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Reframing Teaching: A New Chance of Agency for Teaching Academics in Germany

1.   Introduction

The driving forces behind the transformations of the structures of the academic labour market in Germany are new public management policies such as the implementation of market principles for the evaluation of academic work and funding distribution, changes in budgeting mechanisms, and cost-cutting (see e.g. Henkel 2000; Krücken et al. 2007; Musselin 2011). The transformations are taking place in line with the implementation of the Bologna Process. These developments are leading to changes in the conditions and content of academic work including the components of research, teaching, and administration (Kehm 2012). For teaching, it means a standardization of teaching, a growing workload, and a trend towards separating teaching from research (see e.g. Musselin 2007, 2011).

Recent research findings demonstrate that academics are in favour of greater involvement in research, because research performance is pivotal for advancing their academic careers (Cummings/Shin 2013: 1). Thus, teaching load is a constraint in academic career development (Bloch et al. 2011: 6). However, paying more attention to teaching in higher education policy and academic research is especially important for improving the quality of work and employment, especially for those teaching in positions below a professorship. As soon as teaching is acknowledged as one of the major working activities of junior academics, improving chances for the professional development of those who teach could contribute to better teaching and learning and increase the attractiveness of academic employment. For personnel policies on the level of universities, it is important to not just have more information on the structure of teaching personnel, their teaching load, their types of teaching, and their professional background. It is also pivotal to understand how the academics who teach see themselves within the broader context of the academic labour market, how they relate themselves to professional contexts outside academia, and how they frame teaching as an academic work component that is meaningful for their future professional development. This kind of information would enable a more appropriate allocation and monitoring of personnel along with responsible career development planning and counselling. In this way, the identification of framings of teaching and the elaboration of

the criteria for development evaluation based on information about what kind of work academics see as meaningful to them may might support the promotion of the principle of social responsibility in university personnel policies . Therefore, I conducted a qualitative study in which I asked teaching academics how they perceive their situation. The theoretical framework of the study is the Capability Approach (CA).

This chapter starts by outlining the state of the art in research and introducing the current study in both its theoretical and empirical aspects. The subsequent presentation of the results focuses on the issue of the framing of teaching and its contextualization, and is based on the analysis of some examples from an interview. It shows how particular framings of teaching and the teaching–research relation are confronted with the existing professional discourses and available academic career structures, and how this affects development in an academic's space of agency. The conclusions and the discussion in the final part of the chapter aim to highlight further research paths and possibilities.

2. *Capability approach as a promising framework for this analysis*

The CA (see Sen 1999) was chosen as the theoretical framework because it promotes the idea of introducing novel practices and overcoming existing ones that do not support the realization of the common good (Alkire 2002: 140).

When "the very existence of a novel possibility for action demands a re-evaluation of the status quo" (Alkire 2002: 140), the role of actors as agents in recognizing and pursuing new action paths should not be underestimated. This is one of the reasons why the current chapter focuses on agency.

In the CA, agency freedom and agency achievement constitute what Sabina Alkire (2002: 129f.) calls "process freedom": agency achievement "refers to the person's success in the pursuit of the totality of her considered goals and objectives"; and agency freedom is "one's freedom to bring about the achievements one values and which one attempts to produce". Here it can be noted that the process aspect is stressed in the definitions of agency, whereas the "meaning" aspect is something rather taken for granted. In the current chapter, the specific interest is in how teaching academics conceptualize their work, particularly teaching; in other words, what are the meanings of teaching and how can their dynamics be characterized and evaluated?

The diversity of existing values and preferences limits operationalization of the CA in the dimension of opportunities (see Comim 2001). Nonetheless, I shall attempt to operationalize the CA in the space of agency. This is a promising appeal, because the CA

calls for incorporation of a broader social context into the evaluation (e.g. Shin 2011), whereas the dynamic character of social structures has not been taken into consideration sufficiently in previous research. The analysis of framings of teaching will make it possible to capture the dynamics of meanings of academic work. These dynamics of meanings are central in agency analysis following the principles of Giddens' structuration theory (1984) that stresses the interrelation between agency and structures.

