

Teaching Gender at the Central European University: Advantages of Internationalism

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From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies
*Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum
in Higher Education*

Laura Grünberg

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Teaching Gender at the Central European University. Advantages of Internationalism

Andrea PETŐ and Dóra DEZSŐ

Abstract

The paper explores gender teaching at the Central European University (CEU), particularly investigating, through this case, the ways in which gender-related topics can be incorporated into higher education curricula. These authors consulted institutional documents and databases, to look into the CEU “gender regime” (Connell, 1987), and they also conducted semi-structured interviews with University faculty and students, to reflect perceptions on the gender dimension in higher education teaching and research. The authors have found that CEU’s unique international character provides ample space to teaching gender both by way of the autonomous Gender Studies Department and via integrating gender into other fields of study. Institutional strategic commitment has been identified in gender mainstreaming higher education curricula, as the key to further development, which might materialize in gender-conscious hiring processes, and in providing ‘gender expert consulting,’ for example. It is only by institutional commitment – which is to replace the present practice, based on individual faculty’s professional commitment, guaranteed by ‘academic freedom’ – that systematic progress in gendering higher education curricula can be attained.

INTRODUCTION

The present paper has been commissioned by UNESCO’s European Centre for Higher Education and has been developed within the project *From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies: Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education: Problems, Politics, Possibilities*.¹

Rather than presenting a country’s profile, these authors opted for the case study of the Central European University (CEU). While, actually, it is a highly atypical Hungarian university, in many ways it is a unique international institution: chartered in the United States of America, located in Budapest, Hungary, it is a leading academic institution in Eastern Europe, advancing a multitude of social issues, gender equality included, in the spirit of open

¹ See, a full description of the project at <<http://www.cepes.ro/themes/gender/default.htm>>

societies. Against this background, the authors have inquired into the processes in place to incorporate gender into specific disciplines.

The materials presented here are based on two sources of information. First, we consulted various documents and databases with regard to CEU, as an organization and its Gender Studies Department, to get an updated picture of the institution and its gender-related components. Second, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the University faculty and students. In conducting the interviews, we followed the project's core interview guidelines and, in the period between 4 October and 12 November 2010, eighteen individual interviews were organized (s. Annex 1, for details). The interviews reflect perceptions on the gender dimension within higher education and academic research, as well as the University as an organization. Information gained from these interviews constitutes the bulk of the authors' research findings.

On the one hand, these authors requested statistical data on gender representation, enrolment figures, gender-related courses taught in various departments, etc. In addition, the authors searched the University theses collection, and examined readily available syllabi of the different departments and policy documents. On the other hand, when approaching interview partners, the authors proceeded as follows: four members of the top management were interviewed, namely, the Provost/Academic Pro-Rector, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chair of the Senate's Equal Opportunities Committee, and the Academic Secretary/Research Director. The authors met with heads and faculty of various departments, and with students, at both MA and PhD levels. Specific attention was paid to listening to the heads of departments the disciplines of which might be considered as falling out of the gender scope, as well as to current and former male and female students of the Gender Studies Department, and other students, who took courses offered by the Gender Studies Department, while affiliated to another University department.

The fact that a handful of individuals declined, or failed to respond, to the invitation for an interview reflects on the topic's lasting contentious nature, and the indifference surrounding it. Some respondents claimed not to possess expertise in gender studies, or to have limited knowledge on the subject matter focusing on their own disciplines only. Therefore, this suggests that gender as a topic for discussion has not yet developed into a general theme, on which everyone would feel at ease discussing. The current state of affairs projects the CEU's institutional culture in transition. As a result, it bears transitional values of three different points of reference: Hungary, the United States of America, and last, but not least, the normative standards of the European Union. It is evident that the University does make progress, but with difficulty, in this transition.

Nonetheless, its specific international feature appears to provide ample space to teaching gender.

Leaving aside the negative responses, most of our interviewees requested anonymity, which underlines the presence of politics in the debate and the sensitive nature of the question, *i.e.*, the gender studies position not only at the University, but also in the wider academic community. Some stressed that the inherent arguments are not only present *vis-à-vis* gender studies as a discipline, but also in relation to some other disciplines, when looking from their own fields of study, thus pointing out to a more complex context and the issue of ever-changing disciplinary boundaries. Abiding by our interviewees' wishes, we decided to leave out all the interviewees' names. Three types of data are indicated on the List of Interviews (*see*, Annex 1), namely: interview date; interviewee' position (management, faculty, or student) and sex. Almost all references to courses and departments by which individuals might easily be identified were removed, except for those explicitly agreed on. With reference to grammatical use, the authors have chosen to use 'he' throughout the text (except for quotes), as a political stance, signalling that the gender question, and gender studies, in this particular context, are not solely women's issues.

Although the interviews focused on the Central European University, many respondents commented on other national institutions too, mainly students, who compared their previous higher education institutions to the University. Therefore, sometimes a wider scope is examined, not only that of the University.

It is not the purpose of the present paper to provide an overall, systematic analysis of available documents and relevant data, and/or to reach a final conclusion on the roles and places of the gender dimension within the curricula of the Central European University, in particular, and of higher education in general. Rather, the authors wish to keep this aspect on the academic agenda and present arguments and thoughts, for further debate, on the ways in which gender questions can be included in academic work, both in regular teaching, and in research initiatives.

With respect to definitions, we need to note, at this point, that the fogginess and debated nature of the phrases used, *i.e.*, 'gender mainstreaming in curriculum development,' 'gender-sensitive research,' and 'gender-sensitivity knowledge,' have pose specific challenges in the project implementation, since many project partners would expect clear definitions of the concepts used for the purposes of the given project and context. Within the present text, the authors understand 'incorporation of gender' as 'gender mainstreaming,' therefore, they use them interchangeably.

Following the project structure, Chapter I presents the gender dimension of the higher education institutions concerning Hungary and the Central European

University and draws on the concept of gender as a process. When discussing separatist approaches in Chapter II, the authors briefly describe the condition of gender studies in Hungary and present the Gender Studies Department of the Central European University. When focussing on integration approaches in Chapter III, key definitions of ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘gender sensitive research’ are firstly expanded on; secondly, gender presence in the curriculum is discussed; thirdly and fourthly, the authors identify the kinds of support and types of obstacles exist for gender studies, respectively. Finally, gender sensitive research and interdisciplinarity are examined. Conclusions and recommendations shortly present the debate on gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration. The authors describe possible ways and techniques of gendering higher education teaching and research, as well as the benefits of gender mainstreaming. Finally, the authors reflect on political correctness and additional project impact.

THE GENDER DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This chapter presents a brief general overview of higher education in Hungary, by looking at the state and its higher education institutions. Next, in terms of private actors, there follows a detailed introduction of the Central European University. Finally, the authors draw on the concept of gender as a process in institutions.

Gender Equality and Higher Education in Hungary

Besides the constitutional guarantee of equality between men and women, discrimination is prohibited in various legal acts.² *Eurydice* (2010) placed Hungary in the category of “general equal treatment and equal opportunities,” when examining legislative frameworks for gender equality in education. There also

² Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, specifies “education and training” as one field in which discrimination is prohibited. However, there is no separate act on equal treatment of men and women. With regard to legislation pertaining to education, sector laws, Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education (See, <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/letolt/english/act_lxxxix_1993_091103.pdf>), and Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education (See, <http://www.okm.gov.hu/letolt/nemzet/naric/act_cxxxix_2005.pdf>), fail to explicitly mention gender equality. Still, the latter emphasizes the representation of women in decision-making bodies of higher education institutions and the principle of balanced representation in higher education policies, in general.

exists the *National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality – Guidelines and Objectives – 2010-2021* and its implementation plan for 2010-2011.³

When discussing the general Hungarian legislation, note needs to be taken of the country's recent accession to the European Union, of the great impact of the accession, and of the European Union's normative power, with which Hungary needs to comply. The country implements European Union policies. For example, the *Equal Treatment* act satisfies two major European Union anti-discrimination directives,⁴ while the gender equality strategy follows the thematic frame of European Union's *Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010*.

As a general statement, we can claim that Hungarian women's education level is higher than that of men. Overall, this applies to higher education as well: in the past decade, women represented 53-54 percent of the student body (HCSO, 2009). However, in the higher education system, gender segregation persists both horizontally and vertically.

Despite the noticeable backlash against substantial gender equality in the post-socialist times,⁵ reflected in traditional gender representation and "re-feminization" of women in the education and work-related fields, too (Thun, 2001), there are constantly changing trends concerning fields of study, which do not direct unanimously toward a 'return to traditional gender stereotypes' (HCSO, 2009). While in tertiary education women dominate (with representations of ca. 60 percent or more) in study fields such as Teacher Training, Health and Social Care, Economics, Business, Humanities, and Social Sciences, men are

³ *Nők és Férfiak Társadalmi Egyenlőségét Elősegítő Nemzeti Stratégia - Irányok és célok - 2010-2021*; the full strategy document is available at <<http://www.szmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=21368>>. As the previous government adopted the strategy and its first implementation plan, in its last year in power, how the strategy will be implemented depends on the new government that entered the office in May 2010. Acknowledging gender inequalities, among its objectives, the strategy paragraph, 3.3. *Promoting Equal Participation of Women and Men in the Field of Sciences*, aims at the elimination of women's disadvantages in the educational and research institutes. More specifically, paragraph 1.2. *Eliminating the Gender Pay Gap and the Gender Employment Gap* advocates for promoting a more gender-equitable filling of the positions, in the educational and vocational training system. Paragraph 6.1., *Developing gender expertise and training experts, dissemination of gender-based knowledge in public administration*, of the strategy plan explicitly calls for the inclusion of the gender dimension into the curricula, albeit only in a specific field of study: "Gender mainstreaming should be part of legal and public administration higher education curricula and should be integrated in the requirements of the basic examinations of civil servants".

⁴ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

⁵ The socialist regime of the country aimed at achieving 'full employment' of all citizens. Women were recruited to almost all professions. Women also entered tertiary education in high numbers; between 1960 and 1990, their number tripled, and their ratio increased, from 29% to 48%, during the period. Certain fields, such as education and medicine, became feminized in that time.

overrepresented in Engineering, Informatics, Law Enforcement, and the Military. Since the 1990s, gender representation became balanced in the disciplines of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, previously both male dominated. Moreover, since 1990, women took over Law and Services, too (Kasza, 2007). Therefore, except for very few fields, women are equally present, or overrepresented, in all higher education specialities. Nonetheless, certain major specializations are clearly segregated, in effect, and, on a discursive level, stereotyping is also very much frequent.

