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*Is Academia still an attractive Career  
Opportunity for both Women and Men?  
The new employment law in Austria  
from the new generation of Academic's  
Perspective*

***TP 03/11***

### **About the Project**

The normative concept of gender equity which exists in European societies is contrasted by a reality in which women in top-level positions are by no means a common occurrence.

Against this background, the European Research Training Network Women in European Universities, funded by the European Commission, is a joint research project of partners in seven European countries.

Its scientific programme aims at assessing the professional status of women in academia and at analysing the reasons for the under-representation in positions of authority in European Universities.

The network structure includes regular conferences and meetings to provide a forum to present outcomes, exchange knowledge and to discuss about research planning as well as findings and outcomes.

The **Training Paper Series** are essays authored by the doctoral students of the project in every research phase. They give an introduction to the research topic and an overview of the findings in the research country of the doctoral student.



**Abstract**

This paper is the result of a case study conducted from December 2002 to January 2003 at the University of Innsbruck, Austria to assess the attractiveness of an academic career under the new employment law. Focus group interviews with up and coming academics were run in order to highlight the situation and career opportunities of women and men on the lowest step of the academic career ladder. The design of the study involved four groups differentiated according to gender and occupational status (old vs. new employment law). The method turned out to be a good tool in order to explore various facets of the situation of the interviewees. Furthermore it revealed their insecurity concerning their own status and professional future caused by the policy change. However the results suggest that the new employment law indeed makes an academic career less attractive for it is less predictable and the positions offered are precarious, it is likely that it facilitated the finishing of one's dissertation. Generally, the interviews suggest that the situation and career perspectives of the junior faculty ("Mittelbau") are rather determined by discipline and occupational status than by gender. Thus despite providing interesting insights into the situation and attitudes of the "old" and the "new" junior faculty the outcomes of the study do not bring further light to the explanation of the persistent female underrepresentation in academia.

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## 1 Introduction

Since the late 1980s efforts to substitute existing university employment laws according to civil servant law by employment under public law have been undertaken in several European countries. The first reform in this direction has been conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) with the Education Reform Act of 1988. Through this law, British university teachers became employees of the individual universities unlike before when the state was their employer. Since then, British universities have been free to decide what kind of working contract (unrestricted, restricted, terminable, tenure) to establish. In the UK like in other countries<sup>1</sup> (among them Austria) the tendency towards contractual employment within the university sector is connected to the granting of autonomy to universities (Marhold 2001: 56 f.).

Through the University Organisation Act (UOG – “Universitäts-Organisationsgesetz”) of 1993 the Austrian universities have been granted restricted legal autonomy (“Teilrechtsfähigkeit”) and the recently passed University Act (UG – “Universitätsgesetz”) of 2002 extends the autonomy even further (“Vollrechtsfähigkeit”) (BMBWK 2001: 1).

Even though the UG 2002 will not be in force before 2004, in 2001 a new interim (!) employment law<sup>2</sup> (“neues Dienstrecht”) for university research and teaching staff has already been passed. The main objective of this reform is to facilitate the transfer of universities into extended autonomy. At the heart of this development is the shift from employment according to civil servant law to contractual employment (BMBWK 2001: 2; Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: III). The new law offers university teachers a career according to a four pillar model. Unlike before, transitions from the time restricted positions no longer occur within a closed civil servant career, but by application (BMBWK 2001: 2).

We know from the UK, that changes of the university employment law may have gender specific consequences. In the UK women have been much more affected by the considerable growth in short-term contracts (“casualisation”) than their male colleagues (European Commission 2000: 19). Concerns arose, that such a development towards “contractual segregation” could also take place in Austria. For instance, Ms. Birgit Sauer, associate

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<sup>1</sup> These are Denmark, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and soon Germany (Marhold 2001: 58).

<sup>2</sup> The German term „Dienstrecht“ may either be translated as „civil servant law“ (in the dictionary on higher education – BMWV 1999) or as “employment law“ (in a more recent publication on university reforms by the BMBWK, download at: <http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/start.asp?isllink=1&bereich=7&l1=&l2=&l3=&OID=6820#>). I have opted for the latter, mainly because the last reform is seen as an intermediate stage for the change of university employment law according to civil servant law to employment under public law. (The law has been published in: BGBl I 2001/87).

professor at the Department of Political Science of the University of Vienna, states: “The creation of two classes of university teachers, one restricted, the other unrestricted (“definitiv”), will probably lead to a feminisation of the insecure positions and to a further masculinisation of the secure positions” [own translation, J.B.] (<http://science.orf.at/science/sauer/14925>: 25/01/02). A further critique already raised by feminists during the drafting process of the reform concerns the necessity to apply for transitions from time restricted positions. But applying for a position on the next pillar is only possible provided there is a vacancy and exactly this would be questionable due to budgetary restrictions (Moser 2001: 27; <http://science.orf.at/science/sauer/14925>: 25/01/02). Thus Sauer points out that the new generation of academics, which is quantitatively more feminised than the higher ranks of the academic hierarchy, may be expelled from the universities after the expiring of their fixed-term contracts (<http://science.orf.at/science/sauer/14925>: 25/01/02). In addition Ms. Gabriele Moser, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Vienna, underlined, that the new employment law would enhance enforced childlessness as it prevents the planning of the career (Moser 2001: 27). Yet it is certainly too early for a profound assessment of the possible gender-specific consequences of the new employment law on all levels of the academic hierarchy. This is the case, not only because it only came into force in October 2001, but above all because the old regulations keep being adherent for most of the staff (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: III). A bigger number of persons under the new employment law can right now only be found on the lower levels of the academic career ladder (academic employees and assistants), where no positions are “blocked” by persons under the old law for many years due to tenure. Additionally, the data provided in table 2(see:) also show, that up to now vacancies have preferably been filled with academic employees and thus persons contracted on the lowest rank. Particularly the introduction of this lowest position has been criticised for making a university career less attractive. The comparatively lower income on the first step has been considered to endanger the recruitment of qualified up and coming academics (e.g. by the Dean and Faculty Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts of the University of Innsbruck: [http://www2.uibk.ac.at/ipoint/news/uni\\_und\\_gesellschaft/20020516.html?id\\_111](http://www2.uibk.ac.at/ipoint/news/uni_und_gesellschaft/20020516.html?id_111): 17/3/03).<sup>3</sup> Experiences at the University of Innsbruck confirm the legitimacy of this concern – within the first six months after the implementation of the new employment law applications for the first and second pillar declined by 70% (Korecky 2002: without pages). The decline in applications was especially extreme at the Faculty of Medicine, as positions in hospitals that are

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<sup>3</sup> An academic employee in training earns 1512 € gross a month (that are approximately 1085 € net), according to the old system the same person would have earned 2087 € a month. ([http://www2.uibk.ac.at/ipoint/news/uni\\_und\\_gesellschaft/20020516.html?id\\_111](http://www2.uibk.ac.at/ipoint/news/uni_und_gesellschaft/20020516.html?id_111): 17/03/03).

run by local governments are more attractive for they are better paid and research is not compulsory (Uniintern 2002: 4).

Against this background I have decided to conduct for the qualitative step of our Research and Training Network “Women in European Universities” (which explores the situation of women and their career chances and barriers at the universities of seven European countries<sup>4</sup>) a case study at the University of Innsbruck to assess the situation and career perspectives of up and coming academics on the lowest rank of the new employment law. As there are no respective studies available yet<sup>5</sup>, I opted for focus group interviews which according to Sue Wilkinson (1998: 184) may be used to explore new research questions. In order to determine whether there are any gender-specific differences regarding the situation and career perspectives of the “new” junior faculty, I chose a design that incorporates two separate sessions for women and men and one “mixed” session. Furthermore I set up a contrast group – consisting of members of the junior faculty who are still employed under the old employment law – to detect similarities and differences between members of the “old” and the “new” junior faculty.

I start my report with background information concerning the available positions under the “old” and under the “new” employment law. In addition, I provide data on the gender distribution at Austrian universities in general and at the University of Innsbruck in particular. In the third chapter, the methodological approach is outlined. In the following three chapters chapters (4. *The attractiveness of an academic career*, 5. *The situation of the junior faculty*, 6. *Explanations for women’s underrepresentation and perceptions concerning equal opportunity policies in academia*) I present the results of the interviews. In the final chapter I will sum up the results in general and in view of my research goals. In conclusion, I will discuss the results in regards to the method used.

## 2 Career path and gender distribution in Austrian academia

This paper tries to assess the situation of up and coming academics as well as their perception of the attractiveness of an academic career from their own point of view. The main questions of this research have are: Is it less attractive to pursue an academic career due to the regulations of the new employment law than before? Are there any gender-specific differences concerning the situation of the junior faculty and their career perspectives?

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<sup>4</sup> These are Austria, France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

<sup>5</sup> Similar studies by Buchholz (2003) and Kreetz (2003) are forthcoming. However, they do not explicitly focus on the consequences of the new employment law but on general factors that influence the working conditions of the junior faculty.

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Before analysing the data from the four focus group interviews, it is necessary to provide some basic information about the “old” and the “new” career path and the gender distribution in Austrian academia in general and at the University of Innsbruck in particular, especially as far as junior faculty is concerned. Therefore I give a broad overview of these aspects in the following chapters.

## 2.1 “Old” vs. “new” career path

### 2.1.1 The “old” employment law

Despite many reforms ever since its implementation, the “old” employment law dates back to 1988 (BMBWK 2002a: 26). According to its regulations there were generally two options to enter university: either as *university assistant* (“UniversitätsassistentIn”) or, for those who could not have been appointed as a university assistant for particular legal reasons<sup>6</sup>, as *contract assistant* (“VertragsassistentIn”). For both employment types there were several steps with the final one leading to permanent employment:

The prerequisite for appointment as university assistant or contract assistant on a temporal contract was the graduation from a university. After two years of service, a contract assistant may have applied for a prolongation of the contract for a further four to six years (“VertragsassistentIn zeitlich befristet” – erste Phase”). After taking her/his pertinent doctor's degree and in case of need it was usually possible to be appointed for a further six years (“VertragsassistentIn zeitlich befristet – zweite Phase”). After a further extension of the contract, the contract assistant obtained an unrestricted contract (“VertragsassistentIn auf unbestimmte Zeit”). However, contrary to a tenured university assistant, s/he can still be dismissed.

After four years of service a university assistant on temporal contract (“UniversitätsassistentIn zeitlich begrenzt”) may have entered provisional service (“UniversitätsassistentIn auf unbestimmte Zeit/provisorisch”) for a further six years. This presupposed successful performance, an existing need and above all her or him holding a doctorate degree. After that, a university assistant may have become a civil servant (“UniversitätsassistentIn auf unbestimmte Zeit/definitiv”) by proving successful service or by achieving a habilitation (i.e. teaching authority). An assistant who acquired a habilitation was transferred to the category of associate professors (“UniversitätsdozentIn or “VertragsdozentInnen”, official title: “Außerordentliche/r ProfessorIn”). The

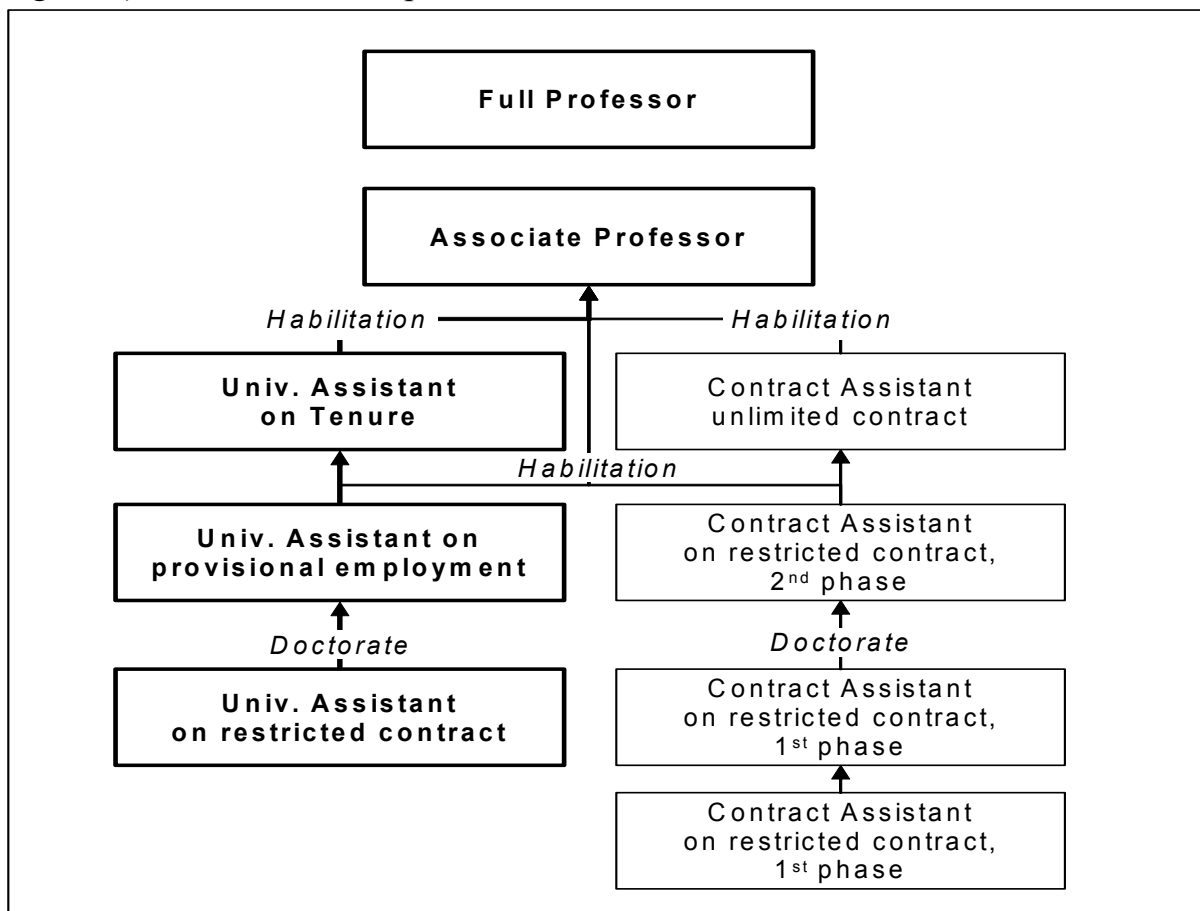
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<sup>6</sup> These reasons are part-time employment, having passed the age limit of 40, being a foreigner from a none European Economic Area (EEA)-member state or when slipping in for someone else (“Karenzvertretung”) (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 15).



conditions for appointment as a full professor (“UniversitätsprofessorIn”) were habilitation, pedagogical and didactic aptitude, managerial capabilities, involvement in international research projects and extra-university practice (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 8ff; <http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/start.asp?OID=5252&isllink=1&bereich=2&gwort=1:27/11/2002>). Generally, the existing forms of employment will not be interfered by the reform of the employment law in 2001 but certain limitations will occur, e.g. extensions are no longer possible (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 8ff.).

