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# **Gender, Scientificness and Ideology**

**By Regina Frey, Marc Gärtner, Manfred Köhnen, Sebastian Scheele**

**Edited by the Heinrich Böll Foundation**

A longer German language version of this publication under the title «Gender, Wissenschaftlichkeit und Ideologie» can be downloaded from the website of the Gunda-Werner-Institute: [www.gwi-boell.de](http://www.gwi-boell.de)



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Gender, Scientificness and Ideology

By Regina Frey, Marc Gärtner, Manfred Köhnen, Sebastian Scheele

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## PREFACE BY THE AUTHORS

This text is an English summary of the brochure entitled «Gender, Wissenschaftlichkeit und Ideologie», which was originally published in German in the early summer of 2013. It primarily arose as a result of the astonishment felt at a large number of unobjective, distortive and, in part, verifiably untrue assertions about gender issues making the rounds over the last few years in German-speaking countries – both among the established print media and online. We have examined these assertions and lines of argument more closely and juxtaposed them with our scientific arguments and expertise. Our intention was and still is: to counter the deliberate misinterpretations of the gender debates using plausible and sound arguments and to provide readers with arguments with which they can proactively uphold an emancipatory and forward-thinking gender policy.

In the light of current developments in numerous European countries, in which similar conflicting lines can be observed, we have decided to make the content of the brochure accessible to an international audience. This executive summary of the brochure set out on the pages that follow provides readers from different countries with an insight into the discussion taking place in Germany and covers the main elements of the 72-page German version of the brochure. We trust that our work may be of value to various contexts in other countries.

At this juncture, we wish to express our deep gratitude to all those who have contributed to the brochure by providing their food for thought, support and feedback. The brochure has met with widespread interest in Germany. We have received numerous positive responses and feedback for which we are very grateful. As was to be expected, those criticized in the brochure also vented their feelings, as did those who believed that the criticism was levelled at them, along with those who grasp every opportunity they can to lash out at «gender» – and who, in their own unique way, became prime illustrations of some of the issues raised in this brochure.

We would like to thank the Heinrich Böll Foundation once again for making this publication possible, even in its second edition with this English summary. We are especially indebted to Henning von Bargen of the Gunda Werner Institute for his contributions and support. Also special thanks to Bettina von Arps-Aubert for translation.

Regina Frey, Marc Gärtner, Manfred Köhnen and Sebastian Scheele  
June 2014

# Introduction

A spectre is haunting Europe: the spectre of genderism... You might be forgiven for gaining this impression if you take the widely-used arguments opposing gender studies and gender equality policy literally. Since the German version of this brochure was first published in the early summer of 2013, scores of acts of mobilization on gender-political subjects have manifested themselves, including at the European level. At the same time, some campaigns have been distortive and unobjective, with others, at times, falsely targeting gender equality policy, gender mainstreaming and gender research, deploying arguments that had previously been referred to and addressed in the German publication of «Gender, Scientificness and Ideology». These current developments are dealt with in the abridged English version of the brochure. Our aim is to rectify this situation and present factual arguments that may also prove beneficial in other countries. For the slanderous remarks touting gender as an «ideology», the defamation of gender mainstreaming as a «re-education programme» and the supposedly accompanying «sexualization» of children and young adults only work if the informed expertise and sources of the gender debate are simply ignored. In this context, certain defamation strategies and manipulations of a distorted representation can be observed in various countries. These are spread by an, in part, well-networked and, surprisingly well-funded «anti-gender lobby».

The current developments provide sufficient grounds for rekindling this brochure, because all of these activities have one allegation in common: that gender studies is unscientific. The accusations go as far as to claim that gender research – as well as every other area that, in some shape or form, involves gender, irrespective of whether or not they actually work with the term «gender» – is about «genderism», «gender ideology», «gender obsession», «gender nonsense» and other similar spectres. Allegations of this nature have since solidified into a permanent anti-feminist rallying cry that can be summarized as «gender enmity».

We would now like to address the various elements of this accusation in greater detail: the undifferentiated mixing of gender research (and specific gender theories) with gender equality policy (plus strategies such as gender mainstreaming); the accusation of being ideological; the monopolization of a concept of science geared to certain natural sciences; and, last but not least, the polemic selective accusation of being unscientific.

Prior to doing so, however, it is worth outlining the various gender enmity currents which are prevalent above all in German-speaking countries. In this connection,

roughly five groups of gender opponents can be identified in terms of their ideological background and spheres of activity:

### 1. Journalistic gender enmity

A series of journalistic works – some of them sharply worded – appeared as far back as 2005 to 2007, which opposed «gender» and gender mainstreaming. Two works frequently cited by gender opponents were penned by Volker Zastrow in Germany's most important conservative daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) (re-published as Zastrow in 2006). In early 2007, the liberal news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, followed on by publishing an article on gender mainstreaming entitled «Der neue Mensch» (Pfister 2006).<sup>1</sup> In his TV documentary series in Norway, «Brainwash», a comedian by the name of Harald Eia spoke out against gender studies, among other things, a fact that was also picked up on in the German media (FAS 2012, Eia 2012) and which led to all kinds of myths being created.<sup>2</sup> Articles of a similar nature have appeared time and time again, and still do today: the weekly newspaper, *DIE ZEIT*, for example, published a text by a well-known German columnist, Harald Martenstein (2013), which also took a polemic swipe at gender research – Title: «Genderforschung: Schlecht, schlechter, Geschlecht».<sup>3</sup> The German business magazine *Wirtschaftswoche* regularly publishes similar articles, one of which claims «Baden Württemberg wants to abolish biology classes – Stuttgart in the hands of gender ideologists» (Knauf 2014).<sup>4</sup>

### 2. «Guardians of scientificness»

Another group accuses gender researchers of being generally unscientific in their work. This group presents itself as being politically neutral and merely interested in scientific quality. At the same time, however, the disciplinary leanings diverge greatly: whether it be, for example, a social science direction such as the Critical

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- 1 «The new human». Cf. a comprehensive critical analysis of these articles, Roßhart 2007; especially on the often-cited gender opposition-based media debate on political correctness and sexual correctness, its history and its function as a construct for a concept that evokes hatred or fear – see Möller 1999.
  - 2 In German-speaking, anti-feminist circles, for example, there is a popular belief that Eia's television show led to funding for the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK) or even all Scandinavian gender studies to be dropped. None of these alleged sources prove this assertion. In actuality, the NIKK ceased to receive further funding at the end of 2011 following an evaluation; it is also worth noting that, following a period of restructuring, the NIKK resumed its operations as far back as October 2012. Further information on this can be found in the blog entitled ««Aus für Gender? Ein deutscher Mythos über einen norwegischen Komiker»» (Scheele 2013).
  - 3 A response to this, which, it is worth noting, equally applies to the «simplistic nature/culture debates» in Eia's TV series, was penned by Hark/Villa (2013).
  - 4 The «Bettina Röhl direkt» column should also be mentioned in this context. Here, Röhl lashes out with enormous redundancy, perpetual unprovoked alarmism and the shrillest tone against «western decadence phenomena», «intellectual arson», «crimes against humanity» and, of course, «fantastical ideas of world supremacy» – all of which, it should be noted, are deemed to be gender mainstreaming and gender studies. (Röhl 2013, cf. also Röhl 2014a,b,c,d).

