

**Application to the TransCoop Program  
of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation**

**Transatlantic Research on Gender Equity Training:  
Restructuring of Modern Knowledge Economies and  
Management**

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Our German-US international research collaboration project, entitled *Transatlantic Research on Gender Equity Training* (TARGET), focuses on the role of gender expertise in gender equity and organizational change. TARGET studies how organizations and governments "mainstream" gender equity concerns into (international) policy, particularly with regard to the transformation of feminist knowledge into "gender expertise" in a variety of policy fields. We are now applying for the TransCoop program to fund a series of meetings among three collaboration partners over the next three years to analyze the data we have collected, to write together to produce several publications, and to provide a forum for discussion among German, European and North American scholars on gender equity politics in academia.

Our writing will address issues directly dealt with in our prior, more applied TARGET grant and on some foundational and cross-cutting questions which have surfaced based on our results so far. We are eager to develop, publish and present research results in theory-focused academic contexts, rather than only to provide applied knowledge, as the original grants were intended to produce. Our new work will contribute to science studies and organization studies as well as to gender studies, with additional insights from and contributions to socio-legal studies regarding the implementation of official as well as non-official (or "informal") law to organizational development.

Our current research builds on but differs from an international collaboration project, also called TARGET, that started in 2007. The initial project focused on applied outcomes, particularly how standards for gender equity training in organizations are being set and might be improved particularly in public administration. We did not anticipate that theoretically interesting questions would come out of our meetings with international gender experts and discussions on gender trainings in public administration. We have seen, however, that there

are broad transformations underway -- including professionalization in gender studies, organizational responsiveness to international gender norms, and gender inclusion as a norm for academic quality -- that merit more sustained consideration.

**Key research question:**

Hence, we are now applying for funding for this new project in order to conduct collaborative theoretical work on the questions that the previous applied project raised. While the previous project was primarily concerned with gender training in *public administration*, we are now interested in finding out how gender is taken differently into account in the *restructuring of modern knowledge economies and management* in three nested areas: in gender studies as a field of study; in universities as research organizations; and in the competitive environment of academic norm-setting for "excellence."

Hence, the goals for this new TARGET project are:

- (1) to reflect theoretically on what our findings mean for the process of professionalization of gender studies in academia;
- (2) to develop more comparative analysis of how "gender training" interventions do and do not hold promise for organizational change, especially in universities;
- (3) to push forward from this to explore the role of gender expertise in transforming norms of excellence and inclusion in the fields of academic sciences and social sciences.

This agenda relies on collaborative work since it implies sharing our individual knowledge in the fields of gender studies, organization studies, and science studies to contribute to building bridges among these fields. The project will benefit in particular from the transatlantic exchange of knowledge and draw on comparison between Germany and the United States, because approaches to using gender expertise in organizations and in particular gender training interventions vary greatly among Germany and the United States. While Baer is most familiar with German approaches, Ferree and Zippel are more familiar with approaches used in the United States.

Focused on public administration and policy makers, the original TARGET project brought us into a wider group of researchers, where our focus has been on how to improve gender training and expert interventions into organizational change. This applied TARGET project has collected empirical data over the past two years with funding from both European and United States sources. TransCoop funding would enable us to deepen the collaboration between the German and the US partners in this project, who have particular interest in working theoretically with the data, focusing on professionalization and institutional change and applying it to the field of academic science. This smaller, more intensively focused collaboration among ourselves will enable us to write more theoretical papers rather than just practical, applied analyses. We do also foresee providing feedback into the practical change dimension in a workshop again involving a mix of scholars and practitioners near the end of this grant period.

This applied and network building work has been funded with a grant of the University of Wisconsin's Research Circle on International Gender Policy and with a two-year grant (2007-2009) from the EU/US ATLANTIS Programme Cooperation in Higher Education and Vocational Training, jointly supported by the US Dept. of Education and by the EU Commission. From 2007 -2009, we have been very successful in using the grant to establish

connections among researchers in Europe and the United States, and have been collecting data on what "gender experts" do and how they have been trained, both in and out of academia. The German side is funded through a large Sixth Framework EU collaboration project entitled Quality in Gender Equality Policies (QUING). As satisfying as these applied projects are, we have been frustrated with the limitations of this support for a broader, more theoretical approach to the data with which we are now surrounded.

### **Methodology**

We are going to use a comparative, qualitative approach to analyze the wealth of data that we have collected over the past two years and the additional data that we will collect in the context of the gender training studies at the universities. The US and EU TARGET team held four expert meetings - one in the US and three in the EU - on different aspects of gender training. The main goals were to identify best practices in gender mainstreaming training with regard to content (HU Berlin), methodology (RAD Nijmegen) and curriculum standards (UCM Madrid), as well as for outreach into third country development for "training the trainers" (NU Boston). The participants included academics as well as practitioners involved in gender training for public policy officials. The participants came from over 17 countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa as well as from China.

