

Women in Leadership Positions

Perspectives from research and practice



Technical University of Munich
Chair for Strategy and Organization

Diversity & Women in Leadership Initiative
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Research overview

Current status of our research,
May 2021

Current facts and figures and state of international research



- 01 Status quo: Facts and figures
- 02 Impact



Barriers, stereotypes, and (in)effective measures

- 03 Causes and stereotypes
- 04 (In)effectiveness of trainings, interventions, and measures

What really works – proposals for better measures



- 05 Impact on the individual and society
- 06 Proposals for impact at the company level



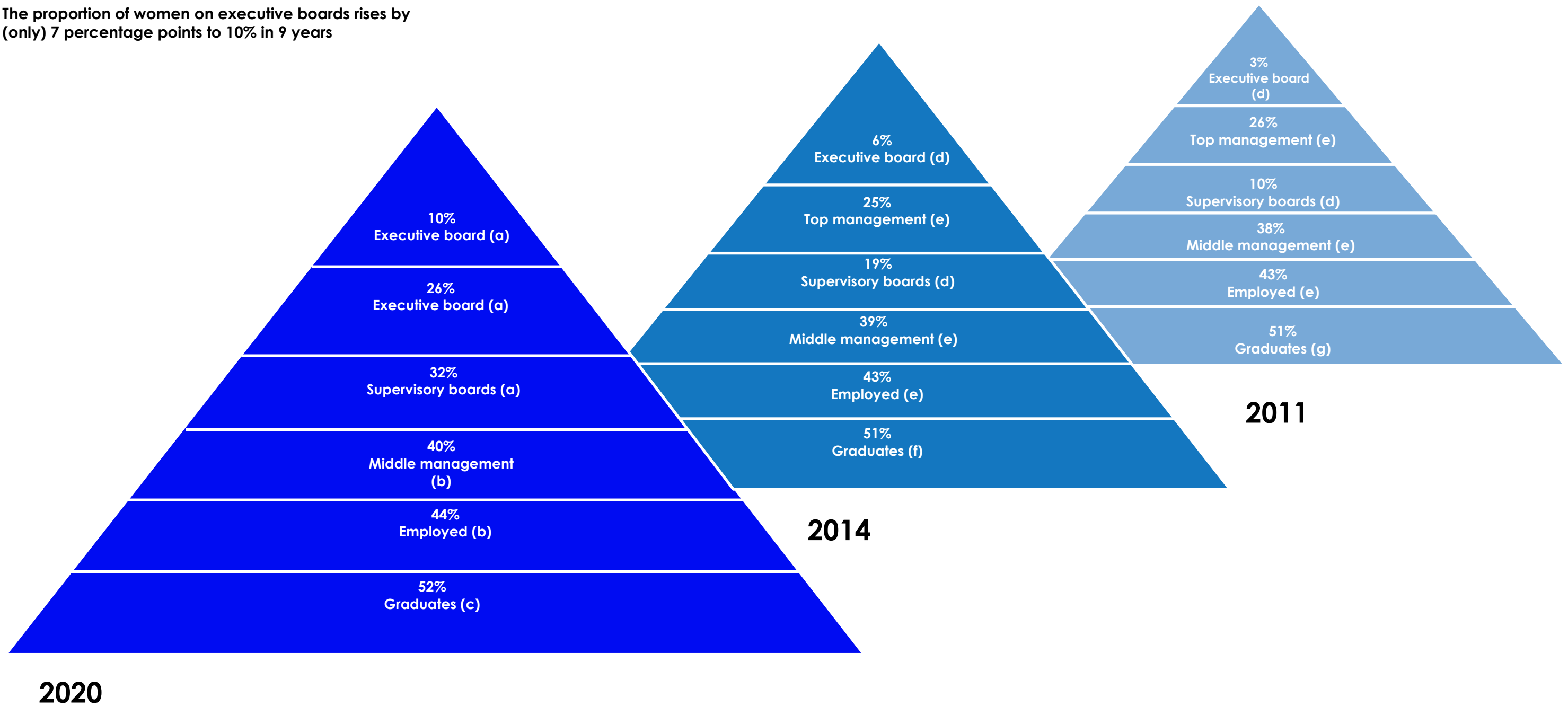
The royal road

- 07 Scientific monitoring of the measures through interventional study designs

Current facts and figures and state of international research

01 Status quo: Facts and figures

The proportion of women on executive boards rises by (only) 7 percentage points to 10% in 9 years



(a. FidAR, 2020 & Allbright, 2020; b. IAB, 2019; c. Destatis, 2020; d. FidAR, 2014; e. IAB, 2016; f. Holst & Kirsch, 2014; g. Destatis, 2014)

a, d: Executive and supervisory boards of DAX 30, MDAX, SDAX
b, e: Proportions of women at two management levels and in the entire workforce (private sector only)
c, f, g: Graduates are students who have passed their final examinations for their degree.

Women in leadership positions: Sector-specific representation

Sector	Proportion of women at leadership level (2014)	Proportion of women at leadership level (2019)
Health care and social services	43%	49%
Retail	38%	38%
Wholesale trade, automobile trade	15%	10%
Professional, scientific, and freelance services	22%	23%
Financial and insurance services	12%	16%
Information and communication	13%	13%
Accommodation and food service	39%	39%
Energy, water, waste, and mining	8%	15%
Transportation and storage	21%	18%
Manufacturing industry	14%	14%
Construction	7%	8%

(Institute for Employment Research, 2016; 2019)

Women in leadership positions: Classification by qualification level

Qualification levels 1

Leaders and managers

Overall: 5%
Women: 3%
Men: 7%

Academic professions

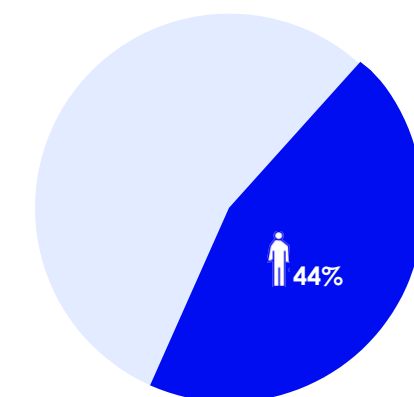
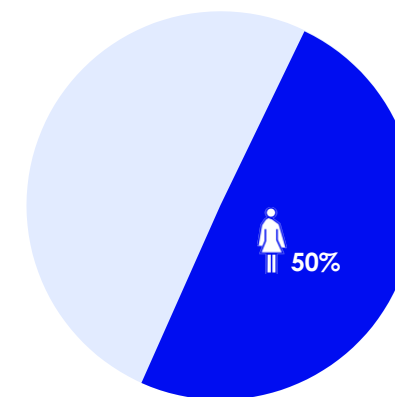
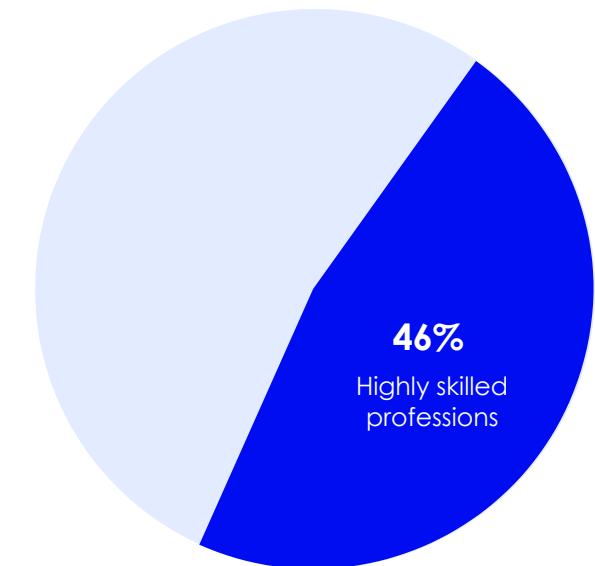
Overall: 18%
Women: 18%
Men: 18%

