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Profession, Market, Organization:

How is academia regulated?

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This chapter is about the respective influence of market forces, professional regulations and organizational rules on academic labor markets and work. By labor markets, are meant recruitment procedures, processes allocating individuals to positions and devices organizing career paths. Academic work refers to the contents and management of day-to-day activities achieved by faculty members. It is important to note that all aspects of academic work will be considered in this chapter, although the different components of academic activities are frequently studied independently: the sociology and anthropology of science focus on research, while the science of education analyzes teaching and pedagogical tasks. Following some precursory works (Bertrand 1993 or Schimank 1995), the three main dimensions of academic work – research, teaching, and the achievement of administrative responsibilities and tasks- will be taken into account.

Academic labor markets and work are both considered in this chapter in order to exhibit the intricate links between them. It will be shown that the nature of the regulation which prevails on academic labor markets impacts on academic work and vice versa.

The respective influence of the market, the profession and the organization on academic labor markets¹ or work is a rather traditional questioning. But it seems highly relevant to raise it once again after the recent evolution of most higher education systems and the increasing autonomy and empowerment of universities (among many, Braun and Merrien 1999 or Amaral, Jones and Karseth 2002). Most studies on the academic profession (among others Fulton 1994, Altbach 2000, Enders 2001) conclude that market mechanisms and managerial organizational devices are developing while professional regulation is threatened and weakened. M. Henkel in this book also comes to this conclusion when addressing the transformation of academic identities. This chapter is intended to take a closer look at this trend and assess what remains under the control of the peers. It also aims at examining whether academic labor markets and academic work are equally concerned by this trend.

With this purpose, three main dimensions pertaining both to academic labor markets and work will be respectively examined: the division and allocation of work; control and incentive mechanisms, and the affiliation of academics to collective entities.

For each of them, the respective influence of market forces, professional norms and organizational rules will be discussed. For instance, are decisions about recruitments (academic labor market) or the allocation of tasks (academic work) dependent on bureaucratic rules implemented by a hierarchy, on decisions made by peers, or on spot-markets ?

Because important variations exist among countries, the analysis of the four dimensions under study will build on two empirical studies. The first concerns France, Germany and the United States: about 200 interviews were led on recruitment and career management (Musselin 2005) but also on the organization and the allocation of academic work. A further study was led in France on the accomplishment of academic work in four disciplines (history, physics, biology and management) each time, in three university departments (Becquet and Musselin 2004).

Division and allocation of work

Academic activities are specific. They are neither strongly formalized nor standardized. Based on unclear technologies (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972) they are difficult to describe, to prescribe, and to reproduce (Musselin 2006). They are closer to an “intellectual” craft, each “product” (a course, a paper, or a research project) being conducted from the beginning to the end by one person or by a small group frequently composed of a team leader and a few subordinates. As a result, the division of work is not formally structured in any of the three countries under study. Nevertheless some underlying mechanisms can be identified which have an impact on the manner in which work is allocated.

Differences introduced by the segmentation of the academic labor market

The first mechanism is linked to the co-existence of segmented academic labor-markets (Kerr 1954), primary labor markets on the one hand and secondary on the other (Doeringer and Piore 1971). The former include permanent staff (*titulaires* in France, *Beamter auf Dauer* in Germany and tenured positions in the USA), but also the American tenure track positions² - being transformed into tenured positions in 7 out of 10 cases (Chait 2002) they are rather stable academic positions -. The timing of access to the primary labor market differs a great deal from one country to another: it occurs rather early in France and in the USA (academics in their thirties) but much later in Germany (after forty). The percentage of positions concerned by each segment varies a great deal as well³ but the secondary labor market tends to expand. In this market different types of time-limited positions are concerned: from

doctoral students to research fellows, adjuncts or part-time teachers. Despite the variety, the contrast in terms of division and allocation of work between the primary and the secondary labor markets is stronger than within each of them.

