

# Responses of Organizational Units to Institutionalized Demands

The Strategic Handling of Employment Advertisements for Professorships by  
Selection Committees

12th Workshop on New Institutionalism in Organization Theory  
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Maren Klawitter

# Phd project: Responses of German Universities to Institutional Pressures in Appointment Procedures for Professorships

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  - Decoupling of formal structures and activity level (Meyer and Rowan 1977)?
  - Compliance of tender texts with institutionalized expectations only “window dressing“?

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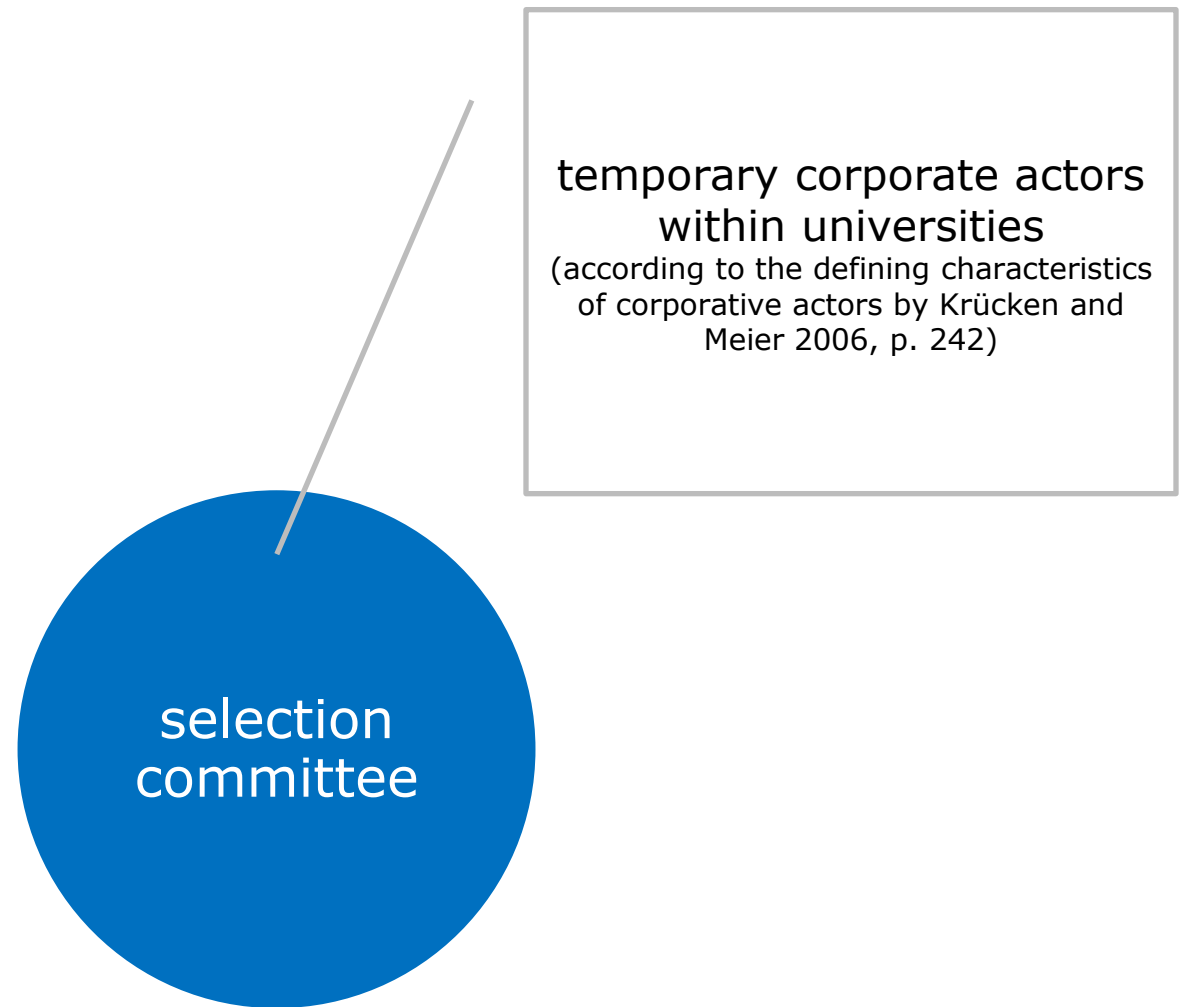
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**» Starting point of this study:**  
**Handling of tender texts in the actual selection procedure**

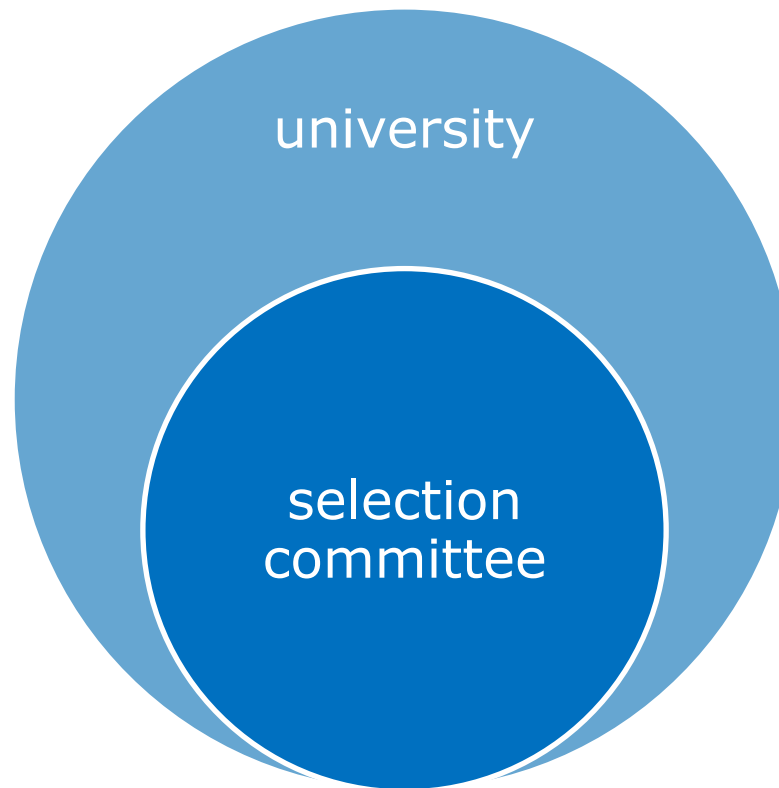
## The selection procedure for professorships in Germany

