



UiO • **Faculty of Educational Sciences**
University of Oslo

Between career structures and personnel policies: the evolving academic profession in Europe

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2 approaches

Sociology of professions

- autonomy and self-organization
- control of entry, progress, training
- professional ethos

Human Resource Management

- strategic management
- recruitment
- reward and control systems

Political ambitions

Delegate personnel policies to university

Centralize, standardize and formalize personnel policies.

Shift in the authority from professorial oligarchy to university leadership and university administration

Assumption

re-designing regulatory frameworks push universities to redefine and implement human resources management in order to support their organizational strategy.

e.g. international researchers

Institutional strategies

University positioning with distinctive profile

Recruitment instrumental to strategic change

Symbolic and material rewards differentiate high and low performers and link to overall strategic objectives

Control systems built to manage highly diversified academic workforce

Assumption

Rational actors able to pursue their interests

Academic traditions

Strong normative frameworks on academia, science, teaching and research

Academic profession decides on academic careers: stages, evaluation, expertise, normative dimensions.

Practices may not reflect regulatory frameworks and strategies.

Academic traditions affect change by design and shape different trajectories.

Assumption: logic of appropriateness relative to culture and identity – ideal of professionalism

Flagship project

2012-2015 Coordinated by ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, funded by the Research Council of Norway.

Flagship university

- a comprehensive, research intensive university, located in a major urban area.
- among the oldest and largest higher education institutions of its country.
- expected to be given more leeway than others because of their scientific leading role at the national level

Flagship project

- Governance
- Strategy
- Personnel policies
- Research management
- Nexus teaching-research

Unit of analysis

Department as university unit harbouring a disciplinary field

Expectation: personnel policies affect research performance

Flagship project

More than 80 interviews

academic leaders, chief administrators, professors

Official in Ministry of Education

EU policy documents (ERA, EHEA)

National legal frameworks

University regulations, strategic documents

Departmental policy documents, self-evaluations

Flagship project

European, national, institutional, faculty, departmental,
research group levels

Chemistry – Psychology – Public Health – Teacher
Training

Nordic countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark

Low countries: Netherland and Belgium

Switzerland and Austria

Extra European: Poland and Australia

Flagship project

Focus

Career structure

Chair – department

Linkage temporary-tenured positions

Access to academic career: internal-external

Incentives

Governance and leadership

Professionalization and training

Norwegian model (stylized)

Between chair and department

Big leap from temporary to tenured (postdoc to associate professor)

Few incentives for administrative reasons

Culture of equality

Delegation to departmental leadership

Universities part of the public service

Flemish model (stylized)

Chair structure

Internal career according to formal criteria (competitive)

Tenure track (recent)

Excellence oriented

Departmental leadership vs autonomous professors

Swiss model (stylized)

Chair structure

Junior professorial positions funded by the Swiss
Science foundation

Tenure track (recent)

Highly internationalized

Resource allocation to best performers

Checks and balances: professors- rectorate

Recruitment

- System of check and balances is growingly complex – more stakeholders, rules and criteria - constraining for academics
- Redefinition of academic excellence (e.g. social skills, funding attraction) is the arena where different logics coexist.

Retention of high performers

- Clear career structures

Career stages, promotion criteria

- Incentives

Salaries, research packages, teaching buy-out

- Work and career support

Uncertainty

1. standardization of procedures: ensures quality and salary negotiations
2. Internationalization: provides criteria to comply with in order to select the “best candidate” from a large group.
3. strategic planning: link recruitment to overall measurable organizational objectives.

Fragmentation

Academic logic: research agenda and excellence ideals within disciplinary field

Bureaucratic-administrative logic: formal criteria have to be fulfilled (e.g. composition of commission, introduction of trial lecture)

Market logic: competition is fostered, and social, managerial and leadership skills are required, compliance with institutional strategy.

Segmentation and division of labor

Status and reputation according to type of funding and publications

Competitive pressures

Among and within countries, universities,
research groups, academics

Affect

- Teaching and research
- Level of autonomy and academic freedom

Segmentation and division of labor

Different types of professorships and other academic positions

- tenure track

- external funding

- fixed-term professorships

- hiring through direct call

- excellence grants for international professors.

- period

- support to juniors

- faster recruitments and promotions.

Conclusion

Pressure to become excellent: competitive staff, students, funding, research outputs

Different factors and actors driving change
administrators, managers, external agencies

Changing indicators of performance. E.g. EU funding

Internal vs. external search “talent”

International vs. Internal careers