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Article

A squandered opportunity: Even after the financial crisis, top positions in large financial firms still largely occupied by men

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Weekly Report

A squandered opportunity: Even after the financial crisis, top positions in large financial firms still largely occupied by men

Despite the recent financial crisis and widespread mergers in the banking industry, the German financial sector remains largely unchanged in one respect: the percentage of women on the corporate boards of Germany's banks and insurance companies was nearly as low in 2010 as in the pre-crisis years. As a result, German companies have left the potential for innovation that has been shown to accompany a significant increase of women in top management untapped. Although more than half of all employees in the financial sector are women, only 2.9% of executive board¹ members in Germany's major banks and savings institutions and just 2.5% of board members in the largest insurance companies are female. In this respect, the financial crisis has not changed the gender divide in top management.

The percentage of women in board positions in Germany's largest 100 banks and savings institutions has remained almost constant since 2009; on the boards of German insurance companies, the percentage of women has even declined. Women are slightly better represented on supervisory boards than on executive boards: 16.3% of supervisory board members in the top 100 banks and savings institutions are female compared to just 11.9% in the top 62 insurance companies, a 0.5 point lower percentage than last year. The great majority of women were appointed to supervisory boards as employee representatives, thus as a result of co-determination legislation²—66.7% in the case of banks and savings institutions and 81.3% in the case of insurance companies. Moreover, public-sector banks are no models for gender equality in top management: with only 2% women on their executive boards and 16.5% on their supervisory boards, these state-run institutions are no better than their private-sector counterparts, despite federal and state gender equality legislation. However, the only women chairing supervisory boards in the public or private sector are found in public-sector banks and savings banks.

¹ In Germany's two-tier corporate governance system, corporations have two boards with clearly separated functions. The executive board is responsible for managing the company; the supervisory board oversees and advises the executive board.

² According to the Mitbestimmungsgesetz (MitbestG) BGBI [Codetermination Act], par. 1 and 7, a supervisory board with balanced proportions of employer and employee representatives is compulsory for companies with more than 2,000 employees and with the legal status of an AG, GmbH, KG a.A. or cooperative. According to the Drittelbeteiligungsgesetz (DrittelbG) BGBI [One-Third Employee Representation Act], par. 1 and 4, one-third of supervisory board members have to be employee representatives in companies with more than 500 employees and with the legal status of an AG, GmbH, KG a.A., insurance association a.G. or cooperative.

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Table 1

Percentage of women staff among total staff subject to social insurance contributions by economic sector

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Financial services	57.4	56.9	56.9	57.1	57.2
Central banks and commercial banks	57.8	57.2	57.3	57.6	57.6
Insurance, reinsurance, and pension funds (without social security)	49.1	48.9	48.8	50.0	49.2
Activities linked to financial and insurance services	61.1	61.6	61.5	61.2	60.9

Source: Federal Statistical Office. Federal Employment Agency. DIW Berlin calculations.

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More than half of all employees in the financial and insurance sector are women.

All of Germany's large financial institutions crucially need to catch up in hiring women for senior positions. Without a clear and binding road map, however, the gender gap in management positions in large public and private financial institutions is not going to close at any time in the near future.

In the wake of the financial crisis, the German financial sector faced serious structural problems, resulting in massive restructuring.³ Many countries

³ Schrooten, M.: Internationale Finanzkrise erhöht Reformdruck im deutschen Bankensektor. Wochenbericht, DIW Berlin, no. 8/2008, p. 77-82.

dealt with the crisis by replacing individuals in top management. The EU Commission has expressed hope that such restructuring processes will lead to a higher percentage of women in top management—especially since studies have shown that gender equality on corporate boards is indeed a factor in company success.⁴

DIW Berlin regularly investigates women's representation in top positions (executive and supervisory boards) in the German financial sector.⁵ The present study examined the top 100 banks (selected by balance sheet total) and the top 62 insurance companies (selected by revenue from premiums) in Germany.⁶ The data used describe women's and men's participation in decision-making processes in the financial sector at the end of 2010.

