

Evaluation of Gender Research in Lower Saxony¹

0. General remarks on gender research

Gender research and equality policies have their roots in the “new” women's movement that emerged in the 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, despite some fierce conflicts between the two areas, it was recognised that gender research, which at the time was still focused on the female gender, provided the knowledge for practical measures of women's policy, and vice versa: the women's movement was the source of significant impetus and research questions as well as of material and symbolic support for gender research. There were intensive content-related interactions and a number of personnel and structure-related intersections. Since then, both equality policies and gender research have undergone further professionalization and institutionalisation in their respective social arenas. As a consequence, their interrelation has changed and loosened. Both areas are less dependent thematically than they used to be. They are part of different self-sufficient discussion contexts and, accordingly, have developed different horizons of relevance. True, the findings of gender research can and should continue to provide the scientific (reflective) knowledge for today's equality policies and practice. However, neither does the current practice of equality work incorporate the totality of findings in gender research or proceed on the sole basis of this reflective knowledge, nor does this context of application—even though the knowledge created by gender research finds a possible practical application in equality policies—provide the single horizon for the selection of research questions. Productive connections, however, continue to exist. The integration of the gender research perspective into all areas of science—and, thus, the expansion of gender research—is positively related to the increase in promotion of gender equality at the level of research staff and research institutions.²

In the last years, equality policies as well as gender research feel challenged the concept of “diversity” that targets economic, cultural and social variety and emphasizes the potentials of a diverse society, staff or student body. Gender, in this context, figures as one dimension of diversity

¹ This paper is based mainly on the publication: Gender Research – Thematic evaluation at Higher education and Research Institutions of Lower Saxony. Wissenschaftliche Kommission Niedersachsen (WKN), 2013. http://www.wk.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=33214&article_id=116311&psmand=155

² WKN, p.15

amongst, for example, age, ethnicity or sexual identity. The diversity approach is – as yet - more a political concept than a scientific programme.

Gender research in Germany is mainly conducted in universities, universities of applied sciences and non-university research institutes. As a scientific field, gender research in these institutions takes different forms of institutionalisation—while a separate discipline in some, it is only one aspect of a discipline in others, and in yet others, it is the centrally coordinated sum of the individual research profiles of the scholars and their respective disciplinary affiliations. These disciplinary affiliations are, in fact, diverse, even though there is a prevalence of the social sciences and the humanities. In the development of gender research, which incipiently (as women's studies) would mainly focus on the female gender, the claim to grasp the complexity of influences, to which female (and, subsequently, male) life contexts are exposed, has in combination with epistemological and science-critical positions led to two convictions. First, that gender as a cross-cutting issue has a bearing on all areas of science. Second, that gender research needs to be organised along structures different from those of the traditional disciplines.³

It is for this reason that gender research has, over the last two decades, become an ever more important instrument for the critique of science. In modern history of science, the dynamics and change of scientific terms have for quite some time been invoked as manifestations of, and driving forces for, the development of knowledge. Gender research, described by the philosopher of science Thomas S. Kuhn as the foremost paradigm shift to take place in the history of science in recent decades,⁴ and has provided a major impetus to this process. Gender research is thus not only a source of new insights with respect to gender relations and the analysis of their formation but also a tool of scientific innovation.

As a form of work and organisation, interdisciplinarity was right from the beginning the most important concept in women's studies and gender research. It formed the basis for the development of appropriately organised research centres and courses of education. Generally understood as an approach that combines several disciplines addressing a common question, interdisciplinarity comprises a methodological, terminological or conceptual exchange with a view to building and sharing a coherent conceptual framework. Interdisciplinarity thus cuts across the traditional disciplinary organisation of scientific research and teaching.