1. *Negotiation of the requirements profile for a vacant professorship by faculty and university leader*
2. *Public call for applications*
3. Establishment of a selection commission for that specific professorship:
  - Professors of the advertising faculty
  - Academic staff of the advertising faculty
  - Students of the advertising faculty
  - Equal opportunity officers
  - (Official representatives for appointment procedures)
  - (External professors)
4. Selection of the best candidates regarding the specific requirement profile
  1. Invitation of candidates to give a lecture and to a job interview
  2. Ranking of the three best candidates
5. University leader finally decides on appointment

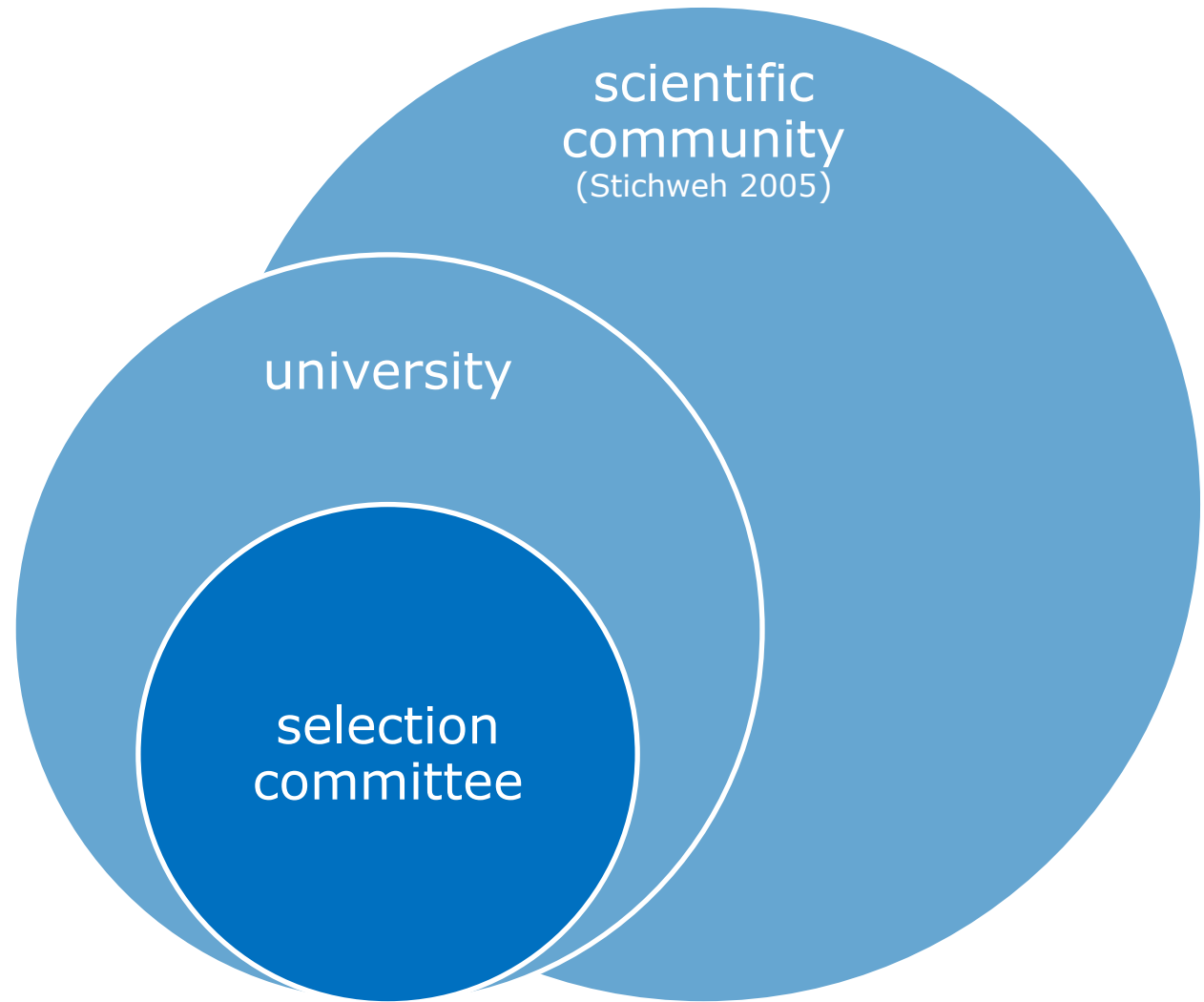
# Handling of employment advertisements in selection procedures



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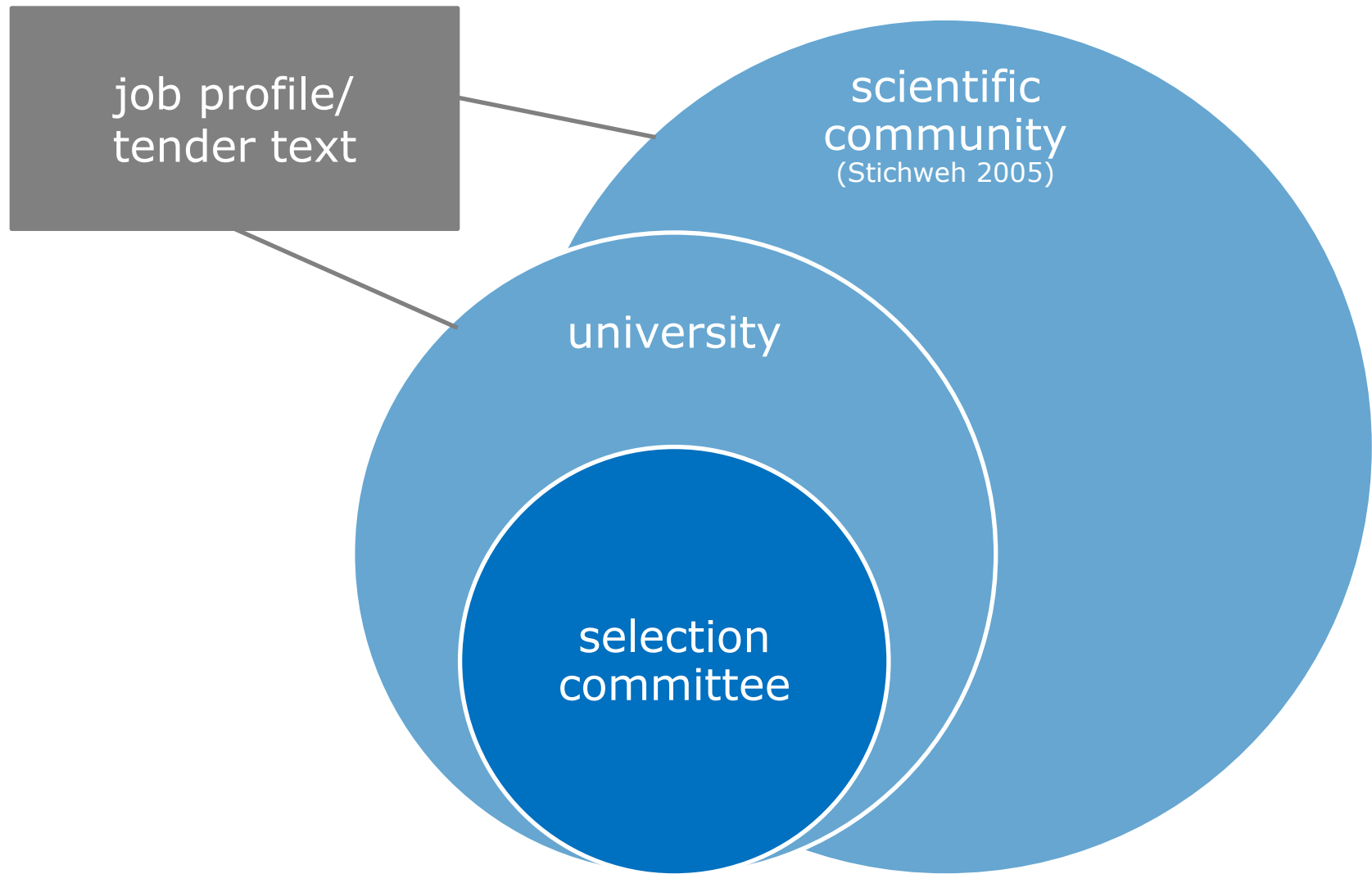


