HYBRID ROLES, CONVERGING KNOWLEDGE NEEDS FOR GRADUATES' CAREERS? AN INSIGHT INTO ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

In the paper we first present relevant discourse about higher education, the labour market and graduates' 'employability'. Second, we discuss general changes in the work of academics and administrators, and problematize the characteristics and particularities of their hybridization. Building on this, we generate a holistic conceptual and research model that questions how the external 'employability' societal and policy drivers are related to a wide range of work in academia (e.g. curricular developments, management and reaccreditations, university-business cooperation, public relations, career success evidence, etc.). Finally, we map and identify these areas further and explore differences and similarities among academic, administrational and hybrid jobs. The analysis is based on mixed methods research – an open-ended survey on the profiles of 234 higher education institutions from 20, mainly European, countries, and on 37 expert interviews. The results indicate differences in the priorities of individuals playing different roles within higher education institutions. Contrary to the administrators, who favoured more practically-oriented topics related to training and career-related issues, and the persons in hybrid roles – often called higher education professionals or similarly – who favoured accreditation, quality assurance and higher education management issues, the academics appear to have the most balanced portfolio of priorities, as will be shown below. Moreover, we can identify the omnipresent urgency to be responsive to labour market needs, the increasing adjustment of academic work to bureaucratically infused assessment as well as the ostensible polarization between research and teaching.

Key words: higher education, labour market, graduates, employability, academics, administrators

RUOLI IBRIDI, OCCUPABILITÀ E CAMBIAMENTI NELL'ISTRUZIONE SUPERIORE: PUNTO DI VISTA ACCADEMICO E AMMINISTRATIVO

SINTESI

Nell'articolo presentiamo innanzitutto il discorso rilevante sull'istruzione superiore, sul mercato del lavoro e sull'occupabilità dei laureati. Continuiamo trattando i cambiamenti generali nel lavoro degli accademici e degli amministratori e problematizziamo le caratteristiche nonché le particolarità dell'ibridazione del loro lavoro. Su queste basi costruiamo l'intero modello concettuale e di ricerca che si chiede come le pressioni politiche e sociali esterne riguardanti l'occupabilità influiscono sullo spessore dei lavori all'interno della sfera accademica. Alla fine identifichiamo e ricerchiamo in modo più dettagliato le similarità e le differenze nel lavoro degli accademici, degli

amministratori e dei loro ibridi. L'analisi si basa su un approccio multimetodico – questionario aperto sui profili di 234 istituzioni d'istruzione superiore in 20 Stati europei e 37 interviste con esperti. I risultati mostrano differenze tra le priorità di diversi detentori di ruoli all'interno dell'istruzione superiore. Diversamente dagli amministratori che preferiscono tematiche orientate più verso la pratica, legate alla formazione e alle carriere dei laureati, e i ruoli ibridi che preferiscono gli accreditamenti, la garanzia della qualità e livelli nell'istruzione superiore legati al management, gli accademici mostrano i portfolio di priorità più equilibrati. E non solo. Abbiamo identificato la diffusa necessità di rispondere ai bisogni del mercato del lavoro, un adattamento sempre più intenso del lavoro accademico alle procedure burocratizzate riguardanti la valutazione e un'evidente polarizzazione tra la ricerca e l'insegnamento.

Parole chiave: istruzione superiore, mercato del lavoro, diplomanti, occupabilità , professione accademica, amministratori

INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, higher education institutions have experienced massive growth in student enrolment, the diversification and synchronization of programmes and external calls to adopt a labour market orientation. The call for closer links between higher education and the world of work harbours ambitious expectations: students are expected to be equipped with competencies that are useful on the job and to experience a smoother transition to work, whereby employers should be provided with workers possessing the skills they need. This widespread call for 'employability' has triggered changes within higher education institutions that affect the self-understanding of academics and administrators and their interrelationships.

Strategic decisions and processes in higher education institutions are moving more and more towards a mix of collegial academic-based decisions and administrative directions, whereby the latter is often more strongly affected by external expectations. Most Western societies have experienced the process of higher education's expansion and corresponding growth in the overall number of academics along with a decrease in their social status, income and autonomy (see Altbach, 1996; Musselin, 2007; Teichler et al., 2013). This has gradually started to impose new roles with changed responsibilities, needs and power positions. We note, first, the striking growth of higher education professionals, i.e. persons neither in charge of teaching of teaching nor resembling the traditional types of administrators, but – by primarily being in charge of service and management – support bridging the traditionally separate spheres of academia and bureaucracy (see Meek et al., 2010; Schneijderberg and Merkator, 2013). Second, the roles of academics and administrators are ever more overlapping: "Administrators are increasingly entangled in academic management

as well as academics into institutional management" (Musselin, 2007). As a result, "internal boundaries between different occupational groups and functions have become blurred, so that the simple distinction between academic and non-academic work has become less useful" (Henkel, 2007, 199). The stronger employment and work orientation of higher education is one of the most important drivers of these processes.