Technicians and equivalent non-technical professions

Overall: 23%
Women: 29%
Men: 19%

Persons employed in highly skilled professions, overall: 46%

Women: 50%
Men: 44%



50% of employed women were found in highly skilled professions, compared to 44% of men. The **higher proportion among women** is due to the relatively high number of **female teachers and medical and technical assistants**.

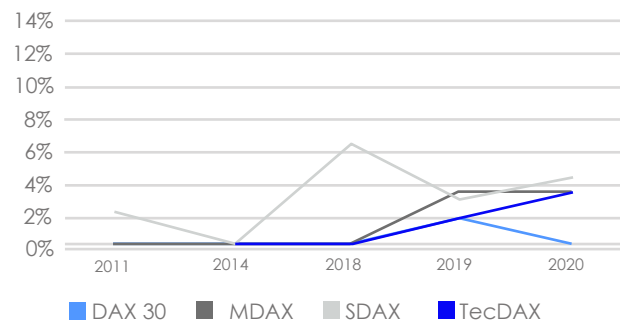
1: Persons in highly skilled occupations (ISCO major groups 1 - 3; International Standard Classification of Occupations); random sample; single-stage cluster sample; survey of 754,178 persons

(Destatis, 2021)

Proportions of women on the executive boards of German companies

The proportion of female chief executive officers (CEOs) of DAX corporate groups is stagnating

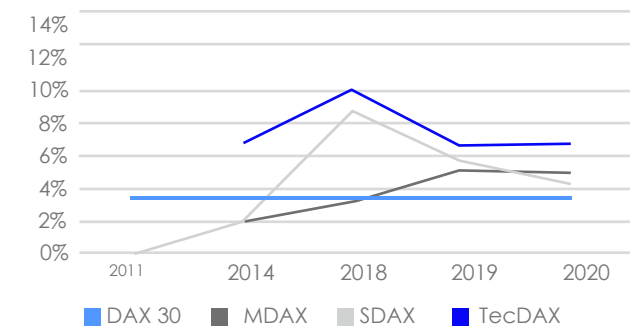
Proportion of female CEOs chairwomen



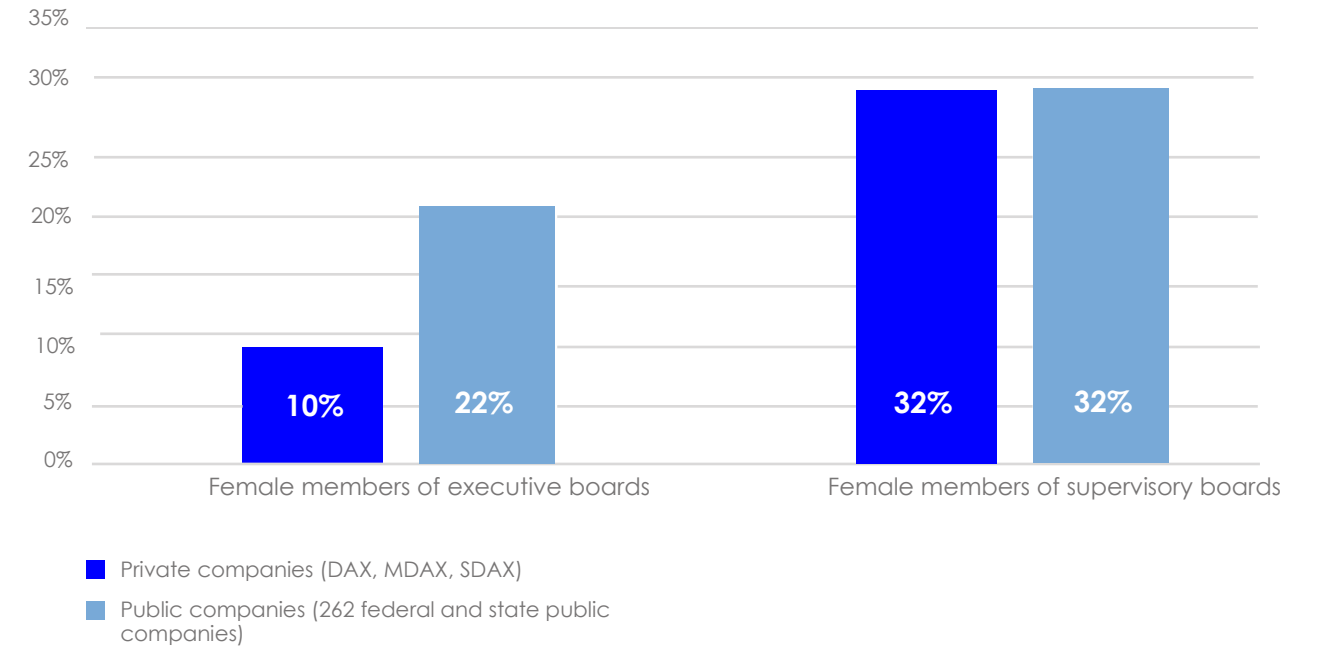
(DIW Weekly Report, 2021. Women executives barometer.)

The proportion of chairwomen on the supervisory boards of DAX corporate groups is stagnating

Proportion of supervisory board



German public companies have the same number of female members on their supervisory boards as private companies

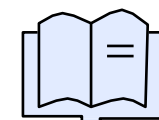


(Allbright Stiftung gGmbH, 2020. Deutscher Sonderweg: Frauenanteil in DAX-Vorständen sinkt in der Krise.; FidAR, 2020. Public women on board index.)

