

Sexual Politics on Behalf of LGBTIQ? Re_Production of Heteronormativity in the German Debate about the Implementation of Sexual Diversity as a Topic in School

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Abstract: In the fall of 2013, a working paper by the German federal government of Baden-Württemberg became public, revealing the intention to introduce the topic of sexual diversity across all school subjects. This was followed by a public outcry: Almost 192,000 German citizens signed a petition against the planned curriculum reform; between February 2014 and February 2016, every few months, thousands took to the streets to demonstrate against “gender-ideology and [the] sexualization of our children via the curriculum” (Demo für Alle 2014). In this paper, I analyze the working paper as well as the petition from a discourse-analytical perspective. Specifically, I work out how knowledge about gender and sexuality is re-produced and transformed in the two documents. I do not only show the petition’s use of so-called “anti-genderist” rhetoric but also the ambivalence of the specific LGBT*I*Q representation in the working paper. Despite their contrary intentions, both documents contribute to the re_production of a heteronormative order.

Keywords: Education, Discourse, Heteronormativity, Antifeminism

Submitted: 31 January 2019

Accepted: 26 November 2019

Published: 15 May 2020

Cite as: Grenz, Frauke (2020): Sexual Politics on Behalf of LGBTIQ? Re_Production of Heteronormativity in the German Debate about the Implementation of Sexual Diversity as a Topic in School. In: *Open Gender Journal* (2020). doi: [10.17169/oqj.2020.82](https://doi.org/10.17169/oqj.2020.82)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17169/oqj.2020.82>

Edited by Julia Scholz and Boka En

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Introduction

After the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg had been governed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) for over 50 years – for the last 15 years, in coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) – the political situation changed; in the 2011 federal election, the CDU was still the strongest party, but even together with the FDP no longer had a majority of the seats. This electoral result led to the first federal government in Germany to be led by the Green Party. The Green Party (Alliance 90/The Greens) became the second largest party and formed a coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which took over the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (Ministerium für Kultur, Jugend und Sport).

Soon after the election, the ministry began working on a reform of the state curriculum. In the fall of 2013, a working paper concerning this reform was leaked to the public. The document revealed an intention to introduce the topic of sexual diversity across all school subjects. This was followed by public outcry: Almost 192,000 citizens signed a petition against the planned reform of the curriculum and from April 2014 onward, every few months, thousands took to the streets to demonstrate against “gender-ideology and [the] sexualization of our children” (Demo für alle 2014, transl. by FG). The debate soon reached national attention. In the end, the new curriculum was delayed but ultimately passed in 2016, with changes compared to the leaked working paper. This 2016 curriculum includes a guideline with the title “Education to Tolerance and Acceptance of Diversity” (Curriculum 2016, transl. by FG); however, the term “sexual diversity” no longer appears anywhere in the document.

For this paper², I have conducted a detailed analysis of the working paper

1 See Petition 2013.

2 The analysis in this paper forms part of my PhD project, in which I analyze discursive statements in different enunciative contexts of the Baden-Württemberg debate, such as the working paper that was leaked in 2013, the discussions in the federal parliament of Baden-Württemberg concerning the curriculum, the curriculum that was finally passed in 2016, the petition against the curriculum, the self-representation of the opponents of the curriculum (e.g. the alliance Demo für alle), as well as the press coverage of the debate from a discourse-analytical perspective. I am not only interested in the arguments of the opponents of the curriculum. Rather, I aim to work out how knowledge about gender, sexuality, and educa-

that was leaked in 2013 as well as of the petition against the planned reform of the curriculum. Specifically, I have analyzed how knowledge about gender and sexuality is re-produced³ and transformed in the two documents. Before I present the results of this analysis, I give some insight into how the two documents fit into the larger social, political, and scientific context in chapter 1. In chapter 2, I present the main theoretical concepts on which I base my research and briefly explain how I conducted my analysis. Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to the presentation of results. I close with a conclusion in chapter 5, in which I summarize the results and point towards different possibilities for thinking about gender, sexuality, and education.

