

2. Academic careers in Europe: a nested view

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EXOGENOUS AND ENDOGENOUS CHANGE DRIVERS FOR ACADEMIC CAREERS

In Europe, academic careers are widely discussed by policymakers (Pausits et al., 2022), universities (Overlaet, 2022; Saenen et al., 2021) and higher-education scholars (Sarrico et al., 2022). There are several reasons why academic careers have been highlighted. The reasons for the growing interest in academic careers are based on two interrelated development trends (summarised in Table 2.1). The first, exogenous, trend is related to changes in the management and steering of higher education, while the second, endogenous, trend concerns the changes in universities as organisations and the nature of academic work.

Exogenous Change Drivers

Changes in the governance of universities have played an important role in redefining academic careers in Europe. Universities are responding to mainstream trends embracing the transnational governance of universities, namely rankings, autonomy and accountability (see Erkkilä & Piironen, 2014; Capano, 2020), because they are being influenced by massification, globalisation and new competition (Finkelstein & Li, 2022). There are also national pressures to increase the cost efficiency of universities (Bleiklie et al., 2017). All these trends have impacts on the personnel policies of universities.

The first major reason for the redefinition of academic careers has been the increased institutional autonomy of European universities, which is still, however, rather restricted (Shattock et al., 2023; Capano, 2020). Universities in many countries have become independent employers and have introduced their

Table 2.1 Exogenous and endogenous change drivers

Policies, structures and processes driving changes in academic careers (exogenous drivers)	Characteristics of the work driving changes in academic careers (endogenous drivers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened institutional autonomy • Soft laws and policies on academic work • Impact of external research funding • Strengthened performance-based steering • Strengthened strategic management • Strengthened role of quality assurance and audits • Reforms of research funding • Synchronisation and harmonisation across subsectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation of academic labor markets • New academic tasks and positions related to the ‘third mission’ • Individualisation of careers • Interdisciplinarity • Diversity in academic careers • De-professionalisation

own, more flexible human resource management (HRM) policies (Bennetot Pruvot et al., 2023; Farnham, 1999; Siekkinen, 2016b). These policies include institutional guidelines for evaluation, promotion, recruitment and performance appraisal.

Increased institutional autonomy has increased the demand for accountability on the part of universities (Górska et al., 2022), which has had a direct impact on the organisation and measurement of academic work. This has often been implied to strengthen managerial personnel policies and, consequently, to diminish the role of national bureaucracy and professional collegiality (for example Pietilä & Pinheiro, 2021; Waring, 2017). These trends were influenced by the ideology of managerialism (Deem & Brehony, 2005) and have combined universities with private sector organisations (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018; Siekkinen et al., 2019). Traditionally, universities have been subject to strict governmental control in many European countries, as academic careers were regulated by the state, and, in some cases, even their ability to create new positions, recruit and evaluate their own staff was limited.

The second exogenous change driver, which exists alongside and, to some extent, in contradiction to the trend of increasing autonomy, is that European governments have introduced policies, often based on soft law or financial incentives and funding, that encourage universities to reorganise academic careers. In Germany, for example, the federal and state governments initiated a competitive funding programme in 2016 with the aim of creating up to 1,000 tenure track professorships and promoting this academic career path within the German higher-education system (Dance, 2016). In Finland, the government introduced a policy based on a four-stage career model that has been

adapted by all universities as a framework for reporting on and analysing their workforce (Välimaa et al., 2016) and the Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced a pilot for three-year doctoral education with the objectives of testing a more flexible process for doctoral education and increasing the mobility of PhDs across sectors (Academy of Finland, 2023).

As European public universities continue to rely on government funding, such initiatives have been closely monitored. This has led to increased interest in and the piloting of ‘tenure track’ recruitment, as well as the introduction of post-doctoral and doctoral positions in doctoral schools, which were previously unknown in many European countries (Herschberg et al., 2018; Kivistö et al., 2017). The tenure track was also recommended by the League of European Research Universities (LERU) in 2014, with the following motivation: ‘In light of Europe’s demographic development and the undeniable need to keep the advantage over international competitors, it is absolutely imperative that research-intensive universities such as the LERU members and others pay special attention to the careers of the most promising excellent post-doctoral researchers’ (LERU, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, the European Commission’s soft-law instruments, such as the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, have facilitated discussions of researchers’ careers (Pausits et al., 2022).

