

How Interdisciplinary is Interdisciplinary Gender Research? *An Investigation of the Research Programme Gender in Transition.*

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How Interdisciplinary is Interdisciplinary Gender Research?

An Investigation of the Research Programme Gender in Transition

How has interdisciplinarity been interpreted and enacted within gender research? Interdisciplinarity is now mainstreamed – but what does this mean for researchers? The authors questions whether researchers actually have made use of and explored all the interdisciplinary research possibilities. And are there methodologies, themes or norms that are still not allowed within our disciplines as well as the gender field?

Gender research is today a research field in its own right with its journals, research centres, -positions and -programmes. Some even claim that it is a discipline, with its bachelor education and shared curriculum – which the new *Kjønnforskning. En grunnbok* (Lorentzen and Mühleisen 2006) illustrates. All the time, interdisciplinarity is stated as its main characteristic, formulated either as means or goals. But while interdisciplinarity in the feminist heydays of the '70s was a necessity (we were few and scattered and little was written on gender issues) and represented a challenge to our understandings of gender as well as to our understandings of the disciplines, the situation of today is radically different. Now that there is a quite substantial body of knowledge and we are quite a few within the disciplines, the demand for interdisciplinarity has become mainstream – partly within the disciplines (due to «new» theoretical paradigms), but particularly at the political level. Is interdisciplinarity still (to be) our main ambition and, if so, what kind of interdisciplinarity? What is it to imply to us today? In light of a new research programme on gender coming up at the Research Council of Norway, trying to find answers to these questions seem quite urgent. One evident starting point would be the investigations of research practices among gender researchers. Have we actually practised interdisciplinarity, and if so, when and how? And how have we evaluated it?

Here we will present some of the findings from our investigation of the interdisciplinarity of the previous gender research programme «Gender in transition». We hope that it will contribute to a debate on these issues among us gender researchers.

Background – Our Research Design

Our investigation was part of a feminist ini-

tiated EU-project on research integration between the humanist and the social sciences² and is published in full in the report *Interdisciplinarity, Research Policies and Practices: Two Cases in Norway* (Larsen and Widerberg 2006).³ The report focuses on the two research programmes, «Gender in Transition», which was active from 1989 to 1996, and the «Programme of Cultural Research», active from 1998 to 2002. They were both run by the Research Council, and both had an explicit goal of being interdisciplinary. We will focus on Gender in Transition (GiT). However, some differences between the programmes shed light on some current assumptions in gender research, and we will also briefly include some findings concerning the Programme of Cultural Research (PCUL).

Our data consist of written documents as well as qualitative interviews with members of the programme boards and researchers funded by the programmes. 14 interviews were done.⁴

A notable limitation of our data is that the self-evaluations as well as the interviews only convey the perspectives of the «insiders». We have thus not evaluated the quality of the results from other points of view. Consequently this article describes some strategies of interdisciplinary work in practice and raises issues regarding interdisciplinarity in humanist and social science research in Norway, *through the voices of our interviewees*.

In line with this approach we were interested in what meaning the programme participants themselves put into the terms multi- and interdisciplinarity. This being part of our investigation, we did not evaluate their definitions against a norm made at the outset. However, we started out with some (relatively wide) definitions, against which we discussed other meanings given the terms. Here we use «interdisciplinarity» mainly as a generic term, comprising encounters between disciplines.

In some contexts we have found it useful to differentiate this term from «multidisciplinarity». In these cases *inter*-disciplinarity points to the intermix of different theoretical perspectives or methodologies in one and the same project – either owing to collaboration or individual endeavours – whereas *multi*-disciplinarity points to a collaboration between researchers from different disciplines, with the intention of producing research on the same topic from different disciplinary angles.

Interdisciplinarity within Research and Education

Recent years have been characterized by a push for interdisciplinarity both within research and education (see Widerberg et al. 2005). A mutual interest and demand for interdisciplinarity make the expectations and requirements go both ways. An interdisciplinary education promotes the kind of thinking now awarded research funding and such (interdisciplinary) research funding in its turn a message to the universities as to what they ought to prioritize. Today, both education and research have to be related and discussed when interdisciplinarity is the theme.