Figure 1) The “old” career path



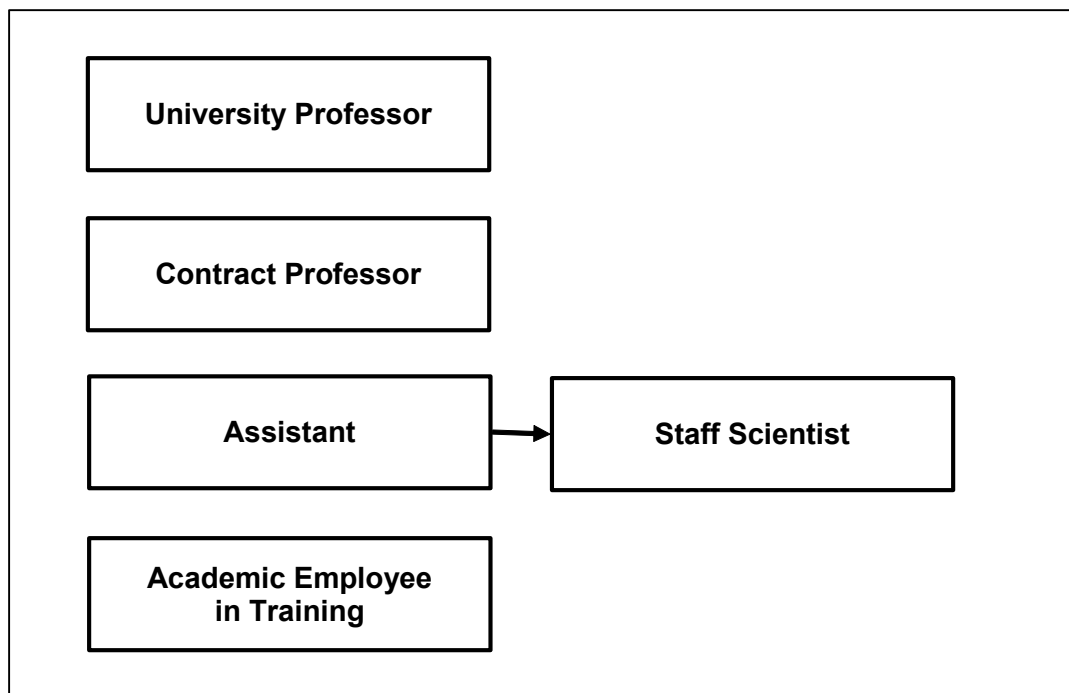
Source: Own elaboration

### 2.1.2 The “new” employment law

As mentioned above, the new employment law introduced new career positions according to a four pillar model: academic employee in training (first pillar), assistant (second pillar), professor on temporary contract (third pillar) and professor on tenure (fourth pillar) (BMBWK 2001:4). Besides these four pillars, the category of staff scientist (unlimited contract) has been created in order to offer for “proven” assistants the chance for a continuation of the career and to

meet the demands of certain subjects after the abolishment of tenure (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 24). Generally everyone who has been entering university after September, 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 has to do so according to the new model (ibid.: 21). Transitions from the time restricted positions now only occur by application after an open announcement procedure (“Ausschreibungsverfahren”). The first pillar, academic employee in training, is restricted to four (or six) years. Prerequisite for entering an apprenticeship (“Ausbildungsverhältnis”) as an academic employee is a graduate degree. After successful completion of this first phase (above all taking a pertinent doctorate degree) an academic employee may apply for a vacant assistant position. Today, there is only a single category of assistant. In fact, one of the main aims of the reform of the employment law was the repeal of university assistants to become civil servants (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 10). An assistant (official title: university assistant) is employed for four to six years and prolongation is no longer possible. However, after expiring of one’s contract, one may apply again for a vacant position as assistant or one may be transferred to the position of staff scientist on unrestricted contract. However, the latter is only possible in exceptional cases. For an appointment at the third pillar as contract professor, habilitation is not a legal prerequisite. Contract professors cannot be dismissed, however, their contract may be cancelled before expiring. The contract lasts for a maximum of seven years. After the expiring of the contract, one may apply either for an extension or for a vacant position as contract professor or tenured university professor. The fourth pillar, the university professors, are on unrestricted contract. Nevertheless university professors may be dismissed or their contracts can be cancelled (ibid.).

Figure 2) The four-pillars of the “new” employment law



Source: Own elaboration

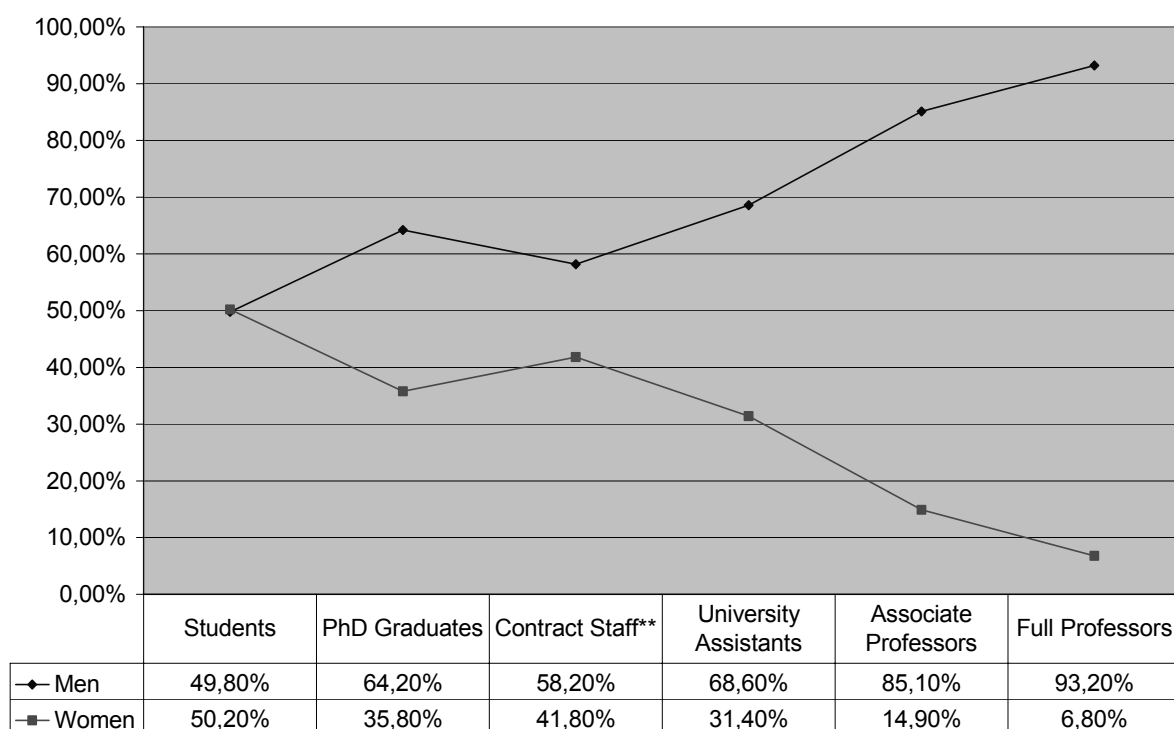
### 2.1.3 Tasks of the junior faculty – old vs. new employment law

While the duties of university assistants and contract assistants according to the old law comprised administrative tasks, research and teaching (with 2-8 hours of independent teaching per week), the commitments in teaching of the newly established academic employees in training are limited (<http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/start.asp?OID=5252&isIlink=1&bereich=2&gwort=1:27/11/2002>). Academic employees are allowed to teach independently to an extent of 2 hours per week maximum. Half of their working time can be used for personal education, thus their salary is comparatively lower than that of university assistants and contract assistants (Kucsko-Stadlmayer 2001: 26). Duties of assistants according to the new law are research, administrative tasks and teaching (with a maximum of 4 hours of independent teaching per week) (<http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/start.asp?OID=5252&isIlink=1&bereich=2&gwort=1:27/11/2002>).

## 2.2 The gender distribution

A common pattern that is found among Western countries is the loss of women on the academic career ladder: The higher the position of the hierarchy the lower the percentage of women (European Commission 2000: 10). In Austria, this phenomenon that is called *vertical segregation* is very pronounced, as we can see in the following figure:

Figure 3: Women and men at Austrian universities\* (2001): The scissors diagram



Source: Own elaboration based on data by the BMBWK (2002b: 104)

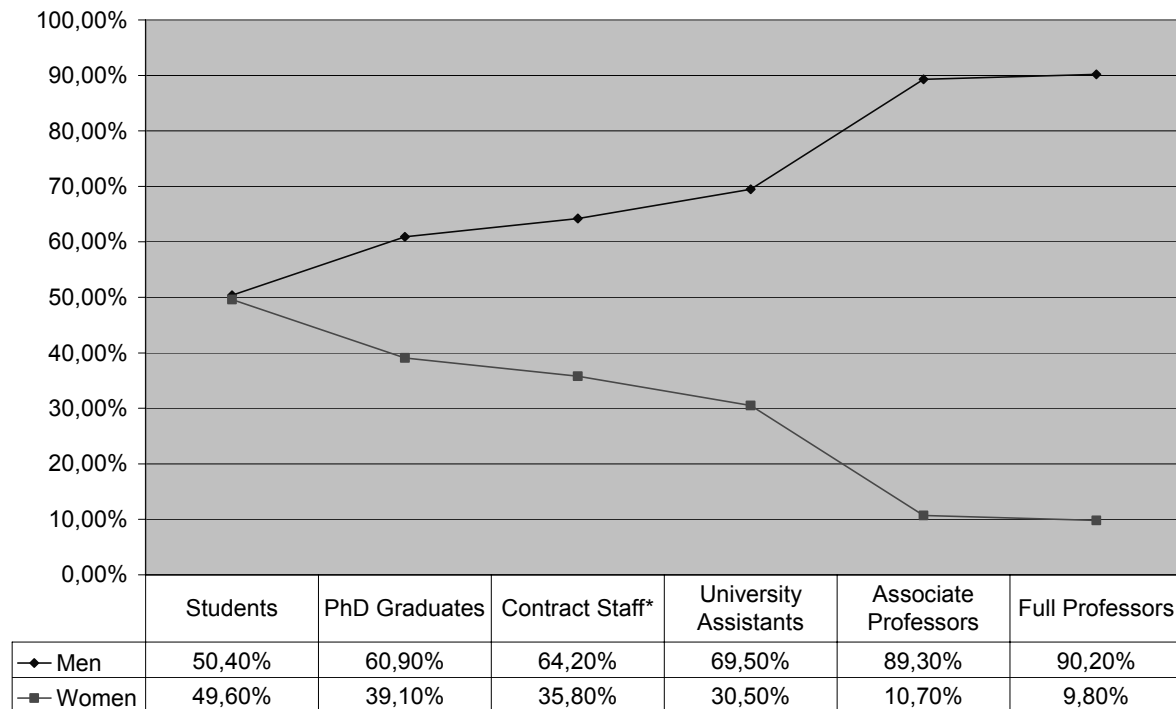
\* Data do not include the Universities of Art.

\*\* Contract staff = contract assistants and contract associate professors

At student level, women and men are almost equally represented among first degree students but the women's proportion drops at postgraduate level: Women only account for 35.8% of the PhD graduates. Concerning the women's proportion among staff, their quota is high among contracted staff (41.8%). However it declines markedly on each step up the ladder hereafter: Less than one third of the university assistants, only about 15% of the associate professors and only 6.8% of the full professors are female!

As we can see in the following figure, the overall picture at the University of Innsbruck is similar, however there are slight differences when compared to the national average.

Figure 4: Women and men at the University of Innsbruck (2001): The scissors diagram



Source: Own elaboration based on data by the BMBWK (2002b: 103)

\* Contract staff = contract assistants and contract associate professors

A comparatively higher proportion of women obtains their doctorate at the University of Innsbruck while their quota among contract staff, university assistants and associate professors is lower when compared to the national average (see figure 1, above). However, the top rank, full professors, is proportionally more feminised than at national level even though women make up only 9.8% of all professors.

Besides vertical segregation there are considerable variations in the proportion of women between disciplines: Women tend to cluster in certain disciplines whereas they have an extremely low share in others. Because of its comprehensive study offer this so called *horizontal segregation* can be seen at the University of Innsbruck: Over 120 departments which are grouped into seven faculties offer 52 different subjects (BMBWK 2002b: 23). The following table shows the horizontal and vertical segregation at the University of Innsbruck:

Table 1: Teaching staff by gender, faculty and position at the University of Innsbruck, 2001

	CAss. PT		CAss. FT		Univ.Ass.		Assoc. Prof		Full Prof.		Others	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Catholic Theology	5	2	0	0	13	1	5	1	16	0	0	1
Civil Engineering + Architecture	16	3	2	0	44	6	15	0	20	2	1	1
Law	14	7	0	1	14	16	10	0	25	0	0	0
Liberal Arts + Humanities	12	26	1	1	20	22	39	8	32	10	15	21
Medicine	7	8	14	23	260	114	165	18	52	6	45	29
Natural Sciences	49	22	44	17	1	0	81	7	40	2	3	0
Social + Econ. Sciences	5	4	0	3	32	14	16	3	23	2	8	7

Source: Own elaboration based on Retti (2002: 6 ff.)

CAss = contract assistants, PT = part-time, FT = full-time, M = men, W = women, Univ.Ass. = university assistants, Assoc. Prof. = associate professors, Prof. = professors

Others - includes: VertragsdozentInnen, Ausbildungsärzte/innen, VertragslehrerInnen and BundeslehrerInnen

Women are very well represented among contract assistants on part-time contracts at almost all faculties. In 2001 (as of July, 1<sup>st</sup>), there are even more female than male contract assistants with part-time contracts at the Faculty of Medicine (8 women vs. 7 men) and at the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Humanities (26 women vs. 12 men) this is particularly dominant. Almost as many women (4) as men (5) are at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences. At the faculties of Law and Natural Sciences and Catholic Theology their quota is lower, but it still reaches about 30%. Only at the faculty of Civil Engineering there are much more male than female contract assistants on part-time contracts (3 women vs. 16 men).

