

# genderCartoons



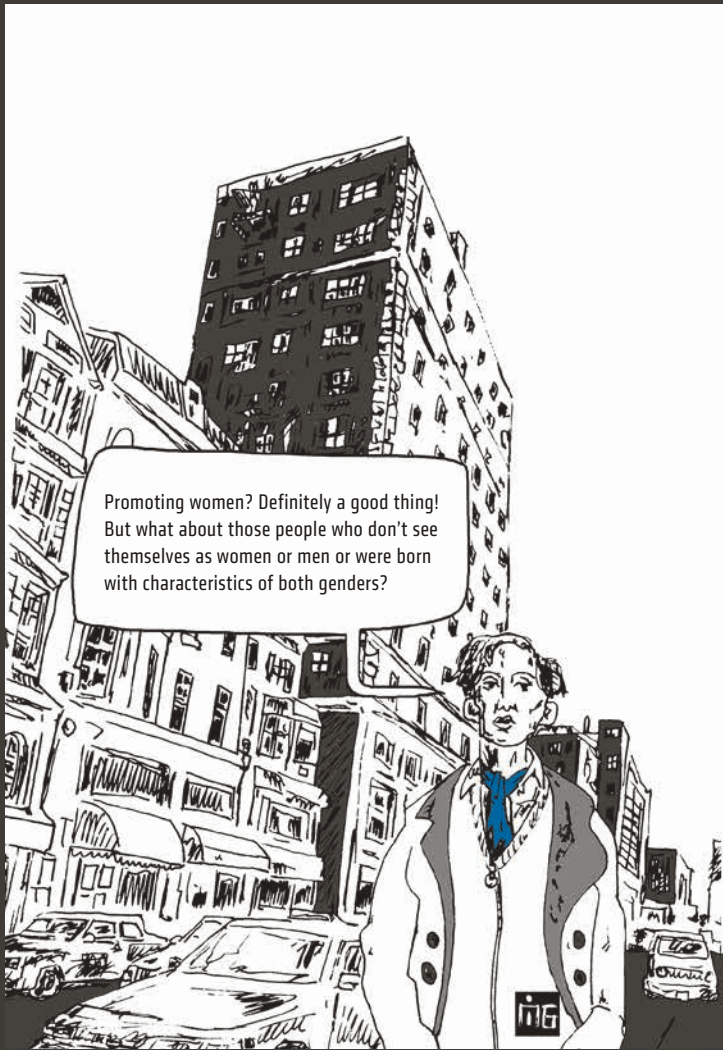
# genderCartoons

The **genderCartoons** exhibition shows the various aspects and challenges of implementing gender equality policy in everyday life and addresses the recurring questions that arise in connection with this.

The cartoons stir up memories of our own experiences, help us formulate our arguments and encourage us to look more closely at the issues.

What kind of socialisation and influences and experiences have led to the call for “More equal opportunities for women in technology”?

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## IMPORTANT

**Gender equality policy** is about establishing equality between genders on a political, economic and social level. Examples of gender equality policy strategies include:

- gender mainstreaming
- promoting women
- promoting men
- anti-discrimination policy.

The interests of transgender and intersexual people have not been adequately represented in gender equality policy so far.

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- Women are not always “meant as well” when you use the masculine form to refer to everyone.
  - Using gender appropriate language means the **equality of men and women in language.**
  - Language politics is no small matter: it determines how we think about gender and how we act.
  - Gender appropriate formulations, such as using an **underscore** in German (also known as the “gender\_gap”) helps us envisage a society in which there are more than two genders.
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- There is no such thing as “the lads”.
  - Images of masculinity that run counter to the demands of school (hardworking, keen, ambitious, conformist, ...) are problematical.
  - An **education system** that produces losers is in urgent need of reform.
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- What does feminism mean to this young woman? What does it mean for you as a reader of this text?
  - Which images and associations do you have in mind when you read this statement? How do they match up against reality?
  - Feminists have fought for and achieved a great deal, for example women's right to vote, employment, education, etc.
  - **Feminism refers** to a vast number of emancipatory movements concerned with the way we think and behave; their political aim is to get rid of gender-based hierarchies and constraints.
  - **Feminism today comprises** a variety of theories and explanatory models that are connected to women's movements and other civil rights movements, as well as to scientific research and theory formation.
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I don't see any point in getting involved in women's rights issues as I haven't been discriminated against so far. And I just can't believe that women's professional qualifications don't take precedence over the fact that they are women. Because if I'm good at what I do, I'll get the same opportunities."



