The Academic Profession in Chair and Department Systems

An Empirical Analysis in Eleven European Countries

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Abstract

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In Europe, different higher education systems co-exist simultaneously and make Europe an interesting research target. The focus of this paper is on whether chair systems and department systems as described by Clark (1983), Neave and Rhoades (1987) and Kreckel (2008) go hand in hand with specific patterns of the academic career. This question is treated empirically with the use of survey data from the international EUROAC project, where academics employed at universities were asked about their employment conditions, their career path, time use etc. and is supplemented with information from several country reports. The eleven European countries examined are Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Finland and Norway.

First, the main features of the models are described followed by the categorization of the higher education system in each country in relation to the models. Second, the key features of academic career paths as they are realized in each country are discussed in terms of the predictions by the models. The analysis shows that the organizational structure of either chair or department does have a major impact on individual careers, barriers and chances and supports the description in six of the 11 countries precisely. In the other five countries (Italy, Portugal, Poland, Finland and Norway), however, at least two additional career patterns are observed that consist of a mixture of the predicted patterns. These are not well covered by the scholars’ descriptions and might require more detailed characterizations from current researchers.
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1. Objectives of the Study

Although academia in Europe today is said to be “in the periphery” (Altbach 2005), Europe used to be a strong academic player and European higher education systems have been exported around the globe (Clark 1983). Still today, university systems are being referred to worldwide as the “British system” or “German system”, which encompasses the division of tasks as well as the organizational structures. While more than a century ago the English Cardinal Newman emphasized the mere teaching of eternal truths as the purpose of the English university, the German scholar von Humboldt emphasized the unity of teaching and research (Clark 1983, pg. 21) and brought research to university (Schimank and Winnes 2000). Processes of rapid change, differentiation and convergence continue and the argument that research is an integral part of university is definitely solved. Yet considerable differences still remain between higher education systems. Some of the structures that were established during the last centuries, namely the department, chair and Napoleonic systems, remained fully or at least survived partly. Today, the cross-country categorization into the chair or department systems is still used as a reference point when referring to universities. The parallel existence of different systems in one continent is what makes Europe an interesting research target.

Certain features that are typical for chair systems are often in political debates and are perceived as major career progression barriers. Included among the points of criticism are the high selectivity and insecure future prospects, the long dependence upon one professor, the necessity to be highly mobile, to qualify into higher ages of life and to raise funds for an own position. But similarly in department systems, academics react with uproar. Here the career paths are not in the focus of critique, but the focus is rather on the market-oriented reforms that are seen to threaten academic freedom and autonomy.

In this paper the focus lies on the academic careers in chair and department systems. While chair and department is on the level of inner-organizational structure, career paths describe individual developments inside an organization or organizational unit. Notably, there has not been much empirical evidence of the impact of the organizational structure on academic careers for a number of countries recently. The goal of this paper is to show to what extent the categorization into chair or department system is suitable for describing academic career paths in 11 European countries.

At first, the ideal models chair and department systems according to the descriptions of Clark (1983), Neave and Rhoades (1987) is introduced. Here, the organizational level and the level of career paths are described separately. Second, the higher education systems in 11 European countries (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Finland and Norway) are categorized into chair or department systems. Third, by presenting recent empirical data from the higher education systems in these 11 countries, a comparison is drawn between the predictions of the models and the actual career structure in each country. On this basis, how well the models describe the career paths in each country will be shown.

2. Describing the Ideal Models

Clark (1983) and Neave and Rhoades (1987) describe the organizational structure and the career structure as fundamentally interrelating where the organization determined the individual career paths of the early career researchers.
2.1 Organizational Level

According to their descriptions, chair systems are the more ancient of both models. A chair is a smaller unit one organizational level below a department. It builds a subunit on an intermediate level between the department and the junior staff who are structurally assigned to the chair and automatically financed by the university (cf. Figure 1). The chair holder is a professor with central responsibility, management and leadership tasks of her/his unit. Aside from status and prestige, the chair holder enjoys not only material resources at her/his command, but also power over the junior staff to whom she/he is boss and academic gate keeper simultaneously.

In the “professor systems” (Shin & Jung 2013) professors also have power inside the institution, academic oligarchy, – and they execute institutional decisions in the department and the faculty.

