



**U. Teichler, E. A. Höhle (eds.): The Work Situation of the Academic Profession in Europe. Dordrecht etc: Springer Publishers, 2013**

Hungarian Educational Research Journal  
2013, Vol. 3(2) 32–37  
© The Author(s) 2013  
<http://herj.lib.unideb.hu>  
Debrecen University Press



DOI: 10.14413/herj.2013.02.04.

*Reviewed by Tamás Kozma*

“After years of discussion on elegantly formulated objectives such as the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, higher education systems in Europe have remained fairly varied. Similarly, the academic profession has remained extremely varied across Europe...” (p. 271). This is the concluding remark of the editors of a new book--Volume 8 in The Changing Academy series--entitled ‘The Work Situation of the Academic Profession in Europe’.

What is the work situation of the academic profession in Europe (represented by twelve countries)? Professors at the university and senior academics in the non-university sector spend 30-40% of their working time on teaching and definitely less than this on research and research-related work (junior academics spend somewhat more time on teaching, but have the same attitude towards teaching versus research). Regulations and incentives play a stronger role in the higher education institutions of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; however, they seem to be less important in Austria or in Italy. Academics in Poland and Portugal spend more time on teaching than do other academics in Europe, yet their work load is relatively small and their teaching activities are not so varied (pp. 79-108).

University professors spend on average 16 hours a week on research when classes are in session and 24 hours per week when classes are not in session. (The equivalent is 10-14 hours per week for senior academics in the non-university sector.) A fifth of academics in the university sector and a third in the non-university sector did not publish scientific papers in the last three years. More than half of the academics—both senior and junior academics--are active in preparing and conducting research projects (the juniors mostly conducting projects, while the seniors tend to be managing and supervising them and applying for new projects). Both seniors and juniors feel that the increasing significance of external funding and the pressure for research productivity jeopardise the quality of their research (pp. 109-136).

Although there are debates about the service function (the 'third mission') of higher education institutions, academics in Europe (in the twelve countries surveyed) consider their service function to be marginal. They spend only 3 hours a week on service type activities, while they do administrative work for approximately 6 hours per week. Germans do more (up to 6 hours a week), and the English less (2 hours). The roughly 3 hours are mostly spent undertaking service type activities which are connected to teaching or research (e.g. teaching in various extramural settings). Only junior academics are expected to do community or politically oriented service work. The service activities of academics in Europe (the academics representing the 12 countries surveyed) are not only marginal; they also support their main motivational drive, that is, to improve their status in the academic community (e.g. peer reviewing, counselling, board meetings and the like (pp.137-158).

These are the core findings of the book. As its subtitle tells us, they are the findings of a twelve-country survey conducted in 2010-2011 under the umbrella of the European Science Foundation, a collaborative research project with the title 'The Academic Profession in Europe'. IKT was conducted by INCHER (International Centre for Higher Education Research), a centre of Kassel University (Germany) dedicated to the academic study of, and research on, higher education.

One predecessor of the EUROAC project was the CAP-project ('The Changing Academic Profession'), undertaken from 2007-2010 with the participation of academics from twenty countries around the world. The aim of the CAP project was to identify and analyse changes that had occurred in the academic professions since the Carnegie Study in the early 1990s. The Carnegie Study was the first questionnaire survey conducted internationally. It used the hypotheses and survey techniques that had been formulated and regularly used by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to monitor changes in the teaching profession in the United States. All in all, the purpose was clear: to discover as much as possible about the teaching profession in the European higher education area on the basis of an empirical survey.

The volume is not simply a collection of essays (by nearly 20 contributors) of the traditional type, that is, country case studies with introductory and concluding essays emerging from an international conference with a pan-European audience. Rather, it is a thoroughly structured research report which guides the reader along the research path. The editors explain the growth of the idea of an empirical study, providing all the necessary information about methods and samples. (Chapter 1). At the end of the volume (Chapter 12), they return to the main idea of the survey.