The absolute number of contract assistants on full-time contracts is very low at the faculties of Catholic Theology, Civil Engineering, Law, Liberal Arts and Humanities as well as Social and Economic Sciences. Altogether, there are only 9 contract assistants on full-time contracts at these faculties, thereof 5 are female. Only two faculties have a considerable number of contract assistants with full time contracts, these are the faculties of Medicine and Natural Sciences. While the former has a higher women's proportion than a men's share (23 women vs. 14 men), the latter has much more male than female contract assistants on full-time contracts (11 women vs. 44 men).

At the first university career step, the appointment to university assistant, the quota of women drops at all faculties when compared to both contract assistants on part-time and contract assistants on full-time contracts. Only at two of the faculties (Law and Liberal Arts and Humanities) women account for more than 50% of the university assistants.

On the second step of the academic career ladder, associate professors, there are no women at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture as well as at the Faculty of Law. At the latter, the high share of female university

assistants combined with the complete absence of women on the level of associate professors points at the existence of severe obstacles (e.g. male networks) for women to complete a habilitation. Three faculties have a women's quota above 15% (Liberal Arts and Humanities, Social and Economic Sciences and Catholic Theology with only 6 associate professors, thereof 1 female).

Unsurprisingly, the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Humanities has the highest proportion of women full professors (10 women vs. 32 men ~ 23.8% women). Few female full professors are at the faculties of Civil Engineering and Architecture (9.1%), Medicine (10.3%), Natural Sciences (4.8%) and Social and Economic Sciences (8%). At the faculties of Catholic Theology and Law there are no women full professors at all. Thus, we can conclude that – when compared to the national average – the higher proportion of female full professors at the University of Innsbruck is mainly due to the feminisation of the top rank at the Faculty of Liberal Arts.

The new employment law is only in force since January, 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 and so far no respective data have been published. However, I asked the administration of the University of Innsbruck<sup>7</sup> for data on persons under the new employment law by category and gender:

Table 2: Staff under the new employment law by category and gender at the University of Innsbruck, as of April, 15<sup>th</sup> 2003:

	Men	Women	Total
Academic Employees	107	85	192
Assistants	60	36	96
Contract Professors	6	0	6
University Professors on tenure	2	1	3
Total	175	122	297

Source: Personalbüro of the University of Innsbruck

Until now, only about 300 persons are employed at the University of Innsbruck under the new law. In accordance with the general under-representation of women in all categories there are more men than women. Furthermore the data reveal that the horizontal segregation remains pronounced: While the women's proportion among academic employees is comparatively high (44%), the respective proportion drops among assistants (37.5%). The absolute figures of professors under the new employment law are still very low. Nevertheless, they clearly show that the male dominance on the top ranks is still unbroken: All of the six contract professors are male and out of the three university professors only one is female.

<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank Mr Reichsöllner, Mr Kröpfel and Ms Engel at the office for personnel ("Personalbüro") of the University of Innsbruck for supplying these data.

### 3 Methodological approach

#### 3.1 Focus groups: a qualitative method

To me the most appealing method in order to investigate my primary research questions (Is it less attractive to pursue an academic career due to the regulations of the new employment law than before? Are there any gender-specific differences concerning the situation of the junior faculty and their career perspectives?) have been focus group interviews.

What are focus group interviews? Focus group interviews are a qualitative research technique. More precisely they are one type of group interview (for a comparison of focus groups with other forms of group interviews see: Flick 1998: 115 ff.; Frey and Fontana 1993). Usually not a single interview, but a series of focus group interviews are run. The groups are composed according to a *factorial design*<sup>8</sup> (Bernard 2000: 209). To Wilkinson (1998: 182 referring to Beck et. al 1986: 73) focus groups are basically informal discussions about specific topics. However, to me this is a rather problematic definition for two reasons: First, one could assume that data in focus group interviews are gathered by merely observing an ongoing discussion. And even though a focus group moderator may keep a rather low profile (as it is recommended by Wibeck 2001: 4) and group interaction is explicitly used to produce data (Morgan 1997: 2) this is not the case: however the participants certainly bring up their “own” and thus “new” topics, the general topic and further sub-topics are determined by the researcher (usually by using a question guide). In fact, there is no focus group interview without questions (Krueger 1993: 76). Secondly, I do not think that there is anything informal about focus group interviews. As already said, the composition of the groups<sup>9</sup> follows certain criteria, the setting is a formal one (usually a room in which participants are arranged around a table) and of course an interviewer (usually equipped with a tape recorder), sometimes with an assistant, is present. And although in some cases a very vivid discussion may arise between the group participants, all of them are for all of these reasons very well aware, that they are involved in a study.

Crucially, the advantages associated with focus groups stem from group interaction in response to researchers’ questions (Morgan and Krueger 1993:

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<sup>8</sup> In order to analyse the effects of several independent variables a factorial design lays out all the combinations of all the categories of the independent variables (Bernard 2000: 136f.).

<sup>9</sup> A focus group consists according to Bernard (2000: 210) usually of 6-12 members plus a moderator, more than 12 people are rare (Wilkinson 1998: 182). Members have to be homogeneous with respect to certain characteristics and ideally should not be familiar with each other (Bernard 2000: 210). Further characteristics depend on the topic under investigation.

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15). Some of the features of focus groups are that they produce ethnographically rich data (Bernard 2000: 211), provide more detail than surveys (ibid.: 210), enable a shift of balance of power (Wibeck 2001: 5), facilitate openness and disclosure (ibid.), provide access to participants own language and concepts (Wilkinson 1998: 188) and offer an opportunity to observe the co-construction of meaning in action (ibid.: 193). Disadvantages of the method are besides interviewer and respondent bias limited reliability and validity (ibid.: 186).

Focus groups can be used for several purposes; most commonly they have been used in market research, however, nowadays they are also widely used among social researchers (Bernard 2000: 207; Wilkinson 1998: 181). Social researchers may use focus groups as an adjunct to other research methods (e.g. to test questionnaires), as a form of participatory action research or as a primary research method. Used as a primary research method they may serve either to explore new areas or research questions or to examine existing areas or research questions from research participants' own perspective (Wilkinson 1998: 184 ff.). Due to the novelty of the employment law, there has not been any research yet on it's impact on the situation of up and coming academics Thus focus groups seem to me an appealing method in order to explore the situation of the young academics from their own perspective.

### 3.2 The group design

Instead of running several sessions with groups selected according to the same characteristics, I opted for a design that incorporated different groups with potentially contrasting views or experiences. John Knodel (1993: 39) calls characteristics that differentiate population subsets from each other *break characteristics*. Clearly, in accordance with the purpose of my study, gender was one of the break variable to define my groups, thus I decided to draw together three focus groups consisting of academic employees in training<sup>10</sup> in order to hold two separate sessions for women and men and one with a mixed group. Further I recruited a group for comparison, consisting of one male and two female contract assistants<sup>11</sup> according to the old employment law. Thus the

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<sup>10</sup> About 80 academic employees in training were contacted by e-mail, many of them additionally by telephone. I received a list with the names of 73 academic employees by department from the personnel bureau ("Personalbüro") of the University of Innsbruck (I would like to thank Mr Reichsoellner for this). Additionally, six names have been collected by checking the homepages of departments. Likewise e-mail addresses and phone numbers were collected through a search in the internet.

<sup>11</sup> The names and contact details of 56 assistants (contract assistants and "old" university assistants) were collected by a search on the webpage of the University of Innsbruck. Most of them have been contract assistants, as "new" assistants are also called university assistants and it was often not possible to decide whether a person is employed under the old or the new law. Eventually only contract assistants agreed to participate in the interviews.

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occupational status served as a second break variable in order to be able to trace similarities and differences between members of the old and new employment law.

Originally, I tried to achieve a group size of about 4-6 members, which is according to Victoria Wibeck (2001: 2) a suitable size for a group. According to Harvey R. Bernard (2000: 210) larger groups are difficult to manage, while smaller groups are better for exploring sensitive issues but may be dominated by “loudmouths” (sic!). Due to the difficulties when trying to get the groups together I ended up with small groups consisting of either three (group 2 and group 4) or four members (group 1 and group 3).

A further recruitment criteria besides the two break variables, occupational status and gender, was the discipline. I tried to bring together participants belonging to different faculties. Ideally, all seven faculties of the University of Innsbruck should have been represented in the groups, for the following reasons: Firstly, the tasks of junior faculty vary considerably between the faculties. Thus all faculties/disciplines should have been represented in the study to eliminate disciplinary bias. Secondly, it is more likely, that people from different faculties do not know each other. This would have been desirable as it assumed, that unfamiliarity helps interviewees to open up (Bernard 2000: 210). However, due to over-recruiting on the one hand and refusals on the other, in two of my groups were members from the same faculty (group 2 and 3) and indeed, two people in one of them knew each other prior to the interview. Unfortunately, the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture is not represented at all, none of the contacted members was either willing to participate or able to meet at the time set. The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Humanities is only represented in the contrast group.

Age, marital status and parenthood have not been recruitment criteria, however, as these characteristics facilitate our interpretation they are included in the following table, which describes the composition of the groups. Further, as can be seen in table 3, I assigned an abbreviation to every participant which indicate her/his gender and the group in which s/he was participating. For instance, participant No. 14, the male contract assistant in group 4 is called G4M (group 4, male participant), the female respondents (No. 1 and No. 2) belonging to group 1 are called G1F1 (group 1, female participant 1) or G1F2 (group 1, female participant 2) respectively.

Table 3: The four focus groups: composition and characteristics of the members

Group	Particip.	Denomin.	Sex	Age	Position	Faculty	Highest Qualific.	Married	Children
1	1	G1F1	F	25	AE	Natural Sciences	Master	no	no
	2	G1F2	F	28	AE	Catholic Theology	Master	no	no
	3	G1M1	M	25	AE	Medicine	Doctorate	no	no
	4	G1M2	M	28	AE	Social + Econ. Sciences	Master	no	no
2	5	G2F1	F	26	AE	Social + Econ. Sciences	Master	no	no
	6	G2F2	F	28	AE	Social + Econ. Sciences	Master	no	no
	7	G2F3	F	25	AE	Law	Master	no	no
3	8	G3M1	M	25	AE	Social + Econ. Sciences	Master	no	no
	9	G3M2	M	35	AE	Catholic Theology	Master	no	no
	10	G3M3	M	25	AE	Law	Master	no	no
	11	G3M4	M	33	AE	Social + Econ. Sciences	Master	no	no
4	12	G4F1	F	29	CA	Natural Sciences	Master	yes	no
	13	G4F2	F	39	CA	Liberal Arts + Humanities	Doctorate	yes	no
	14	G4M	M	35	CA, tenure	Catholic Theology	Doctorate	yes	yes

Source: Own elaboration

Particip. = Participant, Denomin. = Denomination, AE = Academic employee, CA = Contract assistant, Econ. = Economic, Qualific. = Qualification

### 3.3. Setting and procedure of the interviews

The four interviews were conducted in December 2002 and January 2003 at a group room of the University of Innsbruck. Besides the participants which were arranged around a table I as the group moderator and in three cases an assistant<sup>12</sup> were present. The interviews were audio-taped, additionally I and the assistants took notes. I started the interviews with introducing myself, briefly explaining the method, the procedure of the interview and the research aims. Then the participants introduced themselves. The interviews were opened by the question: “Which career opportunities besides an academic career would have been available for you? Why did you opt for academia?” („Welche Karriereoptionen hätten sich für Sie außer der einer Universitätskarriere angeboten? Weshalb haben Sie sich für die Universität entschieden“). The four interviews lasted between 1 to 1 ½ hours.

As the focus group interviewer certainly influences the quality of the outcome, the literature gives some advices concerning their role and function (Bernard 2000: 210 f.; Flick 1998: 115; Krueger 1993: 73 f.). Some authors advocate a rather retracted, nondirective interview-style. According to Wibeck (2001: 4) this should give the participants the freedom to discuss among themselves and to raise issues relevant to themselves. Another style that can be

<sup>12</sup> I would like to thank Ms. Lydia Buchholz and Ms. Tanja Kreetz for their assistance.

assumed by interviewers is a more directive or active one (Frey/Fontana 1993: 27). This is in accordance with Michael Q. Patton's (1991: 335) argument that focus groups are not group discussions but group *interviews*. I tried to balance my behaviour between the two styles: Generally, by actively steering the group and keeping it on the track I adopted a rather directive approach. However, bearing in mind Bernard's (2000: 211) advice "don't put words in people's mouths" and Richard A. Krueger's (1993: 74) opinion that moderators should not interject their personal opinions and detach themselves from the issue at stake, I tried also to give the participants room for discussions and raising topics which I had not determined beforehand.

### 3.4 Analysis of the data

Three of the four audiotaped interviews were fully transcribed.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, one of the tapes was of rather poor quality, thus I relied mainly on the notes and a full transcription was not possible. Then the data got subjected to qualitative analysis. There are various forms of qualitative analysis (for an overview see: Mayring 1999: 81ff.), and different kinds of analysis can be done with data from focus groups. Most often content or thematic analysis are undertaken, discourse or conversation analysis are rare (Wilkinson 1998: 182).

Given the nature of the data collected in my interviews on the one hand and the goal of my study on the other, I decided to make a thematic content analysis by establishing categories. The topics (categories) for the analysis have generally been dictated by those included in the focus group guidelines (which were the same for all three interviews with academic employees and similar to those in the case of the contract assistants). However, in accordance with the "permissive" interviewer style I tried to adopt (see above) other topics that have not been incorporated in the guidelines arose in the course of the interviews (Knodel 1993: 44). Therefore, I not only assessed the beforehand established categories against the data and modified them if necessary but also incorporated new categories (deductive coding) whenever new topics emerged.

As Wilkinson (1998: 196) has observed, this kind of analysis has the disadvantage, that it neglects the interactive nature of the data. Further there is a tendency to present extracts from group interviews as if they were one-to-one interview data (ibid.). I tried at least to a certain extent to take into account the social nature of the data by displaying besides individual utterances also some

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<sup>13</sup> As the main purpose of the interviews was to gain information, I decided with Meuser and Nagel (2002: 83) that it is not necessary to use an extensive notation system for the transcripts (e.g. they do not indicate speaker breaks or other non-verbal elements). However, for clarification purposes I often added words in parentheses to the quotations. Further I indicated of course whenever words/sentences of the transcript were left out in the quotation.

interactive extracts as anchor examples in the following presentation of the results.

Coding (categorising) the data is of course already a form of analysis, however, I will not short stop by presenting and summarising the structured and relevant data: Moreover I will discuss the similarities and/or differences between the groups, which are differentiated by the break characteristics. Furthermore I will discuss the results in the view of the chosen method.

