



Gendering the **A**cademy
and **R**esearch: combating
Career Instability and **A**symmetries



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Scientific excellence, gender, and precarious careers

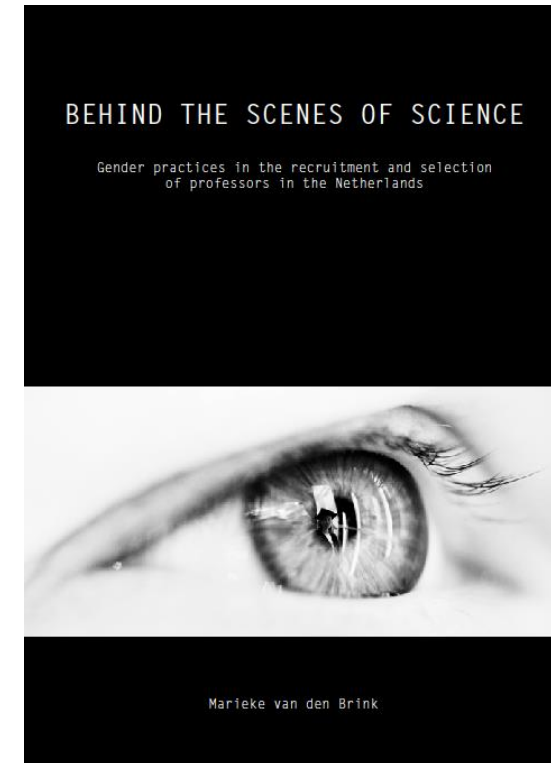
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Background/research

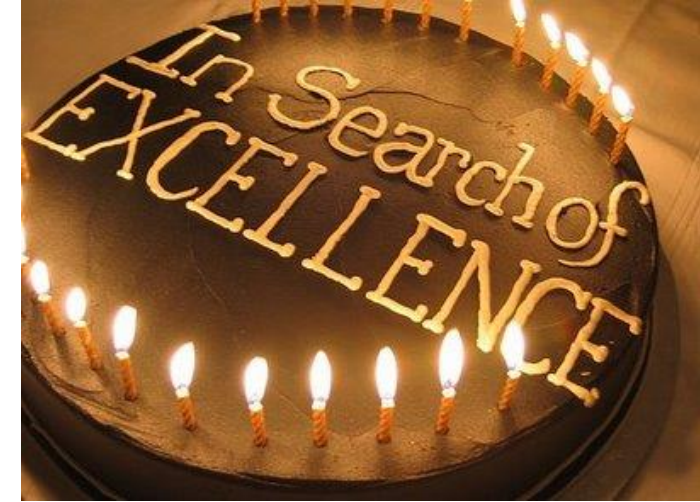
- Research Professorial Appointments:
How is gender practiced in the recruitment & promotion of full professors in the Netherlands?
- Data collection:
 - Statistics appointment Dutch universities
 - 971 Appointment reports
 - Recruitment and selection protocols
 - 64 interviews with committee members
- GARCIA project: FP7 EU research project on gender and precarious workers in academia (2014-2017).
- Data collection: (Channah Herschberg)
 - Case reconstructions 2014-2015
 - Interviews committee members
 - Workshops committee members



In search of excellence: early career academics

- Increase of fixed term contracts (FTCs), in all Western universities (Huisman, De Weert, & Bartelse, 2002): precarious employment (Armano & Murgia, 2013 ; Arnold & Bongiovi, 2013)
- Increasing numbers of PhDs (Cyranoski et al., 2011)
- Strong competition for scarce jobs
- Tenure-track programmes – implemented to improve career prospects (Schiewer & Jehle, 2014), prolongs probation period
- Recruitment and selection practices play an important role in getting access to a tenure-track position
- Trend of internationalisation and label of excellence key to inclusion or exclusion in academic profession