Between the first and the concluding chapters, ten chapters analyse the findings of the EUROAC survey. An impressive group of European collaborators worked to explain the most important results of various aspects of the academic profession. The 'career path' is described by Ates and Brechelmacher (Chapter 2); the job satisfaction of academics is presented by Kwiek and Antonowicz (Chapter 3); and their gender differences are

analysed by Goastellec and Pekari (Chapter 4). Three chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) deal with the core functions of the profession: the teaching function (Höhle and Teichler), the research function (Drennan et al.), and the service function (Culum et al.). The next three chapters focus on university governance, changes in such governance, and the impact on the European higher education models: the changing controls on academic work (Aarrevaara and Dobson, Chapter 8), the introduction of the New Public Management model (Park, Chapter 9), and research and teaching evaluation at the universities (Campbell, Chapter 10). Last but not least, Goastellec and Pekari highlight the effects of internationalisation on the profession between Academia and the Market (Chapter 11).

Is there any convergence in the academic profession in present-day Europe? Or, rather, is there a growing divergence (as the editors seem to suggest, see above)? The main lesson to be drawn from these chapters is that both tendencies are at work. A strong convergence can be seen in the functions of research and teaching (the two 'pillars') of the profession in present-day Europe. The division of the academic year is also a common feature--not necessarily the same parts of the year though--which makes the division of the research and teaching functions viable. Full employment of senior academics seems also to be a general pattern, while junior academics tend to receive only temporary employment for a relatively long time in their careers. It is also common that women academics gain more and more room in the profession -- a process seen decades earlier in school education throughout Europe. These tendencies suggest a strong convergence process.

However, strong divergence forces still exist. There is a growing difference in the working hours of academics, from a minimum of 4-6 hours a week (senior academics) to a maximum of 15 working hours (juniors). Their salaries may be half of the maximum salaries found in the survey. Characteristic is the division of time spent on research (10-40 %) and teaching (30-60 %). These differences cannot be labelled as the characteristics of less or more developed university systems. Rather, they are closely connected with national traditions and with the social contexts of higher education institutions in the various European countries.

The shift from the traditional guild-style governance toward a top-down university management has a deep impact on the working conditions of academics. Traditional governance can be characterised by the 'collegial' system where senior academics (e.g. university professors) have a strong influence on various internal and external issues of their institutions. This mode of governance has a long tradition at European universities, and it still exists in southern Europe. Although new stakeholders have arrived at the universities --internal stakeholders (students, the management / administration, the staff) and external stakeholders (government representatives, business-related stakeholders, enterprises, chambers of commerce, trade unions, the media etc.), power seems to remain in the hands of academics. The external stakeholders have more influence on research activities than on the teaching functions for the simple reason that teaching (contents, methods, techniques) has always been controlled--more or less--by

academia. The research field is less controlled by traditional prescriptions, and there is more room for innovation and creativity.

New stakeholders have less influence on university systems funded mostly by public resources; less public funding goes hand in hand with the growing influence of the new stakeholders. Since universities are in a better standing--as far as public funding is concerned, the external stakeholders have more influence on the non-university sector. This seems to be a general pattern throughout Europe, with systems in the northern countries (the UK, the Netherlands, Finland) being under stronger external influences than university systems in the south (pp. 159-182).

While the influence of external stakeholders varies from system to system and from country to country, the power of internal stakeholders is generally increasing. They seem to have more influence on European universities than do external stakeholders. In part, this reflects traditions that have arisen since the 1960s, when students and staff became recognised partners in university governance (particularly at German, Austrian and Swiss institutions). The growing role of those 'internal stakeholders' was one of the outcomes of the student unrest of the late 1960s in Europe. The increasing influence of internal stakeholders--mostly the administration and management--derives from the changing characteristics of research and teaching at higher education institutions.

