

Abstract

Diversity Studies, Women, Conflict, Resistance and the Curriculum

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8th Equality, Diversity and Inclusion International (EDI) Conference

6-8 July 2015, Tel-Aviv University, Israel

Conference Theme: Dealing with diverse identities



Diversity Studies, Women, Conflict and the Curriculum

The paper discusses Diversity Studies as an ambivalent issue for the development of the curriculum: Are Diversity Studies a tool for broadening the scope of gender studies in respect of the acknowledgement of intersecting inequalities such as race, class, abilities, sexualities, age etc. or can diversity studies rather be regarded as a tool for sweeping critical gender studies off the curriculum – a tendency which goes hand in hand with the neoliberal university?

The paper discusses a new trend of strengthening Diversity Studies, especially at German Universities of Applied Sciences. This development partly results from the legal background due to European antidiscrimination law, as well as from economic demands to adapt organisations and the workplace with the diversification of globalized ageing societies.

At the same time it is obvious that the development of academic staff in Germany does not correspond with a diversified social world: There is still a low participation of persons with ethnic minority and migration background amongst students and academic staff of German

universities (Neusel et al. 2014). Continuously, there is a disproportionally low participation of persons from a working class background both on the side of students as well as in professorships at German universities (Hartmann 2010; Möller 2014). Last but not least, there is an ongoing low participation of women in professorships (CEWS 2014), whereas female students have more than caught up in numbers and quality of their performance. In 2012, more than 50 % of university graduates were female. All in all, female student's grades were significantly higher than the performance of male students (Allmendinger 2012).

Despite the fact that this trend towards successful participation of women in higher education does not find an equivalent continuation in academic and professional participation in leadership positions for women, there is a growing discourse and an increasing belief in an 'absence' of gender inequalities. At the same time, Diversity Management is increasingly introduced into the mainstream of the curriculum. The paper will examine these questions with a case study about the implementation of Diversity Studies into the curriculum at higher education institutions in Germany. The paper will discuss whether there is an increasing neglect of women's conflicts and gender based social inequalities.

Carola Bauschke-Urban is a sociologist and professor of Gender and Diversity Studies at Fulda University of Applied Sciences. Her research interests: Higher Education Systems, Transnational Mobility, Internationalisation of the Sciences, Academic Staff and Student's Mobility, Gender and Migration, Gender and Education, Biographical Research, Postcolonial and Diversity Studies.

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