

Generation BeSt - Investigation of gender neutral and gender sensitive academic recruiting strategies

Abstract

Careers of women in science run along a gendered "leaky pipeline" (cf. European Commission 2001: 12). With each career level the percentage of women decreases. The German average of female professors currently reaches only about 20% (cf. European Commission 2013: 90). On average, the percentage of female professors in EU-25 is 18% (cf. European Commission 2013: 90). Recent studies about the marginalization of women in the German science system suggest that the under-representation of female scientists has to be analysed through deep insight of the scientific system and its structures in order to understand and explain the background.

The main objective of "Generation BeSt" was to analyse the habits and rules of appointment procedures at universities and to develop gender sensitive and gender neutral methods for assignment and personnel recruitment at German universities, especially in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET). The project "Generation BeSt" was conducted in a cooperation between RWTH Aachen (IMA/ZLW & IfU) and the Technical University of Munich (Gender Studies in Science and Engineering) and funded by the ESF and the BMBF from December 2011 until February 2013.

A first work package included qualitative interviews with members of appointment committees to evaluate which structural and cultural mechanisms exist and influence the proportion of female professors at German universities. Since the amount of external funding serves as an essential quality feature in appointment processes - particularly within STEM faculties -, the next step was to analyse whether and to what extent external funding calls of the leading German research institutions contribute to a gender asymmetry. This was achieved via text mining procedures and expert interviews.

The investigations resulted in targeted recommendations to higher education, research institutions and science policy regarding gender-sensitive and gender-neutral appointment methods and recruitment strategies for the promoted appointment of women in academia.

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1. Background and state of the art

Women's careers in science are influenced by the phenomenon of a gender-specific "leaky pipeline" (European Commission 2001): the percentage of women decreases disproportionately the higher the career level. This "dropout" of female academics (Metz-Göckel 2010 et al.) especially occurs in the transitional postdoc phase between doctoral degree and habilitation. It continues with the appointment of professorships thus reproducing the gender asymmetry at this level. This asymmetry varies strongly concerning the different subject areas. At the beginning of their studies male students have a chance of 2% to ever become a professor. On average considering all faculties, the probability for their female counterparts is at only a 0.6% (Lind 2006). Today the gender ratio among new students enrolling at universities is balanced (Federal Office of Statistics 2012) – depending on the faculty female freshmen even prevail. However, on average women's chances of becoming a professor are at only a third of the chances of men.

Research on the subject of the underrepresentation of women in academia published since the beginning of the 1990s indicate the key reasons are to be found in the scientific system and its structures. As a result the focus has shifted to a field considerably influenced by the approach of the "Gendered Organization": asymmetrical gender relations exist and are reproduced in organizations and institutions and are therefore to be found in universities and research facilities (Geenen 1994, Roloff 2002, Allmendinger 1999, Matthies et al. 2001). Additionally, this asymmetry can be observed within appointment committees (Allmendinger et al. 2004).

Many consider the low degrees of standardization and formalization of appointment procedures to constitute a structural problem concerning the dropout of female academics (Lind 2007, Allmendinger 2005). Women are often assumed to drop out of academia due to family responsibilities. Funding and promoting women thus seems riskier. In consequence, it may unconsciously occur in a more defensive way than the funding and promoting of men (Lind 2007).

Moreover, there exists a variety of informal barriers whose influence is of crucial importance. These are vague expectations in terms of job performance and availability³ as well as a disadvantageous culture of confirmation and appreciation⁴ towards female academics (Lind 2007), especially in the fields of SET (Ihsen et al. 2013). Such behavioural patterns have been termed the withholding of the capital "acknowledgement" (Metz-Göckel et al. 2010) and constitute a central obstacle on the way to considering an academic career.

A look at the gender asymmetry at professorial level provides a first impression of the problem of gender-specific career-development. This circumstance is even more crucial considering regional and subject-specific differences. Furthermore, there is a distinctive dispersion and variance concerning the representation of women at professorial level depending on the region as shown by the University Ranking based on gender equality aspects (CEWS 2011). It is evident that the percentage of women is widely dispersed depending on the subject orientation of universities.

