



Gendering the Academy
and Research: combating
Career Instability and Asymmetries



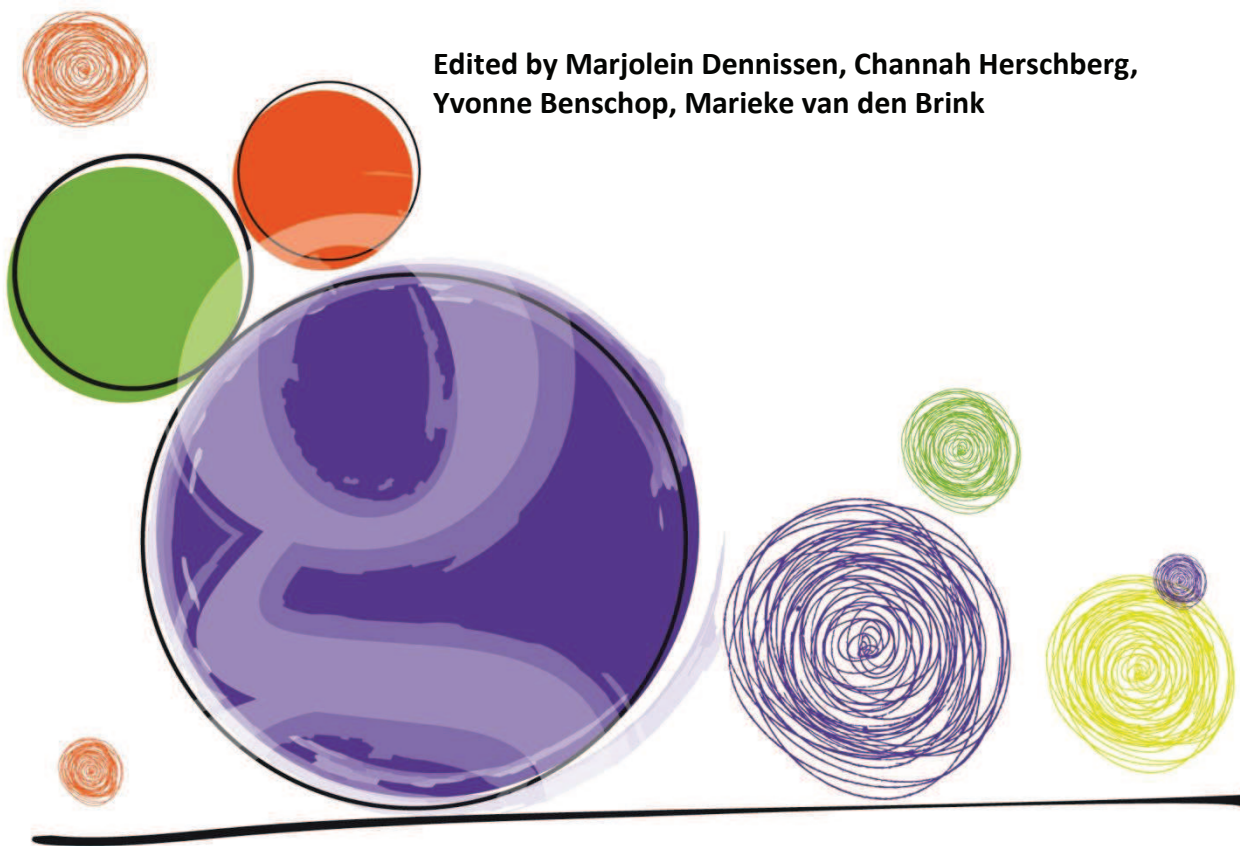
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GARCIA WORKING PAPERS

20

Reflexive working groups for selection committee members: 12 SSH and STEM test institutions

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This GARCIA Working Paper ‘Reflexive working groups for selection committee members: 12 SSH and STEM test institutions’ presents the collection of the reports on the reflexive working groups for selection committee members that were organized in the six GARCIA beneficiaries: Belgium, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Switzerland. The reflexive working groups were organized in two disciplines: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

The reflexive working groups for selection committee members are part of work package 7 of the GARCIA project. The GARCIA Project – Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries – is concerned with the implementation of actions in European universities and research centres to promote gender equality and to prevent gender stereotypes and discriminations. Work package 7 focuses on the revealing of gender practices in the construction of scientific excellence in recruitment and selection procedures. The construction of scientific excellence is especially salient for the early stages of a scientific career, as the label of excellence can make the difference between the inclusion or exclusion of researchers in academia. Building on the D7.2 report on Gender practices in the construction of excellence (Herschberg, Benschop & Van den Brink, 2016), the reflexive working groups are developed for committee members and other key players involved in the recruitment and selection of early career researchers.