³ WKN, p. 13

⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn on the 17th International Congress on the History of Science, Berkeley 1985. Cf. Orland, Barbara / Rössler, Mechthild (1995): Women in Science—Gender in Science. Ansätze feministischer Naturwissenschaftskritik im Überblick, in: Orland, Barbara / Scheich, Elvira (eds.): Das Geschlecht der Natur. Feministische Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie der Naturwissenschaften. Frankfurt am Main, p. 15; WKN p.13

Nevertheless, there were also other forms of organisation and work that were formulated as concepts of gender research, and practically implemented to different degrees. The scientific study of gender may be understood as multidisciplinary gender research from the point of view of the respective disciplines, and although an exchange takes place between these disciplines, each of them largely defines and deals with its research issue independently, with the aim of advancing the discipline-oriented findings on "gender" as an object of research. The synthesis functions in an additive manner, merging the results separately obtained. This notwithstanding, women's studies and gender research retain their alignment with the disciplinary research and education systems. Transdisciplinarity, in its first meaning, stands for the close link between scientific and extrascientific knowledge. What takes place in the research process is the merger of scientific knowledge with knowledge from outside the scientific system. The prefix "trans-" denotes the crossing of boundaries between science and other sectors of society. Since the creation of knowledge is based on the specific character of the problems occurring in the context of application, the solutions are developed in relation to applications. A second meaning emphasises the level of cooperation of the disciplines involved. Transdisciplinary research here denotes the highest possible degree of integration of the different disciplines. ⁵

In recent years, the cross-sectional nature of gender research has been acknowledged as an opportunity for the as yet less involved disciplines. Under the slogan "Fixing the Knowledge", the integration of gender issues into fundamental and applied research was identified as an opportunity for increasing the research excellence, creativity and social utility of the natural and engineering sciences as well as biomedical research.⁶

1. Gender Research in Lower Saxony – developments since 1990

Just as in the rest of the Federal Republic, gender research in Lower Saxony has emerged in the wake of the "new" women's movement from the mid-1970s onwards. The first documentation on women's studies in Lower Saxony (1992) stated that the latter's development until 1990 was characterised by the fact that themes and forms could be fleshed out only individually or in the context of the female scholars' research group in Lower Saxony.⁷ At the same time, the report noted an almost continuous increase in the number of projects related to women's studies and gender research. Most of the (188) projects in women's research between 1981 and 1991 were

⁵ WKN, p.13f.

⁶ Schiebinger, Londa / Klinge, Ineke (ed.) (2010): Gendered innovations. Mainstreaming sex and gender analysis into basic and applied research. Meta-analysis of gender and science research – Topic report. Luxemburg. WKN, p.14

⁷ Kutzner, Edelgard/Richter, Gudrun (1992): Dokumentation Frauenforschung in Niedersachsen - 1981 bis 1991. Hannover; WKN p.17

conducted in the fields of social sciences and/or sociology, followed by history and pedagogy. The other disciplines mentioned (numbering 15, after all) followed at a large distance and featured only very few contributions.

The report entitled “Promotion of Women as a Reform of Higher Education, Women's Studies as a Criticism of Science”, prepared by the first Commission on “Women's Studies and the Promotion of Women in Teaching and Research” was published in 1994.⁸ It analysed the structures of gender equality and women's studies as well as gender research in Lower Saxony at the beginning of the 1990s. The report found that the financial support and institutionalisation of women's studies in Lower Saxony had by then only been fragmentary and that considerable gaps existed in different subjects. A further point of criticism was that the universities of applied sciences had hardly been taken into consideration. With six professorships at three universities at the time of reporting, Lower Saxony had, according to the report, set up too few positions for women's studies. Also in teaching, women's studies had only in a few subjects at specific Institutions of higher education been institutionally anchored. Nevertheless, the Commission noted remarkable scientific achievements and described regional priorities with characteristic incorporations in scientific disciplines as well as specific institutionalisations. The Commission recommended the further development of women's studies in Lower Saxony at both an intra- and an interdisciplinary level. Next to various infrastructure and funding structure recommendations, the Commission advocated the presence of women's studies in each subject at each higher education institution as a reference point for interdisciplinary cooperation. In addition, it was recommended to set priorities. The Commission specifically recommended the establishment of an interdisciplinary institution of women's studies for the natural sciences, technology and medicine with six research priorities with one professorship each as well as a broadening by means of further 36 professorships at higher education institutions in Lower Saxony. Moreover, it advocated the further internationalisation of women's studies and its extension into as yet less active subjects.

In 1997, the second Commission on Women's Studies issued the report “Findings in Women's Studies: Perspectives for Sciences, Technology, and Medicine”.⁹

The Federal State of Lower Saxony has purposefully and systematically strengthened gender research since the mid-1990s. According to a recommendation of the first Commission, a

⁸ Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (ed.) (1993): Frauenförderung ist Hochschulreform – Frauenforschung ist Wissenschaftskritik. Bericht der niedersächsischen Kommission zur Förderung von Frauenforschung und zur Förderung von Frauen in Lehre und Forschung. Hannover.