International educational integration, through the Bologna Declaration, brought about a total reform of higher education in Norway in 2003. University education until the reform entailed longer and more in-depth disciplinary undergraduate studies compared to the new system based on the American model. With the reform, the degrees became shorter and allegedly more market- and interdisciplinary-oriented. The administrative university structure with discipline oriented departments and faculties were however left more or less intact – even though the allocation of money was now partly based on production of credits. So, even though there are now several interdisciplinary Bachelor and

Master programmes, the programmes are administered in the old-fashioned way.

The same interdisciplinary emphasis was evident also in the new research policy formulated through the reorganization of the Research Council in 2003.⁵ However, the most profound change took place even earlier – a decade or two ago. Whereas funding until then to a larger extent was granted to good applications no matter what the topic was (we admit the slight exaggeration), there was a shift to funding through research programmes. Since then the programmes have been interdisciplinarily formulated and applicants are required to be affiliated to specific research environments. In other words, the programmes constitute a push towards interdisciplinarity. The competition has thus, in a sense, moved from between the disciplines to between «the hard and the soft sciences».

Overall, interdisciplinarity is publicly expressed as an unquestionable goal within research and higher education in Norway today. The reasons to «go for interdisciplinarity» are both varied and conflicting. What the market wants from and expects of interdisciplinarity might not coincide with the goals of the welfare state and the politicians. And none of them mean the same thing as the intellectuals arguing for interdisciplinarity in the name of gender, queer and post-colonial perspectives. For the present, this general discourse on interdisciplinarity opens up a space to the actual doing of interdisciplinarity in all its varieties. It is there – and this is important – for all of us to claim. So do we still want to, and if so, how do we want to do interdisciplinary research today? Our answers will most likely be influenced by our experiences of such endeavours, so let us see what we can learn from a research programme such as «Gender in Transition». What were their goals and how were they implemented and evaluated?

Gender in Transition

«Gender in Transition: Institutions, Norms, Identities» (GiT) was the follow-up of two parallel programmes for gender research: «Basic Women's Research for the Humanities» and «– for the Social Sciences» (1989–1996). This makes GiT the first gender research programme to bridge these two domains, and interdisciplinarity was also given priority in the stated goals of the programme. GiT was later to be succeeded by the current programme, «Gender Research: Knowledge, Change, Boundaries» (2002–2007), in which the interdisciplinary organization is maintained. The total funding of GiT during the five years was 27,6 mill NOK (3,3 mill EUR).

The programme aspired to meet two main challenges, which both sprang from the historic strengths and weaknesses of Norwegian gender research. The first goal was to combine theoretical problems with empirical research. This meant building on the strong tradition of «problem-oriented empiricism» in Norwegian gender research, which had been strong since its start in the 1970s, and continuing the theoretical turn encouraged by the first research programme in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The second goal was «continuing the comprehensive inter- and multidisciplinary cooperation that has characterized gender research» (GiT pol doc: 8). We will focus on this second goal in detail, but first briefly present the thematic priorities of the programme.

Six fields of priority were stated:

1. New forms of working life.
2. Individual rights and institutional norms: Moral and political dilemmas engendered by the tensions between individual and collective views in modern society.
3. Gender, religion and cultural conflicts.

4. Cultural coding of the body – the body as an interface between biology, past experience and culture.
5. Sexuality, gender and identity.
6. Feminism as critique (of the disciplines). Theoretical work on the sex-gender system and reflections on gender studies' own normative premises are mentioned in particular.

The priorities were to give direction to the applications. Focus was needed because the economic resources were considered small. In addition to social and academic relevance, one important argument for selecting these particular topics was their alleged equal appeal to the humanities and the social sciences (GiT mid ev: 2).