The third exogenous change driver – the impact of the increasing significance and amount of external research funding on the formulation and planning of academic careers and institutional policies – has grown. The impact of decreasing public funding and the rise of the entrepreneurial university have made academic careers precarious, as the employment contracts of academics are connected to short projects and they have become entrepreneurs responsible for their own funding and the continuation of their employment (OECD, 2021; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009). As a seasoned higher-education scholar and consultant, Shelda Debowski (2022) writes, in her review of the past 20 years in academia, that the influence of external funders has increased and external funding policies have come to guide institutional strategies, which have impacts on the definition of performance over one’s career. In most European countries, national science, research agencies and councils have become funding bodies for researchers employed by universities, rather than acting as employer agencies. Consequently, science councils, as significant funding agencies for university faculties, have a notable impact on the personnel policies of universities. National science funding agencies, such as the German Science Foundation, have developed various instruments, including funding schemes for doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers or tenure track positions. These funding initiatives are often linked to the thematic or disciplinary profiling of universities. Furthermore, external funding agencies, such as the European Research Council (ERC), and commission-led funding

instruments, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, shape the landscape of European academic careers. Consequently, the individual academic's career path is significantly impacted by the funding decisions of external funders, which has made academic careers insecure and led to the decreased attractiveness of academic careers.

The fourth exogenous change driver, performance-based steering, is tightly connected to increased autonomy, as well as increasing global competition and, thus, the need for increased efficiency (Finkelstein & Li, 2022; Kallio et al., 2017), which are all impacted by New Public Management (NPM). The purpose of NPM was to make the public sector function in a more efficient way, and it is widely implemented in European higher education (de Boer & Huisman, 2020). Increased autonomy has brought about a change in the type of state steering of universities. The emphasis has shifted from steering via inputs, such as budgets and positions, to steering based on outputs, such as research publications and degrees awarded (Kallio et al., 2017), as the state's new role is steering from a distance (Capano, 2020). Consequently, the quantification of academic outputs has become more important, motivating universities to actively develop career-related incentive structures and thus increase the productivity of individual academics (Finkelstein & Li, 2022; Kallio et al., 2017; Kivistö et al., 2017). This includes forms of career progression based on predefined performance measures and performance-based elements in academics' remuneration (Leisyte, 2022), as have been introduced in Germany.

Furthermore, increased autonomy and an orientation towards performance have strengthened the role of strategic management and planning in universities (Fumasoli, 2020; Seeber et al., 2015). Personnel policies have become more strategic (Pietilä, 2015; Siekkinen et al., 2016b) and many universities have introduced an administrative function called strategic human resource planning and management. This has increased the visibility of career-related matters and shifted the level of human resource management and planning from individual positions and departmental planning to strategic management, boards and councils of universities.

The fifth exogenous change driver is a trend related to the changing nature of steering and the emergence of an 'audit society' (see Power, 1999, 2021). As universities gain more autonomy, the direct control of universities by the government decreases, while quality assurance, project audits and external reviews become more prominent (Craig et al., 2014). This has also impacted human resource policies. International experts have provided recommendations, known as international best practices. These have influenced national policies related to the functions and positions of the academic workforce. In the European context, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and the quality award, along with self-assessment and audit practices, indirectly implement European supranational policies at the institutional

level, without direct regulation or financial incentives (see Siekkinen et al., 2015). Additionally, national governments have their own HR policies and data-collection practices, which practically steer HR functions in autonomous universities. These policies also highlight the role of centralised HR functions in institutions and may impact the power balance between the university and its faculties in HR matters.

According to Saenen et al. (2019), the assessment criteria applied to researcher assessment in European universities are notably similar, with a heavy emphasis on research publications and external funding success. Indeed, the global ideals regarding what a successful researcher looks like seem to be quite similar (Lund, 2012; Orupabo & Mangset, 2022). At the national level, the funding models of higher-education institutions and state-level financial incentives may further homogenise universities' assessment criteria.