³ Due to restricted temporal resources such as childcare and family responsibilities the output funding relations of women are not secured (Allmendinger 2005).

⁴ During their studies female students feel less strengthened than their male counterparts when it comes to their professional competence which negatively influences the tendency to strive for a doctoral degree (Allmendinger 2005).

Gender-specific study choices make it difficult for technical universities in particular to raise the percentage of female students and staff in their characteristic disciplines, especially in the fields of SET (Schlüter and Harmeier 2012). Universities focusing on social sciences and economics are able to achieve this more easily. Although the percentage of female students and graduates is higher in these disciplines technical universities have a relatively higher percentage of women at higher career levels – measured by the scientific potential at hand (CEWS 2011). A closer examination of these disciplines with regard to the percentage of female professors shows that the number of women decreases depending on the hierarchy level. However, differences exist: both, the percentage of female freshmen as well as the dropout at different levels of qualification are relatively low. By the time of graduation and the appointment of professorships the percentage falls by 13%. When it comes to linguistics, cultural studies and art studies there is a high percentage of female freshmen. Nevertheless, the dropout of women in these disciplines is also relatively high. Compared to engineering the reduction amounts to 55% (Allmendinger 2005).

In consequence, a simple causal connection between the percentage of female students and the percentage of female professors cannot be confirmed. Thus, it is presumed that one reason for the low percentage of female professors can be found in the processes of universities.

The amount of acquired external funds⁵ serves as a benchmark during the selection process – as it is supposed to be an objective criterion. Although this measure substantiates one's scientific productivity and reputation (Jansen et al. 2007) and thus influences the decisions made in appointment procedures, no research results were to be found regarding an unintended gender bias concerning the award of external funds and its scientific justifications.

As a matter of fact the number of female scientists that apply for external funds is much lower than that of their male colleagues (Etzkowitz et al. 2012). Moreover, they have lower chances of success than male scientists (Auspurg and Hinz 2010). One reason might be the fact that women are less likely to have permanent contracts thus not meeting the formal (or informal) application requirements for external funding of several research funding institutions (DFG 2012b). Instead of examining the individual, structural and contextual differences between men and women (Allmendinger and Hinz 2002), the gender specific choice of research topics is still being used as an explanation for their different chances of success in external funding. The Funding Ranking of the German Research Foundation (DFG 2009) shows that between 2005 and 2007 18'159 persons from universities participated in research proposals addressed to the DFG. The percentage of proposals with female participants that were granted external funds amounts to only 16% (2'862 women). The Funding Atlas of 2012 by the German Research Foundation (DFG 2012a) reveals an identical quote of 16% in 2010.

The turnaround concerning university funding is a factor that structurally and informally affects academic recruitment strategies and is closely connected to the strategies at professorial level. Thiem (2013) observes a different style of research between men and women and describes the reasons in the different socialization experiences as well as the long-practiced societal gendered division of labour. Furthermore, women tend to attribute greater importance to interdisciplinary and do research in less established fields (Bührer 2010) than their male colleagues. In summary, it can be

⁵ External funds are defined as funds that are obtained for the funding of research and development in addition to the regular university budget and are acquired by public or private bodies. External funds can be provided for universities, one of their institutions (faculties, departments) or individual researchers (WR 2000).

presumed that this fact is to be discovered in regards to the low quota of applications by women on external funds and job postings. Furthermore, it can be supposed that not only the postings by research funding organizations but also those of professorships unconsciously contain a gender bias and put women at a disadvantage even before the application. As external funds grow more and more important, other benchmarks such as the number of publications and the volume of acquired external funds outweigh further criteria (Beaufaÿs 2003). Often, female scientists do research in less popular research areas (Beaufaÿs 2003). Thus, their chances are low in peer review systems, unaffected by their qualitative performance. This is closely related to the “Matthew Effect” in science described by Gross et al. (2008): According to that, performance is always implicitly considered in the light of known reputation and quantitative research achievements.