A reflexive working group is a type of interactive training that invites the participants to reflect on their own actions and behaviour in organization processes. It is a space to share and exchange experiences. The aims of reflexive working groups were threefold. First, to raise awareness among key players on how gender practices influence the selection process and the selection criteria, including conceptions of excellence. Second, to raise awareness that evaluation criteria are not objectified truths, and that evaluators’ conceptions of criteria differ in highly political selection processes. And third, to raise awareness of the gender practices in evaluation procedures that disadvantage women.

Reflexive working groups are thus designed to discuss the recruitment and selection procedures of early career researchers and how gender practices are key to the inclusion or exclusion of candidates. Each beneficiary reported on the organization, execution and evaluation of these reflexive working groups in their national and organizational context. They reported on the challenges and resistances that they encountered either during the organization of the working groups or during the execution of the working groups. Although the basis of the reflexive working groups was the same for every beneficiary, national and organizational context factors resulted in several differences between the beneficiaries. Yet, these differences resulted in a valuable overview of what the organization of a reflexive working group of this kind entails in different national and organizational contexts. This exemplifies that keeping in mind the context in which the reflexive working groups are to be organized is crucial for its effectiveness and success.

The collection of these reports will provide insight into the organization of reflexive working groups for selection committee members, the challenges and resistances that organizers came across in organizing and executing the reflexive working groups, learning points, and the main outcomes of these reflexive working groups at six European universities and research centres.

1. BELGIUM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of organizing reflexive working groups with recruitment committee members is twofold. We first wanted to promote, amongst committee members (most of them being full professor) a climate that decreases gender bias in evaluation moments. That was achieved by discussing, during the working groups, the main findings we made in previous working packages of the Garcia project regarding the question of gender bias in UCLouvain organisational culture. We secondly wanted to collect information about the selection criteria that are used in actual recruitment procedures. Discussing, in light of different findings of the Garcia project, evaluation criteria and the perception of what is “scientific excellence” with committee members permit us: 1/to collect information about how “scientific excellence” is conceived in recruitment procedures at UCLouvain and 2/ to raise awareness of gender practices and gender bias in recruitment among key players in recruitment procedures.

We performed two working groups with committee members. One in the IACCHOS Institute (SSH Institute of the UCLouvain) and one in the ELI Institute (Institute of earth and life sciences - STEM). As recruitment commissions are composed mainly of full professors, we invited to the working groups most of the full professors of the two institutes. We also particularly targeted professors who occupy or had occupied decisional functions within their institute or even within the central administration of the UCLouvain (among them: Dean, President of Institute, former Vice-rector, and former Rector).

UCL specific context of recruitment

Selection procedures at the postdoctoral level at UCLouvain can take different forms. Tenure-track recruitment procedures are particularly different from non-permanent postdoctoral research or teaching staff member recruitments. Tenure-track recruitments (at the level of “*chargé de cours*” (assistant or associate professor) or “*chercheur qualifié*” (research associate) are the most formal recruitment procedures. It is the only stage of the career for which an official recruitment committee is constituted to assess the scientific quality of the candidates. Non-permanent post-doctoral position generally does not imply the constitution of a selection commission and are often directly conducted by the primary investigator of a research project himself.

Tenure-track recruitment procedures also depend on the scientific career paths that exist. Two career paths exist in Belgian universities: appointment as permanent professor at a university and appointment as permanent research associate at the FNRS (Belgian Funds for Scientific Research). Selection procedures as university professor or as permanent researcher at the FNRS are different.