The analytical account of identity negotiation (see Meisenbach 2008) will be applied in this analysis. The dynamics of meanings can be analysed in terms of how academics frame teaching and relate it to different contexts and academic labour market structures. It is about the interplay of different meanings of work and their reformulation: how do academics deal with the existing structures when framing their work in a meaningful way? According to Meisenbach (2008: 259), scholars are calling for more attention to the meanings and consequences of occupation, work, and professionalism, and they are doing this in relation to identity negotiation. Linked to this, the social dynamics of teaching reveals aspects of the meaning of work and the structural conditions of work (these are the "symbolic" and the "material" dimensions in the social interactionist terminology for the analysis of work; see Meisenbach 2008).

According to Emirbayer (1997: 288), the meaning or framing of work on an individual or collective level permits the categorization of phenomena. Meaning thus makes a categorical basis of action; it can assure its stability.

Sociological approaches such as identity negotiation analysis can be used to gather rich data on structures and social dynamics, whereas the CA makes it possible to draw normative conclusions on these while focusing on the individual. It allows the identification of structures pivotal for development. The self-reflection aspect implies that when there is a contradiction in the framing of work, agency is affected negatively, because such a contradiction limits an actor's abilities to choose: an actor cannot choose under the given conditions.

Traditionally, the Humboldtian idea of a close link between teaching and research has been characteristic of the German university (Teichler 2013: 61; Krücken 2003; Ash 2006). This discourse implies that "teaching is more creative and qualitatively more demanding, if the teachers are concurrently involved in research, and that research benefits if the scholars are involved in teaching" (Teichler 2013: 61). The material reality of academic work indicates that teaching and research assignments are not distributed in a similar way across different academic positions. The Humboldian principle tends to manifest more in the positions of

professors who have both teaching and research assignments. Junior academics are involved in teaching in various ways. Additionally, they are considered to be in a qualification stage as researchers ("*Wissenschaftler*"), or, in other words, future professors (Teichler 2013: 62). Being a researcher in Germany means engaging in a professional activity that is overwhelming. The life of a researcher includes a long and demanding qualification stage in which it is almost impossible to separate working life from private life, because research as is perceived as an activity engaging the whole person (see Krais 2008).

Following Meisenbach's principles (2008), the framings of academic work are challenged by the content of academic work as well as its changing structural conditions. In changing/emerging professional fields, in contrast, actors may formulate new framings; or in the case of less prestigious types of work, their framings struggle to overcome the existing societal and professional discourses. That is, framing is a conceptualization of work by an individual that is formulated in the "negotiation" between existing discourses and the material reality of her work in order to arrive at meaningful conceptualization. Moreover, it is the categorization that provides a basis for taking action.

That is, agency is about reframing or arriving at new meanings plus the re contextualization of these meanings. These recontextualizations lead to the formation of new arenas for action and the introduction of novel practices, that is, development in the broader sense.

The CA also allows an additional important remark regarding the consequences of the situations of contention or contradiction that emerge in the interviews on decision making and thus agency. Contentions in action orientations may disrupt decision making and thus lead to incoherence and inconsistency, which, in turn, following the principle of practical reasoning, has to be eliminated (see Alkire 2002: 106).

The theoretical framework can be summed up as follows: "self-reflection" – or reframing of teaching – is the basic foundation that has to be enabled for further development. "Resources" as social structures that support these framings are another important component enabling agency.

3. *The Study Sample and Methods*

In my study, I was interested in how teaching academics frame their working tasks. The fieldwork took place in 2012 and the beginning of 2013. The sample consisted of 16 teaching academics (8 female and 8 male) from junior faculty ("*NachwuchswissenschaftlerInnen*"). The interviews were conducted in German, and I have translated the quotes cited in this chapter myself. The method of the problem-centred

interview was applied in order to focus on the conceptualizations of teaching in relation to important career decisions (Witzel 1985). Interviewees were from different universities in Germany: a mid-sized university with a strong international research reputation in some subjects, a big technical university that is highly internationally prominent in research, a prominent academic research institute, and a mid-sized university with traditions from the eastern part of Germany that aims to become more renowned internationally in some subjects.

The interview partners were in the career stage of doing (9 interviewees) or having completed their doctorates (7 interviewees). They were involved in teaching and other professional activities at a sociology department, an educational science department, or an interdisciplinary doctoral training school. In the case of the education department, teaching demand was high due to the presence of teacher training programmes at the university; the department of education and sociology at the technical university was teaching subjects as a service discipline to future teachers as well. The sample also contained some academics who were self-employed or employed part-time with a half-position in research institutes and who teach occasionally.

