



Memorandum for the Establishment of an Institute for Gender and Sex Research at the Humboldt University Berlin, 1991



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M E M O R A N D U M

The undersigned respectfully request that the High Academic Senate establish an

Institute for Gender and Sex Research

within the Department of Social Sciences of Humboldt University Berlin as a successor to the Institute for Sexology founded by Magnus Hirschfeld.

Preface ↑

The history of sexology before 1933 is firmly rooted in Berlin. It was here that Iwan Bloch presented the first agenda of the newly-developing subject of sexology in 1907; sex researchers Albert Eulenburg (1840-1917), Albert Moll (1862-1938), and Max Marcuse (1877-1963) made their careers here, as did women's rights activists Helene Stöcker (1869-1943), Adele Schreiber-Krieger (1872-1957), and psychoanalyst Karen Horney (1885-1952). In 1905, Helene Stöcker and Max Marcuse founded the scientific journal "Mutterschutz" ("Maternal Protection"); after 1908 Stöcker edited it alone under the new title "Die neue Generation" ("The New Generation"). In the same year, Hirschfeld published the first journal on sexology; five years later, the first professional sexological societies were founded in Berlin. In 1919, Magnus Hirschfeld opened the first Institute for Sexology; it was destroyed by the Nazis in 1933.

The Institute, which had been sponsored by the Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation since 1924 was, for its era, as outstanding as it was unique. It included medical, psychological, and ethnological divisions, and a marriage and sex counseling office; its scientific-humanitarian committee was one of the pioneering institutions to call for civil rights for homosexual men and women. Other significant issues in which the Institute was involved included the demand for equal rights for women, family planning, and sex education

According to the founder's wishes, the Institute's resources were to be used to establish a chair for sexology at Berlin University. Both, West and East Germany failed to follow this bequest after 1945. Since 1982, the Magnus Hirschfeld Society in West Berlin has been working toward the reestablishment of the Institute for Sexology at one of Berlin's universities.

The founding of an Institute for Gender and Sex Research at Berlin Humboldt University would also constitute a belated act of reparation; it would be an

acknowledgement of the life and work of the jew activist Magnus Hirschfeld, M.D. At the same time, by establishing the Institute the Humboldt University would be carrying out an act of atonement for all the men and women, who were persecuted during the Nazi era because of their sexuality.

However, the dicision to newly establish a sexology institute within a University setting should not be misunderstood as to continue with the field of sexology in a conventional manner; i.e., with research which more or less abstracts from the relationship between the sexes. Following 150 years of scientific work dealing with sexuality, criticism of this type of research has grown. A newly-founded facility should not ignore these criticisms; rather, it should accept them, use them to develop new scientific perspectives, find new areas of emphasis, and develop new sets of goals; i.e., to carry out innovative research in the field.

A gender-neutral view of sexuality is obsolete, not only because it does not explain **the** sexuality of **all** people but also because the lectures and writings about sexuality cannot be separated from the gender of the female and male researchers and their differing views of sexual matters. The gender-specific biases and the biographical facts conveyed thereby should be utilized as an epistemological instrument within the framework of the proposed institute. As such, the decision to newly establish a Sexology Institute cannot encompass a decision to simply continue with traditional sexology's rationalist, behavioralist, or medical origins. This is because monodisciplinary sexual research leads to a narrowing of perspectives and looses itself in dead-end streets. A decisive aspect of the Institute's work is the recognition that gender relationships are socially constructed, and that they are structured both patriarchally and hierarchically due to social, economic, and cultural conditions. New insights into the relationship between the sexes will be gained only if gender differences and the conditions of structural violence are placed in the center of the research. From this perspective the Institute's affiliation with the Social Sciences Department is essential.

With the understanding of gender relationships and sexuality, the Institute confronts a current problematic situation. Through its work, it strives to create the framework for reflection about sexual and gender relationships and the social conflicts that develop out of them. Therefore it is important to expose the potential for sexual power and violence between men and women, between majorities and minorities, and between adherents of differing cultural traditions. The growing interest in these issues can be seen in the increasing number of counseling and self-help groups, as well as in independent research projects. However, their activism cannot belie the fact that opportunities for independent research are limited and independent scholars are unable to keep up with the emerging demand for theory, and that, as a whole, their working conditions for scientific research are generally inadequate.

A. Responsibilities ↑

I. Research - II. Teaching - III. Practice

Given the goal of explaining and understanding sexuality within the framework of historical, political and social relationships form a gender perspective, the Institute's work would include the following areas:

- to analyze the order of gender relationships as based upon power, dominance, and/or violence;

- to study the gender differences and gender roles and at the same study how concepts of gender have been socially constructed;
- to lead the theoretical and practical discussion on the gender-specific differentiation of sexual perception and behavior;
- to define the constitution, regulation and control of women's and men's bodies in terms of reproductive politics.