The board seems to have reflected on the issue of disciplinization in several ways in the process of writing the policy document. For instance, it is mentioned that the board's decision to not list men's studies on the list of priorities, although it was a research area they wanted to encourage, was based on the undesirability of making an artificial schism between women's and men's studies. It was argued that men's studies should rather be integrated in the topics listed – as should women's studies (GiT mid ev: 2).

Articulating Interdisciplinarity: Goals and Meanings

GiT professed interdisciplinarity, and paid special attention to inter-faculty research. The policy document states that: «The programme will provide incentives for closer cooperation between humanists and social scientists and attach emphasis to the interdisciplinary nature of the projects» (GiT pol doc: 23).

The special status interdisciplinarity has held in gender studies seems to have made arguments for the value of interdisciplinary

research as such redundant. To quote the policy document: «The [...] challenge lies in continuing the comprehensive inter- and multidisciplinary cooperation that has characterized gender research. The field would have been inconceivable without such cooperation» (GiT pol doc: 8). It seems to us that GiT may have taken both the existence and the positive aspects of interdisciplinarity for granted. This became especially evident when comparing GiT and PCUL; in the policy document of the latter, interdisciplinarity was considerably more pronounced, emphasized and advocated (PCUL pol doc, Larsen and Widerberg 2006:11, 14–15).

PCUL explicated the overall goal of interdisciplinarity to be the production of a *shared* perspective. Strong academic interests in the PCUL board were directed at making something new and challenging out of the multitude of disciplinary perspectives. According to the chairman of GiT, *their* goal was to produce separate and *different* perspectives on an issue, inspired by the different disciplines. Syntheses and intermix were seemingly less of a primary goal.

Although interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity were present goals in the programme, they did not override the goal of good disciplinary research. Contrary to PCUL, interdisciplinarity was not hailed as GiT's most important ambition.

When asked why interdisciplinarity had not been contested, debated or made an issue at board level in GiT, the board gave the following explanation: Gender researchers have always been interdisciplinarily oriented, due to knowledge claims (gender cuts across disciplines and the disciplines have not evolved with the aim to understand gender) as well as necessity (there are few gender researchers within each discipline). The assumption of interdisciplinarity within GiT may have meant that interdisciplinary research met little

resistance, and thus promoted it. On the other hand, it may also have meant that some of the «romanticism» and ardent enthusiasm often surrounding all that is «new» may have gone away – for better or worse.⁶ Leaving aside the question of whether gender research at the time was at a more advanced level of interdisciplinary work than was cultural research, our findings raise a more general question, probably of current interest. Namely, is there an underdeveloped potential of interdisciplinarity within gender research?

The writings on interdisciplinarity in GiT's policy document questioned neither the fruitfulness of the phenomenon as such nor its inherent possibilities. The following two questions were apparently deemed more relevant themes for discussion:

1. Whether the main bulk of gender research should be conducted within the conventional disciplines or outside of them.
2. If and how gender-, women's, men's, gay/lesbian and queer studies should be more closely integrated, how to combine different theoretical traditions in these fields, and how to combine theoretical and empirical research.

The first issue points to internal competition between the disciplines and the centres. Gender research in Norway seems to have flourished because it has had several institutions to spring from (Widerberg 2006). The board of GiT continued this practice and thus opted for a «double strategy»; gender studies should be supported *both* as a separate field *and* as a research topic integrated into the (traditional) disciplines. In other words, they refused to make a choice as to which «side» they wanted to support: «Efforts will be invested in developing and maintaining broad, multidisciplinary scholarly expertise. At the same time, the programme will con-

tribute to the development of knowledge within the individual disciplines» (GiT pol doc: 4).

According to the chairman there was a consensus within the board on this matter. The board decided to handle the applications based on academic quality, first and foremost. They did however also consider national-, disciplinary-, thematic- and institutional distribution, and claimed prioritized disciplines in which the gender perspective had been rare or absent (GiT pol doc: 11).