⁹ Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (ed.) (1997): Berichte aus der Frauenforschung: Perspektiven für Naturwissenschaften, Technik und Medizin. Bericht der niedersächsischen Kommission zur Förderung der Frauenforschung in Naturwissenschaften, Technik und Medizin. Hannover.

department was set up in the Ministry of Science and Culture (MWK) for the “promotion of women” as early as 1994, which was also concerned with gender research. Following the recommendations of these reports, the Lower Saxony Research Network for Women's Studies and Gender Research in Science, Technology, and Medicine (NFFG) was established with a volume of DM 7.5 million for five years (1997 to 2002). In the context of the EXPO 2000, the “International Women's University for Technology and Culture” (IFU) was carried out in Hanover and on other campuses located in Lower Saxony as well as in Bremen, Hamburg and Kassel.

In 2001, the Maria Goeppert Mayer (MGM) Programme for international gender research was started. The objectives of the programme were the introduction of the international standards of women's studies and gender research in Lower Saxony, the continuation and intensification of international contacts, the structural anchoring of gender research in teaching and research, the promotion of interdisciplinarity as well as the promotion of next-generation researchers in the field of gender research. Visiting professorships and lectureships have been awarded, and centres for women and gender studies have been initiated and supported.²³

Since 2007, it has been possible to apply for visiting professorships that last more than one semester. The aim of this amendment was to create greater sustainability and to provide an incentive for a structural anchoring by the start-up funding of (permanent) professorships with an academic profile partly or fully related to gender research. From the beginning of the programme, all kinds of institutions of higher education have been eligible for these funds.

The two funding lines of visiting professorships and centres were related to each other: the visiting professors were to provide the centres with a variety of stimuli, in particular with regard to international cooperation. The centres, in turn, were to serve the visiting professors as permanent contact points and to facilitate the integration into teaching and research at the respective higher education institution.

In total, funds in the amount of EUR 4.3 million were made available between 2001 and 2010 on the part of the Federal State¹⁰; another EUR 1 million of reciprocal financing came from the higher education institutions.

Right from the beginning, higher education institutions in Lower Saxony have extensively used the Maria Goeppert Mayer Programme. Between 2001 and 2010/2011, 91¹¹ visiting professors, of which 45 came from abroad,¹² benefited from the funding scheme to conduct research and teach

¹⁰ Including funds from the Higher-Education Scientific Programme (2001-2006).

¹¹ Counted in persons

¹² Of 25 nationalities altogether

at higher education institutions in Lower Saxony. In total, visiting professorships for 115 semesters were awarded, and an additional 25 teaching assignments, over the programme period.

In 2010, the Maria Goeppert Mayer Programme was re-shaped with the aim of strengthening the sustainability of gender research: universities could apply for funding of a permanent or temporary (at least four years) professorship with a special-focus on gender. 7 professors were appointed (with a funding of 500.000 € p.a.).

Moreover, start-up funding from the programme was used for the establishment of five centres over the 10-year funding period (2001- 2010). Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's and Gender Studies, University of Oldenburg (2000)

- Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's and Gender Studies, University of Hildesheim together with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hildesheim/Holzminden/Göttingen - HAWK (2001)
- Braunschweig Centre for Gender Studies, University of Braunschweig, together with Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences Braunschweig/Wolfenbüttel and the Braunschweig University of Art (2003)
- gender_archland – Forum for Gender Competence in Architecture Landscape Planning, University of Hannover (2006)
- Centre of Excellence for Gender-Sensitive Medicine, Hannover Medical School (2009)

In 2006 the Research Centre Music and Gender (FMG) was founded at Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, financed by external funds.

In target agreements (*Zielvereinbarungen*), the respective higher education institutions have agreed to continue the centres' work as of 2011 from their own resources.

The Federal-State Working Group of Institutions for Women's and Gender Studies in Lower Saxony (LAGEN) was founded in 2007 and currently has 30 members (natural persons) from all active centres of the federal state. Since its establishment, LAGEN has discussed joint research topics and enabled the cooperation of individual sites via teaching projects, meetings and common applications for visiting professorships. Moreover, the format of a common interdisciplinary graduate colloquium was agreed and implemented. The latter has the task to coordinate gender research of next-generation researchers in Lower Saxony and to promote and consolidate the networking of gender research institutions and locations.