The interview participants were from the social sciences representing education science, sociology, social work, and history. Their teaching load varied from 2 to 13 academic hours per week. Their positions at the universities and in the research institute were diverse.

The doctoral students receiving scholarships retained their student status: the sample included one member of an interdisciplinary doctoral training school. Although, as is usually the case for this kind of position, the interviewee did not have any teaching assignments, she was still teaching one or two courses. Other interview participants had the status of employees. The majority were scientific assistants ("*Wissenschaftliche MitarbeiterInnen*") with full- or part-time (half) positions involved in research and with a diverse teaching load. A lecturer for special assignments ("*Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben")* is a position only in teaching in which the teaching load can be very high. It was up to 13 academic hours per week in the case of one informant. Associate lecturer ("*Lehrbeauftragte(r)"*) is a position only in teaching and usually for one term, aimed at covering the specific teaching demand; these interviewees were teaching one or two courses. The employment contracts for the positions mentioned are usually for up to 2 years; the contracts for associate lectures, for one term. An assistant lecturer with a short-term contract ("*Akademischer Rat (auf Zeit)"*) who participated in the research had both teaching and research assignments with a higher remuneration than that of a scientific assistant; his contract was for 4 years. Nonetheless, such

salary differences are not found in every case; the position of *"Akademischer Rat"* gives a status of civil servant with or without tenure, and a scientific assistant is an employee.

The selection was made to ensure diversity in the sample in terms of gender, employment situation, work assignments, organizational context, as well as the representation of different disciplines in the social sciences. The disciplinary focus was to ensure homogeneity in academic work characteristics in terms of not only teaching and research but also the job opportunities in the labour market outside academia.

Coding used the procedures of Grounded Theory (Strauss/Corbin 1998). The specific thematic focus was on teaching in the context of other professional activities. Additional inspiration for coding was the research literature on less prestigious types of work within the symbolic interactionist methodological framework in which the work content has been related to different societal discourses and individual justification strategies (Meisenbach 2008).

4. Results

I shall concentrate my analysis on one interviewee, Maria. Maria is an especially interesting case, because she was involved in different kinds of teaching and research at the university. The consequences of the structures of the academic labour market in the narrower scope of the university with regard to how teaching and research are framed and with regard to decision making become very noticeable in the interview.

Maria has a full-time position as a scientific assistant with a teaching load of four academic hours per week. Parallel to that, she is working on her doctoral thesis. In the past, she had taken vocational training and worked in public education services outside the university.

She is teaching large student groups on the bachelor level, but also has experience of teaching small groups of master students. She is qualifying as a researcher, that is, works on her own research project in the form of writing a dissertation. At the same time, she is involved in a working group: an externally financed research project at the university.

4.1. Teaching

Framings of Maria's teaching are rather specific, particular, and very much bounded to the context of the university. The way she frames teaching is related to the characteristics of teaching she is currently practising. Maria is teaching compulsory courses ("Pflichtseminare"), and it is difficult for her to relate her teaching to the topic of her research. Maria stresses that she spends almost half of her working time on teaching, including holding seminars, reviewing student papers, replying to their emails, and advising them.

The material reality of her teaching she refers to is the bachelor level teaching: standardized content not related to her research interests, large student groups, and diverse students in terms of their motivation and background knowledge.

Maria notes that she lowered her demands on students and on herself as a teacher when she switched from teaching seminars on the master level to the bachelor level. She noticed that students "do not manage in the seminar". As a consequence, she says she is less enthusiastic about teaching, more careless, and allocates less time to preparation:

> I don't prepare for the seminars that much anymore. …to the situation that students don't manage in the seminar, I tell myself: "it is indeed not a problem" ... and of course I am a bit less enthusiastic when I stand in front of the students. (Maria)

She continues discussing her teaching with reference to the material reality of teaching on the bachelor level. Students have different capacities and not all of them manage well in the seminar. That is why she faces a problem in how to deal with this.