Rationalism expressed in the blog «Kritische Wissenschaft – critical science» or a specific natural science direction, such as evolutionary biology, expressed in the blog «*Alles Evolution*» – what they all have in common is their leaning towards promoting the assertion that gender as a subject is unscientific. Among gender opponents, these assessments have acquired the standing of scientific authority and, through open letters, for example, present some mobilization potential even beyond this group.

### 3. Christian fundamentalism

Authors from the Christian fundamentalism camp also criticize gender studies and gender equality policy. While setting their own focal points (especially concerns over sexual morality and, consequently, always linked to this: the struggle to combat women's reproductive rights), the accusation of being unscientific equally counts among their criticisms. The author Gabriele Kuby who has also been actively engaged in the demonstrations in Stuttgart, and her daughter, Sophia Kuby, who is active on the international stage, are just two such examples, as is the website [www.gender-kritik.com](http://www.gender-kritik.com) run by the «Deutsches Institut für Jugend und Gesellschaft» (DIJG).<sup>5</sup>

### 4. Explicitly anti-feminist actors

This group has adopted the accusation of being unscientific, but views itself as being explicitly political at the same time – whether through its self-perceived role as men's rights activists, anti-feminists, masculinists, or in their advocacy of «gender democracy», which is primarily understood to mean repressing and repelling «feminism». This camp comprises, for example, associations that go by the name «MANNdat» or «Agens», authors such as Gerhard Amendt or Arne Hoffmann as well as online projects such as «WikiMANNia» or the «wgvdI» forums («Wieviel Gleichberechtigung verträgt das Land?»).<sup>6</sup>

### 5. Right-wing organizations

At last, actors from right-wing and extreme right-wing parties and scenes have asserted the «gender ideology» accusation in the past few years. For example, FPÖ politician (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*), Barbara Rosenkranz, published a book on this subject in 2008 entitled «MenschInnen. Gender Mainstreaming – Auf dem Weg zum geschlechtslosen Menschen». In its party manifesto, the NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) states that it «rejects the abnormal gender mainstreaming ideology that runs wholly contrary to any natural state»

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5 In this context, for example, the alliance *Kein Raum für Sexismus, Homophobie und religiösen Fundamentalismus* 2009; for information on Gabriele Kuby, see Gehring 2007.

6 «How much gender equality can the country stand?» – A number of authors have concerned themselves with these arguments and this scene in particular over the past few years: Claus 2014, Ebenfeld/Köhhnen 2011, Gesterkamp 2010, Kemper 2012, Rosenbrock 2012, Wolde 2007.

(NPD 2010: 6) while the campaign «Free Gender: Raus aus den Köpfen – Gender-Terror abschaffen» came about through neo-Nazi connections.<sup>7</sup>

With this publication, we cannot and do not intend to describe the structures and the intertwining relationships of these groups. Nor is it our objective to provide a detailed description of the scenes and actors. The aim of differentiating the five groups is merely to illustrate that gender enmity is articulated against the backdrop of, at times, highly divergent ideologies: to put the criticism expressed by a *Spiegel* editor on a level with the *FPÖ* or even the *NPD* would be a distortive representation of the facts. There are undoubtedly argumentative interfaces, however. One such interface is the accusation of being unscientific which is therefore worth greater consideration.

This publication builds on the knowledge and inspiration of other works. These works (see comments in footnotes 1, 3, 5–7) have covered a variety of stakeholders and arguments; following on from these, we will focus on the accusation of being unscientific.

By way of explanation, it should be noted that this publication in no way represents an introduction to gender studies, theory of science, gender equality policy or the gender mainstreaming strategy. That goes beyond the intentions of this brochure and would also be superfluous given the numerous introductory texts that have already been published.

It is equally not our intention to defend specific or even all texts from gender studies or specific or all gender equality policy measures. It goes without saying that there is also good and not so good research in gender studies, as well as good and not so good measures in gender equality policy – and this is, of course, also discussed «on the ground», in the respective working contexts. As we will show, the blanket accusation of being unscientific is directed at gender studies and gender equality policy per se, however. Thus, this accusation does not contribute to improving the quality of differentiated science but is a blanket attempt at discreditation, for which the big guns are brought out. The accusation – which even extends beyond the science field and is made irrespective of the respective claim – is directed at all those who somehow work in the area of «gender». There are, for example, text genres that appear without any claims to be scientific (e.g. journalistic texts) but which are nevertheless accused of being unscientific. For this reason, we will examine the fundamental direction this argumentation takes and offer counter-arguments.

This text has especially been composed for those who, in the broadest sense of the term, work in the area of gender and are thereby confronted with the accusation of

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7 «Free Gender: get it out of our heads – abolish gender terror» – For information on Barbara Rosenkranz' book, see Frey 2009; for information on masculinities as well as gender orders in right-wing extremism in general, see Claus/Lehnert/Müller 2010. For a practical and preventive perspective, we also recommend the web pages of the specialist department for Gender and Right-Wing Extremism ([www.gender-und-rechtsextremismus.de](http://www.gender-und-rechtsextremismus.de)) which contain a wealth of information, and also the project «Rechtsextremismus und Männlichkeit(en)» by the Institut Dissens as well as the resulting capacity building series «Vielfalt\_Macht\_Schule» ([www.vielfalt-machtschule.de](http://www.vielfalt-machtschule.de)).



being unscientific. One of the experiences many people make – e.g. gender researchers at universities and colleges, employees working in gender equality departments, those working in the education or education planning field, or editorial journalists open to feminism – is that dealing with gender issues is time and again met with distrust or needs to be justified. At the same time, however, the rifts in discourse between these «gender»-based activities are broader than such sequencing would perhaps have us believe. The communication and translation difficulties between gender-based and feminist fields of activity that have emerged over the decades cannot be rectified through this argumentation tool either. In terms of the accusation of being unscientific, however, perhaps it is possible to place a stepping stone in the middle of the rift in discourse in some measure that can at least go some way to facilitating the further communication and translation. This is required, especially since the parties that are collectively affected by the accusations raised by gender opponents need to exchange views and opinions. For gender opponents do not bother with this rift. They succeed only too well in lumping together gender-based activities no matter how diverse these may be – regardless of whether this has anything to do with the reality of these activities and what «myths and intermingling» (see below) are required to do this. The accusation that all of this is «unscientific» is therefore not at all directed solely at gender studies and those working in the scientific field. The «hardening of lines in the discourse» feared by Roßhart in 2007 (p. 92) have since materialized for the most part; one of these hardened delegitimization strategies is the accusation of being unscientific. This has since become an accusation mostly unrelated to any specific event that is pulled out of the hat at regular intervals during debates in a wide variety of fields.