Contextualization and State of the Art

The two documents I have analyzed for this paper represent two sides of a paradox and a simultaneous development that has taken place over recent years. On the one hand, questions about diversity and equal rights have become one of the major issues for public and private institutions as well as for social science⁴. Ann-Kathrin Stoltenhoff and Kerstin Raudonat identify a new paradigm of heterogeneity in German educational systems (Stoltenhoff/Raudonat 2018, 236). The draft for the curriculum reform in Baden-Württemberg (the working paper) appears to fit right into this new paradigm, as it focuses on the acceptance of diversity, more specifically of sexual diversity. On the other hand, there has been an increase in fascist and right-wing populist movements in most Western societies. Many of these movements focus on questions concerning gender and sexuality and have been analyzed as neo-conservative, fundamentalist, and anti-feminist (see Lang/Peters 2018; Kuhar/Paternotte 2017; Hark/Villa 2015).

The protests against the planned reform of the curriculum in Baden-Württemberg have been analyzed as part of these so-called anti-genderist movements. For instance, in identifying the mobilizing mechanisms and argumentative strategies of the French alliance *Manif pour tous* as well as the German *Demo für alle* – which played a central role in the demonstrations against the curriculum in Baden-Württemberg – Imke Schmincke (2015) analyzes how the image of the “innocent child” is used as a moral weapon of neo-conservative movements. Similar to Schmincke’s analysis, Elisabeth Tuijter (2016) shows how

tion is re-produced throughout the debate and which kind of knowledge finally congeals to an alleged truth in the curriculum passed in 2016.

3 I use the underscore in order to emphasize that I focus on both the production as well as the reproduction of knowledge.

4 For detailed analyses of neoliberal debates about diversity, gender, sexuality, and equal rights, see, for example, Pühl/Sauer 2018; Voß/Wolter 2013; Engel 2009.

the desire to protect “innocent, asexual children” is used to re_produce a heterosexual and racialized norm of sexuality.

Meanwhile, drawing on affect studies, Jutta Hartmann (2016; 2017) takes a closer look at how emotions function as a central motor for processes of in- and exclusion within the Baden-Württemberg debate. Hartmann shows how the sexualization of the curriculum as well as of LGBT*I*Q⁵ ways of life is used as “a strategy of generating outrage that aims at reducing the emancipatory character of the debate and at producing ‘indecenty’” (Hartmann 2016, 122, transl. by FG). Furthermore, Hartmann analyzes normative processes of subjectivation that follow a “we vs. the others” logic. Finally, Vivien Laumann and Katharina Debus (2018) identify anti-feminist obstacles for an emancipatory gender pedagogy and go on to formulate counter arguments and elaborate on possible resources for a diversity-oriented pedagogy.

All of these studies focus on the anti-feminist and anti-genderist protests against the reform of the curriculum. The working paper, which forms the first draft of the reform, appears to represent the opposite perspective, because it propagates acceptance of sexual diversity. In this paper, however, I argue that the working paper also takes part in the re_production of a heteronormative order.

Analyzing the Discursive Re_Production of Heteronormativity

The focus of my analysis is the re_production of heteronormativity in both the working paper and the petition. Specifically, I identify through which discursive strategies knowledge about gender and sexuality is re-produced and transformed in the two documents and which gendered subject positions are discursively constructed in them.

The term heteronormativity was popularized by Michael Warner in 1991 (Warner 1991, 3). The concept has since been understood as the hegemonic gender order of Western societies, in which heterosexuality and gender dualism are perceived as the norm. According to Judith Butler, this hegemonic order is discursively reproduced via a heterosexual matrix “through which gender identity has become intelligible” (Butler 1990, 24). It “requires that certain kinds of

5 The acronym LGBT*I*Q stands for “lesbian, gay, bi, trans*, inter*, and queer”. I use the asterisk to denote different ways of identifying as trans* (e.g. transgender, transsexual) or inter* (e.g. intersex, intergender). The letter q for “queer” aims at including further and different queer identifications. However, the documents I have analyzed use different versions of this acronym. In the respective passages, I have taken over the respective authors’ acronyms and spellings.

'identities' cannot 'exist' – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not 'follow' from either sex or gender" (Butler 1990, 24). This means that only cisgender and heterosexual subjects are produced, while LGBT*I*Q people function as the constitutive outside of the heteronormative order. The "exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet 'subjects,' but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject" (Butler 1993, xiii).

Drawing on the works of Butler and Michel Foucault, I understand discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972, 49). However, discursive practices do not merely denote the act of speaking or writing but signify the constitution of knowledge and truth (Fegter et al. 2015, 14). In this paper, I analyze through which discursive strategies a heteronormative truth is re-produced. The term "discursive strategies" is not meant to constitute intentional tactics by the documents' authors⁶. Drawing on Foucault's "Archaeology of Knowledge" (1972), I use the term "discursive strategies" to describe the discursive practices that I have identified as regulated ways of re-producing knowledge and truth about gender and sexuality.

Furthermore, I am interested in the different subject positions that are constituted through these powerful knowledge constructions. According to both Foucault and Butler, the subject can be understood as the effect of power relations; the subject does not precede discourse but emerges through a process of subordination. Thus, "'[s]ubjection' signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject" (Butler 1997, 2). The term "subject position" refers to a discursively or symbolically defined speaking position (Wrana et al. 2014, 394). While Foucault (1972) suggests focusing on the status of the speaking person ("Who speaks?"), according to Butler, individuals become subjects through discursive interpellations that operate through identity categories (Butler 1993, 81pp.). Drawing on both theories, I focus on the question of the position from which one could legitimately speak according to the respective documents.

For the analysis of the two documents, I loosely follow poststructuralist figuration analysis as developed by Katharina Scharl and Daniel Wrana (2014). While I do not use the term "figuration", I draw on the three analytical steps they suggest: differentiation, attribution, and transformation. In the first step, one focuses on the differences between concepts or objects. Such discursively constructed differences are usually marked by a hierarchy in which one side of

6 To stress this point, I deviate from an established scientific citation practice: For the analyzed documents, I do not cite the authors but (a shortened version of) the documents' titles.

the difference is revalued and the other is devalued. Quite often, this follows an “us vs. them” logic. Thus, in the second step, one analyzes what is attributed to the two sides of this difference. In a possible third step, one focuses on how the previously constructed knowledge is transformed through a shift of the difference or a reattribution of the two sides of the constructed binary (see Scharl/Wrana 2014, 354).

In the following chapter, I focus on my analysis of the working paper. It will become apparent how knowledge about gender and sexuality is constructed in this document along the difference of “us heterosexual and cisgender people” vs. “them queer-identified Others”. However, the reproduction of this difference is not exclusively consistent and the construction of different subject positions is ambivalent. In chapter 4, I analyze the petition against the reform of the curriculum. There, I focus on how the discursively constructed knowledge about gender and sexuality in the working paper is transformed through different discursive strategies. With the analysis of the working paper and the petition, I am able to show that the discursive statements of the Baden-Württemberg curriculum’s opponents do not come “out of nowhere”. They are based on a hegemonic heteronormative discursive order that is re-produced even in documents that aim at acceptance of rather than discrimination against sexual diversity.

Working Paper

The 32-page Working Paper for the Curriculum Committees as a Foundation and Orientation for the Introduction of the Guiding Principles (Arbeitspapier für die Hand der Bildungsplankommissionen als Grundlage und Orientierung zur Verankerung der Leitprinzipien) (Working Paper 2013, 1)⁷ presents five guiding principles for the planned reform of the curriculum: Vocational Orientation, Education for Sustainable Development, Media Literacy, Prevention and Health Promotion, and Consumer Education (Working Paper 2013, 1). The first four pages contain general information on the new curriculum as well as on the individual principles. Subsequently, the “Competences and Contents of the Individual Guiding Principles” (Working Paper 2013, 5) are introduced in the form of tables. Below each of these tables, there is a section with the headline “Additionally to be Considered under the Aspect of Acceptance of Sexual Diversity” (Working Paper 2013, 9, 12, 23, and 32). The only exception is the guiding principle Prevention and Health Promotion. Here, the corresponding information is included in the table.

⁷ All quotes from the working paper have been translated by the author.

In this table, one can also find a definition for sexual diversity: “Diversity in sexual identity and orientation (hetero-, homo-, bisexuality; transsexual, transgender, and intersexual people)” (Working Paper 2013, 26). In this quote, heterosexuality is explicitly listed as a part of sexual diversity. In the rest of the working paper, however, only LGBTTI⁸ people are addressed under the aspect of sexual diversity. For example, students are supposed to get to know “the different forms of living together of/with LGBTTI people” (Working Paper 2013, 12). Further, they should familiarize themselves with the “distinctness/expression of gay, lesbian, transgender, and intersex culture” (Working Paper 2013, 29, see also 12). Students are also expected to learn about “exceptional historical and contemporary LGBTTI people” (Working Paper 2013, 29), the “history of suppression of bi-, homo-, trans-, and intersexual people, the movement of emancipation and liberation” (Working Paper 2013, 29), as well as the “rights of LGBTTI people (derived from basic human rights as well as international and national law, e.g. the UN Charter, European Law, the German constitution, the General Act on Equal Treatment, the Act on Transsexuals)” (Working Paper 2013, 29). Additionally, students should concern themselves with “classic families, rainbow families, single people, couple relationship[s], patchwork families, single-parent families, extended families, [and] chosen non-biological families” (Working Paper 2013, 12).

With these statements, the working paper breaks with the concealment of the existence of LGBT*I*Q people and their discrimination and explicitly attributes rights to those who identify as homosexual, bi, trans* or inter*. The non-representation of LGBT*I*Q people has a long tradition. In many schools, homosexual forms of desire are still only mentioned in the context of sexual education, and then almost always in association with HIV/AIDS. Bisexuality, trans*, inter*, and other forms of queerness are usually not addressed at all (see, for example, Kleiner 2015; Hoffmann 2015; Hartmann 2014; Bittner 2011; Hilgers 2004). The working paper, however, renounces this tradition on several levels: Non-heteronormative identifications are not reduced to homosexuality, and addressing sexual diversity is not limited to the context of sexual education, but is considered a cross-cutting issue that should be addressed in connection with all five of the guiding principles. This repeated interpellation of LGBT*I*Q issues produces lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and inter* subject positions.

However, this representation of queerness is highly ambivalent. The representation of queer ways of life is restricted to clear-cut lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender and intersexual identities and lacks ambiguity.

⁸ The working paper uses the acronym LGBTTI, which is explained to stand for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and intersexual people” (see Working Paper 2013, 32).

Moreover, heterosexuality and cisgender are still reproduced as norms through the unilateral marking of LGBT*I*Q. According to the working paper, students are also supposed to learn about heterosexual and cisgender culture, history, rights, etc. However, these are not marked as such but appear as “the normal”. Heterosexuality is only named once as part of sexual diversity, while cisgender is not mentioned at all. The only gendered positions that are explicitly named are transsexual, transgender and intersex people; the words “woman” and “man” do not appear. Implicitly, they are merely featured under the aspect of “family” where they are alluded to in “classic families” in opposition to “rainbow families” etc. With the adjective “classic”, heteronormative father-mother-child(ren) families are marked by a positive connotation.

As Scharl and Wrana (2014) emphasize, “there are often subject positions affiliated with markings: The pole constructed as unmarked becomes the place which is taken as a position from which to speak” (Scharl/Wrana 2014, 360, transl. by FG). This can also be observed with regard to the markings of LGBT*I*Q people in the working paper. The students who are directly addressed are implicitly positioned as heterosexual and cisgender, whereas LGBT*I*Q identities function as the constitutive outside (Butler 1993, xiii). They are referred to the position of the Other – an Other that is to be accepted, but an Other nonetheless. This becomes especially apparent in the guiding principle of Media Literacy, where – in reference to the acceptance of sexual diversity – students are supposed to recognize “that standing up for potential victims in digital media is an essential part of moral courage in a pluralistic society” (Working Paper 2013, 23). Here, students are addressed as people who stand up for potential victims of homo- and transphobia. The potential victims, though, are Others.

However, the subjectivation of students as heterosexual and cisgender and the construction of LGBT*I*Q as the constitutive outside becomes brittle in other parts of the working paper. Under the guiding principle of Vocational Orientation, students are expected to “meet their own and other sexual identities without prejudice” (Working Paper 2013, 9). This suggests that students could potentially hold prejudice against their own sexual identity. Prejudice concerning sexuality and gender is mostly directed against non-heteronormative identifications. Therefore, this quote opens up the possibility that students might position themselves as other than heterosexual and/or cisgender. This possibility is reinforced by the expectation that students understand their own sexual identity and respect other sexual identities and ways of life (see Working Paper 2013, 9).

All in all, the representation of queerness in the working paper is highly ambivalent. For the most part, LGBT*I*Q people form the constitutive outside

of a heterosexual norm and it remains unclear what is to be understood by the terms sexual/gendered identity/orientation. Moreover, gender and sexuality seem to be the only social categories the working paper focuses on; an intersectional perspective cannot be found.

Petition

This vacancy and conceptual vagueness are taken up in the petition *Future – Responsibility – Learning: No Curriculum 2015 under the Ideology of the Rainbow* (*Zukunft – Verantwortung – Lernen: Kein Bildungsplan 2015 unter der Ideologie des Regenbogens*) (Petition 2013)⁹. The text starts with a short summary of the working paper, which is followed by a general distancing from the acceptance of sexual diversity. In the main part, the petition presents six short demands, each of them accompanied by an explanatory footnote.

The petition differentiates between a status quo that is to be protected and a threatening future that the implementation of the planned reform of the curriculum would begin. The petition starts out declaring that the signatories support the “prevention of discrimination” (Petition 2013) against LGBT*I*Q people. However, the introduction of “acceptance of sexual diversity” in the curriculum would “overshoot the target” (Petition 2013) and aim at a “pedagogical, moral and ideological reeducation at general schools” (Petition 2013). The German *Umerziehung* (reeducation) has a strong negative connotation and is associated with a forced transformation of an assumed previous or current education. Thus, the petition draws a picture of a negative and threatening reeducation towards acceptance of sexual diversity. Against this backdrop appears the assumed education towards heteronormativity or non-acceptance of sexual diversity.

In my analysis, I have identified six discursive strategies through which heteronormativity is reproduced and legitimated in the petition.

Sexualization

First, as Hartmann (2016; 2017) has demonstrated, LGBT*I*Q ways of life, as well as the content of the working paper, are sexualized in the petition. While in the working paper, sexual diversity is addressed with regard to sexual orientation and identity, in the petition, the focus is shifted towards sexual practices: “The LGBTTIQ groups propagate the focus on different sexual practices in school as

9 All quotes from the petition have been translated by the author.

a new normality" (Petition 2013)¹⁰. The planned reform of the curriculum would represent "sexual politics on behalf of LGBTTIQ [people]" (Petition 2013) and the "cornerstone of a new sexual ethics" (Petition 2013). By contrast, the petition demands a "stop to the propagating new sexual morals" (Petition 2013). Hartmann points out that this implies that

"it is the sexual that is supposed to become the new educational content. However, the curriculum does not address sexual practices. It has been possible to address these in an age-specific way already since the introduction of sex education in schools in the 1970s" (Hartmann 2017, 35, transl. by FG).

This shift of focus from identities and ways of life to sexual practices relies heavily on a shift in terminology. The working paper does not address different pleasure-generating and/or coital practices. Rather, it propagates the acceptance of non-heteronormative self-constructions and social relationships. The petition, however, introduces new terms, such as "sexual practices", "sexual politics", and "sexual morals". This shift in terminology constitutes a transformation of the constructed knowledge about sexual diversity; a transformation that has proven rather successful, as the public debate following the petition was no longer focused on acceptance of homosexual, bi, trans*, and inter* people, but rather on the question of whether students should be "forced" to learn about and be encouraged to engage in different types of coital and pleasure-evoking practices.

Pathologization

People who identify as homosexual, bi, trans* or inter* are pathologized in the petition. This is a well-known strategy that Foucault analyzed in his studies on the deployment of sexuality (Foucault 1978, 75pp.). Additionally, following Butler, this strategy questions the legitimacy of the existence of certain people: "To the extent the gender norms [...] establish what will and will not be intelligibly human, what will and will not be considered to be 'real,' they establish the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression" (Butler 1990, XXIVpp). The petition addresses the "negative concomitants of an LGBTTIQ lifestyle" (Petition 2013). According to the petition, these include

"the higher suicide rate among homosexual adolescents, the higher susceptibility to alcohol and drugs, the remarkably high rate of HIV in-

10 The petition uses the acronym LGBTTIQ. Its meaning is not explained.

fections among homosexual men, the distinctly lower life expectancy of homo- and bisexual men, the pronounced risk of mental illness among women and men who live homosexually" (Petition 2013).

In addition, it claims that "the psychic and somatic problems of [transsexual] people are reduced to questions of social acceptance" (Petition 2013). In this quote, the pathologization is somewhat implicit but no less clear. Drawing on the socially constructed distinction between nature and nurture, it is suggested that the negative experiences of trans* people could not be explained by a lack of social acceptance (nurture). Therefore, the causes are allocated in the supposedly different nature of trans* people who are thus biologized and pathologized. The authors of the working paper surely did not intend for such a perception of people who identify as homosexual, bi, trans*, or inter* – on the contrary. However, a link can be drawn between the construction of LGBT*I*Q people as abject beings in the working paper and the pathologization in the petition. In the working paper, it becomes obvious that there is something different about LGBT*I*Q people. They seem to be "in need of" special attention. It is not explained what constitutes this specialness, though. In the petition, this vacuum is seized upon. Their "specialness" is explained through a biologized difference between "them" and "normal" people, i.e. cisgender heterosexuals. Regarding the "risk of suicide among homosexual adolescents" (Petition 2013), the petition claims there to be "no empirically provable connection between suicide risk and discrimination that would explain this to be a result of non-accepting attitudes towards adolescent homosexuality" (Petition 2013).

Science vs. Ideology

The phrasing "empirically provable" points towards another discursive strategy: The differential figure of gender and queer studies as political ideology vs. "real", "hard" science has already been analyzed in a number of studies (see, for example, Lang/Peters 2018; Kuhar/Paternotte 2017; Hark/Villa 2015). In the petition, this figure is re-produced by distinguishing between a "scientifically-oriented pedagogy" (Petition 2013) that it demands and the "ideological battle cries and theoretical constructs" (Petition 2013) that it sees represented in the working paper. For the signatories of the petition, these supposed "theoretical constructs" include "so-called 'sexual identity', such as transsexuality" (Petition 2013). The word "so-called" constitutes a distancing from the statement and thereby calls the existence of trans* people into question. By contrast, the petition demands an "unrestricted 'yes' to the scientific principle in school, teaching, and teacher-training" (Petition 2013). According to the petition, "ques-

tioning the genders man and woman via gender theory" (Petition 2013) is not part of this scientific principle.

Reversal of Perpetrator and Victim

Another strategy through which the planned reform of the curriculum is portrayed as a threat is the reversal of perpetrator and victim. While LGBT*I*Q people are constructed as potential victims in the working paper, according to the petition, it is heterosexual cis women and men that are in danger. The signatories demand an "orientation towards the values of our constitution that defends the protection of marriage and family as a democratic achievement" (Petition 2013):

"The "Introduction of the Guiding Principles" derives rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersexual people that do not exist. A change of articles 3 and 6 of the constitution that these groups hope for is anticipated in the curriculum 2015" (Petition 2013).

Article 3 on equality before the law and article 6 on marriage, family and children of the German constitution are subject to different interpretations. Recently, this has been shown by the introduction of the so-called "marriage for all" in 2017, which – finally – allows homosexual couples to get married. The petition, however, assumes that the two articles of the constitution should only protect the rights of heterosexual cis women and men. LGBT*I*Q people, on the other hand, are denied equal rights, since equal treatment is seen as a threat to the protection of heteronormative privileges¹¹. Furthermore, the petition deplores the alleged stigmatization of teachers: "The accusation that schools are 'homophobic places' put Baden-Württemberg's teachers under general suspicion of discrimination" (Petition 2013). Following this logic, it is no longer homophobia itself that is threatening but rather the stigmatization of being accused of homophobia.

Parental Sovereignty of Education

The focus on teachers and parents in the petition constitutes another discursive transformation. In the working paper, students are constructed as agentic subjects who actively accumulate knowledge about sexual and gender diversity and tackle their own orientations and identifications. In the petition, however, students are named only once and appear merely as passive recipients of edu-

¹¹ Tuider (2016), among others, identifies narratives in which the white, heterosexual, cisgender, bourgeois man is constructed as the new victim.

cation: "A so-called 'sexual identity', such as transsexuality, is supposed to be conveyed as an expression of socially wanted/accepted sexuality to the students of Baden-Württemberg" (Petition 2013). This denial of students' agency already points towards the depiction of children as "innocent" and "in need of protection" as analyzed by Schmincke (2015) and Tuidier (2016). The petition focuses on teachers, who are portrayed as stigmatized and overtaxed, claiming the new curriculum would demand teachers stand up against homophobia, force them to "introduce the next generation to a new sexual ethics" (Petition 2013), and "oblige them to base their teaching on LGBTTIQ ideas" (Petition 2013).

Thus, teachers are portrayed as mere executors of a threatening curriculum, which undermines the sovereignty of parents over education. This parental sovereignty is stressed by the claim that "the cooperation between schools and parental homes that has been built through decades of constructive collaboration becomes subject to negotiations" (Petition 2013) and a demand for the "preservation of the trustful relationship between schools and parental homes" (Petition 2013). Through the figure of a once "trustful relationship", the subject position of parents is limited to cisgender and heterosexual parents. Homosexual, bi, trans*, inter* or other queer-identified parents who have been fighting for recognition of their reality of life by schools and curricula are denied the subject position of parents.¹²

LGBT*I*Q vs. other Others

Finally, the petition takes up the non-representation of other social identity categories in the working paper. Instead of criticizing the lack of an intersectional perspective, however, the petition plays off different discriminated-against groups against each other in its sixth and final demand. The petition argues that the curriculum not only threatens the privileged position of heterosexual cis people but also "conceals other forms of exclusion" (Petition 2013): "In vain, one looks for a similar engagement in the areas of ethnic origin, disability, age, gender, or worldview/religion" (Petition 2013). Here, people who have experienced racist, ableist, ageist, religious, and – interestingly – gendered discrimination are used to legitimize the protection of hetero and cis privileges. The fact that discrimination based on gender is specifically listed reinforces the shift from a focus on people to a focus on practices. As described above, cisgender subject positions (cis man, cis woman) are not mentioned in the working paper.

12 Even though the petition does not specifically address other forms of discrimination until the last demand (see chapter 4.6), this also applies to parents of color, parents with low social-economic status, dis_abled parents, and many others who have been denied recognition by educational institutions.

In the petition, trans* and inter* are not recognized as gendered subject positions and homo- and bisexuality are not viewed as gendered identifications but are exclusively associated with “perverse” sexual practices. Thus, in the petition, knowledge about sexual diversity is transformed into an understanding of the term that does not address questions of gender.

Conclusion

Detailed analysis of the two documents shows that even though they clearly pursue different – if not opposite – targets, they are connected, not only because the petition constitutes a reaction to the working paper. The knowledge about gender and sexuality constructed in the working paper is transformed in the petition through different discursive strategies.