She tries to overcome the problem by relying on the importance of study goals and relocates her autonomy over deciding on her ways of teaching to the general goals of the studies and the relevance of her teaching for the future professional practice of the students. Despite the fact that students may have different background knowledge and motivations, the teacher should have an

> understanding of what the students actually have to learn in their studies, and that you do not say, 'well, they are not that advanced in their studies yet', or 'they don't want this', but that you keep your own profile in the seminar. (Maria)

This framing of teaching is very university-contextualized and it stresses study goals and points indirectly to the importance of the study programme. That means that she as a teacher would like to be goal-oriented and put frames on her way of teaching. Setting goals is an important procedure to relate the seminar to the overall study experience of the students at the university in a strategic way. The particular technique she relies on is to stick to the "profile", so the goals of the studies are in balance with the goals of the teacher. In this way, "good teaching" can be ensured.

In relation to this, she stresses that teaching has to be relevant for the future work of the students, to address the problems their professional practice:

"good teaching… is about how the problems considered in the seminar come up in practice and how one could possibly react to them." (Maria)

This framing of teaching is of a particular character: it stresses teaching being outcome-oriented, clearly structured, and not changing arbitrarily. Further framings of teaching can be considered as particular, referring to particular aspects of teaching, such as "teaching as seminar talk production".

The framing of producing communication in the seminar can be seen as being both very technical and, at the same time, very university-specific due to the reference to students who are difficult to deal with:

a good seminar is when the students talk and communicate with each other, with me, that is, there is a productive atmosphere, and that there it is only talked, but then it is exactly … the production of the seminar talk. (Maria)

The situation when students do not talk in the seminar is a sign of bad teaching (Maria: 65). That is why it is generally important that students "react and actively participate" (Maria: 69).

4.2. Research

When framing research, Maria stresses particular and more applied aspects of it, rather than the aspects related to dealing with abstract knowledge. "Scientific" ("wissenschaftliche") work, that is academic work, can take the form of "preparing presentations", "writing articles", or "sitting concentrated on the dissertation" (Maria).

When it comes to the activities she engages in as a scientist, she talks about her research work in the team:

We developed questionnaires, organized a survey. Then we had to write reports, make presentations of our results … (Maria).

She stresses the benefits of working in a team: one can gain support and share responsibility for success. She gives an example of making a presentation to the clients. The latter are associated with the non-academic environment that is alienated and hostile (Maria).

4.3. Teaching and research relation

Maria's framings of academic work including teaching and research are of a particular character; that is, they refer to particular techniques and procedures rather than the abstract

idea of scientific knowledge processing. In addition, these framings are very much contextualized. That means they refer to either university structures of teaching such as the curriculum or study programme or to characteristics of the students. Or they refer to the context of research in a working group, including work sharing, workload distribution, and confidence in her work derived from group membership. The interview data shows the persistence of the idea of the unity of teaching and research as soon as the interviewee refers to both when narrating on different components of her work. Thus, it is interesting to see how Maria relates both spheres of academic work: teaching and research.

The narrations on the material reality of teaching including the high teaching load and standardized teaching unrelated to the topic of research emerge together with more specific and context-bounded framings of teaching. On the one hand, academic work is "that one prepares presentations, writes articles" (Maria), and good teaching is rather about bringing in new things and being up to date. This leads to the way of reformulating the teaching and research relation for her situation. This situation includes a relatively high teaching load, responsibilities in the research project, and lack of time for her own research project – her dissertation. Importantly, positions below professorship are generally considered as a qualification stage on the way to becoming a scientist in Germany. During this stage, carrying out independent research, that is writing a dissertation, is pivotal.

She relies on the framing that being up to date is what makes her teaching good and makes it into university teaching. If structural changes increase the workload, this major prerequisite of university teaching might be lost. She makes a remark regarding university positions with a very high teaching load:

> For instance, the posts with eighteen hours of teaching per week, that makes 9 seminars per week, they are, I think, difficult to do, because then you really want to bring in new things and to be at the forefront of the scientific debate, then you can become like a teacher at school, that is, and there it is then easier. There you probably do not have to be at the forefront of the scientific debate. (Maria)

At the same time, such conditions of high workload legitimize teaching being less related to the "scientific debate", or to research. She relies on the framings of university teaching as based on "being up to date", "informed". These aspects of teaching are seen by the informant as the major difference between school teaching and university teaching. When the structures are changing, it is legitimate to weaken the interrelation between teaching and

research. In the case of a high teaching load, one does not have to be necessarily at the forefront of the scientific debate.

The contextualized framing of teaching is related to the discourse on "the students difficult to deal with". The students are difficult to deal with because of their diversity and growing numbers. The framing justifies changes in teaching as work, but teaching is still bounded to the specific context of the university in the implicit reference to students and study goals.