In the paper, we first set out the relevant discourse on higher education, labour market and graduates' 'employability'. Second, we discuss changes in the work of academics, administrators and the new professionals in between. We problematize the characteristics and particularities of their hybridization and, based on this, assume which implications are held by employability and work orientation for their work and professional development. In the third step, we analyze and compare particular knowledge needs and priorities concerning employability and graduates' careers as professors, administrators and managers. This analysis is based on an inquiry among 234 diverse profiles of higher education institutions from 20 mainly European countries. The analysis is complemented by a mixed methods research design – the analysis of the open-ended survey data is complemented by 37 expert interviews.

We claim that, in spite of the diversification of higher education jobs and emergence of hybrid roles, a gap persists in the priorities of academics and administrators in the field of graduate employability and career success.

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN THE VIEWS OF HIGHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

Since the start of the 21st century we have encountered the surprising readiness of higher education to respond instrumentally to external calls to adopt a labour

market orientation. The discourse on 'employability' has gained momentum. There are parallel supportive and critical voices, but it is widely assumed that the actual activities of creating a close visible link between study programmes and a prospective work assignment have acquired momentum (see the overviews on the 'employability' debate in Knight and Yorke, 2003; Teichler, 2007; 2009; Vukasovic, 2007; Yorke, 2007).

As functional and utilitarian reasoning increased in higher education, the emphasis on 'employability' gained in popularity. However, the interpretation of 'employability' varied. In some instances, it was viewed as compatible with the more traditional functions of higher education – teaching students to understand and master academic theories, methods and knowledge domains, strengthening students' self-reflection and critical position on technological and social phenomena and contributing to their cultural enhancement and personality development (e.g. Teichler, 2011). In other instances, 'employability' was interpreted as training the skills viewed by employers as immediately needed on the job and as fostering personalities that seem to 'sell' well. The national and international comparative projects undertaken in recent years – e.g. CHEERS, REFLEX, HEGESCO, EMBAC and DEHEMS – provide evidence that the employment and work 'success' of graduates can by no means be attributed to any single notion regarding the desirable educational approaches.

Views vary as regards the extent to which the 'employability' discourse can be regarded as an integral element of the Bologna Process or it just has to be associated with it like almost any other educational approach popular in the first decade of the 21st century. According to the mainstream utilization of this term, 'employability' chiefly reflects the key concerns of human resources development (Thijssen et al., 2008, 168-169). These are not new, but have been associated with resolving the problems of school leavers and underprivileged people with political ambitions to attain full employment and cut public losses in the 1970s, restructuring companies with corporations' ambitions to attain efficient human resources management in the 1980s, and efforts to ensure successful career opportunities since the 1990s. Hence, the concept is usually related to the paradoxes and causalities of: individual capabilities versus actual registered employment, deprivileged youth in terms of getting a job at all versus the further prosperity of privileged youth (Teichler, 2009, 302), the skill-supply phenomenon versus the skill-demand phenomenon (Allen and Van der Velden, 2011) or individual factors versus personal circumstances (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005, 209).

However, in the last few years the concept has largely become a call for the closest possible direct link between higher education and the labour market. It has thus acquired a normative connotation which would be viewed as problematic from the traditional perspective of higher education since it calls for the following strategic actions by higher education institutions (Teichler, 2011): the enhancement of career success as a primary goal of higher education, favouring fields of studies with the greatest 'credentialist' value in the labour market, strengthening the practical aspects of learning and programme characteristics, as well as promoting profiles and competencies for which there is short-term demand in the labour market. In the light of the current economic crisis accompanied by global pressures and overall occupational deprofessionalization, higher education institutions are finding it hard to take a critical distance towards these expectations.

In contrast, there are differences in how higher education stakeholders take positions on the impetus of the labour market orientation of higher education, as clearly shown for example by the DEHEMS project (see Melink and Pavlin, 2012). Academics are aware of how much the immediate education-job match and satisfaction with work in the early years after graduating might be impressive for students and graduates and therefore, as a counterbalance, perceive their own responsibility to support their (particularly) long-term careers. Their views in relation to programmes' labour market orientation depend highly on the study domain and therefore cannot be generalized: academics in business and economics, for instance, are very open to strengthening the labour market scope of the curriculum, including the importance of practicums which is rarely the case in some areas of the natural sciences.