The second issue – concerning the integration of different research traditions – was stated as more of a resource than a problem. One tension had to do with theory versus empirical research; another had to do with new (post-structuralist) versus traditional (feminist) perspectives. As stated in the policy document:

There is a tendency towards a certain distance and tension between the social sciences and the humanities, not least because the humanities have begun to make more independent theoretical contributions. There are also divergent views among researchers in women's, men's and gender studies, particularly as regards politics and the distribution of power. [...].

The Programme Committee views the ongoing discussions as an important resource and an expression of the growing scope covered by the field. The new gender research programme will take this broader scope into account and exploit the constructive opportunities inherent in the tensions between various fields of research and theoretical positions. As a result, the concept of gender research will include traditions from women's research and feminist research as well as impulses

from newer areas such as men's research and culture-based gender research (GiT pol doc: 7).

It was the schism *within gender research* that was focused on – not those between the different disciplines – although, notably, this schism was partly linked to the humanist-/social sciences divide. Interdisciplinarity, defined as collaboration between separate disciplines, was not the issue here. Instead, interdisciplinarity understood as theoretical and methodological positions cutting across disciplinary boundaries (sometimes defined as trans-disciplinarity) seem to be the challenge. And maybe it is here, in the dialogue between such positions and disciplinary approaches, that there is a potential for interdisciplinary development within gender research.

Performing Interdisciplinarity at Programme Level: Distribution

A crucial prerequisite for a research programme to be interdisciplinary is that different disciplines are represented among the funded projects. Let us therefore take a look at how the money was distributed. At the closing date, 120 applications were received at the Council's. Of these, one third was considered fundable, and 75 % of these were funded, which made 29 funded projects in all (but several of these were granted less money than applied for). There were a large proportion of young applicants; in total, PhDs constituted almost half of the applications (56 of 120), and the board regretted they were not able to support even more in this category (GiT end ev: 4).

The funded projects were quite evenly divided by faculty; nine were humanities projects and 11 were social science projects. Nine projects were listed as multi-discipli-

nary. Note that in six of the nine entities in this category, the funding consisted of *network support*, not money for full research projects. However, because the networks funded (with one exception) were interdisciplinary, it is reasonable to say that the choice of prioritizing networks favoured multi- or interdisciplinary initiatives.

Concerning the link between theory and empirical research, efforts were made to reach this goal. The main means was the «umbrella»-structure, joining projects together. In PCUL different *disciplines* were gathered underneath the umbrellas while in GiT there were examples of *empirical researchers and theorists* getting together as well.

The next issue we identified as important to interdisciplinarity in GiT was the integration of women's and gender studies and lesbian, gay, queer and masculinity studies. Direct comparisons of the number of projects supported are hard to make because support was often given for small arrangements that should not count as much as full economic support for research projects. Excluding network and seminar support and the like, six projects on topics related to homosexuality and one project on men and masculinities were supported; leaving the vast majority to women's and gender studies with the weight on *women*.

This was perhaps natural considering the relative strength of women's and gender studies in Norwegian research at the time, and special means *were* used to encourage applications from the other fields. «Sexuality, gender and identity» was made a topic of priority, and the board even arranged the conference «Sexing the Self» in 1997 in order to stimulate applications in this field. However, GiT's tight budget demanded strict priorities, and the distribution between the branches conveys the fact that women's research – based on an

evaluation of quality as stated as the prime criteria – received funding to a higher degree than gay-, queer-, men-, and masculinity studies.

Performing Interdisciplinarity at Programme Level: Conferences and Seminars

Four conferences and three seminars were arranged at programme level. These arrangements were the main means of encouraging multi-disciplinarity within the programme. Did it work?

Firstly, the number of gatherings was quite small. This goes for all Research Council programmes; GiT did not have fewer gatherings than the average programme and thus this is a general point. Still, the point is that the researchers meet only about once a semester – if they participate in all the gatherings, which few are not likely to do. This might not be a major problem to researchers who already have a stimulating interdisciplinary work environment. But for researchers who do not, the programme activities could perhaps serve quite an important purpose.