The authors of this publication have followed debates on the gender concept for many years and have respective experience working in research, consultancy and politics. One of the main motivating factors behind drafting this text is the sense of astonishment at how such delegitimization attempts and truncated, populist representations of complex debates in the media and digital space can become so widespread. Added to this, we have, in part, also personally become a target for polemics and discreditation. In terms of its type and demands the polemic tone often runs contrary to the claim of uninvolved, objective and socially neutral «scientificness» and reveals itself to be highly politically motivated. Nevertheless, we would like to counter the accusation of being unscientific with factual arguments. We have strong arguments on our side and therefore do not need to shy away from explicating them and putting them up for discussion. We hope that the arguments presented here will help to better understand the accusation of being unscientific directed at gender studies. In this brochure, we will provide you with arguments for future debates – though, given the format used here, simplifications are unavoidable and sometimes excruciating. We hope that our inclusion of numerous sources and notes on further reading is a suitable way to handle this dilemma.

Frequently, the rifts in discourse not only lie between the various gender-based fields of activity but also the respective language areas and national political contexts. An exchange of views and opinions on these phenomena is urgently needed at the international level. Feminist discussions are oftentimes also mainly restricted to the

national political public, and gender studies also have nationally different characteristics to all intents and purposes. The diverse nature of the respective contexts impedes simple transfers, not to mention the issue of language proficiency and translations.

We are convinced that even reporting on experiences gained in specific countries is useful and marks a major step towards exchanging views and opinions across national boundaries as a means of understanding the differences and similarities. In this brochure, the basis for us is the experiences gained in Germany, and some of the actors that have been described or the relevance of certain arguments are undoubtedly peculiar to this context. For this reason, we have steered a middle course for the translation: A translation of the programmatic introduction (chapter 1), abstracts providing an insight into the main elements of the chapters that were not fully translated (chapter 2), an overview about recent developments (chapter 3), and finally some test questions to assess whether a statement is to be understood as (fair) criticism or part of a delegitimization strategy (chapter 4). By issuing this new edition, we hope to contribute towards the discussion on «anti-gender» mobilizations at the European level and on the exchange of views and opinions on the respective national debates.

## CHAPTER 2

# Lines of Argument

The four contributions for the argumentation tool are summarized below in order to illustrate our lines of argument:

Regina Frey throws light on the myths and intermingling that have led to the construction of «genderism». The texts in question were printed around the mid 2000s in what are considered the serious German media. Frey exemplifies this using two texts from 2006 drafted by an editor by the name of Volker Zastrow. His articles appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and, until very recently, had also been picked up on numerous times in German-speaking countries by activists of the New Right (e.g. Barbara Rosenkranz, a member of Austria's *FPÖ* party) to strengthen the respective accusations directed at gender and gender mainstreaming. This chapter traces how misleading and distortive Zastrow's claims about gender and gender mainstreaming are. In one case in point, Zastrow maintains that the term «gender» emerged from an experiment on a human being: the psychiatrist John Money, he claimed, used the term to raise a child born as a boy like a girl. This person ultimately committed suicide after many years of suffering. Without being able to recount the details: Zastrow maintains that Money was the «most influential scientific trail-blazer of gender theory» (2006:38). According to Zastrow, «feminists» «fell upon» Money's hypotheses in order to introduce the term «gender». Zastrow, however, only refers to three authors (Simone de Beauvoir, Alice Schwarzer and Kate Millett) and he «overlooks» the fact that earlier authors (e.g. Gayle Rubin) also deployed the term gender without any reference to Money. Above all, however, he completely sidetracks the critical discussions within the gender debate on the work of John Money. Both Donna Haraway and Ann Fausto-Sterling, two very renowned authors in the gender studies field, have been critical of Money. In «Undoing Gender» (2004), Judith Butler dedicated an entire chapter to the case and the «treatment» of the child by John Money; in it, she condemns Money in no uncertain terms. Numerous other works in the field of gender studies also reject unequivocally the notion of clear-cut gender identities, such as the one Money strived for. The editor Zastrow ignored all of these debates so that he could discredit gender studies altogether.

The second myth that Zastrow spread is: the gender political strategy of gender mainstreaming was invented in order to create a «new human being». He translates gender mainstreaming as roughly meaning «political sex transformation». Gender mainstreaming, Zastrow claims, attacks people's «natural» gender identity. He thus

misconceives and, at the same time, discards the legal/human rights significance of «gender equality» as an integral part of a democratic culture.

By doing so, the author has created myths that have been disseminated across the internet and beyond. These myths devalue gender studies, as well as the people who work with the term gender and believe that gender mainstreaming is meaningful. At the same time, Zastrow's actions are not only devoid of any claim to being scientific (e.g. statements supported by sources) – they do not meet the journalistic standards of broad-ranging research either.

Sebastian Scheele looks into the «gender ideology» accusation. He shows how this accusation not only smacks of an unconvincing understanding of ideology and an unconvincing understanding of gender studies. For ideology is a concept that deals with century-old classic questions in epistemology: the correlation between ideas and material realities, of knowledge and conditions of knowledge production. Gender opponents do not get involved with these questions at all, however, but believe that they can resolve them any old how: the others are the ideological ones, they claim. By contrast, they maintain that their own stance is unideological (ironically, when linking «genderism» to Marxism, they are also directing their accusation of being ideological at precisely the school of thought that stamped the term in the first place). It becomes evident that the term ideology here is used for no other purpose than to launch an attempt at delegitimization. By contrast, if the term and the underlying epistemology questions are taken seriously, it becomes clear that gender studies especially has made and is making a considerable contribution towards finding the answers. In this sense, gender studies, in all truth, does not need to fear comparison: in gender studies, the discussions surrounding epistemology, scientificness as well as its own normative principles have been conducted transparently and with self-reflection unlike virtually any other scientific field. The theory of science and history of science branches of gender studies in particular have extended the classic epistemological questions to include the previously «overlooked» dimension of gender and gendering. Various feminist epistemological models have been developed in order to give thought to the «situatedness» of knowledge (often divided into feminist empirism, feminist standpoint theory and post-modern epistemology). With the ideology term, gender opponents are therefore moving into territory where gender studies is exceptionally well placed. Their accusations make clear that they do not wish to engage in discussions on such differentiated models, whether through reading a wealth of existing introductory texts and textbooks, or through the monographies that have long since become classics (some are cited and quoted in the chapter). They thus fail to recognize what doubled-edged sword they are holding in their hands when making their accusation of being ideological and how errant their attempt is to use a diffuse, emotional charging of the accusation of being ideological to delegitimize what they feel is politically undesirable.

