

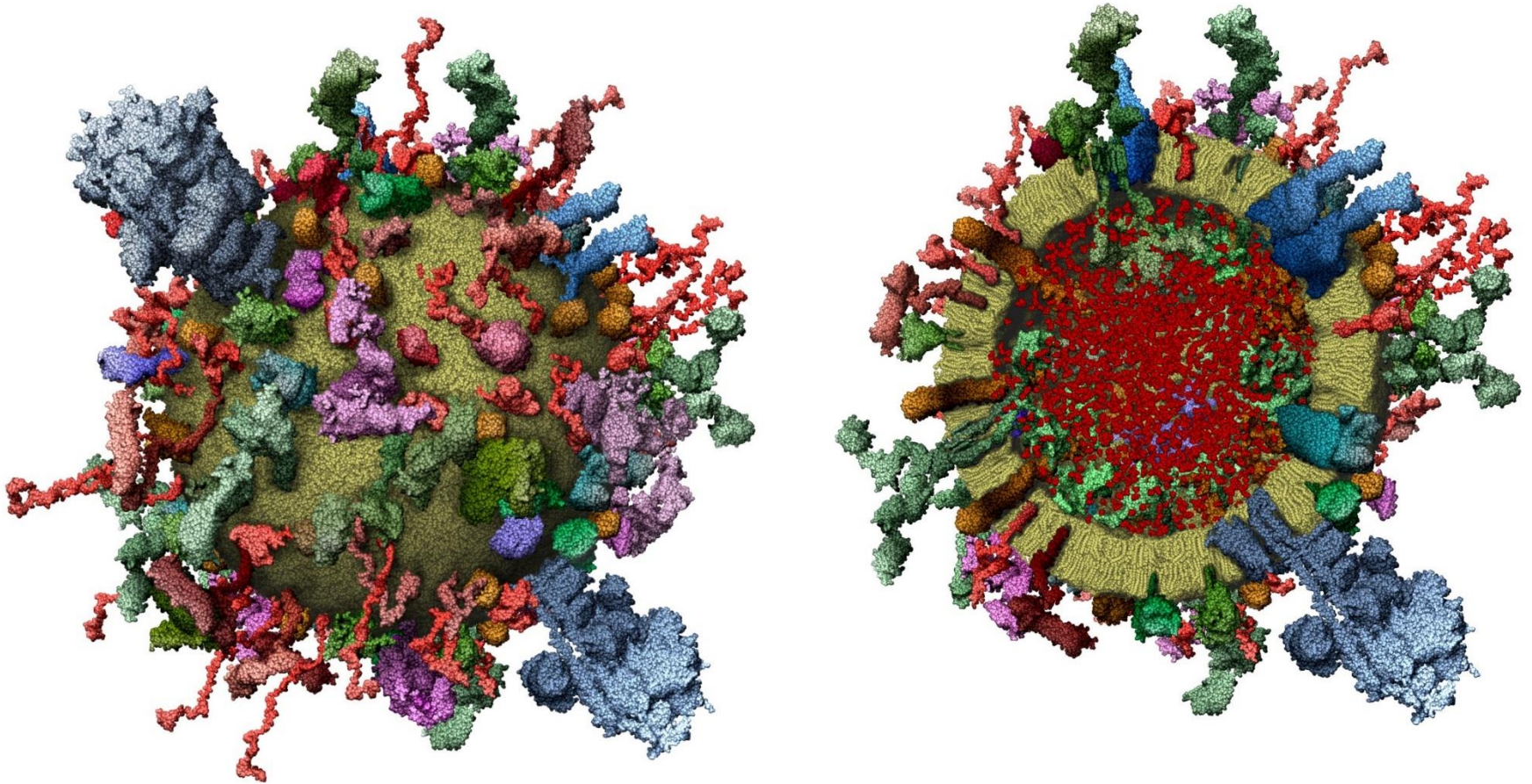
Compassion and Commitment –
Roland's fight against 19th century style hierarchies
within the Max-Planck Society