Overview

Women on executive boards of large banks, savings institutions and insurance companies in Germany 2010

Rank	100 largest banks and savings institutions		legal status
7	Hypo Real Estate Holding AG	Manuela Better (chairperson)	private
13	Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG	Manuela Better (chairperson)	private
24	SEB AG	Renate Bloß-Barkowski, Liselotte Hjorth	private
47	HSBC Trinkaus & Burkhardt AG	Carola Gräfin von Schmettow	private
56	Stadtparkasse München	Marlies Mirbeth	public-sector
60	Targobank AG & Co. KGaA	Maria Topaler	private
63	Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf	Dr. Birgit Roos, Karin-Brigitte Göbel	public-sector
64	Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg	Jacqueline Tag	public-sector
82	Sparda-Bank Südwest eG	Karin Ipfling	cooperative
91	BB Bank eG	Gabriele Kellermann	cooperative
	62 largest insurance companies		
5	ERGO Versicherungsgruppe AG	Dr. Bettina Anders	
16	Zurich Deutscher Herold Lebensversicherungs-AG	Dr. Andrea van Aubel	
29	Provinzial Rheinland Konzern	Sabine Kummenerl	
32	Württembergische Lebensversicherung AG	Ruth Martin	
34	Signal Krankenversicherung a.G.	Marlies Hirschberg-Tafel	
35	Zurich Versicherung AG (Deutschland)	Dr. Marita Kraemer	
49	Alte Leipziger Lebensversicherung a.G.	Wiltrud Pekarek	
53	Bayerische Beamtenkrankenkasse AG	Manuela Kiechle	
57	Württembergische Versicherung AG	Ruth Martin	
60	Provinzial Rheinland Lebensversicherung AG	Sabine Kummenerl	

Source: Data compiled by DIW Berlin.

DIW Berlin 2011

High proportion of women in the financial sector

The majority of employees in the financial sector as a whole are female (Table 1). According to the Federal Employment Agency, the percentage of women in jobs subject to social insurance contributions was 57% in the banking sector and 49% in the insurance sector in spring 2010. In activities

⁴ See, e.g., McKinsey & Company: Women Matter 2010. Women at the top of corporations: Making it happen. 2010. Catalyst, The Bottom Line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards. Catalyst, New York 2007.

⁵ Most recently: Holst, E., Wiemer, A.: Women still greatly underrepresented on the top boards of large companies. Weekly Report no. 7/2010, p. 45-53.

⁶ Selection by balance sheet total (2009) of the 100 largest banks and thrift institutions according to Huck, H.: Die 100 größten deutschen Kreditinstitute. In: Die Bank. Zeitschrift für Bankpolitik und Praxis, 8/2010, p. 30-31. Selection by revenue from premiums (2009) of the 62 big insurance companies was based on data from Wolters Kluwer Deutschland GmbH: Die großen 500. Deutschlands Top-Unternehmen. November 2010, Müssig Verlag. Research on the recruitment for top positions in banks and insurance companies was conducted from October 2010 up to the end of December 2010. Data were obtained from company websites, from 2009 business and annual reports, and from the companies themselves upon request.

Table 2

Women on executive and supervisory boards of large banks, savings institutions, and insurance companies in Germany, 2006-2010