The proportion of women on supervisory boards is sector-specific



Public supervisory boards
Relatively **low** representation in:
Airports and seaports (28%)
Traffic and transportation companies (28%)
Property and building management (28%)



Supervisory bodies
Comparatively **high** representation in:
Education and academia (38%)
Housing (35%)
Hospitals (34%)
Cultural enterprises (33%)

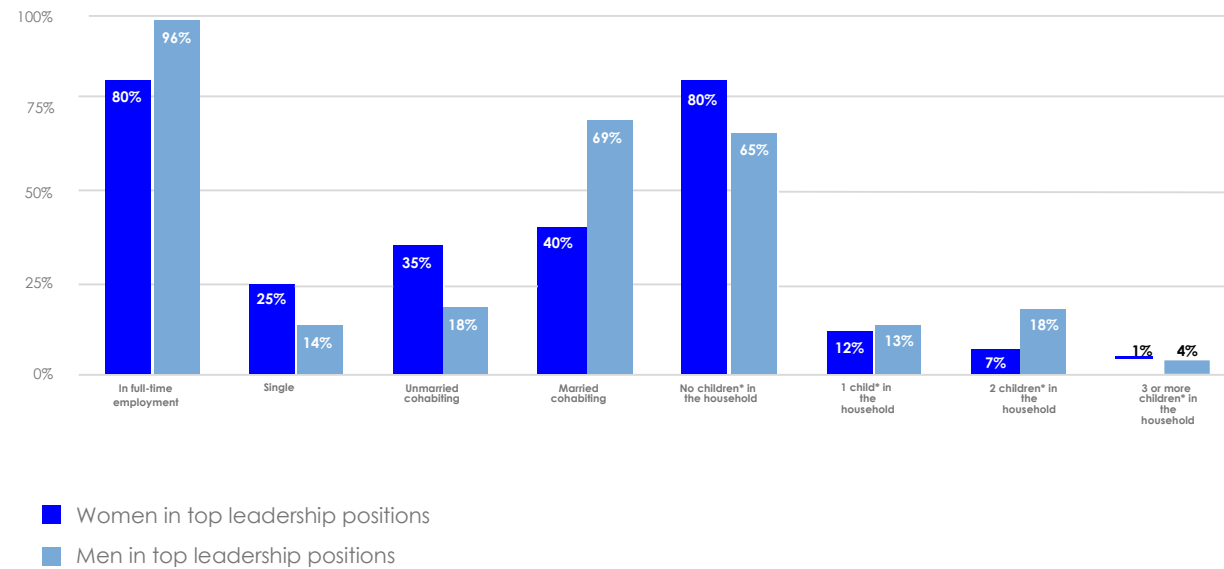
(FidAR, 2020. Public women on board index.)

The number of female CEOs and supervisory board chairwomen of DAX corporate groups is stagnating.

The proportion of women in all management roles in the highest federal authorities is increasing on average.

Family situations of leaders in Germany

Family situation of top leaders by gender in Germany (in %, mean for 2001-2014)



*Children = children under 16 living in the same household.

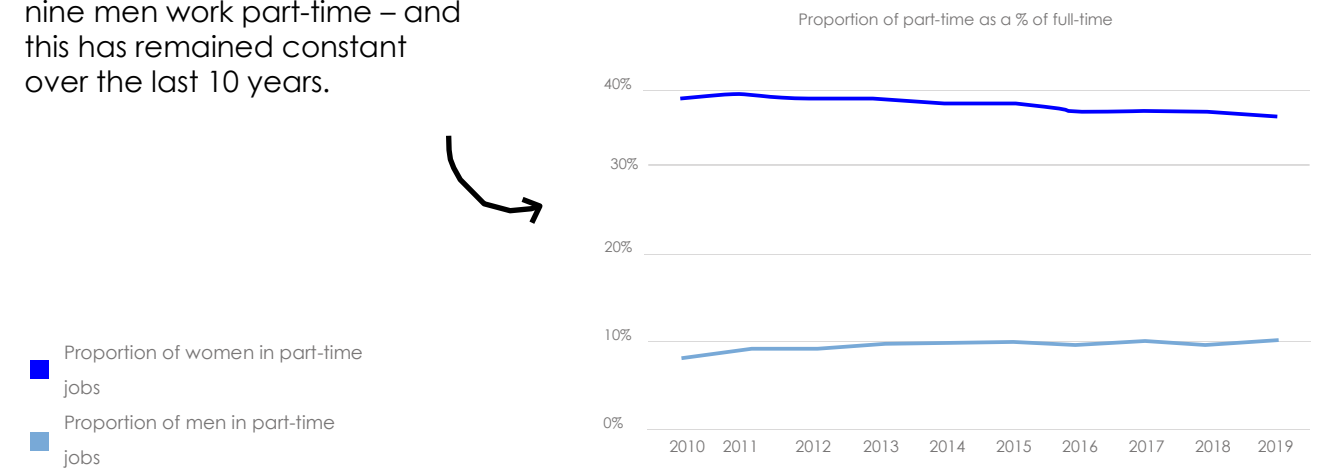
(DIW Berlin – Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung e. V., 2016. Frauen in hohen Führungspositionen.)

Women in top leadership positions are more often single and childless than men in top leadership positions.

Part-time employment remains a women's issue

Large gender gap of almost 30 percentage points

One in two women and one in nine men work part-time – and this has remained constant over the last 10 years.



(OECD, 2020. Labour force statistics 2010-2020; Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2020. Stand der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in Deutschland.)

Differences between men and women in time, income, care work, and pensions

Gender time gap
 Women work 8.2 hours less per week (paid work) than men.

Gender care gap
 45% of total working time for women is unpaid (only 28% for men).

Gender pay gap
 Women earn on average 20% less per hour than men.

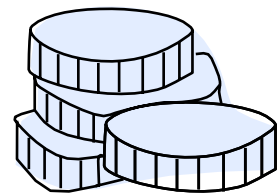
Gender pension gap
 Women's pensions are 53% lower than men's.

(Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2020. Gender pay gap 2006-2019; Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2020. Stand der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in Deutschland.)

02 Impact

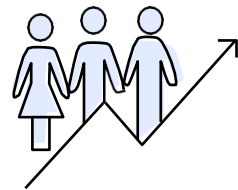
Female executive board members have positive effects on company value and negative effects on share value

Positive effects of the proportion of women on the executive or supervisory board on...



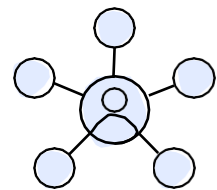
...the **financial performance** (financial key performance indicators) of the company, especially in countries with extensive shareholder protection, e.g., the USA.

(Post & Byron, 2015)



...the **company value**, especially in countries with high gender equity (e.g., Norway).

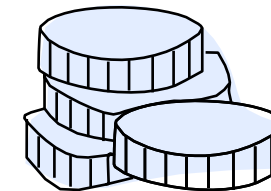
(Pletzer, Nikolova, Kedzior & Voelpel, 2015)



...**social and ethical aspects** (working conditions, sustainability) of corporate behavior and on **gender diversity** below board level.