Reinhard Jahn

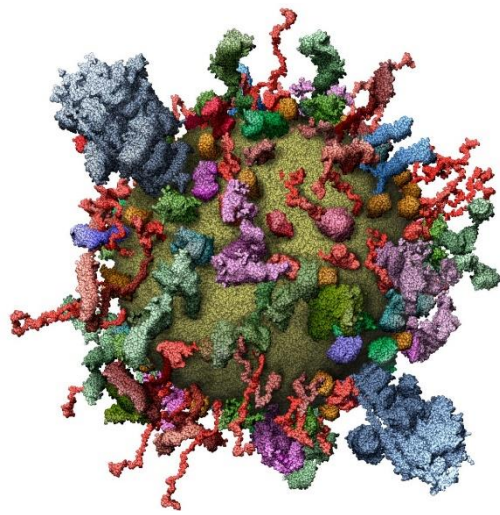
Max-Planck-Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Göttingen/Germany

(not a joke(r)...)

My research deals with structures at the other end of the length scale.....



.....not exoplanets, but synaptic vesicles.....



Diameter

4×10^{-8} m

Internal aqueous volume

2×10^{-20} l

Number of protons required to reach pH 5.0 (no buffering)

0.1

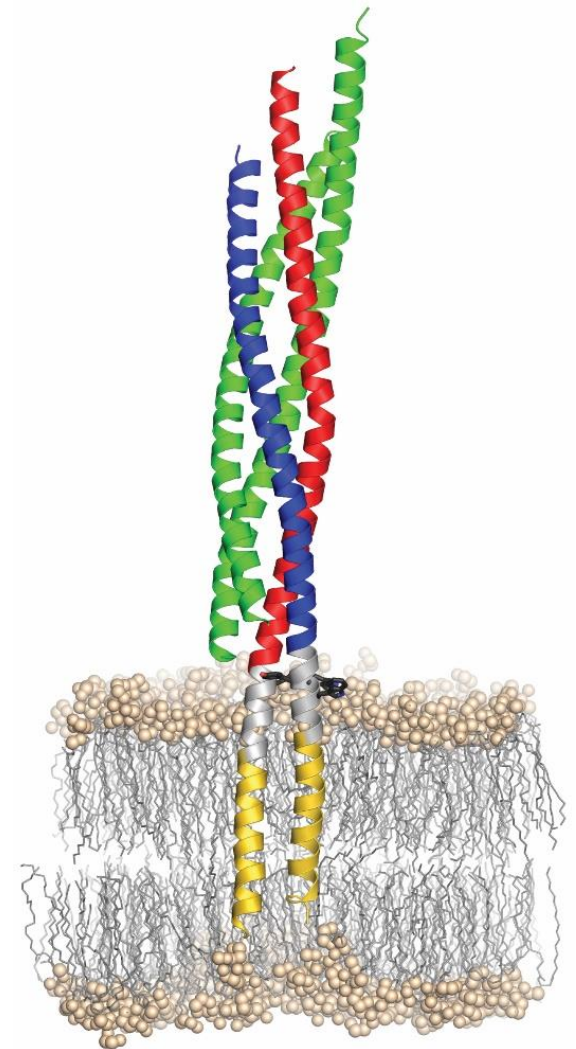
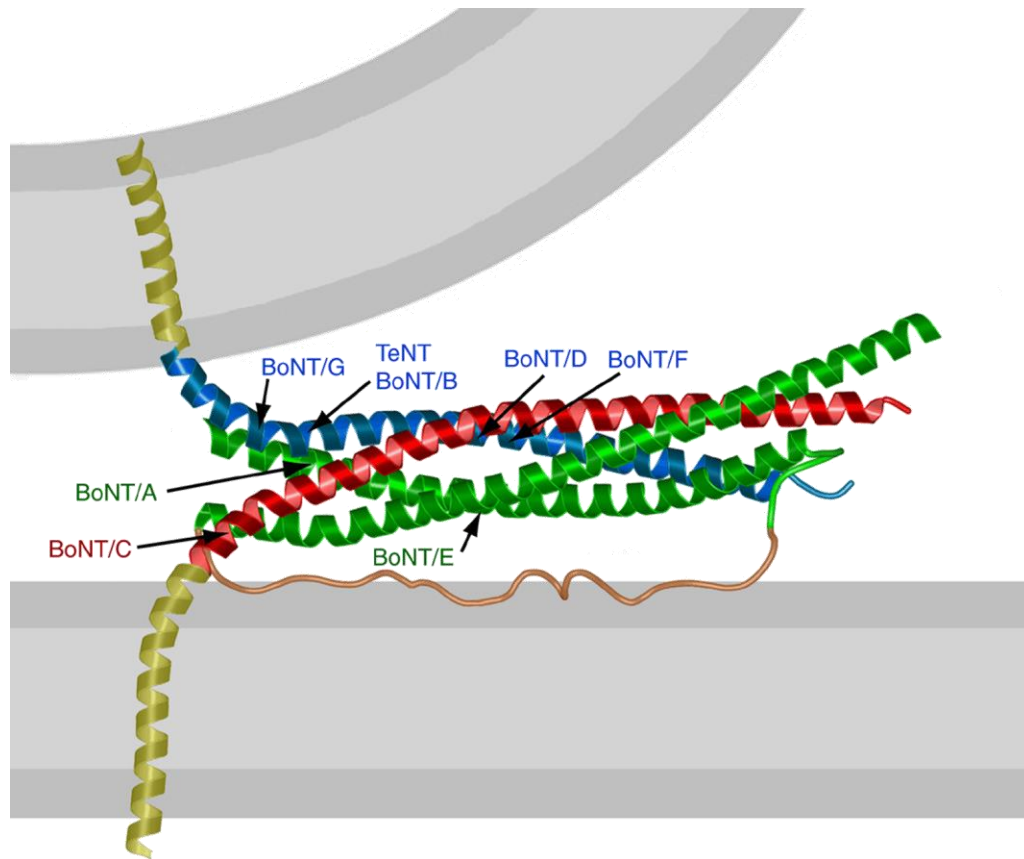
Estimated particle number in your brain

