Starting point

- Research Professorial Appointments:
  How is gender practiced in the recruitment & promotion of full professors in the Netherlands?
  - Data collection:
    - Statistics appointment Dutch universities
    - 971 Appointment reports
    - Recruitment and selection protocols
    - 64 interviews with committee members

  - Data collection
    - Appointment reports
    - Interviews
    - Observations
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Scientific excellence is gender neutral
Theoretical background

• Excellence is holy grail in academia
  – Especially in times of precarity, austerity and new managerialism
• Anchored in the norm of the meritocracy (Merton 1973)

• Attention for bias in academic evaluation (a.o. Wenneras & Wold 1997; Castilla 2008; Ozbilgin 2009; Moss-Racusin et al, 2012; Streinpreis, Anders & Ritzke 1999; Ellemers 2015)

  – Gender as a variable
  – Research focuses on the outcome, not on the process
  – Empirical data (access, confidentiality)

• Excellence as a social construction (Brouns & Addis 2004; Lamont 2009; Van den Brink & Benschop 2012)
Gender bias in selection and promotion

- Peer review: Women had to receive 100 or more impact points to get the same rating from the judges than a man with 40 or fewer impact points (Wenneras & Wold, 1997)

- Male and female science faculty members are more likely to hire male research assistants, mentor them more, and pay them a higher salary (Moss-Racusin et al, 2012; Sheltzer & Smith 2014).

- Female faculty job applicant was viewed as less qualified and less likely to be hired than an identical male applicant (Streinpreis, Anders & Ritzke 1999; Foschi 2000; 2006)

- Women are underrepresented in fields whose practitioners believe that raw, innate talent is the main requirement for success, because women are stereotyped as not possessing such talents (Lesie et al 2015)
Theoretical background

- Excellence is holy grail in academia
- Meritocracy moral of objective measurement of merit (Merton 1973)

- Attention for bias in academic evaluation (a.o. Wenneras & Wold 1997; Castilla 2008; Ozbilgin 2009; Moss-Racusin et al, 2012; Streinpreis, Anders & Ritzke 1999)

  - Research focuses on the outcome, not on the process
  - Gender as a variable
  - Empirical data (access, confidentiality)

- Excellence as a social construction (Brouns & Addis 2004; Lamont 2009; van den Brink & Benschop 2012) in a political arena
Theoretical background

• Deconstruction of excellence /symbolic capital

• Bourdieu
  – Symbolic capital relates to the way one is valued by others found in the form of prestige, renown, honor and personal authority (Bourdieu 1986, 2004)
  – Symbolic capital is composite capital
    • Professional capital
    • Embodied capital / habitus
    • Social capital

• Feminist organization theories
  – Gender: complex, multi-layered social practices which distinguish between men and women, masculinity and femininity and which involves both informal and formal power processes (Benschop 2001).
  • Gender as a social practice (Poggio 2006)

• Sheep with five legs?
Professional capital as starting point

- Official criteria:
  - **Quality of research**
  - Quality of teaching
  - Experience in management and administration
  - Outreach (media, consultancy etc)

- How does gender play a role?
  - Uneven rating of research and teaching
  - More women on precarious (teaching) positions (She figures, 2012)
  - Linear career patterns / international experience

  - Gender bias in evaluation of research and teaching (Boring, 2015)

- Function as pre-condition for professorial selection
• After a certain point, it is too late for promotion. Then they [women applicants] have done everything that is required and they are qualified for the job, but they simply aren’t the right candidate anymore, they are too old. There is a certain window during which you have to enter the circuit. In medical sciences, you have to become a professor between 40-50. Women are not that fast, that is where they fall short. (medical science, woman)
The tacit dimension: embodied individual capital

- Salient in selection interviews
- Personality can influence perceptions of professional capital
- Constructs excellence in two ways:
  - Positive individual capital: fit/similarity as quality
  - Negative individual capital: too difficult or too modest