A general trend in European higher education --in the twelve countries surveyed--is the emerging influence of so-called 'managerialism' (pp. 183-204). This reflects of the introduction of the New Public Management system to higher education institutions, which undermined traditional (collegial) forms of university administration. The New Public Management-style institutional governance --as in other fields of public administration--tries to follow the managerial patterns and techniques of the business sector. It regards the university as an enterprise and applies to it the successful management models and techniques of private business. The new features are the following: a new emphasis on the mission of the institution (mission orientation), vertical (top-down) decision-making procedures (the collegial way of decision-making was more horizontal), and support for competitiveness inside and outside the university.

One outcome of these developments is the introduction of new types of teaching and research evaluation as well as quality assurance. While these have always been elements of university governance, in the past they had traditional ways and means (graduations, diplomas, signs and institutional symbols). 'Managerialism' suggests and implies new ways and means for evaluating research and teaching, such as performance indicators, measurements of student achievements and institutional rankings. All these new tools of the New Institutional Management are now part of the European university. We cannot avoid them; instead, we might seek to 'domesticate' them. The danger of 'managerialism' is, in part, bureaucratisation (the introduction of indicators and data collection, coupled with the unlimited growth of the databases, etc.). This is the result of the poor application of the New Institutional Management model. If data collection is kept under

control and evaluations are based on performance (rather than judgements), then the New Institutional Management model can support the functions of institutions (pp. 205-28).

The countries participating in the survey were as follows: Austria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, and the UK. The Appendix of the volume (pp. 273-290) gives a short overview of their higher education systems. Hungary is not among them. It may therefore be interesting to compare the findings of the twelve-country survey with features of the higher education system in Hungary.

As far as the 'core patterns'--convergence vs divergence--are concerned, we may say that the Hungarian higher education is somewhere in the middle of the scale. Hungary has a hidden two-track system (universities vs 'polytechnics'), though the latter are formally merged with universities. A division of the academic year exists, but it follows the school year pattern (Fall and Spring semesters). Academics are strictly fully employed (a development of recent years), their working hours must be generally 14 hours a week, which is the average of the working hours for senior (6-10 hours) and junior (13-16 hours) academics. Time spent on research and teaching reaches the European average (60-40% for teaching and research, depending on the type of institution).

Academic career patterns in the twelve countries and in Hungary also show similarities with slight differences. A prerequisite for junior academic positions is a doctorate (Hungary has had organised doctoral training since the mid-1990s). The typical age of doctoral candidates is around 30 years, while for the habilitation it is 40-50. Habilitation is a prerequisite for a university professorship (university professors are appointed in the 'polytechnic' type faculties of the universities). The teaching function is generally considered by the public (and government) to be an essential function of Hungarian higher education; in the university arena, however, research is regarded as more important than teaching --or, at least, as equally important. So-called 'research universities' have emerged recently, and a performance standard has been created for them to be qualified for additional research money (public funds). We think, however, that Hungary is somewhere in the European middle--at least in this respect.

External stakeholders have less influence on university governance, since the Hungarian higher education is mostly (if not entirely) funded by government sources. From this point of view, the Hungarian higher education is closer to the 'southern' pattern in Europe. Internal stakeholders, on the other hand, have a relatively high impact. University administrations have always been relatively powerful, mostly due to government funding and the powerful government bureaucracy, which has always sought out its university counterpart. In recent years, however, the university administrations have tended to become managerial-type bureaucracies (thanks to the influence of New Public Management in Hungarian higher education). The reason for this is partly that public administration is also changing; it is moving away from the

traditional bureaucratic model towards a more modern administration. Another factor is that universities have grown in size and have more functions. The largest institutions today function as major public service enterprises, similarly to public transport, health, and social care institutions. Accordingly, Hungarian universities--the largest of them--are becoming major factors for the economic development of their regions.

The questionnaire used in the survey is not published in the present volume; it can be found in an additional volume (Teichler et als, *The Changing Academic Profession*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013). It would be worth conducting a similar survey among academics in Hungary and elsewhere (in, for instance, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Ukraine, etc.). It would contribute to the core idea of the present book: universities are similar and diverse at the same time. This is a major pattern in Europe.