Obviously, many employers favour a stronger role for work experience within the study programmes provided by higher education institutions and closer collaboration between the academic sphere and industry. However, employers also want higher education to instil good generic competencies that support graduates in all career stages and contend that the strengthening of a more holistic concept of study would be preferable to the strengthening of specializations. Various other external stakeholders, e.g. trade unions, advocate more coherent collaboration between the external world and higher education institutions when it comes to creating, accrediting or reaccrediting study programmes. Many students suggest greater communication between academia and the world of work as well because concern about unemployment or inappropriate employment is widespread among students.

CHANGES IN ACADEMIC JOBS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUPPORTING GRADUATES' CAREERS

Context

The academic environment is 'managed' altogether by clearly different 'groups': the academics (professors and junior academic staff), the administrators and, finally, the managers with possibly varied backgrounds. The

work of these 'groups' is traditionally driven by three theoretically diverse principles (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001; Evetts, 2013): (i) The work of professors is characterized by an academic type of *professionalism* which is governed by disciplinary-oriented professional organizations; (ii) the work of administrators is dominated by bureaucratic principles and traditionally subordinated to the state and legislation on administration; and (iii) managerial positions have been increasingly shaped in recent years by the principles of competition, *commodification* and *managerialism*.

Since about the 1980s we have observed trends in higher education in Europe that challenge the traditional divides between an academic zone strongly determined by academics' values and an administrative zone. The growing managerial power and rising importance of various measures of evaluation, performance measurement (Vidoni and Palleta, 2012) and indicator-based steering are perceived by many academics as efforts to superimpose managerial principles onto the academic sphere (Schapper and Mayson, 2005), even though many academics believe these principles of coordination and control do not affect the heart of the academic culture (see the different views in Locke et al., 2011).

The work of academics

The term "academic" is employed in this study, like in many other studies, to describe everyone at a higher education institution who is primarily employed for the tasks of teaching and/or research. As a rule, they are subdivided according to positions on a career ladder with professor at the apex. In some instances, standalone positions are created, e.g. lecturers without research tasks and without any chance of being promoted to professorial positions. The work of academics can traditionally be described by the concept of a "community of practice" (Wenger et al., 2002) in which groups of people share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and deepen their domain. Academics are understood to be in charge of knowledge creation, systematization and dissemination. Their tasks are often termed teaching, research and possibly a "third mssion" (Culum et al., 2013). Their daily life is shaped by activities of raising funds, networking, participating at conferences, scientific publishing and financial reporting.

The authority of academics is thus generated on the basis of professional expertise and supported by a collegial professional network that has its roots in industry, politics, public government, discipline-related international and organizations and university management. Professional expertise gives those academics who have attained the rank of (full) professor the right and power to create and implement a university curriculum which represents a systemized body of knowledge for graduates and their future professional work. Professional expertise – even though it is not usually related to man-

agement – also grants academics, depending on their position, the right to become involved in academic and institutional management as project leaders, heads of department, (vice) deans and (vice) rectors. Academics organize their work in representative collective bodies such as a senate or collegium where major decisions are typically discussed and improved.

The work of academics has been framed in the last few years by administrative and managerial principles that have led to a limitation of their traditional self-regulatory setting and is often seen as a dramatic loss of academic freedom, as deprofessionalization, 'bifurcation' and diversification between permanent and temporary staff, as well as reliance on professional rather than on academic identity frameworks (see Currie and Vidovic, 2009; Findlow, 2012). "Academics no longer have a monopoly of influence on organizational goals, strategies, structures and cultures. For some this has meant loss of control of their academic agendas, loss of disciplinary location, loss of self esteem and loss of identity. Others have succeeded in accommodating and exploiting new demands and connections without deviating from their main agenda, even if the contexts in which it is pursued have multiplied..." (Henkel, 2007, 198-199). With this loss of traditional academic freedom, the "academic profession has come under enormous pressures potentially endangering the survival of the core identity of academics and universities" (Kogan and Teichler, 2007, 9).

Administrators

The managerial and administrative system of the academic environment is governed by elected deans and rectors (presidents, vice-chancellors etc.) who in most cases are or have been professors. In some, mainly Anglo-Saxon, countries, the top management positions of academic institutions are filled by non-academics, while in most continental European countries the principle secretary, director or chief executive officer is subordinate to the academic governance and responsible for routine day-to-day administration (Kogan, 2007).