	Banks and savings institutions					Insurance companies				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Executive board/management										
Total number of companies	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
With data on composition of boards	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
Without female members of the board	90	91	93	91	90	53	52	49	51	52
Percentage	90.0	91.0	93.0	91.0	90.0	84.1	80.0	84.5	82.3	83.9
Total number of members ¹	442	430	414	418	408	394	411	372	392	399
Men	431	420	406	407	396	384	398	363	381	389
Women	11	10	8	11	12	10	13	9	11	10
Percentage of women	2.5	2.3	1.9	2.6	2.9	2.5	3.2	2.4	2.8	2.5
Chairs (total)	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
Men	98	98	100	100	98	63	65	57	62	62
Women	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of women	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supervisory boards/administrative councils										
Total number of companies	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
With data on composition of boards	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
Without female members of the board	11	9	15	13	12	17	16	16	14	14
Percentage	11.0	9.0	15.0	13.0	12.0	27.0	24.6	27.6	22.6	22.6
Total number of members ¹	1 633	1 573	1 566	1 555	1 548	812	830	727	734	732
Men	1 387	1 331	1 324	1 294	1 295	720	726	629	643	645
Women	246	242	242	261	253	92	105	98	91	87
Percentage of women	15.1	15.4	15.5	16.8	16.3	11.3	12.7	13.5	12.4	11.9
Chairs (total)	100	100	100	100	100	63	65	58	62	62
Men	97	95	97	96	97	63	65	57	61	61
Women	3	5	3	4	3	0	0	1	1	1
Percentage of women	3.0	5.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.6	1.6
Companies with data on employees' representation	33	55	51	50	44	24	41	38	52	34
Total number of members	599	858	767	764	642	291	454	444	634	351
Men	496	731	654	637	549	256	406	390	555	319
Women	103	127	113	127	93	35	49	54	79	32
Female employees' representatives	85	95	84	91	62	32	45	41	63	26
Percentage of all women	82.5	74.8	74.3	71.7	66.7	91.4	91.8	75.9	79.7	81.3

¹ Only companies supplying data on the composition of their boards.

Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

DIW Berlin 2011

The percentage of women on the executive boards of banks, savings institutions, and insurance companies is smaller than 3%. In insurance companies, this number has even gone down since 2009.

linked to banking and insurance, nearly 61% of all employees were women.

Banks and savings institutions

Most executive boards still dominated by men

Ninety percent of all executive boards in banks and savings institutions with a majority of female employees are still constituted entirely of men. Of the 408 executive board positions considered in our study, only 12 (2.9%) are occupied by women. Of the 100 executive boards examined, only two had a chairwoman: Manuela Better at both Hypo Real

Estate Holding WG and Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG (see overview). Here, almost nothing has changed since before the crisis, despite sweeping staff changes in top positions at major banks that offered substantial opportunities to correct the gender imbalance.

Proportion of women on supervisory boards at 16.3%

Nearly 90% of all banking sector supervisory boards or administrative councils (both referred to below as supervisory boards) have at least one woman among their members (Table 2). This percentage appears to have reached a plateau, however, and was even higher in 2006 and 2007 than it was in 2010.

Table 3

Top 100 banks and savings institutions¹ with at least 25% women on their supervisory board in 2010

Rank	Company	Total members	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Legal status
13	Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG	6	3	3	50.0	private
9	WestLB AG	20	13	7	35.0	public-sector
6	Unicredit Bank AG (ehemals Bayerische Hypo- und Vereinsbank AG)	12	8	4	33.3	public-sector
7	Hypo Real Estate Holding AG	6	4	2	33.3	private
41	Santander Consumer Bank AG	9	6	3	33.3	public-sector
45	IBB Investitionsbank Berlin	9	6	3	33.3	public-sector
53	Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein (IB)	12	8	4	33.3	private
54	Deutsche Schiffsbank AG	6	4	2	33.3	public-sector
58	Sparkasse Hannover	18	12	6	33.3	private
90	Kreissparkasse München-Starnberg	12	8	4	33.3	private
95	Sparkasse Mainfranken	26	18	8	30.8	public-sector
1	Deutsche Bank AG	20	14	6	30.0	private
34	Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall AG	20	14	6	30.0	cooperative
86	Sparkasse Essen	17	12	5	29.4	public-sector
98	Stadtsparkasse Wuppertal	17	12	5	29.4	public-sector
38	Bremer Landesbank Kreditanstalt Oldenburg – Girozentrale	18	13	5	27.8	public-sector
85	Sparkasse Krefeld	18	13	5	27.8	public-sector
23	Landeskreditbank Baden-Württemberg – Förderbank (L-Bank)	15	11	4	26.7	public-sector
91	BB Bank eG	15	11	4	26.7	cooperative
2	Commerzbank AG	20	15	5	25.0	private
24	SEB AG	12	9	3	25.0	public-sector
55	Wüstenrot Bank AG Pfandbriefbank	8	6	2	25.0	private
60	Targobank AG & Co. KGaA	12	9	3	25.0	private
64	Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg	16	12	4	25.0	private

¹ Only banks and savings institutions supplying data on the composition of their supervisory board.

Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

DIW Berlin 2011

Twelve of the top 100 banks and savings institutions do not have any women on their executive and supervisory boards; these include the private companies Dexia Kommunalbank Deutschland AG (rank 26), Düsseldorfer Hypothekbank AG (rank 42), Wüstenrot Bausparkasse AG (rank 50), DVB Bank SE (rank 52), Debeka Bausparkasse AG (rank 57), and Sparkasse Bremen AG (rank 68). If we compare all supervisory board seats, the proportion of women on the supervisory boards of large banks and savings institutions (16.3%) is higher than on those of private companies (without the financial sector)⁷—but still extremely low in comparison to the high percentage of female employees in that sector. Only 3 of the 100 supervisory boards are chaired by a woman.

Two-thirds of women on the supervisory boards of banks and savings institutions were appointed to

those positions as employee representatives under employee co-determination legislation. On a positive note, more women have been appointed to bank and savings institutions' supervisory boards from the other side of the bargaining table: In 2006, employers appointed 17% of the women on supervisory boards, 33% in 2010.

Among the 100 banks in this study, there is only one with a gender-balanced supervisory board: Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG with Manuela Better as chairwoman of the board. Two of the three women on the supervisory board were appointed by employers, one as an employee representative. In all other supervisory bodies, women are a minority. In the “best practice” ranking of all supervisory boards of banks in this study, West LB AG ranks second, with a 35% female board (Table 3). At least 8 other banks have one-third female board members, half of them being public-sector banks.

⁷ The percentage of women in supervisory boards in the top 200 companies (excluding the financial sector) in Germany is 10.6%. See Holst, E., Schimeta, J.: Twenty-nine women to 906 men: Continuing gender inequality on the boards of Germany's top companies. Weekly Report no. 4/2011.

Public-sector banks and savings institutions as role models?

This is the first time in a study of this kind that we differentiate the banks and savings institutions by legal status (public-sector, private, cooperative). It becomes clear that despite existing legislation promoting gender equality, public banks do not provide a positive example for the placement of women in top positions. However, there are positive exceptions: The only three top 100 supervisory boards that are chaired by women are publicly owned. In many of these positions, a political function plays an important role: Bremer Landesbank is chaired by Bremen's financial senator, Karoline Linnert (Green party); Kreissparkasse München-Starnberg is chaired by Munich's district administrator, Johanna Rumschöttel (SPD); and the Sparkasse Saarbrücken is chaired by Saarbrücken's mayor, Charlotte Britz (SPD). The percentage of women on the supervisory boards of these public institutions is about 16% overall, approximately the same as in the other sectors.

On the executive boards of public-sector institutes, the proportion of women is even lower (2%) than on the executive boards of private banks and savings institutions (3.8%) (Table 4). There are even a few public-sector financial institutions without a single woman on either their executive or supervisory boards: Bayerische Landesbank (rank 8), Westdeutsche Immobilien Bank AG (rank 40), LfA Förderbank Bayern (rank 46), and Bayerische Landesbausparkasse (rank 68).

Insurance companies

Only 10 out of 399 board members are female

Only 2.5% of insurance company board members are women (Table 2): 10 out of 399 board positions are occupied by 8 women (two hold dual positions). The highest percentage of women on a supervisory board (nearly 45%) can be found at Zurich Deutscher Herold Lebensversicherungs-AG (Table 5). Not only does the company have the only female chairperson of a supervisory board, Annette Court; it also has Dr. Andrea van Aubel, one of the few women on an executive board in Germany (overview).