In department systems, however, the department, school or institute, is the greater organizational entity. Modern departments often go back to ancient chair systems whose structures were, often in the rise of the managerial university, disintegrated to the benefit of greater organizational units (Jacob 2013). As a result, the centrality and power concentration to chair holders is avoided. "[...] the department spreads responsibilities and powers among a number of professors of similar senior rank and more readily allows for some participation by associates and assistants. It thereby becomes a basis for collegial as well as bureaucratic order at the operational level." (Clark, 1983, pg. 46). Neave and Rhoades describe that professors and non-professorial academics are consolidated in the department as the collegial body. Hierarchy between the academic ranks is attenuated since there is no direct dependency on each other. Instead, departments are chaired by a relatively strong dean who was appointed in a top-down process and, rather than professors, it is the administrative units who decide about the use of resources (ibid. 1987). This structure “engenders a sense of immediate solidarity among all ranks of academic staff, setting them apart from, sometimes in opposition to, a bureaucracy.“ (ibid. 1987, pg. 216). Here, the academic staff of all stages are managed by the dean of the department whom they may see as their opposition (Clark 1983; Neave & Rhoades 1987; Kreckel 2008).

Figure 1: Organizational Structures

Source: Own design
2.2 Career Paths

Clark, Neave and Rhoades describe the organizational structures in a direct connection to different types of career paths. The constitutive element differentiating between both systems is the organizational unit that non-professorial academic staff subordinates to. In chair systems, the chair is the organizational unit that all non-professorial academic staff subordinate to and the staff are subject to directives of the chair holder. There are no regular professorial positions other than that of a chair holder. In department systems though, the non-professorial academics are directly employed in the department, as the professorial staff also are (cf. Figure 1). Academic personnel in chair systems are described to be pyramidal structured and therefore more hierarchically organized than the staff in department systems. Certainly, the quantitative relation between assistants and chair holders does not allow every assistant to become a chair holder and selectivity and competition make the future prospects for an academic career insecure. The non-professorial researchers are typically on fixed-term contracts, subject to directives to the chair holder and normally in a qualifying process until they may become a professor on their own. Usually a second degree, the habilitation, is required to be allowed to teach on an independent basis (venia legendi) and is the requirement to become a professor. Both the PhD and habilitation are normally supervised by the chair holder in a “Meister-Schüler” (Master-Student) relationship.

The professor is the central figure for junior researchers as she/he determines the working contract, qualification, professional socialization, introduction into the scientific community and the intellectual development. For non-professorial researchers, this setting constitutes long periods of dependence as well as prospective insecurity that brought about the saying “up or out”. Neave and Rhoades characterize the distinct divide between professors and junior staff as “inherently hierarchical, with potential divisions of interest among academics of different ranks. It was based on a system of patronage in which members of the non-professorial class remained highly dependent on individual chair holders not merely for admission into academia but also for advancement once inside” (Neave & Rhoades, 1987, S. 211). Similarly, “professors are the masters, and the subordinate academic staff serve either as their apprentices or, in a slightly less humble station, as their journeymen” (Neave and Rhoades 1987, pg. 215).

But in department systems, professors are single units without assistants and early career researchers are normally not bound by instruction to a professor (Clark 1983; Neave and Rhoades 1987; Kreckel 2008). In contrast to chair systems, in department systems doctoral students are seen as third-cycle students, but the doctoral degree is the highest formal qualification which is followed by permanent employment after a short probationary period of fixed-term employment. For promotion to higher career stages an internal evaluation of research and teaching merits takes place, but permanently employed candidates also have the possibility to remain on lower stages for the rest of their working lives. Even in early career stages, stable positions, relatively independent teaching and an own research agenda contribute to their independence.

In the next section the 11 European countries are matched in this classificatory scheme.