Working in the UCLouvain context we focused solely on selection procedures as permanent associate professor. This recruitment procedure is very formalised and similar in every institute of the UCLouvain. When a position opens, a job advertisement constituted of a precise profile description is widely distributed. In the same time, a local (i.e. within the Faculty where the position is located regarding teaching duties) recruitment committee is constituted. This committee typically gathers 3 or 4 full

professors from the Faculty and 2 external members generally coming from abroad. This tailor-made committee examines all the applications received and draws up a short-list with candidates that will be invited to a hearing. After the hearing, the committee produce a ranking of the candidates. This ranking (identifying generally one preferred candidate, in some cases two can be ranked as first) is transmitted to the central authority of the UCLouvain (the rectoral board, composed of the rector and vice-rectors). The rectoral board then invite the first-ranked candidate(s) for a hearing and make the final decision to appoint the candidate selected by the local recruitment committee. Generally the candidate selected by the local commission is appointed, but, in some uncommon cases, the rectoral board can decide that the first-ranked candidate does not demonstrate sufficient scientific achievement and decide to close up the procedure and postpone the appointment to the next year.

1.2 SET UP OF THE TASK

Two different workshops were organised with committee members. The first one with committee members from the STEM department (ELI) took place on March the 25th 2016 (11AM to 1PM), the second with committee members from the SSH department (IACCHOS) also on the 25th of March (2PM to 4PM).

1.2.1 STEM Department

Organization of the workshop

The first task to perform was to identify professors in the ELI that have taken part on a regular basis to recruitment committees. As it is very difficult to obtain the information about past recruitment procedures, we decided to invite to the workshop all the professors having the rank of “full professor”, namely 22 full professors. We send them an e-mail to invite them to what we called a “Workshop on the Garcia Project”. In this invitation we presented the Garcia project and explained that the aim of the workshop was to identified: 1/ the criteria of “academic success” and the evolution of “academic career” and 2/ to think about the impact of these two elements on gender inequality in academic career. 11 out of 22 responded to our call to participation, 11 didn’t give us an answer (despite the different reminders we sent them).

Among the 11 respondents, 6 were not available in the two weeks we intended to plan the meeting. 5 accepted to come on the 25th of March for a 2 hours meeting (11AM to 1PM). Finally one of them cancelled and 4 full professors took part to the meeting.

All of them had participated to recruitment procedures. One was a former member of the rectoral board of the university and took part to several recruitment procedures not only in the ELI, but in all institutes of the university during several years. A second one took part to several recruitment commissions within the ELI and recruits on a regular basis postdoctoral researchers for his own research unit. The third one is a senior professor who took part to two recruitment procedures in the last five years, he also was a member of an evaluation commission at the FWO (the Flemish Funds for Scientific Research) in charged of the recruitment of postdocs and permanent research associates of the FWO. The last one was a younger full professor who had not yet been involved in a recruitment

committee (to appoint an associate professor), but had several experiences with the recruitment of postdoc researchers for his research team.

Among the 22 full professors of the ELI, only two are women. None of them took part to the meeting, one didn't answer to the invitation, and the second one was interested in the project but was on sabbatical leave and could not participate.

Content of the discussions

We divided the meeting in three parts. In a first part, we presented the aim of the working group and some actual facts about the “leaky pipeline” phenomenon and the progressive disappearance of women in academic career in Belgium coming from the Garcia working paper 5. We then asked the participants to react and comment these statements.

In a second part, we presented the results of a first research about the conception of “academic excellence” realised at UCLouvain. Based on interviews made previously with recruitment committee members, we distinguished two different conceptions of what is scientific excellence at UCL. A first one we called the “nomination set of criteria” and a second that we called the “competition set of criteria”. We then asked the participants to comment and discuss this distinction. We asked them if they agreed with this analytical distinction between these two sets of criteria that are used to evaluate the scientific quality of a candidate during recruitment procedures. We also asked them if these sets of criteria could, to a certain extent, serve as an impediment for women to access permanent research positions.

In a last round of discussion we asked the participants if they have any recommendations to make regarding gender inequalities in recruitment procedures at UCLouvain.

In the first round of discussion (discussing the leaky pipeline phenomenon). A first intervention was made saying that:

“I have been in two recruitment commissions recently. In both we recruited women, thus in our institute, gender inequalities, if we make the math, I don't believe that exist” (Prof. ELI 1)

This first statement was quickly dismissed by other participants. The second participant stated that gender inequalities in recruitment is not a novelty. That 20 years ago the same observation was already done and that the situation has not evolved much ever since. For this professor the explication of that phenomenon is that:

“Private life concerns are more important to women candidates than to men”.
(Prof. ELI 2).

