wage Structure and Gender Inequality in Ukraine</i></p> <p><i>Women Labour Supply Model: The Case of Fr. Yugoslavia</i></p>
Sociology	<p><i>Making Themselves at Home: Expatriate Women and Spaces of Belonging in Budapest</i></p> <p><i>Still Fixing Women? Female Circumcision and the Anti-HIV/AIDS Fight among the Ejaghams of Cameroon</i></p> <p><i>The Activist Self: Collective Identity in Anti-Nationalist, Anti-Militarist, Feminist Mobilization in Serbia</i></p> <p><i>The Indigenization of Women's Funds in Central and Eastern Europe: The Making of a Hybrid Identity</i></p> <p><i>Women on the Margins of Life and Death: Honour Crime and 'Governmentality' in Turkey</i></p>
Legal Studies	<p><i>Gender Employment Discrimination. A View on Transitional Democracies: the Case of Albania</i></p> <p><i>Protection of Refugee Women in International Law</i></p> <p><i>Status of Women Prisoners in the Czech Prison System</i></p> <p><i>The Law against Trafficking in Women: Some Modern Models of Using Current Norms to Combat the Problem in Central and Eastern Europe</i></p>
Nationalism	<p><i>Gender, Nation, Rape: Intersections of Gender and Ethnic Violence during the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i></p> <p><i>Is Survival Resistance? Experiences of Gypsy Women under the Holocaust</i></p> <p><i>Memory Work in Srebrenica – Serb Women Tell Their Stories</i></p>
Public Policy	<p><i>Promoting a Victim-Centred Approach to Combating Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation</i></p> <p><i>Public Health Care for The Poor? A Gendered Analysis of the Implementation of Integrated Health Insurance (SIS) and Its Effects on the Access of the Poor to Health Services in Peru</i></p> <p><i>Romani Women's Movement and Its Impact on Policy-Making Process. A Comparative Study of Macedonia and Serbia</i></p> <p><i>The Europeanization of Bulgarian Counter-Trafficking Policies: Between Rational Incentives, Social Learning, and Drawing Lessons</i></p> <p><i>The Impact of Micro-Credit on Social Capital. A Critical Investigation of Bangladesh</i></p>

\* NB: This is not an exhaustive list. They are examples of theses searched by the key-word 'women' in other than the Gender Studies Department, at the Central European University.

Source: CEU Library database.

# **Uneven Curriculum Inclusion: Gender Studies and Gender IN Studies at the University of Bucharest**

Theodora-Eliza VĂCĂRESCU

## **Abstract**

*Research on the mechanisms, politics, and practices at work in the process of institutionalizing women's and gender studies in higher education, in Central and Eastern Europe, show a definite, albeit often uneven and sometimes precarious, dynamics of inclusion of this field of teaching and research, inside and outside officially recognized academic structures, during the last two decades or so. This paper some of the institutional mechanisms, transnational higher education structures and interests, and personal investments and strategies that shape the current configuration of gender studies in higher education in Romania, in general, and at the University of Bucharest, in particular. The author argues that the inclusion of gender studies in higher education in Romania should be integrated within the larger, multiple, and overlapping kinds of national and transnational social, economic, and political transformations started in the early 1990s and accelerated at the end of the decade and mainly at the beginning of the millennium. Within this framework, not only specific of the Romanian context, but, as shown in several studies, also of other Central and Eastern European countries, the appropriation of gender-related concerns, equal opportunities legislation, and gender studies as a valid field of teaching and research by various governmental and institutional bodies, in Romania, could be read as part of the greater endorsement of the 'democratization agenda.' However, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of institutional change and of the international financial and political interests as undoubtedly influencing the local options and opportunities, although not always in a uniform and unidirectional manner, in shaping the content of the teaching and research practices undertaken locally.*



Research on the mechanisms, politics, and practices at work in the process of institutionalizing women's and gender studies<sup>1</sup> in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe reveals a definite, albeit, often, uneven and sometimes, precarious, dynamics of including this field of teaching and research, inside and outside endorsed academic structures, during the last two decades or so. This study investigates some of the institutional politics and mechanisms, as well as the individual endeavours and strategies of the academics involved in the process of gendering higher education curricula at the University of Bucharest, both within various disciplines and courses of studies, and as a newly established separate graduate programme. The author argues that, – for an accurate and nuanced understanding of the particular constellation of various agents, factors, and strategies that lead to the present-day configuration of gender studies as a field of academic teaching and research at the University of Bucharest –, the process of its (partial and often contested) inclusion should be integrated within the larger, multiple, and overlapping binds of national and transnational social, economic and political transformations started in the early 1990s and accelerated at the end of the decade, especially at the beginning of the millennium. Within this framework, not only specific of the Romanian context, but, as shown in several studies, also to other Central and Eastern European countries, the annexation of gender-related concerns, equal opportunities legislation and gender studies as an acceptable field of teaching and research by various governmental and institutional agents in Romania could be read as a part of the larger endorsement of the discourse and agenda of democratization, human rights, and free market economy. Thus, on the one hand, the category of gender was not necessarily relevant and important in itself, and, on the other, the local actors who strove to raise awareness, run activist and academic projects and programmes were faced with the difficult choice of either giving in (at least partially) to the political agenda and the conceptualization

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<sup>1</sup> The ongoing debate over the naming of this field of academic inquiry and teaching, in various geo-political and temporal contexts, has a long history [S. Scott (1986); Braidotti (1994); Miroiu (2001)]. Yet, since in Romanian higher education, virtually all the initiators and promoters of academic programmes in this field have opted for the phrase, gender studies, the author will use it with reference to the Romanian context. M. Miroiu, a Romanian prominent feminist academic and founder of the first postgraduate programme in gender studies in Romania, points out that:

“Of course, a name has a powerful creative force, but in Romania it is necessary to simultaneously accommodate the development of both a modern and post-modern strategy. Then, to call feminist studies, women's studies, or gender studies what the other and others are undertaking is, at this stage, a matter of option and adaptability. To what extent can they be ‘unreasonable’ in order to be accepted, and to what extent can they be ‘reasonable’ in order to avoid assimilation are matters of practical wisdom. For example, in Romania, when someone has a liberal feminist approach, he or she is labelled a ‘radical’.” [Miroiu (2001), p. 118]

There are, however, courses offered at various universities, including the University of Bucharest, the titles of which include ‘women,’ ‘feminine,’ ‘feminism,’ and ‘feminist.’

and methodological models, imposed by the financing international (West European and North American) bodies, or remain at the margins of the academic, public, and activist scenes and retain their critical stance towards both local gender inequalities and larger global asymmetries. (Ghodsee, 2004; Zimmermann, 2008).

Following (some of) the guidelines provided by the UNESCO-CEPES research project, "From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies: Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education: Problems, Politics and Possibilities", I shall first present a synthetic assessment of gender equality in Romanian higher education, including the relevant legislation, at national and institutional levels, on gender equality in education and higher education, quantitative data on women and men in higher education (student enrolment and faculty, distribution by disciplines, academic hierarchy, leadership aspects). The next section of the paper offers a concise overview of the existing research tackling the institutionalization of gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania, and briefly examines the social, political, historical, as well as institutional and personal factors and contexts that have been identified as contributing to the inclusion of gender components and gender courses at the level of undergraduate higher education (Bachelor's Degree) curricula in various social and humanities disciplines, in Romanian universities, starting before the mid-1990s. The author also looks at the more or less successful establishment, between 1998 and 2003, of three separate and autonomous postgraduate level programmes (Master's Degree programmes), with the main focus on gender studies. The third section of this paper investigates departmental and university mechanisms, transnational higher education structures and politics, and personal investments and interests that shape the current configuration of gender studies at the University of Bucharest. In this section, the author makes use of data from official departmental curricula, inter-university and inter-departmental partnerships, and curriculum development projects, as well as information, perspectives and opinions provided in the semi-structured interviews conducted with the university management and with academics teaching in some of the departments, who include gender studies in their curricula. The last section summarizes the findings of the research and discusses a few possible recommendations.

## WHOSE EDUCATION? WOMEN AND MEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

This section of the paper first presents an overview of the relevant normative laws and acts that regulate the educational process, with the main focus on women's and men's access to education and higher education, anti-discrimination on the basis of gender and the possibilities of affirmative policies. Also, the author looks at the

relevant acts specifically regulating the educational process within the University of Bucharest. Next, the author examines the available statistical data on the access to education and higher education in Romania, as well as at the data available for the University of Bucharest, including students and teaching staff, looking at study field orientation, university titles, and management positions. The author shows that, although, on the one hand, the general legal framework of education and the specific acts regulating higher education provide for equal access to all levels, disciplinary specializations, and management positions for all involved in higher education, and, on the other, general student enrolment figures show a balanced participation in higher education for women and men, and entry-level teaching positions are also gender balanced, when considering the percentage of women and men by pursued study field, both student and faculty figures demonstrate an uneven distribution, with significantly higher female concentration in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, medical and Economics education, and higher male presence in Computer Science, technical, and agricultural education. Moreover, data on women and men academic titles and management positions, throughout higher education in Romania, the University of Bucharest included, show a substantial gender gap in favour of male academics, especially in the 45 plus age groups.

### *National and Institutional Legal Framework*

The general legal framework that demands 'equality among the citizens' is the *Constitution of Romania*,<sup>2</sup> Article 4 of which states that, "Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin." (*Constitution of Romania*, Art. 4, Para. 2)

Article 32 of the same, regulates, in general terms, the educational process, specifying that

"The right to education is provided by the compulsory general education, by education in high schools and vocational schools, by higher education, as well as by other forms of instruction and postgraduate improvement." (*Constitution of Romania*, Art. 32, Para. 1)

However, no direct reference is made to sex/ gender, neither as a possible category for discrimination, nor for affirmative policies. The same article stipulates that public education is free and that "social scholarships" will be granted by the state "to children or young people coming from disadvantaged families and to those

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<sup>2</sup> Adopted in November 1991, the Constitution of Romania was amended by Law no. 429/2003 on the Revision of the Constitution of Romania.

institutionalized”, again without any reference to sex/ gender, and the application of both provisions remains to be further regulated by supplementary laws.

*Law no. 202/2002 on the Equality of Opportunities and Treatment between Women and Men* also specifies women and men’s equal access to all forms of education and training and the prevention and elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in the access to education (Articles 2 and 15). In counter-distinction to the *Law on Education No. 85/1995*, currently in force, which does not contain any requirements, related to the elimination of stereotyped gender roles and models in education, Article 16 mandates the Ministry of Education to ensure education and training

“in the spirit of equality of opportunities between the sexes” and to promote “those textbooks, university courses, guidelines for curricula which do not contain either sex discrimination aspects, or negative models and stereotypes regarding women’s and men’s role in public and family life.” (Law No. 202/ 2002)<sup>3</sup>

Both the *Law on Education of 1995*, the fundamental piece of legislation regulating the educational process, and the new *Law on National Education*, ratified in January 2011, but not yet in force, stipulate equal access, to all levels and forms of education, irrespective of “social and material status, sex, race, nationality, political, and religious affiliation” (*Law no. 84/1995*, Art. 5, Para. 1) and “free of any form of discrimination” (*Law no. 1/2011*, Art. 1, Para. 4).

The 2011 *Law on National Education* also specifies a series of principles that govern all levels of education, among which “the principle of equity – on the basis of which the access to learning is undertaken free of discrimination” (Art. 3, Para. a), “the principle of ensuring equality of opportunities” (Art. 3, Para. j), “the principle of social inclusion” (Art. 3, Para. o). Article 118, paragraph 1, in the section on higher education, expressly restates “the principle of equity,” and paragraph 2 stipulates “discriminations on the basis of age, ethnicity, sex, social origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation and other types of discrimination, except for affirmative actions provided by the law” as inadmissible.

Within its principle of “public responsibility,” the 2011 *Law* additionally requires all higher education institutions, to “observe the policies of equity and university ethics, comprised in the *Code of Ethics and Professional Deontology*, approved by the University Senate.” (Art. 124, Para. 1). However, within the minimum requirements for the *Code of Ethics and Professional Deontology* to be developed by each university, the *Law* fails to include provisions related to any form of discrimination, including sex/ gender (Art. 130, Para. 1). The *Code of Ethics* of the University of Bucharest, currently in force, does not contain any gender-related

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<sup>3</sup> Amended in 2007.

references with respect to access, opportunities, or concerns. (*Code of Ethics of the University of Bucharest*)

By contrast, the National School of Political and Administrative Studies (NSPAS) from Bucharest includes, in its 2006 *Code of Ethics*, several principles and values that the School “especially promotes”, among which, for example, the principle of “rightfulness and equity” (Art. 1), according to which “members of the NSPAS will be treated justly, fairly, and equitably”; the NSPAS does not allow for discrimination or exploitation, either directly or indirectly, and adopts “firm measures for non-discrimination and equality of opportunities in access to studies, promotion, and programmes” (Art. 3). Another principle that is meant to prevent various forms of unfair treatment and discrimination is “respect and tolerance”, according to which the NSPAS “promotes the existence of an academic and residential community, where each person’s dignity is respected in a climate free of any manifestation and form of harassment, exploitation, humiliation, contempt, threat, or intimidation.” The same principle explicitly mentions that the NSPAS does not “allow for misogynistic, racist, chauvinistic, xenophobe, homophobe manifestations and sexual harassment.” (Art. 9). (*NSPAS Code of Ethics*)

However, the Bucharest University *Charta* includes provisions on non-discrimination in its Articles 16 and 45:

“The University’s academic community is open to Romanian and foreign citizens, without discriminations, within the conditions imposed by its internal organization: student, professor, researcher, postgraduate student. The fundamental criteria for academic community membership are professional competence, behavioural rectitude, and appropriate authorization.” (*University of Bucharest Charta*, Art. 16).

Also, according to the *Charta*, access to the academic community, either as a student or as faculty member, including management positions, cannot be “restricted on bases pertaining to sex, race, ethnicity, political or religious conviction” (*University of Charta*, Art. 45)<sup>4</sup>

A relevant legislative provision, which can function as a contributing factor for the relatively rapid inclusion of gender-related components in higher education in Romania, is related to university autonomy, “guaranteed” by the *Constitution of Romania* (Art. 32, Para. 6). The same principle is observed by both the 1995 *Law on Education* and by the 2011 *Law on National Education*. The 1995 *Law* stipulates, in Article 12, Para. 3, that “in higher education, the curricula and the syllabi are established according to university autonomy and national standards.” Article 13 reconfirms that “university autonomy is guaranteed.” In the series of principles stipulated in Article 3 and applicable to all levels of education, the 2011 *Law* also

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<sup>4</sup> Ratified by the Senate of the University of Bucharest in 1996, the *University Charta* was amended in 2008.

includes “the principle of university autonomy”, reiterated in the chapter on higher education, Article 118, Para. 1.

### *Student and Faculty Participation in the Educational Process*

Women make up more than half of the student body in both public and private higher education. During the last decade, for example, the percentage of women’s enrolment in public undergraduate higher education was between 53-54 percent (Table 1). Considering forms of learning, women attend, in higher percentages, regular classes and distance learning education (between 52-54 percent, and 57-58 percent, respectively), while men’s participation is significantly higher in evening classes (between 73 and 84 percent) and reduced attendance classes (68.45 percent, for the last academic year, increasing from 50.28 percent for the 2004-2005 academic year); however, in the last five years, women’s attendance of evening class increased by about 10 percent. Nevertheless, the total enrolment decreased by 8.50 percent, during the last five years, with women’s enrolment decreasing slightly more, by 10 percent (Table 1).

Table 1. Numbers of students enrolled in Romanian public higher education, by form of learning (last decade)

Form of learning	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent
General total	435,406	231,891	53.25	495,034	269,152	54.37	452,982	242,016	53.42
Regular classes	364,413	192,826	52.91	405,045	219,008	54.07	373,469	202,030	54.09
Evening classes	3,210	687	21.40	1,148	173	15.06	1,626	429	26.38
Reduced attendance	21,776	11,630	53.40	20,072	9,980	49.72	19,117	6,032	31.55
Distance learning	46,007	26,748	58.13	68,769	39,991	58.15	58,770	33,525	57.04

Sources: RNIS, 2002: 1; RNIS, 2005: 1; RNIS, 2010: 1.

In public higher education, student segregation, by gender, is obvious in the study areas women and men pursue (Table 2). While women tend to concentrate in medical education (69.28 percent, for the last academic year, and increasing, by almost 5 percent, since 2001), economics (64.71 percent, in 2009-2010), general university education (about 67 percent, throughout the decade), law (62.72 percent, in 2009-2010, with an increase of more than 6 percent, during the last ten years), and arts (between 54 percent-56 percent, in 2001-2010), men pursue, in significantly higher numbers, technical (between 71 percent-73 percent) and agricultural education (54 percent-64 percent, in the last decade).

Table 2. Student enrolment in Romanian public higher education, by study area (last decade)

Area of study	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent
General Total	435,406	231,891	53.25	495,034	269,152	54.37	452,982	242,016	53.42
Technical education	127,536	34,149	26.77	136,413	37,852	27.74	140,730	40,283	28.62
Agricultural education	15,810	7,195	45.50	19,614	6,970	35.53	14,698	5,303	36.07
Economics education	83,457	54,220	64.96	109,918	72,628	66.07	93,505	60,516	64.71
Medical education	31,112	20,075	64.52	32,995	22,322	67.65	44,165	30,598	69.28
General university education <sup>5</sup>	143,934	97,420	67.68	160,102	108,852	67.98	129,023	86,459	67.01
Law	26,000	14,688	56.49	27,262	15,658	57.43	22,853	14,334	62.72
Arts	7,557	4,144	54.83	8,730	4,870	55.78	8,008	4,523	56.48

Sources: RNIS, 2002, pp. 4-11; RNIS, 2005, pp. 6-13; RNIS, 2010, pp. 4-11.

Overall, in general university education,<sup>6</sup> women's presence is considerably higher, approximately 67 percent, in the last ten years. Women outnumber men in Social Sciences and in Humanities, as well as in Natural and Exact Sciences (see Table 3). The only specializations overwhelmingly dominated by male are Theology, Computer Science, and Physical Education; in these fields, women's presence is not only lower, but decreasing in the last decade. For example, women's enrolment in Computer Science decreased by 5 percent, in the last five years, while in Theology, by almost 20 percent. Also, women tend to pursue to a lesser degree some gender-balanced disciplines, or disciplines where women students used to lead in numbers: *e.g.*, women's enrolment in Physics decreased by 15 percent, in the last decade (from 59.35 percent to 44.11 percent), and in Geology, by almost 10 percent during the last five years (from 53.76 percent to 44 percent). In disciplines where women's enrolment was and is still high, the same tendency of decreased women's presence is apparent in the last decade's statistics: Biology (from 82.81 percent in 2001, to 75.87 percent, in 2009),

<sup>5</sup> See, Table 8, for student enrolment in general university education, by specialization and gender.

<sup>6</sup> According the official biannual auditing, completed by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, '(general) university education' comprises Social Sciences and the Humanities, the Natural and Exact Sciences, as well as Computer Science, Theology, Physical Education, etc. (See, Table 3, for all fields, disciplines, and student enrolment).

Chemistry (from 84.70 percent, in 2001, to 79.13 percent, in 2009), Geography (from 70.86 percent, in 2004 to 64.64 percent in 2009), Political Sciences (from 63.46 percent in 2001, to 60.42 percent in 2009), International Relations and European Studies (from 77.55 percent, in 2004, to 73.44 percent, in 2009), Sociology (from 81.36 percent, in 2004, to 78.77 percent, in 2009). The fields with higher and on the increase women's enrolment are Mathematics (from 60.67 percent, in 2004, to 63.38 percent, in 2009), Philosophy (from 55.43 percent, in 2001, to 66.72 percent, in 2009), Psychology (82.52 percent, in 2004, to 84.43 percent, in 2009), Educational Sciences (92.04 percent in 2004, to 96.21 percent, in 2009), Social Work (85.67 percent, in 2004, to 87.49 percent, in 2009), Journalism and Communication Studies (from 65.49 percent, in 2001, to 75.36 percent in 2009).

Therefore, this author believes that both women's and men's concentration in particular and different disciplinary/professional areas and the tendencies of increasing and/or decreasing enrolment could be justified by a combination of 'traditional' gender roles and of economic and financial orientation. For example, the top two study fields, where women's enrolment is overwhelmingly higher than men's, Pedagogy and Philology (Table 3), most likely provide the graduates with job opportunities in secondary education, which, in Romania, is highly underpaid. Even disciplines like Mathematics, Chemistry, or Philosophy, 'traditionally' labelled 'male' areas, and where women's participation is still low in many countries, in Romanian higher education, are dominated by women; yet, these also most likely lead to jobs in education and research, where financial resources and, to some extent, prestige are lower. On the other hand, Computer Science, where men stand for more than two thirds of the student body, offers much better paid job opportunities. A combination of economic and political factors could also explain the (yet slight) decrease in women's enrolments in such disciplines and specializations as Political Sciences, International Relations, and even Sociology, which have started to be seen as opportunity openers.



Table 3. Student enrolment in public undergraduate general university education (See, Table 2) by discipline/ specialization

Discipline/ specialization	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent
General Total	143,934	97,420	67.68	160,102	108,852	67.98	129,023	86,459	67.01
Mathematics and Computer Science <sup>7</sup>	13,118	6,300	48.02	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	-	-	-	5,839	3,543	60.67	2,141	1,357	63.38
Computer Science	-	-	-	6,802	2,297	33.76	6,926	1,963	28.34
Physics	3,514	2,086	59.35	3,210	1,670	52.02	1,360	600	44.11
Chemistry	3,523	2,984	84.70	2,901	2,310	79.62	1,414	1,119	79.13
Biology	5,515	4,567	82.81	5,902	4,668	79.09	4,033	3,060	75.87
Geography and Geology <sup>8</sup>	8,736	6,073	69.51	-	-	-	-	-	-
Geography	-	-	-	10,545	7,473	70.86	9,358	6,047	64.61
Geology	-	-	-	1,300	699	53.76	400	176	44.00
Museology <sup>*</sup>	141	103	73.04	-	-	-	-	-	-
History	8,375	4,714	56.28	8,318	4,871	58.55	3,411	1,904	55.81
Philosophy	2,412	1,337	55.43	2,609	1,724	66.07	1,241	828	66.72
Philology	24,199	21,970	90.78	29,192	26,317	90.15	20,042	17,736	88.49
Political Sciences	4,292	2,724	63.46	4,470	2,798	62.59	2,906	1,756	60.42
Administrative Sciences	13,712	9,825	71.65	16,200	10,501	64.82	14,300	9,973	69.74
Physical Education and Sports	12,163	3,830	31.48	11,851	3,350	28.26	10,351	3,150	30.43
Sociology- Psychology- Pedagogy <sup>9</sup>	25,389	21,785	85.80	-	-	-	-	-	-
Psychology	-	-	-	6,336	5,229	82.52	7,152	6,039	84.43
Educational Sciences (Psycho-Pedagogy)	-	-	-	12,142	11,176	92.04	11,782	11,336	96.21
Sociology	-	-	-	3,682	2,996	81.36	2,690	2,119	78.77
Social Work	-	-	-	4,936	4,229	85.67	5,309	4,645	87.49

<sup>7</sup> Data provided jointly for the two specializations, only for the 2001-2001 academic year. For the 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 academic years, information on Mathematics and Computer Science is provided separately.