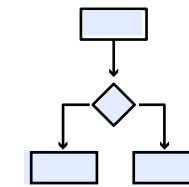
(Kirsch, 2018)

Mixed effects of the proportion of women on the executive or supervisory board on...



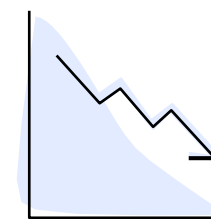
...the **financial performance** (financial key performance indicators) of the company due to a lack of correlation/causality.

(Kirsch, 2018)



...**organizational** company performance.

(Hoobler, Masterson, Nkomo & Michel, 2018)



However:

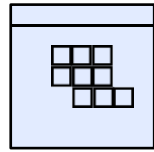
Female executive board members have a negative impact on share value and no impact on profit.

(Dobbin & Jung, 2011)

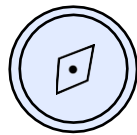
↳ **Institutional investor bias:** Fund managers reduce the value of companies with more female board members due to gender bias.

The glass cliff effect

Women who break the glass ceiling often find themselves in precarious leadership positions (glass cliff).



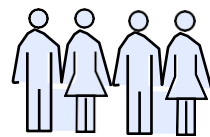
The glass cliff effect is **sector-specific** (management, politics, education, sports, non-profits).



Small glass cliff effect in **leadership aptitude assessments**.



Women are more likely to be selected for leadership positions in **crises** than men.



The glass cliff effect also affects **other minorities** based on origin and ethnicity.

Random sample: 3 meta-analyses
(Morgenroth, Kirby, Ryan & Sudkämper, 2020)

Differences in the external and self-assessment of women and men



Men and women do **not** differ in perceived leadership effectiveness **on the whole**.



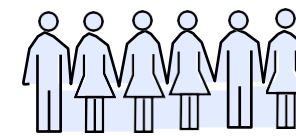
If only **external assessments** are considered, women's **leadership effectiveness** is rated significantly higher than that of men.



When only **self-assessments** are considered, men rate their leadership as significantly more effective than women.

Random sample: meta-analysis with 99 independent samples from 95 studies
(Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr, 2014)

What makes teams more intelligent?



Regardless of their gender, people who have high social sensitivity increase collective intelligence.

Teams with **more women** perform **better** than teams with more men.
(Woolley & Malone, 2011)

Do women harm other women?

The queen bee phenomenon

- Masculine self-presentation of women
- Emphasizing their differences from other women
- Preventing the advancement of other women
- Distancing between women

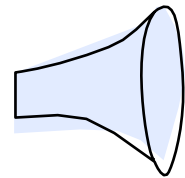
(Derks, Van Laar & Ellemers, 2016)

The queen bee phenomenon is a **myth**, as benevolent behavior between women is observable.
(Arvate, Galilea & Todescat, 2018)

Barriers, stereotypes and (in)effective measures

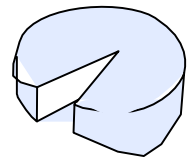
03 Causes and stereotypes

Explanations for the low proportion of women in leadership positions



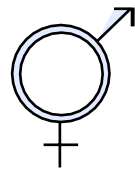
Pipeline theories

"There are not enough **suitable** women."



Deficit theories

"Women **don't have what it takes** for leadership positions."



Unconscious bias/stereotypes

The same behavior, competence, and performance are not (always) equally valued, rewarded, and recognized.

Most important explanation

Prejudices in daily work

Descriptive effect

Women are seen as less suitable for leadership positions than men.

Prohibitive effect

Women should not be dominant; men should not ask for work-life balance.

Prescriptive effect

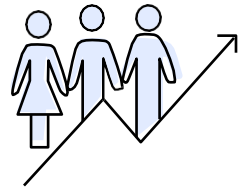
Male leaders who ask for help are seen as less competent.

Stereotypes also affect **many other social groups** (ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, religion, sexual identity).

(Heilman, 2001, 2012; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Okimoto & Brescoll, 2010; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristikari, 2011; Rudman & Phelan, 2008)

04 (In)effectiveness of trainings, interventions, and measures

Quotas can have a positive impact on the proportion of women and a negative impact on company performance

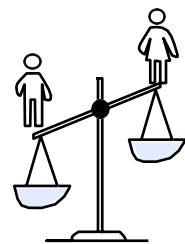


Mandatory gender quotas are able to bring about **change** and increase the proportion of women --> Encourage women to take on leadership positions as board chairs and CEOs
(Wang & Kelan, 2013; Yang, Riepe, Moster & Terjesen, 2019)

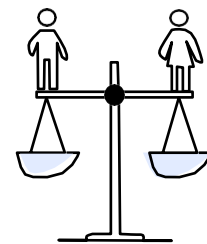
External pressure leads to an increase in the number of **female board members**; BUT: Mostly by adding board seats, not by replacing incumbent male board members
(Knippen, Wei & Qi, 2019)

The gender quota in Norway **negatively** affects corporate performance and entrepreneurial risk
(Yang et al., 2019)

Partly random selection of leaders can be an effective alternative to controversial quotas



Pure merit selection



Partly random selection procedures

Compared to pure merit selection, women were significantly more likely to participate in a competitive selection with a random component and were thus more likely to attain a leadership position.
(Berger, Osterloh, Rost & Ehrmann, 2020)

Diversity measures can have unintended effects on the company

Stereotyping

Reinforcement of perceived differences and confirmation of stereotypes due to a focus on "stereotype awareness."

Resource allocation

Ensuring unbiased evaluation procedures requires additional time, energy, and cognitive resources.

Subtyping

Perception of women in traditionally male professions as competent exceptions or as recipients of undeserved advantages.

Social identity threat

Women's self-perception that they actually neither fit nor belong in a male environment (e.g., STEM).

Stereotype threat concerns

Women's fear that their behavior is viewed through the lens of negative stereotypes and that they confirm them.

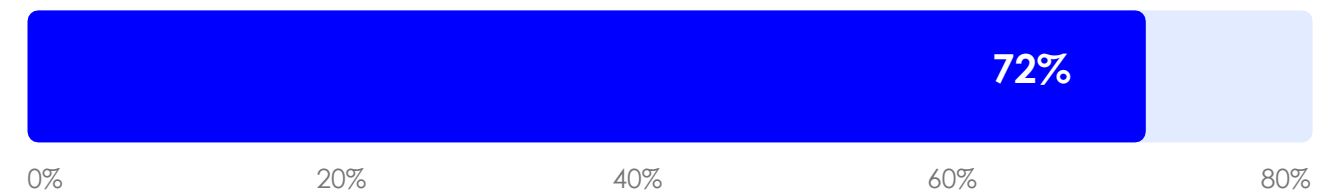
Diffusion of responsibility

Reduction in perceived personal responsibility and vigilance against bias.

