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"Academic labour markets in Europe: an analytical framework to understand their transformation"

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Introduction



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Introduction

■ Rather well known facts and trends

- The academic profession is increasingly “professionalised”
 - Thus access is more and more formalized...
 - ...but also more and more unpredictable
- Casual positions are more and more frequent



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Introduction

- Academic activities are more and more :
 - Organized around projects assembling various categories of actors achieving different tasks
 - Assessed according to diverse criteria allowing to link scientific reward to financial retribution
 - Expected to be also relevant
- Careers (or trajectories) are affected
 - Less linear
 - Less organizational



Introduction

- No doubt that the academic profession is changing but how to analyse this?
- My point here will be:
 - To simultaneously look at academic labour markets,, the content of academic work and the transformation of academic organizations and at their interplay
 - Each time trying to rely on a specific analytical framework



Content

1. Transformations of academic work
2. Transformations of academic labour markets
3. Transformations of academic organizations



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1. Transformations of academic work



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1. Transformations of academic work (1)

- Looking at academic work with the tools of the sociology of work
- Building on M. Lallement (2007), 4 main dimensions have to be distinguished
 - Division of work
 - Individuation
 - Integration
 - Regulation



1. Transformations of academic work (2)

■ Division of work

- "The way segmentations with cognitive virtue are built, last and are destroyed" : a traditional issue
- "The principles which structures the division of work"
 - Statutes
 - Contractual arrangements
 - Performance
- "The criteria determining hierarchies"
 - Managerial skills // scientific competencies
 - leaders // primus inter pares



1. Transformations of academic work (3)

■ Individuation as processes “producing a diffraction of the social”

- Instruments allowing forms of individuation: citation-index, web of science, H-index, rankings
- Transparency about the performance of colleagues
- A common group of equals sharing the same norms // differentiated salaries and work conditions



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1. Transformations of academic work (4)

■ Integration

- Organisations “whose integrative function is recognized today”
 - More interdependence because of more division of work
 - Increase in collective devices and practices at the infra-organisational level.

The British case and the RAE:

- more collective practices (seminars, mentoring, etc.) at the department level.
- individual success depends on increased collective collaboration and exchanges at the departmental level.

- “The adoption of shared ideals and common representations”: the resilience of the academic identities



1. Transformations of academic work (5)

- Regulation as the “continuous movement of creation, recomposition and destruction of rules”
 - Academic review and scientific criterai are playing an increasing role...
 - ... but non-academic rules, norms and standards are developing in parallel



2. Transformations of academic labour markets



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2. Transformations of academic labour markets (1)

- Market segmentation as an analytical framework
(Doeringer and Piore 1971)
- Primary *versus* secondary labour markets
 - The increase in secondary labour markets...
 - But also less pathways from secondary to primary labour markets



2. Transformations of academic labour markets (2)

■ Two phenomenon

➤ External labour markets

- Become highly valorised (being local or “native” is wrong)
- The more prestigious way to make a career

➤ More equipped internal labour markets

- Universities as internal labour markets
- Increasing equipment of the internal labour market
 - introduction of merit-salaries,
 - contracts by objectives,
 - advancement rules etc.



2. Transformations of academic labour markets (3)

- New contractual arrangements between universities and academics
 - From universities as hosting places...
 - ... to universities as employers
 - A paradoxical trend : more institutional commitment *versus* more flexibility



3. Transformations of academic organizations



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3. Transformations of academic organizations (1)

■ Reforms affecting the governance of universities

- Delegation of tasks previously in the hand of the public authorities
- Strengthened executive leaders / weakened deliberative bodies
- Collegial governance is challenged by university boards



3. Transformations of academic organizations (2)

- Universities as organizations (Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersonn 2000)
 - Drawing boundaries and constructing institutional identities
 - "Being special", i.e. emphasizing singularities and "distinctiveness" => building specific assets
 - Increased tension between being committed to a discipline than and to a university: towards "local cosmopolites"?



3. Transformations of academic organizations (3)

➤ Reinforcing the hierarchy

- More coordination as well as more control on individual behaviours *vis-à-vis* the overall institutional project
- Multiple evaluation

➤ Looking for rationality

- Rationalising the production process within universities
- Promoting responsibility, relevance, accountability



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Conclusion



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Conclusion

- The three dimensions (work, labour markets and organization) play one with another: some examples
- Two main consequences (and issues to study):
 - A move of academic work towards other forms of work?
 - The academic profession, more and more differentiated



Thank you very much !



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