After this observation the discussion went mostly around the difficulty for women to articulate their “working life” with their “family life”. One interesting observation in this regard was that:

“As well as it is the case for men, women have all to gain from a career management policy that takes into account the family life” (Prof. ELI 3)

Three out of the four participants totally agreed with this statement and also agreed that expectations put on men and women regarding investment in work and family had known an “extraordinary evolution” and that the “pressure [on both men and women] is now

bigger that before”. Only one participant disagreed with this statement and found that work pressure is now lower than 30 years ago and that gender inequalities in this regard does not exist (Prof. Eli. 1).

It is also worth noting that during this round of discussion about the leaky pipeline phenomenon, men and women were regularly presented as, “biologically” or even “naturally” different and that those natural differences play a role in how research is done. Men were described as “dominant male”, more prone to adopt “blunt” or “animal” comportments, and that the presence of more women in the work environment make it more difficult to behave in this masculine manner. Women doctoral student were described as “more cautious”: - “they take 18 months to go to the lab for the first time” - than male PhD student that “when they have an idea, they have an idea, they fail and then they start again”. “The get the same result in the same time, but this is a reality” (Prof. Eli 2).

The second round of discussion was devoted to the discussion of how to assess academic excellence in recruitment procedures. We presented our analytical distinction (nomination criteria vs. competition criteria) and asked the participants if this distinction made sense regarding their experience.

The four participants agreed with our distinction. Competition criteria (impact factor, number of publications, postdoctoral abroad research stays...) were seen as more useful to write a first short-list of candidates, and “nomination criteria (the ability to fit in the department, human and social competencies, capacity to be autonomous) were seen as more important for the last round of audition. Our formulation of the distinction between these two set of criteria was judged quite robust and applicable to their experiences.

In the last round of discussion we asked the participation which recommendations they would set regarding fight against gender inequalities. A first set of recommendations are about the enhancement of the work environment. Diminution of the work pressure with measures like the diminution of meetings, the organisation of meetings during strict business hours (before 5PM), the diminution of administrative tasks. This diminution of work pressure would allow men and women to achieve a better work/life balance.

The second set of recommendation is about the setting up of an institutional gender policy. One of the professor thinks that the university should be more proactive in that matter and have an official gender policy. Another professor think that this gender policy should be linked to the formulation of a “family policy”. The university should communicate more about work/life balance.

1.2.2 SSH Department

Organization of the workshop

We launched a first round of invitations to professors that we know had taken part in recruitment committees in the last years. IACCHOS has 11 full professors (“*professeur ordinaire* ou “*professeur extra-ordinaire*”). We invited three of them but also different professors who have institutional responsibilities (directors of research units, members of the board of the institute), that we know have also been involved in recruitment procedures. We thus invited 11 people to the working group. We send them an e-mail to

invite them to what we called a “Workshop on the Garcia Project”. In this invitation we presented the Garcia project and explained that the aim of the workshop was to identified: 1/ the criteria of “academic success” and the evolution of “academic career” and 2/ to think about the impact of these two elements on gender inequalities in academic career. The 11 professors answered our e-mail and have shown some interest in the project. Among them, 5 were interested but were not available during the two weeks we intended to plan the meeting. Finally two professors cancelled in last minute (for medical reasons) and four professors took part in the meeting on March the 25th (2PM to 4PM).

All of them had participated to recruitment procedures in the past years. One (a full professor) was a former member of the rectoral board of the university and took part to several recruitment procedures, not only in the IACCHOS. A second one (full professor) was a former president of the IACCHOS institute and took part to several recruitment procedures in the Institute but also in other Institutes. Two (1 full professor and 1 professor, director of a research unit) took part to some recruitments procedures in the IACCHOS only.

We contacted three women and eight men. Three men took part to the meeting and one woman. (Among the 11 full professors of IACCHOS, 2 are women).

Content of the discussions

As it was the case for the ELI working group, we divided the meeting in three parts. In a first part, we presented the aim of the working group and some actual facts about the “leaky pipeline” phenomenon and the progressive disappearance of women in academic career in Belgium coming from the Garcia working paper 5. We then asked the participants to react and comment these statements.