With regard to the gender balance of the persons holding higher and/or teaching positions in higher education institutions, there is a slow, but steady increase of women. From 1980 to 2008, the percentages of women among faculty rose from 31 percent to 39 percent. Still, they are underrepresented in top positions, by only 5.7 percent ratio. Moreover, of the 70 rectors of Hungarian accredited universities and colleges, only 7 are women. In point of academic ranking, women represent 20 percent in top academic positions (professors) and 50 percent in the lower ones (assistant professor). (HCSO, 2009)

Central European University – Gender and Organization Aspects

Since its foundation, the Central European University has been committed to promoting the values of the Open Society, and has extended its mission and geographical focus from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia to a global view, with special attention to emerging democracies worldwide. Originally chartered in 1991, as a U.S. higher education institution, all its degree programmes have been accredited in the U.S. In 2005, the University (as *Közép-európai Egyetem*) gained Hungarian accreditation and immediately started some PhD programmes. Starting the 2007-2008 academic year, MA programmes were also accredited, and their number has been increasing ever since. Furthermore, the University awards joint degrees with other leading European universities. The University is singular in the region, as it is a private higher education institution, hence it does not depend on any state funding. As a result, while it has to observe the relevant Hungarian legislation to a certain extent, it enjoys much freedom, as compared to state-funded universities, for instance, with regard to its internal governance structure. Moreover, it is a small institution with 14 departments, focussing on Social Sciences and Humanities, and offering only graduate level courses.

With reference to student enrolment in the past five years, the overall gender representation is well balanced within the university: the number of female students is a bit more than half (52-55 percent) of the whole student body. When looking at disciplines and departments, one by one, some imbalances could be

noticed, the significant ones being in the Gender Studies Department, the Department of Mathematics, and Applications. While in the Gender Studies Department, women represent 85-90 percent of the student body, there is a reverse ratio in the Mathematics Department, with men representing 90 percent of the student body. The departments of Sociology, Environmental Sciences, Public Policy, Nationalism Studies, and Medieval Studies attract more women (over 60 percent); the department of Philosophy and the Business School attract more men (above 60 percent). Finally, gender representation tends to be well balanced and stable over the past five years in the departments of History, Legal Studies, Political Science, and International Relations, grouping joined by Economics (male-dominated just five years ago) in the past three years.⁶

When considering the faculty, the overall picture suggests that the University cannot reach the Hungarian average numbers in its overall gender distribution. With 31 percent of resident faculty⁷ being women (*NB*: the ratio reflects the Hungarian average in 1980), the situation is most balanced at the level of Assistant Professors: 43 percent women and 57 percent men. In higher positions, those of Professors and University Professors, women representation is 20 percent and 14 percent, respectively (*NB*: these ratios are consistent with the current Hungarian average ones). This renders visible the glass ceiling effect in academic ranking. In 'research' positions, however, women are more present, both at junior and senior levels, with 75 percent and 67 percent ratios, respectively. When examining visiting faculty, we meet with the striking data of only 11 percent female faculty in this category. This instance shows how the glass ceiling might work in this academic context: by not being equally represented in this category, women do not have comparable access to networking opportunities, which, consequently, has a negative effect on their career advancement. Regarding the top management, the University fares well: the Provost/Academic Pro-Rector is a woman; 5 out of the 14 the department heads are women, as a result of recent changes. Unlike some other universities, the Central European University practices a rotation system for its department heads. However, given that the position is purely administrative, while filling the position, the professor cannot fully devote to research and teaching. Thus, we could interpret this change also as 'women moved to administrative duties.'

Whereas the proportion of women is on the rise in the University top management and decision-making bodies, such positive signs of development are not yet visible in other areas. The Senate adopted the *Equal Opportunity Policy* in

⁶ For more details, see, *Student Enrollment Statistics* at <<http://www.ceu.hu/studentlife/students>>

⁷ 'Resident faculty' are under an employment contract (usually full-time), and their main academic affiliation is CEU, in most cases, while 'visiting faculty' are under an assignment contract, or consultancy agreement, and contracted for a limited number of credit-courses.

2008, which is to fight direct and indirect discrimination – gender included – on a wide range of grounds, a document which explicitly allows for positive action. Referring to the present project's objectives, the policy, *inter alia*, aims to “encourage faculty to acknowledge that preconceived notions about gender, class and ethnicity enter into the construction of knowledge and to take critical account of this in the process of curriculum planning” (CEU, 2008: 3). Nonetheless, implementation of the policy lags behind, as the outlined “comprehensive equality policy strategy” has not been developed, as originally planned by the Senate, by the 2009-2010 academic year. Additionally, the Senate maintains an Equal Opportunities Committee,⁸ which is presently chaired by the Head of the Gender Studies Department. All the committee members, except for one, are women, a feature that perhaps reflects on the institution's standpoint that equal opportunities is purely a ‘woman's issue’, despite the fact that the policy is a comprehensive anti-discrimination one. Earlier policy measures, covering anti-discrimination issues, include CEU *Non-Discrimination Policy* (1997), CEU *Policy on Sexual Harassment* (1997), and CEU *Code of Ethics* (2003).

The University management is in the process of revising the major policies, such as the academic selection procedures, and, in its new compendium, a gender bias handout will be included for the benefit of, among others, selection committee members. By this move, the management acknowledges the fact that unconscious bias against women in academic hiring might exist, and thus it attempts to counteract the phenomenon. In addition, the management considers exchanging experience with Swedish institutions, for example, on leadership initiatives; such exchanges are regarded as very helpful.

From our interviews, it also became obvious that not only the management, but the faculty and students, too, promote the ideas of gender mainstreaming and raising gender consciousness in formal aspects of the University life, such as in organizational, administration, and management issues. Therefore, the University is committed to institutional feminism, focusing mainly on institutional barriers to women's equality that includes issues such as discrimination, workplace harassment, equal pay, and equal opportunity in employment and education.

In opposition to the perceived consensus on gender mainstreaming in formal organization-related aspects, we find that standpoints change immediately when it comes to central administration involvement in introducing the gender dimension into the curriculum, as one of the management body states with full conviction:

⁸ At an earlier time, the Senate set up various committees – e.g., the Committee on Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination, in 1997 – the names and mandates of which evolved in time.

"I absolutely see no reason to interfere with the autonomy of research and departments. [...] I do believe in research and intellectual autonomy. I wouldn't want to interfere with the actual academic topic and choice of faculty." (Interview 8)

And this strong belief is shared by many and a central top-down approach of introducing gender studies across all curricula is rejected by most faculty, and students alike, who claim that "it is difficult to parachute this project onto the people" and stress that the channels through which and the ways in which it is executed are key factors in achieving success should there be a management decision on the issue.

Finally, we need to emphasize that it was admitted that there is no systematic monitoring in respect to equal opportunities.

"There is kind of absence of initiative, which has to do with perhaps the fact that most people feel we are ok, and that also has to do with the fact that there is no institutional, clear, formal strategy and direction of what we should do." (Interview 9)

This is the reason why these authors feel that the present project is a contribution to keeping the gender questions on the University management agenda, providing space for reflections on the issue to a range of its affiliates. The authors consider this feature an additional project outcome, which is nicely echoed in the following statement given at the end of one of our interviews, "This [discussion] was a very useful reminder to me."

Institutional Strategies about Gender

When discussing gender issues, we cannot separate formal organization and content-related sides. Interview partners were not able to treat the two separately within the Central European University structure and curricula, though most of the time they were aware of the different nature of the two. Moreover, some identified a clear link and interplay between these two aspects.

Connell's concepts related to gendered institutions and the institutionalization of gender clearly show relevance here. Connell (1987) argues that gender is not only present in the usually acknowledged interpersonal relations and at the level society as a whole, but also in-between, that is to say, at the level of institutional gendered practices, be it at the workplace or in the media. He defines "gender regime" as "the state of play in gender relations in a given institution" (p. 120). In a school, for example, the politics of gender can be manifested in the sexual division of labour among the staff members, debates on sexism in the curricula, staff promotion, or leadership questions. Additionally, Connell claims that while 'gender' is mostly understood as an individual property, he also understands 'gender' as a collective's, an institution's property, and it being a practice: "Gender in this conception is a process rather than a thing" (p. 140). He continues arguing that

“The ‘process’ here is strictly social, and gender a phenomenon within sociality. It has its own weight and solidity, on a quite different basis from that of biological process, and it is that weight and solidity that sociology attempts to capture in the concept of ‘institution’.” (p. 140)

The collection of an institution’s customs, routines, and cyclical practices then determine its gender regime.

When analyzing gender regimes’ structures, Connell (2002) looks at the following themes: labour (production), power, cathexis (emotion), and symbolism. The power aspect is particularly important in a compact formal organization, such as an educational establishment. With the use of such institutionalized power in the complex processes of gender, gender inequality is maintained. Inequality is present in gender-biased laws and regulations on the one hand, and on the other, it can be traced in gender studies being relegated to invisibility and set aside from the mainstream, if not pushed to the margins, of academic study.

With respect to the Central European University, as the specific institution in question, Connell’s concept of the gender regime can be applicable in a variety of ways. It is certainly reflected when the University is examined as an organization, for example, gender segregation might be found, both horizontally and vertically, among staff and faculty members, or how certain internal rules and regulations impact differently on the employees and students along gender lines, *i.e.*, to what degree such key documents are written in a gender-blind or gender-biased way. Additionally, the University gender regime can be identified in the academic, educational programmes it offers, that is, along what norms and values the university commits itself to educate the younger generation; whether gender equality is one of them, and if yes, by which means it is to be achieved. How gender studies are handled at the University is revealed in the way a given educational unit, in the still male-dominated and -managed field of higher education, can work with a relatively new discipline, the ultimate aim of which is to transform education in order to enhance women’s positions in society.

These practices and approaches all add to the maintenance of a specific, gendered institutional culture at the University, which, in turn, determines further directions in its as an organization, including its educational offerings, by means of which it can institutionalize gender.

Gender Studies: Gendering Higher Education – Separatist Approaches

This chapter is devoted to the Gender Studies Department of the Central European University, as it represents the autonomous unit development in gender studies. To contextualize the Gender Studies Department, we shall briefly describe the situation of gender studies in Hungary, aiming at highlighting the uniqueness of the Department in the entire country.

