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Intersectional Perspectives on Gender Equality in Higher Education: A Survey on Swiss Universities of Applied Science

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Context

International orientation is legally anchored for Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) since 1995

However, strong social selectivity and gender inequalities in students’ access and success exist

• 28% (2013) students with a migrant background at UAS compared to 41% share of 18-34 year olds with a migrant background in the permanent resident population of Switzerland (FSO 2015a: 25).
• horizontal and vertical gender segregations, i.e. traditional fields of study and glass ceiling effects
• lack of data on intersectional effects, i.e. intersections between social categories of difference
Context

Students with migrant background at Swiss UAS (2013)

Main countries (across all universities)

Germany (25%)
France (16%)
Portugal (16%)
Italy (12%)
Austria (3%)
Others (41%)

Source: SSEE, 2013, BFS, Neuchâtel, 2014
Theoretical perspectives

- universities (re-)produce gender relations and inequalities, also in processes of internationalization (Aulenbacher/Riegraf 2010)

Institutional perspectives

- formal rules and regulations (e.g. conditions for admission and education, gender equality policies) and
- informal requirements (i.e. implicit rules and ‘diversity cultures’) generate specific framework conditions for migrant students of different sex (cf. Riegraf et al. 2010; Funder 2014)

Intersectional perspectives

- different structural categories can generate structurally specific differentiations and inequalities (Crenshaw 1994)
- Social differences can be of different importance in different structural and institutional contexts (e.g. educational fields) (cf. Lutz 2007)
Research Questions + Aims

Research Questions

- How do male/female students with migrant background perceive the UAS diversity climate?
- How does perception of UAS climate impact on intentions of students to continue their studies?

AIMs of this presentation

- Illustrate the influence of the perception of the UAS diversity climate on intention of male/female students with migrant background to continue their studies
- Develop ideas for the improvement of the UAS diversity climate for students

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Methods

- Swiss online-survey of BA-students in 2 Universities of Applied Science and 1 University of Education in Switzerland (N=9’608) in 2018.
- Comparison of students’ perspectives in two areas of large BA degree courses with different male/female ratio
- RETURNS:
  - Economy & technology n=978
  - Education & social work n=642

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Perception the of UAS from students with migrant background (incl. diversity)

- I feel like I belong to this university $n=679$, $M=3.62$, $s=1.14$
- I feel welcome at this university $n=662$, $M=4.00$, $s=.97$
- I feel valued by this university $n=634$, $M=3.62$, $s=1.06$
- This university values the opinions of its students $n=679$, $M=3.36$, $s=1.26$
- It is important for me to study at a university where there are a wide variety of students...
- I feel appreciated by the other students $n=656$, $M=4.04$, $s=.841$
- I think that the university is concerned about my well-being $n=608$, $M=2.79$, $s=1.21$
- I view the lecturers and professors at my university as role models $n=640$, $M=3.01$, $s=1.12$
- I have the same opportunities for academic success as my fellow students $n=638$, $M=4.16$...
- Students of different sexual orientations are respected at this university $n=475$, $M=4.52$...

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### Perception the of UAS from students with migrant background (incl. diversity) II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students of different religions are respected at this university n=541, M=4.45, s=.85</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from different countries of origin are respected at this university n=602, M=4.40, s=.88</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of different genders are respected at this university n=634, M=4.51, s=.79</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from different socio-economic backgrounds are respected at this university n=558, M=4.34, s=.86</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different opinions, ideas and perspectives are encouraged at my university n=603, M=3.68, s=1.15</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingualism is encouraged at my university n=566, M=3.42, s=1.39</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated differently because of my language n=569, M=1.51, s=1.05</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the way performance evaluations at my university are carried out n=632, M=3.12, s=1.17</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching staff encourage students to form study groups n=628, M=3.37, s=1.36</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Multiple regression analysis shows

- Perception of the UAS has an influence on the desire to continue studies; F(2,1702) = 93.7, p = .000, n = 1703

- 9.8% of the spread in the desire to continue studies is explained by the students' perception of the UAS, which according to Cohen (1992) corresponds to a medium effect (f=.33 - almost a strong effect).
Conclusion

• In general, a rather positive perception of the UAS (incl. the diversity climate) by male and female students with a migrant background can be stated in this survey.

• Perception of the UAS (incl. diversity climate) has an influence on the desire to continue studies for male/female students with migrant background.

• However, in this survey, students from a migrant background point out a number of issues, which they perceived as in need of improvement (see next slide).
Implications

In order to improve the perception of the UAS (incl. diversity climate) by students with a migrant background, UAS should:

• express more **value** for students and their opinions
• express more **concern** about the well-being of its students
• **support** lecturers and professors as role models
• **encourage** multilingualism at the university
• **foster** transparency of evaluations for all students
• **foster** the formation of learning groups where students with and without migrant backgrounds work together
Literature I


Literature II

Development of entry to UH at licentiate/diploma/bachelor level by gender and educational background