Table 4

Women in supervisory/executive boards of large banks, savings institutions in Germany 2010 by legal status

	All examined banks/savings institutions	Public-sector	Private	Cooperative
Supervisory boards/administrative councils				
Total number of companies	100	52	36	12
With data on composition of boards	100	52	36	12
Without female members on the board	90	49	31	10
Percentage	90.0	94.2	86.1	83.3
Total number of members ¹	408	203	157	48
Men	396	199	151	46
Women	12	4	6	2
Percentage of women	2.9	2.0	3.8	4.2
Chairs (total)	100	52	36	12
Men	100	52	34	12
Women	0	0	2	0
Percentage of women	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0
Executive boards/management				
Total number of companies	100	52	36	12
With data on composition of boards	100	52	36	12
Without female members on the board	12	4	7	1
Percentage	12.0	7.7	19.4	8.3
Total number of members ¹	1 548	960	396	192
Men	1 295	802	333	160
Women	253	158	63	32
Percentage of women	16.3	16.5	15.9	16.7
Chairs (total)	100	52	36	12
Men	97	49	36	12
Women	3	3	0	0
Percentage of women	3.0	5.8	0.0	0.0

¹ Only companies supplying data on the composition of their boards.

Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

DIW Berlin 2011

On the executive boards of public-sector banks, the percentage of women is lower than in private banks or cooperatives.

Table 5

Top 62 insurance companies¹ with at least 25% women in their supervisory board in 2010

Rank	Company	Total members	Men	Women	Percentage of women
16	Zurich Deutscher Herold Lebensversicherungs-AG	9	5	4	44.4
43	DBV Deutsche Beamtenversicherung Lebensversicherung Aktiengesellschaft	9	5	4	44.4
10	Allianz Versicherungs-AG	6	4	2	33.3
24	Debeka Lebensversicherungsverein a.G.	9	6	3	33.3
14	R + V Lebensversicherung AG	16	12	4	25.0

¹ Only insurance companies supplying data on the composition of their supervisory board.

Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

DIW Berlin 2011

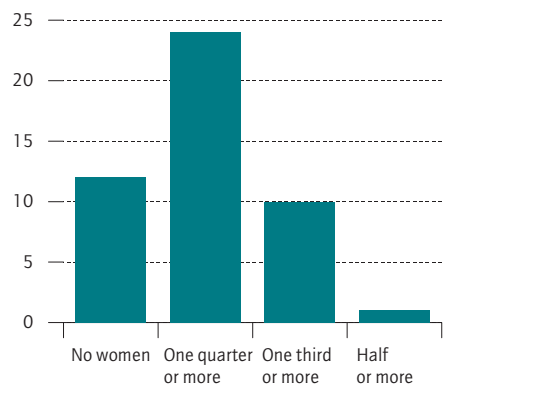
Lower percentage of women (11.9%) on insurance company supervisory boards than in banks and savings institutions

The overall percentage of women on the supervisory boards of Germany's 62 largest insurance compa-

Figure 1

Top 100 banks and savings institutions by percentage of women on supervisory board

As a percentage



Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

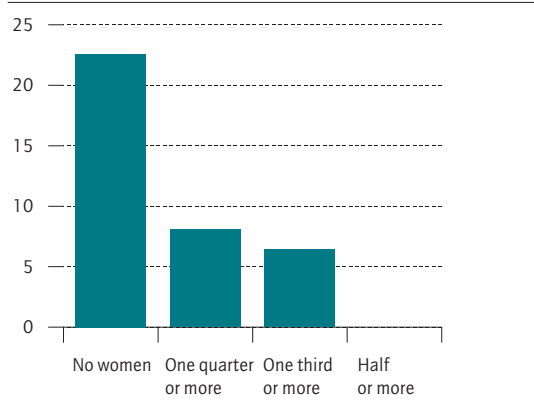
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Ten percent of banks and savings institutions in Germany have a supervisory board with one third female members.

Figure 2

Top 62 insurance companies by percentage of women on supervisory board

As a percentage



Source: DIW Berlin calculations.

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Nearly one quarter of German insurance companies has an all-male supervisory board.

ies (by revenues from premiums) is 11.9%—lower than in the top banks and savings institutions. At 22.6%, the proportion of insurance companies with no women at all on their supervisory board is significantly higher than for banks and savings institutions—a situation that has remained virtually unchanged over recent years (Figures 1 and 2).