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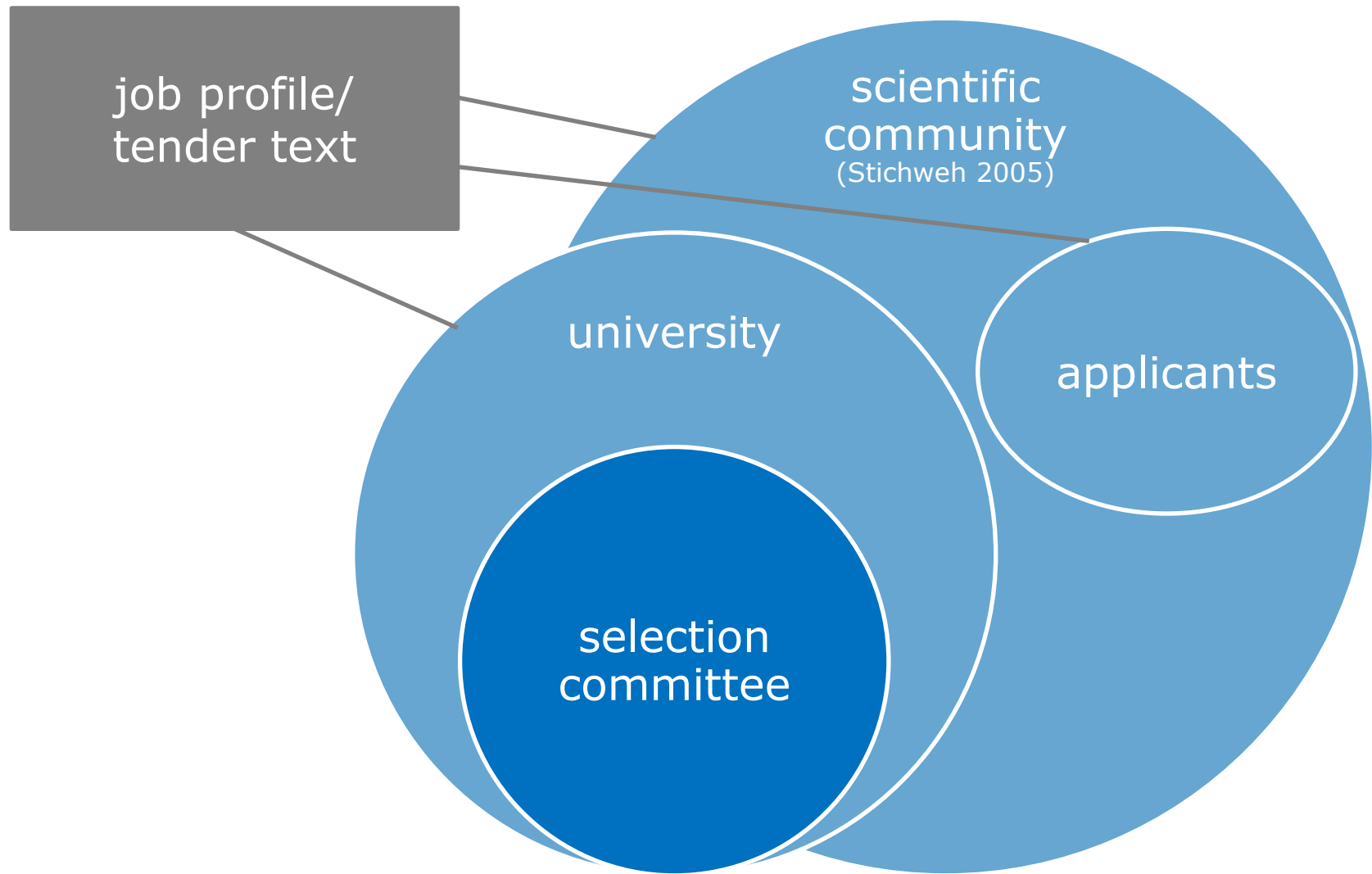




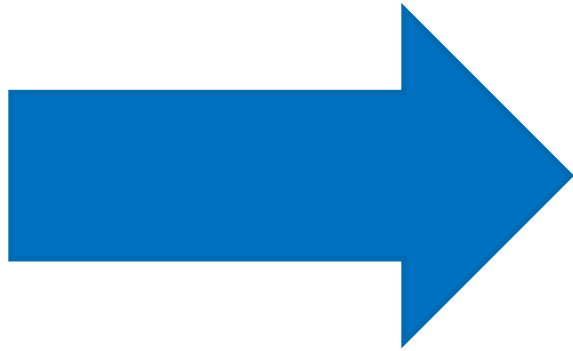
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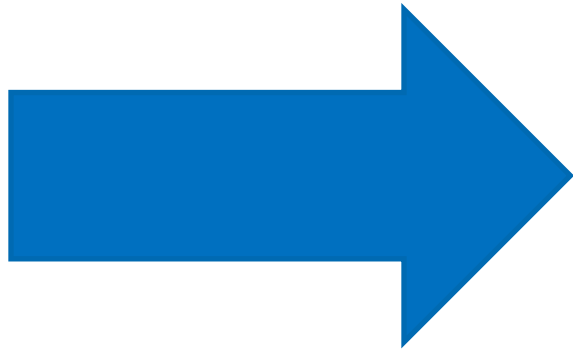