Gender Studies in Hungary

Subsequent to the political changes of 1989, gender studies attracted more and more academics, in part with the aid of Western academics teaching in Hungary at the time. Gender studies evolved, not in a systematic manner, rather in an ad-hoc way, around certain lead academics, in various academic locations. There is a loose network of individuals, whom Pető (2006) calls “pioneers off the beaten track” (p. 8), interested in the subject and trying to bring gender issues in their own current courses, or designing new ones. This way, these academics raise their students’ awareness, as well as that of their colleagues in certain disciplines and research areas, despite the habitual present institutional and professional resistance. Accordingly, Hungary falls into the category of gender studies inclusion into higher education, whereby particular gender studies modules appear within the framework of traditional disciplines.⁹ As, at the institutional level, there seems to be no demand for their presence, gender studies remain very much ad-hoc, dependent on the individual faculty members. As Fodor, and Varsa (2009) conclude,

“... gender studies as a discipline, although gradually and willy-nilly acknowledged by university administrators and educational policy makers, lacks full legitimacy as a veritable scientific endeavour.” (p. 303)

When applying with educational programmes to the national accreditation committee, consortiums are set up. Such was the case with the gender studies, too. Alongside the CEU, the Social Sciences Faculty (ELTE TATK) of Eötvös Loránd University’s and Corvinus University of Budapest participated in the gender consortium. However, from among the gender consortium members, only the CEU managed to start an independent gender programme accredited by the Hungarian

⁹ Griffin differentiates four categories in the respect of gender studies’ position in higher education infrastructure, where: 1) gender studies is almost non-existent, 2) there are certain modules in traditional disciplines, 3) there are independent gender studies departments and degrees and 4) gender studies are mainstreamed and traditional disciplines are reformed in accordance with gender studies expectations (See, reference in Pető, 2006: 8)

Accreditation Committee.¹⁰ Most gender programmes in Hungary are (and were) only fractional ones, *i.e.*, specializations, tracks of other disciplines.¹¹

Therefore, one can claim that gender studies are not considered to be an established discipline in the country. What is more, we feel this statement can be easily extended to the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe, as a Western student expresses on the distinctiveness of the CEU Gender Studies Department,

“It [Gender Studies Department] is one of the oldest, independent standing gender studies departments, as I understand, in Eastern Europe. And it is not part of another faculty, and it is actually sort of free existence, which is I think is very interesting in this context.” (Interview 11)

The Gender Studies Department of the Central European University

The evolution of gender studies in Europe is faced with two dilemmas: one refers to the name of the discipline; the other one, to the agenda and content of this field of study. The second dilemma refers to a political question: whether gender studies should be autonomous, or gender studies should be integrating into other disciplines (Waldijk, and Just, 2010). CEU has chosen the term Gender Studies for its programme and opted for the autonomous unit, in terms of the agenda of gender studies. Whereas the term, gender studies, is frequently used in Hungary, the way gender studies are included in the CEU institutional structure is unique in the country (compare with the above: how gender studies courses appear in traditional disciplines elsewhere in Hungary). The autonomous Gender Studies

¹⁰ Fodor and Varsa (2009), draw attention to a small, yet significant, detail of the accreditation procedure: Gender Studies was labelled as a ‘field of study’ as opposed to a ‘scientific discipline’, which the authors claim cannot be a mere translation issue, since Media Studies, for instance, received the ‘scientific’ label. Rather, it reflects on the fact that the accreditation committee members did not regard Gender Studies as a ‘real discipline.’ (pp. 290 and p. 303)

¹¹ For instance, “Gender and Culture” tracks at ELTE TATK and Corvinus (for more information, see, <<http://gender.tatk.elte.hu>> and <<http://gender.uni-corvinus.hu>>). The gender programmes predominantly fall under Sociology, Social Work and Social Policy, and Foreign Languages and Literatures. At the University of Szeged, the Institute of English and American Studies, for example, offers an MA degree programme, where diplomas are awarded in “English Studies – Gender through Literatures and Cultures in English” (for more information, see, <<http://www.arts.u-szeged.hu/ieas/gender/>>). Moreover, the Universities of Debrecen and Pécs offer individual courses in Gender Studies, again, in the Sociology and English departments. The University of Miskolc maintained the Gender Studies and Equal Opportunities Centre, which, for some years, had been offering interdisciplinary teaching and research, based in the Humanities (for more information on the Center, see, <<http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/bolgender/english/aims.htm>>). As a typical story of person-dependency of gender studies, once the lead professor left the Centre, the gender unit vanished from the University structure.

Department – indicative of the separationist approach – is selected as the case to be presented in this paper.

In the 1997-1998 academic year, the MA degree awarding *Programme on Gender Culture* came into existence. Later on, in 2001, it was converted into a full university unit, that of the Gender Studies Department, which offers MA and PhD programmes. In its Statement of Purpose, the Gender Studies Department

“[...] seeks to contribute to the process of developing Gender Studies as a full scale subject field, in its own right, which is oriented towards the production of socially relevant knowledge on the basis of epistemologies allowing for diversity and integration. Teaching and scholarship in the Gender Studies Unit are built on strong disciplinary roots, genuine interdisciplinarity, and on integrative and comparative perspectives allowing for the unfolding of Gender Studies as an inclusive subject field.”

In the 2008-2009 academic year, the two-year MA programme in Critical Gender Studies was initiated at CEU, and so far it has been the only full Gender Studies MA degree accredited and awarded in Hungary.

Since its inception, the gender studies programme had independent MA course offering, with an average of 27 courses in each academic year, covering a wide range of topics. The programme covers special areas such as the gendered dimensions of post-state socialism; theories of gender; gender, nationalism and the political; and raced and sexed identities.¹²

Over the years, the Gender Studies Department MA student body increased significantly: from the initial number of 15 students, in recent years, the department serves about 34, one-year, MA students, per academic year. Since 2007, due to special joint European Master's programmes, such as *GEMMA* and *MATILDA*,¹³ and the introduction of the Hungarian accredited two-year MA programme in 2008, the number increased to an average 45, showing a steadily growing trend.

However, when looking at the gender distribution, female students make up the vast majority of the Gender Studies Department student body: of the total of 647 students (of all years), only 73 male students enrolled in the department.

The background of the students enrolled in the MA programme varies: Foreign Languages and Literature (a vast majority), Political Science, Psychology, History, and Sociology. As to the country of origin, many students come from Hungary and neighbouring countries, such as Romania and Serbia, and some others from the

¹² CEU Gender Studies Department website <http://www.gend.ceu.hu/areas_of_specialization.php>

¹³ For more information, see, <<http://www.gend.ceu.hu/erasmus.php>, <http://www.gend.ceu.hu/matilda.php> and http://www.gend.ceu.hu/2_year_ma.php>

U.S. In general, it can be said that the European Union and Southeast Europe countries are dominant, followed by CIS, the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

Most of the Gender Studies Department MA graduates (20-40 percent of the graduates, per year) continue their studies, usually at the PhD level, some at MA level, while another significant number finds employment in education and research institutions (10-20 percent), although there is a huge fluctuation year by year.¹⁴ Besides academia, a similar number of graduates find employment in the non-governmental sector, with advocacy groups and the business sector, whereas there is hardly anyone in the six-year span to have found employment with the government, or with international organizations. Therefore, the gender studies alumni employment trends at the University only partially correspond to what is described and expected by Pető, for example, according to whom, such specialists in the 'New Europe' find employment (outside the academic sphere) in government structures, and local and international non-governmental organizations and work on equal opportunities (Waaldijk, and Just, 2010: 40). From these figures, we can conclude that the University faces a gap between theory and practice, which the current gender studies cannot bridge, while training mostly theoreticians, and not practitioners.

Besides having established its own Gender Studies Department, the University is active in providing assistance to efforts, elsewhere in the region, to establish gender studies programmes, through the agency of the *Curriculum Resource Centre*, and by means of special projects, e.g. *Gender Studies Programme Development*,¹⁵ focussed on the geographical area of Eastern Europe and CIS. Naturally, the Gender Studies Department plays an active role in such activities. Note needs to be made of the point, though, that the University and its Gender Studies Department can be active in such norm transfers as reforming the curriculum, only in countries outside the European Union.

On the questions whether there should be a separate gender studies department, whether gender studies are a discipline, and what impact the department makes overall, views much diverged among our interview partners. Thus, despite the institutional commitment made, by establishing the Gender Studies Department, the debate is still present within the University, revolving around the dilemma of gender studies aiming at autonomy or integration.

¹⁴ CEU's Alumni Relations and Career Services Office, *Alumni database*. The data refers to graduates in the period between 2005 and 2010, and contains only information shared with CEU (thus, unemployment status, for example, is not known). As a result, there is a great number (31%) of graduates whose career destinations are unknown to CEU.

¹⁵ For details, see, <<http://web.ceu.hu/crc/> and <http://web.ceu.hu/sep/spo/gspdp.html>>

In favour of an independent department, on the one hand, a management member recalls the time and decision made to establish the Gender Studies Department, and it was pointed out that

“... there was a big discussion in the Senate, several rounds of discussions. Some people argued no, we should not have a PhD in gender studies, because this is not a discipline. And only disciplines should have PhD studies. And those people said instead of having a separate PhD programme, even a separate department, all departments, each department should do something in gender studies. [...] I, in a way, constructed the argument in favour of a gender studies PhD, which I learn from others, that it may not be a discipline, but it contributes to the creation of new knowledge in the same way as disciplines did, so without gender studies we would not have some new knowledge, therefore it is justified. Part of this argument was real, and the other, I think, many people were afraid that unless we do a department and programme, there will be no gender studies teaching.” (Interview 9)

The faculty at the Gender Studies Department point out, in line with the department Statement of Purpose, that

“We need to have departments, because departments are necessary to legitimize a certain kind of knowledge which is produced in the field of gender studies. Without departments, without the ability to give the degree, or without also this whole institutional support which is related to the existence of a discipline, we have problems to legitimize certain kind of knowledge which is being produced and which is necessary.” (Interview 12)

and

“... because having a separate department, you produce a kind of gender knowledge. Our department is really committed to interdisciplinarity. So we are training students in a mould of scholarship that is above and beyond the topic itself of gender. So, it is kind of intellectual work that you don't get so easily in traditional disciplines. And there is no other department that does that at CEU. And in most universities. I mean you get cultural studies programs that also do that, but we don't have anything like that here.” (Interview 6)

Thus the issues of legitimization and gender knowledge production are key factors in supporting independent Gender Studies Departments.

On the other hand, hesitant, or opposing, views are voiced by a number of faculty members. For instance, one is puzzled by the question,

“There was another side of this [question] that made me hesitant, whether this was an independent discipline. You can do research on gender issues in all fields of science, but it remained a question whether this constituted an independent discipline, or it is an eclectic collection of studies in different disciplines that should stay within their area, within law, history, sociology, economics. I cannot decide this

debate. Perhaps the development of sciences is in favour of such examples of becoming independent – there is a similar process with environmental sciences.” (Interview 16)

Or another one reflects on ‘boxing the gender dimension into one department’:

“Normally [I am] rather allergic to caging or straitjacketing dimensions or approaches into particular boxes. So as I am uncomfortable with having specific gender studies units or departments, as I am with having ethnic or racial studies departments or nationalism departments. So, I think that the dimension is relevant to a number of disciplines and as a result, it should be touched upon or discussed within most departments. That is a must [emphasis added]. Social Sciences. I mean. ... Caging it or boxing it into one department, then entails two risks: it is a very easy way out for departments not to deal with the question, because someone else does it; and also it risks giving that particular department the monopoly of wisdom on that particular subject. So I think that the costs are way [larger] than benefits of having a dedicated unit on this one.” (Interview 18)

The debate over gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration still continues, both at CEU, and at the European level. When considering the role of gender studies in other degree programmes, Waaldijk, and Just (2010), point out some pros and cons.¹⁶ On the one hand, integration can undermine gender studies’ status and make it invisible, as Pereira argues, “this has been the case when issues of gender are integrated in existing curricula but described, explicitly or implicitly, as secondary and less credible or prestigious than other fields.” (Quoted in, Waaldijk and Just, 2010: 48) On the other hand, gender studies seminars present in other degree programmes can maintain and increase the importance of the field, as well as contribute to achieving the study field main objectives, including transformation of higher education.