On the secondary labor markets, the definition of work is more precise and there is less room for self-determination. First, faculty members belonging to the primary labor market exercise hierarchical relations on the members of the secondary labor market, and thus directly weigh on the contents and allocation of their work. Bilateral relationships between those providing work and defining the activities, and those executing these tasks are the rule. In Germany for instance, non-professor positions are for a limited time, assistants depend on professors who recruit them, define their research programs and teaching duties and act as their employers. Second the contents as well as the scope of work of the less secure positions are most of the time focused on only one aspect of academic work. Adjuncts for instance only have teaching assignments while post-docs are generally dedicated to research only.. As a result, being on the secondary labor market has an impact on the contents and the definition of work, and on who makes the decision.

The decreasing share of permanent and tenure track positions in many countries (Altbach 2000, Enders 2001, Chait 2002, Finkelstein and Schuster 2006) should lead to an increasing share of staff, working on specified tasks, directly dependent on a principal, for time-limited periods. Recruitment processes for this category of staff are less formalized, less based on collective peer decisions, and rely more often on general rules of employment than for permanent academics. The expansion of the secondary labor markets therefore reflects a stronger impact of market forces on teaching and/or research staff. On the one hand, this increase in non-permanent positions is convergent with the overall transformations of work outlined for instance by P.-M. Menger (2002) who argues that wage-earners are closer today to workers in the arts because protected employment and life-long careers within the same

firm are rarer while simultaneously, projects and recognition of competences become more frequent. But, on the other hand, the extension of the secondary labor market in academia departs from this analysis because it is not accompanied by an empowerment of tasks: on the contrary, tasks are more closely defined and hierarchical relationships prevail.

Three main factors which explains the division of work on the primary academic labor market

The division of work within the group of permanent and tenure track positions is less marked than between the primary and the secondary labor-markets, but it nevertheless exists. Three main factors – the status, the institutional hierarchy and self-regulation - play a role in explaining discrepancies among permanent academics but each factor does not have the same weight from one place to another.

In some countries, the division of labor vary according to the status. This is typical for France where permanent positions (by far the largest share of the academic profession) consist in two corps: young academics start as *maîtres de conférences* (tenured assistant professors) and some become professors. Because the legal rules defining each corps do not introduce compelling and clear differences in terms of tasks, the weight of status varies across departments (Becquet and Musselin 2004): in some, it plays no role and polyvalence prevails, while a strict interpretation of the rules is respected in others. In this last case, each corps concentrates on differentiated tasks and professors only are considered as completely autonomous. Nevertheless, the activities on which status plays a role are not the same according to disciplines.. In departments of physics and biology where status respect is strong, all kind of tasks are concerned by the status-based division of work: the *maîtres de conférences* teach section sections but no lecture courses, they have a restricted access to

administrative responsibilities and can not lead a research project by their own. It is not the case in history: administrative responsibilities and teaching are allocated according to status but the *maitres de conférences* are completely autonomous as far as research is concerned. Moreover, whatever the discipline, status can impact on the division of work but never implies subordination: status creates prestige-related professional segments (Bucher and Strauss 1961) among the same academic group and but the professors do not act as the principals of the *maitres de conférences*.

In some other countries, on the contrary, status makes no difference, but the institutional hierarchy does. In American research universities, it is thus not relevant to distinguish between tenure track and tenured staff in order to understand how work is allocated. An assistant professor may teach graduate students and head a research contract: once on a tenure track position, he/she is considered as fully socialized and autonomous⁴. The pre-tenure period is not meant to complete an apprenticeship, but to reveal one's competencies and show one's capacity to earn tenure. Therefore no difference is instituted between the tenured faculty and those on tenure track in terms of work allocation. When variations exist among members of the same department, they are linked to specific agreements passed with, or to constraints imposed by, the academic hierarchy (the chair and the dean). Obtaining an important research grant from a national research agency can for instance be a case for less teaching: J. Fairweather in the chapter he wrote in this book shows that there is a clear correlation between heading a funded research project and spending more time on research and the author also mentions the role of administrators in the US in assigning a work load. The institution through its academic leaders thus has an impact on the nature and contents of work of American academics.