However, some researchers experienced the tensions at conferences and seminars as being too strong to have a constructive impact. This was especially expressed to have been the case among some who were not doing women's research or not keeping to the assumptions considered «politically correct» (interviewees expression) among this majority. In this way, GiT brought to light an interesting question: Does the so-called interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies suffer the same rigidity problems as conventional disciplines when having their doxa confronted? In fact, the end evaluation by the programme board may be interpreted to express similar thoughts. After concluding that the multi-disciplinary seminars and

conferences all in all had been a success, they continued: «it is more doubtful whether the programme has also managed to initiate inter- and multidisciplinary collaboration in a way which has had impact on the results in terms of knowledge» (GiT end ev: 12, our translation). Had gender research become so «established» that it shut out new perspectives? And what is then the situation at present?

Performing Interdisciplinarity at Project Level: Two Networks

We interviewed researchers from two networks, one in Oslo and one in Bergen. The two were very different in scope, strategies and aims. The head and heart of the Oslo network was a team of four people organizing open and free seminars and conferences at fixed dates throughout the year. The speakers were researchers who studied homosexuality from any discipline and perspective, from student to senior level. The Bergen network was a philosophically oriented reading circle, whose efforts eventually resulted in an international conference as well as a book.

How did the two networks «do» interdisciplinarity? The Bergen network consisted of researchers from philosophy, literature, public administration and Spanish. Very different disciplines on the surface, but the individual researchers had a shared interest in basic theoretical research with philosophical roots, and this was their common ground. Their goal was to discuss theory across disciplines. The network was self-initiated, and the participants had both professional and social ties. But the reading circle also stretched out internationally. Money was spent to house guest scholars from the Nordic countries and the US, who lectured on their own work and contributed to the reading circle along with the other participants. The different discipli-

nary backgrounds never posed a problem, according to our interviewee. The theoretical interest cut across, and this seemed to have made interdisciplinary collaboration less of a challenge. On the one hand, one may say that the network functioned successfully because of the members' shared theoretical interests. On the other hand, there may perhaps be less to be gained by interdisciplinarity if there is already an academic consensus at the outset.

Interestingly, the Oslo network seemed to have been successful for the exact opposite reason; the low threshold for both attending and speaking, as well as the low commitment involved, seemed to have created an open and inclusive environment – for different disciplines and academic traditions. The «drop-in» character of the seminars may have been the key. There was however also factors that ran somewhat contrary to this point. First, research on homosexuality is still so rare that it requires interdisciplinary collaboration to have any collaboration at all. Second, research on homosexuality is also especially interesting in terms of identity. A majority of the researchers in this field identify as homosexual, and this may be central to understanding the collective spirit and shared enthusiasm across disciplines in this research field. Both factors are probably transferable to the early period of women research in the 1970s.

Performing Interdisciplinarity at Project Level: One Umbrella Project

As mentioned, the umbrella structure was one way of organizing interdisciplinary projects. One of the umbrellas was mentioned by several as especially successful, and it may well be read as an example of «how to do it». This network consisted, with a few exceptions, of researchers from different disciplines within the social sciences, and it exemplifies

how theoretic and empirical interests were joined together.

Two senior researchers were the heads of the umbrella, and 10-15 PhD scholars, master students and research fellows connected their own work to the seniors' projects. The senior coordinators' projects were basically of a theoretical nature (although they were also engaged in more empirically oriented projects funded by other sources) whereas the rest of the projects were more empirically oriented. About half were seniors and half were «juniors», and some of the seminars were credited as PhD courses. The seminars served both as reading circles in which theoretically relevant texts were discussed and as workshops in which the participants' own texts were reviewed and commented upon. The participants met regularly four times a year and they also had two two-day seminars during a period of three years. In addition they arranged a few open seminars with guest speakers. One of the coordinators emphasized the importance of maintaining the same network for a longer period of time, because mutual confidence needs time to grow, and such confidence was important to the fruitfulness of those seminars.