The sixth exogenous change driver, structural changes, has also impacted academic careers and positions. In many European countries, there have been attempts to integrate the 'research or scientific sector' into the 'academic or university sector' either partly or more holistically, as in Denmark (Aagaard et al., 2016). This integration has involved transferring positions that were previously part of sector-ministry-led research institutes to the personnel and organisational structures of universities. Additionally, efforts have been made to synchronise the positions and career steps in universities with those in the remaining sector-based research institutes. Discussions about the harmonisation or synchronisation of careers in the traditional university sector and other sectors of higher education, such as universities of applied sciences, polytechnics and university colleges, have also taken place alongside discussions of organisational mergers and consortia. When mergers lead to a change in status, as in Ireland, where mergers of institutes of technology resulted in the creation of technological universities, this may lead to the greater alignment of academic careers and HR policies across the sector (OECD, 2022a).

Changes in academic careers are, of course, not solely due to changes in the administrative environment. There are also substantive changes in academic work and the profession that have impacted careers and created new challenges for universities in terms of managing and motivating their professionals.

Endogenous Change Drivers

First, science and the academic profession have always been international, and the academic labour market has become more international, especially for early-career researchers (Pietilä et al., 2021; Probst & Goastellec, 2013). Recent global developments have opened labour markets, and the massification of higher education has increased the supply and demand for academic labour (Teixeira 2022). Furthermore, the role of English as a lingua franca in

most disciplinary fields has opened teaching positions for international talent, reducing the importance of knowledge of the local language in many fields and countries. The mobility of academics has created a need for internationally comparable and recognisable academic careers (Pekkola et al., 2020b).

The mobility of academics has long been a policy priority in the European Research Area (ERA). In the increasingly global competition for talent (LERU, 2014), universities are differently positioned in terms of attracting new researchers. In addition to their locations, which are or are not attractive for international academics, some countries offer new entrants more job security than others. In addition, some countries continue to have formal and informal barriers, such as accreditation systems, for those with foreign PhDs (Afonso, 2016). At least in theory, tenure track contracts offer new academics better job security and career prospects than other structures and options and should thus increase the attractiveness of universities as employers (Pietilä, 2019). However, universities also compete for staff with organisations outside academia, including those in the private sector. From that perspective, the career prospects and employment conditions for academics should be attractive enough when compared with non-academic labour markets (Teixeira, 2022). So far, tenure track contracts, which offer better salaries and more secure career development than other contracts, have been available to only a small number of academics in European universities.

The second endogenous change driver is the fact that, due to the massification of higher education and changes in the structure of markets and economies in Europe, the role of universities as organisations has changed. The addition of the third mission (Laredo, 2007; Pinheiro et al., 2015b) and societal impact (Geschwind et al., 2019) to their portfolios has created new demands and challenges for universities, which must consider the roles of the academic workforce, as well as individual academics, more broadly than before. The roles of academics have changed, and there is increasing demand for the expert services provided by universities, as well as increasing demand for universities to emphasise their societal impact in their teaching and research activities (Geschwind et al., 2019). Concepts such as hybrid careers and ‘entrepreneurial academics’ have been developed to describe the new career paths in hybrid-like universities (Pekkola et al., 2020a, 2021; Siekkinen, 2019). Additionally, new titles, such as ‘professor of practice’ or ‘industry professor’, have been introduced. Thus, academic careers are considered crucial in ensuring linkages between universities and society.

The third endogenous change driver is the fact that careers in professional work in general have become more fragmented, flexible and borderless. This trend also applies in higher education, although the change may not be as significant as in other fields, because careers in academia have been fragmented in the past as well and success outside the university is not valued in academic

recruitment. In such a context, a career can be seen as an ‘individual project’, in which an individual strategically plans their own advancement and utilises different funding arrangements to build their career paths, which are not dependent on a single organisation or internal power struggles within an organisation (Siekkinen et al., 2022; van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2018).

