

**The rationalization of academic work and careers:  
Ongoing transformations of the profession and policy challenges**

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During the last two decades, the reforms led by national governments across Europe and the policies developed at the European level in order to transform universities and their relations to public authorities deeply affected the situation of the academic profession. This paper aims at looking at these transformations and is organized into two parts.

The first part deals with the key features about the academic profession in Europe and presents the main results which have been highlighted by different research and approaches. In terms of change, two main domains have to be distinguished. First the transformations of academic work and the increase in organisational control: it is argued that these changes cannot be equated with de-professionalization, but rather with a formalization of the division of labour and new forms of control among peers. Second the evolutions experienced by academic labour markets: the changing relationships between permanent and casual occupations go hand in hand with the introduction of new recruitment procedures and the development of internal labour markets.

The authors conclude this first part by showing that the transformation of academic work and the transformation of the academic labour market are coupled processes. In particular, the specialization of academic work is paralleled by a differentiation in statuses and career tracks, so that specific activities are allocated to particular types of manpower.

The second part identifies some potential developments between 2010 and 2020 and the main four issues which will have to be dealt with. First, the problems raised by the ongoing transformations of the control and the evaluation of academic work. Second, the challenge of heightened pressures on academic work in the context of further institutional hybridization. The third issue concerns the growing role of universities as employers. The fourth challenge is the construction of a European academic labour market.

The two authors conclude that the rationalization of work as well as the differentiation and the formalization of career tracks are expected to continue and generalize in the form of incremental, yet thorough, changes. They also stress that future changes in the profession may still be rather dependent on national institutional trajectories, even if comparable changes in EU countries could be indirectly induced or accelerated by European institutions and policies, for instance through research funding instruments or education policy schemes carrying implicit or explicit rationales and organizational arrangements.