## 4 The attractiveness of an academic career

### 4.1 Reasons for entering academia

Many of the interviewees report that they had learned about a job-vacancy through members of the university while being a student (G1F2, G1M2, G2F1, G2F2, G2F3, G3M1, G3M4, G3M2, G4F1). Some say that they were explicitly asked if they would like to do the job, either by the supervisors of their theses for diploma or by other professors (G1M2: 3; G2F1: 2; G2F2: 2<sup>14</sup>), whereas others only report that they “were informed”<sup>15</sup> (G3M4: 2) about a vacancy, that their “attention was drawn to it” (G2F3: 3; G3M2: 3) or that they “heard” about it while talking to a professor (G1F2: 2). Only two of the interviewees learned about the vacancy through an official announcement (G1F1: 1; G3M3: 2). However, one of them added that he already had close contacts to the department which offered the position beforehand. Not only did he write his thesis for diploma at that department but moreover the head of department had supported him in getting an internship at an international institution (ibid.).

Concerning the reasons for entering academia, only one of the academic employees in training indicates to have planned an academic career (“I always imagined to do so”<sup>16</sup> G1M1: 5). Two women underline that they did not plan to pursue an academic career (G1F1: 5; G1F2: 4). G1F2 said: “I did not plan to pursue an academic career, not at all ... it was unexpected that I got into university”<sup>17</sup> (ibid.). Similar to that, another woman speaks of “coincidence” when it came to enter academia (G2F2: 1). Two women indicate that they became academic employees as a dissertation will enhance their chances on the

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<sup>14</sup> In the following the pages of the (four separate) transcripts will be indicated as sources. Further, when quoting I decided to not only indicate the group/transcript (G1, G2, G3, G4) but also the participant (e.g. a quote by/reference to a contribution of the female participant one, in group/transcript one, on page one of the respective transcript is labelled: G1F1: 1).

<sup>15</sup> The interviews were held in German, thus I translated all quotes. As it would hinder easy reading, I will not indicate further, that the translations are mine. I included the original quotes in the appendix. They are ordered chronologically according to their appearance in the text.

<sup>16</sup> For the original quote in German see appendix, quotes, quote No. 1.

<sup>17</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 2.

extra-university labour market later on (G1F1: 1; G2F3: 3), while three of the interviewees more generally report that they either wanted to start or to finish their theses (G2F2: 2; G3M1: 2; G3M4: 2). Both of the women in group 2 who explicitly have been asked by members of the university whether they would like to enter academia indicate emotional motives for their decision to do so (“The basis for my decision then was above all that he [the professor] was nice”<sup>18</sup> G2F1: 2; “It was actually a spontaneous thing. I did not think too much about it, it simply felt good”<sup>19</sup> G2F2: 2). Some of the interviewees say that they can imagine to stay in academia or science after obtaining the doctorate (G2F1: 3; G3M3: 4; G3M4: 3).

I asked the contract assistants in the contrast group if they could imagine to have started an academic career under the new conditions. To G4F1 this would not have been an option since

with regard to the duties [of academic employees] I cannot imagine, that this works like it has actually been planned to. In the first years you are not allowed to teach independently. And that is completely illusory at our department. The courses would be offered in the name of the professor, but I would nevertheless hold them <sup>20</sup> (G4F1: 18).

To G4M it would have only made sense to start as an academic employee in case of having already a concrete dissertation project at hand (which he only developed within his first year at the university). To him a position as an academic employee is an opportunity to finance one’s dissertation, but he is rather sceptical about whether one can pursue/achieve an academic career by this means (G4M: 19).

## 4.2 Positive vs. negative aspects of academia

### 4.2.1 Positive and negative aspects in general

To the four male interviewees in group 3 the scientific work itself is attractive (G3: 3ff). One of them underlines in this respect the freedom of science and research within academia:

With regards to content I find the work within the university attractive because if you enjoy scientific work you have enough freedom. You are your own boss and actually

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<sup>18</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 3.

<sup>19</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 4.

<sup>20</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 5.

you can do research on what you are interested in. If you like teaching as well, that is an additional advantage<sup>21</sup> (G3M1: 3).

Likewise, two female participants in group 2 stress the comparatively high freedom in academia (G2: 8). One of the participants in group 3 already teaches in cooperation with his professor states: “I like the work, I like the subject. I already have the opportunity to teach a bit together with the professor. I mean, teaching is fun to me. To me these are the attractive aspects of it”<sup>22</sup> (G3M2: 5). Another academic employee already teaches own courses (cf. 5.2 Tasks and time for own research). To her it is “interesting and stimulating to teach and to exchange my thoughts with students”<sup>23</sup> (G2F2: 5).

Depending on the field and department the working hours of the interviewees are either fixed (G1F1: 22; G1M1: 6) or rather flexible (G1M2: 22; G3M2: 15; G4F2: 11). Four of the respondents underline that to them the flexible working hours are an advantage of academia (G1M2: 11; G2F1: 8; G3M3: 13; G4F2: 11). One of them concludes thus that academia is when compared to other professional fields more family-friendly (G3M3: 13f.). The two others, who are both living in long distance relationships, mention that the flexible working hours are favourable to them when it comes to reconcile work and private sphere (G4F2: 11; G1M2: 11).

Statements in all groups suggest that academia is a more favourable working place when compared to private businesses for it is easier to interrupt one’s career (sabbatical year, parental leave) or to work part-time. All respective statements connect this assumption to the reconciliation topic: Two male participants suggest that the acceptance to interrupt one’s professional career because of child rearing and taking paid parental leave, also for men, is bigger in academia than in the private sector (G1M2: 15; G3M1: 11).<sup>24</sup> G1M2 states, that he would actually be willing to take parental leave if he became a father. He added that in case he of working for a private company he would not dare to openly say so. Indeed, most of the men that would take parental leave are working in the public sector (ibid.). G4M is the only participant with children (see table 3 above). He has only been holding a full-time position for a couple of months now. Prior to this he had been working part-time. As long as his children were small he considered this to be an ideal arrangement because this offered the opportunity to for his wife to work as a teacher (G4M: 11). To G1F2 it is also easier to reconcile family and work within academia because of the

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<sup>21</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 6.

<sup>22</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 7.

<sup>23</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 8.

<sup>24</sup> In Austria only very few men do interrupt their professional careers and take paid parental leave (“Karenz”). In 2000 76.339 women but only 1420 men took a professional break to care for their toddlers and small children (BMSG and BMBWK 2002: 221)

possibility to work part-time and the comparative easiness to take parental leave. However, her statement makes also clear, that this may have negative consequences for one's career:

From my point of view the university offers good possibilities to work part-time or to drop out and then drop in again, if you are not pursuing *the* career. It is really not a problem to drop out for one year and then to find the connection again. That could be much more difficult in the private sector<sup>25</sup> (G1F2: 6).

One of the male participants considers the large number of meetings one (especially on the higher ranks) has to attend to be negative (G3M2: 5). To a female interviewee “sometimes the feeling of being in an ivory tower arises, where one really misses how it looks like in a business”<sup>26</sup> (G2F2: 3). Another participant regrets that despite there are people who would like to do either only research or only teaching this possibility does not exist at Austrian universities contrary to other countries (G3M4: 20). Some stress that the exchange of knowledge among departments and faculties is poor (G1F1: 25; G1M2: 25; G2F1: 6).

None of the interviewees really complains about a high working load. To G2F3 academia is less stressful than the private sector (G2F3: 8). Nevertheless several statements show that some do actually work a lot. The physician in group 1 reports: “We have to work 10, 12 hours [a day]. We should do research, but there is no time provided for it within the first two or three years [of the apprenticeship]”<sup>27</sup> (G1M1: 6). But this obviously does not bother him: “That is a practical thing, that has to be learned ... I am satisfied. Before I [became academic employee I] always thought that it is tragic to work 60 hours [a week] for 1000 Euros ... but it turned out differently. Actually I am positively surprised”<sup>28</sup> (ibid.: 7). The two female contract assistants in group 4 indicate that they spend much time on preparing courses and teaching (G4F1: 1; G4F2: 2; cf. 5.2 Tasks and time for own research). The male contract assistant reports to have observed that colleagues suffer from stress:

We have a bunch of people at the faculty, who are in a tremendous struggle. Where I sometimes ask myself, does an academic career have to be like that? To sleep on the desk and so. Where I sometimes think to myself, if it is like that, is this the right way for me? Because I also would like to live outside the office<sup>29</sup> (G4M: 11).

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<sup>25</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 9.

<sup>26</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 10.

<sup>27</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 11.

<sup>28</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 12.

<sup>29</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 13.



Also another male interviewee refers to colleagues having stress especially when working on the habilitation. He connects this to the reconciliation issue:

What I observe or know from speaking to colleagues is, that having a family is really difficult when one has finished the dissertation and decides to pursue an academic career, to work towards the habilitation. I believe that is the most stressful phase of an academic career, at least in the field or department in which I am. It is generally difficult for an assistant to write the habilitation there. And if you also have a family then, I think one would certainly get into a moral conflict. What is the right thing? I believe, if I would decide to pursue an academic career, I would postpone having a family<sup>30</sup> (G3M4: 13).

#### 4.2.2 Positive and negative aspects of the new employment law

According to the old law (see 2.1 The “old” career path) one was transferred to the category of associate professor and usually obtained a tenured position after submitting one’s habilitation. A male participant regrets that now the habilitation does no longer guarantee to get tenure (G1M1: 7). Likewise, a female interviewee stresses the loss of significance of the habilitation (G2F2: 6). As it is still possible to submit the habilitation under the “old” conditions until November 2003 despite the change of the system, a female participant reported that people are trying to habilitate quickly before this loophole closes. According to her, until now more men than women succeeded in doing so (G4F2: 14).

One interviewee reports that there were problems to get sufficient teaching staff at his department as due to the new employment law one has [de facto] to hold a doctorate<sup>31</sup> in order to be allowed to teach independently (G3M4: 20).

A participant from the Faculty of Theology questions the sense of taking a doctorate degree for theologians when on the one hand the possibility to stay in academia now declined and on the other hand the extra university labour market does not offer the same opportunities to theologians like to natural scientists for instance. Whereas to an interviewee from the social sciences the question is rather how many people with doctorate can be kept by the departments of economics at all (G3M4: 4).

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<sup>30</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 14.

<sup>31</sup> University assistants under the old law were allowed to teach independently from the 3<sup>rd</sup> term on while academic employees are only allowed to teach independently from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year on. Moreover, academic employees are allowed to teach independently to a comparatively lesser extent than assistants according to the old law – 2 vs. 2-8 hours a week (“Wochenstunden” which corresponds to 2 respectively 2-8 credits). “New” assistants who have to hold a doctorate can teach to an extent of 4 credits.

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One woman in the contrast group raises a very interesting issue: presumed conflicts between members of the old and the new law:

What strikes me and is not considered at all by this [new] law is that people who are tenured yet remain for at least 20 years here ... There is a squad of people who are permanently here and who know the business and there are new [people] that stay for a short period and then leave. And these two groups of professionals have such different interests – in principal – that this actually only provokes conflicts ... That what the law actually intended, [namely] flexibility on the level of junior faculty, that was not accomplished. It is only flexibility for the upcomings. But the junior faculty is tenured, it remains for the next 20 years ... there will be people who float around all the time while others are stuck. And I believe that creates many conflicts. That is not good for the organisation itself<sup>32</sup> (G4F2: 19f.).

Whether the coexistence of different forms of employment indeed causes additional conflicts remains to be seen. But as academic careers are highly dependent on mentoring and participation in networks (Interview, Sabine Engel: 1f.) it is more than likely that up and coming academics which remain only for a short period at a department/institution are put at disadvantage when compared to those under the old law who have more time to establish closer contacts and gain access to networks.

With regard to the position of academic employees

The law stipulates that academic employees use half of their working time for their dissertations (§6b, Abs. 4 Z1 BGBI. No. 87/2001). This is seen as an advantage of the new employment law:

I think that compared to the old employment law, the new one is an advantage to those who want to write their dissertations ... Many [of the assistants] at our department did not succeed in doing the assistant job and writing their theses. Especially because they were occupied a lot with teaching and organisational matters. And many broke off, could not finish their theses. Therefore, the new system should be an advantage, if it really gets executed how the law stipulates, namely that half of the time can be used for the dissertation and the other half for tasks at the department <sup>33</sup> (G3M4: 3f.).

The case of the female contract assistant in the compare group who hardly has time for her thesis (cf. 5.2 Tasks and time for own research) underlines the legitimacy of this assumption. But the participant who expresses this opinion

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<sup>32</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 15.

<sup>33</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 16.

adds that although it possibly got easier to finish one's dissertation thanks to the new law, it might have become more difficult to complete a habilitation. According to him this is the case, because now only people who are holding a doctorate (and thus are likely to work on a habilitation) are allowed to teach<sup>34</sup> (ibid.: 5). Obviously he assumes that their working load increased as a consequence of the new regulations.

Concerning the salary, all academic employees earn the same (cf. footnote 3), however, physicians get supplementary payments for working at weekends and doing night shifts. The regulation that half of the working-time can be used for one's dissertation leads two of the male interviewees to the conclusion that the salary is actually fair. One of them compares it to the old system: „[It is a] fact, that as an academic employee one earns more and has more opportunities than a contract assistant with a part-time position ... That is certainly a positive aspect of the [new] employment law”<sup>35</sup> (G3M3: 4). To the other one it is a question whether one considers the dissertation to be a part of the work or not: “For a half-day job it is not badly paid ... (the twenty/twenty regulation). If you see the dissertation as a private pleasure, well then the remaining 20 hours [of working time] are well paid. If one does not see it like that, well, then one could probably have opted out”<sup>36</sup> (G1M2: 4). Nevertheless, other statements make clear, that all in all the income is perceived to be rather low. The one academic employee who considered the salary to be fair with regard to the working-time that can be spend on ones dissertation answers the question whether academia is attractive to him as follows: “That the depends on what comes afterwards. The first four years are financially quite lean”<sup>37</sup> (G1M2: 3). A female participant in the same group reports: “And then I said to myself, I have to make it [the dissertation] directly after graduating ... the pretensions/ambitions are still moderate then, so that you can get on with the money. More or less”<sup>38</sup> (G1F1: 1). Two of the female interviewees in group 2 consider the income as a negative factor. G2F3 states: “The salary is a negative aspect. We are put at disadvantage when compared to the assistants [of the old employment law], who actually do the same work like we do.”<sup>39</sup> G2F2 agrees to that: “Especially as I know both sides [since I was employed as an assistant under the old law before]. The salary really acts as a deterrent. One needs a great deal of idealism and interest”<sup>40</sup> (G2: 7).