Overall, Gender Studies Department faculty reflects positively on the department standing (in the form of cooperation, formal and informal deals with Gender Studies Department) within the CEU, as well as on the University position with respect to gender studies (position materialized in financial commitment to the Gender Studies Department and in the number of scholarships), which underlines the University standpoint that gender is a priority issue. Thus, as opposed to gender in a ‘placeless place’ in many other universities,

¹⁶ The *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Gender Studies* brochure is part of the European Tuning project, and the result of decade-long cooperation and exchange in gender studies in Europe, cooperation which was established and enhanced in the framework of ATHENA, the Advanced Thematic Network of Women’s Studies in Europe (See, <http://www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/athena/index.html and <<http://www.athena3.org/>>). More information on the European Tuning project available at <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>>

“I see CEU as well positioned, because we have our own department and it is a large department and most of the people are only in our department. ... This is wonderful on one hand, because it means that there is not one person in each department trying to represent what gender is, and can actually be a location where people have different ideas on how to approach gender, like we can cut across lots of different subfields. So I think there are still subfields that are not represented in our department, and I’d like to keep building. But in terms of having a department, in my experience it was not sort of a poor step-sister to other departments. I mean there is a hierarchy of funding in CEU, just the way it is in many universities, and Gender Studies is not exactly a big gun in terms of soft influence and money, but I think we are on par with other disciplines, like Sociology and Philosophy or History, that are basically trying to make their way.” (Interview 6)

GENDER IN STUDIES: GENDERING HIGHER EDUCATION – INTEGRATIONIST APPROACHES

Chapter III pinpoints the gender studies position in various disciplines within the Central European University. Attention is drawn to the issue the authors faced during the interviews: the problematic definitions of ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘gender sensitive research,’ in the academic context. Secondly, the authors ascertain the position of the gender dimension in the curriculum. Thirdly and fourthly, these authors identify the support for and obstacles against gender studies, respectively. Finally, gender sensitive research and the related concept of interdisciplinarity are considered.

Definitions of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Sensitive Research

While approaching faculty and students and conducting the interviews, the authors noted that there were some uncertainties about the definitions used within the project framework. On the one hand, it seemed that some of the interviewees were not fully aware of the phrase, ‘gender mainstreaming,’ in general. On the other hand, the use of ‘gender mainstreaming,’ outside the policy context, seemed problematic. While it is comprehensible from the organizational aspect of an institution, the way it works, it is managed, etc. it is more challenging in the academic context. The same applies to ‘gender sensitive research,’ where gender sensitivity can be defined in various ways. As one faculty member justifiably questions the relevance of such terminology, in the academic context:

“[The questions] are interesting, and some are difficult to answer and in part I think the difficulty [arises] from thinking in policy terms as the European Union does or UNESCO might, and thinking in terms of academia and the way in which new research domains develop. So I think that sometimes they can’t really translate all

that well into how we think about how research domains develop. But it is interesting to try to talk across the paradigm.” (Interview 6)

And goes on, deliberating:

“I have been trying for years to figure out exactly what gender sensitive research means. I understand it in relation to maybe policy, and this informs gender mainstreaming that programs need to take into account how they would affect men and women differently and how they might reproduce or undermine the negative impact of gender inequality. So I understand how it works in terms of policy, but I think this is one of the terms that does not translate so perfectly into academia, because well, we are an organization so there might be an element of gender sensitivity to, say, human resource policies or pedagogy, but gender sensitivity in the way in which I think about research, seems, does not tend to be a phrase I use when thinking about my own research. I think of gender in academia, more as a kind of analytical lens through which to understand various problems, so in some way being sensitive is not just being aware of how a research question might impact men and women differently, etc.” (Interview 6)

In fact, the interviewees tried to provide us with their understanding of the concept of gender sensitivity, when reflected on and thus linked it to the domains where the gender dimension should be present. Naturally, the uncertainty surrounding these concepts had its impact on the interviews. At the same time, the authors felt that the discussion on these subjects, while elaborating on the definitions, contributed to the enhanced understanding of what gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive research could signify. One management member gives a definition, in which the potential place of gender mainstreaming is outlined,

“Gender mainstreaming in my understanding, from curriculum point of view is that gender issues should be there everywhere where they are relevant. Here, of course, the issue is where that is, where they are relevant. And I think here again we have a lot of uncertain and probably different points of view.” (Interview 7)

Drawing also attention to the question of gender and its relevancy in different contexts, which then opens debates in various forms.

Gender Dimension in Various Study Fields

The authors have found that their own and their interviewees’ perceptions, or expectations of where the gender dimension should be present do not necessarily coincide with some actual findings based on the examination of seminar documents, theses titles, and descriptions. However, there seems to be a consensus on the issue that gender has only entered the curricula for Social Sciences and Humanities.

As one interview subject puts it,

“Studying anything that has to do with social reality, Sociology or Political Science, whatever you do, gender is obviously one of the main factors that you have to look at. This is an issue that any decent empirical science would address in its methodology. I am assuming that this is not a big problem.” (Interview 8)

In addition to the already mentioned fields of study, History was most referred to, but Legal Studies, or Public Policy, was hardly ever pointed out as a location by the interviewees, be them management, faculty, or students.

The authors need to draw attention to the fact that, in some fields, gender is not present as much as it is expected by, for example, the departments' own students. One speaks about his department, as

“The tendency I noticed so far... I have not seen it is treated very much at all! [...] Maybe [there is] an undertone of a certain type of disregard. “This is a niche concern, sort of a footnote, this about political correctness.” (Interview 11)

The interviewee also recounts the inquiries made prior to his being admitted and poses potential reasons for the situation,

“What is the place of these kinds of concerns (or what you wanna call them, identity politics, gender and sexuality) within the department, I posed this question, to professors, students. Student said it is not really a discussion in [name of department], not really part of any course, not explicitly. The professor gave a more diplomatic answer, but in a forward-looking way, she said she had a lot of interest in it. ... There is a great (potential?) for exchange between these two departments, but not something which has really come to fruition yet. [I think] there is no any structural reason for them [...] maybe more political reasons, that people don't encourage this sort of exchange. But this is not something that would be actively prevented, or discouraged. This is something an individual would really want to do in order to make it happen.” (Interview 11)

Thus the ‘individual’ is featured here, too, as opposed to the ‘institutional.’ (See our earlier claim on individual dependency under II.a.) Among other potential reasons for the absence of the gender dimension in various departments, or seminars, we find arguments for the division of labour within the university, in terms of organization, *i.e.*, among the departments; and for professors' focusing more on classical, conservative materials as opposed to newer, alternative readings,

“I think professors are much aware of the issue. Nonetheless, the assigned readings do not reflect this. But I think the issue was that he wanted to assign “classical economic materials.” So I did not have negative experience in this, which is good, especially when compared to ELTE [a leading Hungarian university].” (Interview 2)

When examining course offerings by their title (s. Annex 2, for a list of gender-related courses), the authors find that certain departments regularly offer gender-related courses, e.g., Medieval Studies, Legal Studies, and History. At the same time, it is visible that these courses tend to be associated with specific faculty individuals. When such professors leave the university, their departments can no longer offer these courses. This might have happened to the departments of Sociology and Economics, which used to have related courses. Finally, recently, the departments of Public Policy and International Relations started to offer gender-related courses.

Browsing through the CEU theses, by title (s. Annex 3, for a list of gender-related theses), reveals that the large majority of the gender-related theses has been written in the departments of History and Political Science. While in History, topics such as women and war, politics, women's identity, emancipation and images of women are present, in Political Science, topics like political representation, women war victims, trafficking, justice in the family are considered. Other three departments are also present with a considerable number of gender-related theses: International Relations, with trafficking, gender, and nation and gender identities questions; Economics, with wage inequality, occupational segregation, and women labour supply; Sociology, with expatriate women and spaces, honour crimes, and female circumcision. Three departments have a number of theses on gender: Legal Studies, on employment, discrimination, and refugee women; Nationalism, on memory work, women under holocaust, gender ethnic violence; Public Policy, on social capital, gendered analysis of health insurance scheme. Some departments, such as Environmental Sciences and Policy, have recently joined in the gender theses collection, with thesis titles like *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Coping Mechanisms*.

It is worth mentioning that some of the above listed theses were fully or jointly-supervised by the Gender Studies Department staff. This is the case with the departments of Nationalism (*Gender, Nation, Rape: Intersections of Gender and Ethnic Violence during the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*) and (*Is Survival Resistance? Experiences of Gypsy Women under the Holocaust*); Political Science (*Human Trafficking, Prostitution, and Public Opinion in Hungary. Interviews with Hungarian University Students*); Public Policy (*Public Health Care for the Poor? A Gendered Analysis of the Implementation of Integrated Health Insurance (SIS) and Its Effects on the Access of the Poor to Health Services in Peru*), and History (*Politically Active Women in the Ukrainian Independence Movement, 1988-1991*).

A certain incongruity has been noted between the various classes offered and the gender-related theses written in the various departments. Especially interesting are the cases of Political Science and Economics, where, despite a pronounced student interest, no gender-related courses are offered.

With regard to who teaches such courses, and who might be in the vanguard of curriculum reform, one professor states bluntly, “Gender is apparent where there is someone who can teach gender,” implying a critical stance and discontent with the current state of affairs. Another one states his belief that it is “a matter of individual conviction,” and then points to the fact that gender is not dealt with in a systematic manner. One faculty member describes what he teaches and the reasons behind his choice and commitment, in the following way:

“In general, I think that feminist jurisprudence contributed a lot to human rights protection. It developed within the critical legal studies movement, intending the critique of the law as a system. Feminist jurisprudence criticizes the way law works. Not just one or another provision, instead, the whole system is under scrutiny. I embraced this notion. As a lawyer, I am often confronted with the impression that fundamental institutions of law, for instance, property law are unjust.” (Interview 16)

Students voice their concern in this matter: “There are only a few professors [of gender interest], but it is not sure at all whether they can teach this,” while another claims:

“I don’t see gender in the curriculum as a formally required theme. In practice I see [that] there are certain professors whose field of interest is related. [...] There are other professors, too, in other departments and from the departmental brochure you can learn that his or her research interests include gender, but the courses taught do not reflect this aspect. I don’t really see why this is the case, whether he does not want to teach such a course in this academic year, or... So, I don’t know how it works, how it is organized. Obviously there is a departmental approach in what the current curriculum should look like, but it is another question, whether when [name of department] curriculum was determined in the long run, if this was an aspect or not, for example, to have such a course on offer, each semester.” (Interview 2)

So the perceived uncertainty is, to a certain extent, inconsistent with what some faculty say about academic freedom in choosing what topics elective courses are developed on. Academic freedom is an integral part of the University institutional culture and identity, and as such, it is difficult to introduce any changes that may have an effect on this type of freedom. Nonetheless, as the complaint above indicates, a gender-conscious academic hiring, resulting in a higher number of faculty members paying attention to gender might not altogether be able to solve the ‘gender mainstreaming in curriculum’ issue.