In the third section, Manfred Köhnen examines texts that raise the accusation that gender studies or feminist science are unscientific. Anti-feminist authors put forward two assertions as justification for the accusation: firstly, political goals and political commitment are wholly irreconcilable with science or the claim to scientificness, and,

secondly, people deviating from the heterosexual norm are not sufficiently neutral or objective to work on the subject scientifically. In this connection, it is noticeable that they only level this accusation at gender studies. Sociological or politological family researchers who are parents at the same time are not deprived of their scientificness. At the same time, in their generally unscientific but rather journalistically polemic texts, the anti-feminist authors lay claim themselves to taking an objective and neutral stance. To get to the bottom of this contradiction, Manfred Köhnen examines the underlying understanding of science. In this context, it is noticeable that some anti-feminist sources have an understanding of the everyday understanding of science that is not touched on by the scientific discussion of science. In turn, the self-proclaimed guardians of science refer to Karl Popper and Max Weber. However, they simplify their stances by making their calls for objectivity and freedom from value judgements absolute. The guardians of science claim that politically active people and institutions cannot be scientists. By contrast, Max Weber and Karl Popper call for empirical science work to be separated from practical value judgement and personal opinion. Thus, Manfred Köhnen demonstrates that, with regard to epistemology, they fall short of the position adopted by critical rationalism and, at the same time, claim to have the one and only valid understanding of «scientificness». In keeping with this authoritarian gesture is the fact that they take no notice whatsoever of alternating discussions on scientific theory such as critical theory or constructivism. Less polemic discussions on the epistemological possibilities of science deal with the problem that scientists can never be «neutral» and «objective» because of their social situatedness. Therefore, the objectivity that the guardians of science claim to possess always remains an apparent objectivity that strives to assert their normative position as the generally valid one: «The gender order should stay where it was». For this reason, by the time we come round to Max Weber at the latest, it is recommended in discussions on scientific theory that people should reflect on and make transparent the researchers' interest in knowledge and/or their social background and thus gain greater objectivity in the scientific process in the long term. Feminist authors have been especially consistent in upholding this epistemology stance.

In the final chapter, Marc Gärtner – in spite of the objections raised – embarks on the gender opponents' understanding of scientificness and exemplifies it using texts from exactly this political spectrum and their networks. The selected texts range from Gerhard Amendt, an author frequently cited by anti-feminist gender opponents as a former holder of a chair, to radical catholic publicist Gabriele Kuby. In regards to those cited, it is striking that their restorative criticism of modernized gender relations not only targets feminism but also homosexuals. It also shows that these texts blatantly contradict the propagated scientificness criteria. In one of the few studies from within the realms of the gender opponents, for example, Gerhard Amendt analyzes the situation of fathers living in divorce deploying a non-transparent method of evaluation and case selection. The inaccurate research approach goes hand in hand with the polemic and largely unsupported attacks on political opponents. Amendt does not meet the respectability criterion associated with a scientist in his expert field whatsoever. Other authors proceed in a similar fashion: for example, *MANNdat*,

a group primarily active on the internet, published a purportedly informed «report» on the discrimination of boys and men. This discrimination on issues relating to the labour market or violence is constructed using a one-sided or questionable selection of indices and the collective victimization of men and boys. Male behaviour that (in the area of health, for example) results in specific risks is consistently given just as little attention as facts, studies or statistics that would contradict the authors' obvious agenda. However, the works published by Amendt and *MANNdat* are not only risqué because of their untenable claim to represent the truth and scientificness. The fact that, for example, Michael Klein, a ghostwriter, is equally well networked with these authors explains why his claimed methods, which he steadfastly postulates in the guise of a «guardian of scientificness», are not applied to works from within his own realms, which would show them up. This double standard, at the very latest, shows that the accusation of being unscientific primarily revolves around a politically motivated denial of legitimacy and not a discussion on methodological or science theory stances.

The arguments against «gender» discussed here continue to be used and are repeated to varying degrees of emphasis in different countries in Europe. These current developments in various countries and across Europe as a whole are described here and discussed in the light of the previous statements.

# Current Developments

The five different gender enmity groups that we have outlined above were active to varying degrees last year. A lot of activities and European networking have particularly been noticed from within the Christian fundamentalist ranks of gender opponents. In the run-up to the European elections, political groups could also be seen to be adopting a clear anti-gender stance among them the newly-established *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) party. Prior to looking at this example, however, let us cast an eye on the protests in **France** that opposed the introduction of same-sex marriage. Under the banner of «Manif pour tous», which lays claim to representing the majority will of the people, demonstrators took to the streets in Paris, sometimes in their hundreds of thousands, to show their opposition to marriage for all.<sup>8</sup> Subsequent to this, a «heterogenous alliance comprising traditionalists upholding traditional conservative values, religious dogmatists and militant extremists» (Simons 2014) held protests against other laws. Rumours fuelling opposition to teaching materials called «ABCD de l'égalité» teaching materials, addressing gender stereotypes, made the rounds, and calls for a «school strike» to oppose the alleged «re-education» and «sexualization» of children fell on many a sympathetic ear.<sup>9</sup> Added to this, public libraries came under pressure to remove books allegedly influenced by «gender theory» from their shelves.<sup>10</sup>

In Germany, the slogan «Demo für Alle» («Demo for All») was seized on in protests against the curriculum reform proposed by the federal state of **Baden-Württemberg** which envisages the acceptance of sexual diversity as a cross-cutting

8 Cf. Främke 2013. In his analytical assessment of the protests, Främke also explains the importance of France's republican self-image in the course of events during the conflict. The debate surrounding the «PaCS» solidarity pact as far back as 1999 was a centered around universalism, i.e. the PaCS (which is largely concluded by heterosexual couples) was meant to be accessible to all, irrespective of their gender: «A legal solution such as the Civil Partnership Law in Germany, that refers exclusively to homosexual partnerships, would not gain majority support in France.»