↑ I. Research

1. Basic research with the following areas of emphasis:

- Theory of sexualities;
- theory of gender;
- theory of gender relationships;
- theory of reproduction;
- theory of social norms on gender and sexuality;
- the gender specificity of the concept of sexuality.

2. Historical research with the following areas of emphasis:

- History of the sexes, gender relationships and sexualities;
- history of discrimination against and persecution of sexual minorities;
- history of sexology, especially the work of the old Hirschfeld Institute with the goal of critically analyzing and further developing traditions of enlightened sexology.

3. Empirical research with the following areas of emphasis:

- Relationship between the sexes; sexual perception and behavior of men and women; male aggression and violence against women; sexuality in couple relationships; lifestyles of sexual minorities;
- research on the psychosocial and societal dimensions of the AIDS epidemic;
- research on reproduction politics, especially on the societal, political and social regulation and control of reproduction through new technologies;
- research on concepts for the treatment of sexual dysfunction and conflicts, and on counseling and treatment practice.

↑ II. Teaching

The Institute for Gender and Sex Research would offer the following instruction:

1. optional events for participants from all departments
2. required or elective events for those majoring in subjects from other departments
3. continuing education courses for practitioners
4. research and doctoral seminars

on 1.

Basic orientation and survey events in the context of fulfilling § 24, sec. 2 and 3 BerlHG (Berlin Higher Education Law).

on 2.

The teaching is particularly geared toward those studying

- Educational Science/teacher-training fields
(e.g., gender-specific sexual socialization; a critical view of concepts of gender-

- specific child-raising; sex education)
- Law
 - (e.g., marriage and family law; sexual criminal law and criminology; forensics)
 - Cultural Studies
 - (e.g., forms of expression and representation of sexuality and gender relationships; everyday culture of sexuality; ethnology of sexuality)
 - Psychology
 - (e.g., construction of gender identities; psychology of sexual minorities; concepts of counseling and therapy in the area of sexual dysfunctions and conflicts)
 - History
 - (e.g., history of bodies and the sexes; history of birth control and reproduction, history of patriarchy)
 - Sociology
 - (e.g., power structures and sexuality; constructs of gender; sexual deviation and normalcy)
 - Philosophy/Theology/Religious Sciences
 - (e.g., gender-specific structures of thought; patriarchal myths and dogmas; practical sexual ethics)
 - Medicine
 - (e.g., a criticism of gene and reproductive medicine; the medicalization of sexuality and sexual deviance)

on 3.

It is both necessary and prudent to cooperate intensely with counseling and self-help organizations working in and around Berlin. Here, possible teaching would include:

- clinical supervision
- practice-oriented continuing education for counselors and therapists
- post-graduate continuing education courses
- organization of common research colloquia with projects independent of the university (for example, history workshops, gay and lesbian archives, a Feminist Education and Information Center, etc.).

The Institute for Gender and Sex Research does not strive to offer any particular course of study or degree. The possibility of acquiring additional qualifications at the Institute within the framework of research studies should remain open.

↑ III. Practice

Both the type and scope of counseling and psychotherapy will be determined based upon research, teaching, and clinical supervision responsibilities. However, we note that some of the above-mentioned research goals could not be attained without a counseling and/or psychotherapy practice of their own. Likewise, continuing education and supervision cannot be offered without such experience.

B. Requirements ↑

I. Personnel Requirements - [II. Material Requirements](#) - [III. Space Requirements](#)

↑ I. Personnel Requirements

- 4 Professors C4
- 12 research assistants and/or lecturers
- 6 secretaries
- 2 librarians and/or archivists
- 1 higher administrative officer

In order to realize the goals outlined on the previous pages, it is essential when filling the positions that gender parity is achieved in all main areas of research. To attain interdisciplinarity and cooperation with independent projects, sufficient funds must be available for hiring guest professors, lecturers and/or temporary project workers for limited periods of time (independently of potential fundraising to attain third-party grants).

↑ II. Material Requirements

In addition to basic requirements, such as furniture, equipment, etc., the Institute should have the sum of DM 100,000 in its founding year in order to establish a library; in the following five years, DM 20,000 per year would be required to acquire books, research, and research materials.

Every department of the Institute should be guaranteed a minimum of DM 15,000 per fiscal year; in addition, the Institute as a whole should be allotted DM 20,000 in central funds per fiscal year.

↑ III. Space Requirements

- 16 rooms for the academics
- 2 to 8 rooms for the library and archives
- 2 rooms for doctoral candidates, degree candidates and assistants
- 2 rooms for guest lecturers
- 1 conference room
- 4 to 8 rooms for research assistants, who will be paid through third-party funds
- 2 rooms for those projects and/or groups cooperating with the Institute
- 2 seminar rooms

Given the historical work of the Institute, it would be desirable for the library, in addition to its emphasis on research, to concentrate on collecting significant publications from the second half of the nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries, especially those connected with the former Hirschfeld Institute.



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aus: [Mitteilungen der Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft, Nr. 17, Dezember 1992](#)