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Gender Studies in Spain towards the Bologna Agreement. A Collective Proposal

This paper presents the results of a meeting of academic women currently working in gender studies in different Spanish universities; their aim was to discuss the future of gender studies as a subject within the Bologna agreement. The Bologna process is seen both as an opportunity to introduce gender studies into mainstream university curricula and as a risk: Following the Bologna reform and the necessary changes within our current teaching structures, the space for gender studies, achieved not without effort, could suffer negative impacts.

The conference consisted of participants who were teaching gender related subjects in various Spanish universities. The conference was organized jointly by the Spanish Institute of Women Affairs, the General Secretariat of Equality (both from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), and the Women and Science Unit (from the Ministry of Education and Science). The conference had multiple objectives: First, since a common listing of these studies was lacking, to inform the government about the current situation of gender studies in our country. Second, to lobby in favour of the continuation and extension of the various gender studies and, at the same time, to increase the level of awareness about gender equity in our universities and third, to gather as many of the gender experts in the country as possible, the majority of whom had not yet had the opportunity to meet before.

In the following, I will present the results of the conference's various debates and list the actions that ensued. The first part of this essay consists of a compilation of the subjects taught in gender studies during the current academic year in Spain, in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. They are organized according to areas of knowledge. It must be noted here that this is the first occasion in which we are able to integrate this relevant data. The second part presents the conclusions reached during the conference and the proposed lines of action. The third part gives an account of the current position of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science in relation to the subject of gender equity in the frame of the Bologna reform as is being discussed at this very moment.

Gender Studies in Spain 2006-2007

Most subjects presented in the conference are currently taught and have been taught for numerous years in several universities. There are also a number of new subjects recently proposed by teachers who have designed a new curriculum or have changed part of an old subject in order to fulfil some of the Bologna requirements. As expected, the majority of topics are offered in social sciences and humanities, followed by health studies. Teachers in natural sciences and engineering found it harder to introduce subjects with a gender perspective in their courses. Their

difficulties originate in the traditional non-inclusion of gendered perspectives in these fields. As a result, it is quite common that their own colleagues find the idea of including them not only unacceptable, but also not up for debate.

The situation of gender studies in Spanish universities, as presented in the conference held in November 2006 is summarized in the following chart (For more detailed information, please see the appendix):

FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS
Social Sciences & Law	71
Humanities & Arts	31
Health Sciences	12
Natural Sciences	1
Engineering & Architecture	5

Every degree in the current Spanish university courses is composed of compulsory core subjects, university specific subjects and elective subjects. The number of subjects within each cluster varies depending on the degree. Each university decides which ones are to be considered specific subjects and individual teachers propose the elective subjects that they would like to teach. Very often the teacher who proposes an elective subject agrees to teach it as an unpaid extension to her/his compulsory teaching load. Most gender subjects belong to this cluster. This implies that the existence of gender studies in Spanish universities is due to the effort and non-recognised generosity of many academic feminists. It is true that in many universities, once an elective subject had been consolidated and has been successfully taught for two or three years it is officially included in the teaching load of the department and counts the same as any other subject in the individual teaching load. Something similar occurs with subjects taught in PhD and the other post graduate courses. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that this 'freely chosen' elective teaching, is more common in gender studies than in any other field.

In most universities, feminist academics have started creating interest groups for gender issues. These groups take on a variety of formats, ranging from seminars, to chairs and in some cases even as institutes. In addition, there are associations, study and research groups and others which are more difficult to classify. Regardless of their structure though, these groups support the individual teachers who offer new subjects in gender studies. Most, if not all postgraduate courses have been organized by these interest groups. The Spanish Institute of Women Affairs has been supporting these groups financially, from outside the university network with resources provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Since the late seventies up until the present day, these seminars, chairs, women institutes, gender and feminists study groups have been continually increasing in number. At present there are 62 groups unevenly distributed throughout different universities depending on the number and range of power of the feminist academics in each

university. Obviously, the universities with more gender studies groups are the ones who also offer postgraduate courses in genders studies as well as gender subjects in the undergraduate courses.

