Definitions

Feminism

Women's Movement is just as non-existent as Feminism. On the contrary, the term is much more representative of an amazing diversity, of a very heterogeneous field with regard to the issues, objectives and strategies. Apart from productive interactive additions, they also range from intensive tension to blatant internal inconsistencies.

Nancy Cott offers a three-part "working definition" (cited in: Lønnå, Elisabeth (2004): Waves in the History of Feminism, in: Christensen, Hilda/ Halsaa, Beatrice/ Saarinen, Aino (Eds.): Crossing Borders. Re-Mapping Women's Movement at the Turn of the 21st century, Odense, p. 41-58), which states:

1. "Feminism involves the opposition to gender hierarchy (as opposed to gender equality).
2. Feminism involves the presupposition that a woman's role is socially constructed and not god-given and thus can be changed.
3. Feminism involves the understanding that women are a social group and it implies a certain identification with this group that is called 'women'."

On the basis of this "working definition", key factors of the movement, for example the fight against gender-based discrimination as well as resistance to traditional gender roles can be read out. At the same time, the struggle for the actresses of this movement becomes clear. It is linked to the key question of who these people are who identify themselves with the group of women, and why this identification possibly only occurs up to "a certain degree".

Women's or gender equality policy

The objective of institutionalised women's policy is to enforce the equal participation of women in society. As a rule, women's policy and gender equality policy are used as synonyms. Gender equality policy comprises all political strategies, measures, programmes etc., that serve the realisation of equal opportunities for women and men.

Women's promotion

The promotion of women signifies the development and the proposal of particular measures to promote women. The term women's promotion has been criticised by feminists for a number of years in that the term suggests women are deficient and these deficits must be reduced. Critics claim that a standard which is considered "male" is implicitly applied. Special measures for the promotion of women have proven sensible by virtue of their structural discrimination, for instance the assignment of a women's quota, the strengthening of competencies and assertiveness with further education etc. Particularly in development policy cooperation, where women-specific projects, women's initiatives and women's organisations are supported, both autonomous and integrative women's advancement approaches meanwhile have a long tradition. Tools for the promotion of women can be used both internally and externally in organisations. The internal promotion of women works in the context of HR policy, the external deals with the promotion of women in political fields of action.

Gender democracy

Gender democracy is both a political role model, social vision and organisation principle for the Heinrich Boell Foundation. Gender democracy means a relationship free from dependence and dominance between genders. The objective is the democratic embodiment of society, i.e. the representation of its citizens taking the diversity of their various initial conditions and needs into account. Democratic circumstances will be achieved when it becomes possible for women and men to achieve equal access on all levels, i.e. social, political, economical and cultural. Gender democracy implies equal participation of women and men in politics, in public and economy, the expansion and protection of fair reallocation and reassessment of social work between women and men, as well as the reduction and prevention of authoritarian and violent structures between genders.

Gender diversity

Gender diversity signifies intersectionality, i.e. the connection of the gender category with other socio-politically relevant social differentiation categories (for example age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, East/West, class or social stratum/milieu). Empirical studies concerning the interaction of different categories in German-speaking women and gender research are only just getting started.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming marks the gender-political strategy of the European Union for the realisation of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men. Gender mainstreaming relates to the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of decision-making processes in all political sectors as well as in all fields of work within an organisation. It means acknowledging gender as a structural category and systematically involving it in the forefront of all political concepts and measures, and making it useful for the equality of women and men. Gender mainstreaming is conceived as a double strategy, i.e. in addition to measures that are related to both genders, tools for the promotion of women will also be applied. Within the scope of gender mainstreaming and other gender-related equality strategies, gender is used as an analysis category and thus also acknowledged as a structure-building category. Consequently, the focus is aimed at shaping the gender relations, their framework conditions as well as the changes in existing gender-specific power structures.

Men's policies

The term "men's policy" was brought into public debate in the past years by men who were committed in a gender-political sense, to counterbalance and complement women's policy. Gender-political activities and discussions that focus on "male" approaches are meant. It is about men's role images and their effect on politics and social gender relations, about visions of a "different life" that enables men to live outside traditional gender roles (for example active fatherhood and equal partnerships). The term combines the idea that gender-democratic gender policies are in need of women's and men's policy positions and approaches.