7×10^{16}

....arranged single file, the synaptic vesicles in your brain would reach from here to the moon.....

...if counted as single molecules, your brain would be a 10 μ M solution of synaptic vesicles

...so the only thing Roland and myself have in common is that we use high-energy radiation (X-rays) to do research....



Academic career stages (proposal of the EU commission)



R2
Recognized
Researcher

R3 Established
Researcher

R4 Leading
Researcher

R1: First Stage Researcher (up to the point of PhD),
R2: Recognized Researcher (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent),
R3: Established Researcher (researchers who have developed a level of independence) and
R4: Leading Researcher (researchers leading their research area or field).

doctorate

Academic careers – international comparison USA



R2
Recognized
Researcher

R3 Established
Researcher

R4 Leading
Researcher



Postdoc



Assistant/Associate
Professor with tenure
track

15%
-
70%

Associate
Professor

Professor

doctorate

Tenure

Academic careers: USA



R2
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15%
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Associate
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↓
Professor

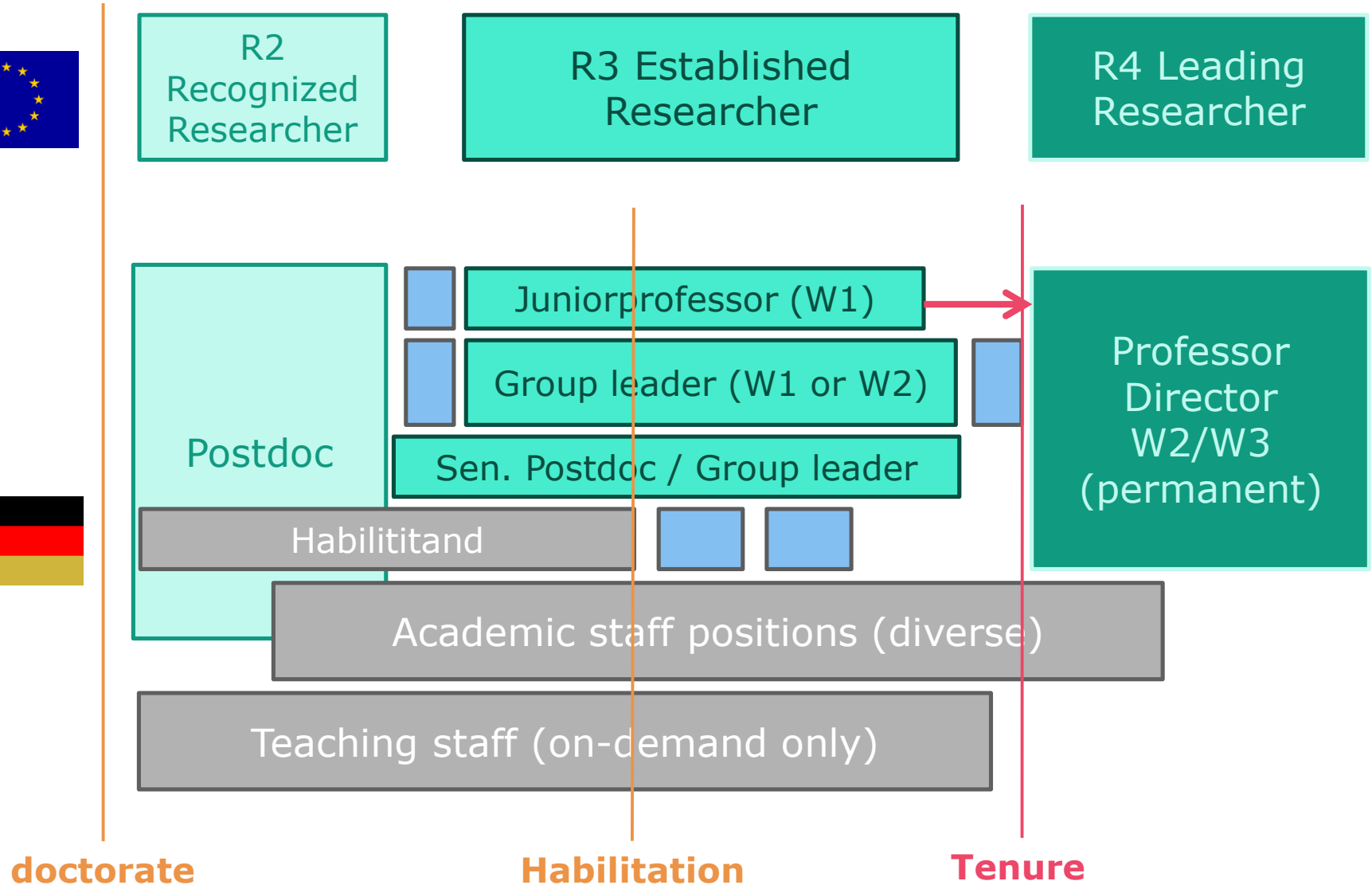
Defined terms (exc.
Postdoc), termination if
tenure is denied:
„up or out“

doctorate

(note an increasing proportion of
Assistant/Associate professorships
w/o tenure-track)

Tenure

Academic careers – international comparison Germany



Academic careers – international comparison

2. Germany



R2
Recognized
Researcher

R3 Established
Researcher

R4 Leading
Researcher

Pos

Teach

Professor
Director
W3
(ment)

No common or defined career structure
(federalism, further divergence between individual universities)

Almost impenetrable for outsiders

No clearly defined career stages

Many academic positions below professor are filled without public advertisement („meine“ Stelle...)