<sup>8</sup> For the 2001/2002 academic year, the data for Geography and Geology is provided in bulk, while for the 2004/2005 and 2009/2010 academic years, the information for the two specializations is provided separately.

<sup>9</sup> For the 2001/2002 academic year, data on the three specializations is provided in bulk, while for the 2004/2005 and 2009/2010 academic years, the data on Psychology, Educational Sciences (Psycho-Pedagogy), Sociology, and Social Work is provided separately.

Discipline/ specialization	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent		Numbers	Percent
Journalism/ Communication Studies	5,891	3,858	65.49	9,575	6,888	71.93	8,990	6,775	75.36
International Relations and European Studies <sup>10</sup>	-	-		2,049	1,589	77.55	4,120	3,026	73.44
Theology	12,925	5,264	40.72	12,243	4,524	36.95	9,263	1,599	17.26
Environmental science <sup>11</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,288	838	65.06
Cultural studies <sup>12</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	546	413	75.64

\* No data on specialization in Museology, for the 2004/2005 and 2009/2010 academic years.

Sources: RNIS, 2002, pp. 8-11; RNIS, 2005, pp. 10-13; RNIS, 2010, pp. 8-11.

No statistical information for the University of Bucharest with respect to student enrolment has been publicly available. The National Institute of Statistics (RNIS) does not provide data on students, differentiated by universities, much less by disciplines/ specializations within specific educational institutions. However, from the internal statistics provided by the University of Bucharest,<sup>13</sup> the general trends of student enrolment valid for higher education in Romania are broadly applicable to the University of Bucharest, as well. For example, greater numbers of women are enrolled in undergraduate education in Administrative Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Philosophy, Geography, History, Journalism and Mass Communication, Foreign Languages and Literature, Psychology, Educational Sciences, Sociology, Social Work, and Political Sciences. Male students' enrolments are higher in Mathematics and Computer Science (taken together), Physics, Geology and Geophysics, and Christian Orthodox Theology (while, in Baptist and Roman Catholic Theology, women's enrolments are higher than men's).<sup>14</sup> Another trend, perceptible from the collected data, refers to women students who tend to concentrate in regular state-subsidized education, while in regular unsubsidized education, reduced attendance, and

<sup>10</sup> No data on this specialization for the 2001/2002 academic year.

<sup>11</sup> Data on specialization in Environmental Studies available for the 2009/2010 academic year only.

<sup>12</sup> Data on specialization in Cultural Studies provided for the 2009/2010 academic year only.

<sup>13</sup> To be able and access the data, the author had to submit an official written request pending approval by the University Senate. Since no centralized information on student enrolment is available, the author has had to skim through hundreds of pages, for each academic year, to acquire the much needed figures.

<sup>14</sup> Information is given for the 2010/2011 academic year. Source: S.C.1, University of Bucharest, 2010/2011 (unnumbered pages).

distance learning (all the latter forms of education require tuition fees to be paid by the students), their percentages decrease.<sup>15</sup>

Table 4. Faculty academic titles in public Romanian higher education institutions, in the last decade

Academic Title	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	in percent		Numbers	in percent		Numbers	in percent
General Total	25,174	9,849	39.12	26,790	11,189	41.76	26,757	12,232	45.71
Professor	4,356	760	17.44	5,057	1,055	20.86	5,082	1,437	28.20
Associate professor	3,852	1,188	30.84	4,285	1,638	38.22	4,867	2,167	44.52
Lecturer	7,068	3,074	43.49	6,844	3,129	45.71	7,149	3,583	50.11
Assistant lecturer	5,987	3,083	51.49	6,725	3,663	54.46	6,739	3,821	56.69
Teaching assistant	3,038	1,651	54.34	3,054	1,625	53.20	1,825	1,072	58.73
Consultant teaching staff	837	78	9.31	795	70	8.80	1,095	152	13.88
Teaching staff with research workload <sup>16</sup>	36	15	41.66	30	9	30.00	-	-	-

Sources: RNIS, 2002: V; RNIS, 2005: V; RNIS, 2010: V.

Women make up less than half of the teaching staff in higher education institutions in Romania, but there is an overall increase by approximately 6 percent (from 39.12 percent, in 2001, to 45.71 percent, in 2009) in the last decade. However, there are significant asymmetries between women and men, both in academic titles<sup>17</sup> and management positions. While women hold more than half of the two lowest academic titles (54 percent-58 percent, teaching assistants and 51 percent-56 percent, assistant lecturers, in the last decade), less than one third of full professorships is held by women, with an increase by 10 percent, in the last ten years (from 17.44 percent, in 2001, to 28.20 percent, in 2009). An even higher increase of women's percentage – almost 14 percent – is noticeable in the past

<sup>15</sup> Example: in the 2010/2011 academic year, at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, considering the two specialization areas together, women make up 44.18%, in regular public education, 35.04%, in regular private education, and 24.78%, in distance learning. The same is true for specializations with women as the vast majority: the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences registers 93.90% women enrolled in regular public educations, 82.60% women, in regular tuition paying education, and 81.46%, in distance learning (Source: S.C.1, University of Bucharest, 2010/2011, unnumbered pages).

<sup>16</sup> Information on the teaching staff with research workload is available for the 2001-2002 and 2004/2005 academic years, only.

<sup>17</sup> The academic hierarchy in Romanian higher education includes five titles, from the lowest to the highest, as follows: teaching assistant (preparator/-toare), assistant lecturer (asistent/-ă), lecturer (lector/-ă), associate professor (conferențiar/-ă), professor (profesor/-soară). According to the new *Law on education* and in compliance with the wider changes in Romanian higher education, 'alignment' to the European educational systems included, the teaching assistant position will cease to exist.

decade among women holding the position of associate professor (Table 4). Given the slightly larger concentration of women in the lower ranks of the academic hierarchy and the steady increase of women at the top, it is likely that a more gender-balanced faculty will be arise in two or three decades.

The general distribution of faculty by gender and academic title, in Romanian higher education institutions, is, by and large, valid for the University of Bucharest, as well, although women's overall participation tends to be slightly higher (by 2-3 percent). Women hold top academic titles in larger numbers and the increase over the last decade is significant, as compared to the general trend in higher education institutions. For example, at the University of Bucharest, in 2001, women held 23.41 percent of professorships (17.44 percent for all higher education institutions in Romania), and the ratio increased to 35.08 percent, in 2009 (as compared to the national 28.20 percent), *i.e.*, more than 11 percent. If, in terms of numbers of lecturers and associate professors, the increase is less significant, in terms of the two lowest academic titles, the boost is again remarkable – 10 percent for assistant lecturers and 24 percent for teaching assistants, from 2001 to 2009 (*see*, Table 5). This trend could be interpreted as being positive, supporting the hypothesis of a more gender-balanced higher education faculty, in two to three decades, and negative, with men choosing better paid and higher prestige occupational areas.

Table 5. Faculty by gender and academic title at the University of Bucharest, during the last decade

Academic Title	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		Numbers	in percent		Numbers	in percent		Numbers	in percent
General Total	1,551	641	41.32	1,588	689	43.38	1,402	674	48.07
Professor	316	74	23.41	352	91	25.85	305	107	35.08
Associate Professor	226	92	40.70	257	119	46.30	271	127	46.86
Lecturer	413	196	47.45	426	196	46.00	372	190	51.07
Assistant lecturer	360	189	52.50	342	197	57.60	259	161	62.16
Teaching assistant	154	75	48.70	128	72	56.25	81	59	72.83
Teaching consultant	80	14	17.5	83	14	16.86	114	30	26.31
Teaching staff with research workload <sup>18</sup>	2	1	50.00	-	-	-	-	-	-

Sources: RNIS, 2002, pp. 94-95; RNIS, 2005, pp. 88-89; RNIS, 2010, pp. 114-115.

The category, consultant teaching staff, shows an interesting dynamic with respect to both gender and age (S. Tables 7 and 8, in the Annex). In Romanian

<sup>18</sup> Data for this category was only available for the 2001-2002 academic year.

higher education institutions, the category generally (but not exclusively) includes teaching staff having reached the retirement age, but who have chosen and been accepted by the university to continue teaching. In the 2004-2005 academic year, women made up only 8.80 percent of this category; in 2009-2010, the percentage of women increased by 5 percent. When considering the age variable for regular faculty, the percentage of women in the 65 plus age group is extremely low: 12.5 percent, in 2004 and 15.51 percent, in 2009. In the 60-64 age group women's presence is slightly higher, but steady (about 25 percent) during the last five years (see, Tables 7 and 8, in the Annex). Looking into this disparity would be worthwhile, by using qualitative research methods and examining the institutional mechanisms and practices and the individual choices that could account for it.

Statistical data on institutional management show the unequal distribution of women and men throughout Romanian higher education institutions: in 2004, women in management positions represented 25.89 percent; in 2009, they represented 30.14 percent. (RNIS, 2005: 94-95; RNIS, 2010: 124-125) Currently, the Rector of the University of Bucharest is a man; two of the five Vice Rectors are women (40 percent). It is relevant, however, that the male Vice Rectors' areas of management are academic programmes and publications, scientific research and financing, international relations and quality management, while one female Vice Rector manages student social problems, and the other one, manages financial, human, and material resource (University of Bucharest website), a situation that renders visible a distribution of management tasks at the crossroads of 'traditional' gender roles and academic prestige and importance. At the level of faculty/ chair/ department management, no statistical information is available for the University of Bucharest. By manually searching each faculty and department websites and counting management positions, the author has found that currently less than a quarter of the dean position is held by women (21.05 percent), one third of the vice dean positions is taken by women, while women department/ chair persons make up 41.89 percent (Table 6).

Table 6. Current management positions at the University of Bucharest (by level and gender)

Management position	Total	Women	
		Numbers	in percent
Dean	19	4	21.05
Vice Dean	33	11	33.33
Scientific Secretary	19	6	31.57
Head of Department / Chairperson	74	31	41.89

Source: The author.

Although most academics interviewed were aware of the gender asymmetry and some even acknowledged a form of 'glass ceiling,' in terms of both academic titles and management positions, none considered that any policies were appropriate or desirable to increase women's access to higher academic titles or management positions. Explanations for this reluctance range from 'the famous communist provision of 33 percent women in all areas' to the 'meritocracy principle,' 'intellectual and human value,' 'scientific accomplishment' in higher education, conceived as entirely neuter to gender (M.V., R.I., M.C., I.B., S.M., interviewees.) Most interviewees referred to the equal opportunities, or the non-discriminatory policies, in the national legislation and in the University of Bucharest Charta, thus rendering any gender-targeted policies superfluous, if not outright wrong, and unfair. Moreover, one of the male vice rectors, when overtly enquired about the gender disparities in the distribution by academic titles and management positions contended that:

"This doesn't mean that the university has set up selective mechanisms that would create such a structure, such a type of sampling. Of course, it is a construction that has a social source rather than an institutional one. This stratification is not the result of a selection; it is not us, as institutional representatives, that have produced these final hierarchies that you are talking about, statistically speaking. With respect to a balanced approach, they are a definite source of interpretations, but I believe that a woman has never been rejected from a management position, when she ran against a man, because she was a woman. [...] Our only options, in our case, are the intellectual value, the human value, scientific achievement and less belonging to [one] gender. This is an absolutely natural criterion in an institution such as the University of Bucharest." (R.I., interviewee)

In contrast, one of the interviewed female Vice Rectors observed and commented, at length, on the overt and covert gender biased attitudes and practices of the general academic environment in Romania. She mentioned explicit obstructive attempts against the advancement of female academics, but did not refer to and was not able to recall such blatant cases at the University of Bucharest. At the same time, the same Vice Rector admitted that she had reservations as to the possibility of introducing affirmative policies for women in higher education, especially due to the negatively perceived experiences (including personal incidents) and the inappropriate application of the mandatory '30 percent women' requirement during the communist regime. (M.V., interviewee)

## A PROGRAMME OF THEIR OWN? GENDER STUDIES AND GENDER IN STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

In this section, we present a brief overview of gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania. We will show that this research identified a combination of individual scientific and career pursuits, institutional and political transformations triggered by national and international educational, economic, and political mechanisms and interests, which could account for the inclusion of gender-related issues and gender studies in post-1990 curricula, in higher education institutions and in training, research, and activist NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. The author argues that the rapid and partially successful inclusion of gender studies in Romania accompanied other transformations at the levels of the educational system and of the economic, social, and political order. As Susan Zimmermann extensively, analytically, and critically shows in her study (Zimmermann, 2008: 131-160), in the framework of conceptualizing the post-1989-1991 transformations, the category of gender was used not only for its critical potential of examining existing social, economic, and political asymmetries, but also as a means of imposing a specific Western model of liberal democracy and free market economy. (Griffin, 2001; Ghodsee, 2004: 27-753; Ghodsee, 2006)

In Western Europe, the emergence and, later on, institutionalization of women's and gender studies in higher education, in the 1980s, mostly followed and was, for the greater part, in close connection with, and relied on women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and their militant concerns and activist agendas (Ergas, 1994: 527-547; Griffin, 2002; Frunză, 2008; Cîrstocea, 2009). In Central and Eastern Europe, the inclusion and institutionalization of women's and gender studies in higher education institutions pursued a different path. Studies looking at the process of institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe showed that, though not uniformly, this field of teaching and research penetrated, after the 1989-1991 regime change, rather rapidly and in part successfully in either officially recognized academic programmes, or in independent centres of studies and in privately financed universities. (Grünberg, 2001; Zimmermann, 2008; Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008; Cîrstocea, 2009)

In Romania, after 1990, women's studies, feminism and general gender issues were, at best, met largely with scepticism, if not outright rejection, by both dominant intellectual and media discourses, and by the bulk of the academic environment. (Miroiu, 1998: 252-274; Frunză, 2004; Miroiu, 2006) At the same time, in public higher education institutions, the inclusion of gender studies courses and the establishment of standalone graduate programmes focussed on gender studies occurred relatively rapidly and, to some extent, successfully, during the mid-

90s and early 2000s. (Nicolaescu, 2002; Popescu, 2002; Magyari-Vincze, 2002; Dascăl, 2002) In most studies, the resistance to feminism and gender concerns is read within, on the one hand, the particular social and political contexts specific to post-communist countries before the 1989-1991 regime change (Bahovec, *et al.*, 2002; Pető, 2006),<sup>19</sup> and, on the other, as the perceived imported Western character of this field of social, cultural, and political critique and activism (Miroiu, 2001).

It is interesting that the socialist state's official policy on women's equality with men could function both as an explanation for the rejection of post-1989 concerns for women's and gender issues, including research and teaching in these areas, and as a justification for the rapid acceptance, at least in some contexts, of gender as a category for policies as well as scholarly interest. This apparent paradox could be explained by the fact that, on the one hand, women's and men's equality was postulated in the official socialist ideology and discourse, thus making gender-related concerns either unnecessary, since equality has already been achieved, or a specific 'communist' issue, rejected by the dominant anti-communist discourse. On the other hand, since the category of gender was, according to the official socialist ideology and practice, subordinated to that of class, the new, Western, model of democracy and human rights discourse brought it to the fore, thus establishing itself as different from socialist ideology, also by means of using gender as a "symbolic marker" of Western, democratic transformations, including economic, political, and educational structures. (Zimmermann, 2008)

The emergence of women's and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe can be traced back to the late 1980s. Zimmermann distinguishes three broad stages in the institutionalization of this field in Central and Eastern European and the former Soviet Union space. The first one, starting in the late 1980s until mid-1990s, is the period of endeavours and activities to introduce women's studies/ gender studies in these regions, mostly in NGOs and informal settings, some supported by international actors (such as, the United Nations and the World Bank). During the period, no significant institutional changes occurred, and training courses and research took place only outside the officially established framework of higher education (Zimmermann, 2008).

Zimmermann considers the next stage, roughly from 1995 to 2000, to be the "time of the Americans", when most funds were coming from North American and Anglo-Saxon international organizations (such as the MacArthur Foundation and

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<sup>19</sup> This explanation, using the 'communist heritage,' was also mentioned by I. Băluță, an academic teaching gender-related courses at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest. I. Băluță is the coordinator of the recently authorized Master's Degree programme on Politics of Equal Opportunities. However, Băluță stressed the clichéd character of this too easily accepted justification for the resistance to feminism or affirmative policies for women. (I.B., interviewee)



the Open Society Institute), and when the first substantial steps were being taken towards the institutionalization of women's and gender studies in (mostly) private higher education institutions. That was the result of the "internationalized and privately funded parallel sector or shadow network of higher education" (*ibid.*, p. 135), which led to full scale gender studies courses, and (especially postgraduate) programmes, and outreach activities. It is especially during this phase and within these processes that Zimmermann identifies the constitution of the category of gender and of gender studies as one of the "symbolic markers" of the much broader agenda of "Westernization" and "liberal globalization" (*id.*, p. 141). The same mechanisms are identified by G. Griffin in a range of geo-political contexts. She points out the close correlation of "gender-conscious transformation of society" with efforts targeting democratization and free market economy, supported by such international organizations as the United Nations and the World Bank. (Griffin, 2001)

The third and ongoing phase of the institutionalization of women's and gender studies started in 2000. For Central and Eastern Europe, this phase shifted from a (mostly) American influence to a European Union influence, under the requirements put forward by the *Bologna Declaration* (1999) and the subsequent communiqués. The Bologna process sought to enforce the standardization of the higher education systems in the European Union countries, the "accession zone" included, targeting institutional reform at several levels and with several goals: academic degrees easily recognizable throughout the educational structures having adhered to the Bologna process; a three-cycle study system (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor's); transferable credits that would allow for of students', instructors', and researchers' high mobility, for inter-university cooperation, and for the set up of a "European dimension" in higher education. Although individual countries are not legally compelled to implement the various policies advanced by the Bologna process, the hegemonic character of this framework makes it difficult, if not impossible, for local and national actors to survive and work outside it. Combined with the reforms designed for higher education, the requirements put forward by the European Union, through the *acquis communautaire*, established the major focus areas that the acceding countries had to achieve. Under such conditions, equality of opportunities, gender mainstreaming and teaching and research in these areas became important signposts for the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe countries wishing to join the European Union. Thus, a different path towards the institutionalization of women's and gender studies was created, this time mostly in state higher education institutions and with European Union endorsement and funding. (Zimmermann, 2008)

Considering the general dynamics and timing of the institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe, gender studies issues

penetrated Romanian higher education in rather different ways and at a rather early stage.

First, there were gender components in some courses, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, in the Social Sciences and Humanities, in several Romanian universities, in the early and mid-1990s. For example, between 1993 and 1995, the Faculty of Sociology, the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies, at the University of Bucharest, offered courses focussed on gender and feminism (M.M.; L.G.; D.R.-F., interviewees). Moreover, starting in 1998, a postgraduate Master's programme in gender studies was offered at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies (NSPAS) in Bucharest, as the first programme in gender studies granting an officially recognized diploma by an educational system from Central and Eastern Europe. (Miroiu, 2001; Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008)

Second, from the start, the gender studies courses, modules, and postgraduate programmes were introduced in public higher education institutions. In several Romanian university centres, such as Bucharest, Cluj, and Timișoara, public higher education institutions offered optional and mandatory undergraduate and postgraduate courses in gender studies. That was the case of the Master's programme in Gender Studies from the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, established in 1998. Another case was the Interdisciplinary Group for Gender Studies, established in 2000, at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology from the *Babeș-Bolyai* University, in Cluj, which offered a two-year gender studies module for undergraduate students enrolled in different specializations, and completed with a graduation certificate. (Frunză, 2008) In 2003, two more Master's programmes, focussed on gender studies were developed: the Master's programme on *Gender, Differences and Inequalities*, by the *Babeș-Bolyai* University in Cluj<sup>20</sup> and the Master's programme on *Socio-Cultural Gender: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, by the West University in Timișoara,<sup>21</sup> both universities being public higher education institutions and granting officially recognized postgraduate degrees. (Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008)

Third, some of the courses and one of the postgraduate programmes in gender studies were taught, at least initially, without any or with insignificant external funding. The first gender and/ or feminism-related courses, introduced at the University of Bucharest in the early and mid-1990s, were financed neither by American, nor by West European organizations and foundations. The same was true for the establishment of the Master's programme in Gender Studies in Bucharest, financed from state budget funds, exclusively (M.M., interviewee). It

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<sup>20</sup> Enikő Magyari-Vincze was the initiator and coordinator of this postgraduate programme.

<sup>21</sup> The originator and coordinator of the Master's programme was Reghina Dascăl.

was true that the academics teaching those courses were acquainted to gender and feminist concepts and approaches and used 'Western' bibliography, but that influence could be conceived as more oblique than funding and curriculum development models. In contrast, the Master's programmes in Cluj and Timișoara benefited from external funding, especially American and British, through the Open Society Foundation (Cluj and Timișoara) and the University of Sussex and the University of Nijmegen (Cluj). (Frunză, 2008)

Although there are several variations in the institutional mechanisms, financial support and individual, and networking strategies involved in the processes of inclusion of gender studies in higher education in the three university centres mentioned above, a brief remark on certain underlying factors and transformations could shed new light on the dynamics of gender studies induction in Romanian higher education.

First, gender studies could become part of the officially recognized curricula due to a relative opening and flexibility of the higher education system; as shown above, the national legal framework, by taking into account of the principle of 'university autonomy,' presses, to a certain degree, towards higher education reform. For instance, during the late 1990s, when the first Master's programme in gender studies was established, the Ministry of Education was going through a 'very reformist' period (M.M, interviewee), which made possible the introduction of new subject areas.

Second, the flexibility of the education system, on its own, does not hold up the introduction of new fields of teaching and research. The interpersonal relationships, the high academic standing, and the management positions of those promoting either gender components in courses at the undergraduate level, or gender studies postgraduate programmes, has had a fundamental impact in the fairly rapid and (to some extent and in some institutions) successful acceptance of this field as a legitimate scholarly enterprise. Such 'personalisation' could be read positively, as an opportunity to include gender studies in public higher education, or adversely, as an 'immature field' which substitutes deficiency of academic legitimacy and 'epistemic necessity' with a strong personal scholarly and/ or management authority. (Miroiu, quoted in, Văcărescu, 2006). Therefore, the courses and programmes run the risk of being discontinued as soon as their promoters, for one reason or another, cease being involved. This factor may have contributed to the discontinuation of the postgraduate programmes in gender studies at the West University in Timișoara, in 2006, and at the *Babeș-Bolyai* University in Cluj, in 2008.