2. Evaluation of gender research

The Ministry of Science and Culture of Lower Saxony (MWK) has identified gender research as a cross-sectional field which would particularly benefit from the findings and recommendations of a systematic review and whose further development seems promising for the science system in Lower Saxony as a whole s studies. It is against the background of (1) the efforts of the institutions of higher education to establish a clear-cut profile of their own, (2) the progressive differentiation of institutions of the higher education system and (3) the increasing autonomy of higher education institutions that the MWK considers systematically obtained knowledge on the overall situation of gender research in Lower Saxony and the individual higher education institutions' priorities ('profiling') as particularly efficient in terms of a well-oriented science policy and scientific development.

The MWK therefore asked the Scientific Commission of Lower Saxony (WKN) to initiate a systematic structural analysis on gender research at *all* higher education institutions in Lower Saxony and, in so doing, to pay special attention to the research priorities of the different institutions.

The core task of the WKN is to contribute to improving the quality of research carried out in Lower Saxony through appropriate review and advisory procedures.

2.1 Methodology

The instruments used by the WKN for quality assessment are regularly reviewed for effectiveness and adapted to the development of the academic system. Starting with discipline-oriented research evaluations, the WKN has extended its portfolio by the modules "research monitoring" and "topic-specific review procedures". The category of "topic-specific review procedures" is meant to identify the existing structures and their potential within thematically limited scientific fields. This method is primarily targeted at the structural properties of scientific fields and their potential for future development. An analysis of the research performance of the respective topic is part of this procedure. Depending on the layout and nature of the respective topic as well as on the disciplines involved, their particular academic culture and the objectives pursued, topic-specific review procedures must be adapted by the subject-specific expert groups. In view of these necessary methodological adaptations and subject-specific assessments, an expert group of six scholars selected for their scientific achievements and experience reflecting the multi- and/or interdisciplinary aspect of the field was set up.¹³

¹³ WKN, p.8f.

Gender research is understood as a scientific field, whose boundaries are drawn up with a view to the common research objective of being able to comprehend and explain the emergence, relevance, history as well as the (social, cultural, physical and material) practice of *relations and constructions* of both gender and sex in their interrelation. Gender is in this field considered as a differentiating aspect in the formation, selection and operationalization of theory as well as in the selection of methods. The research process is thus accompanied by a permanent reflection of the cognitive categories applied.¹⁴

The approach chosen by the group was based on a self-assessment in tandem with a selective consultation. In a first step, the current situation of gender research in Lower Saxony—its institutional, personnel and intellectual integration at the higher education institutions and the future projects pursued at the respective locations—were assessed by means of a self-report from public institutions of higher education in Lower Saxony. In addition, the group carried out a selective consultation. The criteria applied in accordance with the objective of the procedure were the quality of the structures existing at the individual locations and/or at federal-state level as well as the way gender research was fitted into the profile of the individual higher education institution—the quality of the structures being measured according to their enabling function for gender research. Next to the classical evaluation dimension of scientific quality, the capacity for sustainability is of particular relevance for the assessment of these structures. In particular, research conducted in small multi- and interdisciplinary fields requires a reliable coordination that is independent of individual researchers. Without those a long-term perspective for the field of research would be impossible.

The report includes universities and universities of applied sciences in the whole of Lower Saxony. The expert group also took into consideration the particularities of the research environment at the universities of applied sciences (high teaching loads of professors, little research-supportive infrastructure, no non-tenured academic positions, more application-oriented research in the context of specific business application or regional priorities, etc.). Since universities of applied sciences have, in recent years, increasingly developed research activities, decisions in favour of an application-oriented gender research are both feasible and conceivable.¹⁵

¹⁴ WKN, *ibid.*

¹⁵ WKN, p. 10

2.2 Recommendations¹⁶

Gender research, as a research field, has great potential for innovation. Using inter-, multi and trans-disciplinary forms of organisation, it is capable of bringing together different disciplines. As a research field in its own right, however, it also provides impetus for individual disciplines. Gender research, thus, is simultaneously a cross-disciplinary field and a branch of other disciplines. This potential is not limited to the obviously gender-related disciplines of the social sciences and humanities but also extends to technology and the natural sciences as well as medicine, law and economics. For the development of gender research, its structural and substantial differentiation from the practice of gender equality policies and from the diversity approach is both helpful and necessary. This does, however, not imply that the productive interaction between them ought to be interrupted.

