

FORUM

MEMBER
MAGAZINE

Discussing international education

OUR GENDERED WORLD

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“Researchers suggested a name for the difficulties women face in academia: the ‘glass obstacle course’”

SHATTERING THE ACADEMIC GLASS TANK

28

“If women don’t have representation, we don’t have a voice”

IN CONVERSATION WITH JOANNA REGULSKA



32

“Rarely do student services think of international students in terms of gender fluidity”

REFLECTING ON INTERSECTIONALITY

38

“One subsection particularly at risk in facing culture shock are those students of LGBTQ orientation”

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW?



EDITORIAL

From 1971 to 1979, the American sitcom “All in the Family” titillated US television audiences with a microcosm of the culture wars of the time. White, middle-aged, working class (and let’s face it, racist and sexist) Archie Bunker lamented a fast-changing world in which the social norms he had been raised with were falling by the wayside. The opening theme song included such lines as, “And you knew who you were then/Girls were girls and men were men,” along with “Hair was short and skirts were long.” At song’s end, Archie and his tender, yet hapless wife, Edith, would soulfully belt out: “Those were the days!”

But were they really “the good old days”? When it comes to the matters of gender and sexuality, I beg to differ, and am deeply gratified to see change occurring in many quarters. Indeed, long-standing rigid gender roles and uncompromising cultural frames of reference for sexual identity have been giving way in recent decades to more nuanced and inclusive understandings of these matters. Similarly, tacit acceptance of harassing and violent sexual behaviour is reaching a tipping point at the moment in places like the United States, where the recent #MeToo movement is credited with having opened the door on an unprecedented public conversation about sexual harassment in politics, the entertainment industry, the fine arts world, Olympic sports, the media and beyond.

Our field of international education operates in this same ‘gendered world’.



As many around the world endeavour to make sense of evolving and more critical understandings of gender and sexuality, so too should we, as international education professionals. This issue of *Forum*, therefore, specifically tries to bring into focus ways that gender and sexuality are important considerations in our work.

Our contributing authors provide us with insight and impetus to consider such questions as: What do gender imbalances in international academic mobility mean – for the individuals included and excluded from these opportunities, for the institutions involved, and for broader societies? To what extent are international education professionals and programmes prepared to effectively engage and serve individuals who identify

as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning (LGBTQ)? What can each of us do to advance awareness, inclusiveness, fairness, and equity across the gender and sexuality continuum, and beyond?

As our interviewee, Dr Joanna Regulska, aptly reminds us: “we have nothing to lose” by asking these (admittedly, often sensitive and difficult) questions, but so much to gain. Let “these be the days” we look back on with fondness for the courage, compassion and clarity we applied to an honest consideration of ‘our gendered world’.

— LAURA RUMBLEY, EDITOR
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IN CONVERSATION WITH

JOANNA REGULSKA

LAURA RUMBLEY
EAIE

Joanna Regulska is Vice Provost and Associate Chancellor of Global Affairs at University of California, Davis, where she is also a professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. Joanna has established gender studies programmes at multiple European institutions. Her gender studies research focuses heavily on Europe and the Caucasus, making her the perfect fit for our issue on gender in internationalisation.

What first led you to this interest in studying gender, sexuality and women's studies? What made this topic important for you, both intellectually and professionally?

JR: A lot of interest was generated by my own personal experience. I emigrated to the United States, so an initial interest I had in migration translated to doing a dissertation on women migrants. Coming from Poland, many times I was asked, 'What's the women's rights situation in Poland?' and there was this 'aha' moment where I thought, 'Why are people asking me this question?' and this was really the moment where a feminist was born. That was the moment where I became far more engaged and aware of what it really means to be a woman. It has been a trajectory over time but also over space – in between Europe, Poland in particular, and the United States.

What do you see as some of the most salient issues in internationalisation of higher education in Europe, when considered through the lenses of gender and sexuality?

JR: I want to be careful not to speak for everybody, as there is a great diversity of context. I think what strikes me right now as requiring more conversation is the issue of diversity. We don't speak enough about it in international education. When you look, for example, at who is involved in the profession, the field is actually predominately engaging women. We have a lot of women, but I wish we had more statistics on women of colour, transgender women, their ethnicity, and the sexual orientation of these women, because all of these identities and more play such an important role. We have a lot of

women, but it is still a pyramid – at the top, we have a lot of male leaders.

The second area involves being treated as an equal partner. Together with some of my peers, we conducted a survey and wrote a white paper about women leaders in international education. One thing that kept coming up in survey responses is that

There is a persistent feeling that women are still not equal

women would say, 'I have to work extra hard, be extra professional in order to overcome being overlooked, undervalued, underestimated.' or 'Women are expected to work twice as hard but will earn half the credibility.' There is a persistent feeling that we are still not equal.

Are there any policies or practices that you think are particularly effective in raising awareness about issues of gender and sexuality?