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<sup>34</sup> This is not completely correct, cf. footnote 31.

<sup>35</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 17.

<sup>36</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 18.

<sup>37</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 19.

<sup>38</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 20.

<sup>39</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 21.

<sup>40</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 22.

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When the participants discuss the new employment law insecurity is a keyword in many contributions. One male participant states: “If possible I would like to work scientifically as long as I live. Now for the time being my dissertation is fixed and then there is the great insecurity”<sup>41</sup> (G3M4: 3). Another participant compares the old with the new employment law: “I believe that with regard to the formal criteria the new employment law is very problematic for young scientists because there is no job-security. The old system was friendlier in this respect”<sup>42</sup> (G3M1: 3). A statement by the male interviewee in the contrast group shows that also in the old system fixed-term contracts existed on a regular basis at the beginning of a career:

As I entered university of course everything was also highly insecure. In the beginning it was slipping in for other people [“Karenzstellen”]. Fortunately one colleague who went on leave did not come back. Back then, there was at least the possibility of an opening. Now, in the new situation one has somewhere a deadline and there is hardly such an opportunity<sup>43</sup> (G4M: 4).

To the women in group 2 their fixed term contracts do not constitute a problem. To G2F3 who wants to hold a doctorate as a further qualification on the extra-university labour market rather the opposite would be true (G2F3: 4). To G2F1 there is a generational difference with regard to the attitude towards the recent strengthening of contractual work:

I think this is a generational difference ... if you are in academia for 10 or 15 years then taking successfully the plunge into the private economy is almost impossible ... And if I would be 35, 40 [years old] the whole thing would stress me much more. Then I would rather be worried concerning my future than at an age, where you say, okay, in principle there are nowhere closed careers anymore ... It is not critical for those, who are starting right now. And to see the first four years, is the institution something for me, do I feel well and then to decide, uh, whether they can stay there or if they leave<sup>44</sup> (G2F1: 4).

The last sentence in which G2F1 corrected herself shows that she is well aware, that continuing or not in academia is not only a decision of the individual. Also G2F3 admits that her indifference towards fixed-term contracts might change over the years: “Now for the first four years it [the precarious working situation] is irrelevant. But if it goes on like that, it will be different. I think the insecurity

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<sup>41</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 23.

<sup>42</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 24.

<sup>43</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 25.

<sup>44</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 26.

would presumably become a problem.<sup>45</sup> (G2F3: 9). The statement by a older interviewee in the compare group supports the hypothesis of the generational “gap”:

When I applied for this post I actually thought that it is going to be something with a perspective. I have been in Germany before and thus I did not follow that with the Austrian employment law. To me it was like a cold shower. As I started, I got my contract only just after the old law, but only with the perspective, that it is temporary. And then I took a look at the new one and thought to myself, no please! Under this conditions, I do not know. I really have to ask myself whether I stay within academia under this conditions or I rather go to the private sector<sup>46</sup> (G4F2: 3).

Two interviewees express a rather optimistic view concerning the opportunity to continue in academia despite the restriction of their contracts:

G1M: The formal aspect has to be completed by the informal. If you do a good job, have a good relationship [with colleagues and superiors], then one wants to keep you. You realize that early yourself, you won't be told one day [before the contracts expires]. I think that the unpredictability effect due to the restriction of the contracts is probably cushioned on the level of information.

G1F1: That is the bonus, if you work there, know people, get along with them and do a good job. Why should they employ someone else? Yes, for sure, the position will be announced, the application procedure goes on. But I think, there are opportunities.

G1M2: The informal factor, that is you know someone, plays an important role. My professor says he announces positions but knows beforehand who will get the job<sup>47</sup> (G1: 7f.).

Besides the issue of insecurity caused by fixed term contracts discussions in group 1 and 3 brought the academic employees uncertainty regarding their status and the future of their positions to the surface:

G1F2: Concerning the positions [of academic employees in training] in general, I find them problematic in as far as they are not clarified. This is a new kind of positions, a kind of pilot project, at the same time they are to be discontinued. It is already planed yet that this posts will be abandoned.

G1M2: Somehow we belong to the junior faculty and then we should become research fellows.

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<sup>45</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 27.

<sup>46</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 28.

<sup>47</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 29.

G1F2: Presently we belong to the junior faculty and from January 2004 on we will belong again to the studentship.

(...)

G1F2: And well, I have received totally different information ... And I have been told that the information is not contradictory because the people are not competent, but because it is indeed not legally regulated. And that this is the first time ever, that people who are already employed in essence change their curia. That is that right now we belong to the junior faculty and in 2004, although it is the same contract, we will belong to the studentship ... According to the contract we can offer from the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> year on courses independently. But that will not work for those who have been employed now, because in our 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year we will be students again.

(...)

G1F2: There are many big insecurity factors which I accept for the moment as I generally like my job. But actually they are not okay ... You have a contract for four years, then, after two years we change it a bit and well, someone in another phase of life could not do it<sup>48</sup> (G1: 8ff.).

A similar exchange took place in group 3, in which the interviewee from the Faculty of Law took over the role of an informant concerning the regulations of the law for the other participants (G3: 21ff.):

G3M1: I find it problematic that we do not officially belong to the junior faculty. And then one is nothing.

G3M3: Yes and no. Legally we belong to the junior faculty. Only with the [coming into force of the] University Act [of 2002] we will be nothing.

(...)

G3M1: But we cannot vote members of the founding convent<sup>49</sup>.

G3M3: Right. But that is already University Act. Actually, I think that the academic employees are from a legal point of view a failure, because they were only created by the employment law 2001 and from 2004 on that type will no longer exist.

(...)

G3M3: The existing contracts will of course remain ... As long as we stay ... And after that the positions will be vacant. And then it will be a decision by the senate ... I do not know what they will do, I can keep the position, I –

G3M1: No, I cannot keep it.

G3M3: Well I can put an assistant on it or something else. That will work. I just have to call it differently. But I can also say, the money will be spent on research fellows ... or I buy books with it.

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<sup>48</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 30.

<sup>49</sup> According to §121 UG2002 every university has to establish a founding convent which has to prepare and undertake the measures for the implementation of the law.

(...)

G3M1: The research fellows are not allowed to teach, no?

(...)

G3M1: The chances are [thus] actually relatively big, that it [the position of an academic employee] will be transformed into an assistant position.

G3M3: That is a financial question. If one needs the money for something else ...

G3M1: No, I mean in relation to [the sustaining of the] teaching [as research fellows are not allowed to teach but assistants are].

G3M3: Well, ... I only can speak of the Faculty of Law where many positions for academic employees were created ... I cannot imagine, that all of this positions will be transformed [into assistant positions]<sup>50</sup> (G3: 21f.).

As consequences of the specific regulations for academic employees two aspects were named in the course of the interviews: First, while the salaries of the other junior faculty positions were adjusted by 2.4% this year, those of academic employees were only adjusted by 0.8% (G1M2: 9). And second, academic employees have to pay tuition fees as on the one hand one has to be enrolled when working on a dissertation but on the other hand academic employees are legally not obliged to do their dissertations (G3M1: 23).

## 5 The situation of the junior faculty

### 5.1 Working conditions and environment

Many of the interviewees report that the atmosphere at their respective departments is pleasant (G1F1: 20; G1F2: 20; G1M2: 19; G2F1: 5; G2F2: 5; G2F3: 5; G3M2: 6). One male participant underlines that the hierarchy is hardly perceptible at his department (G3M1: 6). None of the interviewees tells about having experienced severe competition between colleagues. However, the male contract assistant admits that there were some tensions between him and a colleague when both had chances to fill a vacant position (G4M: 9). One of the academic employees mentions a colleague who is not acting very cooperatively (G3M3: 19). The physician in training reports that he observed competition on a higher career level when it came to get support for a project proposal (G1M1: 20). In this respect one of the interviewees stresses that the position of academic employees within the system has to be taken into account:

G1M2: That [the working situation] is very pleasant. Well, towards me. Thereby it certainly plays a role that as an academic employee you cannot hurt anyone. You are

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<sup>50</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 31.

welcomed by everyone. You neither have a seat nor a vote in any committee, you do not teach, you do not cause any costs but your salary, you do not bind any resources. One complains harder about you so to speak.

G1F1: Yes, for sure.

G1M2: Somehow it is like that: you cannot loose anything. You have few rights, but on the other side only few duties. I cannot imagine a reason, why anyone at the department should start to quarrel with me ... Because I don't have anything, because I do not know anything<sup>51</sup> (G1: 19).

Generally the academic employees seem to be quite satisfied with regard to support and promotion by colleagues and supervisors. G2F2 mentioned that her professor as well as the assistants are very understanding and takes over the coaching for her. They tell her to focus on finishing her dissertation (G2F2: 5). G3M3 reports to be lucky having a boss who grants him time for his dissertation beyond the legal guidelines (G3M3: 4). Further he is supported by the older assistants. According to him a close cooperation between the assistants crystallized out of the circumstance, that the head of the department would be rather difficult to handle (*ibid.*: 17 f.). G3M1 has been at the department only for a short period. Until now his professor has been helpful with respect to questions concerning his dissertation (G3M1: 17). G3M2 experiences mutual support at his department. Moreover, the professors would aim at promoting the assistants and researchers (G3M2: 19). Hence he is given the opportunity to attend conferences and to publish (*ibid.*: 15).

Another interviewee reports that there was a coaching system institutionalised at his department:

G3M4: At our department it [the support by colleagues] is institutionalised. There was a decision by the department committee that every newcomer gets a coach, who [supervises] him all the time. And I believe, that it is especially important to have someone to ask for counsel when one starts to supervise theses for diploma (...)

Interviewer: That is a fantastic system.

G3M4: Well, it is officially like that. I mean, at our department it is like that: there is only one female assistant there for a longer period who is working on her habilitation. And actually she has to do everything.

Interviewer: It can also be bad, then.

G3M4: One gets rather a bad consciousness when one says, I have to go to her again<sup>52</sup> (G3: 18).

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<sup>51</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 32.

<sup>52</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 33.

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In the course of the interview the contract assistants focus on the support of superiors with regard to the extension of their working contracts. The male assistant who now is tenured, always got support from superiors in the past when it came to extending his working contract (G4M: 7). Likewise G4F1 reports to be supported by her superior. She assumes that this is also the case because of teaching. Her superior needs someone like her who is willing to hold a particular lecture (G4F1: 7). G4F2 is standing in for a tenured colleague who went for leave in order to finish her habilitation. After submitting the habilitation her colleague will come back, therefore the superior of G4F2 cannot do anything for her (G4F2: 8).

All but the physician in training have their own working place, however, this will change later on when he will start to do research (G1M1: 19). Some have to share their rooms with someone else due to the shortage of space at their departments (G1F1: 20; G3M3: 6; G4F1: 18). No one complains about the lack or malfunctioning of facilities like computers, printers, telephone etc. Nevertheless, one interviewee reports with regard to his computer that he got what was left (an old Apple computer) (G3M4: 6). Another interviewee tells that she spent her own money on purchasing a comfortable chair (“Bürostuhl”) as it would have taken too long to get one through the department (G4F1: 17). Likewise G4F2 who has been a freelance before equipped herself with a laptop and recorder. She stated that she is willing to spend her own money in order to be capable to work (G4F2: 17).

## 5.2 Tasks and time for own research

The physician is doing an in-job-training at a university clinic right now (G1M1: 6). As said above, he will do research from the third year of his apprenticeship on. G1M2 supports his professor in teaching: he corrects homework, formulates exercises and prepares exams. Besides this he is given a lot of freedom and thus, has enough time for his dissertation (G1M2: 11). Also G1F1 reports that she is expected to work independently. It is left to her how far she progresses in her research. However, she is currently doing a practical training, therefore she has a rather tight schedule at the moment. Nevertheless, enough time will remain for her dissertation. She does only have to do few administrative tasks (G1F1: 12). G2F1 supervises and corrects exams as well as conducting minor research work. The time left for her dissertation is sufficient (G2F1: 5). G2F2 has been employed as a contract-assistant under the old law before she became academic employee. As a contract-assistant she was allowed to teach. Thus despite the fact, that now as an academic employee she would only be allowed to teach from the third year on, G2F2 continues to do independent teaching (although officially it is in the name of assistants and the professor). Besides the usual tasks of academic employees she also cooperates in projects. She stresses that

she has to take care to reserve more time for her dissertation (G2F2: 5). G2F3 can use half of her working time for her dissertation. In addition she is doing research for her professor or prepares courses (G2F3: 4).

G3M2 enjoys a lot of freedom. During the term he spends much time on preparing courses but in the semester breaks he dedicates his working time exclusively to his dissertation (G3M2: 15). G3M3 corrects exams, writes a commentary for his professor and helps students. Additionally, he and some colleagues are in charge of the department library. Because of his language skills he has also to make translations for his superior (G3M3: 14). G3M3 has just finished his dissertation. He states that all in all he can certainly still spend half of his working time on his own research (G3M3: 15). Besides the work on his dissertation G3M4 elaborates and corrects exams and looks after projects. He is able to spend at least 50 percent of his working time on his dissertation (G3M4: 16).

The contract assistants tasks vary from those of the academic employees not only because they have to teach but also because they have been in academia for a longer period of time (with the exception of G2F2). Two of them are already holding a doctorate. The one who did not finish her dissertation yet, G4F1, struggles with the time to work on it:

G4F1: I have to give a lecture and I am also involved in other courses. I am quite busy there. Well, further for instance I am in charge of students that are working on their theses for diploma. Besides I somehow try to publish. But the time is really short.

(...)

Interviewer: And what about time for your dissertation?

G4F1: Well, actually I have relatively little time. At our [department] it is rather one's own matter of concern to finish the dissertation. One gets primarily occupied with other things and that [the dissertation] should be done on the side<sup>53</sup> (G4: 1f.).

Besides teaching and working on her dissertation G4F1 has to make expeditions with students in the open country. Furthermore, she is involved in the coordination of an international research project funded by the European Union (G4F1: 10). G4F2 is at a department with a lot of students, some of her courses are thus cramped. She describes her situation as follows:

I am totally involved in teaching. At our department we have many students but a shortage of teachers. Somehow one is very occupied with teaching. But actually I am employed as a junior scientist and my contract stipulates 50 percent research, 25 percent teaching and 25 percent administration. I started keeping record, to figure out for myself [how much time I actually spend on the various tasks]. Because I have the

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<sup>53</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 34.

feeling, that I have to invest an enormous amount of time for teaching. To me it is important, that the teaching is good. And therefore it is very time consuming<sup>54</sup> (G4F2: 2).

To secure the knowledge transfer in this mass sessions she has to develop strategies (G4F1: 10). Further she has just handed in a proposal for a project.

