Diversity around the profile of the 'good' candidate within French and German universities

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ABSTRACT. Diversity may occur among institutions that are considered to be similar. This is one of the arguments developed in this paper through the empirical analysis of faculty recruitments in history and mathematics within German and French universities. This study shows that the definition of what constitutes a 'good candidate' varies greatly from one department to another and affects the criteria to be taken into account and their respective weight in the decision. These variations are to be explained by the internal dynamics of the particular national academic labour market, the specific situation of the department and also by its development strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Differentiation is a complex and stimulating issue as shown by the book edited a few years ago by Meek et al. (1996). It can be used to state the existence of different institutional sectors within a national higher education system (referring for instance to the *grandes écoles* and the universities in France, or the *Fachhochschulen* and *Universitäten* in Germany, etc.). But it can also be used to outline the diversity that may exist between different disciplines within a single institutional sector and to the processes that continuously increase differentiation among them (Clark 1993, 1996). Lastly, it can be used to describe the various strategies that may be pursued by the institutions belonging to the same sector.

   In this contribution, I shall consider this third possibility and examine the diversity that can be observed among the university sector in France and in Germany. The interesting point is that, in these two countries, universities refer to a specific sector of higher education which could be compared with the research university sector in the US. Traditionally, in France as in Germany, the institutions belonging to this sector have been considered as equivalent. This principle probably holds true more strongly in France than in Germany because the role of the national ministry has long be to guarantee and to assess the alleged[1] equivalence of the curricula on the whole French territory. National procedures, criteria, references were defined in respect to this principle and utilised to serve this

aim (Musselin 2001). Even if it was not organised this way in Germany, the same principle held true: each institution called a 'university' was supposed to be equal to all the others.[2] As stated by Enders (2000b: 31): "the classic German solution is to have a high degree of inequality within universities, in the form of the chair system, and a less pronounced inequality between institutions".

In recent years, this general principle has not been officially dismissed, but many indicators show a greater acceptance for stating differences and even of promoting differentiation. The rankings recently published in the weekly newspaper 'Stern' (January 2001) is in favour of such an evolution.[3] The word 'competition' is also more and more to be found in France and in Germany. Nevertheless the situation in these two countries remain very different from that of the US or the UK, where explicit rankings and high differentiation has been accepted and legitimate for a long period.

In this paper, I would like to show that, even in this officially egalitarian setting, diversity already existed and that it can be assessed by looking at processes of recruitment decision-making.[4] What I intend to do is to give evidence that the definition of what constitutes a 'good' candidate greatly varies from one department to another within the same institutional sector, from the 'top researcher' to what we will characterise as a 'good citizen'. This is of course not sufficient to conclude that this is new or that department strategies vary more than before: this should be further documented by more historical studies. I only propose to outline that diversity exists and to give an idea of its scope.

My argument will be based on recent field work led on faculty recruitments in history and mathematics. I chose these two disciplines on purpose, because they are traditional ones: if the profiles appear to be different among the departments of these disciplines, we can reasonably suppose that it is a general phenomena which is not limited to some new or emerging disciplines. This field work is based on in-depth interviews that have been led with members of recruitment commissions and academic administrators in five history and five mathematics departments in France, as well as four history and four mathematics departments in Germany.[5] In each department 10 to 15 interviews were conducted.

I shall first present the main conclusions that can be drawn from the study on search committees in these countries and show that the recruiters' work consists in the gathering of positive signs rather than in the implementation of successive eliminating criteria. In a second part, I shall observe that the mix between the different qualities of the candidates vary from one department to another. The next section will then be dedicated

to the factors that may explain such differences. I shall explain that the level of uncertainty faced by the recruiters while assessing the candidates' qualities depends on the profiles (from 'top researchers' to 'good citizens') they are looking for. In a concluding section, I shall discuss the implications these results have on the study of academic labour markets and differentiation.