doctorate

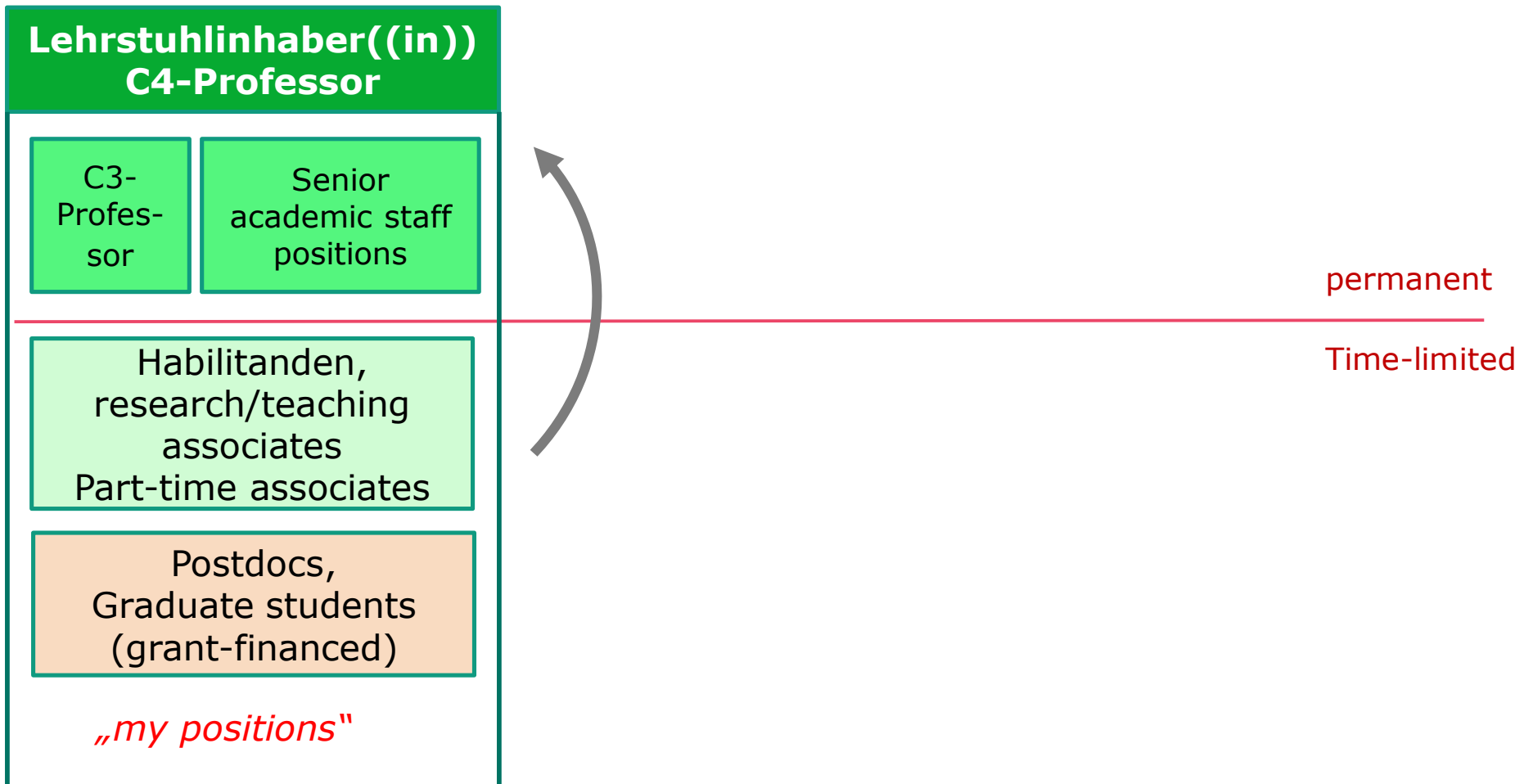
Habilitation

Tenure

Structure of academic institutes in Germany



The good old days
(- 1978/2000, MPG - 2016)