JR: A commitment to equal opportunities is very important. Even if we do have policies in place, the key is really the interpretation of the policies as well as implementation and monitoring. Does equal opportunity really mean equal access and affordability? What do we do to engage more women and men of colour? More transgender students? Or students with different degrees of abilities? How do we create awareness among faculty that there is this diversity of identities in their students? How do we



At UC Davis, we don't have graduate programmes, we have graduate groups. These groups are interdisciplinary, allowing faculty members from different disciplines to participate and thus creating a rich learning environment for students. There are so many different formal and informal ways of looking at the institution and the policies that are enforced to foster an interdisciplinary climate.

You brought up the notion of taking a national experience and thinking about it in an international context. That brings up this current, very real, development: the #MeToo movement. Is there anything about this moment in the United States that can translate to something in terms of an international insight, in relation to international higher education?

JR: This is a very exciting but also very complicated moment. I think what is exciting about this moment is that women are defining what harassment means exactly. A lot of the legal framework, the definitions, were written by men, because men are and were in the position

If women don't have representation, we don't have a voice

of power; they are and were the decision makers. This goes back to something I've done a lot of work on, which is women's political participation. If women don't have representation, we don't have a voice. Today, women are defining

hire faculty that represents that diversity? Every institution has a gap – the diversity of students is far greater than

We must create students who are global citizens by engaging them in the conversation

that of faculty so there is always room for improvement there. Another opportunity is in mentorship. I know many female colleagues who are aware of their own struggles and because of this, they can be good mentors to students.

Another area of concern is the discussion surrounding the freedom of

expression and changing political, economic, social climate. These are the kind of issues that were not as prominent as they are today in study abroad. Now, students are confronted with new questions regularly, just as I am confronted when I travel. We must create students who are global citizens by engaging them in the conversation. Educating them to be more aware of the social, economic, political, historical context and to have a sense of cultural understanding so they can relate their experiences of one country to those of another.

There is another issue of to what degree institutions support interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary/intersectional approaches to learning. How institutions allow cross-disciplinary work to emerge is important. Maybe old departmental structures do not serve us well today.

harassment based on their experiences – on what assault means for them.

We need to think about what this all means for institutions, what approaches, what policies we should be establishing. What are we hearing from these women, these students and staff, but also what is being done with these voices? Is there a space for this conversation? And where is it?

There are also the intercultural and generational dimensions. Students today are so much about intersectionality and individual agency. How do these tensions relate to the #MeToo movement and what does that mean for our strategies for internationalisation?

The other thing is language. The language in many of these policies, quite honestly, is the language of men. ‘Penetration’, ‘ejaculation’. That language doesn’t belong to women. So are we going to start speaking in a different voice? Women have a voice, but their voice needs to be acknowledged; it has to be heard.

This #MeToo movement is happening in real time – are gender studies programmes keeping up with that? Are they providing a space for discussion?

JR: Gender studies has always been a place where this passionate, intellectual fight takes place. While mainstream academia, more traditional disciplines might not see this as a space of value. A lot of times there is this commentary of ‘oh, they’re fighting again’. But there is such a tremendous value in disagreement. This is about so much more than ‘you’ and ‘I’ just not liking each other; this is about strategies and approaches. We have

different roots and experiences; we have different ideas. Those spaces are extremely valuable. The field itself is changing so dramatically and so fast because it is constantly being reshaped by lived experiences. Maybe in more traditional disciplines there is more stability – maybe

transgender students, faculty and staff? What do we do to be accessible to students with different degrees of abilities? We have to dissect the audience. It isn’t an add-on on Friday afternoon, it is every day. It has to be part of everything you do.

We, in international higher education, are role models more than we know

it’s more about facts and interpretations. In gender studies, movements such as #MeToo are the issues of today. Even if we are teaching the same course, the discussion will be much different, because it will be responding to current tensions and current pressures. Where will gender studies go, as a moving, developing field? It is tied to the question of challenges, opportunities and agency. New difficulties and emerging oppressions shape the field. The increased flows of refugees and migrants is influencing this conversation and research in profound ways.

Do you have any final advice or best practices in terms of promoting inclusive internationalisation, including those of all genders and sexualities?

JR: One principle that I subscribe to is to always consciously and visibly be committed to diversity. In everything you do: thinking about new programmes and activities, keeping diversity at the front of your mind. Where are the women? Who are these women? Where are the men of colour? Are LGBTQ students participating? What about the

We, in international higher education, are role models more than we know. We are shaping conversations, making interventions, asking questions. Unless you show this commitment to gender, sexuality, diversity, things will not change. We are in the position to ask these questions and we have nothing to lose. The fear sometimes is so paralysing that we have to push through. Being vocal and consciously committed, now and forever.

EAIE BLOG SPOT

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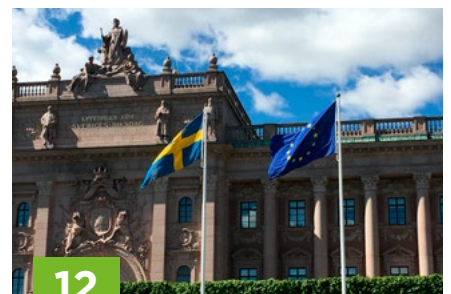


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