Structural barriers in appointment procedures⁶ already been identified are the low degrees of standardization and formalization as evidenced on the examples of strongly varying lengths of processes and a slow flow of information in the course of proceedings (Schmitt et al. 2004). Common countermeasures to these aspects are transparency in the course of procedure (Spangenberg and Färber 2008) or taking into account diverse scientific biographies. These measures, however, can only rarely be found in appointment regulations or guidance documents.

The chances for a successful scientific career are much higher for those scientists who develop consistent attitudes (Janshen and Rudolph 1987) than for those who live and work in a constant ambivalence between person and role (Janshen and Rudolph 1987). In reference to male dominated behavioural patterns that are characteristic for the scientific habitus⁷ and also for appointment procedures, male applicants may profit from a certain ease in their acts (Beaufaÿs in Dackweiler 2007). As womanhood is still perceived as in dissonance to the scientific working culture, women cannot profit from such attributions (Lind 2007). A seamless and disciplinary habitus development can only take place if role consistency is given. The socially and institutionally conditioned image of professors contributes considerably to the habitus-related ambivalence of female scientists on a cultural level. Moreover, seamless biographies are difficult to achieve for women (and men) who wish to reconcile job and family. These disruptions lead to the rigorous exclusion from the scientific community (Metz-Göckel et al. 2010). The formal equality of treatment may also lead to the reproduction of the asymmetrical potential for the compatible development of a scientific habitus. This applies not only to the scientific elite but also to other areas of education and profession, like schools, universities, organizations and associations (Ihsen 2005).

2. Methods and design of the study

To investigate the question what inherent factors lead structures, cultures and organizations to the asymmetric distribution of scientific staff at professorial level in terms of gender, our study analyses various universities and disciplines to identify possible implications between these factors and the respective percentage of female professors. Nationwide qualitative and quantitative investigations

⁶ The rather less formalized access to academic qualification positions has created growing concerns during the last years. There is good evidence that women can profit from standardised, externally advertised recruitment procedures than from internal recruitment practice (Lind 2007).

⁷ Habitus being a system of incorporated internalised patterns of a specific culture which allow one to (re)produce system typical thoughts, perceptions and actions (Bourdieu 1982).

were made concerning gender sensitive and gender neutral academic recruiting strategies (cf. Figure 1).

The second object of the study was the investigation of gender sensitive and gender neutral elements in postings of German public research funding organizations⁸ and professorial job postings (cf. Figure 1) via problem-focused interviews and text mining.

The nationwide qualitative investigation via guided expert interviews in Germany was divided into a preliminary study, data collection and data analysis as well as the validation by experts. The collection and analysis of data was performed based on the preliminary study. The sampling included persons (e.g. internal and external commissioners, university management, gender and equal opportunities officers, professors, etc.) who were chosen due to their expertise and knowledge based on experience regarding academic recruitment strategies and appointment procedures in expectation of valuable contributions. Another criterion was the percentage of female professors of the investigated universities to examine possible implications between the arrangements of appointment procedures and the percentage of female professors. The interviews were accessed by means of content analysis (via MAXQDA). The following expert workshop had the aim to validate the compiled data with the expertise and (implicit) knowledge of different actors and players (e.g. gender and equal opportunities officers, appointment commissioners, scientists and other multipliers from the scientific community).