The agency analysis focuses on whether the framings of teaching and research are non-contradictory for this interviewee. Her framing of teaching is in balance with the framing of research. The linkage between teaching and research is reformulated into the relation between the activities that are considered in rather technical and specific terms: as reading and "being up to date".

Research for her is also reading, that is why, by doing teaching, when she has to read a lot, she is approaching research work, and it can be supposed that her framing of "research as also reading" approaches the conceptualization of research as a rather theoretical research. This, in turn, implies that theoretical research is also reading:

> Well, research for me is the most exciting activity among all in academic work. I think teaching is also very important, and I also don't think that teaching and research must be always coupled with each other; that is, you can also do good teaching when you are not doing research yourself. I am convinced of that, in that that, particularly, if you have a very narrow definition of research. That is, you are doing research, yes, you are researching, yes, also by approaching closer the subject theoretically. That is, when you read a lot, I think you can do very good teaching too without doing own research projects. (Maria)

The citation below illustrates that she would like to claim that reading is an important aspect of good teaching. The relation between teaching and research is established through this activity:

> Although sometimes I have even a feeling, particularly, when I am preparing now for my seminars, I still read for example also a lot. (Maria)

Thus, teaching, research, and the relation between those two components of academic work is framed in this interview in a particular way. In addition, it is very much university-

contextualized. In relation to this, it can be asked how she relates her work to her professional future in a meaningful way. When analysing this, the interview reveals a conflict.

Maria gives an account that shows how decision making and thus action is blocked as a result of a conflict in professional orientations:

Particularly, this is very difficult in a life of a scientist. Exactly when you want this, that is, when you would like to stay at the university, within the regulation six plus six years,[1] and now it is not the case for me that I have a clear goal, that I <u>necessarily</u> want to become a professor, and at the moment I am thinking it over. Where can it lead to? Should it be teaching indeed for me? I think there are already many committed people who can take the lecturer positions … working in projects … what would be a very insecure perspective of course, because I have now to work 30 years more before retirement, that would be quite a few projects (laughing), which you should have been doing, if you take into account that the long projects themselves well, normally, don't last longer than for 3 years. Or then again possibly to have to reorient outside of academia, either to some research institutes, consultancy institutes, or think it over again in a completely different way. It is a very strange situation because I learned a profession before, and then was thinking ok, now I'll go to the university and learn something different once again, but then I have my profession and I am continuing practising it and now one is in the life of a scientist and actually it is even more precarious. (Maria)

Research as a component of academic work is related to the discourse of "living a life of a scientist". "A life of a scientist" is about "emotional pressures that the life of a scientist brings, that you question yourself, that you get angry, that you sometimes exaggerate in one direction or another, that you do not let up" (Maria). It is also about a blurred boundary between private life and working life and about working overtime: "well, we all here at the university work actually more, because it is enjoyable" (Maria).

She relies on this discourse to justify the lack of infrastructure for professional development for her in academia, as she says, beyond becoming a researcher, that is getting a professorship.

The rather organizationally contextualized and "particular" framing of research would not be in balance with the idea that such research can be an overwhelming activity that would absorb the life of an individual as whole and be related to some difficulties to cope with such

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[1] Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz, according to which employment in positions funded from the university budget is limited in time up to 12 years (6 years before obtaining doctoral degree and 6 after).

as unstable employment, risks in career development, challenges to balance work and life, and so forth.

The particular framings of academic work do not fit the existing professional discourses on what it means to be a researcher and available career development structures. Moreover, the framing of "living a life of a scientist" justifies a lack of sufficient professional development opportunities and keeps her from making a decision about her career. The tension between different professional orientations and structural conditions characterize this conflict.

In the case of this interview, the framings of teaching and research support each other, that is, they act as symbolic resources in framing academic work. This illustrates that although self-reflexivity is enabled, the professional discourses and the material reality of the teaching load and the lack of career development structures apart from professorship do not support agency in the dimension of resources. The opposite is the case: contradictions arise.

On the one hand, the professional discourse of "living a life of a scientist" is important in the case of this informant in explaining the challenging reality of her employment at the university: the inability to plan and being exposed to short-term contracts. This employment situation is seen as being related to the specificity of the profession, qualifying into a researcher. On the other hand, the ideal of being a scientist contradicts with her conceptualization of research, which is of a particular character – furthermore, with the material reality of her work in which she does not have enough time left to concentrate on her qualification to be a researcher – her dissertation.