Our interviewee experienced that the group became tightly knit professionally, and that they were all reciprocally inspired. She also talked of an academic change of direction in her own work in the wake of the umbrella project, but she would not identify it as interdisciplinary. It was rather a change *within* the frames of her own discipline, she claimed. And this is perhaps a point in itself; perhaps those researchers most interested in working interdisciplinary do not see their own discipline as narrowly defined, but as open to new impulses. Maybe the old concept of interdisciplinarity is not considered fit for one's actual use of theoretical and methodological positions cutting cross disciplinary boundaries.

To what extent are we today actually working interdisciplinary within our disciplines?

Before merely concluding this umbrella to be a «success story» of GiT, we would like to focus some more on the role of the Research Council – through the programme funding. Except for the two senior coordinators, the researchers in the umbrella were funded from outside of the programme. The seniors were granted only half of the time and money they applied for; the project period was planned for three years and, even though the seniors were only granted half of the time applied for, the three-year period was maintained for the umbrella network, as three years is the estimated time span for a PhD to be completed. In addition some conferences and seminars were funded, and some additional expenses for seminars were granted by the programme midways.

In our opinion, the details concerning funding are worth dwelling on. Even though each project was important to the collaboration in the umbrella, the applications sent in were evaluated separately. This means that the view of the umbrella as a whole – and the role of each project in it – might get lost in the process. It also means that an umbrella planned to be inter- or multidisciplinary might end up as a disciplinary one, if money is lacking. In a programme as poor in resources as GiT, this particular umbrella was probably regarded as a big investment, but, for the researchers involved, the funding was a minimum of what was needed. It would not have been possible to get it going without other sources funding the PhDs. In this sense, one might in fact say that the umbrella existed *in spite of* as well as *because of* the programme's priorities.

Perhaps even more important, this network was able to continue existing and working due to new funding by the proceeding gender program. And this is something we

would like to stress; it takes time to make good collaborating research networks. And when someone has really got a good one going, it should, in our opinion, be first in line for further funding. This way, excellent interdisciplinary networks may grow strong.

Paradigms & Politics: The Difficult Field of Gender

All the researchers we talked to – from both programmes – said that they would stick to an interdisciplinary orientation in the future. They valued and sought interdisciplinary research milieus, networks and collaboration. But when asked about their identity, interdisciplinary or disciplinary, they gave quite different answers across generation and faculty borders. While the cultural researchers claimed an interdisciplinary identity, strengthened over the years, the gender researchers claimed a disciplinary identity, strengthened over the years. And the last category – including both younger and established researchers – stressed the importance of having a disciplinary foundation before embarking on an interdisciplinary project. Such endeavours should wait until after the MA, preferably after the PhD, to guarantee quality as well as disciplinary security.

It seems to us that there might be higher intellectual tensions within the field of gender than that of culture, and that this fact may make interdisciplinary work more difficult in this field – in spite of its interdisciplinary tradition. The gender field does not only have a political history, it is still – we claim – very much concerned with values, norms and – yes, politics. Indeed, this fact became evident at the hearings of the GiT programme, as we have seen.

Following this reasoning, we may question whether the assumptions may hide quite fierce oppositions within gender studies,

which possibly a lot of researchers find more constructive not to bring up at each and every crossroad. One younger researcher even expressed the view that gender research, also within this program, was *not* interdisciplinary, because it was not open to different theoretical perspectives. As doxic and political, it was, according to her view, a discipline. The assumption of interdisciplinarity within gender research was here questioned and interpreted as disciplinarity instead. It questioned the theme as a foundation for interdisciplinarity, arguing for theoretical perspectives and approaches instead.

However, this is not only about politics, but to a high degree about theoretic paradigms. One reason for the different foci and ways of working with interdisciplinarity within the culture field compared to the gender field might be that there are today fewer theoretic tensions among researchers from the humanities working on culture than there are among researchers from the social sciences and the humanities working on gender. The «new» paradigm of post-structuralism is more founded, shared and less threatening to the humanities and forms a platform attracting also the younger generations of researchers.