3. Classifications

To find out to what extent the described features are realized in the university systems in each sample country, it is necessary to classify the organizational structures in the university systems according to the framework of department or chair system. The matching was conducted via country reports in edited volumes by Enders (2004), Enders and de Weert (2001), Clark and Neave (1987), Kreckel (2008) and additional single country reports. The investigation showed that six countries could easily be categorized: Germany, Austria and Switzerland belong to the “classic” countries with chair structures, whereas Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands belong to the “classic” countries with department systems (Kreckel 2008; Kreckel 2010; Killeavy 2004). The five countries Norway, Finland, Portugal, Italy and Poland
are discussed less in the literature and the descriptions are less detailed, so they are more difficult to categorize. Like most countries with department systems, Norway and Finland look back on a tradition of organization in chairs of which remains still linger in today’s department structure. There, the transformation into departments was introduced only a few decades ago in the rise of market-oriented reforms (Välimaa 2001; Jacob 2013; Kyvic 2014). In contrast, Portugal and Italy used to be organized by the German pattern and then changed to follow the French model (Martinelli 1987; Moscati 2001, Le Feuvre 2005, pg. 10), which is organized in chairs, as Neave and Rhoades (1987) as well as Clark (1983) explain1. The Polish system also follows the German pattern with chair organization (Szczepański 1987). Former transitions from one system to the other may not always have been thoroughly implemented so that certain remaining features can be parallel to new patterns and therefore lead to hybridization. This contributes to the reason for difficulties in concretely matching national university systems with the ideal models described above (Höhle 2014).

As most department systems, if not all, have been organized as chair systems at an earlier date, it may be hypothesized that there is a common ongoing trend towards disbanding chairs that might further continue as market-oriented reforms are further enforced. In some existing chair systems dismantling processes are already observable, e.g., the softening of the habilitation from the second book (opus magna) towards a collection of peer-reviewed papers (cumulative habilitation) or the introduction of the tenure-track path in Germany and Austria (Enders 2001). On the other hand, the introduction of the traditional habilitation in Italy in 2010 describes an opposite movement.

4. Comparing the Models With Observations

In this section the academic career paths and working conditions in the 11 European countries are compared with the patterns described in the ideal models by Clark, Neave and Rhoades. Are the typical characteristics of the chair and department system implemented in the systems as the model descriptions predict?

Although it seems difficult to provide any more detailed information about institutional structures than the pure classification into chair or department in all countries, it was possible to figure out the core features of academic careers discussed above. The following information is drawn from different sources: some is retrieved from country reports, others gained from the EUROAC survey; a collaborative project about the academic profession in 12 European countries conducted from 2010-20122 (Teichler and Höhle 2013; Kehm and Teichler 2013).

It must be mentioned that organizational structures as well as career paths are not evenly and homogeneously distributed within countries but can vary from university to university, and even within one university heterogeneous patterns may coexist from discipline to discipline, department to department. Therefore, the information presented in Table 1 is a simplification of the features presented as a binary code (implying zero or one hundred percent) and summarizes a general tendency. In most of the cases the real distribution lies somewhere between these two poles.

1 Contrary to that, the MORE2 study describes Italy and Portugal as department systems (IDEA Consult, pg. 47).
2 The core database is a quantitative survey from the project “EUROAC – Responses to Societal Challenges” (Höhle and Teichler 2013), which is tightly connected to the project “Changing Academic Profession” (CAP) (Jacob and Teichler 2011). In this survey, academic staff employed at a higher education institution were asked about their employment situation and career path, their time use for teaching, research and other academic activities, their attitudes, as well as the institutional setting. The project was conducted in cooperation with the respective national teams. To receive comparative answers, the same questionnaire was used with slight country-specific variations. The national teams received representative results of at least 800 valid answers per country. Altogether, 13,000 valid answers of academic staff of different stages, employed at universities, are analyzed here (Teichler and Höhle 2013).
Table 1 shows the key features that differentiate the academic career paths in both models as discussed above. It also presents whether they belong to the practice in each of the 11 countries in question. If the feature is realized, it is marked by “X”, and if not, by “-”. If the career paths are realized as foretold by the model, all countries with a chair-model are noted with “X” and all countries with department models are noted with “-“.

Deviations from the model are noted in red.

- The organizational unit that non-professorial academic staff subordinate to is the constitutive element for dividing into a chair or department system. Juniors work for a chair in four countries with chair systems, but in two of them (Portugal and Italy), non-professorial researchers are not bound to instruction by a professor as they are employed at the department directly. According to this finding, the question arises about whether both countries fulfill the minimum requirement to be considered a chair system as defined by Neave and Rhoades (1987). In the department systems, all early career researchers are assigned to the department and not bound to instruction by a single professor.