The fourth endogenous change driver is the fact that the institutional structure of academic work has changed. Positions and careers are no longer always and only connected to disciplinary structures and the educational functions and portfolios of institutions (Pietilä, 2015; Ylijoki, 2022). Academic posts are increasingly associated with research areas and societal challenges, such as the green transition and sustainability, or applied fields and promising innovations, such as nanomaterials and artificial intelligence, not solely with specific fields of study, such as public policy or applied physics. In a concrete sense, however, academic careers are still often tied to disciplinary frameworks, and there are many ways to understand what interdisciplinarity means in academic work (Ylijoki, 2022). Units that are teaching intensive may require a strong disciplinary base among their teachers as, in research, being multidisciplinary is important in attracting funders.

The fifth endogenous change driver is the fact that, reflecting changes in society, universities face pressure to address diversity, equity and inclusion, including gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, societal class and religion (Pietilä et al., 2021). Academic careers have, in many countries, remained gendered, with women facing difficulties in reaching the highest academic positions (European Commission, 2019; Pietilä et al., 2021). University structures create glass ceilings and contribute to leaky pipelines for women (Chapter 5; Pinheiro et al., 2015a). However, in universities, gender-related issues are most often acknowledged in planning academic career structures (for example, in tenure track recruitment, candidates’ career breaks are often asked about), and the number of women in the highest positions has increased, at least in some disciplines (Chapter 5; Drange et al., 2023). In the public higher-education sector, this shift is also supported by governmental initiatives (for Germany, for example, see Zimmer, 2018). However, the discourse on diversity in the highest positions has been related mainly to women in European universities (Chapter 13). Only recently has it come to include other marginalised groups. Many academics with marginalised ethnic backgrounds work in postdoctoral positions but encounter challenges in proceeding with their academic careers (see Chapters 5 and 8), which is conceptualised as the ethnic scissors.

The sixth endogenous change driver is the fact that the de-professionalisation of academic work has impacted universities. This is evident in the growing role of the ‘casual workforce’ (for recent literature, see Jayasuriya et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2022) in Anglo-American countries, the impact of casualisation on teaching in universities (Leathwood & Read, 2022) and the precariat

of researchers (for example Vatansever, 2022; OECD, 2021 in continental Europe). The proliferation of non-professional work and an increased volume of non-predictable short-term assignments have also impacted the career structures of universities. In general, academic careers, particularly for early-career academics, continue to rely on external funding and they are characterised by precarity (OECD, 2021). Competition among academics for career success has led to the polarisation of academics, in which some are winning and some are losing (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2015). Consequently, the individual academic's career path is significantly impacted by the decisions of external funders, which leads to the decreasing attractiveness of academic careers.

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES TO CHANGE TENDENCIES: A NESTED VIEW

As discussed in the previous section, the change drivers of academic careers and the respective organisational responses are related to the changing organisational environment of universities and changes in academic work itself. These exogenous and endogenous drivers are tightly connected, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish one from the other. In addition, the analysis of academic careers requires a nested, multilayered perspective.

Individuals navigating their personal careers must take the organisational and national realities of academic careers into account. Similarly, organisational career models must take the individual needs of academics into account and be applicable within national frameworks. The national career framework is also subjected to the realities of international talents building their careers and, thus, dependent on the changes in academic work and the academic profession. Consequently, academic careers are a multilayered and nested combination of structures and agency. In using the term 'nestedness', we refer to various levels – national, organisational and individual – which are interconnected with and embedded within one another (for more on nestedness in higher education, see Pekkola et al., 2021).

National governments and universities are impacting and responding to these changes with their personnel policies. Additionally, the academic profession is adapting and responding to the changes. Thus, the academic career is always a multilayered phenomenon in the publicly funded European higher-education system. In the following section, we discuss academic careers by distinguishing between the various nested levels of academic careers. We propose a vocabulary for discussing academic careers from individual, organisational and national perspectives.

To have an analytical grasp of academic careers, these must be holistically addressed from multiple interrelated, interwoven or nested perspectives, or a single perspective should be chosen as the main avenue for analysis while

contextualising the others. For analytical purposes, it is useful to distinguish between the academic career framework (ACF), at the national level; the academic career model (ACM), at the organisational level; and the academic career path (ACP), at the individual level. In addition to organisational practices, academic careers are defined by global professional practices that are often independent of organisational realities and not limited to organisational boundaries. This professional layer is not discussed in this chapter.