A MIX OF DIFFERENT QUALITIES

There is no place here to describe the entire academic labour market in France and Germany. A precise description can be found in two recent publications that draw a complete picture and present the main issues under discussion (Chevaillier 2000a, b; Enders 2000a, b). I shall simply state that recruitment procedures are quite different in the two countries, even if two distinct processes are always to be observed: an evaluation or judgement process that concludes in the selection and the ranking of a small number of candidates; a 'price' determination process which is separated from the first one, organised by bureaucratic rules in France and resulting from negotiations within limits in Germany. As a result, adjustments between supply and demand on academic labour markets do not occur through the price, but can be associated to what L. Karpik described as an economics for quality (Karpik 1989, 1995; Musselin 1996). In the following sections I will focus only on the first part of the process and stress that judgments include different components and can not be reduced to scientific evaluation.

Empirical results which diverge with the dominant literature on academic recruitments

The sociological literature on academic careers and recruitment patterns very much relies on the analysis of the American academic profession and mostly deals with the same recurrent themes: recruitments are supposed to be based on scientific quality and thus the problem is to assess it. For a first group of sociologists, scientific rewards and careers respect the universalistic norms: this means that recognition and prestigious positions are allocated to academics who have the higher publishing record (for instance: Cole & Cole 1973; Hargens & Hagstrom 1967, 1982). This is very often confirmed by economists (for instance: Tuckman & Leahey 1975; Hamermesh et al. 1982; Diamond 1986) who show a strong correlation between salaries and the number of publications (or the quality of these publications).

A second group of contributors refutes these assumptions and results and states that particularism (*cf.* for instance Crane 1970; Long et al. 1979; Reskin 1979; Long & Fox 1995) plays a stronger role, i.e., that the personal attributes attached to each candidate (such as the doctoral programme he/she attended, the institution where he/she received a BA, the mentors who wrote recommendation letters ...) were much more important than the assessment of his/her scientific production. Quantitative works tried to identify the best predicative factors: most studies showed that, for a first academic position, the best one was the doctoral programme attended by the candidate.

But when the recruiters we interviewed described their methods of evaluation, they explained that they certainly considered scientific activities, but also the personality of the candidate and, most of the time his/her teaching abilities. For them, none of these three components were sufficient: the first one is necessary, the second one is necessary if the first is satisfied; the last one is not always necessary if the two first are satisfied.[6] This means that a good candidate is never (or exceptionally) only an outstanding scholar and that he/she has to satisfy various supplementary prerequisites to be selected.

Collecting positive signs

Moreover, one indicator never suffices to assess one of these three components. To make their judgements, recruiters[7] collect different sets of information, one on the candidate as a scientist, one on the candidate as a 'good colleague' and one on the candidate as a teacher. I observed that the facts taken into account were discipline and country based: historians in France look at certain facts (whatever the institution they belonged to), while historians in Germany looked at other facts (whatever the institution they belong to).

I shall describe the main factors that are taken into account and that are an integral part of the screening process that leads to the selection of a small number of candidates. Following the distinction made by Eymard-Duvernay and Marchal (1997), two different sets of factors may be distinguished: criteria and signs.

The first category (criteria) consists of information that is eliminatory. Once it appears in the dossier, the candidate is eliminated. Such criteria may be administrative (when the candidates do not meet all the requisites), but there are others. One frequently mentioned is the discrepancy between the research speciality of the candidate and the position's profile. Too few publications especially (for a professor's position) constitutes such criteria, while for younger colleagues, in France, dissertations that did not get a *très*

honorable (very good) mention is also used as an indicator. For French historians, candidates who do not succeed in passing the *'agrégation du secondaire'*[8] concourse are also easily dismissed. As for the Germans, candidates who worked in the same field of study for their dissertation and for their *Habilitation* are discredited.

These are a few examples of such criteria, the interesting point is that they are useful in slightly reducing the number of candidates and that there is a shared agreement among the recruiters about them.

The second category consists of 'signs': this is information that never suffices by itself but the collection of which will favour a positive assessment of a dossier. Thus recruiters are looking for candidates that accumulate positive signs.