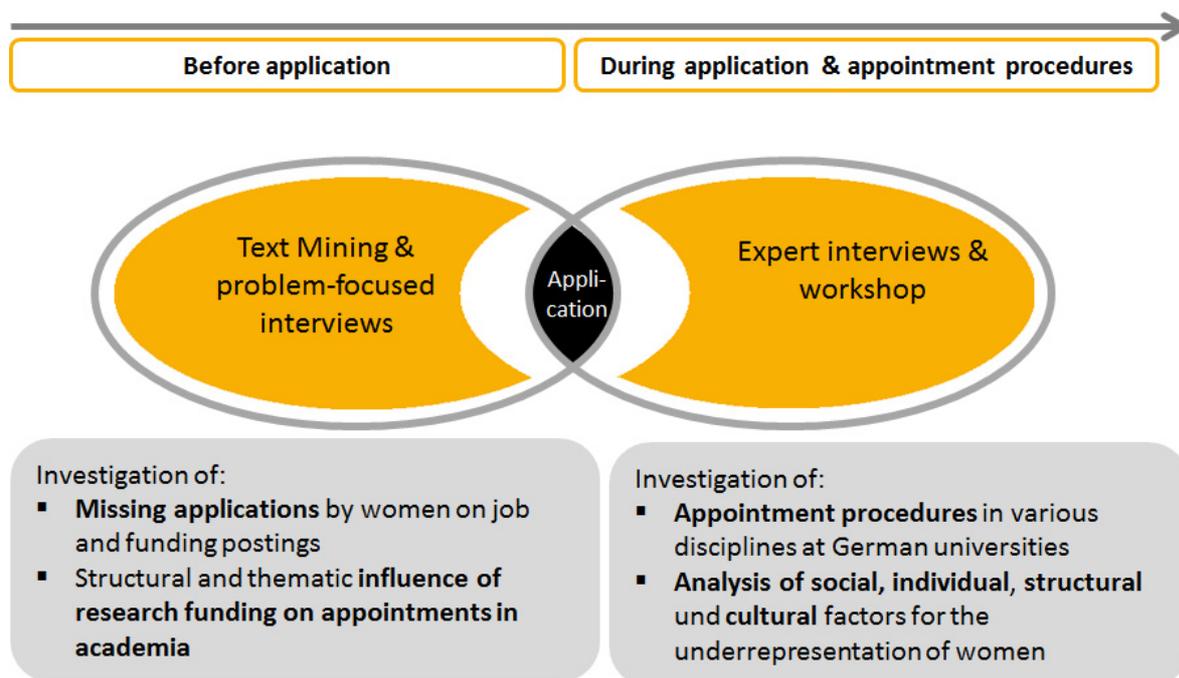


Figure 1: Subjects of investigation

⁸ e.g. German Research Foundation (DFG), German Council of Science and Humanities (WR), Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi), Volkswagen Foundation, Academy of Sciences etc.

The investigation of gender sensitive or gender neutral elements of the postings by German public research funding organizations and professorial job postings was carried out via text mining and problem-focused interviews. The text mining method was used to discover meaningful patterns and structures in weakly structured text data. Two large text corpora consisting of postings of funding organizations between 2007 and 2008 and professorial job postings between 2009 and 2010 were examined and compared. The data was analyzed to determine standard formulations, frequently used technical terms and frequently advertised research trends, thus indirectly looking for research trends in the postings. The problem-focused interviews aimed to portray the time course between research trend and funding as well as the qualification profiles of professorial applicants showing the connections in the decision-making process of qualified persons on applying for a professorship or not. The focus was on the identification of selection processes before the habilitation or – depending on the discipline – at other crucial links.

3. Investigation of gender sensitive and gender neutral academic recruiting strategies

3.1 Preliminary study

Eight guided interviews were used to deduce the five essential topics: “institutional and personal requirements”, “basic conditions of appointment procedures”, “advancement of women in academia”, and “networks and process and completion of appointment procedures”.

The interviewees of the preliminary study commented on the differences between disciplines and their importance for appointment procedures. The non-binding nature or even the entire lack of guidelines has to be emphasized in particular. Differences are to be found not only between different universities but also between universities located in the same federal state. Moreover, there were varieties between faculties of the same university. This heterogeneity was taken into consideration for the interview guide of the main study to scrutinize its impact on the appointment procedures themselves. Above that, the aspects of transparency and procedural documentation were factored in.