Autonomous Community	University	Gender Group (Seminar, Chair, Institute, Association)
ANDALUCIA (14)	Almería	Seminar
	Cádiz	Aula
	Córdoba	Workshop
	Córdoba	Chair
	Córdoba	Chair
	Granada	Institute
	Granada	Institute
	Granada et al.	Association
	Jaén	Seminar
	Jaén	Seminar
	Málaga	Seminar
	Málaga	Association
	Sevilla	Seminar
	Iberoamericana	Seminar
ARAGÓN (1)	Zaragoza	Seminar
ASTURIAS (2)	Oviedo	Seminar
	Oviedo	Seminar
BALEARES (1)	Islas Baleares	Office
CANARIAS (3)	Las Palmas	Seminar
	Las Palmas	Seminar
	La Laguna	Studies Centre
CANTABRIA (1)	Cantabria	Aula
CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (1)	Castilla-La Mancha	Seminar
CASTILLA y LEÓN (4)	Valladolid	Chair
	Valladolid	Seminar
	León	Seminar
	Salamanca	Studies Centre
CATALUÑA (16)	Politécnica Cataluña	Office
	Autónoma Barcelona	Seminar
	Autónoma Barcelona	Seminar
	Autónoma Barcelona	Seminar

	Autónoma Barcelona	Observatory
	Autónoma Barcelona	Studies Centre
	Barcelona	Seminar
	Barcelona	Seminar
	Barcelona	Seminar
	Barcelona	Seminar
	Barcelona	Research Centre
	Barcelona	Research Centre
	Lleida	Seminar
	Lleida	Seminar
	Rovira i Virgili	Seminar
	Rovira i Virgili	Seminar
EXTREMADURA (1)	Extremadura	Office
GALICIA (3)	Vigo	Chair
	Vigo	Seminar
	La Coruña	Instituto
	La Coruña	Office
	Santiago	Office
MADRID (10)	Autónoma Madrid	Institute
	Complutense Madrid	Institute
	Complutense Madrid	Association
	Complutense Madrid	Office
	Carlos III	Observatory
	Europea de Madrid	Seminar
	Pontificia Comillas	Seminar
	Pontificia Comillas	Unit
	UNED	Seminar
	UNED	Studies Centre
MURCIA (1)	Murcia	Studies Centre
VALENCIA (3)	Valencia	Institute
	Jaume I	Seminar
	Alicante	Studies Centre
PAIS VASCO (1)	País Vasco	Office

Knowledge areas are usually officially recognized by the university council. Considering the fact that gender studies has not been recognized as an official knowledge area, the number of courses and subjects concerned with gender studies

that are being taught as well as the various research groups in Spanish universities is quite impressive. It is also worth noting that a few of the PhD courses in gender studies have received an award for quality by the universities quality agency. Two of them (Granada University and Oviedo University) are part of the unique – in Europe – masters course on gender offered through the Erasmus Mundus programme.¹

Proposals to further extended Gender Studies

The analysis of the ongoing reform in order to adapt Spanish universities to the Bologna agreement, enables us to propose that gender equity must be included in universities in two different ways: First, it has to be incorporated into the conceptualisation of the subjects' content and second, into the main stream activities of the universities.

Gender in the Conceptualization of the Subject Content

In relation to the subject content, we understand gender equity awareness as an essential criterion for obtaining a university degree in a democratic society. Gender equality, therefore, must be included in the curricula of every university degree in a more or less formalised way. Furthermore, the necessary general knowledge in gender equality, social sciences, and particularly education must include gender studies as a compulsory subject. Other degrees, which already have gender trained teachers, should offer gender studies as optional subject(s). Thanks to the large number of gender subjects being currently taught, especially in the social sciences and humanities, this is not difficult to do. It should also be kept in mind that the teachers who are currently teaching gender studies can easily adapt their teaching to new areas, if needed. Not to mention that after twenty years of PhD courses in gender, there is a surplus of trained doctors dedicated to main stream subjects who – in many cases – would gladly modify the subjects they teach.

For postgraduate courses, the Bologna reform in Spain will include professional masters and PhD courses. Until now, gender studies in both types of postgraduate courses have been very successful even with the limitations mentioned above (often without official recognition). Following the Bologna reform, it is expected that the number of postgraduate gender courses being offered will increase, particularly as this reform is taking place together with the introduction, in our country, of new regulations about gender equality which demanding that professionals be instructed in gender issues.

¹ The Erasmus Mundus programme operates throughout Europe offering international Masters Courses. Master Courses are arranged according to subjects, e.g., gender – no duplication of subjects are allowed. Each Masters Course involves a number of universities – students thus attend courses throughout Europe. More information can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html (last accessed March 17, 2008)

Gender in the Mainstream Activities of the Universities

In addition to the main mission of universities (teaching and research), one must not forget that universities are social institutions composed by women and men filling different positions. Gender imbalance in decision making positions is a worldwide general trend. However, in a democratic society academic quality should include gender equity. Therefore, university quality indicators must include gender equality as one of its parameters. We propose two types of gender equity indicators. One that is more quantitative and will compute not only women in decision making positions (rectors, deans, head of departments, etc), female professors, but also honorary female doctorates, awards for females, etc. The other – more qualitative – will appraise the gender content in degrees, subjects, etc.