It would take too long to list all the signs that are taken into account for each discipline and for each country: so I shall not go into too much detail and just mention a few examples. The central point is that they are multiple: the positive judgement on a candidate does not derive from only one source of information. What are the recruiters looking for?

Positive signs about being a good researcher. Let us start with the scientific activity. Reading all or some pages of the candidate's production is only one aspect (but not always: in three of the German mathematics search committee, they mostly worked with the list of publications): French and German historians as well as French mathematicians report on the dossiers they receive and at least consult (if not precisely read) the included publications. This can be completed (in the German case at least), by the job talk which a small number of the selected candidates are invited to give.

Another aspect is to rely on what Karpik (1996) called a 'judgement device'[9] (*dispositif de jugement*). Some are based on impersonal trust, such as the number of publications, the number of articles in international journals (ranked according to the citation index for instance) etc. Other are based more on personal trust, depending on the reputation the recruiters have of the place where the candidate prepared her/his dissertation or *Habilitation*, to the members of the defence committee, to the centres where he/she did a post-doc etc. It thus appears that the scientific quality of a candidate first of all does not depend on only one fact, but is based on a combination of different positive signs, and secondly that reputation is much more deduced from the presence of such factors than by assessing the scientific production of the candidates.[10]

Positive signs about being a good colleague. But scientific activity is not the only factor which plays a role. The collegiality of the candidates is also

always mentioned by the recruiters. This of course is not documented in the dossiers. What signs are used therefore to build judgement?

The case is easier for the German recruiters and for professorial positions in France. The number of candidates is not so large. Therefore the recruiters have information about the candidates' personality. There is always someone who previously met the candidates, who was in the same department some years ago, who discussed with one or the other after a conference, etc.

People have a reputation, they are part of a network. We do not call their colleagues. But we already have heard about this person. We have some information. (German professor)

It is much more difficult for *maîtres de conférences'* positions in France. Except for the candidates already working in the department,[11] most of the candidates are not known by the recruiters. When some names have accumulated positive signs about the quality of their research, it is then not rare for a recruiter who knows some of the candidates' colleagues or their dissertation mentors, to place a phone call and seek more information about them. The personal network of the recruiters is thus used.

In Germany, another opportunity to collect signs is the interview that occurs when the candidates come for the job talk.

We sometimes hear something by chance, but most of the time a long conversation is enough to make up one's mind on a candidate, to understand how he/she conceives her/his duties. Administration *(Selbstverwaltung)* is never very appreciated, it takes a lot of time, but it has to be done. (. . .) We may have someone in mind, but this person has to be ready to teach and to participate in the department. (German Professor)

In France, the audition, which is generally very short (no more than 30 minutes) is most of the time presented as 'the' moment when the personality of the candidates can be 'felt', when the positive impression one had may be confirmed or on the contrary may be contradicted.

The audition is essential: someone you did not really see as interesting may appear to be very smart, and reciprocally. Criteria dealing with one's character, personality interfere. (. . .) There is much subjectivity after the audition: how the person behaves, whether he/she is or not arrogant, shy, well speaking . . . This is also taken into account. (French professor)

Positive signs about being a good teacher. Teaching is a last factor on which recruiters try to collect signs. But not always. The French mathematicians for instance almost never mention it, except to say that they expect the candidates to speak correct French (especially when they previously recruited candidates who hardly spoke French and encountered problems because of this). More generally, historians are more aware of teaching than mathematicians.

But what are the positive signs for assessing teaching capacities? An important one in France and in Germany is the capacity and the readiness of the candidates to teach on broader subjects than their research topic. For the French, this is assessed by being an *agrégé*: to succeed in this competitive exam, one has to have a rather 'universal' historical knowledge. In Germany, the subject mobility between the dissertation and the *Habilitation* is a sign of the candidates' broader knowledge.