The problem of balancing academic work and family responsibilities was critically examined in consideration of the significant extension of childcare possibilities during the last years (e.g. Althaber et al. 2011) and in consequence included in the main study. The issue was addressed subtly in the form of asking for part time work and part time possibilities as it can provoke answers that are uttered because of a certain social desirability.

The interviewees of the main study were primarily interviewed on their own experiences about the relevance of networks during the application process of female professors. Of particular interest were the criteria the interviewees used to choose the jobs they applied for. Furthermore, the inclusion of (personal) networks important. In the analysis the results could be contrasted to the point of view of the interviewed appointment commissioners.

3.2 Main study

As there are inter-university differences in the percentage of female professors – as the data of the University Ranking shows (CEWS 2011) – the qualitative study examined the organizationally inherent, structural, cultural mechanisms taking place in appointment procedures that contribute to

the gender-asymmetric distribution in the scientific system. The aim was to reconstruct and explain the causes of the low percentage of female professors.

All in all, 48 persons from 18 German universities, biased by their percentage of female full professors and regional distribution, were interviewed via brief questionnaires and guided expert interviews. The 48 expert interviews were recorded, transcribed and encoded in order to access them by means of content analysis followed by the expert validation within the frame of a workshop.

4. Investigation of gender sensitivity of the postings by German public research funding organizations and job postings

Problem-focused interviews

The guided, problem-focused interviews (Flick 1995) were held with scientists of different disciplines who met the formal requirements for the appointment of a professorship in their respective disciplines. Above that, post-docs who were in a project management function were interviewed in order to cover the selection process before the habilitation.

The aims of the problem-focused interviews were

- to trace the **time course** from research trend to the qualification profiles of professorial applicants in order to
- point out the **connections** in the **decision-making process of qualified persons on applying for a professorship or not.**

This interview method is recommended because of its open approach as well as the centering on a certain problem. During the interviews the respondents had the possibility to comment on their subjective point of view. The respondents' remarks were led back to the leading questions of the investigation via inquiry and repeated questioning. Communication strategies (Witzel 1985) that generate narratives acted as important stimuli in the course of conversation.

In order to answer the main research questions fifteen interviews of post-docs from MINT fields selected by various aspects (gender, area of research, position, professional experience, career plans, family responsibility) were transcribed, encoded and analysed by making use of MAXQDA. A closer look into the coded passages shows the following motives for an application on a professorship:

- Passion for research
- Hierarchy
- Prestige
- Salary/ Money as a form of recognition
- Equipment
- Personnel responsibility

This leads to the conclusion that there is a divergence between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors when it comes to academic careers. The various motives are not easily compatible and

mediating factors are to be found in the recognition of work: the equipment of the working environment, the salary grade and personnel responsibility are named by almost all of the respondents as a form of appreciation for their scientific achievements and leadership qualities.

5. Results

The following findings and recommendations are based on the empirical data collected in the project. We hereby present a summary of the main aspects that in view of the structural and cultural opportunities and barriers exist in the German scientific system. These are reflecting the statements of the experts interviewed. Based on the reported results of the investigation recommendations for action are listed in chapter 6 following hereafter.

5.1 Structural and cultural barriers

As "Gendered Organization" universities proven to be rather resistant to change and reproduce asymmetrical gender relations system-internally. Universities as social spaces continue to be characterized by "patriarchal" structures only by high individual effort have access to the women. A self-selection, however, can only limitedly be observed. Certain external decision moments dominate the career paths in science. The appeal process itself is dominated by a few structural and formal specifications. Hence there is a lot of room for actions for the actors involved remains, but this does not contribute to appoint more women to professorships so far.

5.2 Cultural chances and barriers

Informal barriers such non concrete performance and availability expectations as well as an unfavourable acknowledgment and appreciation of culture against scientists comprising the same recognition before and provide a crucial hurdle on the way to a career in science. As cultural capital, however, networks and informal exchange relations are widely used by the female scientists who have decided to apply for a professorship despite the aforementioned obstacles.

Furthermore the "Matthew Effect" consistently leads to negative effects for women in science. First, due to the patriarchal heritage of "Gendered Organizational" the possibility for alternative scientific biographies will hardly be opened. Secondly, the ability to pass, though being viewed in the light of already known by the commission is neither objectively nor specifiable, ultimately depending on the personal composition of the commissions. It cannot be rejected on principle to pay attention to the "Pass Ability" of the candidates, because even group processes within the faculties and universities are to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless the question must be posed, to what extend these effects are reflected within the appointment procedures.

A systematic habitus ambivalence among the surveyed scientists has only positive impacts for men only positively by a write-up of habitus typical behaviour patterns. For women, however, it would lead to exclusion from the system. This could not be observed. Scientists did not express divergence, which could be based on a non-matching attribution of science vs. gender. Instead, they express their view on the appointment committees' work as an attempt to resort to apparent objective categories and decision criteria.

Another factor which has both structural and cultural impact is the growing importance of third-party funding of research projects at German universities. From one hand, this gives rise to a growing

importance of publication numbers and volume of external funding that are gender asymmetric due to e.g. family times. On the other hand, the choice of research topics is increasingly relevant. To conduct research outside the mainstream thus entails increased opportunities to make themselves unfit for appointment to a professorship. Women are attributed to have a greater affinity for the less popular research topics (Beaufaÿs 2003). However, it was found, that the importance of externally funded projects in respective job diverges is culturally specific. Not in every subject third-party funds appear to be applicable as a criterion of scientific productivity.

6. Recommendations for gender neutral and gender sensitive academic recruiting strategies

Based on the collected empirical data and the previously presented results recommendations were generated which are discussed and reflected critically.

6.1 Under-representation of women in the appointment committees

The under-representation of women in the appointment committees was emphasized by many interviewees. One possible solution to this problem is the introduction of subject-specific quotas by the university administration and national or federal administrations as a realistic approximation to the desired gender balance which is often defined by a guideline in appointment committees. By the development and implementation of a database of potential committee members, the subject-specific quota can be determined, monitored at regular intervals and updated if necessary. This recommendation would be targeted to the faculties and/or the dean's office.

To counteract the risk of a reduced number of women in appointment committees by a subject-specific quota, there should be implemented a minimum. Furthermore, there is the possibility of introducing this ratio as a "soft quota": e.g. the proportion of female students is at 20% in a given subject, the subject-specific quota of women in the appointment committee could be 15%. To gradually increase the proportion of women in appointment committees, it is helpful to check these regularly within the disciplines, depending on the University and, where appropriate, to increase the minimum. Moreover, it is recommended to introduce the subject-specific quota only for members with the rights to vote, in order to prevent the filling of the quota by non-voting members in appointment committees. Negative consequences of the introduction of a subject-specific rate, however, may also arise. It is conceivable that after the introduction of such a quota in the appointment committees of individual subjects fewer women are present than before. One way to counteract this is to expand the pool of potential members of the committee by not only appealing to members of each faculty, but also include external members of the scientific community obligatory. In this way, the risk of a possible overload of the women who are potential appointment committee members can be counteracted. In some cases it may be difficult, however, to find appropriate external members who are able to evaluate the applicants for the job as appropriate or inappropriate.

The question remains whether a higher representation of women can actually lead to an increase in the proportion of female professors in the ranks of the appointment committee members. A first step towards a higher proportion of women among professors may therefore be an awareness for the under-representation of women among all the members, or at least with the chairperson of the

appointment committee. Problematic biases of reviewers and informal processes in conjunction with the review process were highlighted. These problems are enforced by the practice of letting candidates choose or even suggest their reviewers by themselves. This is accompanied by the difficulty - depending on the subject – of having very scientific communities. In a correspondingly large community, one suggestion to approach this problem would be to set up the potential reviewers depending on denomination and community reputation, to regularly assess and select them randomly for each appointment process.

