# Practices of inequality in recruitment and selection in academia

Prof.dr. Marieke van den Brink
Institute for Social & Cultural Research

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

BEHIND THE SCENES OF SCIENCE

Gender practices in the recruitment and selection of professors in the Netherlands

Marieke van den Brink

garcia
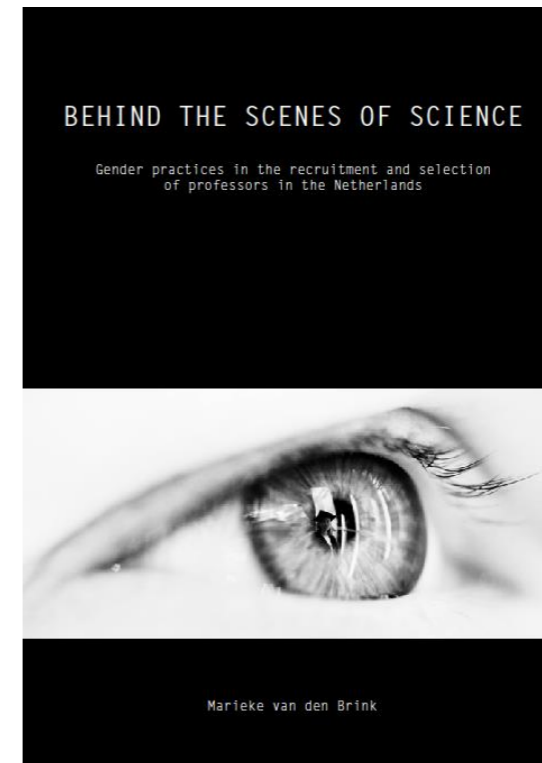
In search of excellence

- 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)

- Stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity, class (a.o. Benaji 1995, Valian 1998)
  - Implicit associations
  - Research focuses on the outcome, not on the process
  - Empirical data (access, confidentiality)

- Excellence as a social construction (Brouns & Addis 2004; Lamont 2009; Van den Brink & Benschop 2012) and selection as micropoliticial process

In search of excellence: full professors

- Do we recognize excellence when we see it?

- Sheep with five legs
  - Formal criteria (research, teaching, managerial experience, academic citizenship)
  - 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
  - Bias in teaching evaluation
  - Leadership capabilities are questioned
  - Perceived lack of commitment

- Gender and age
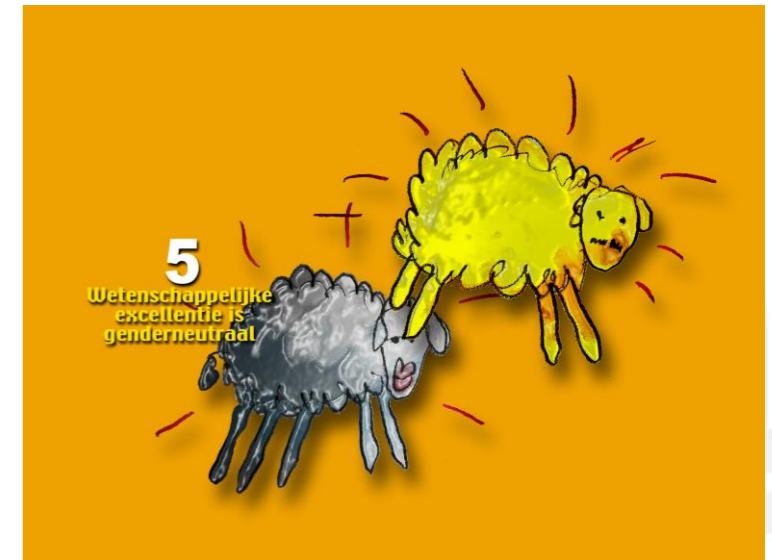
Intersection gender and age

- After a certain point, it is too late for promotion. Then they [female applicants] have done everything that is required and they are qualified for the job, but they simply aren't the right candidate anymore, they are too old. There is a **certain window** during which you have to enter the circuit. In medical sciences, you have to become professor between 40 and 50. Woman are **not that fast** – that is where they **fall short**. They cannot do it so quickly. (Medical Sciences)

- However, I do see women who are qualified for the job. Unfortunately, they are **somewhat older** on average, you know. Committees prefer younger candidates, as they have a longer future ahead of them...or, I don't know, seem more **energetic** or something (Social Sciences)

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
  - who are the 'lucky few'? And is that gendered?
  - Evaluation based on **potential**

Start of academic career: Excellence or suitability?

- Informal recruitment for postdocs

- Postdocs tend to be selected based on availability and suitability instead of excellence. Often under time pressure.
- Postdocs selected at discretion of project leader(s) who prefer candidates in their network (**less accountability**).

- Old boys networks, particularly in STEM fields
  – Limited pool of candidates

- Postdoc stage is a crucial stage in which 'diverse' talent gets lost.

- "who can start immediately [on the first day of the project], who will be good for the project but perhaps **not super-brilliant**, not top class, right, because all the same we are in competition on the market." (Switzerland)

- Yes, postdocs almost always go via the internal network. You know, postdocs and PhD students, they are being paid by projects. People apply for those projects. Those projects are in fact sort of the **property** of those people. And thus they can decide who will be the PhD student or postdoc. (NL, STEM, M)

Exclusion in informal networks

- Who is included in the recruitment and selection process?
    - Scouts are predominantly male
    - 44% of all appointment committees are (white) 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 eligable women for this position'

- Men scouts prefer to work with men (choice homophily)
    - Perceived similiarity
    - Easier (avoiding heterosexual tensions)
    - Women as a risk

- Affiliating masculinities: basing feelings of trust on (perceived) similarity and risks on (perceived) dissimilarity
- Women participating in mobilizing masculinities (reproducing the 'proven success model')

Brink, M. van den & Y. Benschop (2012), Gender practices in the construction of academic excellence: Sheep with five legs, *Organization*, Vol. 19, 4, p.507-524.

Radboud University Nijmegen

Identifying with the similar

When men keep their traditional mentality in which [they think] women are not so interested or they don't even think about it, [a professorial position] they will take other men, because they have always known men in this profession, they know what men can do. Women some day get children or whatever they think that women do. If men are not thinking consciously, she is a woman that is equally good or whatever, than I think that automatically they would just take the man, because they think that they can rely more on the man, he is like me. (natural sciences, woman)

Granting visibility

- Women/minorities 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)

- Granting visibility
  - 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)

- Affiliating masculinities: men mobilize their masculinity by supporting and assisting other men in ways that advance their career goals.

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

Radboud University Nijmegen

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)

Conclusion and how to proceed

- Scientific quality is a gendered social construction
  - Conscious raising about the functioning and effect of male networks and the existence of gender stereotypes in regular appointment procedures
  - Train chairs of committees

- Discuss the criteria of the excellence academic
  - Learn about how to recognize gendered practices and intervene

- Scouting talent is becoming increasingly important in the recruitment of junior and senior academics
  - 'diverse' candidates are scouted as well, but in general, they risk the possibility to be overlooked
- Explicit search for 'other' talent/ use more and diverse scouts
- Mentor and sponsor diverse talent

- Leadership is crucial: back up diversity interventions and explain

- More thinking about our own role/responsibility in changing institutions?
  - Not only 'fixing' women/minorities, but change recruitment and selection practices

Towards inclusion?

	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	**Exclusion** Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.	**Assimilation** Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.
High Value in Uniqueness	**Differentiation** Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/ organization success.	**Inclusion** Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.

Towards inclusive academia

- Change the numbers

- Change the institution

- Change the knowledge