Pedagogical abilities are another important sign. Here, French historians most of the time rely on the fact that the candidates previously taught in high schools. It is presumed that if he/she was able to deal with a class of pupils (especially in difficult places), she/he will be able to teach at the university. German recruiters much more rely on *de facto* evidence: the job talk is a precious moment to build one's opinion. One looks at the structure of the speech, how the candidate uses the blackboard ... Some departments even ask the candidates to prepare a talk for graduate students rather than for confirmed faculty members, in order to better appreciate their pedagogical qualities. This is the case in the mathematics department of the following professor:

One of the candidates was a high profile researcher, who won a lot of prizes, but his talk was so bad that we did not consider him. Nobody understood a word. We asked him questions and he said that we could decide how to make a speech but that he will make the speech he wants to, and that it should be for experts. If he does not want to respect the rules ... (German Professor)

Two conclusions can be drawn from these observations. First, research assessment is crucial but never completely suffices. The collegiality of the candidates is also always taken into account, and most of the time his/her teaching capacities as well. Second, for each of these components, one can identify a few eliminatory criteria, but no single sign important enough to make the decision: candidates are not selected on successive screenings based on more and more precise eliminatory criteria. The selection in fact occurs on the collection of positive signs: the remaining candidates are those accumulating the most positive signs.

A DIFFERENT MIX OF THE THREE COMPONENTS FROM ONE DEPARTMENT TO THE OTHER

In the last point we stated that the scientific quality, the personality and (most of the time) the pedagogical capacities are basic components of the judgment process. I now would like to argue that the weight attributed to each of them is different from one department to the other, even if all

recruiters say that they are looking for the 'best candidate'. Indeed 'best' does not mean the same thing from one place to the other.

The 'best candidate' is one of a variety of possibilities between two extremes: the 'top researcher' on one hand, and the 'good citizen' on the other. This two contrasted figures are not strictly opposed: the characteristics of the first profile are not reversed for the second. A 'top researcher' can be a good teacher: being a 'top researcher' means firstly that his/her main interests are not in teaching or collective life within the department, and that the recruiters have low expectations on his/her teaching capacities or collegiality A 'good citizen' is not a bad researcher (can even be a very good one), but being a 'good citizen' means that he/she is also involved in teaching and/or in taking responsibility in some department duties.

These two extremes profiles and all the variants between them define rather different expectations from the recruiters and rather different weighting between the three components: research, collegiality and teaching. If one looks for 'top researchers' scientific activity will be much more valued than teaching. But if one looks for good citizens, the weight given to scientific activities will be much more balanced by the teaching and collegiality abilities of the candidate.

The orientations towards 'top researchers' or 'good citizens' does not seem to vary much from one recruitment to another within a single department. Looking at my interviews department by department, they appear to be linked to a dominant pattern: some are searching primarily for 'good researchers', while others are looking for 'good citizens'. It is only a trend, but it is possible to identify it. Moreover the diversity among the departments under study is also globally larger in Germany than in France, and larger in history than in mathematics in France.

I shall start with the French mathematicians' committees[12] which are mostly interested in 'good researchers' in the five cases under study. Most of the interviewees in all five cases have a very elitist and selective discourse on the choice of candidates and, mostly, they insist on the very weak importance they give to teaching. In a way, they are all looking for the same candidates, and research results are the first and almost only criterion.

The five French history committees are quite different. Two of them mostly look for 'top researchers' and generally give preference to external candidates rather than to local ones. On the contrary, in another department, the recruiters say that good research is not enough: they are searching for someone not too specialised, able to teach different periods or different subjects in a defined period, and they expect the candidates to come and live in the city where the university is located, to be involved in the collective life of the department ... The two other depart-

ments are mixed models, one rather oriented towards 'top researchers' but needing some 'good citizens' as well, and the other trying to attract 'good researchers' on specific topics but generally favouring 'good citizens'.

The four German cases in history are also quite diverse. One of the four is small, mostly providing courses for future high school teachers and recruiting professors who will be strongly engaged in teaching. At the opposite end, another one is research oriented and is primarily interested in candidates having an international reputation. The two last cases are closer to the latter than to the former, but take teaching more into account.

