

2. Políticas, instituições e cidadania

OC - (22701) - HOW BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING IS PILLING SHATTERED GLASS AT THE BOTTOM: THE PROBLEMATISATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

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This paper employs Bacchi's policy analysis methodology named 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) to examine the contemporary gender equality (GE) policy for Irish higher education. Since 2014, gender equality has gained momentum in Ireland. Feminist organising and media attention resulted in an 'almost-perfect storm of pressure' to which the state responded by developing an 'ambitious and radical' policy. In the process, the problem of gender inequality has been gradually narrowed to address the lack of 'women' in senior positions, marginalising competing problematisations. The unequal distribution of care work in and out of higher education was ignored, silencing the gendered experiences of academics and non-academics, particularly precarious and outsourced staff. We investigate the expert knowledge entangled in GE regimes and show how the current problem representation manufactured (and constrained) expectations for change, shaping the debates. The focus on the glass ceiling (a trend across Europe) is a form of 'gender branding' drawing on and reproducing neo-colonial progress-scales while stalling intersectional agendas. Focusing on this might help some women climb the career ladder, and eventually, the scissor charts' lines might run contiguous and parallel. Still, Irish HE will not be free of gender inequality. While not addressing the devaluation of care work or the managerial structure of power, the policy fails to challenge the unfairness denounced by feminisms. The GE policy invisibilises most care work done in HE. It deprioritises non-academic staff, ignores precarity, and excludes outsourced workers. The policy apparatus presupposes it is impossible to know most cleaners in Irish HEIs are 'economic migrant women' because the HEA does not collect data on them. Differently, we maintain that GE policies that disregard cleaners and other outsourced workers or do not engage in intersectional analysis are skewed by privilege.

Palavras-chave : Gender equality policy, Irish higher education, 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR)