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ABSTRACT

Building Epistemological Infrastructures - interventions at a technical university

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Situated at a technical university with an explicit profile of applied ICT (information and communication technology) in close cooperation between university, business sector and Government, the challenges are huge on the epistemological openness of us active at the university. The present knowledge and technology production occurs in situations far from what is identified by a traditional, mode 1 university. These knowledge processes are my daily experiences at one of the campuses of Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), more precisely at campus Karlshamn. What resources can be used for staying confident, future oriented and innovative as an ICT researcher and an academic teaching staff? Referring to a five year development experience with so far good results, when it comes to student recruitment, research and campus building, resources for the epistemological infrastructures needed have been found within gender research developed within a technical faculty - that is within feminist technoscience.

The gender research conducted within engineering science has come to focus on the fundamental knowledge issues of the areas and on their development of theories and methodologies. Engineering science is characterised by classifications, standardisations and formalisations about which there is general consensus. Gender research within technoscience is very much engaged in studying this basis and developing new ways of approaching the core of knowledge production, in order to strengthen science's ability to bring about change and development. This research has made an impact by showing which understandings of knowledge, science and technology dominate and have consequences in terms of creating realities. Internationally, gender research within technoscience provides an epistemological foundation for a variety of choices and decisions in society, which is increasingly dependent on research and technology. This research is thus no longer about simply drawing attention to the perspectives, experiences and needs of women.

Within international gender research with strong links to the dominant technical fields of our era: information technology, biotechnology and material technology, there is a

widespread understanding of the production of knowledge and technology as processes that take place in distributed systems. In other words, in this day and age knowledge is generated in the borderland between universities, companies and other regional, national and international actors. These processes are not least apparent in our region and affect the way in which Blekinge Institute of Technology carries out R&D work. The term technoscience connotes this understanding of the production of knowledge and technology. The way in which technoscience is defined by internationally leading researchers such as Donna Haraway raises interesting questions about boundaries and the transgression of the boundaries between science, technology, politics and society, and between humans and non-humans, the processes of hybridisation between people and machines (cyborg theories), etc.

The presentation will include discussions about why an epistemological pluralism is needed at a technical faculty and how this can be realized by resources within feminist technoscience.