G4M is at a small faculty with few students. Thus the time spend for correcting exams and so on is comparatively less. However, connected with the minor size of his faculty G4M has to do more administrative tasks and has to be represented in committees (G4M: 10).

## **6 Explanations for women's underrepresentation and perceptions concerning equal opportunity policies in academia**

### **6.1 Explanations for the persistent female underrepresentation**

As most of the interviewees, no matter if male or female, are rather satisfied with their working situation (cf. The situation of the junior faculty) and do not mention negative experiences which could bring further light to the explanations for the persistent female under-representation in academia, I found it particularly interesting to ask them how they explain this fact. Some of the interviewees hereby draw on the traditional family structure which results in the double work load for women and the women's likeliness to interrupt their careers for child-rearing (G3M1: 8; G4F1:12). G1F1 and G1M2 points out, that women are not only more likely to take parental leave because of the role stereotypes but also due to the existing pay gap between women and men (G1: 18). With regard to the argument that the female under-representation is connected to the family structure, G4M raised the legitimate objection that there are many women in academia who are not married and/or who do not have children (G4M:15).

The female interviewees in group 2 came up with further explanations: To G2F1 also women's possible difficulties to gain acceptance play a certain role. "I believe, there is this conflict whether to be a strong career-woman or a woman. Men are less likely to come into this conflict because pursuing a career is rather in accordance with their role"<sup>55</sup> (G2F1: 8f.). To G2F3 the main problem is that the male employee is still seen as the norm. And the organisation of academia would strongly be oriented towards men while women's qualities would not be used sufficiently. Additionally she mentioned the existence of the glass ceiling. Obviously to her this term refers to the existence of discriminative practices. Without acknowledging discriminative practices the shortage of women professors could not be explained. She states "At a certain point you are

<sup>54</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 35.

<sup>55</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 36.

stuck, only men succeed in overcoming that point. It is typically male, that they pull themselves mutually further”<sup>56</sup> (G2F3: 9). For G4F2 the female under-representation is mainly due to the male networks which work on a conscious and unconscious level. She reports from her experiences with committees for appointments, in which announcements would have been tailor-made for particular men. G4M finds it difficult to explain the female under-representation. He mentions that in the past years several female colleagues have focussed on feminist Theology. According to him this was somehow like finishing up a blind alley as feminist Theology is a very narrow field. Further he says that he can imagine that it could be difficult for women to succeed in a male homoculture (G4M: 13).

## 6.2 Attitude towards equal opportunity policies

One topic that arose in two sessions (group 1 and group 3) without being introduced by me has been the 40% target quota of women established by the Positive Action Plan for Women at the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture<sup>57</sup> (“Frauenförderungsplan”). This quota aims at preferential treatment of women at all functions, positions and employment groups dependent on qualification. Several statements by male interviewees show, that they do not feel comfortable with this regulation (G1M1, G3M3, G3M4). G1M1 reported how he perceives the consequences of this regulation:

G1M1: Recently there were several women appointed to professorships at the Faculty of Medicine ... At least at our faculty it is like that it simply gets pushed through. If a woman is in the triple-proposal<sup>58</sup> [no matter on which rank], she is going to get the job – as far as there is no serious reason against it. And that is something which does not create a good image to the junior faculty. If you think, there were actually two others, who were objectively higher ranked. And then the woman gets the post.

(...)

G1F2: But according to the law, the preferential treatment presupposes that the woman is equally qualified.

(...)

G1M1: Well, I only say that at the Faculty of Medicine the whole thing gets exaggerated and that is always bad ... For instance, I have an acquaintance, who was three times ranked at the top of the proposal. And he got the position only at the third

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<sup>56</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 37.

<sup>57</sup> This plan was enacted in 1995 for the first time and is amended every second year. It provides for various measures for the promotion of women among university personnel.

<sup>58</sup> According to the University Organisation Act of 1993 (§23. Abs. 4) the committees for appointment of professors have to hand in a proposal on the three most qualified candidates to the dean.

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time ... even though he would have been the ideal candidate and already had a family with two children at that time. That was not funny for him<sup>59</sup> (G1: 17).

To G3M3 the control exerted by the Working Group for Equal Treatment Issues<sup>60</sup> (“Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen”) could result in taking on not only preferably equally qualified women but also less qualified women:

When a position of an assistant gets vacant, the professor wants to fill the vacancy as soon as possible. And then there are two equally qualified [candidates], or let us say, the men is even a little more qualified. Then it could perfectly well happen that the professor thinks to himself, okay, before I get into trouble with the Working Group and the position remains vacant for another two or three months, I rather take the woman and save me the trouble<sup>61</sup> (G3M3: 9).

G3M4 remembers his feelings when he was told that the Working Group for Equal Treatment Issues has to agree to his employment: “If you are in that situation ... that is somehow a bit a strange feeling. Before I never thought about it. But as I was in that situation myself, I thought, probably she [the responsible person in the Working Group] can do something to me. That was a bit of an insecurity”<sup>62</sup> (G3M4: 9). Further he points out, that professors should have the same right like employees in the private sector where no quotas exist: to take on the best candidate, regardless if s/he is a woman or a man (ibid.: 10).

Two of the male candidates in group 3 have a positive attitude towards promoting women. G3M2 considers the preferential treatment of women to be a good practice (G3M2: 10). To G3M1 a balanced proportion among women and men teachers in education institutions is desirable, as female students and male students would behave differently towards male or female teachers (G3M1: 11).

## 7 Summary and discussion

### 7.1 Summary of the results

The interviews confirm once more that to university members contacts frequently constitute the *conditio sine qua non* for entering academia (e.g. Gottsbachner 1994: 86). Financing one’s dissertation by the means of becoming an academic employee seems to be a common motivation. Only one male

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<sup>59</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 38.

<sup>60</sup> In 1990 Working Groups for Equal Treatment Issues have been established at all universities to provide protection against gender-based discrimination. They extend full information and involvement on all staff recruitment.

<sup>61</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 39.

<sup>62</sup> German original in the appendix, quote No. 40.

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academic employee openly states the wish to make an academic career. However, three more participants say that continuing in academia would be an option for them. Only to two women it is important to underline the lack of planning regarding their entry into academia. And again only two female interviewees acknowledged that emotional reasons played a role when deciding to become academic employees. For the contract assistants of the contrast group entering academia under the new conditions would have been less attractive.

Concerning the positive aspects of academia in general, the work itself and the freedom given are named. Further, the flexible working hours are by some considered to be advantages as they facilitate the reconciliation of work and private life. In this respect the possibility to work part-time and the presumably bigger acceptance of taking leave are widely rated as advantages of academia. However, how one statement suggests, part time work and career breaks may have a negative impact on the career.

A negative aspect which has been mentioned by several participants is the poor exchange of knowledge among organisational units. Moreover single statements draw on the necessity to attend many meetings, to do research *and* teaching and the isolation/lack of practical relevance of academic work.

Obviously none of the academic employees but the physician in training and an academic employee who is already teaching have a high work load. On the other side the female contract assistants are very occupied with teaching due to the requirements of their departments.

With regard to positive and negative consequences of the new employment law in general the following aspects have been named: The weakening of the significance of the habilitation; the limitation of the teaching duties of the junior faculty and the presumed future conflicts between members of the old and the new employment law.

The habilitation lost (at least theoretically) its significance for the new law and does no longer stipulate the requirement to hold a habilitation for professors. Moreover the reform abandoned the category of associate professor (cf. 2.1 The “Old” Career Path). While the former is less likely to have consequences as in most cases the habilitation will remain *de facto* a requirement for professorship, the abandonment of the category of associate professor has a negative impact for individuals who will achieve the *venia legendi* in future: Neither will the habilitation have financial consequences nor does it provide with tenure.

The new employment law narrowed down the extent of hours the junior faculty (academic employees and assistants) is allowed to teach independently. Moreover, at present the academic employees cannot take over teaching, as they are only allowed to teach independently from the third year on. Consequently, like one participant reports, departments may have difficulties to sustain the teaching. Another interviewee judges the limited teaching duties of the junior

faculty as illusory given the need for teaching staff at her department. Besides the general problems for the organisation, the consequences for the individuals will not be unanimous: While academic employees and assistants may benefit from limited teaching duties, this may occur on the expense of other academics.

The assumption expressed by one female contract assistant according to which the existence of two categories of academics, those under the old and those under the new law, will produce conflicts is from my point of view convincing, however, for the time being this is only speculation.

The assessment of the new employment law regarding the conditions for academic employees showed the following results: The salaries of academic employees are modest, however, they can be considered as appropriate when academic employees are indeed granted half of the legally stipulated time to work on their dissertations. Moreover this regulation facilitates the finishing of a dissertation. The insecurity constituted by the restriction of the contracts might be a problem for those who want to go on in academia after the finishing of their dissertations as this would presuppose a vacancy on a higher career level, where usually fewer positions are available. Furthermore, due to the employment of many academic employees the pool of the possible candidates and thus the competition got bigger. The view expressed by two interviewees that continuing in academia is possible when the superiors are content with one's work overlooks the only limited ability of superiors to offer a position for persons holding a doctorate. Also, the usefulness of a dissertation on the extra-university labour market varies between fields: Whereas some can hope to enhance their chances in the private sector by this means, to others the usefulness of a dissertation for anything but an academic career is rather limited. Generally with regard to the attitude towards the restriction of the contracts, several contributions suggest that at the (average) age level of academic employees insecurity is not that much a problem but later on in life this could change. The uncertainty of the academic employees with regard to their status and the positions themselves has been well illustrated by discussions in group 1 and 3. Due to this insecurity it is rather difficult for the academic employees to realistically assess their changes to continue with an academic career later on.

With regard to the working conditions academic employees are generally satisfied. Many spoke of a pleasant atmosphere at their departments. Moreover, the support seems to be given widely by colleagues and superiors. Like one of the interviewees points out, the low position of academic employees could play a certain role in this respect. Another interviewee reports about the institutionalisation of a coaching system at his department. What seems to be a good practice at first sight, however, turns out to be actually a quite bad one: There is currently only one coach for everyone who herself has a high work load.

Concerning the access to material resources the interviewees seem generally quite satisfied. However, one contract assistant had to purchase a chair by her own and another interviewee has only an old computer at his disposal. Comfortable chairs and efficient computers belong nowadays to the standard working equipment, thus this is not tolerable.

The academic employees tasks are diverse. Besides working on their dissertations they support the teaching of professors, conduct minor research work, look after projects, do administrative work etc. One of them already teaches her own courses. Typically enough she is the only one who would need more time for her dissertation. The female contract assistant in the compare group who has not finished her dissertation yet faces the same problem. Due to the demands of her department she is very much occupied with teaching and the time for her dissertation is short. The other female contract assistant is very much involved in teaching, although her contract actually stipulates that only 25 percent of her working time must be used for teaching but ½ of the time for research.

The interviewees explain the under-representation of women in academia with the family structure, the role conflict of women, the patriarchal organisation of academia, male networks/homoculture and the possible negative consequences of focussing on women's and gender studies. Three of the male interviewees have a rather negative attitude towards the practice/consequences of equal opportunity policies, while two are in favour of measures to promote women.

## 7.2 Gender and form of employment – do they matter?

As mentioned above (cf. 3.2 The group design) the design of the study involved two break variables which differentiated the four groups: gender and form of employment. Even though direct comparisons between the groups cannot be made (Wilkinson 1998: 187), a summary and discussion of the differences and similarities between the genders and forms of employment seems to be appropriate.

Equally important to both women and men are contacts to university members when it comes to entering academia. With regard to the underlying motivation for the entry the interviews suggest the possible existence of genderspecific differences: only women stressed the lack of planning<sup>63</sup> and only women mentioned emotional motives. From my point of view it is neither likely that *all* men nor *only* men plan their careers based on rational motives. I would

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<sup>63</sup> This is in accordance with the findings of earlier research that suggested women's likeliness to attribute their careers to coincidence and luck (Gottsbachner 1994; Schuler 1993).



rather interpret the contributions in the interviews as an expression of internalised role stereotypes: women are “actually” not career-oriented and therefore have also the freedom to admit “irrational” motives for career decisions.

A common reason for becoming academic employee for both genders is the wish to write (respectively to finish) one’s dissertation. Further both genders rate the comparatively high degree of freedom regarding content and working-time as a positive aspect of academia. The latter as well as the presumably bigger acceptance of career breaks are seen as advantages when it comes to reconcile work and private sphere.

With the exception of the male physician those who have a high working load are women who are teaching. At first sight this could point to the existence of gender-specific differences. But a closer look shows that of these three women two are contract assistants and thus teaching belongs to their duties. Contrary to them the only male contract assistant is working at a faculty with very few students. This explains his comparatively lower working load due to teaching. The third woman with a high teaching responsibility offers already own courses even though she is now employed as an academic employee. However, she has been employed as a contract assistant before at the same department. Thus we have to conclude that the form of employment and the discipline are of relevance with regard to the working load. Further research would be necessary in order to determine whether or not there are also gender-specific differences in this respect.<sup>64</sup>

The new employment law “devaluated” the habilitation for it does no longer virtually automatic lead to tenure. However, the transitory regulation that the habilitation can be finished under the old conditions until autumn 2003 let many try to do so. As one interviewee stated, until now more men than women succeeded in doing so.<sup>65</sup> If this turns out to be true the struggle for achieving a permanent post before the legal loophole closes could have additionally enhanced the existing gender inequity.

Like some contributions suggested, the usability of a dissertation in other areas than academia varies between the disciplines. While moving to the private sector is comparatively easy in the hard sciences and economics, this does not apply to the same extent to the humanities. Assuming that the chances to

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<sup>64</sup> A study by Mixa (1997) about physicians at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Vienna showed, that the working time has been the same for women and men. However, the female physicians spent more time on administrative tasks and the treatment of the patients than their male colleagues.

<sup>65</sup> Until now there are no data available on this matter. In general much more men than women habilitate, thus to verify the hypotheses that as a consequence of the new law even more men than usual have habilitated it will be necessary to compare data with that of previous years.

continue an academic career after obtaining the doctorate are deteriorating due to the new employment law the disciplinary differences are interesting when taking into account the persistent horizontal segregation (see: 2.2 The gender distribution).

Further the new employment law certainly facilitates the earning of a doctorate as 50 percent of the working time of academic employees are to be used for the dissertation. The case of the female contract assistant who has not finished her thesis yet and who has hardly any time to do so, underlines the legitimacy of this assumption. And like the interviewees showed, most departments in fact keep to the contract. If (like in the case of the female contract assistant who is already teaching) they do not do so, the lower salary of academic employees when compared to assistants under the old law is unjust and academic employees are indeed put at disadvantage to their counterparts under the old law.