The ACF is a combination of structural, regulatory, financial and policy conditions that provide the overall context and structures for developing and managing academic employment. The ACM is an institutional response to the ACF, providing principles and processes aimed at equal and transparent advancement in academic careers within a given organisation. The ACP refers to the individual horizontal or vertical development of academic work, tasks and positions. An ACP is an individual development path within an ACM, but individual ACPs can cross organisational and national boundaries, adapting to global professional practices and disciplinary structures. Table 2.2 provides an overview of the levels of analysis in relation to academic careers.

Table 2.2 Levels of analysis, subjects of study and dimensions of the studies

Level of analysis	Subject of study	Dimensions
National	Academic career framework (ACF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation (labour legislation or civil service legislation) • Legislation (higher-education Acts and requirements for qualifications) • Science funding • National policies • National (collective) salary systems and agreements
Organisational	Academic career model (ACM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational policies • Internal career structures • Recruitment policies and practices • Promotion practices and criteria • Performance-based systems and evaluations • Vacancies and work descriptions
Individual	Academic career path (ACP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual advancement and professional development • Stability, rewards and influence • Horizontal and vertical advancement • Mobility

Academic Career Frameworks (ACFs)

In Europe, most higher-education systems are partially or mostly publicly funded (OECD, 2022b). Despite increased autonomy in many higher-education systems, higher-education professionals often have a civil servant's legal status or other public duties (Crosier et al., 2017). European-level soft-law policies and funding arrangements have significant implications for higher-education systems and employment in higher education. However, higher education is still under the national regulation of member states and, in some cases, even under the competence of regions or federal states. Higher education plays a role in national identity-building, providing national certification and competences, contributing to national competitiveness and serving as a knowledge base for other sectors of society. Therefore, national policies always play an important part in academic careers and employment. This means that seemingly global and international academic careers cannot be analysed on a macro level without considering the national or regional policy context.

Based on an overview of the best practices in organising academic careers at the national level, the ACF is a combination of legislative structures, funding arrangements, policies and collective agreements (see Arnhold et al., 2018). Typically, ACFs have a legislative dimension. Despite the similarities in wider organisational environment, it is important to acknowledge the continuing differences in the organisational leeway to adopt different internal career models in different national systems. For example, there continue to be significant differences in the formal statuses of teaching and research staff (being civil servants versus direct employees of the university) and in the regulation of academic recruitment and promotion procedures and assessment criteria in various national higher-education and research systems. These affect universities' capability to formulate their own HR policies, including internal career models (Pietilä, 2018; Whitley, 2008).

Depending on the higher-education system, various aspects of academic careers can be regulated. In some systems, qualifications are defined by law or verified by national agencies (as in Spain and Portugal), whereas in others, titles and/or career steps are defined in law (such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Germany). In some systems, the number of positions and parts of the recruitment process may also be regulated. This means that when considering academic employment, at least four fields of law must be considered:

1. Legislation/regulations on employment
2. Legislation/regulations on public service
3. Legislation/regulations on higher education and other academic institutions

4. Legislation/regulations on qualifications.

Legal systems vary, and it is impossible to list all the Acts and branches of the law that impact academic work. When considering academic careers, however, the overall legislation on employment must be considered, as it may steer national collective agreements, retirement, pensions, probation, the use and duration of fixed-term employment, minimum salaries and the possibility of combining one's studies and employment. Legislation on public service and employment may complement or provide alternatives to employment legislation. It may also include regulations on other incomes and avocations, legal responsibilities and prerogatives, discretion, the usage of public power and connections to administrative liability. There are only a few studies on the legal aspects of academic career frameworks. The existing studies have often been national in nature and concentrated, for example, on types of employment (Castellacci & Viñas-Bardolet, 2021; see also Bentley et al., 2013); been published as sections in national anthologies of higher-education law (for example in the UK, Farrington & Palfreyman, 2021; in the US, Kaplin et al., 2019); or have approached academic work from a certain perspective, such as a particular discipline (for example, gender-equality plans, see Clavero & Galligan, 2021). There are also reviews that approach academic careers more broadly, for example from the perspective of career development (Zacher et al., 2019). Thus far, the most systematic comparative attempt to understand the legal aspects of academic employment in Europe is the Eurydice (2017) report on the modernisation of European academic staff.