On a more positive note, in 2010, more women were appointed by employers to insurance company supervisory boards than in 2006. However, the percentage of women appointed by employers was also higher in 2008 than in 2010, meaning that men find themselves in an even stronger position in the wake of the financial crisis than before. In 2010, more than four-fifths of all female supervisory board members in top insurance companies were appointed as employee representatives—again, their share in the insurance sector is significantly higher, at 81.3%, than in banks and savings institutions, at 66.7%. Thirteen insurance companies have entirely male supervisory and executive boards. These include large firms like the AXA group (rank 7), Hannover Rückversicherungs AG (rank 9), and Versicherungskammer Bayern (rank 11).

Reasons for the underrepresentation of women in top banking positions

The results show that the so-called “glass ceiling,” which prevents women from accessing top positions, is very pronounced in Germany. A comparative study on re-structuring processes in German and Finnish banks concluded that in Finland, women are included in the pool of candidates for senior positions much more “naturally” than in Germany, where women are usually only banks’ second choice for such positions.⁸ Moreover, the separation between family and career, and the clear gender roles underlying this separation, are not as pronounced in Finland as in Germany. In Finland, preconceived notions about women’s responsibilities outside the workplace do not reduce their chances of promotion as significantly as is the case in Germany. Prejudices and gender stereotypes clearly play an important role here in circumscribing women’s career opportunities.⁹

The discrepancy between the large number of female employees in the financial sector and their massive underrepresentation in management positions can also be explained by “gendered career paths”.¹⁰ This concept refers to career paths that are geared toward the life courses of men without taking the specific concerns of women into account. Such careers may, for example, entail specific job demands and a work-

⁸ Theobald, H., Quack, S., Tienari, J.: Organisationswandel, Geschlecht und Macht. Ein Vergleich deutscher und finnischer Banken. In: Dackweiler, R.-M. (ed.): Frauen – Macht – Geld. Westfälisches Dampfboot, Münster, 2003, p. 184-206.

⁹ Holst, E., Wiemer, A.: Frauen sind in Spitzengremien der Wirtschaft unterrepräsentiert. Eine Analyse der Ursachen und Handlungsansätze. In: Wirtschaftsdienst, no. 10, 2010, p. 692-699.

¹⁰ See, for example, Fahrenholz, A. and Meißner, H.: Welche Macht wollen Frauen? Reflexive Karriereorientierung von weiblichen Führungskräften in der Landesbank Berlin. In: Dackweiler, R.M. (ed.), l.c. p. 207-226.

ing culture that effectively excludes anyone with family duties. A Swiss study on banks and insurance companies concluded that the male business culture is the main obstacle to women pursuing careers in the financial sector.¹¹ These conditions can also hinder men's careers if the choice to play an active role in parenting prevents them from meeting the criteria of executive level success.¹² The male business model thus forms another major obstacle to women entering top management—in addition to culturally embedded notions of women's primary responsibility for home and family, and resulting assumptions about women's skills and capabilities. Since female role models and women in top positions are scarce, women often find it difficult to actively pursue their career objectives and claim their share the way men do.¹³

Furthermore, the crucial importance of encouragement from superiors and membership in powerful networks must also be noted—two factors that tend to benefit men.¹⁴ Entrenched “old boys' networks” are often essential for access to top positions. Thomas Sattelberger of Deutsche Telekom AG describes this phenomenon, as well as other ways of hijacking “very professional” hiring processes to give jobs to men, as “hypocrisy in selecting the ‘best’”.¹⁵

Conclusion

In a statement on gender equality and its positive impact on the economy, the European Commission wrote, “Without doubt, the crisis has raised awareness of the gender inequalities that exist in the finance sector and has created a unique opportunity for change. The question is, will the industry take up this challenge and bring about the cultural revolution that is so clearly needed.”¹⁶ So far, however,

11 See Leu, A., Rütter, H., Umbach-Daniel, A.: *FinanzFrau: Die Situation von Frauen in Banken und Versicherungen*. Kaufmännischer Verband Schweiz, Zürich 2006.

