

# Power Abuse Survey 2025

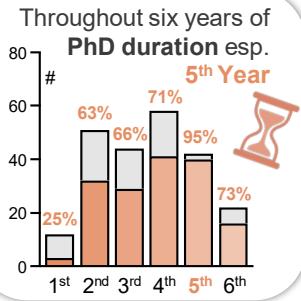
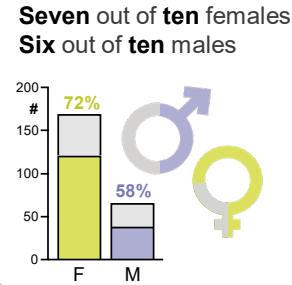
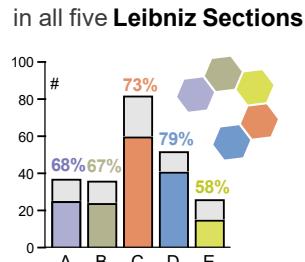
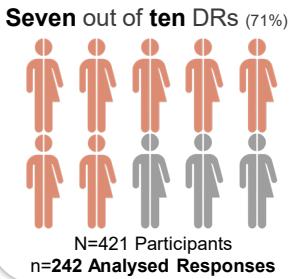
## Preliminary Findings



**“Power abuse”** or “abuse of power” is commonly defined as using one’s position of power (Dahl, 1957) to take advantage of a person in an inferior position for personal gain or to harm said person (UNESCO, 2020). [...] <sup>1</sup>

With this survey, we aim to uncover the mechanisms of power abuse within the Leibniz Association, raise awareness among Doctoral Researchers (DRs) about internal and external resources, and guide those affected toward supportive networks and services. We also advocate for stronger support structures to reduce the impact of power abuse in academia.

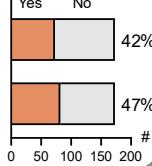
### Who is affected by Power Abuse in our Institutes?



### How does Power Abuse look like?

DRs affected by power abuse answered:

Have you experienced **inappropriate comments** during meetings (e.g., being of sexual or personal nature)?



Have you been **contacted outside** your **working hours** with an urgent request to finish a working task?

DRs affected by power abuse testified:

“According to our **head of department** it is normal to **work everyday more than the normal 8 hours** and also on the **weekends** [...]” DR in 1<sup>st</sup> Year

“[...] She has repeatedly stated that **she won't “let” me get a PhD**. Now this has come to fruition because **she has refused to sign my supervision agreement** [...]” DR in 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

Perpetrator:

**Scientific Misconduct**  
**Improper Supervision**  
Dark Personality Traits  
(e.g. **Narcissism**)  
Verbal and Physical **Harassment**



DRs Experience:

**Discrimination**  
(Gender, Origin and more)  
**Fear for repercussions**  
(e.g. contract renewal,  
PhD completion)



**After-hours contact**  
**Overtime work**  
**Vacations** denied

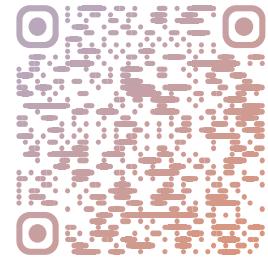
This document was created by the Leibniz PhD Networks Working Group Contract Situation & Prevention of Power Abuse.

More general information on the survey: <https://leibniz-phd.net/survey/power-abuse-survey/>  
What can I do if I experience Power Abuse? <https://leibniz-phd.net/useful-resources/>

You can get in contact with us - write to: [ppa.leibnizphd@outlook.com](mailto:ppa.leibnizphd@outlook.com)

If you want to work with us on advocating, analysing and finally improving the situation, please feel free to reach out.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!



The Leibniz PhD Network is an independent Network of Doctoral Researchers of Institutes of the Leibniz Association. We are run entirely by volunteers.

1. Jana Lasser et al., “Power Abuse and Anonymous Accusations in Academia...,” Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung 1–2 (2021): 50.