A third factor influencing the allocation of work is "self-regulation". Because of their specific characteristics, academic activities allow for a high degree of self determination in

the organization, allocation and combination of tasks⁵, even if more constraints weigh on them than previously as shown also by J. Fearweather who, in this book, presents a wide review of the literature on this trends in different countries. This holds true on status as well as when institutions matter, but more in the first case than in the second. When institution matters, control over the allocation of work goes along with more incentive mechanisms and more control over work performances, as will be argued in the next section. In contrast, when status matters, the possibilities for individual “choices⁶” and for self-determined combination are larger: some academics prefer to emphasize teaching while others are more committed to research and each adopts their workload and repartition of tasks in terms of their preferences. Even when constraints linked to high student pressures or low administrative resources exist within a department, some academics feel free to refuse teaching more than required by the legal duties or achieving administrative tasks.

In this first section, it has been argued that the segmentation of academic labor-markets has a strong impact on the division of work. It introduces strong distinctions between those on permanent or tenure track positions and those belonging to the secondary labor market, whose activity consists in precise tasks defined by their direct academic employer. Consequently market forces play an important role on the allocation of work in secondary academic labor markets. On the primary labor markets, variations in tasks depend in some cases (in the United States for instance) on institutional forces. In other cases (such as in France and in Germany), it mostly remains in the hand of the academic profession, either at a collective level (when differences depend on disciplines or status) or at an individual level (when self-determination prevails to set the intensity, scope and contents of one’s work).

Control, evaluation and incentives

It is usual to speak of faculty members as the “academic profession”. This indirectly suggests that the main control processes are in the hand of peers. This capacity of the academic profession to self-manage and self-control itself was of central importance in the Mertonian analysis of science. From this perspective, the scientific ethos and its shared norms (Merton 1957b) play a crucial role and are acquired during a phase of socialization based on a master to disciple relationships. The reward systems then guarantees the respect of the ethos and acts as a control mechanism. In such a model, there is no place for the market: competition for rewards is of course a key (as expressed by Merton (1957a) in a famous paper on the “Priorities in scientific discovery”) but is disconnected from market forces, market mechanisms or from the pursuit of individual interests. Thus, according to W.O. Hagstrom (1965), the Maussian concept of “gift” (Mauss 1923-1924) is more appropriate than the market to analyze the mechanisms underlying the scientific production⁷. If there is no market, there is no institution either. This absence of the institutional level in most contributions related to the sociology of science further accentuates the prevalent role recognized towards the scientific/academic community in self-managing and self-controlling itself.

But is such a description still relevant today ? Many contributions conclude negatively, and often regret, it is no longer the case (if it ever really existed..). Professional control is said to be always weaker while institutional control increases.

Nevertheless, the professional reward system still plays an important role: peers control access to the profession, recruitments⁸ and most career developments, publications in journals or books and the attribution of prizes. In the three countries under study, academics are the main, if not the sole, actors managing such decisions and they mostly rely on academic criteria, that is criteria they considered as relevant. The control led by the peers relies partly on organized tests (*épreuves*) and procedures (recruitments, submission of papers to a journal for review,...). Such processes have been often studied⁹. But peers also exercise continuous

and informal evaluation: within a department, during a conference, a visiting scholarship or a pos-doc, colleagues proceed to permanent, progressive and non formalized forms of assessment that contribute to the construction of their judgments over their colleagues. This produces exclusion/inclusion phenomena, selective constitution of networks and discretionary proposals for cooperation to some rather than to others. Such processes have been less studied despite their potential impact on the contents of academic work, on the allocation of work and on careers themselves. They are of particular signification before access to permanent positions, i.e. when evaluation is crucial and can not be avoided by those who want to undertake an academic career¹⁰ (Musselin 1996 and 2000). Thus professional control remains strong even if it mostly deals with research and production but it is less equipped (in relevant criteria, in assessment processes) for teaching and for administrative responsibilities.