In Lower Saxony, the research field of gender research has grown significantly in the last few years, both in terms of the number of positions and the research structures at the individual higher education institutions and beyond them. Although the majority of positions is still concentrated in the humanities and social sciences, positions located in other disciplines have grown disproportionately. And even though universities of applied sciences continue to have fewer professorships with an academic profile partly or fully related to gender research than the universities, this number has risen since the 1990s as well (from 6 to 23¹⁷).

The expert group sees a positive overall development of gender research in Lower Saxony. There are clear gaps and deficiencies in the different disciplines which, in the opinion of the reviewers, urgently need to be remedied.

For one thing, this concerns the **natural and technical sciences**. Here, the experts recognised the positive trend of the last few years which was also promoted through strong support from the MWK. The number of positions in disciplines other than the humanities and social sciences has increased. The same is true for the curricula and the variety of subjects. However, gender research is, for the most part, embedded in the natural and technical sciences only on a temporary basis and often without being anchoring deep enough in the content of the disciplines. For example, application-oriented gender research on the genesis, dissemination and use of technology is an open and promising field, where the universities of applied sciences could have an advantage over universities. The recommendation of the group of reviewers is to more actively

¹⁶ WKN, p. 28f.

¹⁷ 2010

integrate the assistance offered on "gendered innovations" in numerous publications and hand-outs already in the development of research ideas and profiles.

Another deficiency of gender research (not only) in Lower Saxony, according to the experts, is the lack or low level of integration of the gender perspective in **law and economics**. Especially in law and economics, modern and high-quality gender research is valuable not only in terms of producing knowledge about a socially relevant topic. It is also of special importance—and will be increasingly so in the future—for the research-based training at institutions of higher education. Especially in the training of lawyers and economists, valid knowledge of gender relations, according to the experts' opinion, will be necessary not only for the professional practice.

In the **social sciences**, the experts were concerned to recognise a stagnation, if not a decline. Already the design of the teaching curricula for individual modules may serve as a bridge between different disciplines involved in gender research. These curricula and the said structures of training for next-generation researchers can and should also be developed across locations in order to achieve a coordinated focus avoiding both the concentration on individual higher-education institutions and imbalances in the university places offered.

Apart from the staff and content-related basis in the individual disciplines, the expert group observes a wide variety of viable interdisciplinary and, to some extent, cross-institutional support structures for gender research in Lower Saxony. These structures have been built up with a high level of personal commitment and are partially, albeit not always, supported only by individual initiative. However, support structures, in the opinion of the experts, are elemental, particularly for small multi- or interdisciplinary fields such as gender research. On the one hand, generational changes involve the risk that established research traditions are (being) discontinued if they depend too strongly on individual persons. As far as cross-cutting areas are concerned, infrastructures and other necessary support structures can be implemented only with difficulty via the disciplinary organisation of the relevant institution of higher education, where the various disciplines and departments (must) give top priority to their own interests. Also, it is problematic for interdisciplinary fields to represent their interests towards the management of the respective higher-education institution, particularly with increasing autonomy of institutes of higher education. On an individual level, conflicts of interest may arise, while the disciplinary organisations primarily represent their own interests.

In terms of content, the mainstreaming approach poses a particular problem for gender research as a cross-cutting area. Mainstreaming as the maximum possible integration in all possible research approaches requires a mechanism for ensuring quality and assigning responsibility. It must be ensured that on as broad a basis as possible methodological and theoretical minimum standards are complied with. At the same time, responsibility must remain attributable in spite of the widening of integration. Also, the relatively small size of the field requires a decision on focuses, where a "critical mass" can be built up.

Centralised support structures not only allow the resource-saving maintenance of infrastructures beyond the traditional disciplinary organisation; as structures independent of individual persons they can also help manage the generational change that determines the situation of gender research. Here, it is possible to provide methodological and theoretical minimum standards and to regularly remind the management of higher-education institutions that its responsibility for substantial gender research goes beyond the symbolic use of the ideas of mainstreaming and diversity. In addition, central structures can and should actively represent the interests of gender research towards both the disciplines and the management of higher-education institutions.