For this purpose, a pool can be created of possible reviewers before creating the list of candidates to be reviewed by the appointment committee. In addition, it is necessary to raise awareness among prospective referees for confidentiality within appeal. A disadvantage of the randomized selection of reviewers is the fact that there are certain areas with only a very small number of qualified reviewers. This can be countered by an increasing the amount of international reviewers. This has other positive side effects such as a higher attractiveness of German universities for foreign applicants.

6.2 Comparability of the reviewers' reports

As part of the evaluation, the comparison of the reviewers' reports was emphasized as a problematic field, since often there are no guidelines or criteria stipulated for these reports available. Support could be offered by the creation of a standardized template for reviewers by the faculties or deaneries depending on the professorship to be appointed, which then can be fitted by the appointment committee with an evaluation matrix corresponding to the vacant post. Due to the high standardization of processes within appointments the risk has to be considered that a benchmarking system pass through that already have a gender bias. To avert this, that particular evaluation matrix can be checked in advance, for example, the Equal Opportunities Officer for any critical points. It should be noted however that complex selection process controlled by standards and rules is ought to be very difficult.

6.3 Mechanisms of discrimination at the receipt of applications

The pre-sorting and/or sorting of applications on their reception was identified as a problem. The implementation of a cross-faculty professorial appointment management could support the avoidance of the sorting of applications without professional justification. This approach to appointment procedures was positively assessed by the universities that already have an appointment management at their command. Moreover, it is recommended for this step of the procedure to implement an evaluation matrix again as a guideline for the committee. This evaluation matrix should be partially standardized but also specialized on the specific professorship to be appointed and could be verified by an Equal Opportunities Officer in order to avoid discrimination mechanisms.

6.4 Structural insecurity in the position of Equality Officers

Particularly the position of the Equality Officer was mentioned during the interviews. The structural uncertainties and insecurities, the overload by committee work and the often missing subject specific knowledge and thus the lack of qualification for the proper assessment of candidates were viewed as problematic. Through the acquisition of participation in appointment committees through decentralized, specialized Equality Officer, this could be resolved. A structural strengthening of the Office of Equal Opportunity can be promoted by the federal- and inter-university institution of voting

rights and of specialized decentralized deputies. Further structural strengthening could be a dedicated workplace and personnel support to provide support at the working level.

In order to promote cooperation within the appointment committee, depending on the professorship to be appointed, a professional coaching for Equality Officer (and for other non-specialist appointment committee members) should take place. In addition, there is the possibility for the appointment committee members, even before the actual process starts, to be coached by the Equal Opportunities Officers or gender issues brought to awareness.

6.6 Selection process within the professorial appointment committee

As part of the selection process within the appointment committee the inequalities within the structures as well as in dealing with applicants became visible. To solve this problem it is necessary to create standardized structures in appointment procedures that lead to a better traceability of the choice of the candidates and greater transparency of the procedures. This can be done by means of detailed appointment directives or manuals, in which individual process steps are clearly structured by the university administration. Furthermore, the individual components within the process could be limited by the means of time in order to avoid the unnecessary extension of the appointment process. The creation of multidisciplinary guidelines for appointment lectures and subsequent reliance conversations could also help to improve an equal treatment of male and female applicants.

6.7 Call for applications

The call for application and thus the addressing of potential candidates for a professorship was shown by many interviewees as inadequate and improvement. To appeal to more potential candidates, it is possible that advise the actors who are responsible for creating the job advertisement by the Equal Opportunities Officer to attain adequate and gender sensitive language. Particularly increasingly relevant it also appears to be to sensitise active recruiting professors about the different offers for finding their active role in the (international) search for suitable candidates. Looking at the job postings, especially the width or narrowness of the tender was discussed divers.

While broader tenders lead to larger numbers applicants and thus possibly to a larger pool of female candidates, this increase, however, the number of unsuitable applicants leading to greater effort and may require a longer duration of the procedure. Closer but tender can be tailored to any particular person or address only a select group of applicants. In addition, applicants may lack the academic aspects of particularly specifically narrow tenders. Although the majority of respondents tend to be arguing for broader job postings, this way the call for applications is not clearly more advantageous for women than short-listed tender of professorships.