Nonetheless, the reward system is not only a question of social control, symbolic gains, reinforcement of the scientific norms and self-regulation of the profession. It is, and has always been, a means to allocate prizes of academics, consisting, of course, in symbolic rewards, but also work conditions and increases in salary and personal advantages. This price is in particular set¹¹ when recruitments occur but important variations are observed from one country to another. In some (as in France), the price mainly consists in reputation, salaries being fixed according to a bureaucratic non-negotiable scale which is the same for all disciplines and all universities. In American universities in contrast, getting a job in another institution is a decisive opportunity to obtain a substantial increase in salaries and in working conditions. This is also the case in Germany but to a lesser extent because salary negotiations are restricted to tenured professors. Nevertheless, negotiations on work conditions may make a difference among academics of the same university. The role of market-like mechanisms in the regulation of the profession and in its internal differentiation is therefore not to be neglected.

Finally institutional regulation also impacts on the reward system when forms of control and reward are set by “internal labor markets” (Doeringer and Piore 1971), that is incentive mechanisms and rules managed by and at the university level. While the professional regulation described above is rather comparable in the three countries under study, institutional regulation is variously developed from one country to another.

Internal labor markets are influential in American universities and rely on three main mechanisms. First the tenure track process which works as an “up or out” system¹²: the moment when the access to tenure will be under scrutiny is known in advance and the decision will lead to maintaining the academic into the university or to firing him/her. This decision is prepared by the department and partly relies on evaluations led by peers from other universities (through recommendation letters), but this is always completed by deliberations at the university level and must be agreed upon by the academic leadership (the dean plays an important role in the process). Even if academics are involved in the procedure, the charts describing the tenure process in each university highlight that the process does not rely on pure academic criteria: institutional dimensions such as the commitment to one’s university or the participation in collective tasks are taken into account. Furthermore, when tenure is refused, the decision is generally made by a university body or the dean. The second incentive mechanism used by American institutions consists in evaluation devices, such as teaching records or annual activity reports, which have an impact on salary increase or the redefinition of the allocation of work. Finally, after tenure has been obtained, the promotion to full professorship is not automatic and can be delayed or even denied.

Such institutional devices are less developed in German and French universities. In Germany, the introduction of merit-salaries¹³ is recent and before the 2002 act, there was no possibility for the universities to reward or sanction their staff. In France, some bonuses were introduced by the beginning of the 90s (but they are rather narrowly regulated and do not

allow much leeway in each institution) and universities can decide for some promotions. But despite these reinforcements of the internal labor markets in these two countries (and in European higher education systems in general, Musselin 2003), institutional regulation is weaker in these two countries than in the United States.

In this second section, it has been shown that assessment, control and reward of academic work are at the crossroad of three forms of regulation (the organization, the market and the profession) but the interplay between them is not a zero-sum game by which increase in one forms implies a decrease of the two others: more organizational mechanisms or more market forces do not automatically weaken the strength of professional regulation. In the USA for instance, the rather developed institutional incentive system does not impede the power of the peers, as shown for instance by the dominance of the American journals over the international scientific community. The three forms of regulation are thus more cumulative than exclusive or substitutive. When the three of them are simultaneously at work they combine to increase the overall level of control over academics. As stated by M. Henkel in another chapter of this book, this transforms the notion of academic freedom: it is nevertheless less because professional power diminishes, but because other forms of controls develop in parallel.

Affiliation to a collective entity or what determine academics identities

The specific character of academic work and the low degree of coordination and cooperation it requires between faculty members in general, and, by contrast with other work situations, between faculty members of the same university raise questions about what ties individuals together when they are not linked by strong work interdependencies or what

determine academic identities? Are they single players on a competitive market, members of a professional group or individuals committed to their institution?