## Handling of employment advertisements in selection procedures



selection committees are expected to adhere to the requirements summarized in the tender text for a specific professorship

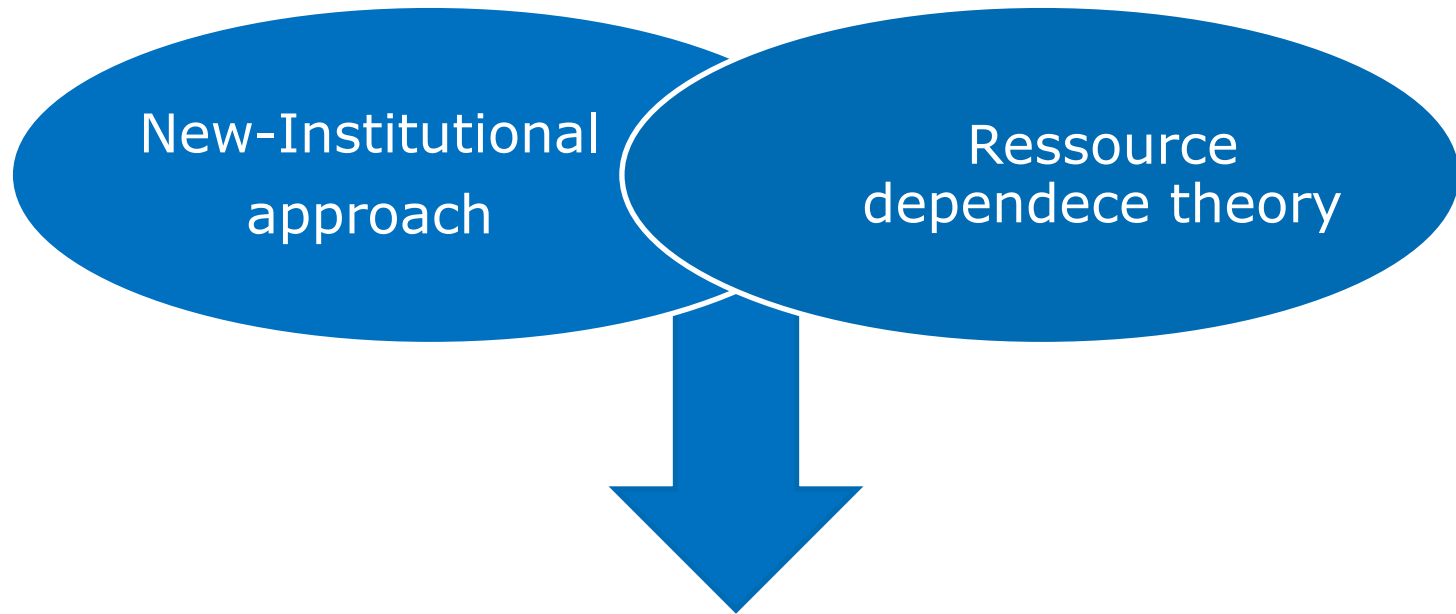
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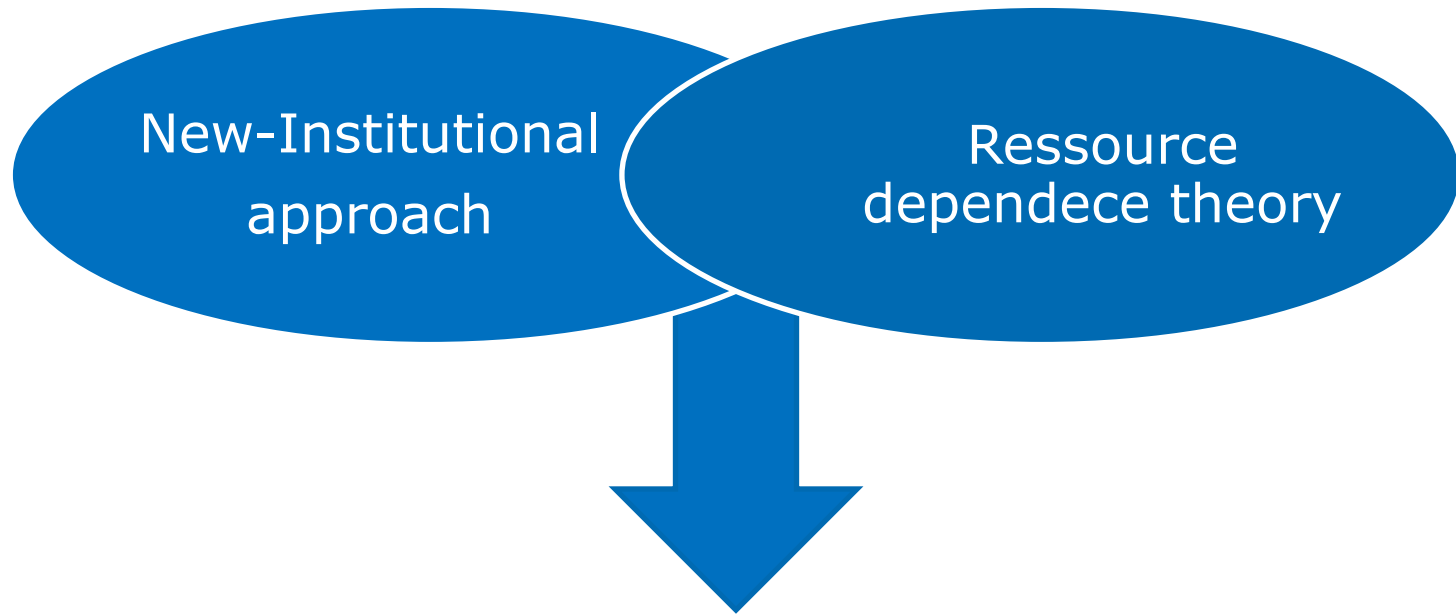
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**How do selection committees respond to this expectation?**