The insecurity caused by the new employment law with regard to the continuing of the career has been criticised mainly by male participants. Surprisingly enough, female contract assistants were the only one's stating that this does not bother them. However, they conceded that this would be different if they would be older. All of the contract assistants expressed a critical attitude towards the new law.

Most interviewees, being them female or male, are content with their working situation. In general, the academic employees have more time for their own research (with the exception of the physician in training and the academic employee who is teaching) than the contract assistants.

Unsurprisingly, mainly women raised more sophisticated explanations for the persistent female under-representation in academia than the family-structure argument. And again quite predictably, only three men have issued a critical/negative attitude towards equal opportunity policies. However, almost as many men (two) are in favour of such policies. None of the interviewee women explicitly expressed her attitude in this respect.

Only two accounts point at the existence of discriminatory practices which could explain at least partially the ongoing male dominance in academia (G4F2 who spoke about tailor-made announcements for male candidates and G1M2 who said that his professor knows who gets the job before announcing a vacant position). Since there are no further statements referring to this issue I cannot detect concrete experiences of discrimination.

We can conclude thus, that with regard to situation and career perspectives of the interviewees there are quite few gender-differences apparent in the interviews. The results suggest that discipline and form of employment are of much bigger relevance for the chances and situation of the junior faculty in this respect.

## 7.2 Discussion of the results in view of the method

The focus group interviews turned out to be a useful method for delivering insights into the working situation of the interviewees and to investigate the motivation for becoming an academic employee. Moreover, the interviews were a particularly desirable research method for an evaluation of the consequences of the new employment law by the affected population. This was connected to one of the major strengths of the method – the dynamic of the group interaction, which stimulated accounts and recall. Another feature of the method – the relative freedom given to the participants – enabled the participants to ask questions at one another. This proved to be helpful when exploring the level of information and the insecurity of the interviewees themselves with regard to their legal status. Another advantage stemming from the comparatively high degree of freedom given to the interviewees was that they could raise topics relevant to themselves (above all their attitude towards equal opportunity policies). However, group dynamics and freedom to speak made it sometimes quite difficult to obtain concrete answers of all respondents on all the topics included in the question guide. Some of the issues were dealt with in detail, while others were neglected or even left out completely. The latter was due to the fact, that frequently the first respondent's answer to a particular question had a very strong impact on the one of the next respondent and so on, so that the last respondent did not take any notice of the original question anymore. Constant interventions of the interviewer could of course have prevented that, however, this would have endangered the flow of the discourses. Clearly, this problems would not have emerged to such an extent in single interviews.

With regard to the primary research questions (Is entering academia less attractive due to the regulations of the new employment law than before? Are there any gender differences concerning the situation of the junior faculty and their career perspectives?) – we can conclude that the method enabled only to answer them partially. Academia as a career opportunity got less attractive for it is less predictable and the new positions are precarious. However, the position of academic employee is – contrary to my expectations – not perceived to be that unattractive by the interviewed academic employees themselves. This is especially true for those whose main aim is to obtain the doctorate. In the interviews no gender-specific differences concerning the situation of the junior faculty were apparent, whereas they showed that occupational status and discipline matter. Possibly a survey could have been more fruitful in this respect for it would have been possible to gain detailed and quantifiable information on e.g. how many hours spent on various tasks, how many conferences attended and so on. Further the participants did not speak about themselves being confronted with discriminatory practices or exploitation. Certainly in-depth-

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interviews would have been more appropriate in order to learn about such negative experiences. Moreover, I assume that those few of the many contacted persons who finally agreed to participate are not likely to be the ones who suffer from severe discrimination or exploitation. But instead of attributing the lack of gender-specific differences in the interviews to the method we could also interpret this differently: possibly there are *no* gender-specific differences on the lower ranks of the academy – the problems start later on.

To sum up, the results suggest that focus groups are an excellent tool for exploratory purposes – and this was indeed a pilot study – however, they are less useful for answering concrete research questions.

## Appendix

### Glossary

Academic employee in training	Wissenschaftliche/r MitarbeiterIn in Ausbildung (§ 6 AbgG)
Announcement procedure	Ausschreibungsverfahren
Apprenticeship	Ausbildungsverhältnis
Assistant	AssistentIn (Funktionsbezeichnung: UniversitätsassistentIn) (§§ 491 ff VBG)
Associate professor	UniversitätsdozentIn (§§ 170 ff BDG), VertragsdozentIn (§§ 55 ff VBG) (offizieller Titel: Außerordentliche/r ProfessorIn)
Contract assistant	VertragsassistentIn (§§ 51 ff VBG)
Contract professor	VertragsprofessorIn (§§ 49f ff VBG)
Employment Law	Dienstrecht
Extended legal autonomy	Vollrechtsfähigkeit
Faculty of Catholic Theology	Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät
Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture	Baufakultät - Architektur und Bauingenieurwesen
Faculty of Law	Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Humanities	Geisteswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Faculty of Medicine	Medizinische Fakultät
Faculty of Natural Sciences	Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät
Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences	Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Full professor	Universitätsprofessor (§§ 162 ff BDG)
Habilitation	Habilitation (teaching authority)
Junior Faculty	Mittelbau
Positive Action Plan for Women	Frauenförderungsplan
Restricted legal autonomy	Teilrechtsfähigkeit
Staff scientist	Staff Scientist (§§ 49s ff VBG)
University assistant	UniversitätsassistentIn (§§ 174 ff BDG)
University professor	UniversitätsprofessorIn (§§ 49f ff VBG)
Working Group for Equal Treatment Issues	Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen

### Abbreviations

AbgG	Bundesgesetz über die Abgeltung von wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Tätigkeiten an Universitäten und Universitäten der Künste (BGBl 1974/463 idF BGBl II 2001/87) (Federal government act on the payment of scientific and artistic work at the universities and universities of Art)
BDG	Beamten-Dienstrechtsgesetz (1979, BGBl I 1999/70) (Employment law for civil servants)

BGBI	Bundesgesetzblatt (Federal law gazette)
BMBWK	Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (Ministry for Education, Science and Culture)
G1	Group 1
G1F1	Group 1, female participant 1
G1F2	Group 1, female participant 2
G1M1	Group 1, male participant 1
G1M2	Group 1, male participant 2
G2	Group 2
G2F1	Group 2, female participant 1
G2F2	Group 2, female participant 2
G2F3	Group 2, female participant 3
G3	Group 3
G3M1	Group 3, male participant 1
G3M2	Group 3, male participant 2
G3M3	Group 3, male participant 3
G3M4	Group 3, male participant 4
G4	Group 4
G4F1	Group 4, female participant 1
G4F2	Group 4, female participant 2
G4M	Group 4, male participant
idF	in der Fassung (in the version)
PhD	Philosophiae Doctor
UG	Universitätsgesetz (University Act) (2002, BGBI I 2002/120)
UK	United Kingdom (Vereinigtes Königreich)
UOG	Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten (Universitäts-Organisationsgesetz - University Organisation Act) (1993, BGBI I 1993/805)
VBG	Vertragsbedienstetengesetz (1948, BGBI 1948, BGBI 1948/86 idf BGBI I 2001/87) (Employment law for contractual employees)

## Quotes

1. „Ich habe mir das immer so vorgestellt“ (G1M1: 5).
2. „Also bei mir jedenfalls ist es so, dass ich überhaupt nicht, ... dass ich geplant hab’ eine Unikarriere zu machen. Also überhaupt nicht ... Es war überraschend, dass ich dort hin gekommen bin“ (G1F2: 4).
3. „Grundlage war dann vor allem eine persönliche Sache, dass mir der [Professor] sehr sympathisch war“ (G2F1: 2).
4. „Und das war damals eigentlich eine spontane Sache. Ich hab’ mir nicht viel überlegt, es hat sich einfach gut angefühlt“ (G2F2: 2).
5. „Weil ich mir auch nicht vorstellen kann, dass das vom Aufgabenbereich [der wissenschaftliche MitarbeiterInnen in Ausbildung] her so funktioniert, wie es

eigentlich geplant ist. Ich glaube, da darf man ja die ersten drei Jahre überhaupt keine Lehre selbständig halten und so. Also das ist bei uns komplett illusorisch. Dann würde halt da der Name vom Professor stehen und ich würde sie trotzdem halten“ (G4F1: 18).

6. „Also inhaltlich finde ich die Arbeit an der Uni attraktiv. Weil sie lässt, wenn einem die wissenschaftliche Arbeit Spaß macht, genügend Freiraum. Man ist sein eigener Chef und kann eigentlich in dem Bereich forschen, der einen interessiert. Wenn man an der Lehre auch noch Spaß hat, das ist dann ein zusätzlicher Pluspunkt.“(G3M1: 3)
7. „Mir gefällt die Arbeit, mir gefällt das Fach. Ich habe auch die Möglichkeit, schon ein bisschen zu unterrichten, mit dem Professor zusammen. Ich meine, dass mir das auch Spaß macht, die Lehre. Das sind für mich die attraktiven Teile“ (G3M2: 5).
8. „Ich [finde] es interessant und belebend, Lehre zu machen und meine Gedanken mit Studenten auszutauschen“ (G2F2: 5).
9. „Also da offeriert meines Erachtens, wenn man jetzt nicht *die* Karriere anstrebt, die Uni tolle Möglichkeiten mit Teilzeit zu arbeiten oder eben auch auszusteigen und dann wieder einzusteigen. Es ist ja wirklich kein Problem ein, zwei Jahre auszusteigen und dann wieder den Anschluss zu finden. Das könnte in der Privatwirtschaft eventuell um einiges schwieriger sein“ (G1F2: 6).
10. „Wo manchmal zumindest das Gefühl vom Elfenbeinturm aufkommt, wo man auf der anderen Seite wirklich das vermisst, wie schaut es im Unternehmen aus“(G2F2: 3).
11. „Wir müssen 10, 12 Stunden arbeiten, da hast du keine Zeit für Forschung. Wir sollten wissenschaftliche Forschung erbringen aber in den ersten zwei, drei Jahren wird dafür keine Zeit oder sehr wenig Zeit zur Verfügung gestellt“ (G1M1: 6).
12. „Ja, das ist eine praktische Sache, die muss man einfach lernen ... Also ich bin zufrieden. Ich habe mir auch immer gedacht, das ist ja tragisch, für 1000 Euro arbeiten gehen und dann musst du 60 Stunden machen. Doch es ist eigentlich ganz anders gekommen. Ich bin total positiv überrascht“ (G1M1: 7).
13. „Wir haben eine Reihe von Leuten an der Fakultät, die in einem irrsinnigen Strudel stecken. Also, wo ich mich manchmal frage, muss eine wissenschaftliche Karriere so ausschauen? So, dass man am Schreibtisch schläft und so. Wo ich mir dann manchmal denke, na gut, wenn es so ist, frage ich mich, ob es der richtige Weg ist für mich. Weil ich außerhalb des Büros auch noch leben möchte“ (G4M: 11).
14. „Also was ich so beobachte oder aus Gesprächen mit Kollegen weiß ist, in der Phase wenn man mit der Dissertation fertig ist und sich für eine Unikarriere entscheidet, auf die Habilitation hin zu arbeiten, da ist es mit Familie schon ganz schwierig. Ich glaube, dass ist die stressigste Phase einer wissenschaftlichen Laufbahn, zumindest in dem Bereich oder an dem Institut an dem ich bin. Und da ist es schon überhaupt schon sehr schwer möglich als Assistent die Habilitation zu schreiben und wenn man dann Familie auch noch [hat] ... da würde man sehr in Gewissenskonflikte kommen. Was ist jetzt richtig? Ich glaube, wenn ich mich entscheiden würde, Unikarriere, dann würde ich das mit der Familie sicher bis dort hinaus schieben“ (G3M4: 13).

15. „Also was mir auffällt und das finde ich ist etwas, das in diesem Gesetz auch überhaupt keine Berücksichtigung findet, ist, dass die Leute, die jetzt definitiv gestellt sind, die sind ja noch zwanzig Jahre mindestens da ... Es gibt so eine Riege von Leuten, die da fix sind und die den Laden kennen und dann gibt es neue, die kurz da sind und dann wieder gehen. Und zwischen diesen zwei Berufsgruppen gibt es derartig unterschiedliche Interessen, im Prinzip, dass das nur Konflikte eigentlich provoziert ... Also das, was das Gesetz wollte, mehr Flexibilität im Mittelbau, das hat es ja nicht geschafft. Das ist ja nur mehr Flexibilität für den Nachwuchs. Aber der Mittelbau der jetzt definitiv gestellt ist, der bleibt für die nächsten zwanzig Jahre kann ... es wird Leute geben die ständig irgendwie herumfliegen und die anderen die da fest sitzen. Und das schafft, glaube ich, viele Konflikte. Für den Betrieb selber [ist das] nicht so gut“ (G4F2: 19 f.).
16. „Ich denke mir, im Verhältnis zum alten Dienstrecht ... ist das neue eher von Vorteil für jene, die Diss schreiben wollen. Viele an unserem Institut haben es nicht geschafft, diesen Assistentenjob zu bewältigen und die Dissertation zu schreiben. Gerade, weil sie sehr viel mit Lehre und organisatorischen Dingen beschäftigt waren. Und sehr, sehr viele haben dann abgebrochen, konnten die Dissertation nicht fertig schreiben. Von daher müsste das neue System ein Vorteil sein, wenn es wirklich dann auch [so] durchgezogen wird, so wie es im Gesetz steht, nämlich die Hälfte der Zeit für die Dissertation zu verwenden und die andere Hälfte für Tätigkeiten am Institut“ (G3M4: 3f.).
17. „[Es ist eine] Tatsache, dass man als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter doch mehr verdient und mehr Möglichkeiten hat, als ein halb beschäftigter Vertragsassistent ... Also das ist sicher ein positiver Aspekt des neuen Dienstrechts“ (G3M3: 4).
18. „Für einen Halbtagesjob ist es nicht schlecht bezahlt ... (die zwanzig/zwanzig Regelung). Wenn man die Dissertation als Privatvergnügen betrachtet, dann sind die restlichen zwanzig Stunden ganz gut entlohnt. Wenn man das nicht tut, dann glaub' ich, hätte man wahrscheinlich irgendwie andere Optionen ziehen können“ (G1M2: 4).
19. „Kommt darauf an, was nachher kommt. Die ersten vier Jahre sind, glaube ich, ziemlich dürr – finanziell“ (G1M2: 3).
20. „Und dann habe ich mir halt gesagt, wenn dann muss ich es [das Doktorat] gleich machen. Direkt nach dem Studium ... sind halt die Ansprüche nicht so hoch, [so] dass man jetzt noch mit dem Geld auskommt. Mehr oder weniger“ (G1F1: 1).
21. „Das Gehalt stört, das ist eine Benachteiligung gegenüber den Uniassistenten [nach dem alten Dienstrecht], die eigentlich das gleiche machen wie wir“ (G2F3: 7).
22. „Da stimme ich total zu, eben weil ich auch beide Seiten kenne [da ich zuvor als Assistentin nach dem alten Dienstrecht angestellt war]. Das Gehalt ist abschreckend. Da braucht man viel Interesse und Idealismus“ (G2F2: 7).
23. „Ich will möglichst das ganze Leben lang wissenschaftlich arbeiten. Jetzt ist einmal meine Dissertation geklärt und dann ist da die große Unsicherheit“ (G3M4:3).