Third, although external international (European and American) financial, logistical, and curriculum support differed in source, timing, and extent, in one form or another, sooner or later, it contributed to the professionalisation of the teaching staff, to the endowment of the programmes, research, and outreach

centres set up to function along and support the gender studies postgraduate programmes,<sup>22</sup> and to the foci of the gender studies programs. Thus, all three Master's programmes restructured their curricula and general conceptual and practical orientations after the first years of their existence. This was, of course, due to various institutional and political factors and strategies, as well as to the perceived social and political structural and legislative transformations. For example, from a general curriculum that provided the first student cohorts with diverse conceptual and methodological approaches to gender studies and feminism, the Master's programme in Bucharest shifted its emphasis on a narrower approach, focused on gender in/ and public policy, a change that was observable in both the curriculum and name of the programme: in 2001, it changed to *Gender Studies and Public Policy*; in 2005, we had *Gender Studies and European Politics* (Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008). Currently, it runs as *Politics, Gender, and Minorities*.<sup>23</sup> These transformations in the conceptualization of gender studies teaching and research constitute symptoms of the process of 'European-unionization' and 'marketisation' of higher education in general, and of this field, in particular. (Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008; Zimmermann, 2008) Thus, it is essential to understand the dynamics of institutional change and international financial and political interests as undoubtedly influencing local options and opportunities, but not always uniformly and unidirectionally, informing the form and content of the teaching and research practices undertaken locally.

### 'MAINSTREAMING' GENDER STUDIES? GENDER-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

To get a more complete and accurate picture of the gender studies induction in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania, one should look both at the local and national institutional mechanisms, priorities, and transformations, and at the larger, global and transnational, politics and interests. This section submits a concise overview of the inclusion of gender studies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, at the University of Bucharest. This author investigates departmental and university practices, transnational higher education

<sup>22</sup> E.g. *The Society for Feminist Analyses AnA* and the Centre for Gender Studies and Curriculum Development: FILIA had, at different stages, an important input in the development of the Master's programme in Bucharest. While during the early and mid-1990s, AnA did not benefit from permanent external financial assistance, both Ana and FILIA ran programmes supported by international organizations in the late 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s. On the other hand, the Centre for Gender Studies at the *Babeş-Bolyai* University in Cluj and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the West University in Timișoara were set up, in the early 2000s, with West European and US financial support.

<sup>23</sup> Visit NSPAS site, for programme mission, goal, courses, and teaching staff.

structures and politics, and personal investments and interests that give shape to the current configuration of gender studies in the University of Bucharest. The data is sourced in faculty curricula, inter-university and inter-departmental partnerships, and curriculum development projects, as well as information, assessments, and perspectives provided in the semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the university management, department heads, and with academics teaching at some of the faculties the curricula of which incorporate gender studies courses.

In several studies and European research reports, the institutionalization of women's and gender studies is circumscribed to six basic phases: "the activist phase," "the establishment phase," "the integration phase," "the professionalisation phase," "the disciplinisation phase," and "the autonomy phase." (Griffin, 2005: 89-90)<sup>24</sup> Of course, the phases do not necessarily have to occur successively and each phase degree of completion may differ, according to various country and institutional specifics. Moreover, as different research reports show, no European country has achieved the comprehensive institutionalization of women's studies/ gender studies according to this model.<sup>25</sup> The main indicators established for estimating women's studies/ gender studies level of institutionalization include: the number of chairs/ professors and lectureships; the presence of autonomous women's studies/ gender studies centres or departments; the academic standing of the teaching and research staff involved; the number and variety of degree awarding undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; the number of disciplines involved in women's studies/ gender studies; the amount and kind of financial support; the research capacity; the recognition of the discipline by the higher education decision-making bodies. (Griffin, 2005: 90-91)

Although this model, with its accompanying institutionalization indicators, may, to some extent, be useful in evaluating and comparing diverse institutional mechanisms and practices, this author believes that setting a rigid teleological

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<sup>24</sup> Griffin elaborates on the six phases: "The activist phase: individual optional modules begin to appear within traditional disciplines though most Women's Studies-related work is carried out outside the academy; The establishment phase: generic and thematic Women's Studies modules are introduced; interdisciplinary co-teaching units are established; The integration phase: Women's Studies modules become part of the core compulsory provision of traditional disciplines; The professionalisation phase: Women's Studies degree programmes are introduced and Women's Studies staff including professors are appointed; The disciplinisation phase: department-like centres for teaching, research and documentation are established; The autonomy phase: Women's Studies functions like any other discipline with the same accreditation, funding, and degree-awarding rights." (Griffin, 2005: 89-90)

<sup>25</sup> *E.g. Employment and Women's Studies: The Impact of Women's Studies Training on Women's Employment in Europe*, research project undertaken between 2001 and 2003, and financed by the Directorate General XII of the European Union. Partial findings published in (Griffin, 2005).

pattern and using it indiscriminately may, at best, fail to acknowledge various countries' idiosyncrasies with respect to educational, financial, and political factors and priorities, as well as personal commitments and pursuits at play in the process of including gender studies in higher education curricula. At worst, it may run the risk of imposing a set of external, and thus irrelevant and unusable, standards that neither have an explanatory power for the processes taking place in individual local educational settings, nor allow for different and meaningful changes.

Consequently, we use a more flexible notion of institutionalization, which, although does not necessarily follow the European model mentioned above, could more adequately account for the specific processes that took place in Romanian higher education institutions and research centres. Given, on the one hand, the particular understandings by the teaching and research staff involved in gender studies in Romania of the 'dilemma' of separation *versus* integration of the field, and, on the other hand, the specifics of introducing gender studies courses and the establishment of gender studies postgraduate programmes in Romanian public higher education, this author considers the use of the notion, inclusion, as more suitable than institutionalization. In this context, inclusion should be understood as a dynamic and flexible process, with both positive and negative aspects. It implies not only creative, institutional and personal, strategies for promoting gender studies in higher education curricula, but also disregard and institutional indifference, even obstruction. As revealed by the research undertaken, the inclusion of gender studies in various faculty curricula, at the University of Bucharest and the academics' approaches to Gender-Inclusive curriculum is a composite process that entails both advancements and setbacks.

As already mentioned in the previous section, gender- and feminism-related courses started to be taught at several faculties of the University of Bucharest in the early 1990s. The courses were mostly optional and dealt with the introduction to gender issues in sociology and social work (at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work), feminist philosophy (at the Faculty of Philosophy), feminist literary criticism (at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures), gender and media (at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies). (M.M.; L.G., D.R.-F.; O.B.; R.S., interviewees) The introduction of such courses in public higher education curricula was the result of a combination of mechanisms that included the academics' interest and commitment to the newly 'discovered' field, their perception of it as a 'niche' worth exploring, and the fairly open departmental curricula, undergoing, during the 1990s, their first process of alteration after the regime change. The institutional mechanisms, understood as active involvement through political, financial or technical support, did not contribute to the inclusion of gender studies courses other than ensuring faculty and chair curriculum autonomy and thus not deterring initiatives in curriculum innovation.

During the 2000s, other faculties at the University of Bucharest included women and gender related courses: *e.g.*, a course on the construction of gender taught within the French track at the Faculty of Political Sciences; one on women's history in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, at the Faculty of History, and one on gender in advertising, at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies. All courses mentioned above were taught at undergraduate level.

Currently, courses with a main focus on gender and/ or women, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, continue to be taught at the same faculties and, in general, by the same academics. For instance, Alin Ciupală's course, entitled *Woman's Place in the Public and Private Spheres in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Romanian Society*, was offered at the Faculty of History, from 2000 to 2006, at Bachelor's level and it was discontinued because of budget cutbacks. At present, a new course, *Body and Sexuality in 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, is offered by the same academic. Alin Ciupală also teaches the course, *Gender Discourses in Arts*, for the Master's programme on the History of Art and the Philosophy of Culture, at the same faculty. (A.C., interviewee) At the Faculty of Political Sciences, Ionela Băluță introduced the first course on gender, in the faculty curriculum, in 2000; later on, she reconfigured it into two separate courses, currently offered, one on women and politics, the other one on feminism and political ideologies. She also teaches a course on equal opportunity policies in the European Union, offered as part of the Master's programme on European and Romanian Politics. (I.B., interviewee)<sup>26</sup>

In cooperation with three other faculties from the University of Bucharest, the very same Faculty of Political Sciences offers a postgraduate programme on Equal Opportunities Policies in the European Union and in Romania. The programme has recently been received by the University Senate and it will most likely be effective as of October 2011.<sup>27</sup> As Ionela Băluță, the initiator of the Masters' programme, explained, the programme includes three main flows: gender, ethnicity, and poverty (I.B., interviewee). This is the first programme with a primary gender component established at the University of Bucharest and, later on, we will examine some of the institutional mechanisms, academic strategies, and personal contributions involved in its design.

Another significant example of gender studies inclusion in the curriculum is that of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, the Master's programme, Research in Sociology (delivered in English), of which offers, starting the 2009/2010 academic year, a course on Gender Studies. In our interview, Laura Grünberg, the academic teaching this course, points out that the new management of the faculty,

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<sup>26</sup> Visit UB site, for Master's curriculum.

<sup>27</sup> Beside the University's approval of content, format, partners, etc., any study programme has to go through the process of accreditation by ARACIS (See, the website), an autonomous public institution.

particularly Dr. Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Head of the Sociology Department, is highly receptive to curriculum changes and he has made a point of promoting gender studies. She also remarked an increased student interest in the topic, correspondingly reflected in the raising number of Bachelor's theses with a main focus on gender, in the last years. (L.G., interviewee, Feb., 2011) Moreover, Grünberg pointed out that the new online academic journal, *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, initiated and coordinated by Cosima Rughiniș, academic with the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, has recently had a special issue on *Women and Men*. All such endeavours, some promoted by academics not necessarily specializing in gender studies, make up signs of an increased awareness of gender in higher education teaching and research and can be read as positive undertakings for integrating gender studies in academic curricula.

However, there are several disciplines and/ or specializations in Social Sciences and Humanities where gender-related components and courses failed to be included in faculty curricula, or their inclusion is minimal. Such is the case of Psychology and Educational Studies (L.B., interviewee), Philosophy, and Law. Moreover, even within the disciplines/ specializations where gender-related concerns and gender studies are included, they are not part of the core curriculum, being attributed a rather secondary position. Their inclusion in the curriculum is closely related to the few academics whose research interests are in gender studies and also teach them. Several reasons have been offered for this marginal and contested position of gender studies in Romanian higher education.

From the interviews conducted by the author with members of university and faculty management, and with the teaching staff involved, in one way or another, in gender studies, three broad categories of obstacles or difficulties that the field meets with in the process of inclusion in higher education curriculum have been identified. First, there is the broad socio-cultural and political context resistant to gender related issues and concerns, which translates into a negative perception of gender studies in the academic environment. Alin Ciupală, for instance, articulated this in the backwardness paradigm, judging the Romanian society as a 'traditionalist society,' attached, to a large extent, to "certain values particular to a traditionalist society which understands values specific to a western cultural and mental space with diffidence and even with difficulty" (A.C., interviewee). One other interviewee, Ionela Băluță also reflected on that negative perception as justified by most academics' lack of experience in the field. She identified both the larger social and cultural representations and the specific educational and scientific patterns, chiefly manifest in "generation" differences, as factors contributing to an overall dismissal of gender studies in the academic environment:



“There still is a negative perception or, at best, a total ignorance of gender studies as a scientific field. [...] the generations educated before 1990, in particular, have no knowledge, there is no knowledge of the scientific field, at least at a basic level, as we know it – each specializing in Sociology, Psychology, etc. –, we have basic knowledge in several other disciplines. [...] It has to do with the horizon of the social representations with live in, and someone who is not interested in the scientific field of gender studies, someone who lacks education in the field is, from this point of view, *i.e.*, of the representations related to feminism, to gender, just as ingenuous – I’m sorry to say it – as any ordinary person. And this person could be an excellent philosopher, an excellent philologist; if he/she is cognitively gender blind, I think he/she reproduces just as naively common representations as my neighbour.” (I.B., interviewee)

A second obstacle in the inclusion of gender studies in higher education curriculum, in general, and at the University of Bucharest, in particular, exists in the discipline area, ranging from issues related to academic legitimacy, external contestation, dissimilar conceptualizations of gender studies by academics working in the field, study field boundaries. For instance, Silvia Marton considers that the most challenging difficulty is the establishment of gender studies as a legitimate academic and intellectual pursuit; gender studies have not reached the status enjoyed by other new fields, such as communication studies, or the history of political ideas. She also compares the intellectual debates over the scientific standing of gender studies, in Romania, to Western models:

“The most interesting obstacle, as well as the most problematic, is an intellectual one: gender studies still struggle – all the more in Romania – to find that uncriticisable place as an intellectual pursuit. The Romanian intellectual debate is probably similar to what was going on, in the 1970s and 1980s, in the USA.” (S.M., interviewee)

Similar concerns were voiced by Alin Ciupală, again referring to the ‘Western’ model that, in his view, could be used to learn from:

“I believe that this situation shows the immaturity of gender studies in Romania, because we only repeat some of the errors made by those who first organized gender studies in the Western space. Instead of learning from the rich and long experience of the Western academic environment, all we do is echoing a beginning that will hold us back.” (A.C., interviewee)

The examination of study field boundaries, the various conceptualizations and definitions of both the field under consideration and the appropriate role of higher education with respect to its critical potential, including the ‘activist’ dimension of women’s studies, feminism, and gender studies, have been extensively analyzed and discussed in the literature. Some of the academics teaching gender studies at the University of Bucharest read those aspects as acute factors that contributed to

sidelining the field and that could influence its future configuration. For instance, Silvia Marton considers that “the confusion” between gender studies and feminism constitutes one of the most important challenges to the establishment of the field:

“Feminism means militancy, it is political action [...] It is a sphere of activity that can, by itself, become object of study in the university, but it’s not the university’s preoccupation. However, gender studies are an intellectual interrogation as any other, looking at citizenship in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, at women in ... as any other scholarly field. Therefore, this confusion is of no help to gender studies.” (S.M., interviewee)

On the same line of argumentation, Ionela Băluță identifies the conditions under which gender studies and feminism were introduced in higher education as another rationale for the academic reluctance to this field. She believes that the conflation of scholarly enterprises with activist approaches produced a general dismissal of gender studies as not sufficiently “scientific” and too closely associated with militancy:

“It has to do with the way gender studies entered Romanian academic environment. [...] And the fact that gender studies penetrated the academic environment at the same time and, somehow, in a sort of symbiosis with the establishment of feminism, of the feminist movement, strengthened – I think – especially in the academic sphere, the conviction that one cannot study this issue without being that sort of militant feminist. Without people bothering to learn what academic feminism means and to look at the diversity of contemporary feminist movements, for there is a very broad spectrum – radical feminism, moderate feminism, multicultural feminism. [...] And then, the fact that these academic studies have been, from the start – I repeat –, connected to the feminist movement leads to a rejection based on the motivation ‘this is not science, this is militancy’.” (I.B., interviewee)

Also related to disciplinary issues, one other impediment in the way of an ample and more substantial inclusion of gender studies in the higher education curriculum was identified, by virtually all the academics interviewed: the absence of a solid conceptual and methodological scheme used in the gender studies research carried out in Romania and in the scarcity of the teaching staff specialized in the field (A.C., I.B., interviewees). As Oana Băluță put it,

“[i]n order to introduce a gender perspective, one needs to produce specialists, to bring experts in the institution. One needs maybe more time than the University of Bucharest needed, in the period following 1990, although it’s been 20 years – and to me that seems enough.” (O.B., interviewee)

Another set of obstacles, located at the intersection of disciplinary practices and individual academics’ priorities and concerns, was detectable in the interviews conducted. The mono-disciplinary approach and the rigidity of some academics in decision-making positions within faculties in terms of curriculum change were

considered by Maria Voinea as contributing to the sluggish inclusion of gender studies:

“Since the number of hours and courses cannot exceed an established amount, each academic teaching a particular discipline tries to include his subjects, those that for years, for dozens of years, for entire generations, were part of the students’ education in that particular field. Thus, newer disciplines or orientations are avoided.” (M.V., interviewee)

Mihai Coman, Dean, provided a different, yet related, justification. He characterized the Romanian system of education as “aged” and identified the symptoms in the unwillingness of many high standing academics, and thus of their disciplines, to open up to new perspectives, to include new directions of scholarly inquiries. (M.C., interviewee)

A third area of difficulties, but in close connection with the previously discussed, consists in the institutional mechanisms that could function as both obstacles and (indirect) support. For instance, the absence of the field legitimacy translates into the absence of gender studies as a recognized discipline, or even specialization, in the Ministry of Education nomenclature (I.B. and S.M., interviewees), which circularly leads to disciplinary and institutional obstruction to the inclusion of gender studies courses in the curriculum, to specializing staff in the discipline and to accrediting programmes with gender as a main component, at different educational levels. On the other hand, the higher education system, which, as already shown, stipulates, as one of its fundamental principles, university autonomy and academic freedom, allows for the inclusion of gender studies in various curricula, though only as marginal subjects.

Yet, several interviewed academics explained that, during the last decade, there was a noticeable opening of the academic environment and that various disciplines and courses include gender as one of the categories of analysis. (I.B.; S.M.; M.V., and M.C., interviewees) Inclusion – partial and unevenly distributed across disciplines – was also visible in the curriculum research undertaken, which shows that the so-called ‘general’ courses, in various disciplines and specializations, include at least a few topics on gender and/or women and/or feminism: *e.g.*, courses and seminars on social structures of communication, political studies, semiotics, etc., taught at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies (R.S.; Z.R.; O.B.; M.C., interviewees); courses on the history of poverty, citizenship, and social inclusion/ exclusion, theories of justice, offered at the Faculty of Political Sciences (S.M., interviewee). In the opinion of the interviewees, the inclusion of gender issues in such courses was justified by the particularities of the disciplines, both conceptual and strategic. Conceptually, in such disciplines as Political Sciences, Sociology, Anthropology, Educational Sciences, Media Studies, History, and Law, the gender component is essential and failing to include it

amounts to partial and inaccurate knowledge production (M.V.; M.C.; I.B.; S.M.; O.B.; L.B., interviewees). Strategically, faculties that include gender studies in their curricula are considered open and up-to-date with current international (read Western) academic trends and scholarly interests, thus rendering such courses and programmes financeable within European Union transnational educational projects. Moreover, some academics mentioned the raising student interest in the field, at least during the last five years, and the fact that, though some ambiguous reactions to gender and feminism were mentioned, the topic is starting to be seen as 'cool,' as one academic put it, however, not only because it is an issue perceived as "very contemporary, very present in Europe, in the world. They are very sensitive to this." (S.M., interviewee)

Students' interest in gender-related topics was indicated by all academics I spoke to. Although the faculties I concentrated my study on do not have a database of theses' titles and the theses are not accessible for examination, the interviewees explained that there are many theses, at all levels of study, that have as a main focus gender, women and feminist inquiries. (M.C.; I.B.; S.M.; R.S.; A.C., interviewees) Moreover, during the last five years, an increased prior awareness of gender and a rising recognition of it as a relevant category of investigation were detectable in the student body. (I.B., interviewee)<sup>28</sup>

Thus, considering the institutional mechanisms, financing priorities, disciplinary obstacles, and personal strategies at play in the process of gender inclusion in higher education curriculum, the fact that most academics involved in the field considered that gender should be both taught within a separate programme of study and included in various disciplines and curricula is justified. (I.B.; S.M.; O.B.; R.S.; A.C., interviewees) However, there are differences in the academics' understandings of the way this 'double' inclusion should/ might work, as well as slightly divergent explanations for the necessity of using both strategies. For example, Ionela Băluță acknowledges the positive impact that a separate programme might have on the legitimacy of the field, but considers that, before establishing one, it is necessary to start by introducing gender components in courses at all levels of education, testing the reception of the issues, and preparing a specialized teaching staff:

"From personal experience, I started by introducing [gender studies] at the Bachelor's level, so I have offered elective courses. And, to me, this has been the easiest way, given the fact that we have neither many specialists, nor is it a well-developed, autonomous academic field, and it does not enjoy enough scientific legitimacy as yet. [...] So, I think it is useful to begin with such subjects, to see students' interest; then, start talking to colleagues and make them sensitive to these

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<sup>28</sup> Also, the author's personal experience with students, when teaching gender, either included in semiotics, for instance, or as a separate course on gender, in media and advertising.

topics – at least, that was how I succeeded. But it is obvious that in order to have visibility and to have an impact, the development of such programmes – maybe not necessarily on gender studies, but with an important concentration on gender studies [...] – I think it amounts to a phase when [gender studies] consolidate as a discipline.” (I.B., interviewee)

Silvia Marton considers gender studies “an autonomous discipline, a trans-disciplinary discipline, with a trans-disciplinary approach.” At the same time, she indicates that, in her view, gender studies should not function as a separate field, but rather they should be integrated in all disciplines. Nevertheless, within the particular context of the Romanian higher education, and for the purposes of raising visibility and establishing academic legitimacy, a dedicated programme would be beneficial, although only for a limited period:

“It would really be best [for gender studies] not to be a separate field of study, but to be already integrated in what is being taught. But if we are not there yet, then it is beneficial to have a separate programme. And I believe that ... at the University of Bucharest ... a separate programme is still, *still* – temporally speaking – needed. We [at the Faculty of Political Sciences] include gender, ethnic discriminations, so a broader approach, in several courses – this is very good. But for now – I will not use the word stage – a separate programme is also needed, in order to make it more visible, to establish it as an intellectually pertinent object of study. But also because it is still an acute social matter, so it is not only an academic issue. And then this visibility, its delimitation as an autonomous programme within a university, faculty, are still necessary.” (S.M., interviewee)

The new Master’s programme on Equal Opportunities Policies in Romania and in the European Union, offered by the University of Bucharest, starting the next academic year, is an interesting example that combines in its conceptual, structural, institutional, and personal establishment story several mechanisms and strategies discussed in this paper. First, it is mostly a personal endeavour, originating in the individual scholarly and political interests of the academic having promoted it. Ionela Băluță had been teaching several courses on gender at the Bachelor’s and Master’s levels for a decade, when she presented to the faculty council her project for the postgraduate programme which, in addition, was going to be part of an international academic cooperation action. Yet, as long as I. Băluță did not receive the support of the faculty management, the programme she proposed was not approved by the board and was thus abandoned. One year later, within a few months, the entire faculty management changed and she received immediate acceptance to start working on the project for the postgraduate programme. She also became Head of Department, which undoubtedly helped. However, I. Băluță reads that acceptance as being not necessarily related to the specific subjects

included in the programme, but rather to the general opening of the new management to institutional development.

Second, new academic programmes are considered institutionally attractive and worth supporting if they comply with a set of norms and values imposed by the transformation of the educational system, in accordance with the Bologna process. The programme conceptual configuration is therefore influenced by transnational political interests. As discussed in the previous sections, such topics as gender, ethnicity, equal opportunities, and human rights constitute benchmarks of democratization and are thus institutionally supported, in spite of a general sceptical perception of their scientific standing in the Romanian academic environment. This may be seen as both beneficial for the inclusion of gender studies, since it can be strategically used by academics working in the field as an entry mechanism, and negatively, as an artificial import that could add to the unwillingness of the general academic environment to accept gender studies as a legitimate field of teaching and research.