The data we collected from these meetings include transcripts and observation notes, 20 one-on-one interviews with gender trainers and gender experts, and a variety of curriculum materials used in training. The US team has completed reports summarizing the "state of the art" in gender mainstreaming, an extensive bibliography on gender training and expertise, a web-based database of gender experts and training programs in the US, and is beginning an overview of training manuals for mainstreaming work in developing countries.

TARGET has also developed a databank of gender trainings and trainers in all EU member states, has analyzed key training manuals for policy makers in the EU, the UN, and for national actors, has provided a curriculum manual for EU trainers including criteria, standards and "best-practices" in gender policy training, and is currently working on train-the-trainer-manuals and dissemination of such information relevant to the gender mainstreaming approach both within the EU and US and in third countries.

In addition, the US side at Northeastern University will collect multiple data sources ranging from interviews, to curriculum and other training materials, and other materials on gender training in academia that focus on intersectionality of gender and cultural competences. These data will be entered into a qualitative data analysis program NVivo to analyze the data systematically for common themes to build theoretical concepts from the data in an inductive manner.

### **Background**

The focus of these studies is applied social change. Our research has been closely related to gender mainstreaming efforts, which also are framed as diversity or equality oriented processes of organizational change in a variety of contexts. "Gender mainstreaming" refers to the systematic integration of gender equity concerns into all aspects and all levels of government policies and institutions. It was introduced at the 1985 United Nations World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. Gender mainstreaming became a prominent part of international development work and administrative modernization in all other parts of the world after the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, and can be considered "soft law" in the EU and its member states.

Since the early 1990s, governments around the world and major transnational organizations from the World Bank to the European Union and the United Nations have adopted this strategy towards gender equity as a major organizational commitment. But it has become clear that taking such a “gender equality perspective,” introducing "diversity management," or making an organizational commitment to realizing "equal opportunity" requires training policy actors to recognize the gender implications for both women and men in policies that are ostensibly gender neutral. The popularity of “gender mainstreaming” and similar strategies has therefore created enormous demand internationally for “gender experts,” "diversity experts," and the like, who can advise governments, ministries, departments, programs, and organizations. In addition, there is an increasing awareness of the need for evaluation of the policies produced by such mainstreaming efforts, which also results in a growing need for expertise in social change studies.

### **Objectives:**

The purpose of the original TARGET grants was simply to improve the quality of gender mainstreaming and the training of gender experts. The focus of the TransCoop grant is to reflect on the meaning of these efforts for the professionalization of gender and women's studies knowledge, and to rethink, based on our data, what gender expertise means as an intervention in specific institutional settings. We ask what this expertise implies for the institutions that produce it, such as gender studies programs and schools of education, public policy and law, and we would like to look at the ways that knowledge does and does not contribute to actual organizational transformation, though sociological processes such as institutional isomorphism, legal framing of norms, and rights consciousness in individuals.

The US- German/European collaboration has enabled us to build a framework to compare the US development-focused gender mainstreaming efforts to those conducted within the EU among the member states, to identify context-specific differences in training needs and trainers profiles as well as methodologies, and to discuss intersectional or multiple inequalities, including those related to ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. Yet there are several broader issues that have emerged from this TARGET project: First, there is a need to study the institutional context where the expertise is located and where it is also sought: universities as organizations. While TARGET originally focused on all types of *public administration*, we turn our focus more specifically to *universities*, as both certifiers and consumers of gender knowledge.

Second, and closely related, gender mainstreaming has been applied to transforming the academy both in Germany and in the United States, even though in the US the term gender mainstreaming is not widely used for these efforts. For example, the NSF funds Northeastern University's ADVANCE project that has the goal to *transform the institution* to increase the participation of women in science and engineering (\$3.6 million dollars over 5 years 2008-2013). As another example, the German Research Foundation has passed Research Oriented Equality Standards in 2008 to gender mainstream German academia.

TARGET allows us to consider the role of gender expertise in these organizational change processes (who is being charged with training, implementing and evaluating such change and how they are empowered to do so). On the one hand, we want to compare these university strategies to the general policy-making organizations which we have already studied in this regard, but on the other hand, we also want to consider in more detail how gender expertise

becomes defined, created and transmitted in the context of the institutions of academia themselves.

