



ZtG Position Paper

Current Context

Gender studies are consistently subject to fundamental attacks within the political and academic public as well as within the media. These attacks are part of the broader current trend of anti-genderism.

According to Hark/Villa (2015), anti-genderism implies a resistance against and negative attitude towards 'gender', or the alleged meaning of this term. These attacks are aimed at gender theories (which are often shortened and falsely depicted in this dynamic) thus attacking the free exercise of academic work. Additionally, they target gender equality policies as well as the recognition of sexual and gender diversity.

Recently, anti-genderism has increasingly entered political agendas – including but not limited to visibly right-wing political parties – and media debates. This encourages and normalizes sexist, homo-, queer-, and transphobic as well as racist and anti-Semitic positions.

Violent attacks such as these contradict democratic principles because they produce discriminating exclusions from the public sphere. Hate speech threatens the public plurality of opinions and freedom of expression. The Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG) views these antidemocratic and anti-scientific tendencies with grave concern.

Self-conception of the ZtG

The Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG) is a network of scientific professionals from a variety of faculties and disciplines of the humanities, social and natural sciences. They provide a multiplicity of scientific approaches and position(ing)s and are open to questioning their own participation in university power structures. The ZtG considers itself a place of dedicated academia in which knowledge, social structures, and developments in teaching and research are reflected upon critically. In this, gender is used as an analytical perspective, expanded via additional categories such as "race", ethnicity, class/social position, sexuality, religion, dis/ability, or age. The perspectives of queer studies, postcolonial studies, critical race theory, and other critical approaches are key elements of theoretical references.

The students, teachers, and employees of the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies view it as a public and democratic space enriched by the negotiation of diverse scientific positions. Mutual appreciation and respect are prerequisite for the discussion of scientific and science policy controversies. At the same time, the ZtG understands itself as a space critical of discrimination. Here, all persons involved aspire to actively counteract racism, sexism, nationalism as well as other forms of discrimination which may occur in structure, actions, and speech.

Implementation in Scientific Practice

The participants of the ZtG utilize a transdisciplinary approach in teaching and research based on simultaneously reflected disciplinary theories and methods. Via this approach, perspectives that are critical of power on knowledge production and transfer are developed.

The policy to be critical of discrimination, as developed by the ZtG, encourages students and teachers to realize their own responsibilities in the learning and teaching processes. These processes are reflected upon, for example with regard to their integration in social power structures to counteract social injustice and discrimination.

The academic production of knowledge in the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies aims for a fundamental gain in knowledge and strives to shape a democratic society through scientifically substantiated contributions. Gender studies contribute to the theory development of diverse disciplines and promote the transdisciplinary integration of perspectives critical of power in academic life.

Regular events and publications by the ZtG increase the scientific exchange on findings of gender research. While the participants of the ZtG are involved in dialogue on societal relations and issues with the general public, they additionally promote the retention, development, and advancement of gender studies on a university, regional, and national level.

In times of anti-genderism, anti-intellectualism, right-wing populism, and attacks on positions and persons, it is especially important to participants of the ZtG to counter discrimination and exclusion in the various structural and institutional dimensions, dynamics, and knowledge processes.

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