6.8 Structural dependencies and insecurities of appointment commissioners

During the occupation of the appointment committee structural dependencies between the different members within the commission were identified as problematic. In particular, the membership of doctoral students and the accompanying carers in appointment committees was mentioned, as these can have a negative impact in case of disagreement in the selection process. In addition, while the fixed-term employment contracts of Equality Officers and doctoral students was considered to have an important influence, as they may lead to a less well representation of their opinion during the commission's work.

6.9 Voting with the appointment committee

The vote on the appointment list which differs among universities is to be assessed as problematic. The interviews showed a dissent with regard to the anonymity of the vote. The advantage of an anonymous vote is, that structural dependencies are not effective or only to a small extent. As within appointment committees however generally open discussions were held about the candidates, an anonymous vote has no added value.

6.10 Sensitization on gender aspects of Structural Commissions

Structural Commissions of universities are usually consisting of deans, educational deans and other representatives of the faculties. They are responsible for the planning and the alignment of professorships in advance of the appointment committee who work on the basis of the work of the Structural Commissions. The interviews suggested that gender issues usually do not play a role at that stage of the procedure. Here, gender issues should be implemented as a cross-cutting issue, aware of the problem and each of the Commission's decision can be questioned on possible gendered effects. The implementation and controlling of gender sensitization of the structure (planning) commission should be carried out by the Equality Officer in cooperation with the university administration and the faculties. This can be anchored together with a subject-specific rate, as recommended for the appointment committees. It would also be advantageous to make the work of the Structural Commissions transparent and documented. Possible negative effects of these recommendations could be assumed with respect to the increasing bureaucracy.

These directives and guidelines will have to be developed, validated, implemented, monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. The proposed controlling also leads to more administrative overhead in the process. The denomination of chairs is an indispensable design tool for schools and universities, even to stand out from other research sites and to raise its profile. Here are only limited options to be identified in order not to restricting the possibilities of arranging professorships which might have negative effects on the German research and teaching landscape. Nevertheless, the varying alignment of professorships can lead to a higher diversity in research and the scientific community.

7. Summary

The improvement and transformation of German universities appointment procedures in terms of gender sensitivity and gender issues is now the subject of research for several years. When asked about improvement within the structural framework, it has been frequently pointed out how important the standardization of structures is. This need could be supported by the project "Generation BeSt". Although often been addressed, the standardization of appointment processed and steps in this direction have been under way, still some problematic processes have been revealed in this regard.

This suggests that a radical restructuring and very strong standardization of such processes may not be the best way. Therefore, it is worth rethinking to have appointment processes tentatively run less standardized and then examine them for their earnings afterwards. As a deeper area of problems, there also emerges the orientation and alignment of professorships. At the same time the number of students in recent years has steadily increased, while the number of professorships has increased only slightly. This results in a rather small margin in the denominations of these professorships and

also results in wider tenders, since teach must be guaranteed. The negative consequence of the wider opportunities as well as those promoted by wider professorships would be that the teaching which is required by program regulations, could not be executed.

The burden of female appointment committee members as well as the Equal Opportunities Officer by the additional work of an appointment process is an important issue. Because often several appointment processes run simultaneously and the Equal Opportunity Officer is a member of other committees, it is necessary to support Equality Officer. In each appointment committee, a person can be coached from the ranks of professors from the Equality Officers in such cases to act accordingly in the respective appointment process. An advantage of this would be the combination of expertise to the representation of gender aspects within the process.

In order to ensure equal treatment of all applicants in appointment processes, training for all actors involved in the process is one way of dealing not only with the structural barriers of the process, but also with the awareness on gender issues. The exchange of best practice examples from the German higher education landscape between university boards could propose a positive orientation for future appointment committees and may be involved in the training mentioned above. For possible objective or impartial control of appointment, the establishment of a general appointment or application management at all universities would be advantageous.

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