9 See taz (2014) or Balmer (2014) in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. For information on «ABCD de l'égalité», see the website of the education authority «Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique»: [www.cndp.fr/ABCD-de-l-egalite/accueil.html](http://www.cndp.fr/ABCD-de-l-egalite/accueil.html)

10 The minister for education, Aurélie Filippett, commented on the incidents and assigned the library cleansing activists to the ranks of the right-wing «Printemps Français» extremists, see Lehnartz (2014) in Die Welt.

aspect of the school curriculum.<sup>11</sup> However, the three demonstrations that have taken place in Stuttgart up to now all failed to come up to the comparable magnitude; the number of demonstrators remained in the upper hundreds. The protests did, however, fall on sympathetic ears within political institutions and were met with approval. In one case in point, the chairmen of the *CDU* and *FDP* state parliamentary groups both sent messages of greeting to the April demonstration under the slogan «Preserve parental rights! Stop gender ideology and the sexualization of our children through the education programme».<sup>12</sup> And, without question, the protests played a part in Minister-President Kretschmann of the Green Party meeting and talking with representatives of evangelical organizations.<sup>13</sup> In addition to this, the Green/Social Democratic state government decided, in the course of the protests, to revise the education programme and to extend the trial phase by a further year.<sup>14</sup> Minister-President Kretschmann of the Green Party is quoted by the *FAZ* newspaper as saying: «essentially the project will remain intact, but it was important to dispel certain «misunderstandings»» (Soldt 2014).

However, neither the protests in Baden-Württemberg nor in France went unchallenged; in one case in point, a French petition made it plain that gender studies, research and education were indeed a very good fit,<sup>15</sup> while counter demonstrations, e.g. sit-down protests, were held during each of the demonstrations in Stuttgart.<sup>16</sup>

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**11** The original education programme draft of 18.11.2013 that came in for criticism can be found here: [www.kultusportal-bw.de/site/pbs-bw/get/documents/KULTUS.Dachmandant/KULTUS/kultusportal-bw/Bildungsplanreform/Arbeitspapier\\_Leitprinzipien.pdf](http://www.kultusportal-bw.de/site/pbs-bw/get/documents/KULTUS.Dachmandant/KULTUS/kultusportal-bw/Bildungsplanreform/Arbeitspapier_Leitprinzipien.pdf)

A report on the second demonstration, in March, which can be found on [queer.de](http://queer.de) (2014), quotes signs, names the participating organizations and also looks at counter-demonstrations and police operations.

The website of the «Opponents of the Education Programme», under the slogan «Marriage and Family First! Stop gender ideology and the sexualization of our children» can be found at [www.demofueralle.de](http://www.demofueralle.de)

**12** See Bilger 2014 in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*.

**13** According to the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* (2014), the meeting came about on the initiative of a state secretary, himself a member of a pietist parish.

**14** The revised education programme: Working paper for the attention of the Education Planning Committee serving as the basis and guidelines for the entrenchment of guiding perspectives, last revised: 8 April 2014, Education programme reform – Entrenchment of guiding perspectives, can be found here: [www.kultusportal-bw.de/site/pbs-bw/get/params\\_Dattachment/1845816/Arbeitspapier%20Leitperspektiven.pdf](http://www.kultusportal-bw.de/site/pbs-bw/get/params_Dattachment/1845816/Arbeitspapier%20Leitperspektiven.pdf) Web page with an overview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Baden Württemberg: [www.kultusportal-bw.de](http://www.kultusportal-bw.de), Lde/Startseite/schulebw/bildungsplanreform

**15** Petition «Les études de genre, la recherche et l'éducation: la bonne rencontre», in French: <http://genrerechercheeducationrencontre.unblog.fr/le-texte-national>, German translation: <http://genrerechercheeducationrencontre.unblog.fr/la-petition-en-allemand>

**16** In one case in point, the «Antifaschistische Aktionsbündnis Stuttgart und Region» called for people to resist «dangerous alliances» between «extreme Christian homophobic and openly right-wing organizations, groups, parties and individuals»: «The dangerous alliances jeopardize all those seeking an open and tolerant society.» <http://aabstgt.wordpress.com/2014/03/27/den-widerstand-gegen-gefährliche-allianzen-verstärken>



To follow on from the success of the French mobilizations, their initiators were also invited to other areas of Germany, however. In one case in point, Béatrice Bourges was invited to an event called «Models for success – conservative initiatives in Europe»<sup>17</sup>. A day later, she attended the conference «For the future of the family! Are the people of Europe being abolished?» near Leipzig where she met numerous well-known speakers from German anti-feminist debates such as Thilo Sarrazin, Monika Ebeling and Berhard Lassahn. *Spiegel online* headlined its report on the conference with «Crude assumptions during homophobic event» and labelled «Compact», the magazine behind the event, a «right-wing populist publication» (Langer 2013).<sup>18</sup> By all accounts, Russia's laws banning «gay propaganda» were also construed at the conference as models for success worth discussing at the international level: two of the members of parliament responsible for introducing the law, Jelena Borissowna Misulina and Olga Batalina, also spoke there.

Gender enmity also finds many a sympathetic ear in **Central and Eastern Europe**.<sup>19</sup> On the subject of **Poland**, the Guardian uses words such as «backlash» and «moral panic» in connection with sex education and sexual and reproductive rights: «In Poland, the word «gender» has become a giant catch-all term, conflating anything that diverges from the conservative, patriarchal norm – it is on this threat that the church and its many allies in politics have declared war.» (Pyzik 2014). The New York Times reported on a Polish bishop considered to be a liberal who, last summer, claimed that «the ideology of gender presents a threat worse than Nazism and Communism combined» as well as on a subsequent campaign driven and orchestrated by the Catholic Church (Sierakowski 2014). This also brings with it strange, yet remarkable, symbolic effects: «gender», for instance, was selected as word of the year in Poland in 2013 (ibid.), while an honorary doctorate that was to be bestowed on the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, by Poland's oldest university was then rejected by a majority in the body of professors «because he promotes gender», according to a headline in the Polish liberal daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Kuraś/Szpunar 2014). During the boisterous debate, opponents of the honorary doctorate pointed out that Barroso had been a member of a Maoist communist group in the 1970s and that he stood for «genderism». On this issue, the Austrian daily newspaper *Die Presse* explains that: «In ultraconservative circles, «gender» has been considered the generic term for everything evil in the modern liberal world ever since Polish bishops penned a pastoral letter in late 2013 warning against a feared gender levelling through science.» (Die Presse 2014)

17 In «Library of Conservatism» in Berlin on 22.11.2013

18 For information on the conference, see also Bartsch (2013) in the left-wing alternative daily newspaper *tageszeitung* as well as the website of the «No Compact» alliance that organized a counter-conference and protests: [www.nocompact.de](http://www.nocompact.de) Information on the conference itself can be found on the website of Compact-Magazin: [www.compact-magazin.com/compact-konferenz](http://www.compact-magazin.com/compact-konferenz)