## Strategic responses of selection committees to institutional pressures



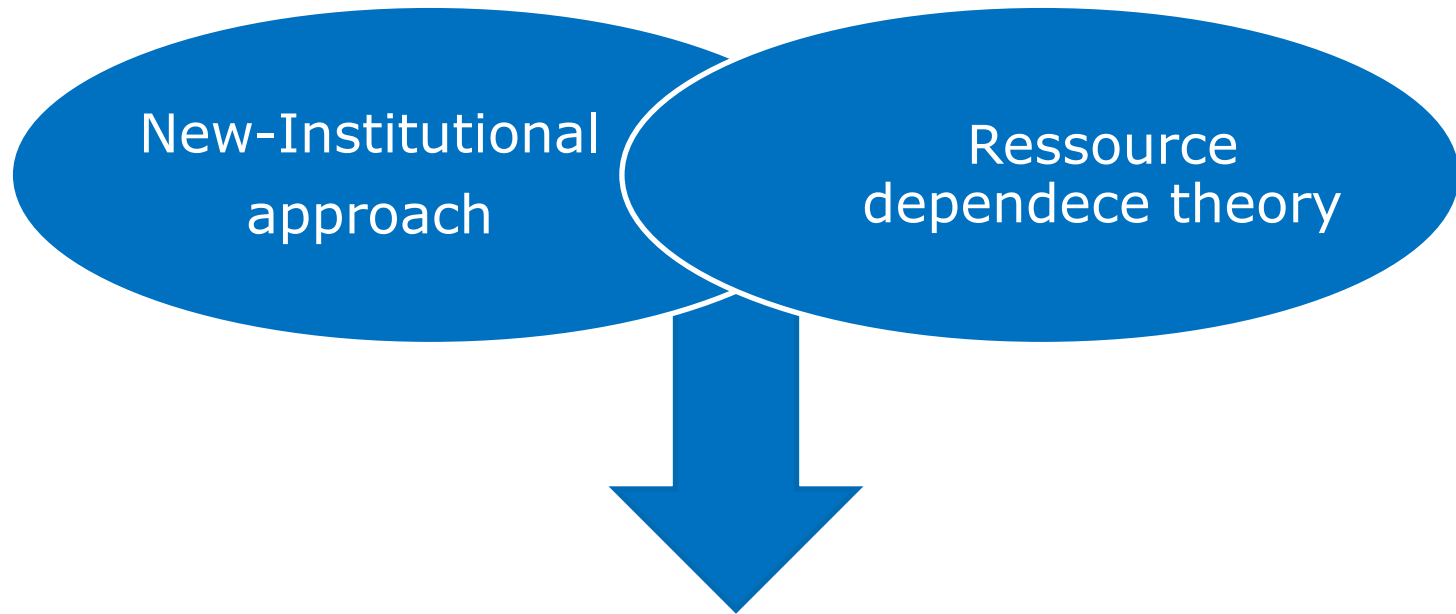
## Strategic responses of selection committees to institutional pressures



Five organizational strategies (Oliver 1991, p. 152 ff.):

- Acquiescence
- Compromise
- Avoidance
- Defiance
- Manipulation

## Strategic responses of selection committees to institutional pressures



Five organizational strategies (Oliver 1991, p. 152 ff.):

- Acquiescence
- Compromise
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## front stage

## back stage

### Aquiesce:

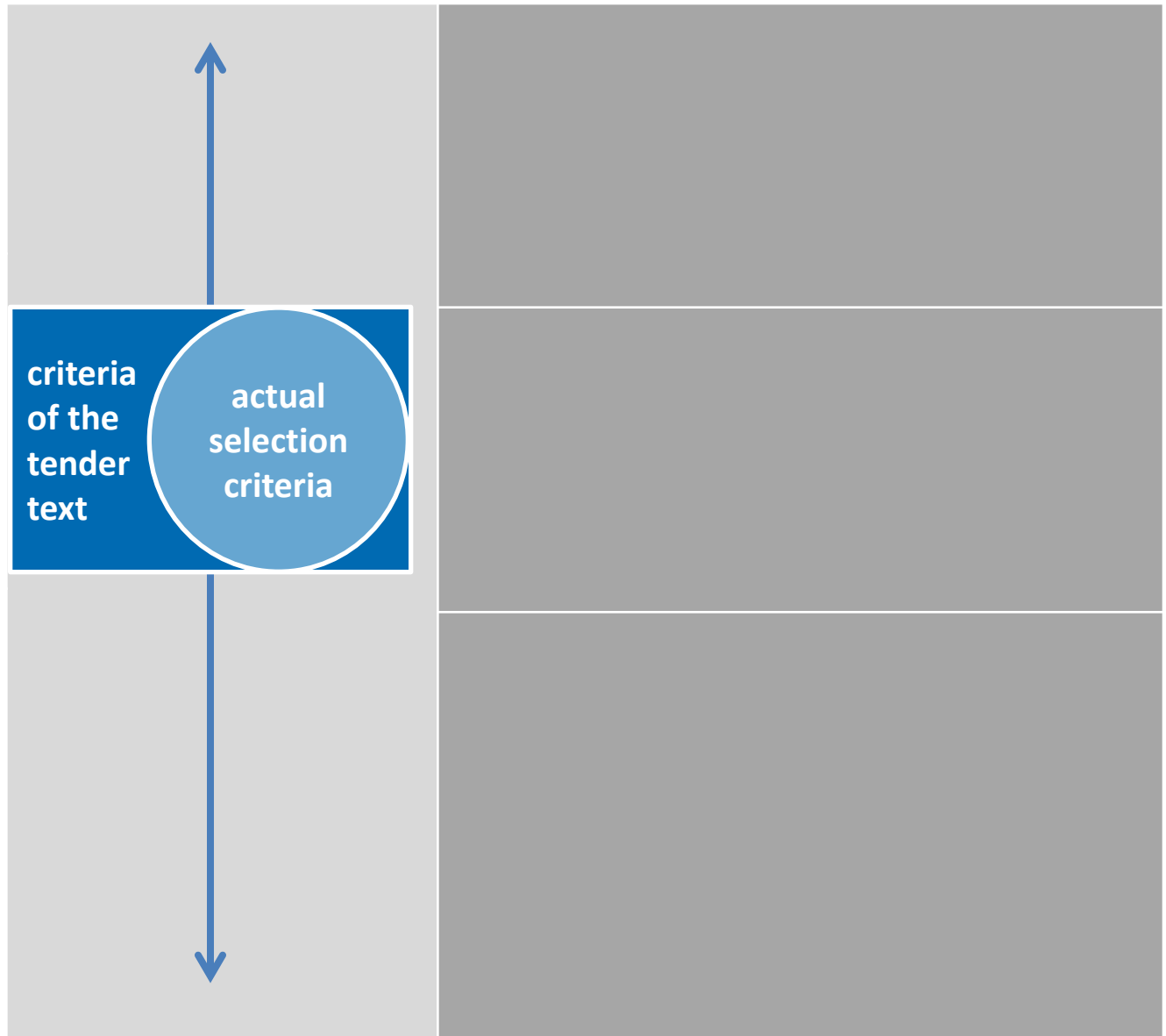
- „compliance to perceived demands“  
(Scott 2008, p. 170)