Expertise in general is largely created and certified in the context of higher education, but this new form of expertise-creation has yet to find a home in academia. We have found that many gender experts are graduates of public policy schools and programs, gender and women's studies programs, and law schools. The data we have already collected on them points to a diverse process of professionalization and institutionalization. While connecting the mix of knowledge, skills and abilities they offer to the institutions where they trained and where they work has informed the applied emphasis on the TARGET project, the analysis has been meant to contribute to curriculum development and academic program changes.

With the specific support of TransCoop funding for the research assistants, the workshops, and the conference the three of us can move beyond the applied focus of the larger group to think more theoretically about legal mandates for equality, organizational change dynamics in universities and professional credentialization as interconnected processes of the transformation of gender relations in modern societies.

Our extended collaboration will also build on work by all three applicants that extends beyond the parameters of the TARGET program as such. Susanne Baer, at Humboldt University, is co-chair of the German Research Foundation President's working group on equality standards, and has presided over the experts committee for the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) on the "Professorinnenprogramm" to evaluate university plans to mainstream equality in the institution.

Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp jointly directed the 2007-2010 University of Wisconsin Research Circle on International Gender Policy Studies, and with Christina Ewig are now leading a 2010-2013 Research Circle on Feminist Activism and Gender Policy, which continues to bring international gender policy experts to the UW campus for interviews and lectures about their work, and Ferree is additionally an external reviewer for the NSF's multi-million dollar project NCWIT (the National Center for Women and Information Technology) which aims for better inclusion of women of all ethnicities across the full length of the pipeline into IT careers, in and outside academia.

Kathrin Zippel, at Northeastern University, is the Co-PI in the Northeastern University NSF ADVANCE program grant, which give her access to the institutional change planning process and evaluations of this program both at her own campus site and in collaboration with other universities who are also ADVANCE grant recipients. These other participations and collaborations give us access to a wealth of related data not directly gathered in the TARGET grant that we believe we will be able to draw on creatively in theorizing the bigger picture of academic transformation as a strategic mandate for governments interested in international credibility.

### **The benefits of this collaboration:**

For this TransCoop collaborative effort, our goal is to improve the theoretical discussion in sociology of how organizational norms - of gender, of diversity, of excellence -- become translated and implemented in academia. By excellence we mean ideas about what constitutes quality, including quality of research, but also of law, both state law and law of organizations. To do this, we need to combine our varying specific aspects of expertise:

Baer, particularly having strengths in the sociology of law and research on organizations; Zippel, in the sociology of organizations and of science; Ferree in sociology of social change and international feminist politics.

All of us share expertise in the sociology of gender and have experience working together (although in the context of working in a larger group) on the TARGET applied research program. TransCoop funding would allow us to bring our complementary expertise together, as well as the data we have already collected in TARGET, and allow us to work on collectively developing a more theoretically grounded understanding of the organizational change processes we have observed and in which we continue to be involved in our other work.

## **Research Plan**

### **Meaning of the working phases, the workshops and conference:**

Our concrete plans for moving into this next phase of international collaboration will involve analyzing the wealth of data that we have collected from the TARGET expert meetings, using the research policy expertise we have developed in other contexts as well, and cooperatively writing a series of co-authored publications. In addition to working together virtually (with email, google docs and a research wiki) on an ongoing basis, we foresee a need for a series of working meetings of the three team members both to help us concretize deadlines for finishing drafts and to have the more intensive discussion that face-to-face conversation allows. These meetings will be crucial to coordinate and collaborate on the analysis of the existing data. We will use the time to generate ideas for the coding of the texts, interviews, and notes from the meetings. We will use this working time to reflect, exchange information and create knowledge on the raised questions collaboratively.

We also do not want to turn away from the larger research collaborations in which our individual work is embedded. We plan to organize one or more outreach centered workshops to discuss our arguments and findings with the several research communities in which we participate: the international policy community, the academic transformation communities in Germany and the US, and the multinational European mainstreaming community. These larger meetings will allow us to share our work with other actors who are shaping academic institutions and building gender expertise within them, and to contribute to further sharing gender expertise within these networks. The conference will allow us to present and discuss our ideas with German, European and US colleagues to solicit feedback on our interpretation of the data and our theoretical conceptualization as well as to disseminate our findings. The concrete results of our collaboration will be several journal publications and an edited volume. We aim to produce publications in gender and women's studies, organization studies, science studies, as well as in socio-legal studies and sociology of education/curriculum development.

We are involving graduate students on both sides of the Atlantic to draw them into this transnational research to enable them to learn first hand how to collaborate across countries with researchers. They will assist us various research tasks ranging from organizing materials, exporting data bases to helping with the data analysis. In the future we will apply for funding that would allow us to exchange these graduate students and to host them at our respective universities.