Once gender is dealt with, within one department, it needs to be noted where such courses are placed in the ‘course hierarchy’. One management member also draws attention to the fact that, in the Hungarian accreditation process, gender is not part of the criteria in any sense. Moreover, disciplines are already set: there is a consensus on what the core curriculum should include, by the agreement of a

national committee overseeing and safeguarding the strictly set borders and contents of accepted disciplines. In such a set-up, the national level regulatory frame prescribes the core content for the higher education institutions. However, the national regulatory frame has little impact on the University, given its highly atypical nature. Nonetheless, besides the national frames, general ‘disciplinary codifications’ exist as well, and they can equally restrict curriculum development. Institutions have more space for flexibility when they can decide on the sub-specializations they wish to offer. At this point, the question arises if there is a will to include the gender aspect in the departmental/institutional strategy, or not. As a result, gender is usually among electives, not in the core bloc. A faculty member explains that professors can develop gender courses as electives very easily:

“Everyone can offer electives. [...] No-one gets 12-credit core subjects so one has some freedom to teach according to one’s own interest, so that is how a department’s portfolio comes together.” (Interview 13)

Still, he claims that this is not the only way. In fact, it should not be the only way for gender inclusion:

“I think you can include gender into the core, everywhere, at good universities, it is done like this. The theme is always there throughout the class, if we speak about policy processes, there are many readings where we look at how the policy process works in a gender-related issue. So, by way of this, these themes are channelled into the core classes, I think this is the optimal [scenario]. [...] The people who are the main gender researchers, at least in my field, usually channel [gender] into bigger classes, so classes which are core, in different ways, or add a special twist to the core class, or more professors teach one class, where there is the opportunity to do this.” (Interview 13)

Some students also point out the possibility of gender inclusion into courses that are not gender-focussed at all. However, they add, smiling ironically, such courses are very rare. Examples are, nevertheless, there, and promptly recounted:

“Gender is included, for example, in the research design class, there are many readings. We had to read in all sorts of topics. There were invited speakers too, and, on one occasion, there was a reading on the abortion policy, and it was in connection with qualitative research method, and [name of person] was invited. She did not speak about her own research, but about methodology and the reading assigned. So it was a sort of surprise for me [smile]. I did not think the professor would include this topic.” (Interview 2)

At the departments of Political Science and Legal Studies or Environmental Sciences and Policy, for example, some other, more subtle, traces of gender inclusion are present – when gender is not explicitly mentioned in the course title, or course description – which might actually be regarded as a much better, or more

advanced, way of mainstreaming, if we follow the above line of thinking and reasoning. Thus, in classes covering Constitutional Law, Research Methodology, Environmental Philosophy, Sustainable Development, International Relations Theory, there is gender mainstreaming indeed materialized in core, compulsory classes.

The issue of relevance also plays an important factor in tracing where gender is present. One professor stresses that “the dimension is included not because it is mandated from above, but because some of us in the department think that this is relevant to what we do.” Many academics and students alike are of the opinion that within one department, there are areas where ‘gender does not add anything to teaching’. Courses on Sustainable Development and International Relations Theory are mentioned, where gender is present and should play a role. However, Econometrics is listed to exemplify an area where gender is totally irrelevant. Therefore, one suggestion stresses that ‘the most sensible approach is when you look at whether gender is applicable to this discipline, and whether it enhances the teaching.’ Students also support the idea of selective gender perspective application to the fields where it is really relevant otherwise it can easily develop to be non-productive. As one puts it,

“The gender aspect cannot refer to all disciplines. It is not obvious. It is rather research and discipline dependent. Nonetheless, these can be refreshed by gender, and blind-spots could be shed a light on by applying gender. There is uneven distribution of gender among disciplines and I think categories could be shaken, and the systems could be fine-tuned by adjusting the small screws [if gender were applied].” (Interview 10)

Here we refer back to a previous quote on gender mainstreaming and relevancy, where the faculty member poses the next theoretical question on how one can define where gender is relevant. What is clearly visible is that the debate is ongoing, some prefer a selective gender mainstreaming while others already prove that gender can be so relevant that such a course can become a core course in a traditional discipline.

It is also proven that there are various ways and various levels in which gender can be included into the curricula, in different disciplines. Some of these inclusions are already at work at the Central European University, while benefiting from different types of support, yet also being hindered by specific factors.

Resources and Support for Gender Mainstreaming

- General Political Support and Academic Freedom as Key Factors

One management representative summarizes the support provided as follows:

“I think the political support is here in several ways. But it is rather generic and diffuse. So, the administration, starting with the President, is obviously in favour of making gender issues something central to what we do. So there is support from the administration. There is pressure I think, there is a lot of pressure from students, which is also very important. And this is important, because you know you may ask what the attitude of the faculty is. Well, I think the attitude of the faculty is politically correct, overall.” (Interview 9)

Obviously, due to the absence of a strategy in this area, it is difficult to make an account of technical and financial types of support. Indeed, the interviewee adds he is not aware of any technical support (*e.g.*, special training opportunities, toolkits, consultancy services) with this aim in view and that there are no earmarked financial resources, either. Nonetheless, he indicates that any gender-related research, training, and initiative should be positively evaluated and funded should it be proposed.

Although there is no immediate reward, academic freedom does exist to devise gender related courses. And because it is not explicitly blocked, rather ‘well-received,’ we list freedom as a supporting factor here. As a professor recalls the time he started to lecture at the University,

“When I was invited [...] I was asked what I wanted to teach. My courses were not compulsory and I could freely design them. [...] I said I wanted to teach gender and law, or non-discrimination, and my proposal was accepted without any reservation. Of course, of course! It made me happy too, as I could devise what I wanted completely freely. What is more, later the department made Feminist Jurisprudence compulsory. I am proud to say that it happened on the students’ request. Human Rights students claimed that from a Human Rights perspective they received so much through this course, so they thought that all Human Rights students should sign up for this course.” (Interview 16)

This example can be viewed as a success story of how an elective course makes it to be compulsory for all the students of a particular specialization track. Thus it proves its relevance and how gender can move from the periphery to the centre to be fully re/integrated in academic teaching. Others also report no resistance when gender related seminars are devised and offered to their departments. Thus we can conclude that once there is a professor with a strong gender interest, an elective course will be well-received at the Central European University.

- When Support Is Intra-Disciplinary Regarding the Subject Matter

In the case of some study fields, for example, International Relations (IR) and Environmental Sciences and Policy, our interviewees mention recent internal developments of the past decade or so, which indicate a tendency towards opening up in favour of gender issues. It needs to be noted, however, that both examples refer to multidisciplinary departments, hence we can assume a greater chance for permeability in these cases. While our IR interview subject claims that “feminist IR plays an increasingly influential role in the discipline”, the Environmental one notes that environment is treated more broadly, and they

“... started to discuss UN millennium development goals, where gender is a key dimension. This shift and broadening up might provide for more space for gender inclusion and the theme of gender equality. MDGs might be discussed in an independent course, including gender equality.” (Interview 4)

The above described internal developments and shifts of focus within disciplines can enhance gender mainstreaming in all other fields, to a great extent. However, the factors at play in gearing towards these changes should be examined, so that we could better understand the dynamics which might be reproduced elsewhere, too.

- The Student Body as Support Factor

A faculty member points out that the students are part of departments and there is always a potential to forming a community both within and across departments. Students can, in various forms, bring in the gender dimension even into disciplines which might be considered very resistant. It is also important, how such a gendered addition is evaluated within the class, especially by a gender-biased professor. It is a commonly-shared opinion that the University atmosphere encourages students to speak up and feel unrestricted, partly due to the founder’s intellectuality and institutional mission determination. However, implementation is done at individual level, and so this creates spaces for individual students as well to step in. One way of doing so has already been mentioned, by presenting students’ theses, and thus also outlining research interests in the various University departments. Another, more active, way of interfering with teaching and the curriculum is when students deliberately choose to present gender-related topics in their free assignments, or to bring in the gender dimension, in class discussions, as the following example suggests,

“At [name of course], in connection to social policy and pension reform, it [gender] came up, though I think it was not as emphasized as it should have been, as I expected. With reference to employment policy I think there should be more. We read a lot of theoretical articles, and it was good that I was there as I raised certain

issues, for instance, it was nice to have a research conducted solely with men, and results would be completely different if there had been women included too. So, how much results can be generalized in such cases, can be much questioned. There were also examples, in connection with our presentations, there were readings to elaborate on, and it was possible to link the readings to our own themes. Of course, it was difficult, but for instance, to a rather dry economic material, I selected three extra materials which dealt with women and labour, linked to economic theory. ... so I tried to bring in the gender aspect, if the professor did not emphasize this already.” (Interview 2)

- The Autonomous Gender Studies Department, as Potential Support for Gender Mainstreaming

Among our interviewees, Gender Studies Department is not thought of being the driving force behind gender mainstreaming at the Central European University. At this point, we again note the presence of the seemingly inherent opposition between ‘theory’ and ‘practice,’ in our respondents’ views. Many share the opinion that it should not be their role, as one puts it, “They should not start a movement,” implying that activism is not part of academic work and such a move would be against academic standards. On the other hand, some would like to see the department more active,

“I think they should play a bigger role in trying to draw attention to problems that are not paid enough attention in society. Their very existence, the fact that there is a Gender Studies Department means that gender is something that can be studied. So their very existence would advertise that ‘look here, there is a problem we need to address.’” (Interview 5)

Stressing the Gender Studies Department sluggishness:

“But since they are not very ... hmm, I don’t know what the problem is. Maybe, they should be going out more and talk, and give lectures on what the Gender Studies Department is. [...] They should establish that this discipline has something to say to society.” (Interview 5)

From this thinking we assume that many link a department’s visibility within the academic community, through its extra-curricular activities, with the degree of its importance and relevance. Hence, gender mainstreaming of the various curricula can also be initiated outside the strict teaching environment and formal settings. Nonetheless, this opinion again directs attention to the fact that the Gender Studies Department is still perceived as unstable and needing further legitimating.

The Gender Studies Department faculty themselves have outlined several more informal, less direct, ways in which the department can contribute to gender mainstreaming efforts at the University. For example, making visible the importance and relevance of gender studies is one key priority, which can perhaps

be best understood in Public Relations terms, by supporting Human Rights Initiative¹⁷ projects (in a way contracting out all activism activities regarding gender equality), as well as working more closely with other departments by way of cross-listing courses and co-supervising theses (the latter ones indeed qualify for gender mainstreaming in our understanding). Moreover, the Gender Studies Department aims to engage in more administrative work of CEU, as the organization, by for example, being invited on various committees.