- The time point when researchers receive a tenured position is the most discussed issue in some countries when it comes to attractiveness of the profession. From the political point of view, fixed-term employment is sometimes seen as a guarantee for innovation and development, while academics with stable contracts sometimes stagnate in their innovative efforts and capacity. For example in Germany and Austria, the period of fixed-term contracts tends to be quite long and not every professorial position guarantees tenure. In Germany, the end of a fixed-term contract and the poor future prospects are the most important reasons to leave academia (Selent 2013). Systems with long periods of fixed-term contracts are defined here as “Late Tenure” systems. For this feature, the employment status of academics in a higher career stage is measured using the EUROAC data. This higher non-professorial career stage includes researchers who obtained their PhD more than six years ago but have not yet reached professorship. This stage is adequate to the definition of the European Commission (2011) of stage R3 which is an “established researcher who has developed a level of independence”. The chair systems of Austria, Germany and Switzerland are considered as “Late Tenure” as only 53%, 47% and 45% respectively in the described career stage are permanently employed. Contrary to this, in Portugal, Italy and Poland more than two-thirds (72%, almost all in Italy, 74% respectively) are permanently employed and therefore are considered as “Early Tenure” systems. In the department systems, there is also a mix between both types of employment. While the United Kingdom (72%), Ireland (73%) and the Netherlands (84%) belong to the “Early Tenure” systems, in Norway and Finland less than half of the academics (39% and 49% respectively) in this career stage have a tenured contract.

- The arrangement during the PhD phase is the feature that is the most heterogeneous of all and the question whether the PhD is considered to be an educational step or a first career step, as Seixas (1998) argues, cannot be answered clearly as it is often both. In most countries multiple ways of financing, of inclusion to university and of supervision co-exist. It is common for PhD students to use private financial sources, receive scholarships, and work outside or inside academia. Even in systems where PhD students are normally seen as third-cycle students, they may have a small part-time job in academia (without being considered as regular staff but still gaining professional experience and socialization). Also supervisory arrangements may pluralize into graduate schools, working alone or in research groups, institutionalized programs, or supervision by multiple or single professorial and non-professorial persons. PhD candidates often even experience several periods of alternating arrangements. Still, the

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3 Insufficient information about Finland and Norway on this point.
4 There is little empirical proof on this connection. Laudel (2013) comes to the conclusion that innovative research needs a longer period of work on one topic.
5 Countries where less than two-thirds of the academics in this career stage have a tenured position are categorized as “Late Tenure” system, while countries with a share greater than two-thirds are categorized as “Early Tenure”.
dichotomy between education and profession is to be used for country categorization. In Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Poland as chair systems, as well as in Finland and Norway as department systems, the majority of PhD students are employed at a university and work as part-time or full-time staff (Saari and Moilanen 2012, pg. 291ff). To what extent they can use their working time for qualification differs from case to case, but usually the practical experience contributes to integration into academia and eases the entrance to an academic career as postdoctoral. In Portugal, the Bachelors or Masters degree used to be the entrance qualification for an academic career and PhD students were “considered as probationer assistants (assistente estagiário) rather than students” (Seixa, pg. 209). In 2009, however, this changed and the PhD has become the entry qualification to an academic position (Teichler and Höhle 2013, pg. 287). Contrary to this, PhD students in Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland are considered to be third-cycle students and do not usually belong to the academic staff (Teichler and Höhle 2013, pg. 280ff). They may, however, have small contracts where they support teaching or research on an auxiliary level.