Administrative or 'non-academic' positions in the academic sphere are found in departments such as student services, libraries, human resources departments, public relations, bookkeeping, building maintenance etc. These departments typically have inbuilt their own hierarchies with their own directors or heads of department. They often collect and administer the data (processing, monitoring and control) related to registers, institutional, state and international policies, committees, providing support for research calls and reporting and administrating academic bodies such as committees, a collegium or senate. The complexity of these tasks might vary from very routine work and responsibility to very complex involving the areas of finance, marketing, international policy or legislation.

In recent times, the intensified relations between the academic world and external environment, domestic and international students, graduates, industry, as well as national and international agencies have been opening up new areas and roles for administrators that can either be traditionally administrative or gravitate more towards the domain of academics. As they have developed their own area of expertise and authority, they are becoming an increasingly important partner to academics in discussions related to supporting graduates' careers (see Schneijderberg and Merkator, 2013; DEHEMS, 2013).

The hybridization of academics in administrative positions

Academics have traditionally occupied leading positions not only in science but (some) also in academic and institutional management. These two domains are now becoming an open arena for a much more equal 'partnership' of both academics and administrators. This has been caused by factors external to higher education (massification, marketization, globalization, performativity) and institutional responses to these processes through their policies, missions, priorities and values (Krause, 2009; Zgaga, 2009). The substantial transformation of academic work has been defined as follows:

- the specialization of work in terms of disciplinary areas (Becher, 1989; Neumann, 2009);
- polarization between research and teaching (Elton, 1986; Krause, 2009) where the first activity is associated with increasing national and international competition and the second with student massification;
- (assertive) cooperation with industry (Etzkowitz, 2008);
- increasing precarization from the side of academic institutions and technocratic control over academic achievements (Musselin, 2007; 2009);
- work intensification (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004); and
- conflict roles and time perspectives (Ylijoki and Mäntylä, 2003).

These changes have resulted in the overlapping jurisdiction of administrators and academics in the area of institutional and academic management as well as some particular areas such as 'employability' issues, internationalization, organization and the recognition of practicums. Some issues that would traditionally fall within the jurisdiction of a department's 'scientific' development are through institutional, governmental and European regulation and monitoring also becoming the domain of administrators. On the other hand, certain particular financial and organizational issues are becoming the concern of academics. Bentley and Kyvik (2012), for example, found that "in countries with comparably steep academic hierarchies, professor positions typically entail significantly fewer teaching hours and more administration".

The overall results tend to be described differently. Some experts note the de-professionalization of academics in terms of losing the power to control their own work (Hinings, 2005; Evetts, 2013); others note the professionalization of academics in terms of not only being experts in knowledge creation and dissemination, but also experts in teaching modes, research management etc. Yet other experts consider the rise of higher educational professionals as undermining the complex roles of academics, while others note the coexistence of professionalization in higher education altogether through the complexity of academic roles and growing role of higher education professionals. To provide additional descriptions of changes in this domain: Kogan (2007, 164-165) refers to an increase in "mixtures of collegial, academic-based decision-making and bureaucratic-hierarchical working". Åkerlind and Kayrooz (2009) observe the emergence of a kind of academic freedom that entails the absence of institutional, societal and personal constraints on academic work. Musselin and Becquet (2008) point to the decline of academic identities based on disciplinary domains, institutional particularities, and one's own "biographical identity".

The 'employability' paradigm as a creator of changes in academic work

As already pointed out, the spread of the *'employability paradigm'* has been one of the most influential drivers of change in higher education since about the start of the 21st century. It refers directly to the substance and processes of study programmes, but its influence is much wider. As already mentioned, the 'employability paradigm' is part of a growing output and outcome awareness and is therefore closely linked to the expanding activities of evaluation, performance assessment and indicator-based steering.

In this framework, attention must be paid to the role of the 'employability paradigm' in the professionalization of academic work (see Kehm and Teichler, 2013) and the growth of the hybrid roles between academia and administration held by people who might be called new "higher education professionals" (Schneijderberg and Merkator, 2013; Schneijderberg et al., 2013). The latter is visible in the rise of career centres, marketing activities, output- and outcome-oriented assessment, alumni-related activities, support for experiential learning etc. At first glance, it is obvious that both academics and higher educational professionals are more strongly involved in absorbing information about graduate employment and work, in reflecting and implementing changes in curricula and teaching with a view to graduate employment and work, and in providing support and services that promise experiential learning as well as direct support for the transition to employment.

However, systematic analyses have hardly been conducted on the impact of the 'employability paradigm' on higher education. Questions such as the following would have to be asked in that framework.