(Caleo & Heilman, 2019; Pietri, Hennes, Dovidio, Brescoll, Bailey, Moss-Racusin & Handelsman, 2019)

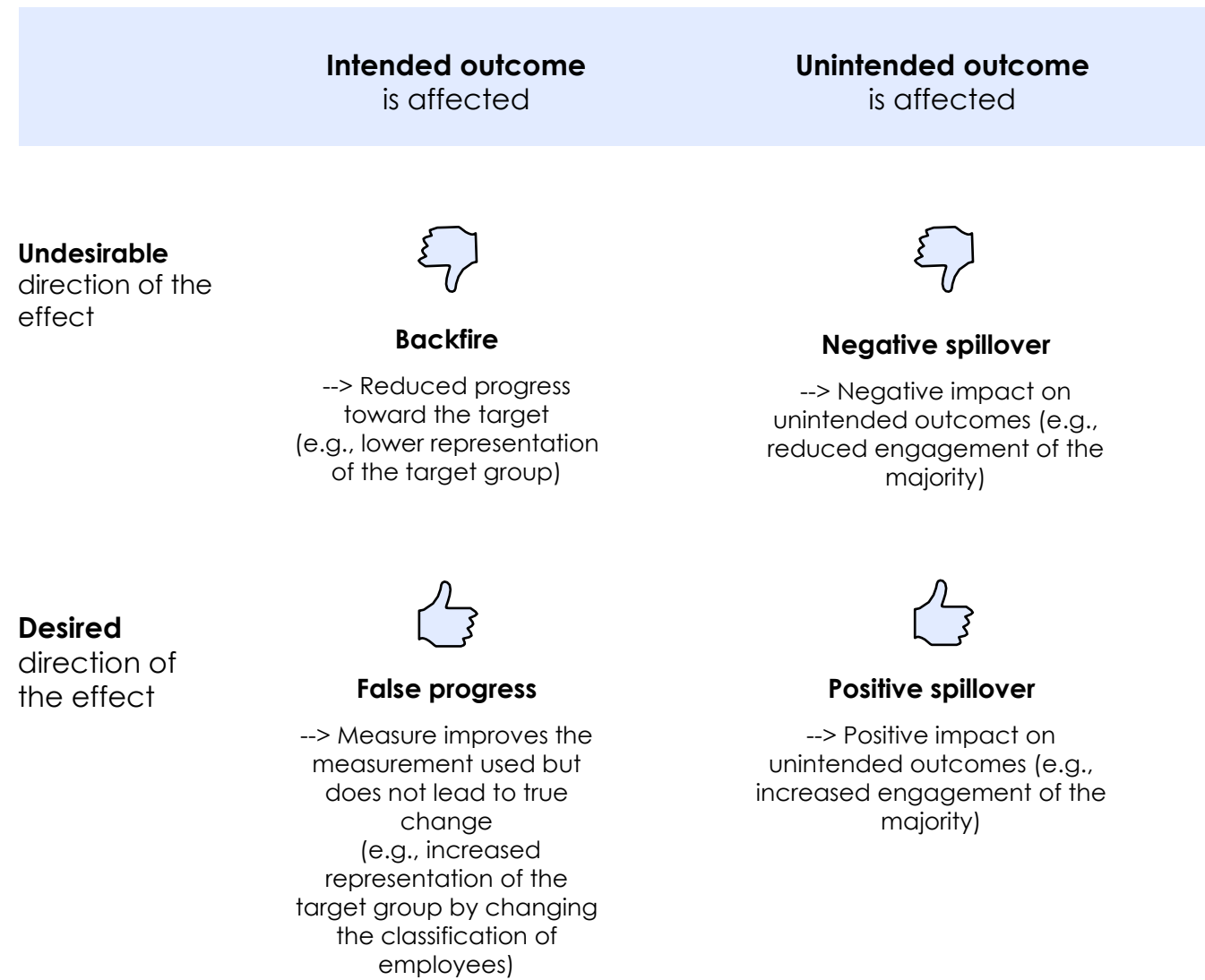
72% of international companies rate recruitment, retention, and promotion as the most effective diversity measure

Random sample: 12,940 international companies



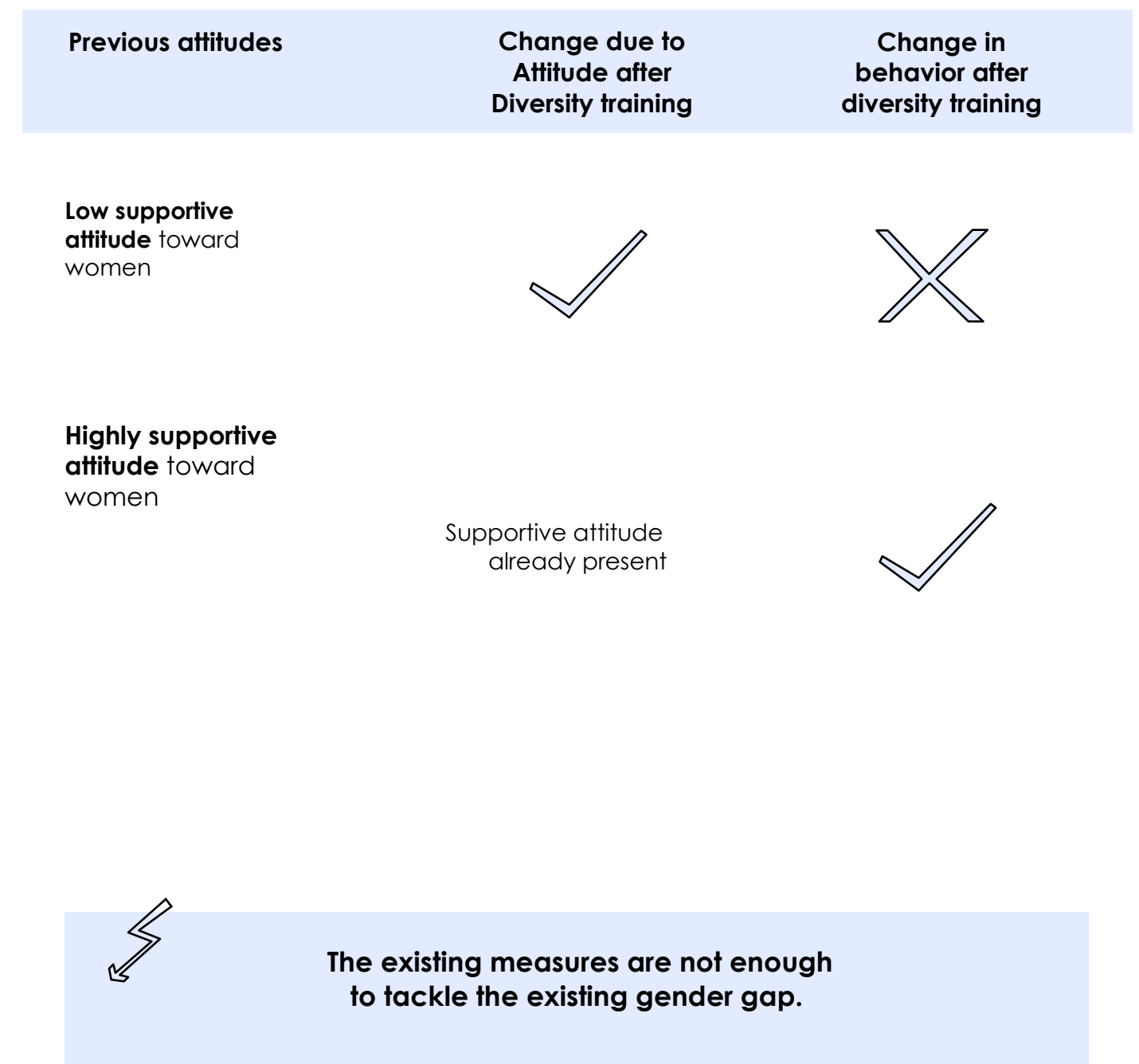
(International Labour Organization, 2019. A global survey of enterprises)