### Compromise:

- mild alteration of demands through their interpretation (Pache & Santos 2010, p. 462)
- Partial conformity

### Avoid:

- conceal the loose coupling of tender texts and selection criteria
- Ceremonial responses to signal conformity  
(Scott 2008, p. 171)





## front stage

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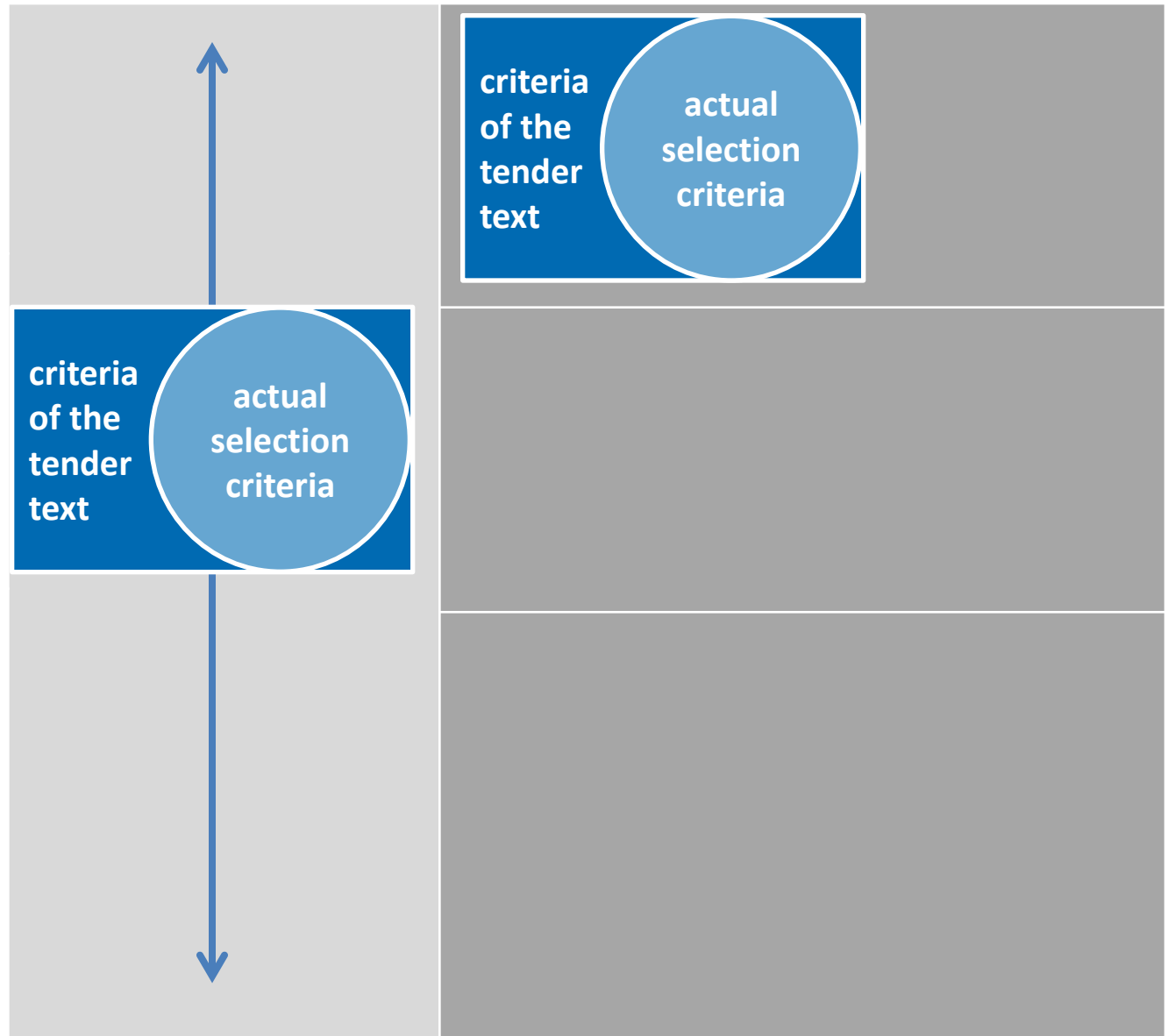
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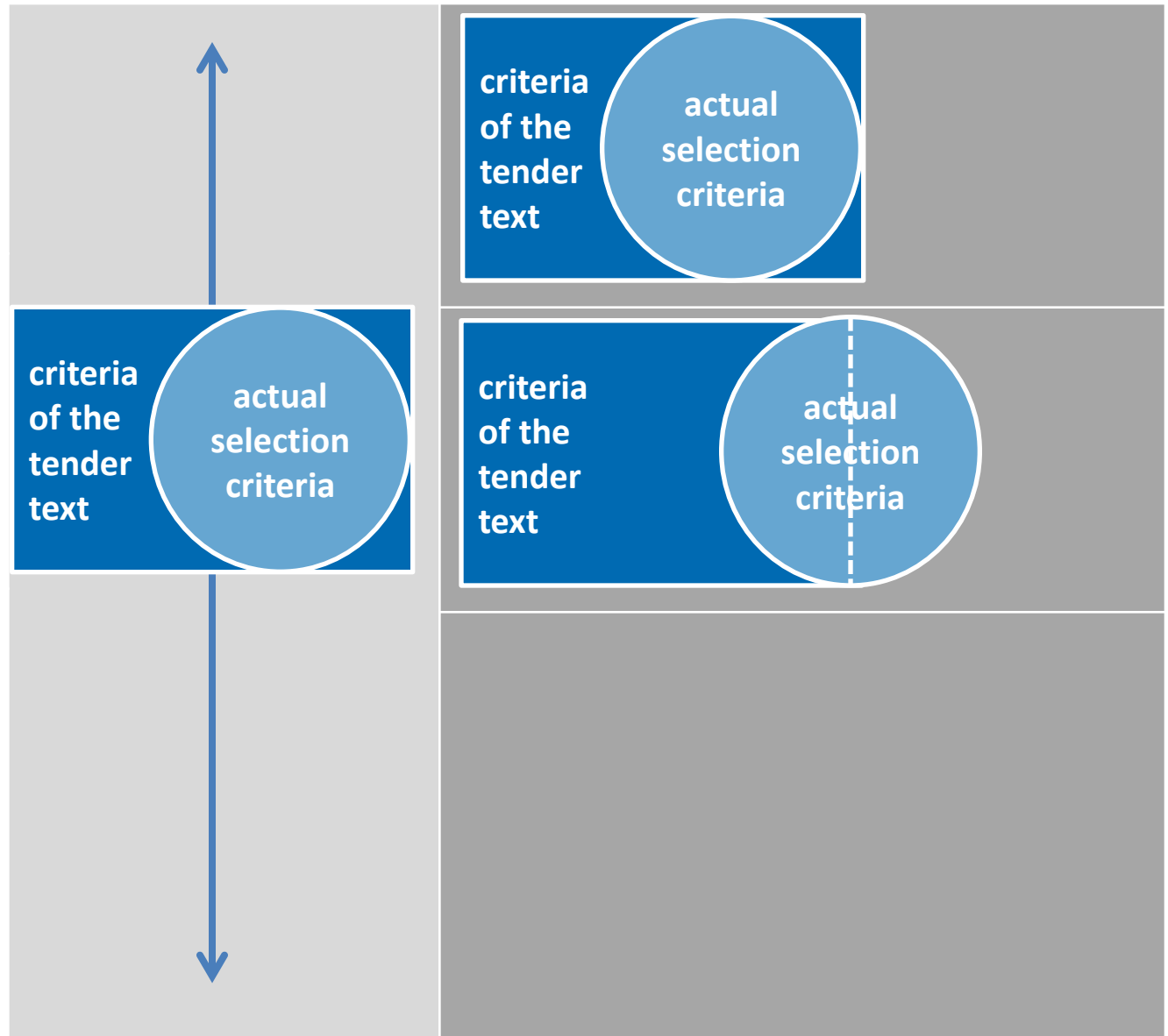
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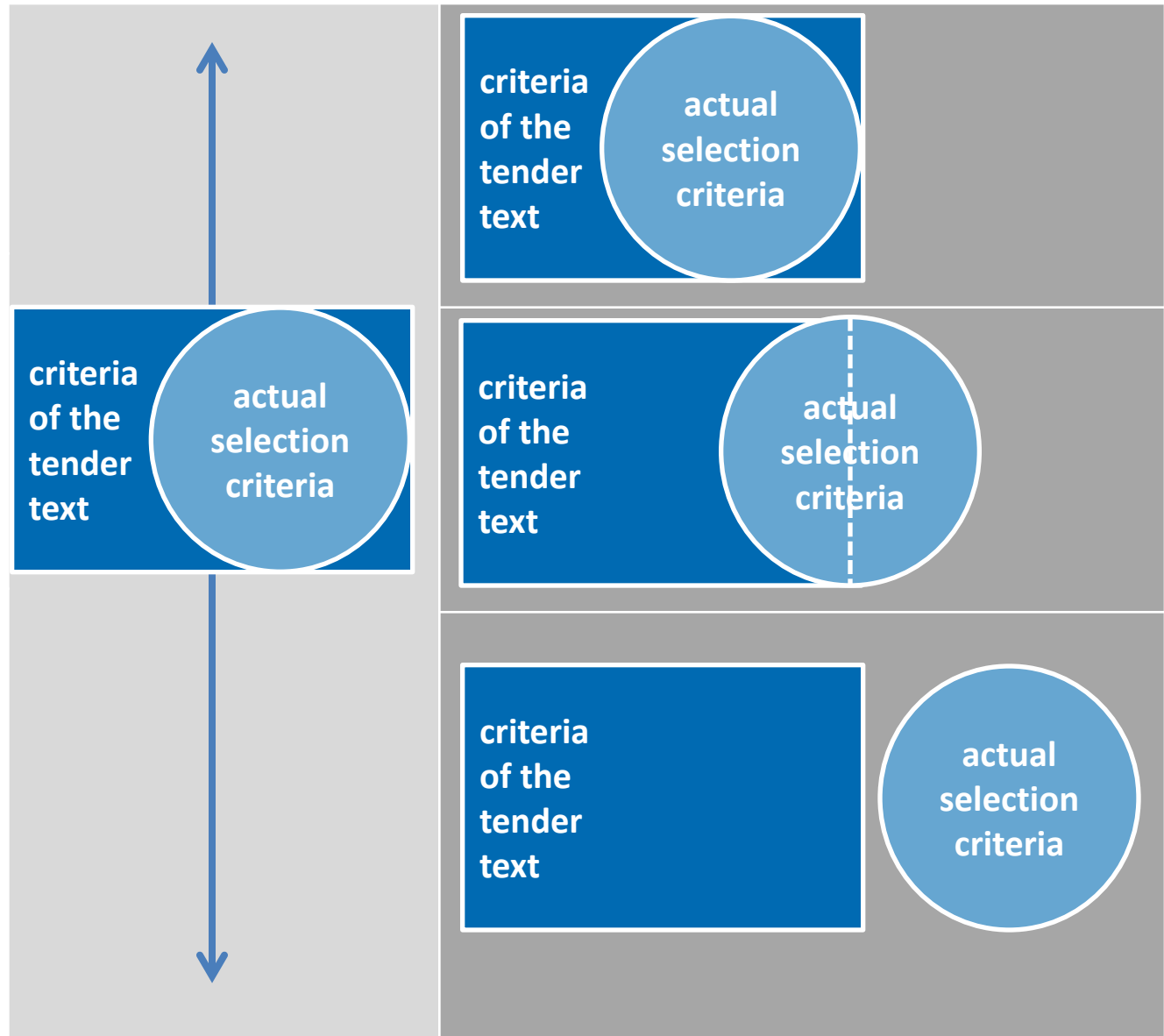
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## back stage



## How do these strategic responses look like in practice?

- Database: 14 Expert interviews
- Interviewees: equal opportunity officers and official representatives for appointment procedures
  - extensive experiences regarding the selection procedure, because they are regular members of selection committees
  - “Neutral observers”, because they have no right to vote
- Central question: role of requirements mentioned in tender texts for the actual selection of applicants for that specific position?