1. Which main external drivers and policy actions triggered the 'employability' shift in higher education institutions, and how did they vary across academic disciplines and countries? In practical terms (e.g. teaching, learning, financing or career support), how were such actions manifested on the level of particular academic institutions?

2. What were the reactions of different professional groups within higher education institutions to these actions? Which general knowledge needs and actions did these external demands create? To what extent were these actions taken to support graduates' careers vis-à-vis strengthening and repositioning own professional positions?

3. What were the concrete implications of 'employability' in terms of generating new: i) bodies within higher education institutions (e.g. career centres and alumni services); ii) new(er) processes (e.g. tracer studies and support for traineeship); and iii) improvements to existing activities (e.g. teaching and learning in procects)?

4. What have been the short- and long-term consequences of these actions for jobs in academia, students and graduates?

In the subsequent analysis, we aim to establish how key actors in higher education – academics, administrators and persons in hybrid positions – understand the term 'employability'. Moreover, we explore the areas in which they suggest action to improve what they consider to be students' 'employability'.

CASE STUDY

Contextual background to the DEHEMS project

The DEHEMS project's main conceptual goal was to link the determinants and dimensions of graduates' career success in selected professional domains and fields of study with the expectations, practices and future challenges of higher education institutions. The project explored how much higher education management systems are evidence-driven, and addressed questions of the overall idea of higher education institutions and management, what these systems were doing to successfully and systematically help graduates make the transition to work, where higher education managers and academics see the biggest developmental needs etc. DEHEMS project organized conferences held in Vienna in 2011 and in Ljubljana in 2012. Both conferences offered a forum for the exchange of information and a discussion of the state of research on the relationships between higher education and the world of work. In order to capture the views of a diverse group of academics and practitioners in the field

(career centre professionals, higher education managers and public administration managers), an analysis of their expressed priorities was undertaken.

Methodology

For that purpose, a research design based on between-method methodological triangulation was chosen (see Bryman, 2003; Fink, 2003). By employing two contrasting research methods – a qualitative survey and a qualitative face-to-face semi-structured interview – we seek to check the validity of a single study by cross-checking the findings with those gathered via another method, thereby reducing the uncertainty of a single study and its interpretation (Webb et al., 1966).

Qualitative survey

As qualitative surveys are particularly suited to examining the feelings, opinions and values of individuals (Fink, 2003, 62), we opted for an open-ended survey questionnaire. Instead of establishing clear frequencies, this approach aimed to determine the diversity of some topics of interest within a given population (Jansen, 2010) without any reduction through categories provided in the research instrument (see Boyatzis, 1998). Qualitative surveys prove especially useful when one cannot fully rely on one's own previous experience, when one wants to gather detailed information in the respondents' own words, or when individuals may be unwilling or unable to respond to "closed" questions (Fink, 2003, 62-68).

The combination of these three reasons, particularly the last two, led us to select this type of survey to investigate our target population – participants at the DEHEMS final conference in Ljubljana held in 2012. As part of the registration process, the participants had been asked/obliged to complete a short online self-administered survey questionnaire made up, apart from several demographical questions and a question related to disciplinarity, of an open-ended question on their priorities in the field. After checking for invalid and missing responses, we analyzed 234 out of 366 submitted survey questionnaires, thus allowing us to investigate potential differences between academics, higher education administrators and persons occupying hybrid roles. We analyzed the data so acquired by conducting an inductive content analysis focussing on differences (see Krippendorf, 2003), whereby most attention is devoted to the differences in priorities among observed individuals. To uncover and systematically analyze this bulk of unstructured data, the responses were coded using version 7.1.3 of the Atlas.ti software package.

Qualitative interviews

A semi-structured type of interview was conducted on a pre-selected target group. While a theme and some

topics were addressed, the interviews were carried out in such a way as to create an open and relaxed atmosphere, thus encouraging the interviewees to talk freely. This was done to discover the causes of certain views and attitudes (see Möhring et al., 2008, 2514). The interviewees were encouraged to give certain cues to elicit comments or statements that would not have surfaced in a standard interview. This 'topic-guide' type of semi-structured interview was regarded as the most appropriate for eliciting expert opinions (see ibid., 2515).

It was intended that the interviews conducted would be 'problem centered', i.e. reflecting the researcher's orientation to a relevant problem, 'object oriented', i.e. developing or modifying the questions with the research theme in mind, and 'process oriented', i.e. allowing understanding of the object of research (Flick, 2006, 161). A 'heuristic interviewing' (Legard et al. 2003, 140) approach was chosen according to which the interviewer sees the process of interviewing as collaboration between the researcher and the interviewee, whereby both persons share reflections and information.

