

## **How do gender and educational background of university graduates influence the transition to individual and structured doctorates?**

*Susanne de Vogel*

The likelihood of starting a PhD strongly depends on gender (Leemann 2002) and educational background (Jaksztat 2014). Traditionally, doctorates in Germany are pursued individually, i. e. within a research assistant position at the supervisor's institute, or as an external doctoral candidate. In recent years, however, a great number of structured doctoral programs have been established. In contrast to individual doctorates, structured doctoral programs are characterized by formalized recruiting processes, aiming on the reduction of social selectivity in the transition into doctoral studies. Since appropriate data have not been available so far, it remains unclear whether this objective has been achieved. To fill this research gap, this paper addresses the following questions: 1. Are the effects of gender and educational background on entering into a structured doctoral program lower than those on starting an individual doctorate? 2. What are the underlying mechanisms that may account for gender and educational background differences in beginning individual and structured doctorates? The research questions are answered using logistic decomposition analyses based on data from the DZHW graduate panel studies. Findings confirm that the effects of gender and educational background on entering a structured doctoral program or grant program are mostly lower than those found on transition to individual doctorates. For external doctoral candidates, differences by gender and educational background are largely caused by subject choices. For doctorates pursued within a research assistant position, working experiences with student assistant jobs also explain a big part of the effects. Regarding structured doctoral programs and grant programs, performance differences mainly account for educational background differences, but not for gender effects.

Literature:

Leemann, Regula J. 2002. Chancenungleichheiten im Wissenschaftssystem. Wie Geschlecht und soziale Herkunft Karrieren beeinflussen. Zürich: Verlag Rüegger.

Jaksztat, Steffen. 2014. Bildungsherkunft und Promotion: Wie beeinflusst das elterliche Bildungsniveau den Übergang in die Promotionsphase? Zeitschrift für Soziologie 43:286-301.