Diversity measures can lead to reduced representation of the target and non-target engagement



(Leslie, 2019)

The effectiveness of diversity training depends on the already existing attitudes of the target group

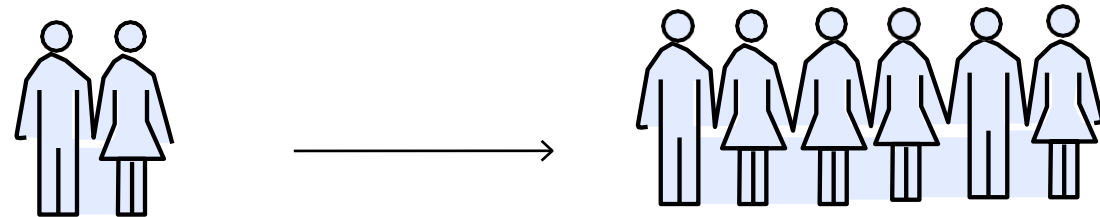


(Chang, Milkman, Gromet, Rebele, Massey, Duckworth & Grant, 2019)

What really works – Proposals for better measures

05 Impact on the individual and society

Away from individual norms, toward changing social norms



Diversity measures should start with society to bring about a change in social norms.

Social norms and stereotypes are heavily influenced by the media



Media High TV consumption reinforces stereotypical thinking in kindergarten children.

Soaps Access to telenovelas on Brazilian cable TV reduces the birth rate, increases female employment, and raises the age of marriage.

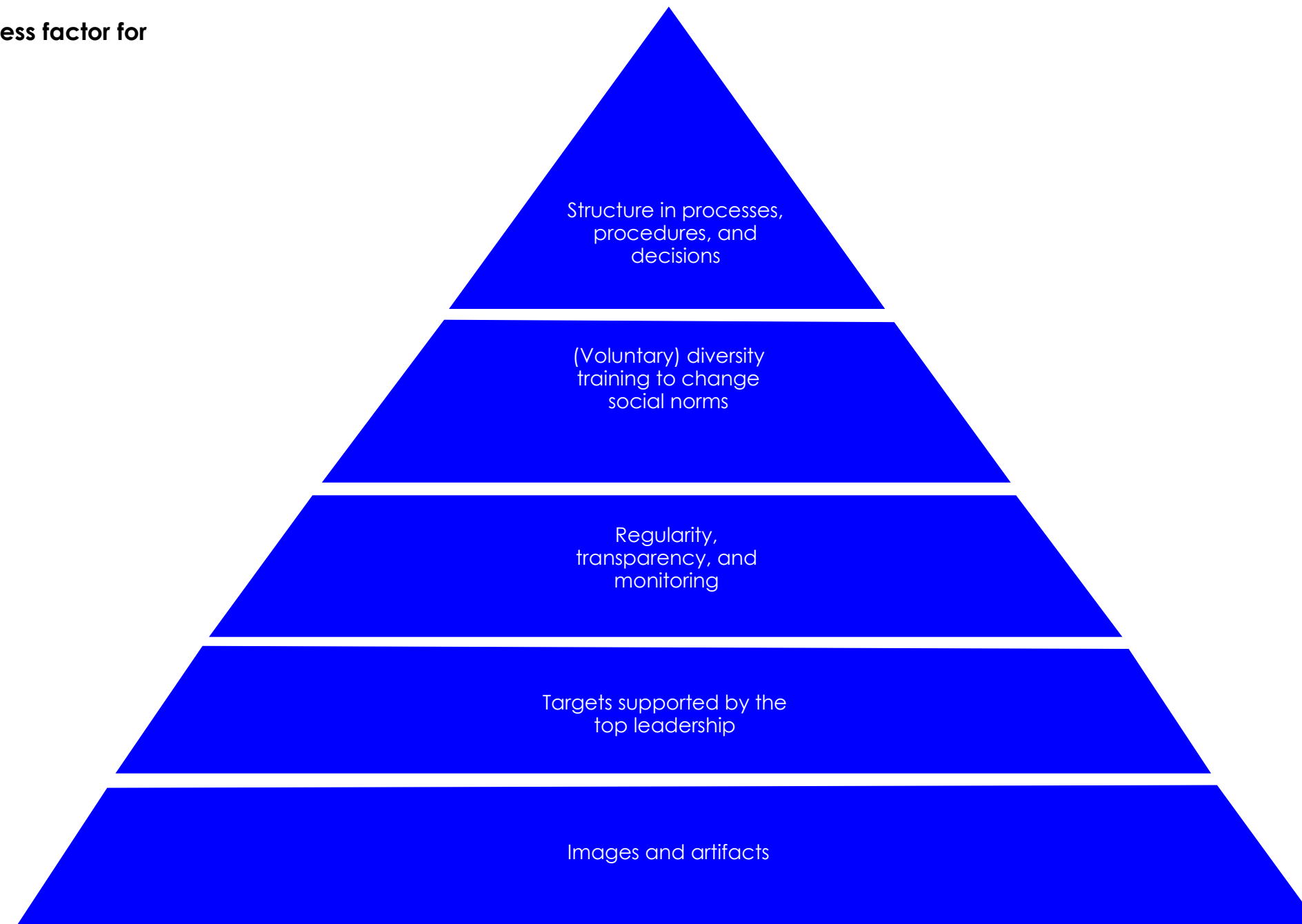
Fairy tales Passive fairy-tale roles (Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel) reduce women's desire for personal power.