Between April and May 2013, 37 interviews were conducted with academics, higher education administrators, and persons in hybrid roles (called higher education professionals). The interviewees came from six domains: Business and economics, life sciences, medicine, engineering, sociology and political science, and education and teaching. They were conducted in Slovenia by staff engaged by the DEHEMS project, had an average length of 45 minutes and were held in quiet public spaces or in individual working premises of an interviewee. The interviews were voice-recorded and later transcribed, while interview summaries were also created. Version 7.1.3 of the Atlas.ti software package was used for the analysis.

Results

Mapping the 'employability' discourse

The first theme of the analysis was use of the term 'employability'. In fact, 42% of 234 survey respondents reported they use the term when expressing their professional interest in the field. While some referred to career prospects in general, most understood 'employability' as a chance of becoming employed. To quote a typical example: *"I support students and graduates in finding a job. The employability of graduates is an important topic"*.

Use of the term 'employability' was most frequently reported by administrators – in general (61%) and in terms of becoming employed (52%), while the persons in hybrid roles and particularly the academics used the word less often. It is less common among persons in hybrid roles (43%) and academics in managerial roles, and even less often employed by academics with teaching and possibly research functions (approx. 30%). Again, reference is frequently made to the opportunity of be-

coming employed, whereby actions were often named (by about one-third of all respondents) with the aim of enhancing 'employability', for example: *"I am interested in changing the study programmes in a way that increases the employability of our students"*. Once again, the frequency of the actions named varies: 36% by administrators (36%), 29% by persons in hybrid roles (29%), and only 17% by academics (17%). While most respondents referred to the frequent and narrow sense of the term, some addressed the possible complexity and breadth of 'employability', for example: *"One of the main tasks … is related to employability issues (curriculum adaptation according to the competencies required in labour market; students' representations of job perspectives and requirements; recent graduates' satisfaction; career centre developments within higher education; partnerships with labour market stakeholders, etc.)"*.

Obviously, the term 'employability' is very much in the minds of the experts addressed in this study. Yet there are differences in the extent attention is focussed on the issue of becoming employed or directed towards a broader set of issues as well as it is seen as closely connected to certain higher education measures.

Priorities among the administrators, academics and persons in hybrid roles

What are the major areas of higher education activity associated with 'employability'. The surveyed administrators named – among the five themes addressed in the final DEHEMS conference – "Career centre developments" most often as important (37%). Persons in hybrid roles most frequently referred to "Accreditation and quality assurance of higher education programmes" and "Development in higher education institutional management" (each 32%) and also named "Practical training and Teaching and learning" (24%). In contrast, the academics referred to all five themes – the four named above plus "Practical training as well as teaching and learning" – to more or less the same extent.

Table 1 shows the responses after they were coded. This confirms that the administrators primarily have measures aiming at promoting career success in mind in this context (74%), for example: *"My professional interest is in the career development and career management of students and graduates"*. Persons in hybrid roles emphasize measures in the domain of higher education management (51%), while academics refer to a broad range of aspects, e.g. "Labour market and higher education relations", "Teaching and learning outcomes", "Higher education management" and "Practical orientation and training", with each named by between one-fifth and one-quarter of this group of respondents. Altogether, we may conclude that the administrators and persons in hybrid roles pay more attention to the labour market value of credentials, while academics are more concerned with educational measures relevant to subsequent professional work.

Table 1: Priority areas stated in the survey of activities related to the 'employability paradigm' and 'employability' pressures perceived, by type of experts (in per cent, N=234)