In other words, the discourse of "living the life of a scientist" can be emancipatory, that is, resourceful, when she addresses the lack of resources for career development in the material reality of her work. At the same time, this discourse is in conflict with her framing of research and teaching; this contradiction blocks decision making and also agency when she narrates on her future development: she postpones the decision. The re-orientation towards contexts "outside" academia is blocked, because it questions her previous decisions and requires "completely different ways of thinking". This means that there is a lack of resources for recontextualization. "Living a life of a scientist" is a professional discourse and constitutes a structure that incorporates the "boundary making" on both symbolic and material levels.[2]

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[2] Such as "being too old to working in business"; "there outside, they speak a different language"; etc. – examples from other interviews, in case of this interview - the perceived "hostility" or "another way of thinking outside" blocks cooperation possibilities in the broader context of the academic labour market.

For that reason, it is possible to speak about adjustment, rather than development here,[3] especially in the case of the structure of "living a life of a scientist" on which the informant relies. This structure constrains agency. The institutional framework of the academic labour market does not support her framing of teaching and research in the narrower context of university employment and career. Many researchers have pointed to the insecure situation of scientific assistants and increasing completion for permanent positions, such as professorships (e.g. Klecha/Reimer 2008; Gülker 2010, Lange-Vester/Teiwes-Kügler 2013).

5. *Conclusions and discussion*

Self-reflexivity or reasoned action is characteristic of "skilful actors" (see Fligstein 2001); that is those actors who challenge the existing structures. In other words, agency is characteristic of those actors who can overcome them by reframing and recontextualizing themselves and their work.

In the case of Maria, her framing of research and teaching were particular, university-contextualized, and in balance with each other. It was possible to establish the relation between teaching and research through the idea of being up to date in the scientific debate and reading. It makes her current work as a teacher on the Bachelor level and as a researcher in an externally funded project at the university justifiable and meaningful. This framing corresponds with the idea to formulate and promote research-based teaching (Huber et al. 2009).

However, her work situation does not allow her to spend enough time on her dissertation and this does not match well with the professional discourse of living a life of a scientist and qualifying as a researcher. This discourse is nonetheless important. She relies on it to justify her lack of career development opportunities in the sense of getting a permanent university position in the future. As a result, the conflict in professional development orientations is not resolved; it does not allow her to meaningfully relate her current work to a professional future. Postponing decisions regarding possible career transitions indicates that her action is blocked. At the same time, the coexistence of different discourses and framings that are in a contention indicates that the way academics see their work changes, and that there is a dynamic in the meanings of its components.

From the perspective of the evaluation of professional development in the dimension of agency, greater self-reflection is the case for this informant when she sees teaching as activities of a particular character. Her framings of teaching are nonetheless placed in the

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[3] The concept of adaptive preferences of the CA might be relevant for characterizing it (see e.g. Quizilbash 2007).

university context. However, there is a lack of support for this framing in the resources aspect. The reasons for this are, on the one hand, the academic labour market structures including the professional discourse of being a scientist; on the other hand, the lack of present structural possibilities of stable employment in the university or the problems with a transition to the labour market outside the university.

Research shows that when designing personnel development policies and respective organizational structures, it is important to consider the aspects related to material reality and symbolic aspects of the work of academics. These include contract lengths, the availability of stable positions, the number of teaching- or research-intensive positions, career development structures, and the framings of academic work – particularly teaching. The policies developed based on ascribing research-like characteristics to teaching without providing stable employment conditions and without reward and promotion criteria to encourage teaching are open to criticism. The policies supporting agency should not mean just a relocation of risks and responsibilities to the actors, but efforts to ensure their abilities to choose and be flexible in seeking new opportunities both inside and outside academia. Different types of teaching and teachers have to be taken into account when developing academic staff at universities. The interview extracts presented in the chapter showed that, on one hand, the professional discourses on research sometimes constrain agency. Some regulations such as *Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz*, as well as a lack of stable jobs apart from professorship do not support a recontextualization of the framings of academic work. These framings were formulated in a more particular way in the context of the actual teaching and research practice. An important way to enhance agency and development would be to improve the material reality of teaching, so that it would allow young academics to spend more time on their own dissertations and provide them with stable employment and professional growth opportunities.

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