Obstacles to Gender Mainstreaming

- ‘Male Management’ as a General Obstacle

A management member points to the obstacle posed by a male-dominated management in higher education, which then determines viewpoints:

“There are many barriers. And they’ll have to be contextualized. I think a lot of university administrators believe this is a non-issue. There is tradition, there is inertia, and the higher education sphere is a male-dominated sphere. If you ask how many women rectors there are in the region, now, you can name quite a few but still, that is not much. [...] I would say the main barrier is the kind of understanding that you know if this is an issue at all, it is not a priority issue.” (Interview 9)

- Accreditation as a Legal Obstacle

When we accept the situation that higher education is still a male-dominated realm and if we note the national accreditation procedures character as being gender blind (as described above), we can consider this factor as a general legal obstacle for gender mainstreaming as such. And in order to redress the situation, national accreditation committees should be worked with and raise the committee’s gender awareness, so that gender can be mainstreamed at the highest legal and academic proceedings.

- The Autonomous Gender Studies Department as an Obstacle

When thinking about barriers, an automatic reaction is to claim the presence of the independent Gender Studies Departments as one major effective organizational barrier to gender mainstreaming.

“In some ways, having a [dedicated] department [of] itself makes it easy for a university. It is sort of logical [...] this is where gender will happen, so [other]

¹⁷ The Human Rights Initiative (HRSI) is an awareness-raising and capacity-building organization, based at Central European University, and financed by the University and the Open Society Institute. At the time of writing this report, for example, they conducted the campaign entitled “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”. See, <<http://hrsi.ceu.hu/> and <http://hrsi.ceu.hu/16-days>>

departments don't need to feel pressure to hire somebody who can do this. So I think that that is a kind of block." (Interview 6)

Not only can Gender Studies Department pose a simple block, but it can also risk academic ghettoization, position from which it might be even more difficult for gender studies to address and infiltrate the other disciplines. Indicative is the following: at the Central European University, the Gender Studies Department (and some other departments) fell outside the scope of a recent reorganization, when certain departments were grouped into 'schools,' such as the 'Doctoral School of Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations,' or the 'School of Historical and Interdisciplinary Studies'. The Gender Studies Department was not taken into consideration, when forming the new schools, probably because it had already had an interdisciplinary nature.

- 'Conservative Disciplines' as an Intra-Discipline Obstacle

One faculty comments about his own field of study that due to its being 'an imperial subject,' it is conservative and social issues are left for other disciplines. It was further stressed that the gender dimension cannot be found in the mainstream of some given disciplines: if one does research on gender, chances are weak that papers will get published in the top five journals of the discipline (such work might be published in the gender studies journals). This results in the scholar's weaker position on the job market, *i.e.*, the person's inability to compete for the most prestigious departments of the discipline, as he lacks an impressive publication list. This example induces the conclusion that, because of his gender research interest in certain fields, the scholar cannot make an academic career in his own discipline. This description well illustrates how a gender-focused professor and researcher could be put on the back burner in some rigid 'traditional disciplines,' since their research interest does not fit to the mainstream. Gender studies can be viewed in a similar same. Griffin (2005), for instance, argues that the degree of the gender studies institutionalization and the impact of the different processes have a significant impact on the individuals (students and/or professors) engaged in gender studies: the invisibility of gender studies can result in a non-mainstream, if not a marginal, position in academia, and on the labour market.

- 'Methodology' as an Inter-Disciplinary Obstacle

Gender Studies Department individuals, in particular, note the fact that it is difficult to cross boundaries, referring to their colleagues in other, more 'traditional disciplines,' where they might be obliged to be

"... really staying within the methodological and subject area, much more tightly than we probably do in our department. They still change it, which is why an independent Gender Studies Department is a good support for people who have mainstreamed in

other departments, because they are changing it. In Political Science just the use of qualitative research methods, when the people who do gender tend to prefer this method and this is our sort of pushing the borders of the mainstream in Political Science. [...] This kind of crossing over disciplinary borders. I think gender research does that and it is exciting, but it also means it meets with a lot of resistance often in [other] departments.” (Interview 6)

Thus it is pointed out that disciplines are not necessarily open to interdisciplinarity, which, as a consequence, can be an impeding factor for individuals who would otherwise be interested in crossing the field boundaries.

- Competing ‘Dimensions’ as an Obstacle

One possible barrier to gender mainstreaming could be the existence of multi dimensions, and the way how to treat such a phenomenon in academic teaching, as well as in research. A faculty member points out,

“However important, the gender dimension is not the only one worth attention. So, it is a tricky question, because the other dimension that comes to mind is race. And if once one tries to prioritize, or mainstream, one, then the obvious question is [what happens to] the others.” (Interview 18)

On the one hand, for some academics this puzzle might be a paralyzing factor and lead to the lack of initiative, in general, and no dynamics at all, with regard to curriculum development, in the various departments. On the other hand, gender studies and research offer a ready solution to tackle the issue of multi dimensions via applying intersectionality in one’s analysis, and, in fact, gender studies most often, and historically, do examine the intersection of race (a category that first come to mind, in the quote above) and gender, as if they were inseparable. Butler (1990) describes these endless dimensions,

“The theories of feminist identity that elaborate predicates of colour, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and able-bodiedness invariably close with an embarrassed ‘etc.’ at the end of the list. [...] This illimitable *et cetera*, however, offers itself as a new departure for feminist political theorizing.” (p.143)

Butler stresses that one’s identity is a mobile, ever-shifting construction of the various characteristics, as opposed to the rather static gender categories in use. The ‘new departure’ should be looked at more as an opportunity, whereby intersectional analysis attempts to catch the relationships between these social, cultural, categories and identities, often portraying positions of minority and marginality. Braidotti also maintains that these issues are interconnected and would be difficult to separate, “‘gender’ cannot function alone, but acts rather as a bridge between different levels and layers of social inclusion and exclusion”

(Quoted by Waaldijk, and Just, 2010: 29), thus the gender dimension does not, and cannot, compete with the other ones.

- Gender Sensitive Research and Interdisciplinarity

As pointed out above, the very definition of ‘gender sensitive research’ is challenging. When asked to think of any gender sensitive research within the University community, almost automatically, the respondents listed gender-focused research projects, for example, ‘very high profile gender projects’ at the Centre for Policy Studies.¹⁸ Additionally, research projects on the Roma, poverty, and rural development are mentioned, as well as the activity of the Centre for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine (CELAB).¹⁹ The examples reflected more on individual professionals’ work and affiliation, whereby the individual faculty member or researcher is well-known for his interests and has already conducted quality research in gender-related issues. These responses reinforce the idea that gender sensitive research, along with gender studies teaching, is more an individual undertaking, motivated by personal dedication than that of an institutional commitment, on the part of the University.

With reference to working together with the Gender Studies Department people, the topic of interdisciplinarity is brought up and pointed out as a big challenge. The same sort of logics applies to the idea of Gender Studies Department faculty being involved in mainstreaming in other disciplines.

One management member unfolds the problem:

“If you really want to advance gender, let’s say, in Energy research, or Environmental research, probably the way to do it is through platforms where you have interdisciplinary research. Where a gender specialist would work. But here you face the standard challenge of interdisciplinarity. [...] Now the problem is as in any interdisciplinary research, you cannot really talk the same language. It is very difficult, I mean we can, but it requires a lot of effort.” (Interview 17)

And continues, explaining the context, further problematising:

“Interdisciplinarity is more a question of cooperation between researchers who are trained in different disciplines, rather than cooperation between departments. In our department, we have one or two faculty members who I totally trust to do gender-related research, as I think they have the tools, methodologies, and conceptual knowledge about this. But there are people who have very little idea about it; so, by making these people research together something, the problem still remains.” (Interview 17)

¹⁸ See, <<http://cps.ceu.hu/researchb173.html?cmsseid=Tb2272515d66831d3883a2fb86be93d1f8ec960e8a12132310ea8112911e2f0f>>, for CPS research programmes.

¹⁹ For CELAB’s work, see, <<http://www.celab.hu/>>

Therefore, faculty members schooled in a traditional discipline and who own the gender knowledge and methodology are seen as desirable research partners. Researchers can 'speak the same language' only in this combination.

On the other hand, for some faculty, interdisciplinarity is seen as an opportunity, a positive development, since, especially for gender studies, people "promoting interdisciplinarity ... should also mean promoting gender." Moreover, they firmly believe that working in an interdisciplinary framework is one of the goals of the Central European University.

Students equally appreciate having this chance at the University:

"I also have a very strong tendency towards interdisciplinary work, so knowing your home department, or knowing your sort of intellectual base, is not really the end of the discussion ... For me it is important to know that foundation I can (leave) and then come back to, from where I can go and participate in other types of intellectual inquiry in other locations for research, whatever that might look like." (Interview 11)

More of a critical tone, a faculty member elaborates on methodology and the main, mainstream discipline, also resonating the arguments above in connection with interdisciplinarity.

"And I think it is important, that whoever studies gender s/he must have a main discipline. So as they must have a strong methodology, not only that of gender. If someone wants to be in gender and politics, then one has to know exactly what methodology is used in Political Science and Public Policy research, because the legitimacy and the strength of research is much more powerful if one comes with a proper disciplinary background and results can be more easily marketed. This way, the place of gender studies in academic hierarchy will improve much. And this is what you see in the whole world: who is really good, is the one who joins a main discipline and adds to it the gender component. So gender is the field of interest in a given disciplinary background. And this is not to say that the Gender Studies Department has no legitimacy on its own. But the real good researchers do communicate with the mainstream." (Interview 13)

Similarly, students voice concerns on not having proper methodological backing, since in gender studies not everything is available, especially referring to quantitative methods. Then, when they try engaging in research with other disciplines, this causes huge challenges for gender studies students. Nonetheless, interdepartmental research is considered an interesting way of gender mainstreaming in research, in which Gender Studies Department individuals could be responsible for the gender component. As reported, such connections are already present, albeit in an informal way. However, formal ways of cooperation could give additional impetus to developing interdisciplinary research, with which gender promotion would follow on.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has explored how and where gender issues are integrated in the curricula at the Central European University. Besides paying attention to gendering the University curricula, the formal, organizational aspects have also been discussed, as they might have mutual effects on each other.

As an immediate recommendation, the authors should emphasize that strategic thinking is needed in the University, as one puts it in connection to a specific proposal, “with high level of gender consciousness.” Therefore, the Senate-envisioned ‘comprehensive equality policy strategy’ should be devised, with no delay, focusing not only on organizational gender mainstreaming, but also on teaching and research content, as well. By establishing such a strategy, the institutional support system of gender studies might take its place, which is missing, at present. The current state of affairs reflects a context within which the existence of gender studies remains to be tied to individual interest and commitment of very few faculty members, outside the autonomous Gender Studies Department.