• Instead of referring to chair and department, Kreckel (2008) refers to habilitation and tenure as distinguishing elements which describe the systems on the career path level. Traditionally, the habilitation is the highest academic qualification and a prerequisite for the professorship in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Poland in the majority of disciplines. Here, 74%, 77%, 66% and 52% respectively of the university professors hold a habilitation (Ates and Brechelmacher 2013, pg. 15). In Italy, the Abilitazione Scientifica Nationale (ASN) has substituted the Concorso in 2010 (an elaborate examination and evaluation of teaching and research merits) and therefore now belongs to the “habilitation systems” (Teichler and Höhle 2013, pg. 286). As habilitation was introduced only recently, at the time of the survey no academic held a habilitation in Italy. In Portugal the Aggregação is the prerequisite for the professorship (Teichler and Höhle 2013, pg. 289). The Aggregação is an elaborate entrance exam – not an academic qualification in a narrow sense. In Portugal, 25% of the professors surveyed have a “postdoctoral degree”. In the department systems (and in Portugal) the dissertation is the highest academic degree. However, to get promotion to be a professor, it is not enough to simply collect years as is sometimes said about officials in the organizational career (Baruch 2004). The evaluation of teaching and research merits can be seen as a functional equivalent to the habilitation, which is bound to the institution and carries less of a visible symbolic character. However, it may contain similar efforts and check the same competences. One important difference between the different steps towards the professorship is that the habilitation emphasizes research qualification more, while the evaluative processes in department systems take teaching experiences and the integration into the scientific community more strongly into account.

• The old scholars described that the PhD is the necessary qualification for independent teaching in the department systems, while in chair systems juniors need to have a habilitation to teach independently. Therefore the balance between the time that junior academics spend on teaching and on research on their way to a professorship shows which is emphasized as more important. The balance between teaching and research goes hand in hand with the necessity to further qualification and with fixed-term contracts. Analysis of the EUROAC survey data showed clear patterns: during the time when classes are in session, in Austria, Switzerland and Germany, as well as in Norway and Finland, junior academics spend more of their working time on research than on teaching. In Portugal, Italy, and Poland, as well as in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland, it is the opposite: junior academics spend a greater share of their time on teaching rather than on research. Starting with the idea that further qualification

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6 In contrast to that, de Goede et al. (2013; pg. 7) write that most PhD students in the Netherlands are employed at universities.

7 Although in these countries many juniors without a habilitation conduct independent teaching – otherwise it would not be possible to serve the amounts of students.
(habilitation or postdoctoral) might go along with a surplus of time spent for research, this connection can be found in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. In Portugal, Italy and Poland, however, where a habilitation or an additional entry evaluation is a prerequisite for professorship, this is not the case. That means that further qualification has to take place in the light of a relatively high teaching load. In Finland and Norway, on the other hand, junior academics spend a higher share of their time on research than on teaching although there is no formal postdoctoral qualification needed. So, a close connection between further qualification and research intensity can only be found in half of the countries. Moreover, the data suggests that there is a relationship between the academic tasks and the contract duration: academics in research-oriented systems tend to have longer periods of fixed-term employment (“Late Tenure”), while academics in teaching-oriented systems tend to reach permanent employment at an earlier career stage.

- The most difficult area to assess is how hierarchical the relationship among the academics of different career stages is. In a paper, the author used the EUROAC data to show the social distance between the roles, contracts and tasks in each career stage (Höhle 2014). According to this, the social distance is greater in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, as well as in Finland and Norway, smaller in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland and in the middle in Portugal, Poland and Italy (ibid.). Because of the heterogeneity of the role during the PhD phase, where one is considered a member of staff in some countries and a student in others, the comparison in terms of social distance is limited.

### Table 1: Selected Features in the Academic Career Path in eleven countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors in Chairs</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Tenure*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD = 1st professional phase</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habilitation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &gt; Teaching*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information taken from the EUROAC study: Teichler and Höhle 2013; Höhle 2014; own analysis

* = feature is given
- = feature is not given

5. Summary of the Results

The heuristics by Clark, Neave and Rhoades proves to be a useful framework for analyzing academic career structures as they describe key features of the academic career path in their composition towards each other in a way that is suited for a cross-country comparison. The description presents two ideal models of organizational structures and a set of key features that in their contrary composition lead to adverse career structures. The detailed information about the career paths was confronted with in how far they correspond to the models.

The analysis of the information corroborated the descriptions in six of the 11 countries (the classic department systems as well as the classic chair systems), while in five of them (Italy, Portugal, Poland, Finland and Norway) the information showed another composition that is not covered by the aforementioned models.

- In the classic department systems (the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands) the PhD phase is basically seen as third-cycle study. The PhD is the highest formal qualification which is the entry qualification as academic and permanent employment is reached soon after a relatively short
probationary period ("Early Tenure"). Having no professorial supervisor is connected to low shares of hierarchy. High loads of independent teaching are realized.