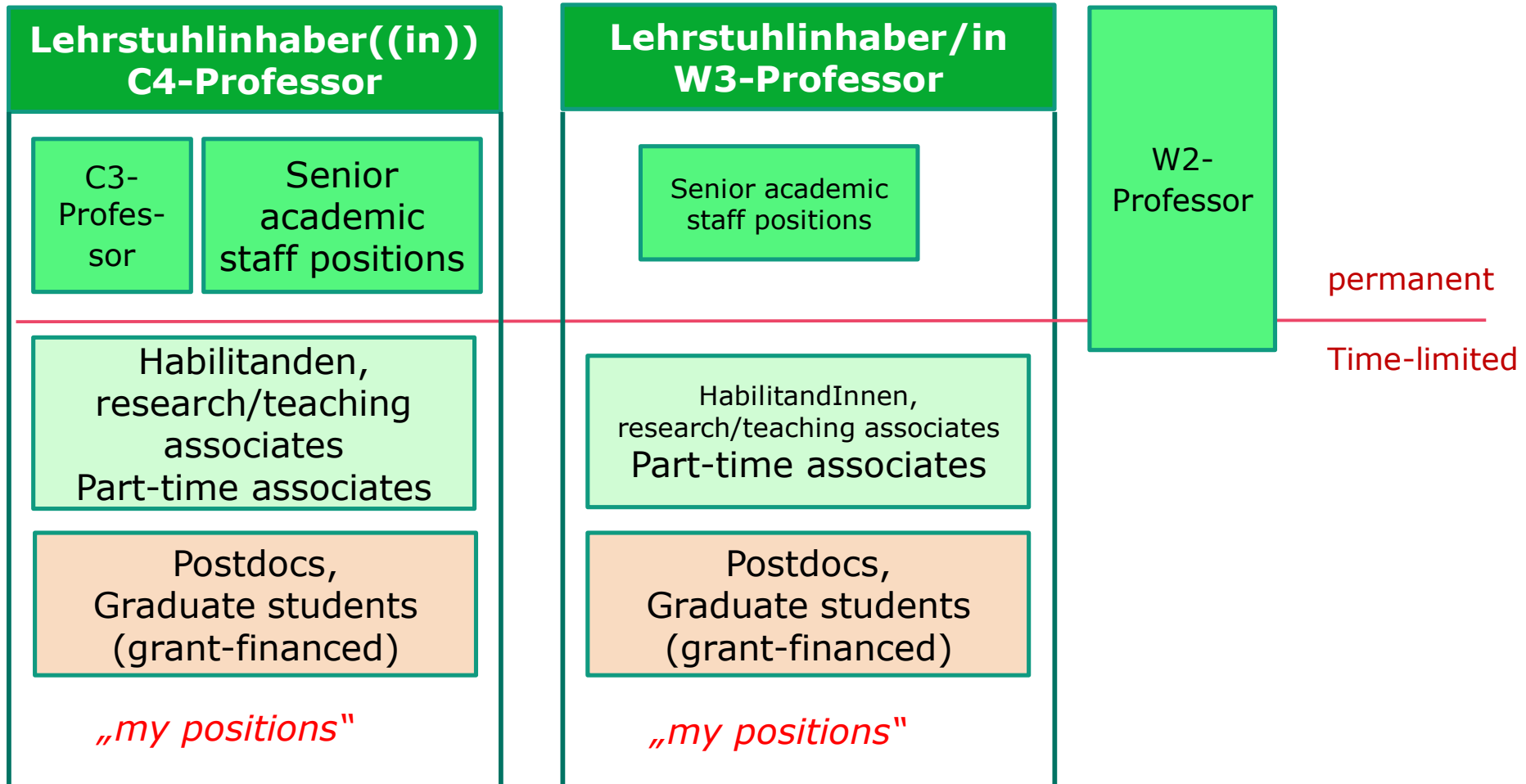


Structure of academic institutes in Germany



The good old days
(- 1978/2000, MPG - 2016)