Gender research has been dominated by the social scientists and to them this paradigm – stemming from the humanities – is stranger and more alienating. Accordingly, tensions around theoretical perspectives and approaches – indirectly around disciplines – can be expected to be more immediate in the gender field. But, the greater the challenges (and difficulties) this theoretical turn represents the more dramatic the changes within the «troubled» approaches can be expected to be. And the most «troubled» disciplines are the ones most likely to profit the most from interdisciplinary work.

Interdisciplinarity – What Is It Good For?

At the practical level, there are still quite a few steps left to be taken to promote interdisciplinary research. The disciplinary structure of the universities makes everyday life of an interdisciplinary scholar quite burdensome (getting an office, technical facilities, functioning economic routines and so forth). Evaluations (in relation to Phd dissertations and academic positions) and publication venues are still mainly disciplinary-founded or -oriented. Although large-scale interdisciplinary umbrella research projects are supposed to be prioritized in the Research Council and such applications are stimulated, the amount of money finally awarded in the end does not make it possible. Other vital criteria for funding – such as geographical distribution (historically and traditionally maybe the strongest criterion in Norway besides quality), disciplinary and gender distribution – also compete with the interdisciplinary criterion, resulting in scarce research resources being spread thinly all over Norway. By financing only parts of it – which seems to be the general rule – the umbrella project is scattered and fragmented. This way of cutting finances may in practice turn an interdisciplinary project into a disciplinary one.

While we wait for the structures to change and for the money to flow, let us reflect on the matter of interdisciplinarity more substantially. The study of Gender in Transition indicates that interdisciplinarity is not necessarily defined or discussed, but might end up more like a political slogan, also at research level. Everything is stated «allowed» while all that is «forbidden» remains invisible. If we gender researchers in the humanities and the social sciences are more or less interdisciplinary, then it seems more interesting to ask what one is still not allowed to do (methods),

know (themes) or claim (norms), within our disciplines as well as within the gender field. It is when asking what can *not* be done, that we learn of the limits which then can be confronted more successfully. The study of Gender in Transition gives a clue of what to look for; politically incorrect perspectives or academic perspectives not corresponding to the current scientific paradigm. Different «don'ts» like this may in fact create stronger tensions than differences between disciplines. Worse, they may also work as blindfolds to new knowledge. Looking at interdisciplinarity in this way – as Gender in Transition in fact attempted to do – is obviously worthy of further discussions and explorations, also in research praxis. ★

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Notes

- 1 This project is funded by the EU Commission. We give our thanks for the support.
 - 2 «Changing Knowledge and Disciplinary Boundaries through Integrative Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities», CIT2-CT-2003-506013.
 - 3 The report is available at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration/>.
 - 4 We would like to thank Dagny Meltvik and Christine Viland, who wrote master theses within the project, for generously allowing us to use some of their interviews.
 - 5 In Norway, as in most other countries, research funding is both private and public. Large corporations, organizations, labour unions and the like either accept applications for funding, employ
- their own researchers, or finance separate research institutes. There are quite a few social science-dominated research institutes in Norway – compared to the other Scandinavian countries – which are financed, at least partly, through private means. But even here a major part of the funding is based on applications to the national Research Council. Norway has only one publicly financed and controlled research council, which accordingly has the sole responsibility for the overall administration of the national research funding. Political guidelines manifested in budget decisions constitute the frames of its workings. The Council has about 4000 million Norwegian kroner (NOK), which equals about 500 million € annually, at its disposal, for research projects in all disciplines.
- 6 One may keep in mind that the situation for gender researchers have changed a lot since the 1970s and structural changes may help explain a reduced enthusiasm regarding interdisciplinarity. Earlier the researchers were few, and had to isolate or collaborate. Today there are gender research milieus within several disciplines, and thus they are quite able to develop their research within their discipline. Some interviewees regarded the frames of the disciplines an academic advantage.