- In the classic chair systems (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) the PhD is often taken as first professional phase with more time spent on research than on teaching as independent teaching is not available yet. Also the work on a postdoctoral degree goes along with further dependence from the chair holder, distance in social roles and long unstable employment.

Interestingly, the other five countries are not described extensively under the concept of chair and department systems, therefore detailed information about the organizational structure is missing.

- For Portugal and Italy, the literature does not even give unambiguous results whether they they are categorized as chair or department systems. This is not surprising as the concept does not describe academic career paths well in these countries. First of all, for both countries, the minimum requirement for employment at a chair is not fulfilled. The combination of early stable employment and a high teaching are features typical for department systems, while the Concorso/habilitation and Agregação can be seen as typical for chairs.

- Poland is organized as a chair system, and the supervision of a chair holder and writing a habilitation are typical career features here. However, the early stable employment and the high teaching load are untypical for chair systems. As in Italy and Portugal, the work on the postdoctoral qualification must be an extra load with high teaching load.

- The university systems in Finland and Norway have been organized as departments for only a few decades and display mainly features typical for chair systems: the PhD as first professional phase, employment with late tenure, a research orientation and hierarchical relationships among staff members. The only features typical as department systems are the subordination to the department and the PhD as highest formal qualification.

Actually, the description of careers paths that do not correspond well with the models are the more interesting as they may challenge common beliefs. In higher education politics in Austria, Switzerland and Germany it is the practice to permanently employ researchers not before they have reached a habilitation or a professorship and by this “encourage” them to further qualify, as permanently employed researchers are suspected not to reach any break throughs any more. The systems in Italy, Poland and Portugal however, show that further qualification is not only possible but also the norm with earlier permanent employment. In these countries more PhD holders reach further qualification than in the first mentioned countries. On the other hand, Table 1 does hint to a connection between research advancement and instable employment: it shows that the countries with late employment stability are also the countries that are research-oriented (even if it does not always go along with a habilitation or postdoctoral qualification) while the countries with early employment stability are more teaching-oriented. Therefore a basic typology can be drafted of the precariously employed researcher, who is in a selectivity process for a long period vs. the securely employed teacher, whose further qualification is not an existential matter, but a matter of climbing up the career ladder.

Finally, in spite of all the processes of diversification and adaption during the last decades, the opposition between chair system and department system is still a valid boundary for classifying six of the countries and for determining the social relationships between the academic ranks. But even if it is not the best model for five of the countries, it is also not possible to view the institutional structures isolated from everyday tasks, individual careers, barriers and chances. The analysis shows that institutional structures and career structures permeate academic work thoroughly.
6. Concluding Remarks

With the conclusion that the model presented by Clark, Neave and Rhoades describes very precisely the typical career path of early career researchers in only six out of 11 countries leaves space for further interpretations and hypothesizing. From the analysis, there are certain things we have learnt and certain things that raise questions.

- It might be asked whether the chair or department system is always realized in the same way or whether there are different ways of realization that might reinforce different career structures.

- If the classification into chair or department systems can be taken as binary as it seems, the conclusion might be that the features characterizing the career path are not necessarily a result of the organizational structure as implied by the old scholars. Recent advances towards hybridization of models imply that features are independent both in their composition towards each other and in their composition towards organizational structures – why should permanent employment not be combined with long qualification phases? Why should a PhD student not work at the department?, and so on. If this is the case, the description of career paths by referring to the organizational structure would be fundamentally wrong – an aspect that is implied by Kreckel (2008) by speaking of the tenure system and habilitation system.

- As five of the systems were not captured well by the model the next step might be to fill this gap by coming up with one (or more) classifications as Ferrara (1996) did when adding “The Southern model” to Esping-Andersen’s scheme of welfare states. It is very possible that career structures at universities offer more than two patterns. Here, the scholars from the respective countries in particular are invited to contribute their expertise and knowledge. Comparative higher education researchers will be thankful for supplementing the concept. As concepts often focus the perspective on certain features, other features that are not well covered in a concept tend to get out of focus. Therefore, an adaption of the American-made concept by Europeans for the countries that are not described extensively might encourage the inclusion of these systems and help make them more visible in higher education research.

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