The challenging, classical but complex dilemmas between professional and institutional affiliation

For the sociology of science is, belonging to the scientific community constitutes the glue among scientists. Academics first of all belong to invisible colleges (Crane 1972, Becher 1989), within a scientific specialty, or a discipline, which is part of a larger entity, the scientific community and its shared norms and values. In such a view, academics are independent entrepreneurs linked by the same ethos, the same trust in science, the same appetite for truth and competing for discoveries.

But the distinction established by Gouldner (1957 and 1958) between the cosmopolitans and the locals blurs this idealistic image: some academics are strongly committed to skills and to external reference groups and are weakly loyal to their institution, while others are not. As a result, each group does not invest the same tasks and does not have the same attitude. It can therefore be concluded that there exists a link between the contents of work, the type of labor markets on which each academic plays and his/her affiliation: hence cosmopolitans spend less time in collective activities, are less bureaucratic¹⁴ and simultaneously less concerned by the internal labor markets (a terminology which was not at hand when Gouldner wrote) governing each institution.

As stressed by O. Kutty (1971) in a stimulating review on the cosmopolitans and locals' issue, two further factors may impact on the behaviors of the professionals. The scope of the external labor market constitutes a first factor analyzed in the study led by P. Blau and R. Scott (1969). If the market is by and large closed, those committed to professional skills may

nevertheless behave as locals, because there are few possibilities for leaving: good examples for this are countries such as Norway or Spain where most academics are/were not mobile and where few positions were opened for seniors to move. As stressed by B. Glaser (1963), a second factor consists in the congruence between the values and objectives shared by the professionals and the values and objective of their institution. This explains why highly mobile American academics (those called “world class scholars”) may express a strong institutional loyalty to their university, until they leave for another and then become committed to their new institution. They are cosmopolitans but simultaneously strongly affiliated to their university if the latter shares their attachment to professional skills and values external reference groups. The influence of organizational saga (Clark 1972) further stresses the role of strong institutional identity. A university with a clear strategy, embedded in a mythical past and strong values, favors “belief and loyalty¹⁵” from its community (academics but also the administrative staff, the trustees, the students, their parents...) and obtains their commitment to its norms and values. On the contrary, when universities – as French institutions until recently¹⁶, Musselin 2001/2004 - have weak identity and display low congruence, they lack commitment from their faculty members.

We thus agree with M. Henkel (2000: 22) when she writes it is crucial to take “the discipline and the enterprise, (...) as the main institutions or communities within which academics construct their identities, values, the knowledge base of their work, their modes of working and their self-esteem”. But many different combinations emerged from the interplay between these two spheres. In the chapter she wrote for this book, M. Henkel also concludes that professional identities are complex and differentiated and this is to expand as variations in institutional contexts increase.

The various natures of the institutional affiliation

But the strength and the solidity of the link between academics and their institution is not the only aspect to take into account; the nature of this relationship has also to be understood. Here again diversity prevails from one country to another.

In the American case, this link is close to the relationship existing between employers and wage-earners. This is the consequence as well as the cause for the capacity of institutions to develop management devices and to implement incentive mechanisms. This situation finds its roots in the history of the American higher education system which first of all relied on its institutions rather than on an academic profession (Clark 1983). This is not the case in many other countries. In France and Germany, from a legal as from an informal point of view, the universities are not the employers, but the Ministry of education in France and the *Landesministerien* (Ministries of Land) in Germany. This situation has an impact on the nature of the relationships between each institution and its faculty members. In the French case, universities remain “hosting places”, which offer little and therefore can not ask a lot. In a few cases, certain French institutions try to change this situation. Some for instance begin providing some start-up funds, but this remains quite marginal. In Germany, a rather different arrangement exists between the permanent professors and their university. The negotiation of material and human resources when recruitments occur, installs an implicit contract by which the institution provides the professor with resources allowing him/her to develop his/her research while the professor in exchange will participate in the administration of the university and show institutional loyalty. But, in the absence of strong internal labor markets, this contract can not be redefined if the professor or the university does not respect it. The recruitment package works therefore as an investment: the institution “bets” on the professor

and expects a return on investment. The recent introduction of merit-salaries can potentially alter this arrangement and transform it into a more employer-wage-earner relationship.