19 The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Budapest organized an event on 18.2.2014 to discuss mobilizations against «gender ideology» in Central and Eastern Europe. A video clip (in Hungarian and English) summing up the event can be viewed online at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQLw2OapiKo&feature](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQLw2OapiKo&feature)

It is worth noting that, on the one hand, Polish-specific arguments play a role here – such as the construct of a nation that is permanently threatened by external «ideologies»: firstly, National Socialism, then communism, and now genderism. On the other hand, a few international all-time favourites have also raised their heads among conservative, catholic gender opponents. Most notably, the same fantasies of the downfall of sexual morality that have been at the core of Christian fundamentalism since its inception in the 19th century have now been pegged to «gender theory» so to lend the incessant admonitions and warnings the appearance of being highly current. The moral panic surrounding sexuality becomes evident when initiatives such as «Nie dla gender» («No to gender») claim that «the key feature of this ideology is uninhibited sexual intercourse» – and that this is also a typical trait in atheists.<sup>20</sup> They call for people to take action, for example by checking their children's schoolbooks.<sup>21</sup> Although these arguments may come across as otherworldly, they are evidently disseminated and the subject of international dialogue. One example from Germany is the publicist Gabriele Kuby: «The deregulation of sexuality is leading to cultural decay» (Kuby 2012: 348). This, in the shortest possible way, is how best to sum up her book «The global sexual revolution – destruction of freedom in the name of freedom» through which she would like to curb the «transition from a Christian-influenced, democratic society to a heathen and hedonistic, totalitarian society» (ibid: 397). Her previous work on this subject «The gender revolution – relativism in action» has been translated into Polish, Hungarian and Italian and is, by all accounts, recommended by the Hungarian Catholic church as the best book for understanding «gender ideology».<sup>22</sup>

Another institution where gender opponents from Catholic/conservative, evangelical and Christian fundamentalist camps have proven their ability to mount campaigns and network internationally is the **European Parliament**. Heading the list is the «One of us» campaign that, whilst also by mingling a variety of issues (namely an ECJ patent law judgement, on the one hand, and development cooperation, on the other), canvasses against abortion.<sup>23</sup> In the space of one and a half years, and with the help of two popes among others, it collected 1.7 million signatures and

20 Original quotation in Polish: «Najważniejszą jednak cechą tej ideologii jest nieskrępowane współżycie seksualne [...]», page «Co to jest gender?» («What is gender?»), <http://niedlagender.pl/index.php/gender>

21 Page «Zadania dla każdego z nas» («Tasks for each and every one of us»), [www.niedlagender.pl/index.php/zadania](http://www.niedlagender.pl/index.php/zadania)

22 According to the feminist theologian Rita Perintfalvi from the University of Vienna (see footnote 8, video clip, 5:35 min.). For information on Kuby's books, see her website [www.gabriele-kuby.de/buecher/](http://www.gabriele-kuby.de/buecher/) Of the other three books, which have also been translated into Polish or Hungarian, her book opposing the «Harry Potter» series is worth mentioning in which Kuby perceives a «global, long-term project seeking to change culture».

23 Detailed information on «One of Us» has been compiled by e.g. the Development Policy Network for Women's Rights and Feminist Perspectives WIDE ([www.wide-netzwerk.at/index.php/frauenrechte/181-wide-stellungnahme-zu-qone-of-usq](http://www.wide-netzwerk.at/index.php/frauenrechte/181-wide-stellungnahme-zu-qone-of-usq)), the European Women's Lobby EWL ([www.womenlobby.org/news/ewl-news/article/european-women-s-lobby-is-deeply?lang=en](http://www.womenlobby.org/news/ewl-news/article/european-women-s-lobby-is-deeply?lang=en)), and the European Humanist Federation (<http://humanistfederation.eu/our-work.php?page=oppose-the-anti--choice-citizen-initiative-one-of-us>)

therefore achieved the necessary quorum defined in the new instrument of participative democracy, the «European Citizens' Initiative» (ECI), to be granted a hearing before the European Parliament.<sup>24</sup> The initiative was rejected by the European Commission in mid-2014, however.<sup>25</sup>

Parallel to this, various campaigns have emerged over the past few months opposing certain gender-political reports drafted by the European Parliament: the Estrela Report on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health,<sup>26</sup> the Lunacek Report against Homophobia<sup>27</sup> and the Zuber Report on Equality between Women and Men.<sup>28</sup>

Content-wise, the reports are all very different, but the countermobilization blurs these differences; «resistance» towards «gender» and also towards «the gay lobby» is the underlying tone, and one also used to help revamp the classic topics such as the campaign against women's reproductive rights («pro life»). Thereby, the aforementioned myths and intermingling of terminology, concepts and theories repeatedly can be observed. In an interview with the Humanist Press Service (2014), activist Karin Heisecke summed up the various campaigns of 2013 and 2014: «The fanatical anti-abortion campaigners have managed to mobilize a lot of people at grass roots level, not just for the ECI but also subsequently to oppose the EP Reports. The Estrela Report and the Zuber Report were thrown out after they had been attacked by concerted e-mail campaigns targeting members of the European Parliament.»

The Estrela Report was defeated by an extremely fine margin, 327 votes in favour, with 334 against. It is therefore worth taking a closer look at how members of the European Parliament voted. All of the representatives from Germany who voted against the Report are members of the *CDU* or *CSU*. Their parliamentary group (the *European People's Party, EPP*) recommended rejecting the report, but it would appear that the group was divided.<sup>29</sup> All of the other German representatives in all of the other parliamentary groups voted collectively in favour of the Report. By all accounts,

<sup>24</sup> On 10.4.2014, see report on this in *The New York Times* (Kanter 2014).