In a second part, we presented the result of a first research about the conception of “academic excellence” realised at UCLouvain. Based on interviews made previously with recruitment committee members, we distinguished two different conceptions of what is scientific excellence at UCL. A first one we called the “nomination set of criteria” and a second that we called the “competition set of criteria”. We then asked the participants to reflect on this distinction. We asked them if they agreed with this analytical distinction between these two sets of criteria that are used to evaluate the scientific quality of a candidate during recruitment procedures. We also asked them if these sets of criteria could, to a certain extent, served as an impediment for women to access permanent research positions.

In a last round of discussion we asked the participants if they have any recommendations to make regarding gender inequalities in recruitment procedures at UCLouvain.

In the first round of discussion, the four participants agreed to the fact that the leaky pipeline phenomenon (the disappearance of women in academic career) is a reality, but that the situation could variate across the different institutes of the university. One of the participant who is also affiliated to the Institute of economy pointed out that in this institute, there is only two female professors and that in the last 6 recruitments, all the selected candidates were males. They all agreed that the situation was better in the social science institute (at some point, one of the participant even expressed concern about the possible “lack of men, which could be worrying [referring to the student population in some disciplines]” (Prof. IACS, 4).

In this regard, one participant expressed that:

“If I speak for myself, it’s a criteria [the sex] that I never have seen as important. Woman or man, I have always felt like I hired the most competent person for the job” (Prof. IACS, 3).

The four candidate agreed however that it was uncommon to find women at institutional important positions. One noted that the UCLouvain has never had a woman as rector and that in fact in Belgian French-speaking universities, only one of the universities had once a female rector for a few years.

The first speaker in the roundtable stated that the fact that women were underrepresented in universities and were given less responsibilities was “highly regrettable” (Prof. IACS 3). He noted that in the last recruitment procedures he/she attended, they decided that, if two candidates were ranked first regarding their competencies, and if one candidate is a women and the other a men, they would chose the women for this reason.

The four participant highlighted the fact that is was highly difficult for women to work in universities and to have a harmonious family life. One of the participant stated for example that:

“in the institute of economics, it is impossible to be a women and to have children”. (Prof. IACS 1, also affiliated to the institute of economics).

Another professor (Prof. IACS 2) noted that in its research unit, there is three female professors and that none of them have children. He also noted that all the postdoctoral temporary researchers were women that:

“Were looking for a permanent academic job, but were also looking to equilibrate their family life. Regarding their level of mobility, one comes from France, one from Sweden, one from Poland, one from China and one from Belgium. The Swedish has a husband and kids in Sweden. The others, they have a boyfriend in Paris or in Luxembourg and they move between the two places, they are really in an uncomfortable situation.”

At the end of the round of discussion one of the participant summarized the exchange in this way:

“ – (Prof. IACS 4) I’m tempted to say that the main entry to the question is the question of gender and not the question of sex, because, finally, the women who achieve to get a career are those who *ape* (imitate) the men, those who do not have children etc. And the men who are today in difficulties are those who *ape* the women by taking care of their kids...

– (Prof. IACS 1) Yes, there is no discrimination on basis of sex.

– (Prof. IACS 3) Yes, we agree”

To sum up they agreed that the leaky pipeline phenomenon was linked to the difficulty to articulate a family life with the criteria of academic productivity and that this problem was mainly encountered by women. They noted however that this difficulty can also be a source of difficulties for men.

The second round of discussion was devoted to the discussion of how to assess academic excellence in recruitment procedures. We presented our analytical distinction (nomination criteria vs. competition criteria) and asked the participants if this distinction made sense regarding their experiences.

The first reaction was to discuss the distinction between “competition” criteria and “nomination” criteria. The first participant pointed out that when he read this distinction that he first thought that “competition criteria” were mainly about research and “nomination criteria” were mainly about the other missions of universities (teaching and community services). He also disagreed with the term “nomination”. According to him a better label for this set of criteria would be “integration”. He noted that:

“The way you separated these two set of criteria shows the hierarchy of activities in universities. (...) With this distinction teaching seems unimportant, except, maybe, at the time in the selection processes where you assess the “nomination” [the capacity of integration]” (Prof. IACS 3)

A second participant linked the criteria of competition to the growing importance of international ranking initiatives of universities. He stated that:

“The competition comes in the system because we adopted the ranking system. The UCLouvain authorities went in that system and say that they want to play with the best. It’s the reason why the criteria of competition are put forward today. You need publications, you need international mobility.” (Prof. IACS 4)