	Administrators		Academics		Hybrid roles		TOTAL		Academics – Researchers		Academics - assigned roles		Academics - Teachers	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1-Curriculum revision	7	11.3	20	16.5	13	25.5	40	17.1	14	16.3	5	20.8	2	8.3
2-General development of HES	11	17.7	21	17.4	9	17.6	41	17.5	18	20.9	4	16.7	2	8.3
3-Teaching and learning outcomes	8	12.9	29	24.0	9	17.6	46	19.7	14	16.3	5	20.8	15	62.5
4-HEI management	9	14.5	28	23.1	26	51.0	63	26.9	24	27.9	3	12.5	3	12.5
5-LM and HE relations	14	22.6	29	24.0	7	13.7	50	21.4	25	29.1	5	20.8	2	8.3
6-Measures to promote career success	46	74.2	22	18.2	7	13.7	75	32.1	15	17.4	7	29.2	5	20.8
7-PR, marketing	3	4.8	5	4.1	1	2.0	9	3.8	2	2.3	3	12.5	0	0.0
8-Practical orientation and training	9	14.5	25	20.7	11	21.6	45	19.2	15	17.4	6	25.0	7	29.2
9-Professional/Career success	12	19.4	12	9.9	5	9.8	29	12.4	11	12.8	1	4.2	1	4.2
10-Quality assurance	8	12.9	19	15.7	16	31.4	43	18.4	12	14.0	7	29.2	4	16.7
11-(Re)accreditation of programmes	3	4.8	10	8.3	10	19.6	23	9.8	5	5.8	8	33.3	2	8.3
EMPLOYABILITY PRESSURES ON HEI														
A-information on career success (tracking)	27	43.5	51	42.1	13	25.5	91	38.9	40	46.5	6	25.0	9	37.5
B-information and support to students/graduates	47	75.8	38	31.4	14	27.5	99	42.3	25	29.1	11	45.8	8	33.3
C-curriculum revision and development, T-L innovations	14	22.6	42	34.7	22	43.1	78	33.3	22	25.6	10	41.7	15	62.5
D-(re-)accreditation, external quality assurance	7	11.3	19	15.7	14	27.5	40	17.1	14	16.3	8	33.3	3	12.5
E-HEI management	9	14.5	27	22.3	26	51.0	62	26.5	23	26.7	3	12.5	3	12.5

Obviously, the administrators are most strongly interested in the availability of detailed labour market information in this context (as also revealed by the study by Janson, 2013), and they consider career guidance and other measures of career-related support as essential. In contrast, persons in hybrid roles, apart from being primarily concentrated on management issues, emphasize the importance of curriculum organization with the aim of delivering competencies highly valued in the labour market and by potential employers.

When asked explicitly in the interviews about priority areas of action, all three groups strongly emphasized curriculum development and curriculum revision (see Table 2). As one interviewee put it: *"There is a clear need for a shift from the teacher deciding the content of the curriculum on the basis of what he has to offer to the decision based on competencies a graduate needs to thrive in his professional field".*

In this framework, interviews with all groups pointed out problems such as insufficient infrastructure, under-staffing (both administrators and academics), a lack of research grants, and difficulties in ensuring high competencies of graduates as a consequence of a high student-teacher ratio. All of these statements suggest that the shortage of higher education funding is a major impediment as far as 'employability' is concerned.

The three groups only differ on issues seen as relevant less often than the two issues named above. Some administrators call for information on career success, while some other administrators and persons in hybrid roles consider information and other means of direct support for students as important. The role of higher education management is underscored by persons in hybrid roles – albeit to a smaller extent in the interviews than in the written survey. Some persons in hybrid roles also call for cooperation with employers. Finally, some academics stress the role of accreditation and quality assurance in general to strength graduates' 'employability'.

Differences among the academics

Table 1 and Table 2 also provide information on three categories of academics: (1) "Researchers", i.e. those with substantial research tasks, including professors both in charge of research and teaching; (2) "Academics with assigned roles", i.e. those with substantial managerial tasks, e.g. deans; and (3) "Teachers", i.e. those primarily in charge of teaching. The responses do not vary substantially according to these three groups, but some differences are worth noting.

As Table 1 shows, academics with substantial research tasks are more often than others in favour of management-oriented approaches to strength 'employability'. They also often see a need to find ways to change the relationships between higher education and the labour market.

Academics with management tasks more often stress actions in the domain of accreditation or of other quality assurance measures, as the following example illustrates: *"Finally, since I am currently involved in re-accreditation of the sociology programme at the University of xxx, it is of paramount importance for me to be informed about the changing requirements of labour markets".*

Lastly, academics primarily in charge of teaching emphasize, as one might expect, the role of learning outcomes in this respect. One respondent stated: *"I wish to learn the latest findings and hope I will be able to use them to modify my teaching aims, methods and/or strategies to maximize the efficiency of study".*

Altogether, the results suggest that in response to the 'employability paradigm' academics do not only underscore the relevance of curricula, teaching and learning. They also highlight measures which are otherwise more strongly emphasized by the administrators and persons in hybrid roles. Moreover, the notions among academics with major research functions differ in some respects clearly from those chiefly involved in teaching. This is

Table 2: Priority areas expressed in the interviews as regards measures related to employability, by type of experts (N=37)

	Administrators	Academics	Hybrid roles	TOTAL
Information on career success	+			
Information and support to students/graduates	+		+	+
Curriculum development and (re)organization	+++	+++	++	+++
(Re)accreditation, quality assurance		+		
HEI management			+	+
Funding – infrastructural issues	+	+	++	++
Cooperation with employers			+	

(min= ; max=+++)

also visible in the interviews. While those strongly involved *in research stressed* in this context the need to acquire in-depth information on graduate employment and work, *those* with a predominant *teaching* role emphasize measures such as employing innovative teaching techniques and being active in career guidance.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, the rising popularity of the term 'employability' suggests that higher education is nowadays more strongly expected than in the past to provide evidence of the professional relevance of study programmes. Views differ strikingly on whether adaptation in line with the demands of the labour market is required or whether, for example, the aims of changing the world of work proactively can be viewed as a viable alternative. In any event, growing awareness of the relationships between higher education and the world of work is called for.