- This statement could be based on an ideology (the ideology of neoliberalism) which asserts that “life is what you make it”. In the context of **structural discrimination**, such as gender-specific division of labour, this perspective results in maintaining the status quo and greater competition between the members of disadvantaged groups.
  - In addition, this statement is problematical because it reduces disadvantage and discrimination to a personal, individual level. Negotiating an egalitarian way of interacting between the sexes is clearly important, but **social inequalities** continue to exist that cannot be changed by individual action alone, e.g. differences in pay for the same work, which still exist today and two-thirds of which are due to structural issues (gender specific division of labour, unequal promotion opportunities, ...)
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- An individual, personal opinion or experience cannot be taken as representative of the (structural) **situation of a whole group.**
  - The so-called “natural” development of gender is neither natural nor independent of societal influences. Such “external” influences are the product of films, advertising, science, family and work policy, for example.
  - That is how the concepts of “masculinity” and “femininity” are created by society.
  - Society’s images of men and women also influences all aspects of employment.
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- Feminism refers to a **vast number of emancipatory movements concerned with the way we think and behave.** The political aim is to get rid of gender-based hierarchies and constraints.
  - Feminism today comprises a variety of theories and explanatory models that are connected to women's movements and other civil rights movements, as well as to scientific research and theory formation.
  - Getting together in **networks** is important because
    - 1) there is a problematical tendency to see disadvantage and discrimination as individual problems that everyone must find their own solution to, and exactly this
    - 2) cannot work because many inequalities, such as the gender-based pay gap or the lack of women in management positions, are not individual but structural problems. And this structural discrimination can only be tackled by joining forces for lobbying purposes.
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- Women are not solely responsible for bearing and bringing up children.
  - Family policy and society focus on a family model that no longer corresponds to the lives of many people today.
  - Traditional roles and division of labour make **modern parenting** more difficult.
  - There is also an increasing number of men who want to look after their children but cannot due to a lack of financial security for both parents, for example.
  - Parenthood and employment should not be mutually exclusive categories.
  - Sometimes, however, women have good reasons for insisting on taking decisions on their own regarding their children. Some men show little interest in their children. Approximately 90% of single parents in Austria are women.
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In the promotion of women we have to bear in mind that women are affected differently by disadvantage and discrimination. Being discriminated against as a white woman is different to how a black woman experiences being disadvantaged. Or to the experiences of a woman in a wheelchair.



- This is a very important point, because women and girls are not all equally disadvantaged or discriminated against, just like men and boys are not equally privileged in the same way.
  - People who are affected **on different levels by different forms of discrimination** (e.g. sexism, racism, discrimination based on disability) have to face/fight different effects to those who are only affected by one type of discrimination, for example. This point has been made by black feminists and women of color, among others, in their criticism of white feminist theory.
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I think it's important that women and men have the same opportunities. My granddaughter should be truly free to choose her own career, for example. In the past it was practically impossible to go in for the profession of your choice, but even today it's not always that easy, for example for women in so-called typically male professions.



Gender equality policy provides various instruments designed to create equal opportunities for women and girls. One of these instruments is **affirmative action**. This includes for example giving preference to female job applicants with equal qualifications or programmes for promoting women in companies and training centres.

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Promoting women is one **instrument of gender equality policy**; other instruments include promoting men and anti-discrimination measures.

That is why there are, for example, seminars on the subject of gender equality just for women as well as some just for men, and further seminars for “mixed” groups.

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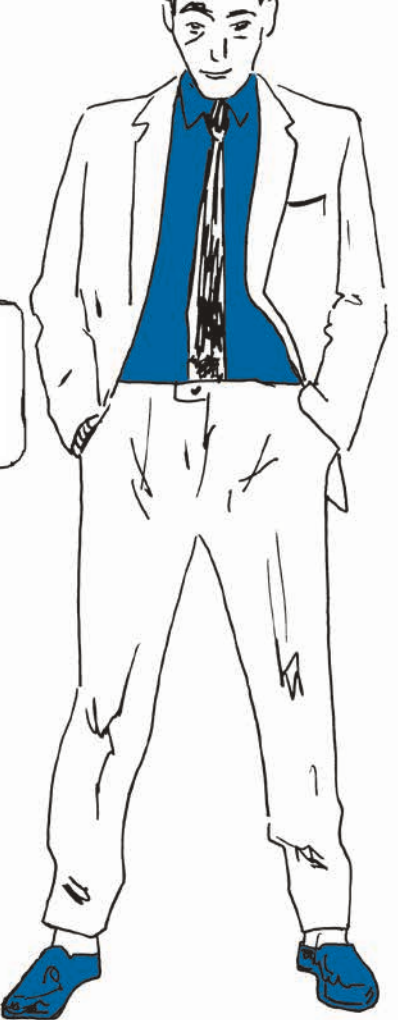




- The key question here is: what is a “real” man? Men are not all the same: there are thin ones and fat ones, black ones and white ones, some with glasses, some without, old and young ones, men with a school-leaving certificate, men who leave school without any qualifications, healthy men and sick men, heterosexual and homosexual men, as well as those who are perceived as being men but define themselves differently or feel different, etc.

- The **goal of gender equality** is not to destroy (gender) identities or to render them all the same. Rather, it is about creating opportunities for development, as well as opening up and expanding the scope of action.





Promoting women is something I support because I know the problems my girlfriend encounters working in a male-dominated profession.