<sup>25</sup> European Citizens' Initiative: European Commission replies to «One of Us». European Commission – IP/14/608, 28/05/2014 ([http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-608\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-608_en.htm?locale=en))

<sup>26</sup> European Parliament (2013): Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2013/2040(INI)), Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Rapporteur: Edite Estrela, A7-0306/2013, 26.9.2013, [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-0306+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-0306+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN)

<sup>27</sup> European Parliament (2014): Report on the EU Roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexuality and gender identity (2013/2183(INI)), Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Rapporteur: Ulrike Lunacek, A7-0009/2014, 8.1.2014, [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2014-](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2014-)

<sup>28</sup> European Parliament (2014): Report on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2012 (2013/2156(INI)), Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Rapporteur: Inês Cristina Zuber, A7-0073/2014, 31.1.2014, [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2014-0073+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2014-0073+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN) 0009&language=EN

<sup>29</sup> The voting behaviour of each parliamentary group and all of the members of the European Parliament can be reviewed here: [www.votewatch.eu/en/homophobia-and-discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-motion-for-resolu-2.html#/%23%23vote-tabs-list-1##vote-tabs-list-1](http://www.votewatch.eu/en/homophobia-and-discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-motion-for-resolu-2.html#/%23%23vote-tabs-list-1##vote-tabs-list-1)

the campaign fell on sympathetic ears and received active support from within the *CDU* and *CSU*.<sup>30</sup> Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (*FDP*) complained to the President of the European Parliament during the decisive plenary meeting citing «falsified or, at least, manipulative voting recommendations» that were being passed down the rows «anonymously».<sup>31</sup> The e-mail campaigns Karin Heisecke referred to were not too unlike spamming. MEP Edite Estrela received 80,000 e-mails, Ulrike Lunacek received 40,000. Yet, in the case of the Lunacek Report, MEPs, for the most part, were «unfazed by the shitstorm», as the Huffington Post Deutschland puts it (Fülbeck 2014) – one of the reasons perhaps being public information by NGOs and, for example, the European Parliament Intergroup LGBT Rights.<sup>32</sup> However, the level of opposition to the respective reports that was mobilized by linked blogs and websites run by gender opponents was so great that it pushed the opinions of neutrals or advocates into the deepest realms of the search engines. Online tools also helped to exert pressure on «undecided» members of parliament or those supporting the reports. On the Christian/conservative website «CitizenGo», which is available in seven languages, for example, it is possible to send letters to every member of parliament,<sup>33</sup> while, on the campaign website [www.EUcheck.org](http://www.EUcheck.org), it is possible to enter search criteria such as «advocates MEP Lunacek» to track down and directly contact members of parliament matching this search.<sup>34</sup> «EUcheck.org» is anything but a neutral online platform: it belongs to a campaign

30 Bernd Posselt, a long-standing CSU member of the EP, who, by his own admission, was «one of the initiators» of the citizens' initiative, describes the interaction of «a lot of votes from the general public» which helped «the vast majority of the Christian-Democratic EPP parliamentary group» to say «no on matters of principle»: «In the past four months, we have been confronted on three occasions with ideological applications or reports which have been supported by Communists, Social Democrats, the Greens and Liberals. [...] Even though the reports were wholly nonbinding under law, they had to be rejected in no uncertain terms because they undermine the right of unborn humans to live as well as the preservation of the institutions of marriage and family. That is why I, along with all CSU members of parliament and the vast majority of the Christian-Democratic EPP parliamentary group voted «no» on all three resolutions. With regard to Estrela and Zuber, we had the majority of the house on our side after a long, contentious debate and were able to reject the whole thing, as you had asked for. In the process, we were helped greatly by the numerous votes from the general public who supported our Christian stance, and I would like to take the time to thank all of them for doing so. In the case of the Lunacek Report, although we succeeded in toning the draft down somewhat, and, even then, still said «no» on matters of principle, we, and by that I mean first and foremost the CSU and virtually all of the CDU, were regrettably not in the majority.» (response to a posting by Mr SoL Horst Schmidt on 29.1.2014 on the portal [EUcheck.org](http://EUcheck.org), [www.eucheck.org/individuelles-profil/bernd-posselt/hauptseite](http://www.eucheck.org/individuelles-profil/bernd-posselt/hauptseite))

31 [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20131022&secondRef=ITEM-008-03&language=DE&ring=A7-2013-0306](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20131022&secondRef=ITEM-008-03&language=DE&ring=A7-2013-0306)

32 This working group has compiled the most important responses and corrections on all issues relating to the «myths» disseminated by opponents of the Lunacek Report: [www.lgbt-ep.eu/parliamentary-work/lunacek-faq](http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/parliamentary-work/lunacek-faq)

33 For example in regards to the Lunacek Report: [www.citizenngo.org/de/3221-keine-lgbti-sonderrechte-nein-zum-lunacek-bericht](http://www.citizenngo.org/de/3221-keine-lgbti-sonderrechte-nein-zum-lunacek-bericht). For information on the political principles of CitizenGo, incl. «right to life» and heteronormativity: [www.citizenngo.org/en/node/1](http://www.citizenngo.org/en/node/1)

34 [www.eucheck.org/eu-entscheidungstraeger](http://www.eucheck.org/eu-entscheidungstraeger)

network organized by an association called «Zivile Koalition» (civil coalition)<sup>35</sup> run by a married couple, Beatrix and Sven Storch, as is the German version «AbgeordnetenCheck.de»<sup>36</sup>, the blog «FreieWelt.net»,<sup>37</sup> the «Initiative Familienschutz»<sup>38</sup>, even the website for the above-mentioned protests in Stuttgart.<sup>39</sup> This wily simulation of a large number of people and organizations by a small group of professional lobbyists is known as «astroturfing» (named after a brand name of artificial turf), because it seeks to give the impression of a «grass-roots movement». Now that Beatrix von Storch has been elected to the European Parliament as a member of the AfD, it is more than likely that she will have greater means of exerting direct influence. This leads us on to another development that only arose after publication of the first edition, which is the final point to be addressed here.

In **Germany**, a new political party emerged in 2013 known as the «Alternative für Deutschland» (AfD), which was able to win its first seats ever in a parliament, namely in the European Parliament. Following a lot of party infighting, the party has since turned out to be clearly anti-feminist.<sup>40</sup> In its manifesto for the European elections, the AfD rejects gender mainstreaming because it seeks «to annul gender identities» (AfD 2014:18) – exactly the same way in which Zastrow misinterpreted the strategy in 2006. On its Facebook page, the party pronounces: «Stop the gender madness» and «Stop the state funding of gender ideology» (cf. Kemper 2014:26/27). The AfD's clearly Christian fundamentalist development is especially apparent in its gender policy. The strengthening of the party's internal political currents in this area has already led to the departure of party officials from its liberal wing. The *FAZ* commented on its development as follows: «Bible-believing protestants are taking control of the «Alternative for Germany»» (Ankenbrand 2014), and the «battle for direction within the AfD [has been] decided: in favour of conservative, bible-believing Christians, led by Storch» (ibid). *Die Welt* headlines as follows: «An erosion process is setting in within the Alternative for Germany party: liberals are fleeing from «Calvinist dogmatism»», and cites notices given by former members that they are leaving the party (Lachmann 2014).

