The Coronavirus Pandemic: How Should we Respond to Future Gender-based Disadvantage for Women Researchers?

The gender care gap, gender career gap and gender pay gap are just some of the issues relating to the ways in which women have been disadvantaged disproportionately during the recent Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic. The closure of schools and daycare facilities in particular and other continuing issues of gender-specific inequality have manifested themselves in the distribution of care work. A comprehensive overview of this situation was provided by a report published in March with the title What the gender care gap tells us about money, social justice and our society.

On average, women spend more than double the amount of time on housework, childcare and caring for dependent adults than men. This means that women were and are affected to a much greater extent by the closures of schools and childcare facilities and beyond.

Researchers from the EconTribute Cluster of Excellence reached a similar conclusion. Working within the scope of a study (The short-run macro implications of school and childcare closures) they were able to demonstrate that men invest more hours in paid overtime than women and women invest more time in childcare in 82% of households.

A second finding relates the impact of traditional gender roles in this regard on the career development of women. Interruptions to career development resulting from childcare in the first third of a woman’s career results in a gender career gap, which itself has an impact on the gender pay gap. It is highly probable that the additional domestic childcare resulting from the closure of childcare facilities and schools over recent months will result in further disadvantage to women on the job market.

The University of Bonn has already provided a considerable range of support for women in terms of flexible childcare, the provision of resources and the reduction of teaching time. Nevertheless, the situation requires the discussion of further measures designed to reduce long-term disadvantages resulting from this situation. Solutions could include the award of similar consideration within evaluations for tenure track or appointment procedures to periods in which restrictions were in force, in a manner similar to those accorded to periods of childcare.

The increasing need for advice and support has led us to expand our program. We are delighted by the positive feedback that we have received about our work and want to take steps to ensure that you remain up-to-date.

One way we will do this is to publish a newsletter every semester to inform you about current issues and calls for tenders. We also seek to raise awareness of developments surrounding these issues in academia in general and the University of Bonn in particular.

Use the following link to register, so as not to miss an issue:

Newsletter registration
The gender care gap has been calculated every year in Germany since 2017 and indicates the percentage that women perform unpaid daily care work in the home which exceeds that performed by men. The term care work includes domestic work, childcare, care for dependent adults and the time spent traveling to perform these tasks. The higher the care gap, the greater the amount of care work performed by women in comparative terms.

The gender care gap currently stands at 52.4%. This means that women currently invest more than 50% more time in unpaid care work than men. The gender care gap is even higher when it comes to direct care work (cooking, childcare etc.) and currently stands at 108.3%. The gender gap related to support care work (gardening, repairs) lies at 47.4%.

Further information: What the gender care gap tells us about money, social justice and our society.

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**Focus on: The Gender Care Gap**

Since 2018, the Gender Equality Office awards start-up financing for projects aimed at boosting the structural integration of gender equality in the faculties. This year saw awards to three innovative projects seeking to reduce gender-specific inequalities in their faculty or institute.

**Project 1**

The Faculty of Agriculture is planning to redraft its entire Internet presence and public relations work in gender-inclusive / gender-neutral language. In so doing, the faculty is seeking to address an important issue with relevance to the entire university. The development and trial of recommendations for the realization of a gender-inclusive / gender-neutral language on websites, as a method of reducing barriers to engagement is a task of central importance.

**Project 2**

The Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Arts is implementing a project to raise awareness of discrimination against persons or groups in research, teaching and learning. Next year, working under the slogan “anti-discrimination and promoting equality and diversity” the department will organize a series of workshops focusing on the role of psychology in the mechanisms of discrimination and the development of discrimination-free teaching and research. The program seeks to develop a series of guidelines to raise awareness about discrimination in the department.

**Project 3**

The Pharmaceutical Institute at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences has submitted a project application to establish a university-wide network of women academics to promote interdisciplinary networking and information exchange with the aim of promoting academic career paths. The planned network “WHAT’S UB? Women in Higher Education and Top Science – at the University of Bonn” addresses a central issue of gender equality: raising the profile of women researchers.