In order to obtain a position within the Spanish university system applicants are required to send their CVs to an academic accreditation agency. As said, gender studies is not an officially recognized area of knowledge, consequently, up until this point in time, the accreditation agencies have not considered the applicant's potential with regards to gender qualifications. We propose that the national and regional accreditation agencies nominate a gender expert committee to evaluate the applicant's qualifications and to establish the minimum requirements to teach gender subjects.

Current Position of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science

At first glance, it seems that from a gender perspective this is the best time to introduce the Bologna reform; largely due to the fact that this year, the Spanish parliament has approved a very progressive Gender Equality Act and the Reform of the University Act, including several articles promoting gender equity in universities. But a more in depth observation shows that the Bologna reform implies a reduction in the number of credits for most subjects. Consequently, every university department, area of knowledge, and scientific association is ambitiously pushing to get more teaching time for their own subjects. This means that gender studies are entering into a fierce competition with well established subjects that will be reduced in relation to the pre-Bologna time.

The draft already published by the Ministry of Education eliminates the core compulsory subjects, university specific subjects and elective subjects referred to above. Whereas previously a large portion of the content required for degrees was set by the National Council of Universities and was common to all universities, now, universities will be allowed a greater degree of freedom in setting almost the entire content of each degree. Following the Bologna reform, each university will design its own degrees and present them to the National Council of universities for approval. On the one hand this is good news, since unlike previously, any university can now offer a degree in gender studies. Moreover, each university is free to include as many gender subjects in the degrees as they find convenient and with the number of credits that appears appropriate to them. However, on the other hand, in

universities in which academics do not have a feminist stronghold, the reduction of credits in the new degrees could imply a reduction or even the exclusion of gender subjects. The ministry draft states:

7. "According to the current legislation, among the general principles which are to inspire and be included in the design of the new degrees are:

a) The curricula of the university degrees must take into account that the instruction of any professional activity has to be realized based on the value of the fundamental principles of equity between men and women. For that reason, subjects about gender equity have to be included in the curriculum of the degrees in which it is appropriate."²

This article could be considered a basis for including some kind of gender equity instruction in all or in some degrees. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to see, how the universities could read it as a compulsory measure for the inclusion of gender studies in all degrees, let alone a few. What the ministry can do is instruct the National Council of Universities to include the presence of gender content in a degree as criteria for a positive appraisal as a general rule and as compulsory criteria for some degrees such as teacher training, pedagogy, sociology, etc. Even though the inclusion of gender studies would not be compulsory for most degrees, the effect of such criteria could be very important, since universities will know that their proposals have a better chance of being approved if they include a minimum of gender instruction.

In summary, Spain has recent laws that support the presence of gender equity and even gender studies in our universities, but it is difficult for the ministry to enforce such teaching within the structure created to fulfil the Bologna agreement. Most probably, the ministry will use incentives (better appraisal, more resources) to include gender subjects in a few degrees and for universities to maintain a gender balance in their staff in all positions. These incentives could support feminist academics in their struggle to enlarge the scope of gender in our universities.

² Real Decreto por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas universitarias oficiales. BOE núm. 260, martes 30 octubre 2007, pg. 44039.

Appendix 1

SUBJECTS ON GENDER STUDIES IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

AREA	SUBJECT	COURSE Undergraduate (U) Postgraduate (P)	UNIVERSITY
ARTS & HUMANITIES	Historia y género: mujeres y hombres en la sociedad contemporánea	U	Valencia
	Mujeres y hombres en la Historia	U	Valencia
	Historia de las teorías feministas	U	Valencia
	Historia de las mujeres y de las relaciones de género	U	Castilla-La Mancha
	Relaciones de género y prácticas sociales desde la Arqueología	U	Jaén
	Los trabajos de las mujeres. Historia, Arte y Literatura	U	Jaén
	Teoría feminista y de género	U	Jaén
	Los Estudios de Género en Música	U	Autónoma de Madrid
	Mujer y creación en el mundo islámico mujer y creación en el mundo islámico	U & P	Autónoma de Madrid
	Historia y Género en la Antigüedad clásica	P	Autónoma de Madrid
	La Sociedad Patriarcal: formulaciones teóricas y realidad cotidiana	P	Autónoma de Madrid
	Mujeres en la Historia e Historia de las mujeres	P	Autónoma de Madrid
	Género Literatura Infantil y Juvenil y Formación de Identidades	P	Jaume I - Castellón