12 See Connell, R.: *Im Innern des gläsernen Turms: Die Konstruktion von Männlichkeiten im Finanzkapital*. In: *Feministische Studien* 1/2010, p. 8-24.

13 IBV No. 14 of 7/21/2004: *Frauen in Führungspositionen in Banken*. Summary of Festing, M., Hansmeyer, C.: *Frauen in Führungspositionen in Banken. Ausgewählte Ergebnisse in einer empirischen Untersuchung in Deutschland*. ESCP-EAP Working Paper No. 3. http://doku.iab.de/ibv/2004/ibv1404_27.pdf [3/5/2008].

14 For an overview of the reasons for the ongoing low percentage of female board members, see E. Holst and A. Wiemer: *Frauen sind in Spitzengremien der Wirtschaft unterrepräsentiert. Eine Analyse der Ursachen und Handlungsansätze*. Wirtschaftsdienst, 10/2010, p. 692-699.

15 Sattelberger, T.: *Praxisbeispiel Telekom: Die Frauenquote – Qual der Entscheidung und der schwierige Weg vor uns*. In: Krell, G., Ortlieb, R., Sieben, B. (ed.): *Chancengleichheit durch Personalpolitik*, 6th edition, Gabler, Wiesbaden. Forthcoming in summer 2011.

16 European Commission: *More women in senior positions. Key to economic stability and growth*. 2010, p. 22. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=762&langId=en&pubId=476&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>

the reality in the German financial sector does not give much reason for optimism. The process of restructuring that followed the financial crisis did not bring women into the boardroom to the extent that many had hoped. Although it was clearly men who were responsible for the decisions leading up to the financial crisis, the gender imbalance in senior positions still remained unchanged when the dust had settled. Indeed, decision makers continue to fall back into pre-crisis patterns, even when it comes to ongoing processes of restructuring. The male monoculture has thus remained intact in the top echelon of the financial sector, with a minute percentage of women on executive boards in 2010: 2.9% in banks and savings institutions and 2.5% in insurance companies. And even though women make up more than half of all employees in the financial sector, they stand little chance of entering management in major companies. Against this backdrop, the financial sector can be characterized as deeply conservative regarding gender, as seen in the extremely low representation of women in key decision-making positions.¹⁷

On supervisory boards, the proportion of women was higher in 2010 (16.3% in banks and savings institutions and 11.9% in insurance companies), but here as well, men and women faced far from equal opportunities. In 2010, the percentage of women on supervisory boards of insurance companies was even smaller than in 2009. Moreover, the great majority of female supervisory board members were not appointed by employers but as employee representatives. The case is even more extreme in large insurance companies than in banks and savings institutions.

The European Commission highlights the growing number of studies showing “a clear correlation between the share of women in senior positions and company performance.”¹⁸ Such findings also underscore the economic necessity of improving career opportunities for women. Public-sector banks and savings institutions could take on a leading role in this endeavor, but for the moment, they are no better than their private-sector counterparts—despite a clear public mandate and gender equality legislation.

If we want to put the know-how of highly qualified women to work in senior management, we need a change of course in staffing decisions and a new

17 The same holds true for management positions below the executive level. This is confirmed by other studies, e.g., Kohaut, S., Möller, I.: *Führungspositionen in der Privatwirtschaft: Frauen kommen auf den Cheftagen nicht voran*. IAB Kurzbericht no. 6/2010.

18 European Commission: *l.c.* p. 21.

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kind of company organization in the financial sector. Early integration of women into company career tracks as well as mentoring programs, awareness training for leaders, childcare options for parents, and the promotion of a work-life balance would be steps in the right direction.¹⁹ But these goals can only be reached if women are promoted into senior positions and top management. Here, the financial sector still has a long way to go. The process could be accelerated substantially by introducing consistent targets for the staffing of boards and other top positions. This, however, will require a new way of thinking in the financial sector and a new business culture. So far, the opportunities this change entails have not been seized in Germany.

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19 For examples from the business world, see Krell, G. (ed.): Chancengleichheit durch Personalpolitik. Fifth edition, Gabler, Wiesbaden 2008.