24. „Von den formalen Kriterien her ist das neue Dienstrecht, glaube ich, sehr problematisch für die jungen Wissenschaftler, weil es keine Jobsicherheit gibt, da war das alte System freundlicher“ (G3M1: 3).
25. „Wie ich auf der Uni eingestiegen bin, war das natürlich auch alles höchst unsicher. Das waren zuerst Karenzstellen. Zum Glück hat es sich so ergeben, dass ein Kollege der karenziert war, nicht mehr zurückgekommen ist. Immerhin war da die Möglichkeit, dass sich irgendetwas öffnet. Jetzt nach der neuen Situation hat man irgendwo eine Deadline und dieser Möglichkeitshorizont ist kaum da“ (G4M: 4).
26. „Ich denk’ mir, das ist ein generationsmäßiger Unterschied ... wenn du 10 oder 15 Jahre auf der Uni bist und dann den Sprung in die Privatwirtschaft zu schaffen, ist fast unmöglich ... Und wenn ich jetzt so 35, 40 wäre, dann würde das Ganze mich mehr stressen. Also da hätt’ ich eher Zukunftsängste als in dem Alter wo du dann sagst, okay, es gibt im Prinzip nirgends keine durchgängigen Karrierewege ... Es ist nicht so kritisch für jene, die jetzt neu anfangen, [und] so die ersten vier Jahre schauen, ist die Institution `was ich für mich, fühl ich mich da wohl und dann entscheiden, äh, ob sie weiter da bleiben können, oder ob sie weggehen“ (G2F1: 4).
27. „Jetzt die ersten vier Jahre ist es [die prekäre Arbeitssituation] irrelevant. Wenn es immer so weitergeht, sieht es anders aus. Die Unsicherheit wäre eventuell ein Problem, denke ich mir“ (G2F1: 9).
28. „Für mich wird es, hätte ich mir eigentlich gedacht, wie ich mich auf diese Stelle beworben hab’, ich möchte’ jetzt irgendwas mit Perspektive. Vorher war ich in Deutschland und habe das so nicht mit verfolgt mit dem österreichischen Dienstrecht ... [Das] ist mir vorgekommen wie eine kalte Dusche. Wie ich angefangen habe und gerade noch meinen Dienstvertrag nach dem alten Dienstrecht bekommen habe, aber nur mit der Perspektive das es befristet ist. Und [wie] ich mir dann das neue angeschaut habe, habe ich mir gedacht, na bitte! Unter diese Bedingungen, ich weiß nicht ... Ich muss mir wirklich die Frage stellen, bleibe ich auf der Uni unter diesen Bedingungen ... oder [ob ich] in die Privatwirtschaft gehe“ (G4F2: 3).
29. G1M2: „Obwohl der formale Aspekt ja noch ergänzt werden muss um den informellen ... Ja wenn man gut arbeitet, ein gutes Verhältnis hat, dann möchte man [dich] weiterhaben. Dass merkt man früh, sagen’s dir nicht einen Tag davor. Ja ich denk’, dass der Unberechenbarkeitseffekt durch die geringen Vertragsbefristungen wahrscheinlich so auf einer Informationsebene irgendwie abgedeckt wird.“ G1F1: „Das ist halt der Bonus, wenn man da schon arbeitet, die Leute schon kennt, mit denen auskommt, eine gute Arbeit abgeliefert. Wieso sollten die dann jemand anderen einstellen? Ja gut, klar, die [Stelle] wird dann ausgeschrieben, die Bewerbungen laufen. Ich denke schon, dass es da Möglichkeiten gibt.“ G1M2: „Der informelle Faktor, also wenn du wen kennst, hat einen sehr hohen Stellenwert. Also, mein Professor hat gesagt, er schreibt Stellen aus und er weiß vorher wen er nimmt.“ (G1: 7f.).
30. G1F2: „Zu der Art von Stellen insgesamt, die find’ ich doch zumindest insofern problematisch, [als] das sie sehr ungeklärt sind. Das ist eine neue Art von Stellen und

so eine Art Pilotprojekt und zugleich schon wieder ein Auslaufmodell. Es ist ja schon wieder geplant, dass diese Stellen abgeschafft werden, diese Art von Stellen.“ G1M2: „Wir zählen irgendwie als Mittelbau und dann sollen wir Forschungsstipendiaten werden.“ G1F2: „Im Augenblick zählen wir als Mittelbau und ab Jänner 2004 gehören wir wieder zu den Studierenden.“ (...) G1F2: „Und, also ich hab’ völlig unterschiedliche Informationen bekommen ... Und ich hab’ mir sagen lassen, die Informationen sind nicht deshalb gegensätzlich weil die Leute nicht kompetent sind, sondern weil das wirklich gesetzlich ungeregelt ist. Eben, dass das das erste mal ist, das Leute, die schon angestellt sind, praktisch ihre Kurien wechseln. Also, dass wir jetzt noch Mittelbau sind, und mit 2004, obwohl das ein und derselbe Vertrag ist, wieder in die Studierenden hineinfallen (...) Bei uns ist es also so, laut Vertrag, könnten wir ab dem 3. oder 4. Jahr Lehrveranstaltungen anbieten, selbständig. Geht aber nicht. Also für die die jetzt angestellt worden sind, werden wir [ja] wieder im 3. oder 4. Jahr Studierende sein.“ (...) G1F2: „Es sind schon viele große Unsicherheitsfaktoren, die ich im Augenblick akzeptiere, weil mir grundsätzlich der Job Spaß macht, die aber eigentlich nicht in Ordnung sind ... [du] hast einen Vertrag für vier Jahre, nach zwei Jahren ändern wir ihn ein bisschen und, ja. Also jemand, auch in einer anderen Lebensphase, könnte das einfach nicht machen“ (G2: 8ff.).

31. G3M1: „Problematisch finde ich, dass wir nicht offiziell zum Mittelbau gehören. Und dann ist man gar nichts.“ G3M3: „Jein. Wir gehören rechtlich zum Mittelbau. Erst mit dem UG sind wir dann nichts mehr.“ (...) G3M1: „Wir können aber nicht Mitglieder des Gründungskonvents wählen.“ G3M3: „Richtig. Das ist aber UG dann schon. Wobei, ich meine, die wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiter sind sowieso eine Missgeburt, jetzt rein gesetzgeberisch. Weil die hat man jetzt eingeführt mit dem Dienstrechtsänderungsgesetz 2001, also die sind 2001 geschaffen worden und ab 2004 gibt es sie nicht mehr.“ (...) G3M3: „Also die laufenden Verträge bleiben natürlich ... Also unsere Stellen bleiben, solange wir da sind, gibt es die Stellen ... und danach ist es dann ... eine Entscheidung vom Senat ... Ich weiß nicht, was gemacht wird. Ich kann dann die Dienststelle beibehalten, ich –“ G3M1: „Na, beibehalten kann ich’s nicht.“ G3M3: „Na, ich kann einen Assistenten darauf setzen oder sonst was machen. Das geht dann schon. Ich muss das Kind dann anders nennen. Ich kann aber sagen dass Geld ist dafür da, ich geb’ das für Forschungsstipendiaten her .. ich kann aber auch sagen ... ich kauf’ mir dafür irgendwelche Bücher (...) G3M1: „Die Forschungsstipendiaten können aber auch keine Lehre halten, oder?“ (...) G3M1: „Also ist die Chance eigentlich relativ groß, dass das dann in eine Assistentenstelle umgewandelt wird.“ G3M3: „Das ist eine Geldfrage. Wenn man das Geld woanders braucht ...“ G3M1: „Na, ich meine in Bezug auf die Lehre.“ G3M3: „Also ... ich kann jetzt nur von der Juridischen Fakultät sprechen: Es sind relativ viele wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterstellen eingerichtet worden ... Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass die alle umgewandelt werden“ (G3: 21f.).
32. G1M2: „Ja, das [die Arbeitsatmosphäre] ist vordergründig einmal äußerst angenehm. Na, mir gegenüber. Wobei da natürlich mitspielt, dass als Wissenschaftlicher

- Mitarbeiter bist ja, du kannst niemandem weh tun, also wirst auch von jedem positiv aufgenommen. Du hast weder Sitz noch Stimme in irgendwelchen Gremien, du hast keine Lehre, kostest [nichts] außer deinem Gehalt, bindest keine Ressourcen, irgendwie. Regt sich mal schwerer jemand über dich auf, sozusagen.“ GIF1: „Ja, klar.“ G1M2: „Na, das ist irgendwie so, du hast nix zu verlieren. Du hast wenig Rechte, aber im Gegenzug wenig Pflichten. Also ich kann mir keinen Grund vorstellen warum [jemand] mit mir zu streiten anfangen am Institut müsste Weil ich hab’ nix, ich kann nix“ (G1: 19).
33. G3M4: „Bei uns [am Institut] ist das institutionalisiert, also das war ein Beschluss von der Institutsversammlung, dass jeder neue einen Coach bekommt, der ihn die ganze Zeit [betreut]. Und ich glaube, dass ist gerade wichtig, wenn man Diplomarbeiten zu betreuen beginnt, dass man da jemanden hat, den man noch zusätzlich um Rat fragen kann.“ (...) Interviewer: „Ja also ich finde das ein tolles System mit dem Coach.“ G3M4: „Ja gut, dass ist offiziell. Ich meine, bei uns ist es so, da ist eine Assistentin die länger [da ist], die eben an der Habil arbeitet ... und eigentlich muss die dann halt alles machen.“ Interviewer: „Oje. Das kann auch sehr schlecht sein.“ G3M4: „Da kriegt man eher ein schlechtes Gewissen wenn man sagt, jetzt muss ich schon wieder zu ihr hin“ (G3: 18).
34. G4F1: „Also ich habe eine Vorlesung zu halten und bin halt in weiteren Lehrveranstaltungen auch tätig. Da bin ich eigentlich recht beschäftigt. Ja, Diplomanden habe ich auch zu betreuen zum Beispiel und so daneben halt versuche ich irgendwie Publikationen noch raus zu bringen. Aber es ist recht knapp von der Zeit her, muss ich sagen“ (...) Interviewer: „Und wie sieht es mit der Zeit für Ihre Dissertation aus?“ G4F1: „Ähm, habe ich eigentlich relativ wenig Zeit. Bei uns ist es mehr, ja, ähm, dann das, irgendwie eigene Anliegen die Diss fertig zu kriegen. Also man wird primär mal für die anderen Sachen eingesetzt und das soll halt so nebenbei [laufen]“ (G4: 1f.).
35. „Ich bin voll in der Lehre. Bei uns ist es so, wir haben sehr viele Studierende und wenig Personal. Also irgendwie ist man sehr mit Lehre beschäftigt. [Ich] bin aber eigentlich als Nachwuchswissenschaftlerin eingestellt und in meinem Vertrag steht 50 Prozent Forschung, 25 Prozent Lehre und 25 Prozent Verwaltung. Ich habe jetzt angefangen so ein Arbeitsblatt zu führen, um für mich selber abzuchecken, weil ich das Gefühl habe, ich muss wahnsinnig viel in die Lehre investieren, weil es mir wichtig ist, dass die gut ist. Und da geht total viel Zeit drauf“ (G4F2: 2).
36. „Ich glaube, das ist so ein Zwiespalt: will man eine starke Karrierefrau sein oder will man Frau sein. Diesen Konflikt haben Männer nicht so, weil es ihrer Rolle eher entspricht“ G2F1: 8).
37. „Irgendwann ist dann Schluss, da kommen nur mehr Männer weiter. Das ist wieder typisch Männer, dass die sich gegenseitig wieder weiterziehen“ (G3F3: 8).
38. G1M1: „Also auf der Medizin sind jetzt ein paar Professorinnen berufen worden ... Zumindest bei uns [auf der Fakultät], da wird das jetzt einfach durchgedrückt. Wenn eine Frau im Dreivorschlag ist, dann wird sie’s – wenn nix Grobes dagegen spricht.

Und das sind halt oft Sachen ... die vor dem Mittelbau, bei den jungen Leuten, kein gutes Bild machen. Wenn man sich denkt, da waren eigentlich noch zwei andere, die objektiv besser gereiht worden sind. [Und] dann kriegt's die Frau.“ (...) G1F2: „Wobei ... laut Gesetz ist es so, das der Frauenparagraf nur eintritt, wenn sie gleich gut sind.“ (...) G1M1: „Na, ich sag' nur auf der Medizin wird das irgendwie ein bisschen übertrieben im Moment und das ist halt immer ungut ... Ich hab' zum Beispiel einen Bekannten gehabt, ... der war dreimal erstgereiht und beim dritten Mal erst hat er's kriegt ... [obwohl er] eigentlich der ideale Kandidat gewesen wäre und er hat eine Familie damals schon gehabt, zwei Kinder. Und das war für ihn auch nicht witzig“ (G1: 17).

39. „Wenn man die Position von einem Professor sieht, sagen wir dem ein Assistent ausscheidet und der einen neuen Assistenten sucht, dann will der, dass das möglichst schnell wieder nach besetzt wird. Und jetzt hat der zwei ungefähr gleich qualifizierte [KandidatInnen], sagen wir, dass der Mann vielleicht sogar ein bisschen besser qualifiziert ist, dann kann das durchaus passieren, dass er sich denkt, okay, bevor ich mir Ärger antue und die Stelle noch zwei, drei Monate offen ist, nehm' ich lieber die Frau und erspare mir den Ärger“ (G3M3: 9).
40. „Wenn man selber in der Situation ist, dann ist es schon ein bisschen ... ein eigenartiges Gefühl. Also vorher habe ich mir da nie Gedanken gemacht ... [Als ich selbst in der Situation war] habe ich gedacht, ja die [das Arbeitskreismitglied] kann mir da noch so möglicherweise da noch etwas machen. So eine kleine Unsicherheit war es vielleicht“ (G3M4: 9).

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