In some other European countries (Austria, United Kingdom,...) more radical attempts have been led to introduce managerial practices and transform universities into organizations (Brunsson and Sahlin-Anderson 2000, Musselin 2006, Krücken and Maier 2006). Studies assessing how far this impacted on academic practices and identities do not all arrive at the same conclusions¹⁷. It can nevertheless be expected that change in the nature of the links between universities and academics – and trends toward employers-employees relationships – will affect academic identities but also practices, because it also transforms academic activities into academic work.

To conclude on this third part, it is again important to outline the complex image which was drawn due to the variety of combinations which exists. A strong commitment to the academic profession can in some cases be associated to a highly competitive and open market for positions, in conformity with the traditional figure of the cosmopolitans. But this strong professional commitment is also compatible with a strong institutional affiliation if the objectives of the university are close to those of the faculty members and/or are embedded in a strong and well defined institutional identity. By contrast, two situations limit strong professional commitment: first a too narrow external market and second an institutional identity which is very different from academic values. In both cases, academics develop specific assets increasing their dependence on their institution and precluding their capacity to compete on the external labor market. The strength, nature and origin of collective commitment among academics therefore helps to identify the conditions by which the market, the profession and the institution may become complementary , but also the conditions leading to contradictions among them.

Conclusion

Four conclusions can be drawn from the preceding four sections. First the strength of the market, the profession and the organization varies greatly from one country to another. The three national situations mentioned in this chapter offer rather different pictures. In France the profession in most cases remains the main, when not the sole, actor intervening on academic work and labor markets. The same holds true for Germany, with a nuance introduced by the fact that there exists a market for professors in which universities play a significant role in setting prices. In the United States, on the contrary, each mechanism can be observed and the profession, the market and the institution exercise control over academics in a rather cumulative rather than substitutive way.

Second, and consequently, the on-going transformations experienced by academic labor markets and work should not be too quickly described as a defeat of professional regulations: the expanding institutional or market forces are added and combine in turn, with the professional forces. It results in a general increase in control, assessment and management of academics.

Third, all kinds of combinations are nevertheless not possible. Some contradictory cases have been identified in this paper (for instance the acquisition of specific assets within an institution is difficult to conciliate with pure professional norms as well as with confronting the market forces) but further reflection will be needed to closely and more precisely look at tensions.

Fourth, the different examples developed in this chapter confirm that academic labor markets are articulated with the way academic work is organized. This works in two ways. On

the one hand the mechanisms governing academic work and those governing academic labor markets are comparable. To put it more concretely: within a given country, when academic work is not strongly structured and organized, academic labor markets are not strongly structured or organized either. On the other hand, each type of academic labor market is linked to a way of conceiving and organizing academic work. Two examples were particularly illustrative. First the content of tasks, the nature of the hierarchical relationships and the type of employment arrangements attached to the secondary academic labor-market, are very different from those that can be observed on the primary academic labor market reveals such correspondences: the tasks are more specialized, the hierarchical relationships stronger and time-limited contracts is the prevailing employment arrangement on the secondary labor market. Second, we saw that the specific attitudes and tasks of academics within their institution vary according to the nature of the external academic labor market. When they are few possibilities to move from one place to another (when the external labor market is not very active), commitment to professional skills (cosmopolitan orientations) may combine with

This last point constitutes a very first step towards a more comprehensive analysis of the interplay between academic work and academic labor markets, but certainly opens a promising avenue for further comprehensive developments on the academic profession.

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¹ Even if the word “market” is present in the expression “labor market”, the latter can be institution driven (when internal labor markets prevail), profession driven (when only peers control the career paths) or market driven (when all events on the labor markets result from competition and exchange).

² In a few years, it will be interesting to see, what proportion of German academics recruited on the newly created Juniorprofessor positions (three year + three year contracts) will be recruited on permanent positions and whether those *Juniorprofessor* positions can be assimilated to tenure-track positions, that is positions mostly leading to secured ones.