The same holds true for the mathematics departments, but the difference between the two extreme cases is even greater. One department is a highly reputed one: all the interviewees express highly elitist preferences: they are interested in 'top researchers' and that is all. Another one is explicitly looking for professors who are not looking for a rapid career and who, on the contrary, would like to settle in the city where the university is located.

The diversified profiles the departments are recruiting, first of all is surprising if one considers that the universities under study are supposed to be 'alike'. How do we explain that they are not all competing for the same kind of 'rare pearl'? We shall see in the next section that this diversity partly reflects the constraints the departments are facing, but is also part of explicit strategies.

DIVERSIFIED (AND MORE OR LESS IMPOSED) DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIES

The results we presented above dismiss the idea of homogeneous recruiters competing for the same candidates within a specific institutional sector, with the best going to the better places and so on. I shall argue now that the heterogeneity of the positions is the product of three factors. The first two are imposed on the recruiting departments – they act as constraints on them – while the third reveals the differentiation dynamic that departments are engaged in.

The influence of the existing situation

The definition of the 'best candidate' should first be considered by the teaching and research characteristics specific to each department. Very simply said, a large history department with many faculty members will be less concerned with the need for teachers able to teach a wide array of subjects than a small department: the former can search for candidates who specialise in a specific research thematic, while the latter will first

consider hiring someone able to cover the basic seminars. Moreover the existence of some research units within or close to the university (*Sonder-forschungsbereich* in Germany; CNRS labelled research groups in France) may structure the definition of the profiles. In such a case, even if the pressure of students is strong, the research priorities have to be taken into account.

The impact of what already exists can further play a role in that the definition of the desired candidate very often borrows the characteristics of the person to be replaced. Much of the time a 'good citizen' will be followed by a 'good citizen' just because the tasks of the former have to be replaced!

Access to the supply on candidates

The second important element is the counterpart of the first. We considered the factors limiting the definition of the supply expressed by the department. We also have to look at the constraints affecting the candidates' responses. Departments have access to limited segments of the demands. A small department with a heavy teaching load and a poor research infrastructure will probably not be overwhelmed by dossiers of top researcher candidates and, even if some of them apply 'in case there would be no other choice', the search committee will not easily take the risk to rank them because of the fear that these candidates will refuse the offer and leave for a another place. The problem for the department is thus not only to reach interesting candidates but also to select the ones that would accept the post. The departments rather clearly have an idea of the kind of profiles they have a chance to attract.

Explicit differentiating strategies

The first two sets of factors I have presented may first seem quite static and outline the issues the departments face. But this is not only a passive mechanism: departments also develop differentiation strategies on their own.[13] We shall take three different and especially clear examples to argue this point.

One of the strategies of a German mathematics department, supported by its university, emphasises 'top research'. The associate professors (C3) they chose are not supposed to stay there long, because they will quickly apply for a full professorship (C4) elsewhere, and the C4 they rank first are expected to be research team managers. None of the recruiters said he/she was very interested in teaching. Even collegiality was a less present factor than in other departments, especially for the C3 because they will not necessarily remain a long time.

Another German mathematics department, on the contrary, is clearly abandoning such a niche for an alternative one: they want to be known for their pedagogical performance linked to applied research. Facing diminishing student numbers, and fearing cuts, they proposed courses to other faculties within and outside their institution. They also search for research contracts with local firms. This new niche limits the pressure exercised by the *Land* ministry, but simultaneously leads them to look for new profiles. On the one hand, they more and more pay attention to the pedagogical abilities of the candidates. On the other, they look for candidates committed to the department: they do not want them to leave too quickly.[14] Thus, they prefer candidates with a good research profile (able to work on the contracts they have) without strong career ambitions and attracted to living in the city where the institution is located, or already leaving there. While the previous department had an external strategy, the latter has a local and internal one.

A last example concerns a French history department facing two difficulties. First it is close to Paris and fears faculty members will only come to give their seminars and then quickly take the train back home to Paris. Second, they do not have a strong research infrastructure[15] allowing them to attract top researcher candidates. They thus decided to prefer candidates interested in research projects using local archives and dealing with local history. Here again local commitment is much more preferred.

