

Higher Education and
Academic Careers - Women's path to positions in academia

- Presentation to National Commission for the revision of the legal framework for higher education in Portugal at University of Maia, Porto, Portugal
- 14 June 2023
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## Academic career systems across Europe

Content of academic work: many universities combine teaching and research positions, while in the non-university sector, teaching oriented positions are the majority

Advancement systems: promotion or competition, many countrys have a combination of a promotion and competition, some have strong competition at all levels

Tenure track models in some countrys
Temporary employments has been on the
rise, but is contested


## LERU 2023

## Differences across systems

Short term contract at the beginning of the academic career vs permanent positions early (Sweden, France, Italy) vs senior researchers employed temporary (serial contracts (Switzerland, UK)
Differences in degree of openness (recruitment/promotion balance)
The gateway to professorship vs reorientation of career at a late stage (mid-career)

Academic career maps - extraordinary diversity



## Academic career systems across Europe

- Belgium (Flanders)
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom (England)





## Academic careers - critical steppingstones

Two stylized pathways: one research-oriented and one teaching-oriented

Kritisk overgang 1:
Kritisk overgang 2:




Kritisk overgang 1:


## Kritisk overgang 3:



Kritisk overgang 2:


Kritisk overgang 4:


## Who apply for academic positions?

- What is the distribution between women and men in the education-oriented career path?
- How is the application distributed between women and men in the research-oriented career path?


Teaching oriented: distribution between women and men


Researchoriented: distribution between
women and men


## How does the hiring process work?

Appointment of associate professor
Example


Five phases of hiring process:
call, screening, academic committee, interview committee, employment


Different understandings of quality: in need of a teacher, productivity in academic terms, productivity in international journals, the right teacher, international excellence


Produktivi<br>anglofone,<br>kompetitive<br>publiserings-<br>kanaler

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- The evaluation and selection tools are perceived as necessary
- To be able to hire someone
- Hiring someone with acceptable expertise
- To do it in a legitimate way
- The evaluation and selection tools may favor
- Research rather than teaching
- Themes defined as the core of the discipline
- Publication channels defined as the core of the discipline
- Graduates who are educated in English-speaking institutions
- Enhances the Matthew effect



## Who is to be included?

Logic of inclusion: Gender, internationalization

Logic of exclusion: Excellence

Logic of exclusion: organizational match

Final decision and employment


What
determines
career
trajectories?


## Critical Career Transitions - Teaching



- The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition from assistant professor to associate professor/dosent/professor (N = 8815 assistant professors).

Critical Career Transitions Teaching

- The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition associate professor to dosent/professor (N $=1897$ associate professors). -


## Critical career transitions - research



The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition from PhD candidate to post-doctoral fellow ( $\mathrm{n}=7353$ PhD candidates).

## Critical career transitions - research



The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition from PhD candidate to associate professor or professor ( $\mathrm{n}=7353$ research fellows).

## Critical career transitions - research



The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition from postdoctoral fellow to associate professor or professor ( $\mathrm{n}=5017$ postdoctoral fellows).

## Critical career transitions - research



The significance of different variables for the probability of managing the transition from associate professor to professor ( $\mathrm{n}=7404$ associate professors).

## Summary of main findings (1)

- The university and colleges sector appears as an attractive workplace:
- Great interest in the positions and many applicants per advertised position
- There is considerable stability in the employment conditions among permanent academic employees, most of whom leave because they retire



## Summary of main findings (2)

- But there are variations:
- difference in attractiveness depending on subject areas, job level and institutions;
- few qualified applicants for senior-level positions, while there are more qualified applicants for PhD and postdoctoral positions
- The research-oriented career path appears to be more attractive than the teaching-oriented career path, especially for applicants from abroad and men
- Institutions in the regions, as well as specialised institutions, face greater challenges in attracting highly competent applicants than the large institutions located in the largest cities



## Summary of main findings (3)

- Different career paths:
- There is a tendency for women to apply for advertised positions to a lesser extent than men, which may indicate a form of self-selection
- Men and women apply to different subjects
- The gender balance evens out when it comes to the likelihood of making the critical transitions in an academic career



## Implications (1)

- Subject differences should be taken into account:
- Policy and practice related to academic careers should take into account the interaction between gender, applicants from abroad and the field of study
- It should be discussed whether national and institutional regulations should facilitate differentiation of career policy between disciplines
- Reason to draw attention to the differences in men's and women's academic preferences for an academic career
- It is important to have sustained attention related to the qualification of women for professorships



## Implications (2)

- Look at the appointment processes:
- Attention should be paid to the qualifications sought in the advertisement of positions and the weighting of the various qualifications in the assessment process
- Assuming that a lot of resources are spent on assessing applicants who are not actually qualified for the positions, which means that it should be discussed whether the appointment processes in the sector can be made more efficient
- Should job advertisements state clearer criteria for what is required to be qualified?




## Implications (3)

- Binding emphasis on teaching competence in the research-oriented career path
- Combined positions with both research and teaching as main tasks are the norm, in order to promote more emphasis on teaching quality and merit of teaching, this should be prioritized within the research-oriented career path
- Greater attention should be paid to clarifying requirements for other qualifications in the call texts and as binding criteria both for the assessment of the appointment committees and for the assessments made by the expert committee