The 'employability discourse' not only affects notions of the relationships between study programmes and subsequent graduate employment and work and notions of the desirability of various educational-related activities. It also has an impact on the professional roles of the various professional actors within higher education. It is linked to the trend within higher education institutions of strengthening management vis-à-vis academia and with the increase in professional hybrid job roles: 'New higher education professionals' are primarily in charge of service and management-support activities, but this has to be done with close links to academic concepts and activities. As an overall consequence, the main actors in higher education can no longer be clearly viewed as simply polarized between academics and administrators.

The specific aim of this article was to explore the extent to which academics, administrators and persons in hybrid roles hold similar or different views as far as the concept of 'employability' and its major dimensions are concerned. In addition, attention was paid to the similarity of notions, in which areas measures are in place to enhance the professional relevance of study.

Altogether, all three groups highlight the often expressed understanding of 'employability' as the chance of getting employed. However, the academics in particular pointed out a more complex understanding. As regards suitable measures, the need for curricular measures was widely emphasized. Further, the three groups name areas of activity that are relatively close to their professional tasks. Moreover, among the academics we note differences congenial to their professional priorities between those strongly involved in research, those with a prime teaching function, and those with considerable additional managerial tasks.

The changing roles of academics, administrators and persons in hybrid roles have often been described as a trend towards the blurring of the traditional functions. The differences in the notions of 'employability', however, not only underscore such a blurring, but can also be interpreted as a growing division of labour combined with a growing division of notions and concept of higher education. The analysis of their notions of 'employability' does not provide a clear answer in one of these directions. The views are sufficiently diverse to ensure support overall for a broad range of measures to promote the professional relevance of study. But so far they do not signal a trend towards professional segmentation. In these circumstances, a certain degree of variation in the concept of 'employability' as well as in respective measures to be taken in higher education can co-exist.

Študenti med predavanji/Student sitting at the lecture. http://depositphotos.com/

HIBRIDNE VLOGE, ZAPOSLJIVOST IN SPREMEMBE V VISOKEM ŠOLSTVU: POGLED IZ AKADEMSKEGA TER ADMINISTRATORSKEGA ZORNEGA KOTA

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POVZETEK

V članku najprej predstavljamo relevantni diskurz o visokem šolstvu, trgu dela in zaposljivosti diplomantov. Nadalje razpravljamo o splošnih spremembah v delu akademikov in administratorjev ter problematiziramo značilnosti in posebnosti hibridizacije njihovega dela. Na tej podlagi gradimo celosten konceptualni in raziskovalni model, ki prevprašuje, kako zunanji družbeni in javnopolitični pritiski po zaposljivosti vplivajo na razpon del znotraj akademske sfere. Naposled tudi identificiramo in podrobneje raziščemo podrobnosti in razlike v delu akademikov, administratorjev ter njihovih hibridov. Analiza je osnovana na večmetodskem pristopu – odprtem anketnem vprašalniku o profilih 234 visokošolskih ustanov iz 20 evropskih držav ter na 37 intervjujih s strokovnjaki. Rezulatati kažejo razlike med prioritetami različnih nosilcev vlog znotraj visokega šolstva. V nasprotju z administratorji, ki preferirajo bolj praktično orientirane tematike, ki so povezane z usposabljanjem in karierami diplomantov, ter hibridnimi vlogami, ki preferirajo akreditacije, zagotavljanje kakovosti in z menedžmentom povezane ravni v visokem šolstvu, akademski delavci kažejo najbolj uravnotežene portfelje prioritet. Še več, identificirali smo vsepovsod prisotno nujo po odzivnosti potrebam s področja trga dela, vse intenzivnejše prilagajanje akademskega dela birokratiziranim postopkom ocenjevanja ter vidno polarizacijo med raziskovanjem ter poučevanjem.

Ključne besede: visoko šolstvo, trg dela, diplomanti, zaposljivost, akademska profesija, administratorji

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