The modern Ordinarius

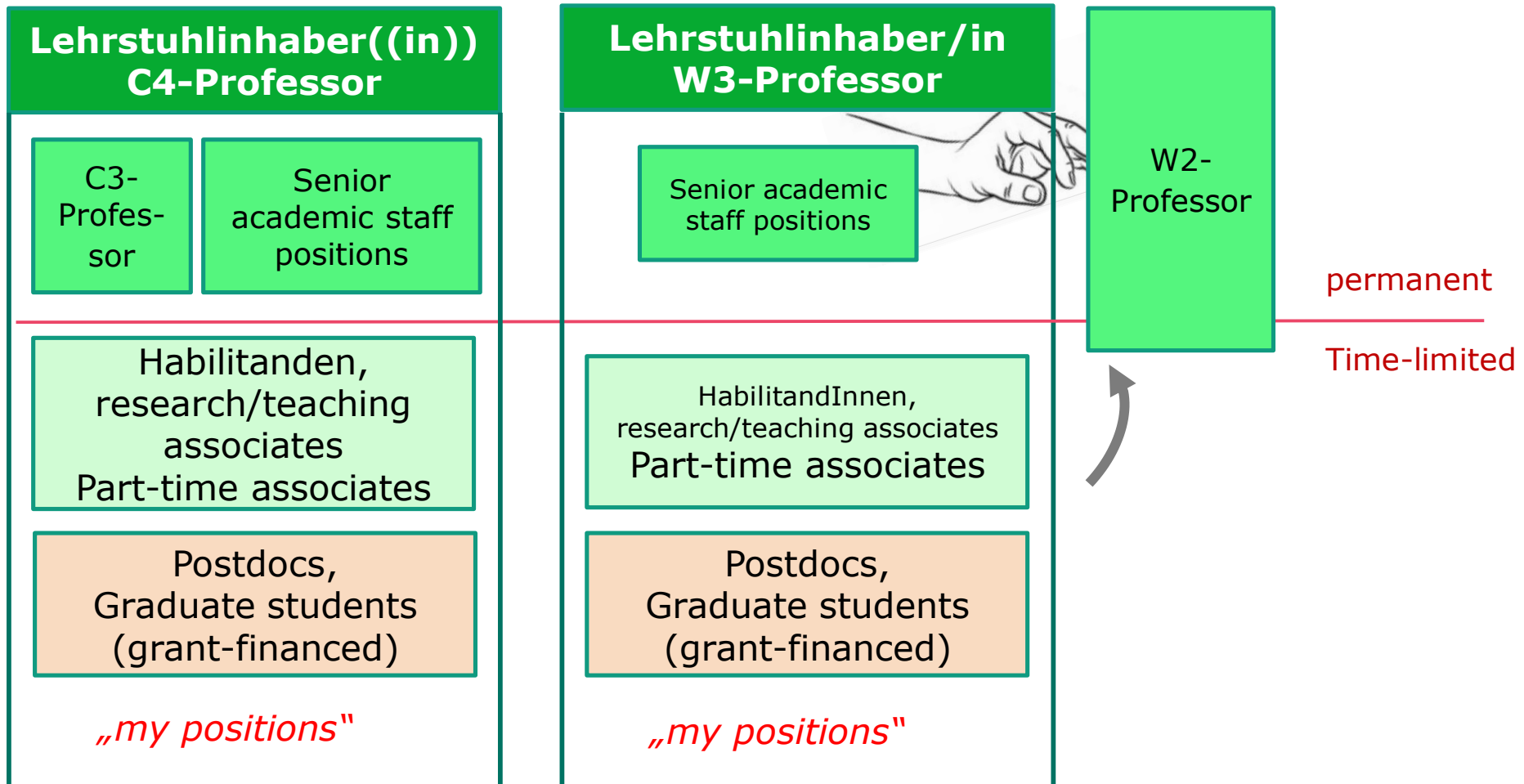


Structure of academic institutes in Germany



The good old days
(- 1978/2000, MPG - 2016)

The modern Ordinarius





Typical features of the classical paternalistic/authoritarian „Ordinarien“ system:

- No clearly defined career phases (promotion within an institute without external participation or external review)
- Following the PhD, young scientists remain associated with the professor for many years (only limited by legal constraints - WissZeitVG)
- Career advancement up to the „Habilitation“ strongly dependent on the good will of the professor – without professorial support further career in science close to impossible (benevolent patriarchy, almost no checks and balances)

..up to the present day the patriarchy is revealed by terminology:

„**Schüler von...**“ (the colleague is 50 years old and Professor...)
„**Doktorvater**“ (very occasionally) „**Doktormutter**“
„**Nachwuchs-Wissenschaftler**“ (..44 years, past habilitation, daughter about to finish high school diploma....).

There are changes: scientifically independent Junior faculty positions in Germany



Funding agencies: VW, BMBF, DFG-Emmy Noether Programm, ERC Starting Grants etc.

Features

- Time-limited (usually 5 yr), no extension
- Significant financial support for consumables and personnel
- No formal institutional affiliation, no mandatory teaching

Universities: Junior group leaders, Assistant-/junior professors

Features:

- Time-limited (JP 3 + 3 years, some tenure-track)
- Support variable, frequently poor
- JP: Status of a professor, with professorial rights and obligations (incl. mandatory teaching)

Non-university research organizations (WGL, MPG, HGF, FhG): Research group leader

Features:

- Time-limited, but frequently more flexible
- Excellent financial support
- No institutional rights or university affiliations (exceptions apply)

Junior faculty positions in Germany



Problems:

- Diverse set of different positions with different rules, not easy to understand for an outsider
- All positions are time-limited, usually no tenure-track
- limited institutional commitment for externally funded positions
- High insecurity: Normally you must re-locate for the next job when your contract expires (increasingly abroad), and this at a time in life that may be HIGHLY inconvenient for your family (school-age kids, partner working)
- These positions are „add-ons“, they exist in parallel with the conventional „Lehrstuhl“ and do not reflect a system change

but...

- At the end of their term most find tenured academic positions (although some times after a long and nerve-wracking search period) – very low „drop-out“ rate!



Thank you, Roland

For your commitment and honesty

For the advice and the many, many fruitful discussions I have received while running the MPS-Committee "Junior Scientists"

....it was worth the efforts even if we failed to reform the R3 career phase in the MPS...

....and enjoy the next phase in your life!