The 'best' candidate for this department and for the previous one will not be the 'best' candidate for departments much more committed to international research. There is thus a market segmentation even within a rather homogeneous institutional sector.

STRATEGIES AND RISKS

One of the points I have made is that three components mostly intervene in recruitment decisions, or at least on the selection of the candidates that will be ranked. I then have tried to identify the factors that can explain variations on the definition of what the 'best' candidate is from one department to the other and that lead to giving different weight to one or the other component. I would like now to argue that the uncertainty on quality assessment is not the same – and is not as important – if one considers the research activity, the personality or the pedagogical competence.

Recruitment is always a risky decision. Firstly because it relies on assessing candidates' quality and secondly because one tries to deduce from this evaluation what the future contribution of the candidate will be. Here the general belief is that a good researcher (colleague or teacher)

today will be a good researcher in the future. But even if we leave aside the problems raised by anticipating the future on the basis of current information, the assessment of the current 'value' of a candidate already raises uncertainties. As seen in the second section of this paper, recruiters have few tangible proofs; they only gather positive signs.

The point I would like to make now, is that the level of uncertainty varies, depending on whether you look for a 'top researcher' or a 'good citizen' profile, and this also influences the nature of the mechanisms used to build judgement and make decisions.

Assessing research is perceived as the least uncertain part of the candidates' evaluation. None of our interviewees expressed much difficulty in determining the quality of research work as long as it concerns his/her research domain, and no one felt that specialists had problems within one committee about reaching agreement on which candidates are good researchers and which are not. Moreover: the longer the candidate is engaged in the career, the easier it is – because academics are very good at providing and collecting data about their work. Problems may appear (in particular in mathematics where the profiles are generally more open than in history) to discriminate among excellent candidates from different specialities: how to assess that the best candidate in algebra is better that the best candidate in geometry, for instance? But each speciality meets no problem in identifying the best candidates in its domain.

Assessing personality appears to be much more difficult. The available signs are rarer, the judgement devices are less formalised. It quite heavily relies on impressions (Siow 1991) (acquired during the interviews or the auditions), on mediated information (from the network of colleagues), and sometimes on past experience when some have already worked with the candidate or when (in France) he already belongs to the department (as a doctoral student, for instance).

It seems even more difficult to assess teaching. Most interviewees outline how difficult it is. As shown by the description of the positive signs taken into account, they focus on the spectrum the candidate is able to teach, on the fact that he/she does not have evident problems with teaching but they do not really assess pedagogical capacities.

The higher uncertainty about collegiality and teaching abilities infers that it is much more risky to recruit 'good citizens' than 'top researchers'. For the latter, the recruiters may rely much more on market regimes[16] and on the comparison of pretty standardised factors (number of publications, reputation of the doctoral programme ...). For 'good citizens', networking and interaction regimes are much more mobilised to try to reduce the uncertainty about the qualities the recruiters are looking for. In the French

case, where no mobility is required, a rational and much used solution to lower this uncertainty is to give the preference to local candidates.[17]

The fact of recruiting one or the other figure also has consequences on the further development of the department and on the candidate's career. In the cases mentioned above (the German mathematics department which focuses on teaching and applied research and the French history department which prefers candidates working on local research) one can easily forecast that the recruited candidates will have less mobility opportunities than in the case of the 'top German research department'. It thus also much more favours the construction of internal labour markets than external ones (Doeringer & Piore 1971).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this on-going research confirm that academic labour markets consist of national markets, divided into disciplines/speciality markets. We observed a profound homogeneity in the way search committees of the same country and of the same discipline work. The factors taken into account to assess the quality of research or teaching are, for instance, very similar from one committee to the other, for the same discipline within the same country.