Third, and connected to the previous point, structural and financial mechanisms, also influenced by transnational dynamics, shape the practical design of academic programmes. For instance, in order for the Master's programme on Equal Opportunities Policies in Romania and in the European Union to be considered sustainable and, therefore, accepted, it had to be designed in cooperation with several faculties and, preferably, to involve international teamwork. Consequently, the programme incorporates academics from the Faculties of Political Sciences, Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication Studies and it is part of an international higher education group, financed by the European Commission. So, in this case, not the programme per se (or not only) was institutionally supported, but the specific format, which could receive additional funding.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender studies, as a field of teaching and research, have been introduced in Romanian public higher education during the early and mid-1990s. Although some disciplines included gender as a category of analysis and there have been three separate postgraduate programmes, with the main focus on gender studies, the field is mostly met with scepticism by the general academic environment and it is perceived as lacking scientific legitimacy. This is also visible in the uneven inclusion of gender in various disciplines, the marginalization of the field throughout higher education curricula, and the 'personalization' of gender studies courses and programs. However, during the last decade, increased course offerings and the teaching staff specializing in gender studies might have been contributing to the slow, yet steady, inclusion of gender in higher education in Romania, in general,

and at the University of Bucharest, in particular. The increase should be understood as the result of a combination of institutional mechanisms and changes, such as the principle of university autonomy, academic freedom, and alignment to the European Union educational systems (R.I., interviewee), transnational political interests (the 'democratization agenda,' with gender as one of its components), of local concerns and personal investments and strategies. Although these various mechanisms and interests may produce tensions, the academics and researchers involved in gender studies could look for ways to creatively use them and respond to the perceived necessities of higher education and to critically address broader social and political issues.

Further on, the author would succinctly present some recommendations, as signalled by the interviewed academics. Mention must be made that opinions were at variance, with respect to the approaches and strategies considered appropriate, useful or feasible for the more substantial and evenly distributed inclusion of gender in higher education.

### *Institutional Level*

Introduction of gender studies in the nomenclature of officially recognized fields of study and specializations.

Academic recognition for the introduction of gender-related components in various disciplines, both in the university specific individual self-evaluation forms, and in the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education's accreditation/ excellence criteria.

### *Teaching Staff*

More substantial and meaningful collaboration between academics involved in gender studies. This should be done at two levels: *i.* within the same higher education institution and between university centres; *ii.* field of study cross-boundaries. Joint-teaching courses, research project co-authorship, discussion seminars, and workshops constitute some of the means to accomplish it.

Discussions in formal and informal contexts, with colleagues teaching and doing research in various fields, aimed at raising awareness of and develop sensitivity to gender issues, including invited speakers in the courses offered.

Postgraduate students already working on gender issues should be involved in teaching gender-related courses and seminars.

### *Study Field Level*

Field consolidation and grounding, through more extensive, more theoretically-solid, and more critical research on gender issues in Romania.

Increase visibility of both teaching and research, in the academic environment, by means of conferences, debates, etc.

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Interviewee	Interview date	Position
Romiță IUCU (R.I.)	February, 2011	Rector
Maria VOINEA (M.V.)	February, 2011	Vice Rector
Mihai COMAN (M.C.)	February, 2011	Dean
Silvia MARTON (S.M.)	February, 2011	Vice Dean
Ionela BĂLUȚĂ (I.B.)	February, 2011	Head of Department
Mihaela MIROIU (M.M.)	July, 2006	Head of Programme
Laura GRÜNBERG (L.G.)	July, 2006; February, 2010	Adjunct Professor
Daniela ROVENȚA-FRUMUȘANI (D.R.F.)	July, 2006	Head of Department
Oana BĂLUȚĂ (O.B.)	February, 2011	Lecturer, President Research NGO
Romina SURUGIU (R.S.)	February, 2011	Lecturer
Lavinia BĂRLOGEANU (L.B.)	February 2011	Lecturer
Zoltán ROSTÁS (Z.R.)	January, February, 2011	Professor

## ANNEX

Table 7. Faculty by academic title, age, and gender, in Romanian higher education (2004-2005 academic year)

Age groups	Total/ Women	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Teaching consultant	Teaching staff with research workload
General total	Total	26,790	5,057	4,285	6,844	6,725	3,054	795	30
	Women (in numbers)	11,189	1,055	1,638	3,129	3,663	1,625	70	9
	Women (in percentage)	41.76	20.86	38.22	45.71	54.46	53.20	8.80	30.00
Under 25	Total	395	-	1	6	8	380	-	-
	Women (in numbers)	210	-	0	2	6	202	-	-
	Women (in percentage)	53.16	-	0.00	33.33	75.00	53.15	-	-
25-29	Total	4,063	-	-	230	1,761	2,072	-	-
	Women (in numbers)	2,140	-	-	119	925	1,096	-	-
	Women (in percentage)	52.67	-	-	51.73	52.52	52.89	-	-
30-34	Total	4,068	2	78	1,259	2,228	484	15	2
	Women (in numbers)	2,116	1	36	611	1,199	268	0	1
	Women %	52.01	50.00	46.15	48.53	53.81	55.37	0	50.00
35-39	Total	4,025	102	532	1,721	1,524	113	27	6
	Women (in numbers)	2,137	30	253	877	918	56	1	2
	Women (in percentage)	53.09	29.41	47.55	50.95	60.23	49.55	3.70	33.33
40-44	Total	2,555	204	713	1,139	482	4	8	5
	Women (in numbers)	1,135	56	277	546	254	2	0	0
	Women (in percentage)	44.42	27.45	38.84	47.93	52.69	50.00	0.00	0.00
45-49	Total	2,713	492	851	1,057	300	1	8	4
	Women (in numbers)	1,051	105	296	469	180	1	0	0
	Women (in percentage)	38.73	21.34	34.78	44.37	60.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
50-54	Total	2,979	968	898	875	232	-	3	3
	Women (in numbers)	1,011	222	343	333	111	-	0	2
	Women (in percentage)	33.93	22.93	38.19	38.05	47.84	-	0.00	66.66
55-59	Total	2,387	1,199	633	404	138	-	9	4
	Women (in numbers)								
		698	248	245	144	58	-	1	2

Age groups	Total/ Women	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Teaching consultant	Teaching staff with research workload
60-64	Women (in percentage)	29,24	20.68	38.70	35.64	42.02	-	11.00	50.00
	Total	1,909	1,305	434	118	43	-	8	1
	Women (in numbers)	479	287	158	24	10	-	0	0
	Women (in percentage)	25.09	21.99	36.40	20.33	23.25	-	0.00	0.00
65 +	Total	1,696	785	145	35	9	-	717	5
	Women no.	212	106	30	4	2	-	68	2
	Women %	12.5	13.50	20.68	11.42	22.22	-	9.48	40.00

Source: NIS, 2005, pp. 94-95.<sup>29</sup>

Table 8. Faculty by academic title, age, and gender in Romanian higher education (2009-2010 academic year)

Age groups	Total/ Women	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Teaching consultant
General total	Total	26,757	5,082	4,867	7,149	6,739	1,825	1,095
	Women (in numbers)	12,232	1,437	2,167	3,583	3,821	1,072	152
	Women (in percentage)	45.71	28.27	44.52	50.11	56.69	58.73	13.88
	Total	220	-	-	-	62	158	-
Under 25	Women (in numbers)	128	-	-	-	26	102	-
	Women (in percentage)	58.18	-	-	-	41.93	64.55	-
	Total	2,219	-	-	163	1,087	969	-
25-29	Women (in numbers)	1,247	-	-	88	593	566	-
	Women (in percentage)	56.19	-	-	53.98	54.55	58.41	-
	Total	4,748	6	151	1,656	2,386	547	2
30-34	Women (in numbers)	2,549	4	66	843	1,325	311	0
	Women (in percentage)	53.68	66.66	43.70	50.90	55.53	56.85	0.00
	Total	3,969	95	605	1,704	1,448	115	2
35-39	Women (in numbers)	2,214	40	302	900	900	72	0
	Women (in percentage)	55.78	42.10	49.91	52.81	62.15	62.60	0.00

<sup>29</sup> Data compiled and calculated by the author.

Age groups	Total/ Women	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Teaching consultant
40-44	Total	3,960	399	1,025	1,546	954	28	8
	Women (in numbers)	2,178	189	516	868	585	19	1
	Women %	55.00	47.36	50.34	56.14	61.32	67.85	12.50
45-49	Total	2,466	533	833	747	337	4	12
	Women (in numbers)	1,179	184	418	385	189	2	1
	Women (in percentage)	47.81	34.52	50.18	51.53	56.08	50.00	8.33
50-54	Total	2,687	901	871	669	230	2	14
	Women (in numbers)	1,066	286	366	297	114	0	3
	Women (in percentage)	39.67	31.74	42.02	44.39	49.56	0.00	21.42
55-59	Total	2,671	1,222	800	485	146	2	16
	Women (in numbers)	885	317	320	180	68	0	0
	Women (in percentage)	33.13	25.94	40.00	37.11	46.57	0.00	0.00
60-64	Total	2,032	1,295	488	170	69	-	10
	Women (in numbers)	509	322	154	20	13	-	0
	Women (in percentage)	25.04	24.86	31.55	11.76	18.84	-	0.00
65 +	Total	1,785	631	94	9	20	-	1,031
	Women (in numbers)	277	95	25	2	8	-	147
	Women (in percentage)	15.51	15.05	26.59	22.22	40.00	-	14.25

Source: RNIS, 2010, pp. 124-125.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Data compiled and calculated by the author.

## **Serbia at the Crossroads. Gender Inclusiveness in Higher Education: Real or just Wishful Thinking?**

Jelena ČERIMAN, Sanja MILUTINOVIĆ BOJANIĆ, and Gazela PUDAR

### **Abstract**

*The present paper examines and analyzes the level of gender content inclusiveness in faculty curricula, in Serbia. The analysis is focused on the introduction of gender curricula at the Universities of Belgrade, Niš, and Novi Sad and data gathered from interviews with academics from the investigated departments, and also supplied by experts in the field of education, working in governmental institutions. The case study covers the Departments of Humanities and Social Sciences of mentioned Universities. Findings indicate that the process of gender content inclusion in Serbia faces numerous difficulties and obstacles, often generating disapproval within the academic community itself. Nonetheless, owing to the individual efforts and enthusiasm of those academics involved in women's studies and in gender studies, university curricula in certain fields of studies such as Legal, Educational and Social Sciences are slowly, but steadily, undergoing revision while adapting their content to them, and the current of gender inclusiveness is on the rise.*

Gender equality education constitutes an integral part of the entire education system in Serbia and in accordance with this principle, secondary school curriculum and faculty curriculum should be formulated so that they include gender sensitive content. One indicator that gender awareness policy is applied is the inclusion of the educational units that elaborate the gender dimension of social life at all levels of education. This kind of policy represents direct investment in democratically-oriented changes in Serbia, since the education system is the key instrument in endowing the younger generations with knowledge, values, and cultural models. The authors of "Women's human rights – practical application" submit an analogue statement:

"The curriculum is one of the main motors in developing stereotypes, in terms of gender roles – expected roles for men and women – as well as in promoting acceptance of such stereotypes. (...) But school could also reverse gender role stereotypes and lead the fight against discrimination of girls and women." (Mertus, *et al.*, 1995: 67)

This article examines and analyzes the degree gender related issues are included in Serbian university curricula. The research was conducted as a case study, by

examining faculty curricula at the Universities of Belgrade, Niš, and Novi Sad. In addition, the authors have also processed data gathered in interviews with the academic staff of the above-mentioned universities and data supplied by experts in the field of education and working in government institutions.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF GENDER AWARENESS

The country's legislation and institutions provides for the mechanisms required in implementing gender equality. The institutional mechanisms consist of bodies for gender equality on all levels of the government (central, provincial and local), strategies and action plans, as well as ombudsmen.

Laws and measures for establishing the conditions for the development of gender equality in Serbia are being enlarged more extensively during the past several years, alongside the processes that follow Serbia's accession to the European Union and the procedures of harmonizing the national laws with the European Union legislation. There are multiple reasons for such a late establishment of laws that regulate the field of gender equality. The political circumstances and the economic situation in Serbia during the 1990s, paradoxically, imposed other topics with 'higher' priorities. Moreover, the political structures of the '90s failed in even recognizing the significance of the gender equality issues. Actually, one of the main characteristics of that period was the destruction of a strong socially interactive platform, which also marked the removal of women/minorities/the disabled from the public to the private sphere. These were the factors that made Serbia the only country in the region without a law on gender equality until 2008.

Defining strategies and laws in the field of gender equality are mostly the result of the influence of the civil society and, above all, of women's associations, which worked on empowering and organizing women and on deconstructing the social context in terms of gender. Women's organizations (NGOs), operating in Serbia since the early 1990s. Their actions promoted and urged the faster development of gender policies by the government. Additionally, after 2000, they actively participated in the processes of setting up institutional mechanisms and developing the adequate legislation aimed at improving gender equality. The representatives of women's rights organizations actually participated in the Beijing Conference, when Yugoslavia's delegates were unable to officially attend it, due to sanctions. In 2003, Veronika Mitro, a member of the Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research, in Novi Sad, coordinated the development of an alternate report, for the CEDAW committee, on Roma women's rights in Vojvodina. In 2008, Marijana Dokmanović, member of the Citizen's association WSR NGO, coordinated the

project devising the indicators for measuring discrimination against women. (Svenka Savić, interviewee)

The legal framework on integrating the gender perspective in education is the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia* (v. site), passed in 2006. It guarantees the equality of men and women in developing the policy of equal opportunities (Art. 15) and the possibility of introducing special measures for obtaining full equality and banning discrimination (Art. 21). It includes the *Anti-Discrimination Law of the Republic of Serbia*<sup>1</sup> and the *Law on the Equality of Sexes*.<sup>2</sup> The *Law on the Equality of Sexes* is in harmony with the European Union directives relating to gender equality. It is notable that the law is entitled *Law on the Equality of Sexes*, and not *Law on Gender Equality*, which is the result of a slight confusion in the understanding of the term, gender, by the decision-making structures. The title represents a compromise of sorts, needed so that the law could be adopted (Jasna Vujačić, interviewee). It also illustrates the ambiguous mood of the political structures towards gender issues in Serbia.

In addition to these laws, the base of the legal framework for gender-aware education was also laid by juridical measures and laws that indirectly regulate this field: the *Criminal Code*, adopted in 2005, the *Family Law* of 2005, and the *Labour Law* (v. sites). The *Family Law* regulates relations between partners, protects children's rights, and introduces special measures against domestic violence. The *Criminal Code* sanctions domestic violence, and marital rape. The *Labour Law* prohibits gender discrimination and sexual harassment at work, and ensures equal pay for work of equal value (Article 104). Two strategies that incorporate the gender perspective ought to be mentioned here: *Poverty Reduction Strategy*<sup>3</sup> and *National Employment Strategy*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In force since April 6, 2009, the *Law* stipulates: general ban of discrimination, forms of discrimination, and procedures for protecting against the same (Art. 1). Provoking and stimulating inequality, hate and intolerance based on sex and gender identity are qualified as severe forms of discrimination (Article 13) (See, website).

<sup>2</sup> This *Law*, adopted in 2009, is part of the set of anti-discrimination laws requiring public institutions to be engaged in establishing a policy of equal opportunities in all fields of social life. It also guarantees the equal participation of sexes in all phases of decision making processes (Article 3). It defines the duties of state administration, of the educational bodies and institutions, providing for the implementation of the equal opportunity policy, when it comes to drawing up secondary school and higher education curricula, as well as when setting standards for it (Article 31, para. 4).

<sup>3</sup> The main goals of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* are: reduction of gender inequality until its total annulment; greater representation of women in government and social institutions, gender budgeting; and setup of gender sensitive statistics. (See, website)

<sup>4</sup> The *Employment Strategy* was adopted in 2005 and it provides an array of measures to improve the position of women on the labour market. Encouraging women's employment is one of the priorities defined by the *National Employment Action Plan* for 2011. (See, website)



The piece of legislation directly regulating the field of gender-sensitive education is the *Law on Higher Education* (v. site), the main principles of which are the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and respect for human rights and civil liberties (Art. 4). In general, the process of adopting various institutional mechanisms for gender equality started after 2000, along with the changes of the political regime in Serbia. Still, the only executive government mechanism for gender equality in Serbia is the Directorate for Gender Equality,<sup>5</sup> at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, established in 2008. The *National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality*, adopted in February, 2009 represents the first strategic document of the Republic of Serbia in the field of gender equality and covers various issues, such as women's participation in policy and decision making processes, in the fields of education, economy, healthcare, violence against women, but also in the fields of media and public opinion, for the 2009-2015 period. One of the priorities of this policy is gender sensitive statistics. The Directorate for Gender Equality provided some recent data: 65 percent of students enrolled in Humanities and Art Faculties are female; the percentage is equal at the School of Medicine; only 25 percent of female student body is enrolled in Natural, Technical, and Technological Sciences.

Despite the great improvement in the establishment of the legal framework for the promotion of gender equality, the biggest challenge that still remains is its implementation and monitoring the enforcement of the *Laws*. Professor Svenka Savić, PhD., while considering the legislature in the Republic of Serbia, appreciated that laws in Serbia are written in a gender-insensitive language. (Savić, *et al.*, 2006: 55-63).

## A 'BOTTOM-UP' GENDERING

Raising awareness about gender equality is primarily the task of those in the public office, educators, academia, parents, and the media, so that sexist, homophobic and discriminatory behavioural patterns are not reproduced.

One way of tracking the endorsement of gender equality in education is the adoption of the 'bottom-up' approach in leading empirical research on the various trends of the gender dimension. Good examples could always generate material for further theoretical studies and provide coherent data. In point, there are at least three sources of the analysis on gender sensitive-content in textbooks that can be compared. The latest volume, *Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Dimension in*

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<sup>5</sup> The Directorate for Gender Equality implements the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, as well as the Action Plan, which represents the strategy's operational development. This institution is also tasked with monitoring the execution of the *Law on the Equality of Sexes* (See, website.)

*University Educational Material*, was published in 2010, by the Centre for the Study of Gender and Politics at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. The conclusion advanced is rather pessimistic: "If the sample is representative, it would result that almost 90 percent of the educational material in the higher education system is, from a gender perspective, unacceptable." (Bačević, *et al.*, 2010: 33) Another study, *Towards the non-Homophobic Secondary School – The Analysis of a Representative Sample of Textbooks in Regard to the Treatment of Homosexuality* (Maljković, *et al.*, 2008), analyzed the gender sensitive-content of secondary school textbooks. Its results were also rather discouraging, specifying that, *e.g.*, homosexuality is mostly mentioned in textbooks of medicine rather than in those of Educational Sciences. LABRIS, the organization for lesbian human rights, carried out some similar research in higher education, *Same Sex Orientation in Faculty Textbooks and Literature* (LABRIS, 2006), and the findings provide unequally represented and misinterpreted gender themes.

## THE USE OF GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

Topics covering this issue are present in the graduate Gender Studies curriculum, at the Faculty for Political Sciences, and at the Faculty of Law, both in Belgrade, within the course "Gender Studies". At the University of Niš, gender-sensitive language is listed as a subject matter within the curriculum of the Faculty of Law; at the University of Novi Sad, within the Gender Studies, various courses deal with this issue.

The greatest contribution to the gender awareness of students and the public, in the use of gender-sensitive language, is certainly that of the professors from the Department for Gender Studies and departments for language study in Novi Sad. Professor Svenka Savić is the author and co-author of several books and publications advocating for the introduction and use of gender-sensitive terminology in public speech and education. Likewise, Veronika Mitro, Marijana Čanak, Gordana Štasni, and many other experts are involved in this topic at the University of Novi Sad.

Generally, in Serbia, the scientific and professional communities have different opinions on the use of the gender-sensitive language. On the one side, there are experts claiming that the invisibility of women in language is connected to the invisibility of women in society. Therefore, it is important to challenge the current order of things. On the other side, certain authorities consider all gender-sensitive terminology as a violent threat against established norms, liable to trigger destabilization in the society. There are also experts engaged in mediating between these two opposing standpoints. They maintain that the use of gender-sensitive

language is important. To implement it non-violently, their suggestion is to promote gender equality by initially changing social relations.

This is the position of the Committee for the Standardization of the Serbian Language.<sup>6</sup> The Committee finds certain proposals for innovation good, foremost because of their use in the Serbian language, so that the discrepancy between today's situation in society and the language structure<sup>7</sup> would be diminished. But it also considers that certain examples lead to linguistically faulty derivatives<sup>8</sup>. Like in other languages, the male gender in job titles that are independent of the natural gender of their holder also has a universal and generic value in Serbian. In this sense, linguists do not advise the use of male and female forms of job titles, since the practice generally overloads the syntax.<sup>9</sup> Professor Klajn states that "languages emerged in a time of absolute patriarchy from where the generic value of the male gender originates. However, the relations in society are changing, but language systems follow these changes in less regular speed." (Ivan Klajn, interviewee) It is thus advisable that the use of gender-sensitive language should not be imposed, but rather introduced gradually into the general language culture. Most students at the Faculty of Philology, according to Professor Klajn, do not have sufficient interest in the issue of using gender-sensitive language. It is clear that in the years to come, debates concerning linguistic changes will expand and the field of language will certainly be recognized as a realm of concrete measures in gender-inclusive practices in Serbia.

## GENDERING HIGHER EDUCATION

About fifteen years before the 1990s, when gender studies started developing, in almost all republics of the Former Yugoslavia, the feminist movements were strong.

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<sup>6</sup> Professor Ivan Klajn PhD., member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

<sup>7</sup> In Serbian language the name of certain professions is easily gendered for men and for women, but there are certain examples of professions the female gender of which is not 'naturally' resolved. Professor Klajn states the following: "The normative linguistics up to date didn't pay attention to the question of human rights but above all considered these innovative linguistic forms as a result of the lack of harmony between actual situation in the society and the linguistic structure, resulting in obvious grammatical faults". Professor Klajn provided an example: "Nastavnik je dete uputio školskom psihologu, a ova je rekla." [The teacher sent the child to the *school's psychologist*, and *she* said...]. In Serbian, the noun, psychologist, is masculine in gender; the use of the female pronoun in the subordinate clause seems grammatically inadequate.

<sup>8</sup> Such as derivatives of nouns ending with suffix *-log*. Grammar experts agree that most of the female suffixes should be *-škinja*, as it is advised in the Register proposed by Savić, *et al.*, (*biološkinja*, *psihološkinja*, etc.), even though these solutions are not in harmony with the existing syntax rules.

<sup>9</sup> When the man ticket-inspector the woman ticket-inspector asks for your ticket, you need to show him or her your ticket.