Legislation related to academic institutions typically also defines issues related to academic employment. Acts on universities and other academic institutions or scientific work may contain provisions on titles, recruitments, seniority, qualifications, management responsibilities, work content and job descriptions, to name a few examples. In addition to higher-education acts, there may be other national regulations on qualifications that are directly linked to ACFs. For example, Acts concerning healthcare, civil engineering or other professions may have implications for academic careers in these fields. Regulations on degrees (doctoral degrees and post-doctoral degrees/titles/qualifications/exams) can also directly impact academic careers and promotions.

In most European countries, national collective agreements are an important part of the academic career framework. Although they are not part of the legislation, they are universally binding documents that often have a role comparable with that of law. Collective (general or local) agreements may directly or indirectly impact career steps, work descriptions, research and teaching hours and qualifications. These collective agreements are incremental documents

that develop over time, based on collective negotiations and bargaining. Many peculiarities of national ACFs can be attributed to collective agreements.

While the role of regulation is important, its significance is decreasing as university autonomy increases in Europe. This has raised the importance of steering through funding. Funding can have implications for the ACF in several ways. Directly, the number of academics and positions or qualifications can serve as indicators in funding models. The share of international employees or other special groups of academics may also be used as indicators. Additionally, there are direct financial instruments that can be used to employ certain types of academics, such as national schemes for employing doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, tenure track professors, international scholars or female academics. All these directly impact the academic labour market and the personnel structure of universities. Indirectly, funding also influences the profiling and direction of academic work. For example, performance-based funding may emphasise research performance over teaching performance, which has implications for the incentive structures developed by institutions. Similarly, thematic funding for research may alter the personnel structure of universities.

One additional way to set the stage for academic work in a national context is through soft-law steering. Information steering can be done through national career frameworks, career steps or other non-binding recommendations. Many countries have introduced policies on academic careers and signed international agreements and recommendations that set standards for national policies. Examples of good practices include the Netherlands' national plan for diversity and inclusion in higher education (MoECS, 2020) and Finland's national four-stage career plan (Välilmaa et al., 2016). At the European level, the European League for Research Universities (LERU) recommended a four-stage career model in 2010 and a model for tenure track in 2014 to be used in its member universities and elsewhere to increase the attractiveness of academic careers and, thus, increase the competitive edge of academic careers and universities in Europe (LERU, 2010, 2014). Overall, European collaboration has intensified via European university networks and alliances, many of which have activities and working groups on the topic of academic careers (for example YERUN, 2023). This kind of activity aimed at peer learning and the sharing of best practices is likely to harmonise academic career systems.

Academic Career Models (ACMs)

While, in this volume, the ACF refers to national guidelines, the ACM refers to practices that organise academic work, professional development and career advancement. These models are closely connected to national ACFs because the academic work done within higher-education institutions (HEIs) is subject

to national regulation, collective agreements, funding environments and policies. In many European countries, however, public universities are employers, so they may have their own organisational practices. The ACM within an organisation integrates and aligns national regulations, qualifications, remuneration practices and organisational needs.

Based on practical experience, the main components of academic career models are as follows (see Arnhold et al., 2018; Pausits et al., 2017):

1. Organisational aims for the development of employees (personnel strategy and policy)
2. Organisational workforce needs (job demands and work descriptions)
3. Recruitment and selection practices
4. Professional development
5. Promotion and career-advancement practices and criteria related to a) pay and benefits and b) performance appraisal.

HEIs in Europe are increasingly transitioning from traditional personnel administration to a more holistic approach to HRM. This change has also affected the planning of human resources. Traditional personnel administration has been based on contractual arrangements, official work descriptions and tasks, as well as the legal conditions of work. The main guiding principle in public administration has often been a stable list of vacancies. More recently, universities have begun to develop their personnel policies and strategies to create a competitive working environment, with the aim of becoming attractive employers in the race for the best talents nationally and internationally (Thunnissen et al., 2021). They also aim to develop their own staff to compete internationally (Ibid., Siekkinen et al., 2016b).