Debiasing training: Making people aware of stereotypes can lead to stereotypical thinking.

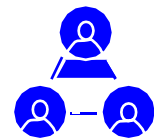
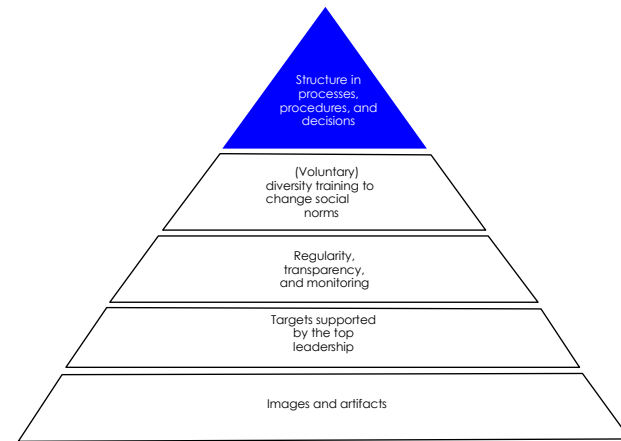
(Bian, Leslie, Murphy & Cimpian, 2018; Bowles, Babcock & Lai, 2007; Jung, Shavitt, Viswanathan & Hilbe, 2014; Hoobler, Wayne & Lemmon, 2009; Nosek, Smyth, Sriram, Lindner, Devos, Ayala & Kesebir, 2009; Okimoto & Brescoll, 2010; Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015; Quadlin, 2018)

06 Proposals for impact at the company level

Structure as a decisive success factor for changing social norms



Structure in processes, procedures, and decisions can change social norms and promote diversity



Processes

Establishing gender-neutral and fair hiring processes and promotion decisions



Procedures

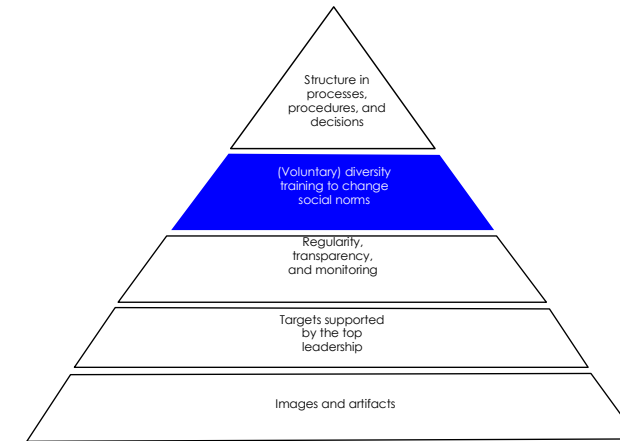
Embedding diversity in corporate strategy in the form of rules, laws, and codes of conduct



Decisions

Creating competence- and performance-based decisions and procedures by establishing a diversity competence center

Voluntary training changes social norms if it is supported by the top management and scientifically monitored



Voluntariness

Training programs based on voluntariness and intrinsic motivation



Support

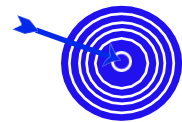
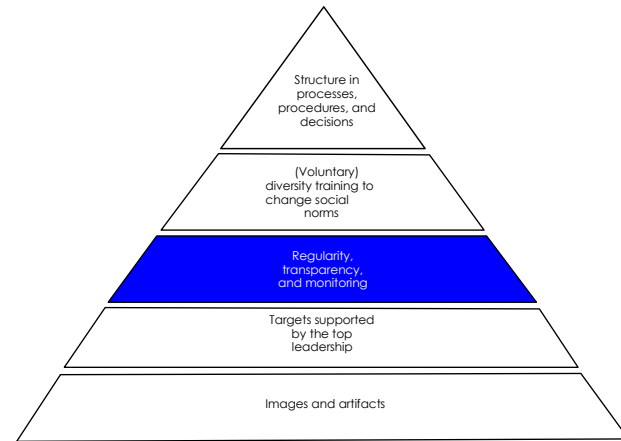
Training programs that are supported and promoted by the top management



Evaluation

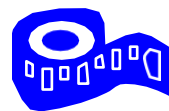
Training programs whose effectiveness is scientifically monitored and evaluated

Diversity can be achieved if the top management is aware of the company's actual figures



Regularity

Introducing targets and regular measurement by means of goals achievable in the short and long term



Transparency

Disclosing and measuring targets, figures, and performance criteria

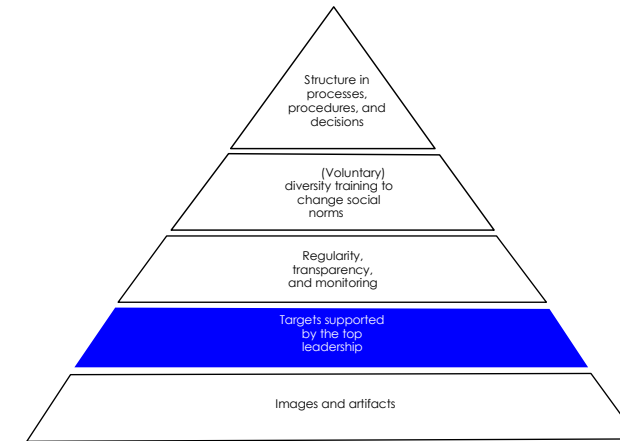


Monitoring

Monitoring change, accountability, and compliance with targets

(Own proposals)

Support for diversity goals from the top management sends an important signal to the company



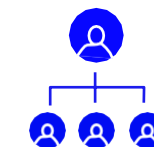
Role model

Role model function of leaders (especially male leaders) in recruiting and mentoring women



Culture

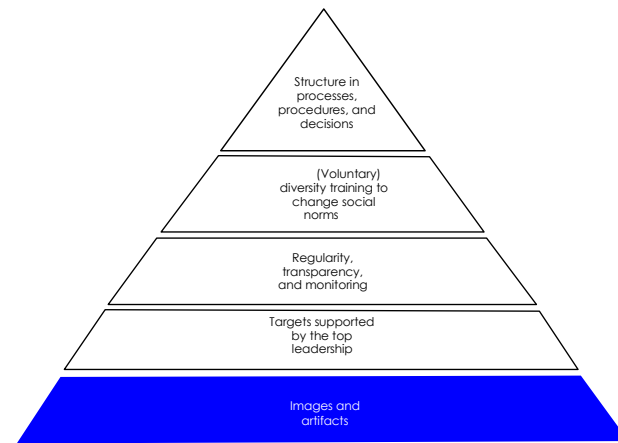
Changing norms by establishing and exemplifying an inclusive culture