	Historia Social de las Mujeres en las Sociedades Preindustriales	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Historia, Economía y Mujeres	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Geografía y género	U	Complutense de Madrid
	La crítica literaria feminista	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Escritoras inglesas y norteamericanas	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Sistemas de género en la comparación intercultural	U	del País Vasco
	Genero, lenguaje y representación	P	Oviedo
	Historia de las mujeres en la antigüedad	P	Oviedo
	Género, lenguaje y representación	P	Oviedo
	Historia de las instituciones medievales	U	Valladolid
	Lengua y Género	U	Valladolid, Alcalá y Santiago
	Génesis y desarrollo de las relaciones de género	U	Granada
	Arqueología de las mujeres y las relaciones de género	U & P	Granada
	Las Relaciones de Género en la Historia Moderna	U	La Laguna
	Gender issues in European culture	U & P	Deusto
	Literatura Hispanoamericana. Acercamientos desde el feminismo	U	Vigo
	Arte, género y tecnología	U	Sevilla

	Literatura escrita por mujeres	U & P	University Complutense de Madrid
31 SUBJECTS			

HEALTH SCIENCES	Género, salud y ciencia	P	Zaragoza
	Salud y genero	U	Zaragoza
	Género y salud	P	Zaragoza
	Educación física, género y deporte	U	Politécnica de Madrid
	Promoviendo la equidad de género en salud.	U	Murcia
	Desde la Ginecología hacia la Salud de las Mujeres	U	Granada
	Género, medicina y salud	U	Granada
	Género y Cuidados de Salud	U	Sevilla
	La mujer, alimentacion y salud	U/P	Valladolid
	Historia de la enfermería	U/P	Valladolid
	Género y Salud	U	Jaén
	Culturas de la diferencia sexual en la tradición científica occidental	U	Cantabria
12 subjects			

NATURAL SCIENCES	El ciclo vital humano desde una perspectiva de género	U	Autónoma de Madrid
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ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE	La arquitectura desde y para las mujeres	U	Alicante
	La mujer y el proceso edificatorio	U	Politécnica de Madrid
	Cuerpo, espacio, y arquitectura	U & P	La Coruña
	Espacio y género I: urbanismo	U	Barcelona
	Espacio y género II: urbanismo	U	Barcelona

SOCIAL SCIENCES & LAW	Lectura crítica de textos androcéntricos y ginecocéntricos. Metodología.	U & P	Autónoma de Barcelona
	Metodología para la evaluación de la calidad De la información desde una crítica al androcentrismo.	U	Autónoma de Barcelona
	Trabajo doméstico y vida cotidiana	U	Autónoma de Barcelona
	Género y Política	U	Autónoma de Madrid
	La Economía desde una perspectiva de género	U	Complutense de Madrid
	La historia de las mujeres en la enseñanza de las ciencias sociales	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Antropología de género	U	Complutense de Madrid
	El tránsito del Estado liberal al Estado de Derecho desde una perspectiva de género.	U & P	Complutense de Madrid
	Las mujeres en la historia del pensamiento económico	U	Complutense de Madrid

	Evaluación social: teoría y aplicaciones en género	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Políticas de género de la Unión Europea	U & P	Complutense de Madrid
	Sociología de la violencia de género	U & P	Complutense Madrid
	Género y política	U	Complutense Madrid
	Más allá de la conciencia del “tercer mundo” en la búsqueda de un feminismo sin fronteras	U & P	Complutense de Madrid
	Revisiones, teorías y perspectivas feministas en antropología social	U	País Vasco
	Las mujeres en la sociedad y cultura vasca	U	País Vasco
	Análisis de género en derecho constitucional	U	País Vasco
	Trabajo y género: nuevas formas de desigualdad	U	Rovira i Virgili - Tarragona
	Desigualdades de género y políticas de bienestar	U	Rovira i Virgili - Tarragona
	Desigualdad económica y género	U	Vigo
	Geografía Económica y Género	U	Vigo
	Género y Desarrollo Humano	U	UNED
	Feminismo, ilustración y multiculturalidad	U & P	UNED
	Análisis de género en derecho constitucional	U	Sevilla
	Género y Desarrollo	U & P	Pablo de Olavide-Sevilla
	Análisis cinematográfico con perspectiva de género	U	Oviedo
	Políticas públicas de igualdad	U	Oviedo