Academic career models are based on the organisational understanding of the need for a workforce and resources. This need can also be closely connected to the national-level regulations, resources or quality-assurance policies that determine the number and qualifications of staff required to run programmes in specific fields or disciplines. Tenure track positions are often used to strategically develop this structure or establish expertise in new areas (Pietilä, 2015). Universities are typically loosely coupled organisations, so, actual personnel planning typically takes place in faculties and departments and, in the case of researchers, at the even-lower level of research groups. Therefore, the connection between the reality of ‘strategic human resource management’ and the reality of ‘recruitment’ is always subject to debate.

Universities may have several approaches related to recruitment practices (see, for example, Siekkinen et al., 2016b). Often, universities have positions that are permanent core parts of their personnel structures. These positions are

typically filled for a fixed term or permanently, following official procedures based on strategic personnel plans. An exceptional case of such recruitment is that of professors and, sometimes, other senior positions, which often involves external members of the academic profession in the selection process. National practices also dominate the recruitment process. In southern European countries, for example, an essential part of the recruitment process is the national or regional accreditation of qualifications. Similarly, in some eastern European countries, national structures and procedures are used for selection. Thus, in the context of European higher education, recruitment to top academic positions often involves permanent employment and being funded by the core funding of the unit (i.e., professors), which is often at least partially beyond organisational control. On the other hand, the recruitment of more contingent faculty, such as project researchers and hourly teachers, often occurs more informally, based on flexible resources and workforce needs. These recruitments are often coordinated by the principal investigators of research projects or the individuals responsible for educational programmes.

Promotional practices, like all other parts of ACMs, are closely tied to national traditions. In European higher-education systems, promotions are based on different premises depending on administrative tradition. There are two dominant types of career-advancement system in Europe. The first is based on positions and vacancies, which means that promotions, when understood as career progression without application for a new position, are impossible because career progression takes place through competitive calls for open positions. This means that career advancement always requires applying for a new position, even within the same institution. The second type is based on career advancement and promotion, allowing academics to be promoted based on their merits or changes in their work description, without establishing or opening a new position (Olsen et al., 2005; Kivistö et al., 2019; see also Chapter 5).

Between these ideal types, there are several variants. In Norway, for example, one can apply for a professorship from one's own or another university, or, if one is deemed qualified, be promoted within one's current position. In Spain, national and/or regional agencies assess qualifications, and if the assessment is positive, an institution sometimes provides a pathway to the next position.

Tenure track is challenging these traditional promotion patterns. The interpretation and 'novelty' of the tenure track often refers to an existing career system. Typically, in Europe, the tenure track mixes tradition and new methods of promotion and uses probation by combining a sequence of fixed-term placements, evaluations and a promotion pattern, with the aim of a permanent contract.

Academic Career Paths (ACPs)

An ACP is an individual career path that can be institutional, interorganisational and/or international. Traditionally, careers have been approached from a vertical organisational perspective, in which the career is seen as an upward progression within the organisational hierarchy. However, career advancement can also be horizontal, within an organisation (such as between units or different tasks) or involve different organisations. In recent years, the boundaries between organisations have become less defined, and careers can be analysed as individual projects (Siekkinen et al, 2022). Thus, a career can most often be described as more boundaryless than bounded (Dowd & Kaplan, 2005).

A bounded career is framed by the organisational career model and employer. Dowd and Kaplan (2005) describe the bounded career as one in which identity is derived from the employer and organisational factors play a major role in rewards, risk-taking and planning for the future. The boundaryless career, on the other hand, is based on the active planning of the individual, involves several steps in multiple organisations and mobility and thus requires risk-taking and a strong professional or self-obtained identity.

Various concepts are used to analyse these personal, boundaryless careers, each highlighting different aspects of such. The psychological contract emphasises the fact that careers are based on reciprocal relationships and trust (for example Siekkinen et al., 2016a). The boundaryless career emphasises the flow and transformation of knowledge between organisations through mobile individuals (Arthur, 1994; Siekkinen et al., 2022). *Flexicurity* highlights the role of governments in securing careers in changing organisational contexts, while *employability* emphasises individual characteristics and transferable skills in labour markets.