The creators of the feminist actions were largely interconnected among themselves, but they were also on very good terms with colleagues such as Christine Delphi, Diana Leonard, Dacia Maraini, Carla Ravaioli, Elisabetta Rasy, guests of the First International Feminist Conference, *Drug-ca žena/Comrade woman* (Mladenović, 2006), held in Belgrade, in 1978.<sup>10</sup> The Conference debates and discourses critically unveiled 'universal' ideological issues, which disguised masculine logo centric domination. Mostly intellectuals, these Serbian, Croat, Slovene, and Bosnian women and men introduced to the Yugoslav public critical work and researches on the so-called second wave of feminism, *écriture féminine* and the French theory, in general, each of them continuing their own emancipating genesis.

The situation changed during the 1990s, when the predominant American paradigm of the conceptually groundbreaking gender studies started to appear. Authors, such as J. Butler, E. Grosz, D. Cornell, G. Rubin, and D. Haraway, were largely brought into the context of new political changes and have been read and translated.

From that period on, Gender studies in Serbia have been developing in at least two directions. One direction is Women's Studies that have expanded within the women's movements (preferring the activist side); the other one consists in developing gender studies as an academic discipline. In 1993, Anđelka Milić,<sup>11</sup> full professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, together with her younger colleagues, Žarana Papić, about to defend her PhD. Thesis, and Marina Blagojević<sup>12</sup> submitted the very first women studies curriculum to the University authorities, hoping to start teaching as soon as the officials receive their proposition. Unfortunately, they found out that most of the Faculty Committees considered women studies not opportune for the Academia and the only solution was to propose gender content as a complementary or elective programme of study. This finally happened and didn't change through time in almost all cases of our research. Since, within the women's movement, women's studies had a dual function: to articulate the knowledge gained through the fight for women's rights

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<sup>10</sup> From Croatia, were present Lidija Sklevicky, Rada Iveković, Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Kesić, Ruža First, Đurđa Milanović, and Gordana Cerjan Letica; from Bosnia, came Nada Ler Sofronić; and Žarana Papić, Sonja Drljević, Jasmina Tešanović, Dunja Blažević, Lina Vušković, Sofija Trivunac, Lepa Mladenović, and Vanda Krajinović were from Serbia among many others.

<sup>11</sup> A. Milić spoke about this experience in an interview on "Ten years of Women studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade" (See, website)

<sup>12</sup> In an interview, Marina Blagojević explained three dominant currents of the movement: politically engaged and anti-war groups (Women's Lobby; Women's party, Women's Parliament, Women in Black); groups fighting violence against women (SOS, Incest Trauma Centre, Women's Safe House); minority group (the lesbians-Labrys, the refugees-The Swallow); educational group at the university (Centre for Women's studies). (Kolarić, 2008:154)

and to disseminate the standpoints of the feminist theories to the movement, they represented a basis for the development of gender studies in universities. (Blagojević, 1998) From the very beginning, women's and gender studies were conceived as interdisciplinary programmes. During the same period, the feminist group, "Women and Society," helped establish the "Centre for Women's Studies, Research, and Communication" as the first alternative academic program. Based, at the beginning, on the traditional and historical approach in the matter of women emancipation, the programme was gradually upgraded, in order to introduce courses that explored various topics of gender in a range of manners (especially in Arts, Media analysis, disciplines related to human/women rights). Within the third wave of feminism and under the Anglo-American influence (with English as a *lingua franca*), gender discourses were shaped in accordance to the new trends. Further actions were aimed at setting up high-level studies (graduate and postgraduate) at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad and Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Nevertheless, together with improvements in the approach to gender issues, in Social Sciences and Humanities, the gender issue also raised a strong resistance that was backed by the overall painful ordeal of the whole society, caused by wars.

## ACADEMIA AND GENDER STUDIES

The Department for Gender Studies, at the graduate and postgraduate levels, at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad is the only official academic centre of its kind, in Serbia. The Centre, set up in 2003, is administered by Vera Vasić. Within the graduate and postgraduate gender studies, students – coming from a wide range of scientific fields – obtain the needed qualifications to carry out gender-sensitive research; they learn to critically assess the concepts of sex and gender, natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, etc. the role of women in social life, and to recognize the social relations in micro- and macro-environment, based upon the distribution of gender roles. They are instructed to apply the interdisciplinary and gender sensitive approach to media, education, economy, law, and other social spheres, but also in Natural Sciences.

Gender studies were established thanks to the activists of the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research, who have invested great energy in raising the citizens' gender awareness, aiming at eradicating discrimination. The process of incorporating gender studies into academia began in February 2003 (Svenka Savić, interviewee), when activists of the Citizens' Association WSR organized an International Conference on Curriculum which was attended by representatives of Women's Studies from neighbouring countries: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, etc. During the Conference, an agreement was reached on the steps to follow in the process of incorporating

gender studies at the University, which meant sending a request to the University on initiating a postgraduate studies programme. The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality, the Citizens' Association WSR, and a network of women's nongovernmental organizations in Vojvodina were united in the idea of establishing the University Centre for Gender Studies. In 2004, a graduate Gender Studies course began, based on a curriculum proposed by Professor Svenka Savić. The University adopted a three-year postgraduate course, and the first generation of students enrolled in 2005. In 2010, sixteen students were enrolled in Gender Studies (seven in graduate and nine in postgraduate studies).

The biggest financial aid came from the NGO, Reconstruction Women's Fund (WSR),<sup>13</sup> which invested 3.5 million dinars in scholarships for students enrolled in Gender Studies. Lectures in Gender Studies were held at the offices of the WSR, until 2009. The WSR library offers large gamut of titles for students' research purposes. The library of the Association accumulated 2,500 titles, partly donated to the University library of Novi Sad, in 2009. Thanks to professors active in the WSR, students have the opportunity to attend the lectures of various guest speakers from the country and from abroad. The distinctive character of the Gender Studies in Novi Sad relies in the fact that this is the only Centre training students in the use of oral history method, in their research work. They also lead projects in the field of gender-aware language.

## GENDER STUDIES IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR OF EDUCATION

As already mentioned, the founding of non-academic women's studies in Belgrade was initiated by the feminist group "Woman and Society". The first one-semester course began on March 8, 1992. The Centre for Women's Studies and Associations for Women's Initiative (AWIN) were established in 1998. The Centre for Women's Studies, Belgrade, represents an interdisciplinary educational project, consisting of three elements: lecturing, research and publication program. Within the one-year undergraduate education programme, students are engaged in researching gender, body, and identity, the history and development of women's movement, women's human rights, peace studies, but also the critical theory and policy of diversity.

This programme is not accredited by the Republic of Serbia's Ministry of Education and from its beginnings it has fully relied on the initiative and activities of women's activist and peace groups. In 2010, the 21<sup>st</sup> generation of students was

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<sup>13</sup> The *Žarana Papić* scholarship programme represents the financial support to women for gaining knowledge, regional and global exchange in the field of gender/women's issues. RZF allocates the greatest number of scholarships for graduate and postgraduate Women's Studies in the country, as well as for certain gender and peace programmes abroad.

enrolled in the alternative non-academic programme of gender studies. Although academic gender studies do exist, a large number of students still apply to this programme. Nonetheless, because of insufficient resources, both human and technical, the Centre for Women's Studies cannot accept all applications. The main goal of the project was the establishment of academic gender/women's studies, goal achieved in 2003. Women's Studies in Novi Sad started as a non-academic programme organized by the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research which was founded in 1997. Therefore, the Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research carries out an interdisciplinary, non-academic educational programme, instructing on the sex divide in the domains of education, science, art, religion, technology, and other forms of everyday life, as well as on the issues of gender social defining in Serbia and the world. In one decade, from 1997 to 2007, one thousand women were educated within the two-year Women's Studies programme with this organization. (Svenka Savić, interviewee) The main goal of the organization was the establishment of the academic gender/women's studies which was realized in 2004.

The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality established an award for contributors to the emancipation of women and gender equality in Vojvodina. It is equally awarded to individuals and organizations. Dr. Svenka Savić received this award in 2003. Gordana Stojaković, a member of the Citizen's Association WSR, received it in 2009, and in 2005, the recipient was the Citizen's Association WSR, for its work on promoting gender equality and reducing discrimination. There is no award of this kind in any other part of Serbia.

## GENDER IN STUDIES

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, gender studies adopted a mainly intersectional approach, introducing ethnicity, race (especially in Novi Sad, working within the female Roma population), poverty, and/or disability into its research categories. Veronika Mitro was adviser for the *Roma in Vojvodina – Expressions of Cultural Identity through Performance* project (Kaufman, 2000). Discrimination, domestic violence, homophobia, or sexism, women's and children's rights represented crucial issues in the courses thought by Professor Zorica Mršević, at the University of Singidunum, Faculty for European Juridical and Political Studies, in Novi Sad. Lately, some other issues were inducted, such as the treatment of the minorities and the 'normalization' trends concerning the non- / acceptance of gay-lesbian-trans population by the society.

Symptomatically enough, gender inclusiveness is still absent from the curriculum, at the faculties of Natural, Technical, and Technological Sciences, except for the courses taught by Associate Professor Biljana Stojković, in the

Department for Genetics and Evolution, at the Faculty of Biological Sciences, and those taught by Professor Dragana Popović, at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The Faculties of Medicine in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, and Niš do not include gender topics in their curricula, although their curricula includes such topics as sex-change or various plastic surgeries related to sex.

### *Politics*

In 1997, the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, started to offer an elective course in the field of gender studies, thanks to Professor Marina Blagojević and the then Dean, Professor Vukašin Pavlović. (Daša Duhaček, interviewee) At the beginning, it was offered as an elective course, in all departments, at the undergraduate level (except for the Department of International Relations). At present, it is still offered as an elective course only at the Department of Journalism and Communication. Gender Studies elective course also exists at the postgraduate level of study.

Graduate Gender Studies were established in 2003. Their name was later changed into Gender and Policy Studies. This graduate programme lasted until 2005, when it was officially cancelled. The course included lectures, various forms of practical activities, workshops, seminars, and consultations. Its curriculum was devised to emphasize the political consequences of the theoretical concepts. The biggest support for the establishment of the Gender Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, came from the then Dean, Mijat Damjanović, and Professors Snežana Milojević, and Ljubinka Trgovčević, Dean of postgraduate studies, at the time. Even though there was substantial support by the educational structures for the institutionalization of the Gender Studies, the field met with strong opposition on the part of the Faculty of Political Sciences staff.<sup>14</sup>

In 2005, the graduate course on Gender and Policy Study was launched and in January 2006, the first generation of students enrolled for the course. Currently, the graduate Culture and Gender Studies – as the course is called today – students study the basic qualifiers of gender (gender, body, and sexuality); modern theories of gender identities; correlation of gender, language and politics; modern political philosophies and gender issues, as well as policies on gender equality.

The graduate courses, *Gender and Policy Studies* and *Culture and Gender Studies*, at this faculty were established with the support of the NGO Centre for Gender Studies militants, in Belgrade. The courses originated in the non-academic,

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<sup>14</sup> Completely misunderstanding the significance of the gender topic, certain professors failed to recognize the importance of institutionalizing Gender Studies. The Faculty for Political Sciences academics, even if aware of the topic, refused the official recognition of the gender studies because of the politically active Centre for Women's Studies.



alternative education programme on Women's Studies, which started in 1992. The curriculum for the graduate studies was designed by members and associates of the NGO Centre for Women's Studies Belgrade. In the years to follow, the course curricula underwent major changes that, above all, entailed the narrowing of topics. The reasons for such changes reside in Serbia's agreement with the Bologna Process and the switch from two-year graduate studies to one-year graduate programmes.

Owing to personal contacts among the professors who used to work with the Belgrade Centre for Women's Studies, their students had the opportunity to attend lectures of numerous guest speakers from the country and from abroad.<sup>15</sup> The Centre library, set up in 1994, boasts around 4500 titles, in eight languages, 120 journals, and about 100 copies of national and international periodicals. The library also contains an archive and documentation centre. The library is the recipient of a donation – legacy of Žarana Papić – containing 2000 titles and extremely rich documentation on the women and feminist movement in Yugoslavia.

The *Women's Studies* journal, published by the NGO Centre of Women's Studies, was launched in 1995. It was envisioned as a space for the beneficial exchange of views on the modern issues of the gender theory in the region. Most importantly, the journal was conceived in the attempt to disseminate gender topics among the students, for them to identify the journal as the place to express their ideas and views, thus bringing the youth into modern feminist works. Lately, the journal has been renamed *Genero*. Even though intended to be a quarterly, because of financial difficulties, the journal is issued once a year.

In the near future, *Genero* will be integrated in the work of the Centre for Gender and Policy Study, founded in 2006, in Belgrade, within the Faculty of Political Sciences. From the very beginning, the target of centre was the foundation, implementation, and development of gender studies inside the academia as an independent research unit. The centre is administered by Daša Duhaček.

### *Sociology*

In 1993, professors from the Department of Sociology, together with Assistant Professor B. Arsić, from the Department of Philosophy, initiated the introduction of a new course, subsequently presented as an elective course on women's issues to all departments at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. (Nada Sekulić, interviewee) The greatest contribution to the course introduction was that of Žarana Papić, who, at that time, was also active in the nongovernmental sector, so

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<sup>15</sup>To mention only a few names: Isabel Marcus, Svetlana Slapšak, Celia Hawkesworth, Ania Meulenbelt, Paule Gentot, Armando Gnisci, Elizabeta Seleva, Heidi Witzig, Katarina Vesović, Daphne Winland, Andrea Feldman.

the lectures that she held represented a combination of activism and theory. Lectures at the newly established course were organized in a dynamic way so that students were introduced to the main subject matter relating to gender and were able to advance their knowledge of these topics through independent work. Students expressing their interests proposed topics for their papers. Furthermore, professors have given them main support and guidance in helping them in realizing their ideas.

In terms of Sociology studies, the University of Belgrade offers the most comprehensive curriculum on gender studies in Serbia. *Gender Studies* and *The Study of Gender* courses are maintained at the Department of Sociology as an elective course at all study levels (undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate). The curricula have not undergone major changes, so lectures are held using the initial principles of the course. The lectures are interactive in character, and students are mostly interested in topics concentrating on women's rights, the issue of reproduction, the issue of sexual rights, and cultural stereotypes.

At the undergraduate level, the *Gender studies I* curriculum includes: defining the main terms of gender categories (gender, sex, gender roles, and gender identities), the history of feminism and feminist theories, the topic of women's health, introducing students to the relevance and significance of gender studies to the modern social thought. This course carries three ESPB points.

At the graduate level, *Gender Studies II* course goal is introducing students to the latest trends in theoretical thought and practice of women's movements in the world, with a special emphasis on feminism and social position of women in Serbia. This course carries six ESPB points.

At the postgraduate level, the following subject matter is researched throughout the *Studies of gender* course: modern status of feminist ideas, practice, and organization; post-feminist and post-modern views on sex and gender; gender interrelations and interactions; commercialization of intimacy and sexual gender practice, as well as the modern social status of women in a comparative perspective, through economic, professional, political, cultural, and communication aspects. This course carries ten ESPB points.

At the University of Niš, the gender content is present in the curricula of several courses offered at the Departments of Sociology. The compulsory course on *Sociology of Relations between the Sexes* is addressed to undergraduate students and carries five ESPB points. At the postgraduate studies in Sociology, gender content is researched through the elective course *Sociology of Gender*, which carries ten ESPB points.

At the University of Novi Sad, at the Department of Sociology, gender content is researched through the compulsory course, *Social Anthropology*, at the undergraduate level, which carries eight ESPB points. This course examines the

process of socialization taking into account cultural differences, evolution of kinship, as well as concepts of body, sex, and gender.

### *Anthropology*

At the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, the gender content is present in the curricula and courses offered by the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology. Namely, gender is, for the most part, examined in the undergraduate compulsory courses, *Anthropology of Gender and Affiliation*, *National Ethnology/Anthropology – Body and Identity*, *National Ethnology/Anthropology – Religion and Gender*, and *Anthropology of Material Culture*. At the graduate level, gender topics are studied in a compulsory course on the *Methodology of Ethnology and Anthropology*, as well as in an elective course on *Urban and Gender Studies*.

*Anthropology of Genders and Affiliation* was the first gender-related course offered by the Department of Anthropology and Ethnology. The course goal is introducing students to the theoretical approaches and studies of gender relations, marriage, family, body and sexuality, while examining the different cultural concepts of these relations. This course focuses on the problems of the conceptual overlapping of gender structures with kinship relations, displayed through different policies and practices in regard to family, biological reproduction, and new reproductive technologies. Problems of identity and the ethical issues related to it are the main interests of this course. The course carries six ESPB points. (Zorica Ivanović, interviewee)

The *Urban and Gender Studies* course offers students the opportunity to analytically grasp the gender aspect of the modern world, get acquainted with the basic network of concepts that enable gender analysis, and acquire knowledge in relation to the anthropology of public, administrative policies and practices, in terms of gender relations. Research on masculinity is an integral part of this course curriculum. Interestingly enough, the Anthropology of Masculinity emerged as a discipline, in order to match Women's studies. (Zorica Ivanović, interviewee) Nevertheless, this discipline gradually changed, due to the fact that the gender aspect of the human existence does not only mean reviewing the status of women, but also incorporating the dimension of correlation of different gender identities in the larger social context. This course carries six ESPB points.

### *Educational Sciences*

At the Department of Pedagogy/Educational Sciences, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, the gender content is present in the elective course on *Programmes of Civic Education* at the undergraduate level, which carries six ESPB points. The

*Programmes of Civic Education* course was introduced in 2006, at the initiative of Professor Mirjana Pešić, who, at that time, was the president of the Commission for the Democratization of Education in Serbia. (Mirjana Pešić, interviewee) The course aims at understanding concepts and educational principles of democracy and the civic society, acquiring practical knowledge in teaching civic education, and developing public awareness and activism. Through lectures of this course, students are able to grasp the political aspects of gender relations and deconstruct certain stereotypes present in both scientific disciplines and everyday life. They are engaged in preparing and questioning the practical project in one concrete field of the subject matter. During the course, students are taught to understand diversity and recognize the importance of diversity at all levels, from the biological, the individual-psychological, to the socio-political plan. Students are welcome to adopt certain values against gender stereotypes and different types of prejudice. Since students who successfully pass this course become qualified to teach Civic Education, in primary and secondary schools, the significance of implementing the gender content into the curriculum of this course is fundamental. Since the future lecturers are trained to transfer knowledge, provide abilities and skills to the younger generations, they can directly shape the future society given that school teachers are part of the educational process of a person from the very early age.

At the University of Niš, within the Department of Pedagogy, at the undergraduate level, gender content is studied in *Civic Education*, an elective course carrying five ESPB points. The course main objective is the comprehension of the concepts and principles of education for democracy and civil society, acquisition of practical knowledge in Civic Education and development of public awareness and activism.

The Department of Pedagogy/Educational Sciences, at the University of Novi Sad, included gender content in the elective course, *History of Women's Education*, which carries three ESPB points, at undergraduate level. The course goal is gaining insight into the specifics of educational work with girls and young women, through the historical development of pedagogical theory and practice.

### *Legal Sciences*

Gender content is researched, to the greatest extent, at the Faculty of Law, at University of Niš, in *Legal Studies on Gender*, an elective course offered at the undergraduate level. The course lectures are held by Prof. Slobodanka Konstantinović-Vilić PhD, Prof. Nevena Petrušić PhD, Dr. Prof. Miomira Kostić PhD, and Prof. Natalia Žunić PhD. The course consists of theoretical classes, practical activities, seminars, and research projects. Its goal is developing the students' gender awareness – future lawyers and/or juridical experts – in issues of gender

discrimination. They are trained to perceive existing legal institutions and offices through the gender perspective and understand the significance of applying the gender theory in jurisprudence. The principal aim of this course is to enable students to connect theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of women's rights, but also to envisage alternative modes of partnerships taking into account the European gender perspectives. This course covers a wide range of the gender topics: prejudice and stereotypes pursuing feminism; gender analysis and the fight against misogyny; stereotypes of women in Serbian culture; forms and types of discrimination; status and rights of women through history; feminist legal theory; political rights of women as a democratic interest of society; discrimination and exploitation of women in marriage; reproductive rights and liberties; criminal justice status of women; sexism in language and gender sensitive public speech; gender regimes in countries in transition; standards and mechanism for achieving gender equality in democratic countries. The course carries five ESPB points.

At the Faculty of Law, in Belgrade, gender content is studied at the undergraduate level through the elective course, *Gender Studies*, which carries four ESPB points. This course is lead by Prof. Dragica Vujadinović and Prof. Vojislav Stanimirović.

As already mentioned, Novi Sad hosts a private Faculty of European Law and Political studies, where, among other courses, Professor Zorica Mršević, also a Deputy Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia, teaches an undergraduate elective course on gender. As an experimental scholar who taught at the Universities of Iowa, Budapest, Vienna, but also at the Centre for Women's Studies in Belgrade, since its beginnings, Prof. Mršević concentrates her teaching on gender-insensitive juridical regulations, in order to prepare her students to challenge these practices.

## GENERAL FINDINGS: PAVING THE WAY FOR GENDER INCLUSIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The analysis of the gender-including faculty curricula in Serbian higher education, showed that:

- Gender Studies, as an independent study programme, is present in two lectureships in Serbia: graduate *Gender Studies*, at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, and *Gender Studies* at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad, at the graduate and postgraduate levels.
- When it comes to the gender-inclusive courses, it is only at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the University of Belgrade that students do get to know this topic through several *compulsory courses* at the

undergraduate and graduate level. At the other investigated departments, the gender content is part of *elective courses*.

- The process of establishing courses and departments in which gender topics are researched has always generated disapproval within the academic community itself.<sup>16</sup> During 1990s, the reasons were political in nature, but they persisted at various levels, even after 2000. The main cause may be recognized at the overall cultural level of the society, accompanied by the lack of organizational skills.
- The availability of literature on gender, in faculty libraries, does not vary much from the availability of literature on other topics, if a comparison of representation of titles in library funds is made. The greatest number of titles in the field of gender can be found at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade (due to the library of the NGO Centre for Women's Studies Belgrade), as well as the Department for Gender Studies at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad (due to the library of the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research).
- Regardless of the presence of gender content (either explicitly or hidden in the context of educational units) in courses that do not primarily research gender, educating students on the topic depends most often by the professor's personal initiative. Likewise, it is difficult to measure the inclusiveness of gender content in disciplines other than in Social Sciences and Humanities.
- The endorsement of the 'gender' legislation is the indicator of the existing political will to introduce gender issues in the public area, in Serbia. However, this political will is mostly the result of the NGO pressure and synchronization with European Union regulations, necessary in the process of European Union accession. There are no specific regulations or bodies in higher education, except for the general stock phrases about the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and respect for human rights and civil liberties.
- Courses that incorporate the gender perspective for the most part are taught by women, and women often elect to follow lectures from these courses. Nearly all teaching is carried out by academics. However, a significant number of these lecturers is also engaged as NGO activists, which helps them

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<sup>16</sup> In 2004, when academic "Gender Studies" were being introduced, in the Senate session of the University of Novi Sad, the then Rector, Fuada Stanković, feeling the storm of indignation at the mere mention of the phrase, Women's Studies, suggested they remained under the label, Gender, since the term was less known!

gain specific active-oriented knowledge included in their lectures. Except for the close solidarity within their circles and the recognition of their work by sister-organizations in Europe or in the World, getting academic promotion or reward for efforts made in gender context is extremely rare at the state level.