Further comprehensive information about the measures and all previously funded projects is available on the Gender Equality Office homepage:

Fördermaßnahmen/Fondsprojekte
The University of Bonn operates a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and sexualized discrimination. Information about contact persons and advice points at the university and recommendations about what to do when confronted by these issues are listed on the homepage of the Gender Equality Office: www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de

**Programs and Events Early 2021 (full list on our homepage)**

02/22/2021 Raising your academic profile (held in German) an event aimed at women doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers seeking to broaden their academic competence profile. Further information

02/24/2021 Effective academic networking (held in German) an event aimed at women doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers. This interactive workshop seeks to help its participants formulate their own career development aims, analyze their existing networks and practice short presentations of their own academic profile. Further information

03/11/2021 First generation academics – what does this mean for me? (held in German) for women early-career researchers (doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers) who are the first person in their family to enter academia. Further information

03/23/2021 Brave, strong and confident! – dealing with sexual harassment and discrimination” (held in German/English) for women students. The workshop seeks to outline strategies which enable women to act effectively to establish effective boundaries during uncomfortable and threatening situations in everyday life at university—including digital settings such as virtual seminars or video conferences. Further information

05/06-05/07/2021 (held in German) or 05/27-05/28/2021 (held in English) self-confidence and empowerment training for women: fearless and safe when out on the street! Open to all women members of the administrative and academic staff of all age groups and fitness levels at the University of Bonn. Further information

06/10-06/11/2021 Confident presentations – from conferences to the colloquium (held in German/English) for women doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers seeking to give academic presentations with greater confidence. Further information

06/22-06/23/2021 Social Media (held in German/English) for women doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers seeking to raise their academic profile on social and other digital media. Further information

**A New Offer**

Online workshop dealing with the handling of questions or complaints about sexual harassment and sexualized discrimination for persons performing an advisory function, members of staff with HR responsibilities or a training and qualification function or working in contact points for those affected by these issues. Further information

The MeTra mentoring and training program is entering the next round!

Please note the application deadlines:
- Women doctoral students: January 31, 2021
- Women postdoctoral researchers (1st - 3rd year): February 28, 2021
- Women postdoctoral researchers (from the 3rd year), heads of research groups, women habilitands, women assistant professors: March 31, 2021

www.metra.uni-bonn.de
**Gender Consulting – Advice for Third-Party Funded**

The latest recommendations from the German Research Foundation underscored the importance of changing academic culture to improve gender equality: “The past twenty years has seen much progress towards gender equality and its acceptance amongst stakeholders. Nevertheless, a number of traditional attitudes and structures have remained; implicit biases have kept alive prejudice, stereotypes and discriminatory role allocations” (p. 12)

In response to these general recommendations, the University of Bonn moved to implement research-oriented gender equality standards. DFG grant programs include separate funding (gender payments) to promote equal opportunities.

These are awarded to projects which implement measures aimed at increasing the representation of women in the management of projects, promote the careers of women early-career researchers, improve family-friendly structures and widen diversity (defined as people with a disability, from underrepresented social backgrounds or with a migration background).

Other programs also place a premium on attempts to incorporate gender equality. One such program is the EU “Horizon 2020” program.

The Gender Equality Office has long provided gender consulting services for those seeking to incorporate such considerations into applications for third-party funding. The gender consulting service provides advice and assistance to research projects and consortia seeking to incorporate considerations of gender into applications, assessments of research projects and the implementation of measures of equal opportunity within projects. Its services include personal advice sessions and the generation of individual requirements analyses to incorporate aspects of gender equality into individual projects.

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Contact person:
Hicham Boutouil
http://www.genderconsulting.uni-bonn.de

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**A visit to Café-Roller with Daniel Epple**

*Sandra Hanke: Shall we order? I think I will have an Espresso. What would you like to drink?*

*Daniel Epple: I would like a cappuccino with sugar.***

Viewed against the backdrop of the current challenges presented by the pandemic, which gender equality issues are currently at the top of your list?

*At the moment, we are working intensively on the relaunch of our Internet presence. We are trying to update and standardize a number of websites, documents, brochures and descriptions. We often come across language which is not gender-inclusive and need to correct it. We are also re-assessing the impact of photographs, so as to ensure that we do not perpetuate clichés, for example about individual academic disciplines.*

How is life in the home office? Curse or blessing?

*Blessing: after the initial technical problems had been overcome, I enjoy being able to eat my midday meal with my young daughter from time to time. Curse: I tend to do more work, because I always have the opportunity “just to do a little bit more”.*

Be honest: what do you pay most attention to about yourself during a ZOOM meeting?

*That my hair looks ok.*

**About:**

Daniel Epple is deputy head of the Central Study Advisory and Counseling Service, Division 9, Section 9.2

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**Key activities:**
Student counseling (mathematics and natural sciences, cultural and social studies, medical subjects)
- The “Studying” web portal
- Online counseling
- Educational fairs