

# The Rise of the Post-Doc as Principal Investigator?

Presentation for the Max Weber Programme, European  
University Institute, 30 November 2007

# structure of the presentation

- What is a principal investigator? What does it mean to be a principal investigator as postdoc? Why is this shift happening now? What does this mean for me?
- From PhD to PI: What do I need to do? How can I do this?
- The postdoc phase: What makes a difference? How can I improve my experience?
- Call for applications: Continuing Professional Development Programme for Postdocs

# the presenter

- Author: "The Rise of the Post-Docs as Principal Investigator? How PhDs and Post-Docs May Advance Their Career and Knowledge Claims in the new Europe of Knowledge" (March 2006). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=891041>
- EUI RSCAS alumnus: JMF 2004-05 and VF 2005-06, sponsored by the Fondazione Antonio Ruberti and EIROforum
- Founder and Executive Director: Research Network 1989 - a collaborative venture of the younger generation
- Initiator: Early Independence for Postdocs: A Continuing Professional Development Programme
- Associate of the Max Planck Society

# the principal investigator

- the ERC SIRG as a 'culture shift'
- build-up: perceptions about competitiveness, innovation and missing researchers
- flagship awards, national reforms and mobility promotion
- the European Research Area
- on the possible divergence between Europe and the US

# four steps from PhD to PI

- writing a career development plan
- enlisting the support of a suitable team of mentors
- finding a fitting institutional environment
- developing a research plan

# what works for postdocs?

## the Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey

Geoff Davis "Improving the Postdoctoral Experience: An Empirical Approach", forthcoming in: The Science and Engineering Workforce in the US, Richard Freeman and Daniel Goroff, editors, NBER/University of Chicago Press - <http://postdoc.sigmaksi.org/>

- Abstract: Recent reports have called for changes to the training of postdoctoral scientists and engineers. We tested the hypotheses that the practices advocated make a measurable difference in the experiences and productivity of postdoctoral researchers using data from a large-scale survey. We found that structured oversight and professional development opportunities are associated with a broad range of positive outcomes; compensation-related measures, in contrast, have few quantifiable benefits. Postdocs who wrote research/career plans at the start of their appointments were 23% more productive than those who did not. Teaching experiences, exposure to non-academic careers, and training in proposal writing and project management were also associated with multiple positive outcomes.

# highlights from the call

- international experience as exemplified by holding educational qualifications from at least two different countries, or else having held mobility fellowships cumulatively for more than 15 months
- awareness of the importance of principal investigators for the knowledge economy and information society, possibly with experience in knowledge-based industries and services
- peers that have some track record of collaboration are encouraged to apply together
- postdocs from CEE and with CEE experience are encouraged to apply particularly
- a special effort to support female postdocs to counter the phenomenon of the leaky pipeline

further information

<http://www.cee-socialscience.net/1989/independence/index.html>

search engine: Research Network 1989

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=891041>

search engine: ssrn post-doc principal investigator