In search of excellence



- Excellence is holy grail in academia
 - Especially in times of precarity, austerity and new managerialism
- Anchored in the norm of the meritocracy (Merton 1973)
- Attention for bias in academic evaluation (a.o. Wenneras & Wold 1997; Castilla 2008; Ozbilgin 2009; Moss-Racusin et al, 2012; Streinpreis, Anders & Ritzke 1999; Ellemers 2015)
- Peer review: Women had to receive 100 or more impact points to get the same rating from the judges than a man with 40 or fewer impact points (Wenneras & Wold, 1997)
- Male and female science faculty members are more likely to hire male research assistants, mentor them more, and pay them a higher salary (Moss-Racusin et al, 2012).
- Excellence as a social construction (Brouns & Addis 2004; Lamont 2009; Van den Brink & Benschop 2012)

In search of excellence: full professors

- Do we recognize talent when we see it?
- Sheep with five legs
 - Formal criteria (research, teaching, managerial experience)
 - Informal criteria (personality, leadership skills, fit)
- 971 sheep with 5 legs?
- Double standards in construction of excellence
- Professional, individual and social capital:
 - Bias in research output / linear career progression
 - Bias in teaching evaluation
 - Leadership capabilities are questioned
 - Perceived Lack of commitment



Start of academic career: Excellence or suitability?

- Informal recruitment for postdocs
- Short term, project based decisions... yet consequences for academic careers
- Postdocs tend to be selected based on availability and suitability instead of excellence. Often under time pressure.
- Postdocs are usually selected at the discretion of the project leader(s) who tend to have a preference for candidates within their network (no accountability).
- Outsourcing selection to funding organizations
- Old boys networks, particularly in STEM fields
 - Limited pool of candidates
 - Women overlooked
- **Postdoc stage is a crucial stage in which female talent can be lost.**

Gender in informal recruitment

- Who is included in the recruitment and selection process?
 - Scouts are predominantly male
 - 44% of committees were men only
- Male scouts have mostly men in their networks (chance homophily). Male networks are homogenous (Ibarra 1992/ Burt 1992). 'we can't find any eligible women for this position'
- Men scouts prefer to work with men (choice homophily)
 - Perceived similarity / unconscious bias
 - Easier (avoiding heterosexual tensions)
 - Women as a risk
- Basing feelings of trust on (perceived) similarity and risks on (perceived) dissimilarity



Gender in formal recruitment: Granting visibility

- “Women do not engage in self-promotion”
 - Social sanctions for self promotion (Rudman 1998; Sools et al 2003)
 - Ambition of women is not self-evident (Benschop et al 2010; 12)
 - Emphasis on self-promotion / self- confidence has intensified (Gill & Orgad, 2016)
- Granting visibility by others
 - Encouragement to apply
 - Building reputations
 - Recommendations
 - Basking in reflected glory (Cialdini 1976)
- Women receive less support during their careers (Husu, 2001; Bagilhole and Goode 2001; Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2014)

- Brink, M. van den & Y. Benschop. Practicing Gender in Academic Networking: The role of Gatekeepers in professorial recruitment, *Journal of Management Studies*
- Brink, M. van den & L. Stobbe. The support paradox: Overcoming dilemmas in gender equality programs, 2014, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*.

Granting visibility

- My own promotor [...] has always helped me if I asked him. But he never supported my career in an active way, as far as I know. Nominated me for things. Never never. It is not something he usually does, but I know he has done it for some men in his surrounding. [...] Actually, he never understood that my ambition in this area is equally to men. And that is not because he isn't the sweetest man, and doesn't care about me, ..that is not the case. But that all this is as important for me as for my male colleagues....he once told me honestly, ...that coin doesn't drop. (humanities, female professor)
- What I also have seen, senior professors, men, prefer to coach or support someone who is similar to them. And of course those are the young, promising guys that they once were. And it is crucial to have someone like that. (social sciences, female professor)

Possibilities for change

- Not only 'fixing' women, but also change recruitment and selection practices
- R&S protocols & transparency necessary but not sufficient
- Awareness of gender practices (and dare to intervene!)
- Use more and diverse scouts
- Search explicitly for female talent
- Take time to prepare interviews
- Explicate criteria before searching candidates
- Awareness of research time in output
- Accountability of committee members
- Start scouting, supporting and sponsoring women