## How do these strategic responses look like in practice?

### Invitation of candidates

- Similarities:
  - Synopsis of characteristics of applicants based on application documents
  - Committee agrees upon selection criteria before the first sighting of application documents
- Differences:
  - How closely are the definition, weighting, and operationalization of selection criteria linked to the tender texts ?

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
Invitation of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee considers all demands mentioned in the tender texts as selection criteria and weights the criteria in accordance with the tender texts</li> <li>No other criteria are added</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee invites all candidates who meet the legal requirements and match the specific professional profile mentioned in the tender texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The selection criteria defined by the selection committee originate partially from the tender texts, some criteria are defined in addition to the tender texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the committee has to define clear, weighted, and transparent criteria (derived from the needs of the faculty/university)</li> <li>The adherence to the tender texts is of secondary importance, because the tender texts are too unspecific to derive criteria clearly</li> </ul>
Final ranking of candidates				

## How do these strategic responses look like in practice?

### Final ranking of candidates

- Similarities:
  - Interplay of several sources for the decision: application documents, selected publications of candidates, personal impression based on hearings and job interview, external reviews
- Differences:
  - How closely are the definition, weighting, and operationalization of selection criteria linked to the tender texts ?

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Final ranking of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the hearings with regard to characteristics, which were not apparent in the application documents, but based on the same criteria with the same weighting as in step one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirements mentioned in tender texts are unimportant for the assessment of the hearings</li> <li>The committee considers criteria such as motivation, originality, and confident appearance</li> <li>But the committee takes care that the ranking list is in accordance with the tender texts to make sure that the selection procedure is valid for legal purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tender texts are not important anymore for the compilation of the ranking list</li> <li>That is because it has been checked in the first step that all selected candidates match the requirement profile of the tender texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preferences of the committee are more important than compliance with tender texts</li> <li>But <b>obvious</b> deviations from the tender texts are not possible at all due to the unspecific character of these texts</li> </ul>



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Acquiesce

Acquiesce

Compromise

Compromise

Avoid

## Conclusion

- What do we know about the responses of selection committees to the expectation to adhere to tender texts?
- Implications?
- Next steps?

Thank you for your attention!

Contact Details

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# Phd project: Responses of German Universities to Institutional Pressures in Appointment Procedures for Professorships

- Theoretical background:
  - recent changes in HE gave rise to new expectations towards universities as autonomous actors (Hasse & Krücken, 2013; Kehm & Lanzendorf, 2005)
  - Universities have to comply with institutionalized expectations to assure their legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977)
  - The demands have to be fulfilled by the academic personnel (Mallich et al., 2010)
  - Universities can influence the professoriate mainly via appointment procedures (Hüther & Krücken, 2011)
- Hypothesis:

The expanded spectrum of tasks of universities should be reflected in the requirement profile of vacant professorships
- Method:

quantitative analysis of employment advertisements for professorships (1995, 2003, and 2012)
- Results:

Requirements relating to demands placed on universities as autonomous actors are more likely to appear in recent job advertisements (Klawitter, 2015).

<b>Bundesland</b>	<b>Universität</b>	<b>Größe (Studierenden -zahl )</b>	<b>Kategorie BO</b>	<b>Berufungs- beauftragte</b>	<b>Gleich- stellungs- beauftragte</b>
BL1	U1	Mittel	S	x	x
BL1	U2	Mittel	D	x	x
BL1	U3	Klein	M	x	x
BL2	U4	Klein	D		x
BL3	U5	Klein	A		x
BL4	U6	Mittel	C	X (dezentral)	
BL5	U7	Klein	C	X (dezentral)	x
BL6	U8	Groß	C	X (dezentral)	x
BL7	U9	Mittel	B		x (dezentral)
				N= 6	N=8

- Renate Meyer: Man kann eigentlich nicht sagen, welche Strategien beschrieben wurden, wenn man nichts über den Ausschreibungstext weiß. Wenn der Ausschreibungstext sehr unpräzise ist, könnte auch Example 1 Aquiescence sein
- Protokolle der BK-Sitzungen von Frau Dötsch
- Katja: Es wäre besser von Dynamiken zu sprechen, anstatt den Terminus Strategie zu benutzen. Das impliziert, dass die Kommission purposefully die Strategien anwendet. In Wirklichkeit handelt es sich aber eher um Ergebnisse von Dynamiken innerhalb der Kommission.
- Achtung: Mich interessiert das Ergebnis der Dynamiken in der Kommission und nicht die Aushandlungsprozesse innerhalb der Kommission und die Interpretationen der Mitglieder
- Eventuell Makro-Mikro-Makro-Verhältnis deutlich machen: Wo bewege ich mich
- „Attribution of Actorhood depends on the level of analysis“
- Ali: Was passiert eigentlich in der Kommission? Der Text könnte von einzelnen Kommissionsmitgliedern strategisch verwendet werden
- Wichtig: Als Ausgangspunkt die AT näher beschreiben. Wie wichtig sind sie? Was steht drin? Welche Vorschriften gibt es diesbezüglich? Einige Beispiele zeigen, z.B. einen besonders ausdifferenzierten und einen sehr knappen

## Weitere Ideen/Gedanken

- Environments can only exert pressures if perceived as such by the organization(al unit)
- Erwartungserwartungen: what do organizational units expect what is expected from them
- How do they conceal → go a bit more inside and show concealment tactics
- Def.Legitimacy: Suchman 1965, p. 574 → in Diss aufnehmen, aus paper von Krücken et al.
- Story: ich wollte eigentlich nur wissen, wie mit den Texten in Auswahlverfahren umgegangen wird, sprich wie aussagekräftig die Ergebnisse der Stellenausschreibungen für work floor level sind
- Mich interessieren dementsprechend nicht die Konflikte und Interpretationen in der Kommission, sondern deren Resultat, das von der Kommission als korporativer Akteur EINSTIMMIG getragen wird
- Welche Theorie könnte da passe?
- Kommission considered as agentic actors, actors can apply strategies

## Markus Perkmann

- Imperial College London
- Peer review= evaluation by own audience
- Research contract: evaluation by other audiences, use-value for firm
- → academics are valued by various audiences
- Data: 10 000 scientists over 15 years (grants, contracts, publications)
- Dep. Variable: valuation – reject or accept grant application
- Indep. Variable: industry popularity
- → curby linear effect of industry popularity on valuation
- Actors can take advantage of popularity with other audiences – but only to a certain degree