35 Zivile Koalition e.V., Executive Board: Beatrix von Storch, Sven von Storch, [www.zivilekoalition.de/impressum](http://www.zivilekoalition.de/impressum). Euccheck.org: Chairman: Sven von Storch, [www.euccheck.org/impressum-datenschutz](http://www.euccheck.org/impressum-datenschutz)

36 Chairman: Sven von Storch, [www.abgeordneten-check.de/impressum-datenschutz](http://www.abgeordneten-check.de/impressum-datenschutz)

37 Editor: Sven von Storch, [www.freiewelt.net/impressum](http://www.freiewelt.net/impressum)

38 Person responsible acc. to German Press Law: Sven von Storch, [www.familien-schutz.de/impressum](http://www.familien-schutz.de/impressum)

39 Person responsible acc. to German Press Law: Sven von Storch, <http://demofueralle.wordpress.com/impressum>

40 For more details on the AfD's gender policy, see Kemper (2014), and especially chapter 3 for the AfD's connections to radical anti-abortionists as well as European anti-feminist initiatives. He takes stock of how this new party developed in its first year: «It cannot be ruled out that, in addition to its Euro scepticism and its stance as an «anti-party party», the AfD is now establishing a third dedicated point of focus, anti-feminism: its radical criticism of every type of gender policy, villainized by the AfD as «genderism», could proceed to become the party's third trademark.» (Kemper 2014: 45).

Corresponding forums (cf. Kemper 2014 :36) sum up with a degree of satisfaction that the front-runners for the EP elections pursue a Christian policy that upholds traditional conservative values. The aforementioned Beatrix von Storch (no. 4 on the party's list of candidates) in particular has been an active gender opponent for years; she has seen to it that the «Zivile Koalition» came across as if a large number of individuals and organizations belonged to it and has been very vocal in calling for protests in Stuttgart: the «Bildungsplan» education programme, according to Storch, is injecting «gender ideology poison not drop by drop any more, but coming along at a level of clarity and violence that we absolutely must take it upon ourselves to resist» (quoted after Blech 2014 in the online portal queer.de). And, in the New Right weekly newspaper «Junge Freiheit», the regional spokesperson for the AfD in Baden-Württemberg, Bernd Kölmel, (no. 3 on the party's list of candidates) assailed the education programme as an «educational, moral and ideological re-education campaign», adding that the AfD protests «against the blatant contempt for parental rights in the raising of their children and against the relativization and discrediting of traditional gender roles under the banner of gender mainstreaming» (Junge Freiheit 2014). Thus, the AfD also lumps gender and gender mainstreaming together and discredits them as being an ideology.

It remains to be seen what impact the party's presence in the European Parliament will have: which inner-party camp will set the tone and the agenda, whether the Christian fundamentalist or the neoliberal<sup>41</sup> camp will gain the upper hand, and what role the party will play in anti-feminist mobilizations in Europe. In any event, the AfD scraped into the parliamentary group of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) by a slender majority; another member of this group is the British Tory Party.

It is clear that, in cutting out all professional debate on gender, gender opponents (from varying ideological groups and with varying political interests) attempt to create a distorted re-interpretation of the term. The intention in doing so is to establish a new concept of «genderism» as the enemy and to justify their own stance.

The following test questions will serve to understand these processes and assign them a political context.

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41 Plehwe/Schlögl (2014) examine the AfD from the perspective of this neoliberal tendency, which they also describe as «market radical and right-wing liberal» (ibid. 7), its networks and partner organizations across Europe. Their appraisal of the AfD one year after its establishment is as follows: «It will be interesting to see how the various candidates will link the neoliberal and national conservative elements and/or how much emphasis the party will place on the various stances and elements in public. Neoliberal stances can be reconciled with national conservative thinking so long as this thinking does not call into question the economic fundamentalism of free markets. Conversely, national conservative stances can be reconciled with neoliberal thinking so long as the nationalist elements do not amount to state interventionism.» (31).

# Test Questions

The following questions provide advice on whether a statement is to be understood as (fair) criticism or part of a delegitimization strategy. The questions stem from the chapters contained in this publication and have been grouped accordingly. If, for example, you are confronted with the accusation that certain texts or stances are «ideological», that a study is «unscientific» or allegedly contains methodological flaws, the following aspects can help you to classify the statement in question as antifeminist or fair criticism.

## A) Fundamental type of argumentation

- To what extent are the critics' own comments backed up by sources and do they quote factual arguments?
- To what extent do the statements reveal that the author is arguing on the grounds of informed criticism having looked into the subject matter?
- Is the criticism of the selected text form appropriate? For example, is a journalistic text or a literature study judged against criteria used for an empirical study?
- Are the points of criticism adequately assessed and made in context? Or are minor (alleged or actual) errors overstated with a view to devaluing an entire study or even an entire field?
- Is the tone used polemic or, for example, inappropriately personal or insulting? (For example, is reference made to people's sexual orientation or a link suggested between the person's sexual orientation and the content of their stance?)
- Is wording and phrasing deployed, for example gender-inclusive language ridicules or neologisms («genderism», «genderists») with the intention of trivializing the matter?

## B) Focus on content

- Are generalizations made inasmuch that no specific theories, no specific approaches or no specific authors are referred to but a uniform image is painted (e.g. «those» gender studies)?
- Is a differentiation made between a) gender theories within the meaning of basic research; b) applied gender research; and c) the implementation of equality strategies? Or are transfers made that suggest an intentional distortion of an

informed debate (e.g. narrowing gender in gender mainstreaming down to «gender identity»)?

- To what extent are terms appropriately classified and used in keeping with their specialist meaning? (For example, is the social theory definition of «construction» incorrectly criticized as a pedagogical strategy, or «deconstruction» equated with «destruction»?)
- Are only fragments of a discussion or approaches that are no longer current homed in on as examples of the gender debate (e.g. the inclusion of philosophers from the 1970s to explain the gender studies approaches of today)?
- Are the concepts of gender studies or the gender equality debate taken to the banal or reframed to delegitimize them (e.g. de-/construction)?
- Are non-challengeable arguments (such as biology or divinity) cited in order to call the equality of all human beings into question?

### **C) Focus on theories of science**

- On what conception of science is the criticism based? Is a claim laid to holding the monopoly on scientificity (for example, only certain natural sciences are claimed to be scientific)? Can it be discerned from the comments that attention has been given to current scientific theory debates?
- Is the accusation of being ideological made only in reference to the political opponent, while the opponent views her/his own stance as unideological?
- Are there implicit or explicit references to constant «truths» or facts that can go beyond the discussion and/or make informed debate and discussion impossible – for example, by invoking nature/naturalness, «common sense» or religion/divine law?

### **D) Selectivity**

- Are the self-defined standards for scientificity also applied to the critic's own work or works from within her/his own network?



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