One of these strategies, which has also been analyzed with regard to other anti-feminist and anti-genderist movements, is claiming the knowledge produced by studies of and theories on gender to be unscientific. While the working paper draws on terms and concepts coined by gender and queer studies, the petition deems these perspectives to be “ideological” rather than “scientific”. Thus, any knowledge produced in the working paper is discredited by the petition.

Other discursive strategies of the petition focus on constructing LGBT*I*Q people as perverse as well as physically and mentally ill. These discursive constructions seize upon the knowledge constructed in the working paper. The working paper focuses on (acceptance of) LGBT*I*Q people and uses terms such as “sexual diversity”, “sexual identity”, and “sexual orientation”. However, the meaning of these terms is not fully explained. In the petition, this conceptual vagueness and the repetition of the word “sexual” is used to shift the focus towards the sexual practices of LGBT*I*Q people. Through the use of other terms such as “sexual politics”, “sexual ethics”, and “sexual morals”, these kinds of practices are constructed as unnatural and perverse.

Similarly, the pathologization of LGBT*I*Q people relies on a transformation of the knowledge constructed in the working paper. As I have shown, the representation of LGBT*I*Q people in the working paper is highly ambivalent. Queer-identified people are represented, but are restricted to the position of the constitutive outside to a heterosexual norm. They are marked as “Other”. While the working paper explains this otherness with social discrimination, the petition claims the reasons for it to be found in the different, abnormal, sick nature of LGBT*I*Q people.

According to the petition, LGBT*I*Q people and ways of life are overemphasized in the working paper. This claim is backed by the observation that

other discriminated groups are hardly addressed in the working paper. Thus, the working paper's failure to include an intersectional perspective on discrimination is seized upon in the petition. The focus on LGBT*I*Q people is turned into an overemphasis of certain groups which is claimed to put other groups at a disadvantage.

The construction of LGBT*I*Q people as perverse, ill, and over-represented ultimately serves the discursive reversal of perpetrator and victim. While in the working paper, students are addressed as subjects who actively engage in different issues, they are constructed as passive recipients of education in the petition. Thus, the focus is shifted towards teachers and parents. In the petition, these (assumed to be) heterosexual and cisgender teachers and parents are constructed as the actual victims. In the working paper, LGBT*I*Q students are identified as (potential) victims of discrimination. In the petition, however, the (potential) victims are those who are (at risk of being) accused of discriminating against LGBT*I*Q people. According to the petition, the real threat is not homo- or transphobic discrimination, but the stigmatization of being (seen as) homo- or transphobic. Ultimately, these discursive strategies serve the purpose of defending heterosexual and cis privileges and reproducing a heteronormative order.

However, this heteronormative order is not only reproduced in the petition. As I have shown, the discursive strategies of the petition rely on the knowledge constructed in the working paper. While the working paper clearly claims acceptance of sexual diversity as its goal, it takes part in the re_production of heteronormativity by restricting LGBT*I*Q identifications to the position of the constitutive outside to a heterosexual norm. This may not be all that surprising: The hegemonic gender order of German society (and most Western societies) is a heteronormative one and, as Butler points out, "all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat" (Butler 1990, 198). In the case of the debate about the Baden-Württemberg curriculum, the discursive transformations initiated by the petition proved effective not only among the opponents of the curriculum but also within the public and political debate in general. This becomes especially apparent in the fact that sexual diversity is no longer addressed as such in the curriculum passed in 2016.

However, as Butler elaborates, "[t]he task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat" (Butler 1990, 202). As discourse-analytical interventions are able to show, there are possibilities for thinking about gender, sexuality, and education from a different perspective. For example, a definition of gender and sexual diversity that does not focus only on LGBT*I*Q people but denotes different ways of life, including cisgender and heterosexual ones (see Hartmann 2002),

could constitute a discursive transformation that would “open up the field of possibility for gender without dictating which kinds of possibilities ought to be realized” (Butler 1990, viii).

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