In following, we shall first present the debate on gender studies’ autonomy *versus* integration. Next, we shall describe some possible ways and techniques of gendering higher education teaching and research, and the benefits gender mainstreaming can potentially offer with a view to provide general arguments and recommendations for gender integration into higher education curricula. Finally, the authors will reflect on the ‘political correctness’ and the additional impact, they feel their research has had on the University.

The Debate: To Separate or Integrate Gender Studies?

In order to generate deep thinking, we proposed a direct question, namely, whether the gender aspect should be dealt with either in a separate department or in all departments. The reactions to this strong ‘either/or’ question, not leaving much space for ‘and’ options, provided pointed academic insights and practical considerations.

While some seem to be insecure in making a decision on the question, others are very decided in solving the issue. Nevertheless, the vast majority of our partners opt for having the two approaches continue living in parallel and mutually strengthen each other, *i.e.*, they voice the need to have both Gender Studies Departments and ‘a general infusion of gender’ across different disciplines.

As a Gender Studies Department faculty member stresses, when first reasoning for a separate department and then shifting towards arguing for the ‘and’ position:

“... I am thinking about this whole academic institutional machinery which makes certain production of knowledge visible, recognizable and makes the space for it. On

the other hand, I think that creating just departments and somehow pushing this kind of knowledge into these ghettos, departments as ghettos, is not enough. I don't want to say that it is counter-productive, but I don't want at all to think about either-or relations. So, it is not about either having the departments or having it the other way around. [...] So, I basically think that we need gender perspective both in across academia, in different disciplines and [emphasis added] that we need the departments for [...] promoting gender perspectives, but with different final aims, so the outcome of one or the other is not always the same." (Interview 12)

A non-Gender Studies Department professor reasons as follows, interestingly, having exactly the same points as the Gender Studies Department one:

"Mainstreaming does not mean there should not be gender studies, but the dual-track [approach]. Mainstreaming means that there is a hub where it thickens and where there is concentrated attention, and beyond this there is everywhere else. This policy does not say that gender machineries should be closed down so that gender should be dealt with everywhere, including the Ministry of Finance, but it says that the machinery is needed and beyond that, one should think about this in the Ministry of Finance, too. So I think these two does not kill each other; there are only different priorities served with gender studies department." (Interview 13)

Most respondents agree on this combination strategy as the only one by means of which change could be brought about. This stand echoes the European network, which also reached a similar resolution:

"The integrationists aim at including Women's Studies into existing curricula and thus force the disciplines to evolve; the autonomists, on the other hand, believe in radical disruption and in the specificity of women-based knowledge. [...] The European network of Gender Studies agreed to disagree – both autonomous and integrated programmes work together and different names and terms for the field are accepted." (Waldijk, and Just, 2010: 29-30)

These authors also firmly believe that the integration of gender into higher education curricula can be best achieved by following the dual-track strategy, which in the present context, would mean strengthening both integration and autonomy of gender studies within higher education teaching and research.

As a final general remark, we also need to note that since gender studies are interdisciplinary, it is difficult to mainstream. If someone deals with gender studies, he/she is likely to fall out of the mainstream, a position from which it is difficult – in the political sense – to find one's way back. Moreover, as is the case with the Central European University and its founding principles, it is characteristic of the former socialist block region that a top-down approach is not acceptable and that individual freedom is highly respected, which points to 'academic freedom' in our case. With these points in mind, we summarize various possible ways in which

gender mainstreaming can be achieved and some benefits it can offer, in general terms, to all higher education institutions.

Possible Ways to Gender Mainstream Higher Education Teaching and Research

- Institutional strategic commitment to ‘more gender’

A viable solution for mainstreaming is proposed by a management member, option that, in our opinion, leaves enough space for faculty members and the departments, and, in a way, it cuts across many of the issues mentioned earlier, which all tackle the question where and how exactly gender mainstreaming / gender inclusion should take place:

“Now, once you have a course, it is very difficult to mainstream gender there, however nothing prevents to make an institutional commitment to want more gender; that would mean not creating courses, but looking at the level of programmes, and there one of the outcomes of this programme is related to gender, and then decide whether it should be a special course, or the modification of existing courses or special faculty, special visiting professor, whatever.” (Interview 17)

From this proposal we can see that the University, as an organization, might still be in a position to commit itself to advancing gender in its educational programmes and at the same time leaving ‘academic freedom’ unaltered. Nonetheless, this approach still presupposes gender-conscious hiring procedures, which focuses not on the sex of the applicant, but on the research interest the individual would bring along to the University. Still, the same professor cautions on being ‘extremely intelligent’ when doing this, and on always ‘asking yourself how gender helps you achieve your goal,’ *i.e.*, that of the departmental education programme and of the particular course.

At the same time, instead of imposing any particular issue, in this case gender, to mainstream, some faculty members voice the following opinion:

“I think that in the end what the management should do, would be to ensure that there is a constant discussion within the faculty over how update the curriculum is, and how they respond to whatever relations.” (Interview 18)

Leaving the department to choose on what particular dimensions they wish to pay special attention to, thus clinging to the institutional culture and, inside it, to the often cited ‘academic freedom.’

With his reminder, the above-quoted management member, too, accepts the fact that it is not only a technical, professional, but also a political issue within the University. Politics enter the debate as soon as the institutional setup and culture are targeted for a perceived major transformation. With Connell’s expression

(1987), CEU 'gender regime' may be affected, institutional processes may be altered, which would ultimately shake the present order, and as a result, various interests immediately compete with each other. However, the Central European University is such a special institution, with respect to its actual settings and organizational backing that it would indeed be difficult to categorize in any given culture. Nonetheless, its strengths and opportunities lie in CEU's 'particularity', its internationalism as far as reforms and new directions can be concerned, including that of gender mainstreaming in the university curricula development.

- Hiring more women as faculty members

There are some cases when respondents introduced a 'third option,' leaving aside the either/or question, *i.e.*, to separate or integrate gender studies. Although a minority, some faculty members believe in the idea that if the CEU could become more gender-aware, as an organization, with visible signs of an increased number of female professors and of women in leadership positions, "these things would come more naturally", that is, gender mainstreaming would then happen in the curriculum development, too.

- Hiring more individuals with a professional gender interest

Overall, hiring new faculty members with a high level of gender consciousness and with gender as a research interest is welcome by many as opposed to encouraging already working professors to change their research interests and focus, change that would be visible in the curriculum, or to add gender to it. The latter possibility would face the strong resistance of the CEU faculty and would likely cause some conflicts with existing accreditation documents, which cannot be changed so easily, an aspect pointing to a factor beyond the University.

- Gender studies department co-operating with other departments

A significant number of faculty and students describe the already existing and institutionally supported ways by means of which the gender dimension can be included and actively supported. Namely, these joint supervision, course cross-listing with other departments, joint-teaching courses, and degrees jointly awarded by other universities and CEU departments, *e.g.*, MATILDA. These techniques in themselves alleviate the difficulty that arises from the fact that in certain departments there might not be 'people that can really do gender.' However, this co-operation is conditioned by the existence of an independent gender studies department within the higher education institution.

- Institutional support for faculty in developing interest in gender

A possible technique of gender inclusion would be to attract academics' interest towards gendered research, for instance through 2-day interdisciplinary seminars with gender networks outside the higher education institution, for which events specific faculty would be targeted, *e.g.* of Economics. As some academics state economics shows interest towards gender issues lately, so representatives of the discipline would likely sit in such meetings. Along similar lines, others speak about 'some initiatives':

"As long as there is such a department [Gender Studies Department], others might think that gender is only their business. With some initiatives, these others might learn that gender after all might have some relevance in his or her research topic and might receive extra feedback in this regard." (Interview 2)

- Institutional support for faculty in providing 'gender expert' consultations within traditional disciplines

Considering who would provide that 'extra feedback' and who to work with on curriculum development is up for discussion. Almost all people who elaborated thoughts on this matter, voiced their concerns that it would be impossible to work with someone who does not come from the same discipline, and has not a PhD in the same field. Gender mainstreaming consultations can only be imagined with such intra-disciplinary profiles, leaving Gender Studies Department scholars aside, unless they are of the same discipline by schooling. The same principles apply to conducting joint research.

However, some would assign roles to Gender Studies Department in gender mainstreaming not the curricula, but the institution:

"I think for the future it is important to have both [*i.e.*, gender studies department and mainstreaming in all departments]. Of course, it should also be a goal not to have such an isolated department, and because of this it would not be a bad idea to create another space, a task in which they could step out from their isolation and to take part in gender mainstreaming of the institution. [...] I think it is important, though I am not aware if at other universities Gender Studies Department have such an extra function or not." (Interview 2)

Benefits of Gender Mainstreaming the Curriculum

Having gender classes incorporated into various (other than gender) departments' course offerings might yield various results, including as the main result the fact that a larger pool of students (not necessarily interested in gender professionally)

will have access to such knowledge, which might significantly increase the importance and impact of gender studies,

“... in this set-up it [the course] does not end up in an isolated box [*i.e.*, gender], but it gets in front of students who do not only deal with gender, but with other issues, as well.” (Interview 13)

A student calls on the danger of separation and too much institutionalization, and gets to the same point: the new institution creates ‘special research’ and, with it, a new method, which is then treated separately. Instead, he suggests introducing gender into the scopes of other departments, which would be more efficient and hence ‘gender would become more popular and understood.’ Offering his own experience as an example, he points to the following issues: out of professional curiosity in order to check out the theory and the approach at Gender Studies Department, he took a course to see what added value is there in connection to showing processes and the presentation of memory. He concludes that after having taken the course, he does make use of the gender category in his professional work, admitting at the same time that, had he not taken the course, he ‘would be way more sceptical using gender as a scientific category in historical research.’ Moreover, he argues that universities in Central and Eastern Europe are conservative, in terms of methodology, and that is how he himself has been academically trained, too. He was happy to find something interesting on gender at the Central European University, as opposed to his previously attended university, where there was nothing on gender.

Another student, supportive of interdisciplinary research, and open to ‘borrowing and experimentation’, describes his Gender Studies Department class and his being at the intersection of two literatures as follows:

“This one maps very interestingly, sort of thrusts in relation to another course I am taking at [name of department], called the [title of course]. And there is this sort of co-evolution, and it is interesting to trace the ways in which each professor approaches the subject. And they are not specifically concerned with the same categories of analysis. But they often meet and they do it on very different scales and in very different ways. And there are other interesting contrasts drawn out there. In teaching styles, one is a man, the other one is a woman, one is in [name of department], the other in gender studies. Ultimately, the work of connecting these two is enriching and interesting.” (Interview 11)

The same individual sums up the benefits he is getting by experimenting in another discipline and by applying gender as an analytical tool:

“Well, at the minimum it is an interesting class, which is enabling me to think about some problems of my own research, my own interest outside of the scope that I would have been able to access, and with a different kind of vocabulary than I think

is really at my disposal at the [name of department]. So for me, being able to talk about it in a couple of different modes and for instance, drawing out some contrasts between the way in which I can think about bringing my interest forth in a class like [title] course, *versus* the way in which I can think about bringing my interest forward in a class like [title] course. I mean, those differences in and out themselves are meaningful of how I then think about discussing my interest in whatever particular set of analytical problems or empirical questions I want talk about in my research.” (Interview 11)

The above mentioned positive examples of students taking gender courses are conditioned by the fact that there are such courses on offer, either within the independent Gender Studies Department, or within other academic units; and that students are interested or ‘curious’ to sign up for specific gender classes so that, professionally, they would benefit from their being exposed to critical gender analysis.