³ It is very difficult to produce precise and actualized comparative figures on this point. I estimate that in France around 20% of the staff is in the secondary labor market but this is underestimated because it does not take into account the time-limited staff working on research contracts or the post-docs ! In Germany, it concerns more than the half of the academic staff. In the US, for a discipline like history, and for all kinds of higher education institutions, about 15% of the staff are adjunct or part-time, while 85% are either tenured or on tenure track positions: they were 14% in 1997.

⁴ Nevertheless, department chairs are tenured. But it is less a question of status than a question of career constraints. The high achievement in research and teaching required for tenure are not compatible with administrative tasks.

⁵ This is a stimulating case for economists working with principal-agent theory and interested in applying this theory to situations where agents have more than one mission to achieve (cf. for instance, Dewatripont, Jewitt and Tirole 2001).

⁶ Into brackets because it does not always correspond to free, conscious, rational and autonomous decisions from the actors. Circumstances and contextual constraints may be rather influent on the orientations of each person.

⁷ For Hagstrom, the “gift - counter gift” mechanism is more appropriate than the market for science because scientists deliver “professional services”. He points out that “the gift exchange is particularly well-suited to social systems in which great reliance is placed on the ability of well-socialized persons to operate independently of formal control (Hagstrom, 1965: chapter 1). A.B. Sørensen (1993) also uses this gift exchange perspective to analyze academic labor markets.

⁸ In our research on hiring processes, it was shown that decisions related to creation/suppression of positions and to setting salaries, the peers had limited influence (with important national variations nevertheless)

but they have complete control in the three countries under study over the choice and ranking of the candidates (Musselin 2002 and 2005).

⁹ But rather different conclusions are at hand. For some (Hargens and Hagstrom 1967, Hagstrom and Hargens 1968, Cole and Cole 1973), the academic reward system respects the universalist norms and is based on the true value of the scientific activity of the candidates. Others, on the contrary, denounced particularist bias: according to them, characteristics linked to the evaluated persons, such as his/her mentor, the university where s/he studied, the department where s/he promoted or gender are more important than the very value of his/her research activity (Crane 1970, Long, Allison and McGinnis 1979, Reskin 1979, Youn and Zelterman 1988, Baldi 1995, Long and Fox 1995).

¹⁰ Informal assessments may take the form of collective peer review but are also individual for instance when a tenured academic produce a judgment on a colleague of the secondary labor market.

¹¹ On academic labor markets, the determination of the price does not occur when supply and demand meet but afterwards (Musselin 1996 and 2005). Quality (and not the price) is the operator between supply and demand on academic labor markets, therefore they can be assimilated to an economics of quality (Karpik 1989) where the phase of judgment (assessing the quality of the candidates) precedes the phase of price setting.

¹² According to economists (O'Flaherty and Siow 1992 and 1995), the "up or out" systems is specific for situations where the competences of staff has to be discovered on the job by the principal.

¹³ Only a limited part of the salary is merit-based. Furthermore this only concerns newly recruited professors, that is all those recruited by a university after the law, whatever their seniority as professor in another higher education institutions before.

¹⁴ In the sense that they rely more on discipline-based / professional criteria rather than on formal rules.

¹⁵ These are the words used by B. Clark for the title of a first version of this article (Clark 1971).

¹⁶ After more than a century and an half of higher education based on *facultés* (faculties or schools) because universities were suppressed or inexistent, the 1968 law recreated French universities and challenged the *prima* of the *facultés*. But it is only recently that the newly restructured institutions began developing institutional identity and became pertinent actors in the French higher education system.

¹⁷ Some authors stress the influence of these transformations on academics (cf. for instance Slaughter and Leslie 1999, Marginson and Considine 2000, Reed 2002). But other authors either show that academic

identities rather well resist such influences (Henkel 2000) or that there is no automatic impact and that a variety of behaviors and beliefs may be observed (Owen-Smith and Powell 2001).