Engagement

Fostering engagement and commitment to reach a critical mass

Diversity can be promoted through neutrality and equal opportunities



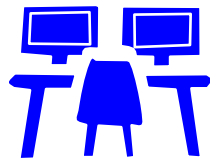
Artifacts

Use gender-neutral designs, logos, art, sculptures, rituals, symbols, and images



Role models

Balanced presentation of female and male role models in companies, e.g., through portraits on walls



Environment

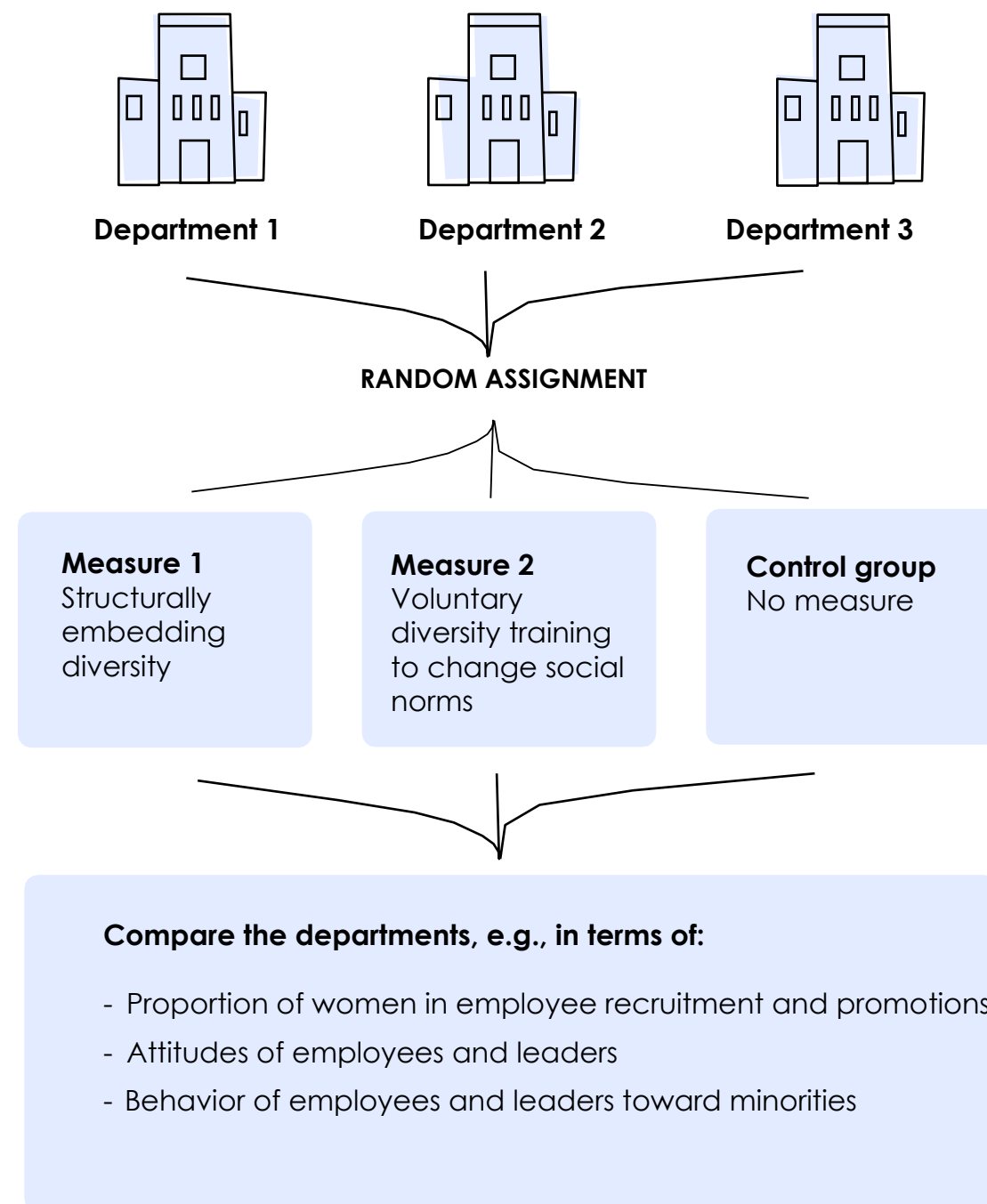
Creating gender-neutral work environments and workplaces



Structure as the decisive success factor for changing social norms.

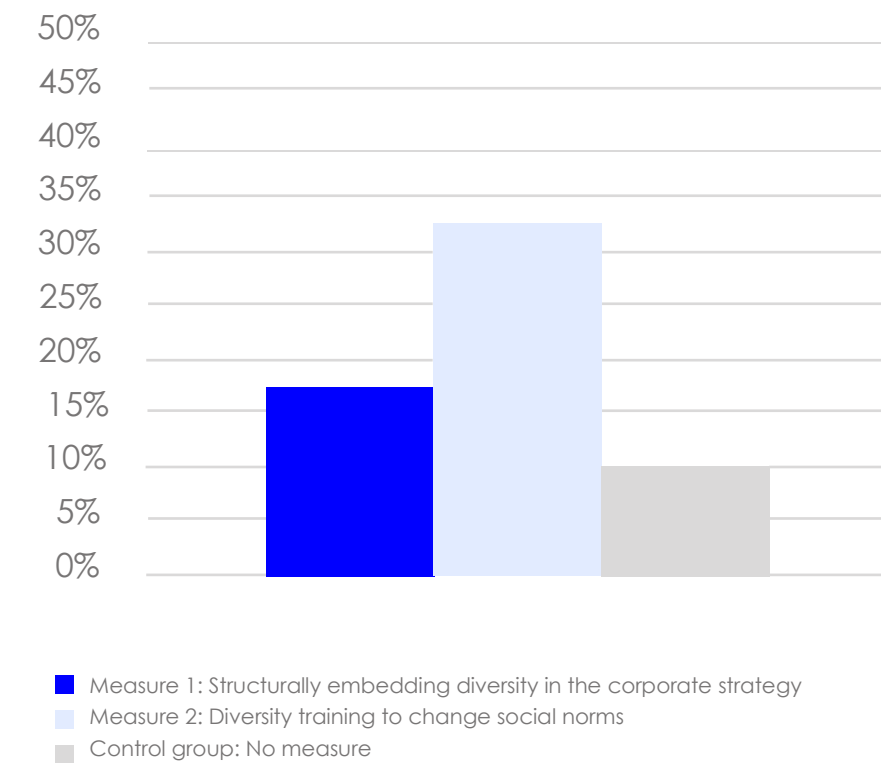
The royal road

07 Scientific monitoring of the measures through interventional study designs



Voluntary diversity training to change social norms could be an effective measure

Proportion of women in leadership positions in the company (fictional result)



Field experiments are the scientific gold standard for assessing the effectiveness of interventions.

(Own proposals)

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