In general, women do not ‘bang their fists on the table’ and say ‘we are going in that direction’. No, that is not the case. However, there are a few who do, but those women are exceptions. And when they do display that kind of attitude, then you’ll immediately get the reaction [among committee members] of ‘no, not that one’. That is pretty clear. When a man acts like that, it is more acceptable, he is still in the race. But when a woman displays that behavior, she is out. (natural sciences, man)
There was a very competent candidate, a woman, small in size, and a [male] member of the university board said: “well, should we take that girl?” So, physical appearance is something crucial (medical sciences, man)

In recent appointments, a lot of men have been appointed. They [male committee members] often appoint their own protégés, and I see that a lot of professors have a soft spot for people who look like younger versions of themselves. They think, ‘how nice, I was like that when I was his age’. Then you get a stronger man-to-man relationship. It is a self-reinforcing process, and it is partly why most of the supervisors or group chairs have always been mostly men. (humanities, woman)
The dynamics of social capital

• Social capital/ networks vital during recruitment and promotion
• Social capital as criterion
  – Importance of international networks
• Social capital as accelerator
  – Committee checks candidates’ reputation in informal networks
  – Basking in reflected glory (Cialdini et al. 1976)
  – Boosting embodied and professional capital

• Rise of scouting
• Reasons for recruitment by invitation:
  – Influence on pool of candidates
  – Fields are small and surveyable
  – Efficiency: low costs, less time consuming
  “If I do not know them, they are not excellent”
Social capital and gender

• Who is included in the recruitment and promotion process?
  – Scouts are predominantly male
  – 44% of all appointment committees are men only

• Male scouts have mostly men in their networks (chance homophily). Male networks are homogenous (Ibarra 1992/ Burt 1992). ‘we can’t find any eligible women for this position’

• Men scouts prefer to work with men (choice homophily) and support men to a larger extent
  – Perceived similarity
  – Women as a risk

• Gender practice: basing feelings of trust on (perceived) similarity and risks on (perceived) dissimilarity
Men preferring men

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

• Visibility also depends on networks
  – Being nominated, informed, recommended
  – Encouragement to apply
  – Building reputations
  – Basking in reflected glory (Cialdini 1976)
  – Sponsorship

• When a candidate aims for a professional position, he is obviously not going to shout, ‘Hello, choose me!’ No. He will arrange for other people, academics, whom he considers influential to recommend him. This happens frequently. (medical sciences)

• Women receive less support during their careers (Husu, 2001; Bagilhole and Goode 2001; Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2014)
My own supervisor […] has always helped me if I asked him. But he never supported my career in an active way, as far as I know. Nominated me for things. Never never. It is not something he usually does, but I know he has done it for some men in his surrounding. […] Actually, he never understood that my ambition in this area is equally to men. And that is not because he isn’t the sweetest man, and doesn’t care about me, ..that is not the case. But that all this is as important for me as for my male colleagues….he once told me honestly, …that coin doesn’t drop. (humanities, woman)
Excellence or suitability?

- Myth of universal standards of excellence
- Ideology of meritocracy implies that merit is individualized
- Insight in the construction of academic quality/excellence
- Not a technical endeavor but involves negotiation between multiple actors
- Scientific excellence is not gender neutral
- Gender practices as struggles over symbolic capital
  - Professional capital: issues of measurement
  - Individual/Embodied capital: influenced by gender stereotypes
  - Social capital: composition and benefits of social networks
- Men’s capital is systematically viewed as legitimate and generates more symbolic capital than women’s
- Our faith in the meritocracy is in the heart of how inequality is produced (Scully 2002)
The quest continues

• Discussions in committees about what is considered an excellent candidate and WHY?
• Challenge the rhetoric of the excellent academic

• Explicit search for female/ethnic minority talent
• More and diverse scouts
• Consciousness-raising about the functioning and effects of male networks and the existence of gender stereotypes in regular appointment procedures
• The interventions should also target organizations, not only women
• Monitoring
• Two-sided mentoring \textsuperscript{(De Vries, 2010)}
• Appoint inspiring change agents
• Use and share available gender expertise