- For the first time, in December 2010, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration and Minister of Science and Technological Development, Božidar Djelić presented two national scholarships of the UNESCO L'OREAL national programme, *For Women in Science*.<sup>17</sup> On this occasion, Djelić also announced that Serbia has a solid gender proportion, as compared to Europe – 45 percent of scientists are women. Although this information indicates only women's participation, and not their decision-making role in science, it is compatible with the aims and procedures of gender mainstreaming in the European Union research and development policy.
- The most renowned centres and institutions for implementing gender content into educational curricula in higher education still largely belong to the private social sector. This sector is intent on training the new generations of students through networking on European programmes and providing individual scholarships.
- Concerning the financial support to 'engender' curricula in higher education, only the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Novi Sad manages to get funding for its functioning. There is no simultaneous effort to establish such studies at other universities, at the moment. Gender content incorporated in various disciplines and courses are funded through their financial lines.

Given the fact that, in Serbia, gender inclusiveness in higher education is still developing and in the process of adjustment, we are unable to recommend only one specific institution and we cannot ignore the extreme willingness and the enthusiasm of the entire private sector, also engaged in this matter, at the Universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš ... "Gender mainstreaming is a demanding strategy, which requires policymakers to adopt new perspectives, acquire new expertise, and change their established operating procedures," state Pollack and Hafner-Burton, in their concise overview on gender mainstreaming in the European Union. (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000: 33). In this sense, the internal institutional

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<sup>17</sup> The European Commission Communication, *Women and Science: Mobilising Women to Enrich European Research*, inaugurated the *Women and Science* programme in February, 1999. (Pollack, 2000:30). Serbia adhered to this programme, while following the steps to its EU accession in June 2010.

reform of higher education (yet to come in Serbia) – which would be able to make this a permanent strategy and no longer at random intervals – should represent the necessary steps to follow in order to support the efforts of numerous individuals seeking recognition within its realm, but also in the entire society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA IN SERBIA

- Gender topics should be introduced in all segments of higher education, by means of short-term workshops and training courses, considering the fact that the process of gender awareness depends on the cultural context as much as it depends on generation differences. Benefits of doing so could certainly result in tolerance toward practices that are less traditional and more democratically-oriented.
- Gender-Inclusive curriculum should above all contain gender-sensitive terminology that would enrich the Serbian language and justify the very nature of its adaptation to new contexts of knowledge.
- The main principles of the gender-sensitive education should be based on the holistic approach of respect for individual freedom that strongly takes into account the 'other' (human or animal, different or similar ... avoiding dichotomies in judgment).
- Sustaining the non-academic programmes on Women's/Gender Studies, at the undergraduate course level, as they are meaningful to students who want to improve their knowledge in the field. It is also important that these studies, unlike academic studies, should be accessible to all students.
- Set up of a partnership network of experts employed in the field of education and gender equality both within these fields independently and in interrelation.
- Organizing conferences on contemporary issues of gender in theory and practice.
- Financing publications on about Gender/Women's Studies.
- Supporting guest speakers and introducing dynamics of the research exchange.
- Working on eliminating stereotypes that accompany the feminist movement, and therefore influencing the understanding of the gender issue.



- Textbook check ups should ascertain the degree their content promotes gender equality.
- Conducting periodical research assessment of gender sensitive content in educational material.
- Launching education programmes on gender-responsible budgeting, as a strategy towards eliminating the inequality of men and women.
- Advocating for continuity in all activities and plans, in the field of gender equality.
- Increasing human capacity, in institutions and faculty research centres, dealing with gender issues.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The degree of gender content in curricula of higher education showed that most of the credits for institutionalizing Gender Studies, in Serbia, go to non-governmental organizations and individuals active in the non-governmental sector. These individuals were the first to develop the gender studies programme in the private sector of education, and also influenced their institutionalization. In the beginning, researching gender content within faculties were made possible by courses including gender topics; afterwards, by establishing entire departments devoted to this topic. The introduction of gender content into higher education courses began in 1993, at the Faculty of Philosophy, in Belgrade. The first department dedicated to the research of gender was established at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, in 2003.

The process of establishing Gender Studies in Serbia was difficult and met with prejudice in the academic community itself. Even though the process of institutionalizing Gender Studies in Serbia finished seven years ago – and the term, gender, was studied in certain courses, for the past seventeen years – this topic has still remained unfamiliar to many representatives of both the educational system and political structures. Therefore, the process of educating individuals, who are in a position to make decisions and convey to others their knowledge, skills and abilities, is of vital importance in promoting gender equality in Serbia. The existence of non-academic *Women's Studies* programmes is essential since academic *Gender Studies* are not accessible to everyone and the topic is not studied in an equally detailed way. Furthermore, gender studies should be developed at faculties that were not initially recognized as the basis for researching the subject matter. An

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, the Directorate for Gender Equality has six full-time employees.

excellent example is provided by the Faculty of Law, which became the leading institution in the development of gender studies at the University of Niš.

Current discussions on the use of gender-sensitive language suggest that, in the near future, this field will be recognized as an important element in the efforts to improve the level of gender equality in Serbia. Therefore, we propose that further gender research in curricula explore the field of gender-sensitive terminology. It is also important that this kind of research should be carried out periodically in order to open the possibility of following linguistic changes. The best long-term strategy for the promotion of gender equality in Serbia relies on education. The joint activities of the public and private sectors of education alongside the institutionalized network for cooperation are of primary importance.

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## LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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**Gender Mainstreaming Higher Education Curricula:  
Models and Guidelines**

# **Supporting the Bologna Process by Gender Mainstreaming: A Model for the Integration of Gender Studies in Higher Education Curricula**

Beate KORTENDIEK

## *Abstract*

*The integration of women's and gender studies in the curricula of higher education institutions is a core element of a gender-fair conception of study degrees and a crucial factor of scientific development in the reorganisation of academic teaching during the Bologna process. This article discusses gender-related topics to be included in the curricula of Bachelor and Master Programmes and introduces concrete organisational forms of how to incorporate these subject matters into both teaching and studying. The propositions presented are based on a model developed within the framework of the 'Gender in Bachelor's and Master's Courses – Integrate Women's and Gender Studies into the Curriculum' project' (Survey and Website – <[www.gender-curricula.eu](http://www.gender-curricula.eu)>) by the Women's and Gender Research Network NRW. The model, constructed from the analysis of 54 gender curricula, singles out categories for a gender-sensitive restructuring of particular disciplines, as well as three issues of interdisciplinary scope, and describes four concrete approaches to the integration of gender studies in higher education curricula.*

## **INTRODUCTION: THE BOLOGNA PROCESS – A CHALLENGE FOR GENDER AND ACADEMIC POLICY**

The internationalisation of higher education systems and the transformation of national higher education facilities into a united European higher education realm (otherwise known as the Bologna Process) pose a particular challenge to equity politics. The central element of the reform is the conversion of previously existing degree programmes to a common Bachelor's/Master's (BA/MA) diploma system. According to experience, times of upheaval are also times in which the hitherto neglected and ignored can be brought into play and new ideas are given a chance. The changes mandate that Women's and Gender Studies are better embedded in academic teaching and research as a central innovation of academic methods and knowledge.

Since course planning is a highly disputable area connected to power, prestige and resources, and since the reform of degree programs is an open process, the extent to which it is possible to alleviate this deficit in gender and academic policy by adopting tiered programmes is still large. It is thus essential to the further development of the higher education system that the Bologna Process be guided by gender mainstreaming and accompanied by gender experts.

The European Ministers of Education seemed to acknowledge this need for gender mainstreaming the Bologna Process. In their Berlin *Communiqué* of 2003, they asserted that

“... the necessity to improve the competitiveness (...) [has] to be brought into agreement with the goal of increasing the significance of the social dimensions of the European higher education realm.”

This concerns “strengthening the social coherence as well as decreasing social and gender-specific inequality at national and European levels”.

#### THE PROJECT AND WEBSITE GENDER-CURRICULA OF THE WOMEN’S AND GENDER RESEARCH NETWORK NRW

The coordination office of the Women’s and Gender Research Network NRW took this declaration of intent as an opportunity to investigate the extent to which the demand for decreasing gender-specific inequality (*i.e.*, according to a Bologna Process gender-balanced design) has been implemented in the changing degree programmes. The goals of the survey included developing criteria for a gender-balanced course of studies and indicating possible content which, from the perspective of women’s and gender studies, should be integrated in the curricula of programmes available at German universities. Strategies for ensuring the integration of gender aspects in the Bologna Process were equally to be pointed out. This research has been conducted by Ruth Becker, Bettina Jansen-Schulz, Beate Kortendiek and Gudrun Schäfer and was supported by the Ministry for Innovation, Science, Research and Technology (NRW, Düsseldorf). The results of the study, *Gender in Bachelor and Master Courses – Integrate Women’s and Gender Studies into the Curriculum*, have been published in printed form (Becker *et al.*, 2007) and are currently revised by Anne Knauf and Beate Kortendiek.

An online database has been developed based on the study. The Gender in Bachelor’s and Master’s Courses website – <[www.gender-curricula.eu](http://www.gender-curricula.eu)> – covers information on 54 degree programmes sub-grouped by categories: Agriculture and Forestry studies, Society and Social Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Medicine and Health, Law and Economics, languages and cultural studies, Art and Design. Scholars from the respective disciplines have written gender curricula that outline (1) general course objectives related to gender issues, (2)

subject-specific gender studies content, (3) concrete forms of integrating gender studies content into the curriculum, and (4) the degree stage at which the particular content should be taught. The database is thus a comprehensive draft for a gendered reorganisation of 54 study programmes. Additionally, the website contains a list of gender experts who can assist in assessing degree courses as regards questions of gender and can evaluate how effectively women's and gender studies have been included into curricula in specific subject areas. The website also provides information on the following topics: interdisciplinary gender issues, the Bologna Process from the perspective of equal opportunity policy, gender balance as a criterion for studying, teaching and strategic concepts implemented by institutions of higher education and recommendations for facilities of higher education, politicians, the accreditation council and accreditation agencies.

According to the definition of 'gender competence' by the Gender Competence Centre Berlin (2006), the inclusion of a gender perspective in teaching and learning requires 'will', 'knowledge,' and 'ability.' Hence, the disposition to implement gender-fair curricula, the awareness of the new gender-sensitive content and the ability for structural change and for the provision of necessary resources are decisive for the success of gender mainstreaming the Bologna Process. The purpose of the study and the database is to contribute to the knowledge and ability dimension of gender competence, and, ultimately, to gender equality in higher education.

## CRITERIA FOR A GENDER-BALANCED UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME AND FOR GENDER IN STUDIES

A central motivation for conducting the survey on gender in higher education was the insight that, outside of the circle of gender equality commissioners and female gender researchers, only very vague ideas exist about what the European Ministers of Education call 'to decrease gender inequality within the context of reorganising degree programmes' means. This was the reason why one of the first challenges of our project was to establish a clear definition of a 'gender-balanced' study programme. Despite different conceptions of what characterises a 'gender-balanced' range of courses, and/or which factors have to be taken into consideration when organising and designing courses of studies, from an equality perspective, the following aspects remain uncontested:

A programme organised and designed based on gender equity is equally attractive and accessible to both female and male students, and reduces social selectivity. It takes into consideration the different living conditions of students, as well as the specific interests and ways of learning of female and male students. Advisory, counselling, support and mentor programmes are oriented to the specific



needs of male and female students. Female and male students are equally led to completing their studies successfully and, at the same time, egalitarian possibilities for transitioning into MA programmes will be ensured for male and female students. A gender-balanced course of study incorporates the specifics of gender-segregated job markets into planning degree programmes and equally supports young female and male scholars. Furthermore, it integrates the theories, methods, and knowledge specific of women's and gender studies into the curricula.

The main part of our study focuses on the latter point: how can be the incorporation of gender issues into higher education curricula achieved? The remainder of this article presents our key findings in three steps and thereby shows how a change in curricula can be addressed.

## GENDER IN STUDIES: FIELD OF STUDY ISSUES

After briefly having clarified the general meaning of a gender-balanced curriculum, the following chapter demonstrates how the subject-specific curricula were developed and illustrates with the help of the two first categories (general course objectives related to gender issues and subject-specific gender studies content) how to make proposals for a gender-fair study reform. The categories are model questions applicable to every discipline and are developed to guide the elaboration of gendered curricula.

### *Teaching/Course Objectives*

To be able and develop a gender-balanced curriculum, the initial step is to identify an overall teaching objective: which gender-related course objectives should be the students taught? This question can only be answered in the particular context of each individual discipline. A health professional needs different gender-related knowledge for his/her professional career than a computer scientist or musicologist. While the physical materiality of the body predominates in Biology, Medicine, and Pharmaceuticals, the immaterial representation and the imagery of the physical prevail in cultural studies. The establishing of "gender in studies" is therefore a subject-specific challenge which has to be addressed by firstly formulating precise teaching objectives. In the following, four gender experts present the gender-related course objectives they devised for their particular study subjects.

- English/American Studies – Teaching / Course Objectives

"Students are familiarized with both the theoretical principles and the methodological concepts of gender studies and their relevance for Anglophone literary/cultural studies and linguistics. Students are enabled to recognise and reflect

critically on the significance of the category of gender (also in relation to categories such as race, ethnicity, sexuality and class) in cultural forms of representation (especially literature and film). They are also made aware of gender hierarchies in language, of gender-specific language behaviour, and of the linguistic construction of gender (linguistic turn) and through historical and pragmatic linguistics.” (Neumeier, 2011)

- Pharmacy – Teaching / Course Objectives

“Students should be taught which sex/gender differences must be taken into account regarding health and disease and the effects of medications, and how these differences affect the prescription and use of medications. Women and men traditionally have different functions with regard to family health and also display differing health-related behaviour. Students should recognise these differences by directly comparing men and women, and evaluate them with regard to their causes and consequences. This also includes gender-differentiated treatment and advice for men and women in pharmacies.” (Schäfer, 2011)

- Study of Religions – Teaching / Course Objectives

“Students should be familiarised with the methodological and theoretical principles of women’s studies, men’s studies and gender research in the field of the study of religions. First of all it is intended to put into question prevailing paradigms and to develop the competence for critical analysis of gender concepts in religious traditions and implicit gender constructions of research and theory-building concerning religions as well. A further aim is the revision of current data of the history of religions relying on the broad empirical results of gender research. Selected comparative and systematic issues should reveal trans-religious coherences relating to gender-specific stereotypes, norms, ideologies and symbols, as well as specifics of particular religious traditions. Students should be enabled to recognise the interaction between systems of religious symbols and gender relations, which stretch from the legitimisation of hierarchic dominance relationships to egalitarian tendencies or even the dismantling of the man/woman relationship. Finally, students should be encouraged to independently integrate the category gender – just like other differentiations, such as social class, age, ethnicity – into the analysis, depiction, interpretation and theory-building within the study of religions.” (Heller, 2011)

- Law – Teaching / Course Objectives

Students should

“Be familiarised with and discuss basic questions of national and European gender policy.

Learn to identify gender constructions in legislation and individual laws.

Analyse deficits and undesirable developments in legislation with regard to the need for gender justice and inclusiveness.

Discuss gender-stereotyped perceptions, preconceptions and prejudices in the finding, application and administration of justice.

Learn about the important legislation for typical life situations and the coexistence of men and women.

Learn about the possibilities and limitations of the 'equality machinery', state and international institutions for creating gender justice." (Schultz, 2011)

### *Teaching Content/Specific Gender Studies Content*

The next step in developing a gender-fair curriculum is to denominate the study content. Which specific subject matters shall be included in the curriculum in order to attain the previously stipulated teaching objectives? Architect Mary Pepchinsky exemplifies this task for the studies in Architecture.

- Architecture – Teaching Content / Subject-Specific Gender Studies Content

The teaching of this subject should focus on seven thematic areas:

"Knowledge of the different experiences of women and men in the profession of architecture in both present day and historical contexts; special emphasis should be placed upon the gender-specific roles that have developed in this profession throughout history, with special emphasis placed upon the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries. Although the proportion of men and women who study Architecture is relatively equal, the number of female architects who are self-employed, tenured professors, or otherwise, work in positions of authority is relatively small. The social and cultural mechanisms, which have enabled this discrepancy, should be more closely examined. Proposals to overcome this situation should be explored. Strategies that challenge the exclusionary mechanisms that exist within architectural practice should be introduced and elucidated.

To develop an understanding of the (explicit and implicit) influence that cultural constructions of gender have had upon the production of theory and mainstream architectural discourse ('key texts') in both current and historical contexts; knowledge that a stance towards 'gender' and 'gender relations' (for example, the production of binary-opposites in pairs such as strong/weak, order/chaos, light/dark, healthy/sick, vernacular/high art, rational/irrational, handmade/machine made, tradition/modern, which reproduce the 'masculine/feminine' binary opposition) has been integral to the language of architectural theory and urban discourse; to develop a critical stance towards these discursive constructions; the integration of writing from different historical periods and current texts, written by women concerning architecture, interior design, theory, history, and urbanism in all of the modules of an Architecture curriculum.

Knowledge of the (explicit and implicit) influence that cultural constructions of gender have had upon the planning, the construction, and the perception of

buildings and cities; an understanding that architecture (including building design, interior design and product design) and urbanism (including strategies for urban design and expansion, urban renewal and urban shrinkage) can be seen as a reproduction of gender relations. In addition, to convey the background, goals and strategies for social integration that are integral to the concept of gender-mainstreaming and, most importantly, to apply this knowledge to the design of public buildings, urban projects, as well as building projects in the area of historic preservation, building in context, and urban design.

To impart the importance of the background and goals of research in the area of gender studies; to inform students of the methods that can be used to integrate research in the area of gender studies into the practice of Architecture, with special emphasis given to the biographies of female architects; the relationship between gender, space, material and form, particularly in different periods and cultures; knowledge of research undertaken on gender, space and urbanism from related disciplines, such as sociology, art history, philosophy, political science, economics, etc.

To impart the importance of acquiring 'soft skills' (communication, negotiation methods, conflict management) in the area of project management; knowledge of the importance of a constructive and impartial means of working with all those who collaborate in the process of building including clients, public authorities, specialists, workers, engineers during the planning and realization of a building.

Knowledge of the ways in which different groups perceive bodies in space (for example, morals, sense of shame, etc.) and how these attitudes influence the planning and utilization of buildings and cities in differing cultures; the development of a sensibility for the manner in which attitudes towards gender have impacted the design of buildings and cities in non-European cultural circles.

Knowledge that the development, production and the application of technology (structural systems, building materials and construction methods; computer software and hardware; media products and applications) is not value-free or value-neutral; in addition, to acquire an understanding of the manner in which cultural constructions of gender in specific social, historical and cultural contexts has impacted the development of building materials and products as well as new technologies (development of the computer, CAD, new media, laser technology, etc.)." (Pepchinsky, 2011)

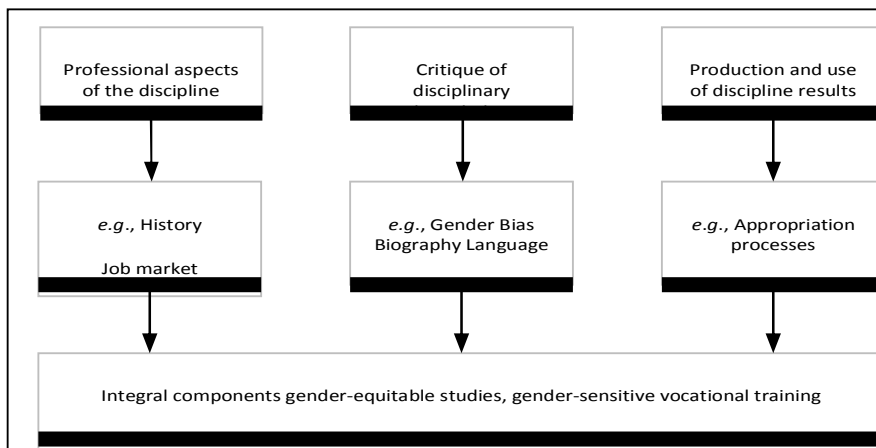
## GENDER IN STUDIES: MULTIDISCIPLINARY ISSUES

Depending on the subject area, the hitherto integration of gender aspects into university teaching differs according to substance, intensity and range of the discipline. Gender as category of analysis has become essential to the study of social and cultural relations and can therefore be considered part of the scientific canon of social sciences and cultural studies today. In contrast, gender issues do not have a similar stance in natural sciences and engineering as gender questions do not seem to belong to the core concerns of these disciplines. However, a current

catching up in terms of incorporating a gender perspective can be observed in Natural Sciences. These different degrees of including gender into research and teaching have been taken into account in the conception of the subject-specific curricula (cf. previous chapter). The intent of the subsequent chapter is to show that, despite the above-exemplified particularities of the different disciplines and the divergent levels of awareness of gender issues, certain steps towards 'gender in studies' are common to all examined disciplines.

An analysis of category two of the gender curricula (the subject specific content concerning women's and gender studies) of several subject areas reveals that, in all disciplines, three concerns are central to a gender-fair curriculum and a gender-sensitive vocational training. As integral components of the curriculum, the following features can contribute to a gender-balanced course of studies: (1) professional aspects of the discipline, (2) critique of disciplinary knowledge and (3) production and use of the discipline's research results (Figure 1). These aspects, to be explained in the following sections, should be examined through a gender perspective in each discipline, in order to guarantee a gender-fair education and can therefore be considered minimal standards of a curriculum, when BA's/MA's programmes are introduced and accredited.

Figure 1. Multidisciplinary issues



Source: The author.

### *Professional Aspects of the Discipline (History, Career, Job Market)*

Retracing and analysing the history of the envisaged career from the standpoint of gender is vital to a gender-balanced education. This includes historical questions on the accessibility to women of certain university studies and on the admission of

women to specific professions. Furthermore, the analysis of professional aspects of the discipline involves examining the process of ‘academising’ careers previously considered typical ‘female professions’ (e.g., Public Health professions, Physiotherapy, or Nursing) as well as discussing the percentage of women and men in specific careers and its underlying causes (Why are we witnessing a current decline in the proportion of men in the rehabilitation sciences? Why do men dominate in degree programmes and jobs in Natural Sciences and Engineering?). In doing so, professions are scrutinized on the individual, institutional, and social level, in order to demonstrate the gendering of work and to reveal how gender characteristics have been attributed to certain careers. Sensitizing students with regards to their own gender roles and with existing stereotypes in their discipline shall strengthen self-reflection on their future professional activities and render visible the significance of gender in professional life. To illustrate, researcher Birgit Babitsch (Berlin School of Public Health) describes the skills doctors and medics should acquire, in the course of their studies. Students should gain awareness of

“... their own gender roles and existing gender stereotypes, alongside their significance for their activities as doctors. At the end of their degrees, students should be capable of using the gender perspective as an important assessment and behavioural dimension in their practice as doctors.” (Babitsch, 2011)

In this context, profession-related communication and interaction processes (e.g., between a doctor and a patient, between a teacher and a pupil, or between an engineer and a client) and gender-related perceptions are of particular concern.