But at the same time, our research refutes the classical views of these markets as homogeneous supply facing heterogeneous candidates and as adjustment processes based on scientific quality. Within the same institutional sector, departments may look for candidates with quite different profiles. This may result from the fact that departments face different needs and problems, or that they do not have access to the same candidates, but it is also the consequence of the strategies followed by the departments. However, whatever the reason, the critical result is that, as for many other marketplaces, adjustments between offer and supply occur through quality rather than price and that the definition of the attributes of quality is an open question (Callon et al. 2001). Nevertheless, unlike the cases studied by Callon and his co-authors, the definition of what quality is, still remains in the hands of the peers and we did not observe the emergence of 'hybrid forums'[18] in the case of academic recruitments.

This affects the definition of 'quality' for which the department is in search and the balance given to three elements: research activity, collegiality and teaching. Uncertainty about quality assessment being bigger for the two last elements than for the first one, it also favours networking and interaction regimes in departments looking for good citizens and expecting the candidates to stay a long time.

This challenges the traditional conception of academic labour markets. Their segmentation was seen as the product of different institutional sectors (Youn & Zelterman 1988; Youn 1992) and highly specialised disciplines. It was thus assumed that within the same discipline of the same institutional sector homogeneity prevails. We have shown that this assertion is questionable and that it not only affects the kinds of qualities requested in the search, but also the way the departments assess them. Within the same institutional sector, some departments will first rely on external markets to manage academic resources while others will tend to construct internal markets.

NOTES

1. In France the official discourse on the equivalence of universities has long been challenged by the well-known but not official distinction that were to be made between Paris and the provinces.
2. This relative homogeneity was confirmed by the results of the study led by Bauer and Bertin-Mourot (1996): no department and no university appeared to be the principal 'producer' of the future CEOs of the German firms.
3. Even if one has to observe that rankings are made discipline by discipline, so that you can rank departments and not universities.
4. I will not be able to take into account the recent reforms in Germany which occurred after our study.
5. Because German assistants are not recruited by a hiring commission, I focused on the recruitment of professors in this country.
6. This holds not only true in Germany and in France: we also observed this in the private research universities where we conducted interviews (Musselin 2000).
7. We will use this terminology to designate the members of the search committees.
8. It is a national concourse which opens access to high school teaching.
9. L. Karpik distinguishes between those based on personal trust (network of friends, for instance) and those based on impersonal trust (guides, rankings, labels ...).
10. In a way they proceed as we do about films. We do not look at every film to know which is the best, but we very often rely on critics, rankings, friends to decide which ones we will see, then see them and decide which one we prefer.
11. Mobility is not required in France.
12. As for French historians, we chose *a priori* quite different situations: Parisian and provincial universities, big departments and smaller ones etc. But it is very difficult to identify different preferences among them.
13. One should keep in mind that most of the time the development of strategies is itself a product of external constraints.
14. Because, if they leave, the post will be vacant and the ministry can decide to cut it.
15. First, they have no CNRS labelled centre and second, the archives nearby are only regional ones. Most of the time, every historian wishing to work on a research project with a larger scope will have to consult archives that are in Paris.
16. We refer here to the typology proposed by Eymard-Duvernay and Marchal (1997) to distinguish four regimes of judgment on labour markets: the institution regime (competencies are assessed in reference to qualification rules); the market regime

(competence is stable and goods are homogeneous); the network regime (competence is "documented by work (...) that the recruiter knows from his/her peers" (1997, p. 33, translated by us)); the interaction regime (judgement occurs during an interaction between the recruiter and the candidate).

17. This explanation does not of course completely exclude the traditional ones developed about 'local recruitments' stressing the incapacity of the recruiters to resist the 'moral' pressure exercised by local candidates, or the dominance of nepotism within French departments but it suggests reconsideration of the problem: local candidates are a good solution to lower uncertainty on teaching and on collegiality.

18. One of the arguments of Callon et al. (2001) is that markets of goods are no longer solely in the hands of economic actors but that they more and more involve non experts (clients, consumers' associations etc.) who are all engaged in the definition of the qualities of goods. Forums were these qualities are discussed are thus becoming hybrid: they are no more restricted to experts.

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