He interestingly linked this observation with a recommendation regarding the work/family balance:

“I think that it is one of the criteria [mobility] on which we can leverage. One can be involved in international network without leaving our offices. I think that we really can be ‘international’ without moving a lot. It is interesting for those who want to invest in family.” (Prof. IACS 4)

A last professor pointed that when recruiting an assistant professor:

“We want everything. (...) The first criteria are research focused. Universities are the only places where we do research so it does not surprise me that research is important in recruitment commissions. (...) But I’m struck by the quality of discussion in recruitment commissions. A lot of criteria are used. The question of integration is also very important.” (Prof. IACS 1).

In the last round of discussion we asked the participants which recommendations they would set regarding fight against gender discrimination. A first set of recommendation is linked to the indicators used to assess the “competition” or the “productivity” of a researcher.

It was suggested that the “CV bodybuilding” techniques was not the best practice to follow. Rather than listing all his/her publication, a candidate could for example only send his two best articles that would be read by the committee. Rather than listing the amount of months he/she stays abroad, the candidate could, in his/her CV demonstrate his/her

embeddedness in international networks by the connexion he/she has or the achievement he made through international collaboration.

A second type of recommendation was related to the composition and the functioning of the recruitment commissions. It was suggested that plurality (regarding sex) should be a priority when constituting a commission. On participant stated that:

“It is important to achieve a plurality of points of view in the commission. Include women in commission is important, not for quota reason, but to have the point of view of women that would maybe be more prone to understand the personal difficulties of candidate”.

It was also suggested that it would be a better solution to proceed to the hiring of most that one professor in one session of recruitment as a way to have the possibility to choose different candidates judged excellent according to different set of criteria.

A last set of recommendations is linked to the articulation of private and professional time. To this regard, one professor noted that the growing flexibility between working time and family time was highly difficult for young researcher:

“I think that a new difficulties today is the porosity between professional life and personal life. I bless the lord that I began to work 10 year before my young colleagues. For young researcher, now, flexibility and porosity between work time and family time is an impediment as much for family that it is for work. » (Prof. IACS 1)

A second recommendation in this regard was the idea that post-doctoral grant systems should be more aware of the family situation of the researcher. It is still difficult for some excellent researchers to go abroad. Post-doctoral grants should help in this regard.

1.3 EVALUATION OF THE TASK

When performing the two workshops, our main objective was to create a learning environment by raising the awareness that evaluation criteria are not objectified truths and that evaluators' conceptions of criteria differ. The creation of this learning environment would promote a climate that decreases gender bias in evaluation moments.

We will now evaluate the two workshops with this objective in mind. We will identify 1/ what have worked when performing the working groups, 2/ what challenges and resistances we encountered, 3/ what learning points we gain from planning the working groups and 4/ The specificity of the UCLouvain context and what future action could be undertaken.

What worked when performing the working groups?

The way we structured the discussions, with three rounds of discussion around the presentation of previous research results of the Garcia project was very effective. It sparked fruitful discussions in both working groups (ELI and IACCHOS), and permitted to clearly address the question of gender inequality in academic career with full professors

who are generally male in their fifties and could maybe not be often sensitized to the question of gender inequality at the universities.

The format of the working groups: 4 participants, 2 hours, 3 members of the Garcia project to lead the discussions was plainly effective. The experiences conducted show that, even if our first goal was to gather 6 or 7 participants in every working groups, 4 participants could be an efficient amount of participants for a two hours working groups. Every participant could talk approximatively 20 minutes and a sufficient amount of time was still available for debates among participants. The possibility to create debate among participant permit to build some consensuses among gender inequalities and how to prevent them in recruitment procedures. More crowded working groups would certainly have given less time for collective discussion (has we organised our rounds of discussion with a first individual roundtable before launching the debate) and hence for building consensuses.

We decided to contact potential participants by sending a personal invitation by e-mail. This medium was quite effective. We actually were surprised by the actual response rate to the first wave of invitations. In our protocol we had seen e-mail invitation as a first contact that should certainly be completed with direct contacts (through phone) to convinced full professors and research unite directors (that generally have a very busy schedule) to take part to our working groups. E-mail were sufficient and permit us to gather professors who had occupied very high responsibility in the university (e.g. two former member of a rectoral team, and a former president of Institute).