Discussing the history and development of a profession in terms of gender and by examining gender relationships within a specific vocational field, can make gender aspects central in the culture of a faculty. Typical questions to be asked are: What are the consequences of high percentages of women and men for professional experience? Do professional hierarchies exist? How should gender-friendly personnel policies be designed? Does the remuneration for so-called ‘women’s jobs’ and ‘men’s jobs’ differ? What is the balance between work and free time/family life? Can we observe the dissolution of gender-specific behaviour and typical male/female careers? To analyse professional action and attitudes in a culture- and gender-critical manner is of high importance to gendered university teaching and learning and to a gender-fair reorganisation of higher education. Only if these professional aspects of a discipline are considered in the curriculum, may students gain the gender-sensitive knowledge necessary to be qualified for a later profession.

### *Critique of Disciplinary Knowledge (Gender Bias, Biographies, and Language)*

The second aspect crucial to the incorporation of gender issues into higher education relates to the roles of men and women in university and academia. It is

essential to render gender visible and to enable students understand how gender constructions work in their respective studies. Starting from a science critique perspective, students should be encouraged to detect gender biases in their disciplines in that they learn to question who researched and published what, when, why, and how. The focus is on the androcentric, on gender dichotomies, or on gender sensitivity in the production of knowledge. It is about enabling students to reflect critically on research processes and projects with regards to gender. Biologist Kirsten Smilla Ebeling illustrates the necessity to raise awareness for gendered knowledge using the study of Biology as example. She notes that biological paradigms and basic assumptions contain gender differences based on dichotomies, such as body/mind, nature/culture and passivity/activity, which are gender-coded and arranged in a hierarchical order:

“The former items are marked as female and the latter are coded as male and of higher status. This structure is expressed in the subtexts of biological narratives, be it the male mind that discovers the secrets of passive female nature, the heroic sperm that overcomes all adverse circumstances and beats its opponents to awaken the egg cell with its kiss, or androgen hormones that prompt the further development of the brain from female to male during the development of the embryo. These gender-coded dichotomies constitute guiding principles that influence biologists’ perspectives and values. They have proved to be constitutive elements of biological thought, setting a framework in which scientific questions are posed, explanations accepted and answers found.” (Ebeling, 2011)

In addition, it is of utmost importance to take into consideration the work and biographies of female researchers within the respective disciplines and, in particular, to discover female pioneers in academia. Musicologist Rebecca Grotjahn states, in this context, that research on individual female composers has constituted the bulk of musicological women’s and gender studies, whereas male composers and musicians have been largely ignored in a gender-sensitive analysis of biographies. This reveals that gender studies need to enlarge their focus in order to integrate processes of gendering and producing social masculinities into curricula to the purpose of preventing the reproduction of the notion of the man, as a universal human being, and of the woman, as a particular sexual being:

“Studies of the life and work of individual female composers currently account for the majority of research in women’s and gender studies in the area of musicology. Initially, an important motive for the research was rediscovering valuable or interesting works by ‘forgotten’ women composers and making these available for professional performance not least by producing editions of them. To begin with, this branch of research followed the traditional ‘life and works’ approach of historical musicology. However, increasingly it has reflected on the underlying principles of biography in particular the concentration on potential ‘masterworks’ and included issues relating to the history of society and culture in its focus. Nevertheless, male

composers and performers have only formed a marginal part of biographies taking account of gender issues.” (Grotjahn, 2011)

Including biographical dimensions in teaching and studying additionally facilitates a self-reflexive examination of one’s own way as an academic.

A further important aspect in connection with the critique of disciplinary knowledge is gender-balanced language. Speech can reproduce gender and gender hierarchies and can thus contribute to gender-related identity building processes, says linguist Kristina Reiss:

“At the heart of feminist and gender-aware linguistics and communication studies lies the interdependency of language, identity, subject positions and socio-political structures and hierarchies. Language is ascribed considerable importance both as engineer and as instrument reflecting societal, political and social contexts and power relations.” (Reis, 2011)

Therefore, sensitivity and thinking about language should be promoted within teaching and studying, for example, via the use of female forms of address. Likewise, attention should be paid to the practical examples used in teaching, to ensure that they do not contribute to maintaining stereotypes, but instead take up modernized and resistant, or unusual, gender images. This approach to integrating gender-balanced language and images should also be accounted for in teaching materials. This includes the mentioning of first names in bibliographies in order to make the proportion of female scientists in the relevant scientific culture evident.

Finally, the subject-specific teaching cultures should be reviewed and same- and mixed-sex learning and working situations be considered. In this context, gender-conscious didactics are of high importance in order to endow university lecturers with the necessary gender competence.

### *Aspects of Producing and Utilising the Results of Disciplinary Research*

The third discipline-independent aspect relates to a gender sensitive perspective on processes of generating and utilizing research results and products. Every discipline should examine its knowledge production and use in a gender-conscious manner. Particularly in domains such as Engineering, in which the idea that ‘the construction of a machine does not have anything to do with gender’ frequently predominates, analysing research outcomes through a gender lens can contribute to proving the significance of gender for all academic and social areas.

More specifically, this third key aspect means that if something is produced in science, research, and practice – e.g., in Pharmaceuticals, a remedy is developed, in Architecture a house is designed, in Engineering, a car is made – gender aspects should be considered both in producing as well as in utilizing this product. Prescription drugs should be tested with regard to the different physiological



effects they may have on women and men, houses should include a kitchen large enough to permit housework to be done together, and cars should be made to satisfy different physical demands.

In the following, selected examples from different subject areas shall illustrate how generating and using research results of disciplinary enquiries can be examined in terms of gender, and how thereby the development of gendered curricula be enhanced.

In the case of Pharmaceuticals, the adoption of a gender-sensitive view on the use of research results seems reasonable and necessary. Marion Schaefer, professor of Pharmacoepidemiology and Social Pharmaceutics, exemplifies some questions that should be considered during the study of this discipline:

“What influences do have sex-specific differences of weight, volume, body surface area, fat distribution, muscle mass, etc. on the effects of medications and unwanted side effects? How different is the metabolism of medications or certain foodstuffs in men and women, and what conclusions we can draw for dosages? How can we explain men and women’s differing ways of dealing with pain, and what are the consequences for diagnosis and therapy, for example, of heart attacks? Do women and men react differently to the increase in toxic substances in the environment (e.g., in water and air)?” (Schaefer, 2011)

In the field of Media studies, communication researchers, Elisabeth Klaus and Susanne Kassel, point out that, students should become familiarised with gender-linked Media usage, dealing with “gender-specific genre preferences and types of reception, as well as the contextual embedding of media consumption in the differing day-to-day lives of men and women.” They include:

“... (mainly) statistical analyses of length and times of use, and preferences in the choice of media and media content.  
Studies of genre preferences and motivation for use.  
Studies on the embedding of media reception in the everyday lives of men and women.  
Examinations of gender-specific media impact, particularly in the area of the portrayal of violence.” (Klaus, and Kassel, 2011)

The detailed example of Computer Science intends to depict the connection of ‘doing gender’ with ‘doing science.’ Professor of Digital Media, Heidelinde Schelhowe, names the case of software development in the context of research results production and use in order to clarify this link:

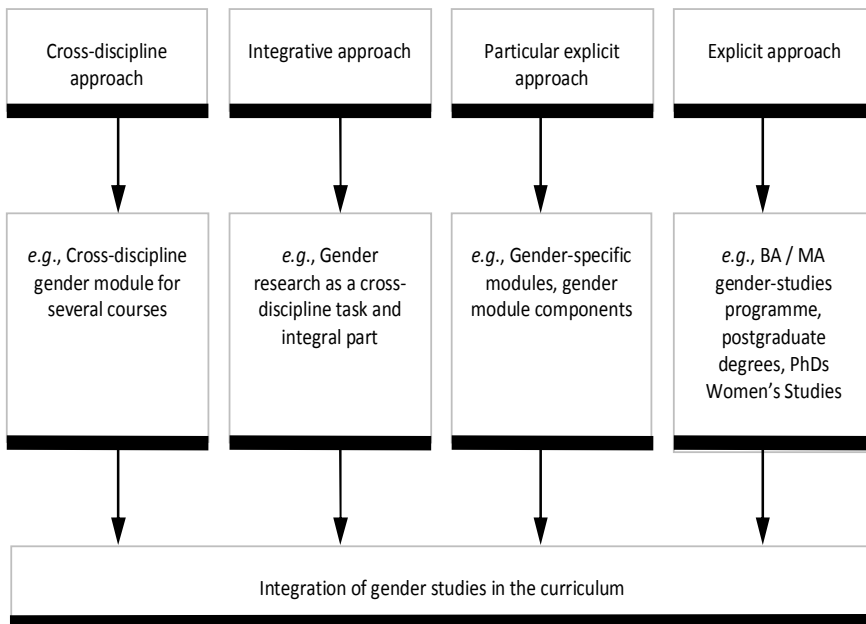
“Software development is doing gender: software is not neutral. Its abstractions and models are based on basic assumptions that emphasise certain aspects and neglect others, as various studies have shown. Partly because it focuses on ‘young, male, white users’ who also dominate the development teams themselves software has failed to appeal to (and be used by) all groups of the population equally. As such,

software frequently contributes to a consolidation of gender relations in their current form. There are numerous examples in the area of computer games. Much of computer scientists' activities involve software development. Gender studies investigates to what extent gender-specific views are inscribed in software concepts, and attempts to make constructive suggestions on how software can be designed so that it can be used by men and women in the same way and appeal to them equally. This requires software design methods that combine a conscious reflection on social contexts with technological development." (Schelhowe, 2011)

### FORMS OF INTEGRATING GENDER STUDIES IN THE COURSE OFFERINGS: EXPLICIT, INTEGRATIVE, OR INTERDISCIPLINARY?

In the course of restructuring degree programmes, within the framework of the Bologna Process, the question of how gender aspects can be integrated into teaching and learning systematically arises. In the following, four approaches will be outlined. Figure 2 gives an overview of these approaches.

Figure 2. Forms of integrating gender in studies



Source: The author.

### *Interdisciplinary Approach: Single-Gender Module for Various Programmes*

An interdisciplinary approach is particularly appropriate in institutions of higher education where women's and gender studies were previously scarce, or non-existent. It involves establishing 'Cross-Discipline Gender Studies' within the institution, either in the form of an inter-discipline gender module, or by integrating special classes into a general studies programme (*Studium Generale*). An example of such a cross-discipline course would be a class on the gender-sensitive use of media, combining insight from Media studies, Social Psychology, Electrical Engineering, Pedagogy and Design. Similarly, the topic of Hydraulic Engineering could be analysed in relation to development, globalisation, and gender.

### *Integrative Approach: Theories, Methods, and Findings of Gender Studies as a Cross-Discipline Task and an Integral Part of Teaching and Learning*

A majority of the gender experts that wrote the subject-specific gender curricula prefer an integrative approach that includes gender aspects as cross-cutting topics into existing degree courses. This is a more holistic approach, which helps prevent Gender Studies being sidelined. Uta Gause, Protestant Theology, advocates for an integrated approach:

"Instead of a specific gender module, we recommend integrating a module element into every course on the individual disciplines. This would ensure that every discipline deals with the subject of gender." (Gause, 2011)

However, for this approach to work, the majority of lecturers need to possess an extensive gender competence. In cases where only a small proportion of university teachers have the required gender knowledge, explicit approaches such as those outlined above, are to be preferred. And so does Beate Neumeier, for English Studies:

"A specific gender module enables not only the implementation of the basic principles, but also ensures further intensive and focused studies. However, of equal importance is the integration of the modules suggested here into other modules, such as literary studies, cultural studies, linguistics as well as interdisciplinary studies." (Neumeier 2011)

Engineer Bettina Mons prefers the stage model for Civil Engineering:

"Subject-specific issues in gender studies should be integrated into individual modules in traffic planning, housing planning, environmental planning, etc. Until we can be sure that the relevant theories are always being taught, i.e., theories on the perception of gender roles and the significance of social gender for the different

planning areas, a separate module can be offered on gender in planning, e.g., 'Mobility and Gender' or 'Gender in Environmental Planning'." (Mons, 2011)

The demand for incorporating women's and gender studies into existing study programmes can contain innovative impulses for the development of an entire discipline, as Rebecca Grotjahn, a musicologist, maintains:

"The new examination and degree regulations should give extra impetus to the development of the subject but on no account turn it into a niche-subject. What is more, lecturers who are not specialists in women's studies should be especially strongly encouraged (and enabled) to apply these new perspectives to traditional areas of the subject." (Grotjahn, 2011)

She further suggests including model themes on gender into the module description of a degree course which should explicitly be asked for during accreditation. This view is shared by Margret Flieder (2011), who points out that the objectives and subjects of Care Science show various links to related disciplines and that gender aspects can hence serve as cross-disciplinary theme, which, however, requires a concrete explanation in the respective modules.

### *Individual Explicit Approach: Gender Subject Modules, Gender Components*

In cases where the integration of gender aspects cannot be secured, academics favour the formation of independent modules and module elements. The inclusion of women's and gender studies as a cross-section theme into university teaching may fail because of the lecturers' want for professional capability, as agronomist Mathilde Schmitt, among others, affirms:

"Essentially, gender aspects can be taken into account in all courses in Agriculture, Forestry, Viticulture and Horticulture degrees. However, many lecturers are unlikely to be able to assess or recognize the significance of the category of gender. We therefore do not assume that gender issues will be taken into account in a relevant number of degree courses in the near future. As an interim solution, we recommend introducing gender modules/seminars on rural women's and gender studies and feminist critique of agricultural/forestry studies, and initiating relevant final theses and work placements. Collaboration with Economics, History and Social Sciences departments/working groups may be useful for formal assignments." (Schmitt, 2011)

However, it would fall short regarding the establishing of an independent gender module only as a temporary solution. Within many courses, an explicit gender module can play a vocational qualification function. Furthermore, gender modules are proposed for areas with a high percentage of women, as is the case with Social Work as well as for programmes with low numbers of female students, as for example in Computer Science. In addition, independent gender modules are

recommended during the Master's degree studies, for a specialization, while for the Bachelor's studies the integrative approach is rather favoured.

*Explicit Approach: BA/MA Degrees in Gender Studies, PhDs, Women's Universities, Distance-Learning Degrees*

The explicit approach is particularly recommended for the area of Social and Cultural studies. In this subject area, MA programmes prepare students for a career as equal opportunity commissioner, or allow a thorough scientific examination of questions on women and gender.

At present, various models of academic degrees in women's and gender studies exist in Germany. They range from postgraduate programmes on specific gender themes. For example: *Comparative Literature, Intercultural, Inter-medial and Gender Studies*, offered by the University of Paderborn; *Gender Studies – Culture, Communication, Society*, offered by the Ruhr University Bochum, an interdisciplinary programme comprising not only the core disciplines of History and Social and Media Sciences, but also integrating further disciplines; or *Gender Studies – Interdisciplinary Research and Practice*, with different specialisations in *Socialisation and Education / Cross-Culture, Work and Organisation, Body and Health* and *Trans-Nationalisation and Democratisation*, offered by the University of Bielefeld, to mono-educational programmes accessible exclusively to female students, some of them in the area of Natural Sciences and Engineering.

## CONCLUSIONS

A central finding of our study is that there is no preset way to anchor gender in studies in higher education. Each discipline and its corresponding courses have their own approach and should have a specific gender curriculum. In this respect, the database has already included 54 curricula, which illustrate the disciplinary perspectives and the wide spectrum of reasons and arguments for the need of 'gender mainstreaming' in curricula.

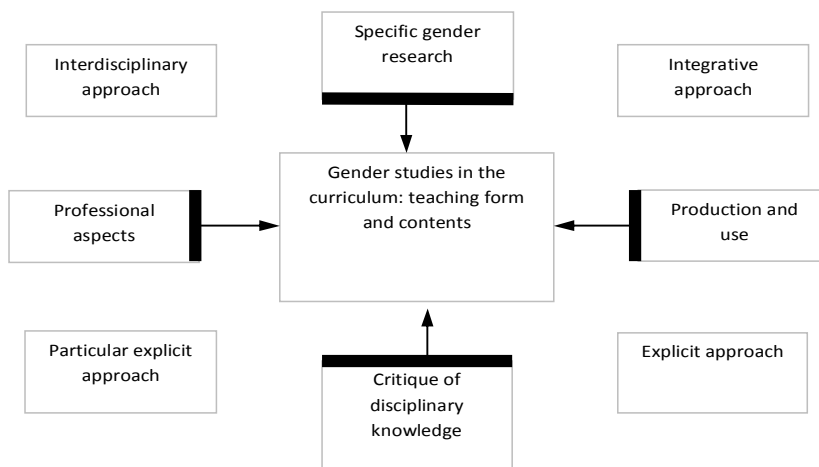
This differentiated approach makes it possible to take the different developments in the disciplines, at the universities, and in the respective regions and countries, into account. For example, interdisciplinary gender modules make more sense at smaller universities and exclusive MA Gender Studies could represent a new discipline at larger universities. In the Social Sciences, an exclusive Master Gender Studies course could provide a professional qualification in the occupational field of equality and thus, be exactly the instrument needed for professionalization, whereas, for example, it is of central importance in Pharmaceuticals that gender be integrated as a cross-section category.

Different methodical approaches for different conditions – to some extent also in chronological order as a stage model – are feasible. The ‘Gender Research in the Curricula’ model presented demonstrates these different forms for institutional anchoring and names disciplinary and interdisciplinary gender aspects at the same time. When anchoring gender studies in the curricula, the identification of disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of gender studies and the development of suitable means for conveying this information are necessary. The interaction of the different elements is illustrated in the following diagram (Fig. 3), as a graphic representation of our model for anchoring gender studies in teaching and study.

An array of efforts and cooperation are necessary to ensure the success of this anchoring, as the promotion of interdisciplinarity, reflexivity, and scientific study via the integration of gender aspects by no means sells itself. In addition to scientists, academics, and equal opportunities commissioners, university and college administrations, in particular, are also required: their active decision for the gender-fair design of their courses is just as indispensable as concrete decisions and agreements with the faculties and the establishment of an advice and evaluation system with the assistance of gender experts.

The Bologna Process should be applied more intensely to design more gender-fair Bachelor’s and Master’s courses and thus enhance lecturers’ and researchers’ gender competence and knowledge, with the result that, in the future, gender becomes a central category in study and teaching and that, on completion of their studies, graduates have developed the much needed gender awareness.

Figure 3. Model – Gender Research in Higher Education Curricula



Source: The author.

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# **Guidelines for Promoting Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education**

Mihaela MIROIU

## **Abstract**

*This paper is the result of the research work, From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies: Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher education. Problems, Policies, Possibilities, UNESCO-CEPES, 2011. The aim is to offer the teaching staff (already involved in gender studies or interested in mainstreaming gender), universities management, as well as the national coordinators of higher education an orientation in their efforts to fight discrimination, to respect equal opportunities and, subsequently, to introduce gender in studies, as a regular curriculum component. Firstly, the guide contains the political, ethical, epistemological, and sociological reasons for an integrative approach on gender, as well as a concise picture of sexist and patriarchal approaches on women and gender roles. Secondly, the discussion goes to Gender Studies/Women Studies/Feminism as an autonomous rejoined to gender conservatism and emancipation educational strategy in South Eastern Europe – guiding the reader through the friendly and resistant fields in the academic life –, as well as to the methodological advantages of a gender integrationist approach. Thirdly, the guide moves on to the integrationist approach, as a potential double-edged sword, but also to its estimated virtues and importance. The last part is dedicated to the possible strategies aiming at introducing gender in studies and to the indispensable actors – the individual, the academic community, the academic institutions, and the national actors – and reference is made to the needed training sources of documentation and bibliography available to the teaching staff.*

## **REASONS FOR A GENDER INTEGRATIVE APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **Political Reasons**

Many Central and East European (CEE) states have adopted laws against discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, but, in most cases, such laws still remain a formal demonstration of conformity to the European Commission, because no clear policies and budgets have been associated with them. The states,



as political actors, agreed to adopt such policies as a condition of their being accepted in 'the club.'

Integrating gender in the curricula is more than a necessity, it is a legal obligation of the system of education, in general, and for higher education in particular. Most of the laws on the equal opportunities for women and men have a similar design in CEE, such as: teaching staff training on equal opportunities, the non-discriminatory and non-stereotypical approach on gender roles in the public and private life, in syllabi, handbooks, and textbooks, and/or the critique of such practices. Mainstreaming gender and adopting a gender equity approach are, in fact, legal requirements, not to mention the ethical, epistemological, and sociological ones.

### *Ethical Reasons*

Starting from the golden rule, 'Don't do unto others what you don't want them to do unto you,' most of the ethical systems lay emphasis on the idea that people, irrespective of (in our case) their gender, should be treated the same way, in comparable cases. To put the question in another way, 'Would you like to be ignored as a person or have your history, interests, and epistemic authority ignored just because you are a man? Can gender be a reason for ignorance or discrimination?' All these questions have been answered by the modern and post-modern ethics. And the answer is NO. All human beings are ends in themselves and cannot be used just as means. Autonomy and dignity define the status of any person *qua* person (a Kantian approach). All people have an equal right to follow their own life plans, according to their view on their own interests. Nobody is entitled to patronize an adult or any rational person without her/his consent (a utilitarian approach). To be impartial, fair, an institution has to rule while taking into account even the interests and needs of the most disenfranchised or disadvantaged person (a Rawlsian approach) (Rawls, 1971). Even more, if the only types of ethics we admit to are those based on rights and interests, they will be suited to respond to the fact that, for a large part of our life, we are not autonomous, but dependent (as children, or disabled, or old, or sick). We also need a very feminine approach to morals: the ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982). Briefly speaking, any moral education and research cannot systematically ignore the 'others' (read women and gender issues).