Political Correctness and Additional Project Impact at the Central European University

We think it would be good and a sign of development if there were no discourse on ‘political correctness’ in relation to gender studies or to applying gender as an analytical tool and category in academic research. This reflects on the gender studies status being unsteady, one that is accepted not because of academic merit, but because of political correctness.

Naturally, students are more explicit on this issue. Students reflect on how their gender presentation was received by faculty members in the following way:

“Professors, well, I think this is an international university, there are norms, and I think no professor can afford being openly hostile towards the issue.” (Interview 2)

We think there is a long way to go and more work to be done in making the gender dimension fully accepted by higher education institutions, in general, and by the Central European University, in particular. The current situation at the University suggests that the normative value transfer (as expected by the European Union norms as well as being present in the U.S. academia) has yet to take place.

Overall, these authors’ opinion is that the Central European University, as an institution, is not ready to adjust its academic programmes so that they can be more permeable to gender sensitive knowledge. This readiness is more visible in the case of certain departments, where motivation comes from within the discipline. We find that gender mainstreaming in academic programmes would be in utter opposition with ‘academic freedom,’ a notion that is held in high esteem by the present-day institutional culture. While the University, as a whole, shows readiness to apply gender consciousness in its organizational structure and to

reform it accordingly, such eagerness is not detectable in the curriculum content adaptation and the ways in which knowledge is delivered to the young generation. Having said all the above, our perception is, to a certain extent in contradiction to the above, that the University does not fare so well, when we consider gender mainstreaming in the institution (which, we think, would be much easier to implement), but points to a good degree of gender studies teaching and research development state, both in the autonomy and integration directions (which we consider much harder to achieve). We ascribe the relatively high level of gender incorporation in teaching and research to the institution's international character, in which merge influences of the U.S., European Union, and Hungary's post-socialist heritage and values; and in which 'academic freedom' still means a lot, as long as there are committed individual faculty members, eager to be engaged in gender studies. However, it is the institutional commitment of the Central European University that is needed in order to secure an enduring and systematic progress in gendering its curricula.

Although not everyone we approached responded positively to our invitation to an interview, the authors consider they have had open and fruitful discussions with all those who agreed to interview. Moreover, we think that we managed to make an impact at the university by raising the issue of gender equality in organizational terms and gender inclusion in the curriculum. The individuals we have interviewed came prepared, some even checked beforehand with colleagues from the respective department, so that they could represent many people's voices, and were ready to provide us with any information requested or opinion invited. Thus, the authors believe that the project has already served the goal of maintaining the gender issue on the organizational and academic agendas of the Central European University and hope that the project has given impetus to further institutional development.

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ANNEX

1. List of Interviews

No.	Date 2010	Position	Sex
1	October 4	Faculty member	M
2	October 14	Student, PhD (non-Gender Studies Department)	F
3	October 15	Management	F
4	October 18	Faculty member	M
5	October 19	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
6	October 20	Faculty member (Gender Studies Department)	F
7	October 20	Management	M
8	October 20	Management	F
9	October 20	Management	M
10	October 20	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
11	October 21	Student, MA (non-Gender Studies Department)	M
12	October 21	Faculty member (Gender Studies Department)	F
13	October 21	Faculty member	F
14	October 22	Student, MA (non-Gender Studies Department)	M
15	October 25	Student, PhD (Gender Studies Department)	F
16	October 26	Faculty member	F
17	November 5	Management	M
18	November 12	Faculty member	M

2. Gender-related courses at the Central European University*

Department	Course title
Medieval Studies	Medieval Images of Outcasts and Biblical Women
	Images and Gender
	Medieval Images of Woman and Family
	Gender and Family
	Gender and Visual Culture
Legal Studies	Comparative Equality
	Privacy – The Body
	Equal Opportunity Law
History	Early Modern Comparative Family History
	Social History of Gender in Central Europe (1867-1930)
Sociology	Comparative Masculinities: Sex and Gender in Europe and the Mediterranean
	Gender and Social Change
	Gender, Sexuality, and Sexual Politics
Economics	Economics of Inequality
Public Policy	Equality Policy in Comparative Approach
International Relations	Gender in IR: Sovereignty, Security, and Militarism

* NB: This is not an exhaustive list. These are examples of courses taught at the Central European University, between 1997/1998 and 2010/2011 academic years.

Source: CEU Information System

3. Gender-related theses at the Central European University *

Department	Thesis title
History	<p><i>Budapest's Girl's Gymnasiums: A Study of the Relationship between the Composition of the Student Body and how This Related to School and Girl's Secondary Schooling</i></p> <p><i>Divided Spheres: Whose war? And Whose peace?: Women in Croatia during the War of National Liberation (1941-1945); the Women's Anti-fascist Front</i></p> <p><i>Equality or Inequality?: Resolution of the Women's Question: Women's Political Activity in Russia during Perestroika and Post-Perestroika Period</i></p> <p><i>First Feminist Groups in Leningrad (1979-1982): Samizdat journals Zhenshchina I Rossiya and Maria</i></p> <p><i>From the Sickle to the Silver Tray: Temporary Domestic Servants in Inter-War Romania</i></p> <p><i>Gender History in the Statutes of the East Adriatic Communes</i></p> <p><i>History of Woman's Emancipation in Russia in the Second Half of the 19th Century: Narrative and Discourse On Women's Emancipation in Journalism</i></p> <p><i>Image of the Woman at the Turn of the Century</i></p> <p><i>Images of women and the Family during Communism as Reflected in the Romanian Newspaper Scînteia</i></p> <p><i>Political Persecutions of Women in Slovakia, 1948-1953: Case Study of Prievidza Region</i></p> <p><i>Politically Active Women in the Ukrainian Independence Movement, 1988-1991</i></p> <p><i>Romanian Women during the Great War</i></p> <p><i>Some Aspects of Shaping Women's Identity in the Soviet Society between the 1970s and 1990s.</i></p> <p><i>The Memory of 1956: A Gendered Transcript</i></p> <p><i>Visions of Women's Social Role in Poland and Lithuania at the Beginning of the 1920s</i></p> <p><i>Women's Journals and Their Image of Women in the Second Half of the 18th Century in Hungary</i></p>
Political Science	<p><i>Explaining Women's Rise in Political Representation: The Case of Croatia</i></p> <p><i>Gender and Politics in Russian Transition to Democracy</i></p> <p><i>Human Trafficking, Prostitution and Public Opinion in Hungary: Interviews with Hungarian University Students</i></p> <p><i>Isocratic Quest: Patterns of Participatory Inequality in New and Old European Democracies</i></p> <p><i>Rawls, Feminist Criticism, and Justice in the Family: Do We Really Need a Kitchen Police?</i></p> <p><i>The Politics of Constructing the Bulgarian Female Officer: Contemporary Discourses about Women in the Bulgarian Military</i></p> <p><i>Trafficking in Women from the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan: An Analysis of Current Policy and Recommendations</i></p> <p><i>Women Victims in the Balkan War: State, Rights, and Abortion</i></p>
International Relations	<p><i>'Fantasy behind Misery' – the Meanings of the European Union Measures on Trafficking in Women</i></p> <p><i>Gender and Nation in Transition: The Politics of Identity in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan</i></p> <p><i>The Political Economy of Welfare States: The Divergence of Family Policies in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic</i></p> <p><i>The Role of the OSCE in Fighting Trafficking in Women in Albania and Moldova</i></p> <p><i>Why Gender Is Absent in Copenhagen School: Theoretical Reflections on the Construction of National Securitization Processes through The construction of Gender Identities</i></p>

Department	Thesis title
Economics	<p><i>Children of the Decree: How the Romanian Abortion Ban Affected Labour Market Success and Health</i></p> <p><i>Examining the Gender Pay Gap in the U.S. in 1979-2009: The Unconditional Quantile Regression Approach</i></p> <p><i>Human Capital Prices and Wage Inequality in Russia 1985-2004</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Segregation and the Gender Pay Gap in Russia, 1994-1998</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Wage Structure and Gender Inequality in Ukraine</i></p> <p><i>Women Labour Supply Model: The Case of Fr. Yugoslavia</i></p>
Sociology	<p><i>Making Themselves at Home: Expatriate Women and Spaces of Belonging in Budapest</i></p> <p><i>Still Fixing Women? Female Circumcision and the Anti-HIV/AIDS Fight among the Ejanghams of Cameroon</i></p> <p><i>The Activist Self: Collective Identity in Anti-Nationalist, Anti-Militarist, Feminist Mobilization in Serbia</i></p> <p><i>The Indigenization of Women's Funds in Central and Eastern Europe: The Making of a Hybrid Identity</i></p> <p><i>Women on the Margins of Life and Death: Honour Crime and 'Governmentality' in Turkey</i></p>
Legal Studies	<p><i>Gender Employment Discrimination. A View on Transitional Democracies: the Case of Albania</i></p> <p><i>Protection of Refugee Women in International Law</i></p> <p><i>Status of Women Prisoners in the Czech Prison System</i></p> <p><i>The Law against Trafficking in Women: Some Modern Models of Using Current Norms to Combat the Problem in Central and Eastern Europe</i></p>
Nationalism	<p><i>Gender, Nation, Rape: Intersections of Gender and Ethnic Violence during the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i></p> <p><i>Is Survival Resistance? Experiences of Gypsy Women under the Holocaust</i></p> <p><i>Memory Work in Srebrenica – Serb Women Tell Their Stories</i></p>
Public Policy	<p><i>Promoting a Victim-Centred Approach to Combating Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation</i></p> <p><i>Public Health Care for The Poor? A Gendered Analysis of the Implementation of Integrated Health Insurance (SIS) and Its Effects on the Access of the Poor to Health Services in Peru</i></p> <p><i>Romani Women's Movement and Its Impact on Policy-Making Process. A Comparative Study of Macedonia and Serbia</i></p> <p><i>The Europeanization of Bulgarian Counter-Trafficking Policies: Between Rational Incentives, Social Learning, and Drawing Lessons</i></p> <p><i>The Impact of Micro-Credit on Social Capital. A Critical Investigation of Bangladesh</i></p>

* NB: This is not an exhaustive list. They are examples of theses searched by the key-word 'women' in other than the Gender Studies Department, at the Central European University.

Source: CEU Library database.