What challenges and resistances we encountered?

We did not encounter much organisational difficulty to organise the two working groups. The bigger difficulty was located in the sensitive content of the discussions and linked to the fact that it was apparently difficult for the participants to recognise that actual gender inequalities or sexual discrimination could exist in their institute.

In both cases, the participants were keen to recognise that gender inequalities or sexual discriminations is a problem in universities. They also agreed with the analysis in term of leaky pipeline. But in the two working groups, they generally presented their institute as a place where these inequalities or discriminations were either non-existent ("I have been in two recruitment commissions recently. In both we recruited women, thus in our institute, gender inequality, if we make the math, I don't believe that exists" (Prof. ELI 1)) or if not non-existent, smaller than in other institutes (with the institute of economy designated as the worst case scenario in the two working groups, where: "it is impossible to be a women and to have children").

The fact that gender discrimination was generally recognised as a general problem in universities is a starting point permitting to raise the question of how to fight these inequalities but the fact that the different professors involved in our workshops had difficulties to see their work environment as problematic to this regard is in itself problematic. This characteristic made difficult the evolution of the debate around how to actually produce changes in ELI or IACCHOS.

What learning points we gain from performing the working groups

We presented during the two workshops the analytical distinction we forged in a previous phases of the Garcia project opposing the criteria of “competition” to the criteria of “nomination” used in academic recruitment at UCLouvain. The validity of that distinction was discussed heavily in both working groups.

Even if the main rationales behind this analytical distinction was validated, alternative labels were proposed and the place of these criteria in actual recruitment processes was heavily discussed.

At the end of the workshop, we think that this distinction can be used to give a better understanding of the causes of the leaky pipeline phenomenon. The input we gain during the workshops will enable us to elaborate this distinction further.

What was specific for our context, which future working group leaders need to take into account?

One of the difficulties in the UCLouvain context is that it is often difficult to know how recruitment commissions are composed. We overcame this difficulty by targeting directly all the full professors of the ELI and some of the full professor and the research unit directors of the IACCHOS. This strategy could maybe not be the best strategy in every universities where rules for constituting recruitment committees could be different.

Another specificity of the UCLouvain context is that in every Institute, most of the professor already knows each other's. We didn't had to plan a moment during the working groups for presentation and breaking glass activities. Discussions could begin immediately. Two hours were thus sufficient for our working groups. Working with people that did not have this previous knowledge could need to extend the two hours duration of the working group.

If we had to plan other working groups in UCLouvain for full professors, we would proceed in the same way. Discussion in small groups seems to be a good way to raise awareness about gender inequalities.

1.4 CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the working groups we organised were an efficient first attempt to raise awareness about gender practices in recruitment procedures. In both cases, we achieved to produce fruitful discussions about gender inequalities and to transmit valuable insights from the Garcia project that were accepted by the participants.

The main difficulty was to overcome the fact that in both workshops, if participant were keen to recognise gender inequalities as a general problem for universities, they tend to minimise the prevalence of this problem in their institute. This phenomenon was similar in the STEM and the SHS Institute.

We can however observe differences between the responses to the results of previous Gracia work that we presented in the two institutes. Professors of the SHS Institute were more familiar with the question of gender and tended to distinguish clearly the question of gender inequalities from the question of sexual discriminations. This distinction was less clear for the professors of the STEM institute.

In both institute the discussion of the leaky pipeline phenomenon led to the question of the possibility, for young researcher (and certainly for women), to achieve a good personal/working life balance. The question of having children or to have the willingness to “invest in family” was clearly connected to the question of the indicators of academic excellence (number of publications, abroad experiences...). In both workshops, it was recognised that it was important for any individual to achieve a good family/work balance. Both working groups made the recommendation that personal situations (e.g. having children during the realisation of the PhD, etc.) should be part of evaluation, and that potential excellent candidates (men or women) could “disappear” from university for this reason.

As actual inequality in the institute were not merely recognised it was difficult to engage the discussion about the setting up of actual action plans to reduce gender inequality. Some general recommendations have been made (see 2.1. and 2.2.). But no formal engagement have been made.

A first step for future actions should thus to promote the idea that, if gender inequalities are recognised as an actual and documented problem in universities, it is a problem everywhere, in every Institute.