

## Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the reasons for women's greater access to German academia and focuses on trends in development in the context of the changing character of the academic profession, development of higher education and labor market situation. To assess women's career chances we explore structural obstacles and opportunities and the position of women within the organizations, and examine the success and relevance of affirmative action in the process of women's integration into academia.

Expansion of higher education sector in 1965-75 offered professorship positions for only a few women and did not open career perspectives for newcomers. Since the mid '70s the number of junior staff positions and professorships has remained stable and career perspectives have deteriorated. The female junior staff has in contrast been constantly on the increase, filling the expanding sector of fix-term, part time and externally funded academic jobs. The overall ratio of junior staff to professors has remained since the '60s much less favorable for women than men (though the discriminatory effect is combined here with the cohort effect- a "young" staff structure for women). Women are also more likely to rely on non-regular financial support while working on their doctorates and habilitations. Thus women are more likely to occupy inferior sectors of the academic labor market, are segregated vertically (less than 10% in professorship positions) and horizontally. On the career ladder they drop-out at a much higher rate than men, but the rates for females actually differ across disciplines as well. They also tend to be younger graduates and doctorate awardees but are considerably older than men at habilitation level and on taking up professorship positions. When investigating professorship appointments we do not identify any obvious discrimination (success rates of men and women are equal), which verifies the hypothesis that more formalized appointment procedures are anti-discriminatory. However, application patterns remain obscure and more sophisticated exclusion leading to different or lower application rates for women may still prevail.

An increase of female participation rates at every step- university enrolment, doctorate, habilitation and professorship in the mid '80s -'90s is to be explained in the context of stagnating interest of men in university studies and careers in a shrinking public sector, feminist pressures and qualification opportunities offered to women (grants, stipends etc), a changing academic environment (more female mentors and networks), and finally a more relaxed situation on the academic labor market due to the generation shift in top-ranking positions. However the perspectives for the future are more pessimistic, due to persistent casualization of academic work, the still huge potential of women and shrinking numbers of vacant professorships. This may rend political involvement even more crucial.