**Empathetic discussion** of discrimination and privilege can lead to a deeper understanding of inequalities in society.



Gender equality, in particular, is a topic which provokes considerable opposition and a great lack of understanding. Among other things, this has to do with the fact that we were all born into a social system of inequality. For us this is “normality”, to a certain extent. This is why privilege and discrimination sometimes go unnoticed; we refer to this as **internalised power structures**.

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- The fact that fewer women than men are studying at the University of Technology is less a problem of individual discrimination and more an issue of the continued existence of **exclusive structures** that make it difficult for women to access male-dominated professions and sectors.
- Moreover, it is social and economic conditions that determine the participation opportunities of women and girls, not a lack of ability on their part.
- Sometimes it also claimed that there are fewer women in technical professions because they are simply not good enough. On the contrary, women have never been as well educated as they are today. And, at the same time, few of them are in positions that reflect their qualifications.



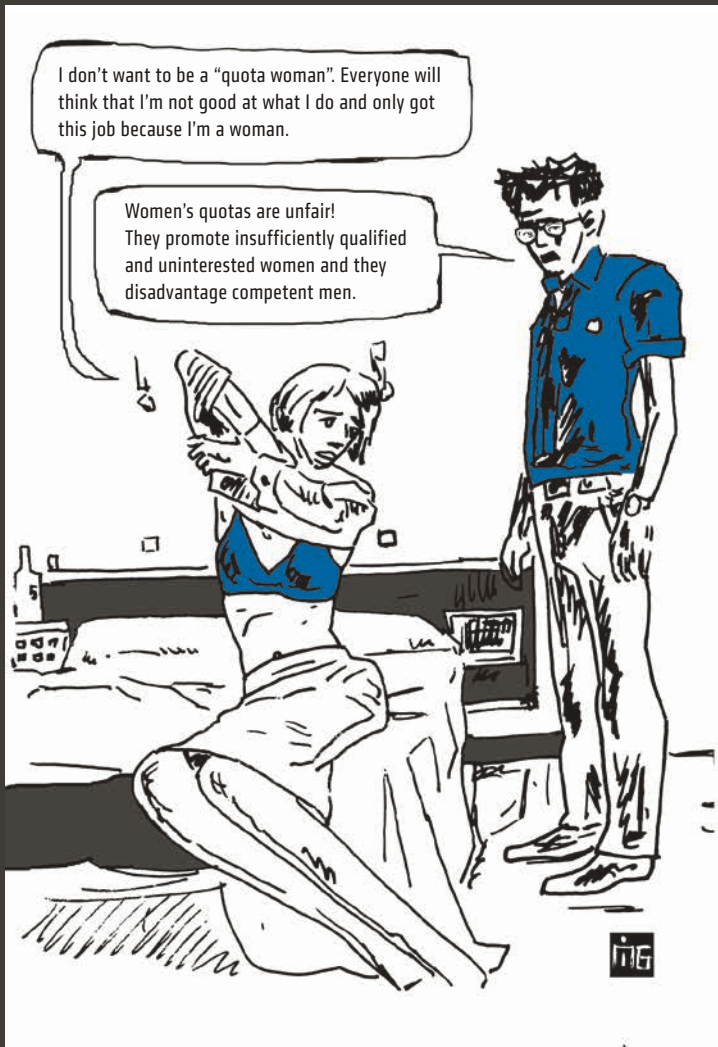


I don't know why there are so few women here at the University of Technology. Probably because technology is more of a man's thing.



- Women (men / girls / boys / ...) are many things—extremely diverse, above all.
- Whoever claims that they know all about “women as such” (“all men” ...) is lumping together a large number of people with very different ways of living, ideas and needs. Such homogenization dismisses everyone who doesn't fit with these crude clichés as an “exception”, as “abnormal”, even “unnatural”, or they just go unnoticed completely. These stereotypes are a bad fit for any individual. It's more people-friendly to relieve everyone of this burden and to **give some thought to how people can live out their diversity** instead of pigeonholing them into two groups.
- It is biologicistic to use biological principles to explain human behaviour and social connections (brain research, genetics, evolutionary biology). Natural sciences in particular are credited with being the most “objective” way of explaining such things. However, natural scientific research has shown that it is considerably more complex and that the **issue of objectivity** in research needs to be addressed. It is the scientific findings that legitimate the prevailing social order that have been and continue to be the ones that are considered to be particularly objective.





- Disapproval of quotas often shows disapproval of gender equality policy in general.
  - Quotas do not discriminate against anyone, they **balance out existing discrimination**.
  - The low proportion of women cannot be attributed to individual decisions or how qualified women are.
  - A quota is nothing more than **personnel development target** to ensure equal rights for men and women participating in the workforce.
  - Women have never been as well educated as they are today, contradicting the assertion that women are insufficiently qualified.
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## IMPRINT

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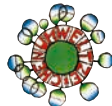
*Gleichstellungspolitik kontrovers. Eine Argumentationshilfe. Bonn. (Controversial Gender Equality Policy. A Manual of Arguments.)*

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# genderfair!

## **genderCartoons is a “genderfair” project**

This project supports schoolgirls as well as women students and research staff at the Vienna University of Technology in their career orientation and development.

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