In the view of the experts, however, some prerequisites need to be fulfilled in order for these tasks to be fulfilled. The **central structures** must be permanent and independent. They must be provided with a minimum of financial and also of symbolic resources (decision-making powers). In addition, their organisation should be clearly separated from that of other areas.

This applies, for one thing, to the task of organising the teaching and, for another, to the task of equality. Both are core tasks mandatory for higher-education institutions and must not tie up the resources required for gender research. Also, there is the risk, especially when it comes to gender equality, that the two functions due to their organisational amalgamation are equated with one another if viewed from outside, which is detrimental for both. Ultimately, the centralised structures must allow of a certain content-related and organisational flexibility in accordance with the profiling processes of faculties and higher-education institutions. For this purpose, they should develop a governance structure which ensures thematic independence as well as responsibility in relation to higher-level structures. It is recommended to check how support structures at higher-education institutions (individually or in association with each other) could be established or, if already existing, made stable and permanent. According to the reviewers, the commitment to gender research by the management of the relevant higher-education institution is of utmost importance in this context.

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The expert group also recommended to provide **LAGEN** as a forum for effective self-organisation of gender research in Lower Saxony with adequate financial and material resources. This could be effected through the centralised support from the federal state, a joint support of higher-education institutions in the form of exemptions and/or secondments or direct financial aid. It is recommended to provide at least one permanent full-time position as well as an appropriate reduction of the teaching load for the respective spokesperson. In addition, this meta-structure could be equipped with funds for initiatives of its own, thus taking advantage of academic self-governing abilities also in this area.

LAGEN is advised to pay more attention to the inclusion of the contents of the so far under-represented natural and technical subjects as well as those of medicine, law and economics. Also, the Working Group should give its governance structure a more binding character.

The experts recommended as well to address the problem of the research funding structure in parallel on different levels:

First, explicit **federal-state funding** for gender research projects or, more generally, inter- or multidisciplinary research would be conceivable and certainly desirable. To avoid stigmatisation, a competitive call for proposals within the framework of promoting inter- or multidisciplinary research is recommended.

In parallel, however, a corresponding adjustment of the selection processes in research funding should be aimed at. On a federal-state level, this may be achieved by following the model of the research-oriented standards on gender equality of the DFG (German Research Foundation) or the procedure of the European Union regarding the commitment to consider the gender dimension as a prerequisite for application.

In addition, the expert group **recommended targeted funding** from the federal state. Broad-based funding should not be encouraged here. What looks clearly more promising is the firm and long-term funding of selected and already well-profiled approaches at higher-education institutions with a supportive management. A feasible instrument in this respect is, for example, appointments brought forward with an academic profile partly related to gender research.

In general, the expert group recommended a balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinary gender research as well as between researchers predominantly or exclusively working in the field of gender research and a broad diversification of the gender perspective in other approaches.

3. Further developments

The Ministry regarded the recommendations as singularly helpful for structuring the further development of gender research in Lower Saxony. Immediately, it realized two main recommendations:

First, it issued a programme “Geschlecht-Macht-Wissen” to set up 3-5 research-networks, each consisting of 3-5 professors, which can be funded up to 500.000€ for 3 years, covering disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary research.¹⁸ The competitive call received 20 applications; a decision will be made in late November 2014.

Second, to achieve the building of networking structures between the centres and the gender researchers the Working Group LAGEN will be supported with a sum of 50.000€ for 3 years.

Furthermore, in the programme “Sustainable Science” the call especially welcomed projects with an integration of gender aspects in the research design, and highlighted the relevance of integrating these aspects in the respective thematic contexts, thus following the recommendation of the German Research Foundation (DFG)'s “Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality” to consider relevant gender and diversity aspects as an essential element of high-quality research.¹⁹

In this way, Lower Saxony intends to strengthen gender research, and as well empower its universities to compete successfully within “Horizon 2020” which asks definitely for a stronger integration of the gender perspective in research.²⁰

¹⁸ http://www.mwk.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=33676&article_id=118861&psmand=19

¹⁹ http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/principles_dfg_funding/equal_opportunities/research_oriented/index.html

²⁰ Vademecum on Gender Equality in Horizon 2020: <http://era.gv.at/object/document/1264>