	Violencia y discriminación contra la mujer en la sociedad de la información	U	Rey Juan Carlos
	Género y Medios de Comunicación	U	Rey Juan Carlos
	Protección internacional de los derechos de la mujer	U & P	Castilla-La Mancha
	Derechos de la mujer inmigrante	U & P	Castilla-La Mancha
	Género Y Multiculturalidad en la diáspora Africana	U & P	Cádiz y Huelva
	Estudios de Genero: retos sociales para las y los profesionales del siglo XXI	U	Barcelona
	Trabajo Social y Mujer	U	Jaén
	Aspectos Psico-socio-biológicos del género	U & P	Jaén
LAW	Teoría Feminista del Derecho	U & P	País Vasco
	El estudio del derecho moderno desde la perspectiva de sexo-género	U & P	País Vasco
	El tránsito del Estado liberal al Estado de Derecho desde una perspectiva de género.	U & P	Complutense de Madrid
	Análisis de género en Derecho Constitucional	U	Several universities
PEDAGOGY	Historia de las mujeres y de las relaciones de género	U	Castilla-la Mancha

	Intervención psicoeducativa en desarrollo social y afectivo desde una perspectiva de género	U	Málaga
	Las edades de las mujeres	P	Córdoba
	Docencia desde la Diferencia Sexual	P	Córdoba
	Metodología de investigación feminista	P	Córdoba
	Historia de la educación de las mujeres	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Las mujeres en la Historia de Madrid. Didáctica para el trabajo en el Aula	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Coeducación en educación física escolar	U	Complutense de Madrid
	Coeducar para la igualdad y la diversidad	U	Jaén
	Historia de la educación de las mujeres	U	Sevilla, Granada
	Historia de la educación de las mujeres en la España contemporánea	U	Málaga
	La igualdad desde una perspectiva de género	P	Zaragoza

	Diagnóstico de los estereotipos y actitudes sexistas en el ámbito educativo	U	Sevilla
	Educación para la convivencia y la igualdad de oportunidades	U	Córdoba
	Identidad de género y educación	U & P	Santiago de Compostela
	Procesos de Construcción de las identidades de género	U & P	Santiago de Compostela
	La Educación Social y los cambios en las relaciones de género	U	Granada
PSICOLOGY	Género y desarrollo psicológico humano	U & P	Autónoma de Madrid
	Violencia y Género	U	Pontificia de Comillas
	Psicología del Ciclo Vital	U & P	Córdoba
	Psicología de los papeles sociales de mujeres y hombres	U & P	Córdoba
	Intervención psicológica en Violencia de Género	U	Pontificia de Salamanca
	La violencia de género desde una perspectiva multidisciplinar.	U	Islas Baleares

	Estudios psicosociales sobre la mujer	U	las Islas Baleares
	Psicología y género: procesos básicos	U	Valencia y Sevilla
	Mujeres y salud: Un análisis desde las políticas de igualdad de género	P	Valencia
	Sistema sexo / género y salud	U	Valencia
	Psicología diferencial del género	U	Valencia
	Psicología y Género	U	Jaén
	Estudio psicológico de las mujeres. Contexto cultural del Sexo/género	U	Granada
	Psicología de la sexualidad	U & P	Vigo
	Evaluación y prevención de factores psicosociales que perpetúan desigualdades de género	U	UNED
MASTER & PhD	Máster Agents d'igualdat d'oportunitats per a les dones a l'àmbit rural (on line)	P	Universidades catalanas
	Curso de formación para Profesionales que trabajan con víctimas de violencia de género	P	Pontificia Comillas

	Curso experto: agente de igualdad de oportunidades	P	UNED
	Magister en Genero y desarrollo	P	Complutense de Madrid
	Master en estudios interdisciplinarios de genero	P	Autónoma de Madrid
	Master en ciencias de la actividad física y del deporte	P	Politécnica de Madrid
	Cuerpo y género en la actividad física y el deporte.	P	Politécnica de Madrid
	Género y Políticas de Igualdad	P	Valencia
	La posición de la mujer en el ordenamiento jurídico	P	Salamanca
	Estudios Interdisciplinarios de Género	P	Salamanca
	Estudios de género y Políticas Públicas (Máster & PhD)	P	Oviedo
	Mujeres y medio rural sostenible (on line)	P	Jaume I - Castellón