In relation to academic research, careers can also be analysed based on advancement type. Laudel (2017) distinguishes between three types of academic career: organisational careers, community careers and cognitive careers. Organisational careers involve a sequence of positions within universities and form the material basis for research. Community careers involve specific stages of role expectations in knowledge production, starting from apprentice and moving to elite, defining the direction of knowledge production of the community. Cognitive careers involve a sequence of academic problem-solving processes in which findings from previous projects are used as input in subsequent projects, forming a research trail. These three types of career are interrelated.

NESTED VIEW ON TENURE TRACKS

Tenure track systems are a Europe-wide trend implemented to address the changing landscape of academic careers. These changes are driven by *exogenous and endogenous factors*, as described in this chapter. Typically, tenure track systems are established through new national policies or incentives. They emphasise the institutional role of universities as employers, often leading to the development of a more diversified work environment and a more specialised academic portfolio. Thus, tenure track systems strengthen the strategic management of universities.

Reforms in Germany are one example of these changes related to the existence of different models (Hüther & Krücken, 2016; Zimmer, 2018). The newly introduced career path of a junior professorship was supposed to serve as an alternative to habilitation (i.e., a second thesis after the doctoral thesis). However, many junior professors still wrote or intended to write this second thesis because of a lack of security concerning the acceptance of the new career path.

A nested perspective on academic careers proves valuable for studying tenure track systems. Due to the embedded dimensions of tenure track systems within national systems, policy changes at the national level are often required. As a result, *national ACFs* have been modified to accommodate this new trend. In many countries, the requirement of a lengthy probationary period poses a legislative challenge that must be addressed to meet labour-law standards. Some countries face challenges involving the length of probationary periods, while others typically offer permanent academic employment beyond a doctoral degree. In addition, there have been countries in which tenured positions were not possible because all academic posts were renewable every six years.

Tenure track systems also have implications for national higher-education legislation in most countries, as they introduce new positions, such as assistant and associate professors, that have not traditionally been used in many European countries. This poses challenges in linguistic translations, as tenure track career stages may utilise national career steps or introduce new employment types. Moreover, the term ‘tenure(d)’ is problematic, as it carries multiple meanings in local languages and administrative traditions, making it difficult to translate accurately.

The trend for tenure track has led to the creation of various funding instruments that support universities in establishing new positions and planning for long-term sustainability after the initial seed funding for recruitment has been utilised (for example, after five years). The funding programme in Germany, mentioned earlier (Dance, 2016), is a case in point. The tenure track model is also connected to internationalisation policies, which are often discussed

alongside language policies and international education. Efforts have been made to facilitate the recruitment of young scholars, female scholars and international talents through tenure track systems, enhancing the attractiveness of academic careers.

In terms of *organisational ACMs*, tenure track positions and recruitment have prompted universities to plan their job demands and design personnel policies. Tenure track positions require more extensive long-term financial and work-related planning compared with 'normal' positions because expenses increase as the recruited individuals progress in their careers. They also necessitate long-term workforce planning. Tenure track positions are typically research intensive (Pekkola et al., 2020a), and, if they are used to replace traditional professor positions, the associated teaching duties must be reconsidered. Furthermore, tenure track positions place demands on academic leaders and supervisors who should facilitate, guide and support tenure track candidates in their career advancement.

Regarding promotion and recruitment practices, universities should carefully consider how to implement tenure track. This involves deciding between developing two parallel career systems or transitioning all positions to the tenure track system. It also has implications for organisational structure, salary frameworks and performance measurement systems, which must be adapted to accommodate the new promotion schemes. This may create equity challenges if some faculty members can be promoted based on performance while others remain in the old system.

Regarding *individual ACMs*, tenure track systems are expected to provide a more predictable and rewarding international career path by strengthening the interconnections between organisational, community and cognitive career aspects. While this holds true to some extent, individual experiences may vary. Despite the organisational aim for tenure track candidates to succeed, evidence suggests that academics on this career path often find the probationary period and performance pressures stressful (Geschwind et al., 2019, Acker et al., 2012; Pietilä, 2018). The tenure track system may also reduce mid-career mobility. In some countries, tenure track systems may alter the work experience of future professors who have only held qualifying positions, bypassing traditional career paths involving teaching, administrative responsibilities and project duties before attaining the qualifications for a professorship.

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