### *Epistemological Reasons*

For millennia, the production of knowledge was a masculine monopoly. The reasons are classical. Most societies were overwhelmingly patriarchal, in gender terms, until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Decades ago, objectivity and

neutrality were contested even in Natural Sciences, not to mention the Social ones and the Humanities. Even if not intentional, producers and transmitters of knowledge have reflected, researched, and published according to their experiences and perspectives. In the last sixty years, many societies made education accessible to women, at all levels, as well as research, in recent decades. But 'the Maestro story' is masculine. 'Maestras' are not yet recognized, as such. Women's specific experiences and perspectives are not included. In the '80s, with the emergence and development of women studies, feminist studies, and gender studies, the undersupplied women's standpoints in knowledge was overcome, to a great extent, at least, in the Western countries. At the beginning of the new millennium, that became a possibility even for the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In the last two decades, Western universities made an impressive step forward, toward mainstreaming gender in the curricula. CEE universities are still keeping gender approaches isolated, minimal, for example, as a special optional course, or just in a state of ghettoization, as gender studies separate centres, or, in the best case scenario, as MA and PhD separate programmes. The time for the new acquisition of gender knowledge to be integrated within various disciplines and topics is coming. (Scott, 1986; Bourdieu, 1998; Kolozova, 2011)

### *Sociological Reasons*

In the entire region, as well as in most European states, the percentage of women enrolled in higher education as students exceeds 60-70 percent in Humanities and Social Sciences. The ratio of gender representation for professorship in Social Sciences and Humanities increased to 50 percent and over; in some areas, women are even better represented than men. MA and PhD programmes are also more and more feminized, in terms of student participation: most MA and PhD graduates – possible future professors in higher education – are women. It is also predictable that, as women are becoming more and more suitable experts in government, given that more and more women have been taking up studies in Political Science, Public Administration, Business, Law, International Relations, and Sociology, they will play a far more significant role in the design of public policies, including education-related policies.

The prejudiced attitude of opposing women's participation in the planning of the public budget, leads to an endemic feminization of poverty, which is deeply affecting education and health, not to mention the gender pay gap. An increased awareness of gender in/justice would provide the chance to change the governmental priorities in investing public money, as a result of competent lobbying. (Ćeriman, *et al.*, 2011; Pető, and Dezső, 2011; Slavova 2010; 2011)

*A Concise Image of Sexist and Patriarchal Approach on Women and Gender Roles*

Women experiences	Content	Misogynistic, sexist, and patriarchal interpretations	Consequences for higher education
Exclusively women	Pregnancy Abortion Giving birth Confinement Lactation Menstruation Menopause	Masculine-feminine creation-procreation spirit-mater culture-nature mind-body reason-instinct strong-weak autonomy-dependence subject-object end-mean public-private	Women's experiences are generally ignored in Social Sciences (research and handbooks). If not, they are interesting in bio-medical, and not social, political or cultural terms.  Most authors of 'canonical' texts on women are generally men and/or women lacking a background in fair gender approaches.  The very textbooks tend to enforce such stereotypes and prejudices.
Symbolic association with nature (shared with: 'barbarians', slaves, and the colonized)	Irrational Emotional Sensitive	Closer to animals / nature than to man Hysterical Low level of discernment Need someone else to rule over them	Canonical literature often portrays women as hysterical, irrational, unintelligible creatures, undermined by sensibility. History handbooks rarely refute such characters.
Image of helplessness (shared with children, the elderly, and the disabled)	Unable to leave and to cope on their own.	Need to be protected paternalism/ patriarchy. It is men who have to protect them.	Marriage and dependency is a woman's main norm. Independence and autonomy are man-related.  Social Sciences are still operating with men as the 'heads of the family' or 'heads of the household.'

Women experiences	Content	Misogynistic, sexist, and patriarchal interpretations	Consequences for higher education
Feminine experiences (shared mainly with the household servants)	Unpaid care work Double working day Domestic violence Sexual harassment Rape Pornography Prostitution	Care for others is 'natural' Self-sacrifice is a duty. Women are sexual objects, men are not. Women must be kept in fear.	The feminine nature of care-taking is presupposed. There is a little room for the alternative of families based on fair partnership as a desirable norm.  Topics related to sexuality and its oppressive forms are usually ignored (if not outright taboo). They are considered too 'low' points, unworthy of academic research.
Subordination (shared with 'lower' classes, races, ethnic groups)	Low access to power and resources. Non-citizens or second-class citizens, at best.	Poverty Humiliation Self-denial Assimilation	Feminization of poverty and of powerlessness is often ignored by sociologists and political scientists, and so are gender budgeting and women's discrimination by the economists.  Women's rights are ignored by Law School curricula.  Higher education suffers from vertical gender segregation in men's favour.
Anonymity (shared with all types of the 'marginalized')	They possess no publicly acknowledged history, concepts, and models.	Lack of self-awareness as a group Low self-esteem Low solidarity Low paid professions Functional definitions as: mother, wife, mistress, daughter.	History fails in providing room to the history of women's rights and allows very little room for women who cannot be functionally defined. Steps for <i>Her</i> story are still missing. Private life history is regarded as an insignificant topic.

Source: Adapted after Miroiu, 1996.

The history of knowledge, as well as social history, has proved that misogynist prejudice, sexist discrimination, and their institutionalized patriarchal forms never change, unless challenged and contested by those who suffer from these forms of discrimination and fight against injustice, irrespective of their gender.

The academic competence for such intellectual skills to fight discrimination and to make room for equal treatment, partnership, respect for differences, self-assertion and equal opportunities among women and men was an impressive forward movement in the last 50 years in the West, and in the last 20 years, in the East (read Central and Eastern Europe).

But as a consequence of the historical gap between the two regions, the stages are different. Western universities are embracing not only gender studies as separate programmes and classes, but also gender in studies as a mainstreaming approach. The last stage is still embryonic in CEE. How can we bring the academic content closer to an inclusive gender approach? This is the problem we shall try to think about and solve in the following pages.

#### GENDER/WOMEN/FEMINIST STUDIES AS AUTONOMOUS RESPONSE TO GENDER CONSERVATISM. EMANCIPATION EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY IN SEE

##### *Gender Studies Friendly Fields*

##### Fields

The study fields that are more open to the introduction of Gender-related Studies are the emergent ones in Social Sciences, or those that have been rehabilitated after the fall of communism: Political Science, International Relations, European Studies, Sociology, History, Anthropology, Journalism and Communication. To a lesser degree, this action can be observed in Law and Pedagogical schools. Women and young people had an easier way in, as the teaching staff was modernized, in terms of academic competence and had access to international research programmes. In many cases, there was no conservative academic establishment to confront with. Everywhere, in Central and Eastern Europe, Open Society Institutes (*e.g.*, Soros), important donors at the state level, and universities from the United States of America and Great Britain were the main supporters of such domains in political, academic, and financial terms. That explains why other new fields, in the Humanities, have developed gender programmes, as in American Studies, British Studies, Cultural Studies, which permeated other fields, such as Literature and Philosophy. The involvement of the European Union programmes, in the last years, was a very good support for trans-national programmes, such as the European MA, MATILDA: Gender and Women's History. ATHENA European network for Gender Studies played a significant part in integrating the field at the European level. Few MA programmes were accepted with state support, not to mention PhD programmes. But the competences gained in the last two decades represent a significant, impressive, and useful achievement for the next stage: gender *in* studies (Grünberg, 2001; Daskalova, 2010; Miroiu, 2010,a).

### Methodological Advantages

As mentioned by the analysts, all specialists in gender studies are an academic vanguard, from a methodological point of view, for the reasons listed further below.

- The emphasis on cross-cultural analysis – such studies have produced new configurations and links among disciplines and cultures, by means of area studies and comparative studies.
- The intersectional approach reveals that gender is easily cross-classified with other categories of social analysis, such as class, race / ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, region, and religion.
- Gender is the usual ‘ingredient’ in disciplines such as Sociology, History, Philosophy, and Political Science – mainly, in introducing such topics as identity development, cultural representation of women / men, motherhood, work, family, class stratification, cultural diversity, gender representation, engendering citizenship and students gain, interdisciplinary and trans disciplinary competences.
- Study field boundaries in the Social Sciences and the Humanities are getting more flexible owing to the transfer of gender knowledge.
- It became a model for analyzing the experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and under-representation.
- It became a model of applied research and applied theory.
- It encourages mainly qualitative and comparative research.
- It became a model for social finalities and virtues of academic knowledge, as emancipation research and education for the public at large. (See also, Kolozova, 2011; Pető and Dezső, 2011; Čeriman, *et al.*, 2011; Slavova, 2011).

### *Gender Studies Resistant Fields*

If in some academic domains as positive sciences, it is rather unusual to operate with a gender dimension (apart from gender policies in enrolment, promotion, and leadership), in many other fields, a gender dimension is indispensable.

To give just a few examples:

- Giving birth, a profoundly and exclusively specific experience for women is rarely presented from women's perspective in Medical Sciences, as well as the specific experiences of women's diseases.
- The economic studies do not analyze budgets in terms of gender.
- Police academies rarely include special topics concerning the traffic of women, prostitution, rape, domestic violence, from women's perspectives, as they are not able to reflect themselves to their own experiences.
- Curricula in Law departments include Women's rights, accidentally, or not at all. In general, the structure of the faculties is rarely encouraging or open to other fields, apart from the narrow specialization.
- As many authors of gender analyses have noticed, even Pedagogy departments are reluctant to introduce gender approaches and feminist perspectives. In the Pedagogy departments (or Science of Education), as a consequence of this unwillingness, graduates are not proficient in promoting gender fairness in education and in building the skills needed to fight gender prejudices and stereotypes.
- Feminist Psychology and Psychology of gender, as well as the necessary gendered therapies, are often ignored, endangering a proper standpoint explanation and therapy.

### *Integrationist Approach to Gender Studies*

#### Integration – A Double-Edged Sword?

In the recent past, *i.e.* the last two decades, those supporting the need for separate, institutionalized Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, or Women's Studies programmes were stressing the need to specialize and legitimize the field, and increase its prestige. The autonomous programme lent greater visibility to gender issues, designed the curriculum transformation, established a network of prominent scholars, and had a significant contribution to the international openness of the host universities.

There are many reasons pleading for keeping Gender Studies / Women Studies / Feminist Studies autonomous. Some reasons are psychological: it creates a sort of academic gynaecium, in which women become more self-aware, self-confident, and self-reflective; they gain a sense of solidarity and collective action. Some other reasons are scientific: such studies are much updated as methods and bibliography; they are strongly related to post-modern approaches and internationalized to a

great extent. To dissolve them in the existing curricula means to expose them to the misunderstandings, tendentious interpretations, ironies, and conservatisms of some university staff. Another reason is that, in the last two decades, the knowledge in the area was rather 'westernized' and the audacity to produce innovative local and regional research and knowledge is still at the beginning.

A reasonable objection is the missing second-wave feminism in the region, because of the communist past. A strategic separation and autonomy are necessary to build awareness among women in the academia, as well as to create women's networks between academics, NGO activists, women artists, women in politics, and to produce an adequate picture of gender relations and policy projects for change. Central and South East European states have landed directly in the third wave feminism, and, at the same time, in the backlash against feminism in the West. They still need grassroots intellectual, civic, and political movements.

The 'either-or strategy' may not be the best of solutions. An 'and-and' strategy would be more desirable: to keep programmes separate and integrate their results in the general curricula.

These needs and amendments are still there, but from the fruits of knowledge and research on gender studies other disciplines have to benefit too. They provide an opportunity to engender a large number of traditional disciplines, in a non-sexist manner. Many objections against integration are related to the fear of assimilation ('Ad women and stir!') and the dissolution of a feminist approach, the last one being constantly under siege. But, according to the experience already gained, a greater ignorance of feminism attracts even more prejudice.

The alliance with men in the academic environment is normal and desirable. There are gender-aware men who feel motivated in introducing a gender-fair approach in their own fields of study; there are pro-feminism men, while some women are misogynists (Miroiu, 2003).

#### Estimated Virtues of an Integrationist Approach

Gender stereotypes in the education system contribute to the reproduction of traditional patterns of behaviour; they maintain misogyny and patriarchal gender relations. Gender mainstreaming is a substantial way to undermine the phenomenon and to settle the epistemic bases of gender equity.

Much more students and a wider audience will benefit from engendering education in a fair, partnership-like manner.

Male students who usually do not attend gender or feminist classes will be normally sensitized to such topics and become aware of the significance of gender, gender conservatism, and gender-fair approaches.

The teaching staff in other disciplines will include gender-related topics in their curriculum and textbooks, becoming more aware and more sensitive to the subject.



As a basic element of diversity (the generic 'man' is just a concept), students, professors and scholars will have a good instrument for openness towards an intersectional approach: gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion, in other words, abstract categories will become embodied experience.

Embracing the 'politics of difference' on a personal level would further have a multiplier effect in changing attitudes such as sexism, racism, homophobia, chauvinism, and hate speech.

- It will raise the level of empathy for the 'others.'
- It will raise the level of contextual understanding.
- It will make classroom debates livelier and more applied.
- It will educate a sense of inclusive, less blind, and less de-contextualized justice.
- It will allow for the training of gender-sensitive experts with basic skills, as part of their professional competence.
- It will contribute to the development of the gender culture, and thus to adjust the quality of national education to the European standards.
- Gender mainstreaming makes possible knowledge internationalization and globalization, while being active in the national, regional and global public sphere.
- It will increase solidarity against manifold kinds of discrimination.
- It will substantially enhance the meaning of consolidated democracy.
- Last, but not least, even if the establishment is not investing money for programmes in gender studies, gender approaches can survive as part of the general and specific curricula. (See also, Slavova, 2011).

## GENDER IN STUDIES INDUCTION STRATEGIES

### *The Individual and the Community, as the Main Possible Promoters of an Integrationist Approach on Gender*

Since the individual level of action has always been the most successful, but success was related to an autonomous approach: creating Gender Studies centres, programmes, special classes on gender, feminism, women studies, doing research, translations and publication, managing grants.

Because they worked together, within the framework of the same programmes, with the same students, on the same research topics, the sense of community and collective action, having common beliefs and values is much higher than in other cases of conjectural cooperative action.

Many of the professors are still playing the role of 'Jane of all trades,' as knowledge producers, civic and academic pioneers, lobbyists, and public speakers on behalf of gender equity. At the same time, many of them are members of an international public sphere concerned with gender issues. They have gained academic and social prestige, which is also advantageous to their universities.

The evolution and the results of their work have become significant enough to allow for a shift to a new strategy, without leaving the 'older' one, but adjusting it.

- Determined, competent, dedicated, and gifted specialists succeeded in creating authentic schools of thought.
- Their command of foreign languages, mainly English, is very good and their academic strategy is meant to surmount the intellectual isolation of their own universities.
- The staff and the students involved in Gender studies programmes have become a community of investigation, sharing competences, methods, contents, and common views.
- Many of their students/graduates are currently working on gender issues as teachers, academics, researchers, civic activists, trainers, artists, journalists, and/or political experts.
- A significant number of PhD theses are focused on gender/women/feminism, irrespective of the PhD field (mainly true for Social Sciences and Humanities).
- In their turn, the PhD graduates, while becoming members of different universities, are spreading the knowledge.
- Translations and original publications have become more familiar to a larger public.
- Thanks to the individual and collective efforts, data bases and specialized libraries are available.
- As specialists in different fields of studies, Gender Studies promoters also teach other classes apart from those explicitly related to gender, women or feminism; they themselves initiate gender approaches in other disciplines, making the subject a very usual, normal ingredient of academic formation.

- The events organized by gender programmes promoters – conferences, public talks, workshops, happening, exhibitions, round-tables, documentary movies, even civic protests – have attracted many female and male colleagues, who became ‘members of the crew.’
- They succeeded to change the academic colleagues’ attitudes from preventive anti-feminism and conservatism to tolerant, sometimes sympathetic, comprehensive and cooperating attitudes. (Scott, 1997; Hey, 2010; Slavova, 2011)

### *Institutional Level*

The organizational culture is the necessary condition to cross from the insular character of the gender studies, to an inclusive naturalization of a fair gender approach *in* the academic disciplines and in the academic relations. Such culture is far more possible in the universities where the acquisitions of the autonomous, individual level, as mentioned before, have already been achieved. It is ‘the flesh and blood’ of any other step, because it is insuring and providing the content itself.

The formal ingredients also matter a lot, in order to create the necessary normative environment.

- The University Charta should include provisions concerning the practice of non-discrimination, the promotion of gender equity and diversity in the access to leadership, resources, and gender fair approaches in curricula.
- The Codes of Ethics must guaranty the university will to fight favouritism, discrimination, sexism, in particular, all forms of harassments (including explicit provisions for sexual harassments) and to promote academic freedom and integrity. The structure of the Councils of Ethics must observe gender representation, for the Council to benefit from gender expertise.
- Quality assurance commissions need policies concerning the evaluation of gender integration in the syllabi and textbooks. At the same time, the commissions should monitor and evaluate the institutional implementation of the provisions on gender equity and gender balance in leading positions.
- The departments will encourage and enforce the introduction of gender issues in the handbooks and textbooks for all the suitable disciplines.
- The departments (mostly in Social Sciences) encourage and organize student internship with NGO’s for Women’s rights, commissions for equal opportunities at the level of the Parliament, the Government, local councils, political parties, and agencies for fighting discrimination.

- The university will support a module for building skills in equal opportunities and promoting diversity (transversal module) in the primary formation, at the Doctor's Degree level.
- The pedagogical modules or departments will include special topics dedicated to gender fair policies in education, in order to train the future teachers to promote a non-sexist, partnership-based education.
- The universities will promote national and international partnership in gender research and teaching.
- The universities will support gender-research events and publications, and will reward outstanding achievements.

### *National Level*

The necessary ingredients at the national level are:

#### General Provisions

- Non-discrimination and Equal opportunities are Constitutional norms
- A Law on Fighting Discrimination and institutions or independent agencies to fight discrimination, which hire gender experts and promote the know-how of university and NGO gender experts.
- A Law on Equal Opportunities, institutions, or independent agencies enforcing the Law, at the national and local level, which hire gender experts and promote the know-how of university and NGO gender experts.
- The National System of Qualifications should officially acknowledge the gender expertise.

#### Provisions for Higher Education

- The Law on Education will include explicit provisions for gender equity, non-sexist education, non-sexist language, education for the private life, education for gender partnership and equal opportunities in the competition, for the access at all the levels in higher education (enrolment, promotion, representation). The Ministry of Education will politically support and finance the training of the teachers and the formation of competences necessary to fight discrimination and promote gender awareness and gender fairness in their disciplines and pedagogical practices.

- The express inclusion of gender sensitive competences of specialists for higher education qualifications in the National System of Qualifications, which would help institutionalize the gender dimension in university curricula and educate gender sensitive teachers.
- Quality assurance commissions /agencies/institutions for higher education have to use the criteria of gender fairness and inclusiveness in their evaluation of programmes and academic institutions, for accreditation and university ranking.
- The agencies/institutions designing the financing policies for academic programmes will promote the criteria of gender-fair inclusiveness in the curricula and representation in leadership.
- The agencies/institutions designated to select applications for research grants will include gender-fair policies for the applicants; the estimated effects for gender equity/inclusiveness, as evaluation criteria of the proposals and results.

#### Training the Academic Staff

Today's specialists, qualified both in a 'classical' domain and research subjects and gender, should organize special training courses for their colleagues and for PhD students. They can also offer a minimal bibliography on gender/feminist approach for each discipline at every level (undergraduate, MA and PhD students).

Suggestions for current and future academic staff

- Bringing more men into gender studies. The number of course offerings would be enlarged, the development of masculinity studies will be enhanced, and a balance between male and female faculty, who work on gender topics, would be reached.
- Applying for research grants (international or national) with cross-discipline teams and students, focused on gender topic or equal opportunities.
- Publication of writings on gender approaches to different subjects or with subjects including a gender and feminist perspective.
- Faculty and student mobility to other national, regional, and European universities, with good practices in promoting Gender-Inclusive curricula.
- Visiting professors with significant standing in the field.
- Organizing convention special panels, dedicated to gender and providing papers on gender to the other convention sections.

- Offering students the option to choose specific classes in other departments or universities.
- Encouraging students to choose such topics for their diplomas and/or dissertations.
- Inviting potential stakeholders to the events on gender topics, organized by the university.
- Introducing a special module on the topic of gender-fair strategies in education, in the pedagogical formation of the students.
- Accessing the valuable Doctoral Grants for the Development of Knowledge-Based Society, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Programmes for Support of Research, Programme for the Development of Human Resources in Gender Studies and Gender approach, participation in different European Commission programmes, such as FP6 and FP7, the Tempus projects, and also in other grant schemes, such as the Regional Research Promotion Programme in Social Sciences. (Koložova, 2011; Slavova, 2011; Čeriman, *et al.*, 2011)

#### Ensuring the Needed Bibliographical Support

Theoretical research and publications increase intra-academic prestige, whereas applied research usually has a larger impact upon the public opinion and the design of gender equity programmes. Neither strategy should be neglected. Research should provide resources through curricular development and continuing education; development of cross-institutional research programmes, promoting scholarship and publications; supporting new local initiatives, promoting regional and international networking and co-operative projects. We are living in the era of globalization of research networks and the access to cyber-expertise.

#### SUGGESTIONS

- Initiation of special collections on Gender studies with important publishing houses, aimed at an increased visibility.
- Translating the 'canonical' feminist texts in different fields, as well as significant works in the region that are closer to the social and historical context.
- Publishing original research and textbooks.
- Special libraries or library sections dedicated to gender topics.

- Drawing up common handbooks and textbooks for different disciplines, with a special insertion of gender or feminist approach.
- Setting up electronic platforms of data bases and publications, for the use of many universities.
- Using the existing European electronic platforms, as resources (*e.g.*, platforms resulted from ATHENA or FRAGEN projects, as well as that of the Central European University).
- Using the main electronic data bases, *e.g.*, EBSCO and JStore.
- Setting up university partnerships, aimed at bibliographical exchanges, in the country and in the region.
- Editing specialized reviews and newsletters.
- Designing an electronic network for gender-interested scholars and students. It will facilitate contacts among gender-interested faculty and students, and create an online basis for available teaching materials (syllabi, books, articles, and Internet).
- Participation in the international production of knowledge in order, so as to render local and regional research more visible.

Specialized periodicals, webzines, collective volumes published by publishing houses able to disseminate their products, in the written and visual media, and documentaries have a stronger impact upon a larger audience.

Extended mediatisation will also stimulate women's rights activism and will overcome the dichotomy between the academic competences, civic activism and the political world, reminding that, in Kantian words: 'intuitions without concepts are blind, concepts without intuitions are empty'. We can expect that such an approach will significantly contribute to the restitution of the deep meaning of the social role of science in increasing the necessary knowledge and skills on liberty, human dignity, self-assertion, and social justice.

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In response to current reforms in higher education in the region, the focus of UNESCO-CEPES activities is policy dialogues covering, teacher education, graduate employment, gender and access equity, institutional management and quality assurance processes, recognition of qualifications and mobility, and the use of ICTs in higher-education.

## From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies

### Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education

Is gendering higher education curricula a priority in Europe, in general, and SEE in particular? How to design gender-inclusive higher education curriculum? How to include gender sensitivity in higher education teaching and research? Who are the key actors to be involved in this effort? Which are the most gender sensitive versus most conservative disciplines in higher education? Are higher education institutions ready to adjust their academic programmes, organizational structures and cultures in order to become more permeable to gender sensitive knowledge? What political, financial, and human support exists to engender the curriculum in higher education? What are the legal, cultural, or organizational barriers in the process of gender mainstreaming higher education curricula?

Gender experts from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia will answer such questions by presenting good practice instances in gender mainstreaming higher education curricula and providing arguments for the need to include gender knowledge and sensitivity in higher education curricula.

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