

# TALENT MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIA

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## Introduction

For universities, the “human resources”, in particular the scientific staff, are the most valuable asset for the success of the organization (Van Balen & Van den Besselaar, 2007). The presence of highly qualified academic staff is not only extremely important for the quality of education programs, university research, and the universities’ reputation, but also for the knowledge condition in a region (Baldini, Fini, & Grimaldi, 2015; Enders et al., 2011; Lanvin & Monteiro, 2019; Lilles & Røigas, 2017). In particular during the course of the last decade, higher education (HE) institutes in Europe were ascribed an important role in the strengthening of the European position in the global knowledge economy (Enders et al., 2011). Contributing to the knowledge economy the European HE system had to become more competitive, and for these investments in quality and excellence were deemed necessary, along with increased transparency, accountability, and efficiency (Enders et al., 2011).

At the same time, many European universities are facing an ageing workforce and need to replace the retiring “baby boom professors” with a new generation of academics (Pilichowski, Arnould, & Turkisch, 2008). Some academic disciplines, such as humanities, have to deal with a surplus of potential academics due to the poor career prospects inside and outside academia. Meanwhile, other disciplines, for example in the fields of nature and science, suffer chronic shortages of talented academic staff (e.g., Gilliot, Overlaet, & Verdin, 2002).

For all universities, finding the most talented people is a key strategic issue (Van den Brink, Fruytier, & Thunnissen, 2013), but the competition for highly educated and academic talents is fierce because other organizations are also involved in this “war for talent” (Holley et al., 2018; Stahl et al., 2012). The question arises if, and how, universities attract, retain, and deploy their human resources to win this battle for talent. In this chapter on talent management (TM) in academia, we aim to answer that question.

TM is often described as the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention, and deployment of talents (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, & Scullion, 2019; Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010). Within their TM definitions, authors define talent in different ways. The variety of terms used to define talent reflects one of the most central debates in TM – whether TM is an inclusive or an exclusive approach (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013). The exclusive approach – often adopted by academics in the field of management (including human resource management [HRM]) – focuses on an elite group of employees whose skills, abilities, and performance are unique and very valuable for the organization, and/or occupy strategically important positions within the organization (e.g., Collings & Mellahi, 2009). The inclusive view on talent – dominant in the

field of positive psychology and Human Resources Development – is aimed at the identification and mobilization of the strengths of all employees, and assures that all employees work in a context and organizational climate that enables them to use and develop their talents (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Swailes, Downs, & Orr, 2014). In practice, both the inclusive and the exclusive approach (and also hybrid forms) occur (Stahl et al., 2012).

This chapter explores in more detail the TM approach adopted by academic organizations. The chapter is organized into three sections. We start with mapping the broader organizational and institutional context, and present the most important reforms in the universities' external environment, in the academic organization, academic work, and the academic staff. This chapter focuses on the context of European universities in general, and, predominantly based on our research, on the context of Dutch public universities specifically.

We then move to the second section of the chapter where we describe how universities manage and mobilize their talents, and how their TM approach is affected by the aforementioned reforms. The Netherlands has fourteen public universities providing bachelor, master, and doctoral education, and only one private university. Many universities have separate HR policies for their academic and support staff. This chapter is about the specific TM approaches for the academic staff. In the final section of the chapter, the discussion, we present dilemmas and tensions in managing talent in academia and present some recommendations for future research.

## **Mapping the Context: Academia in Transition**

### ***A Short History Lesson***

There are not many organizations as old as the universities in Europe. The history of European universities goes back to the Middle Ages, with the first Western European university founded in 1088 in Bologna, Italy (Sanz & Bergan, 2006). Since the late 18th century, the European universities were organized analogous to the classic Humboldt University in Berlin, emphasizing the importance of freedom, autonomy, and creativity in finding new knowledge and deepening the understanding of ourselves and the world around us (Waaiker, 2015). A collegial governance system was dominant, and interference by the outside world was regarded as unacceptable because it collided with the autonomy, professionalism, and expertise of the independent scientist.

This classic ideal continued to exist for almost two centuries, until a series of fundamental reforms urged the Dutch universities to dismantle this classic organizational model (Zomer & Benneworth, 2011). First, the enormous increase in students from all layers of society in the 1960s, the baby boom generation born after the second world war caused a transition from elite to mass education and led to growing investments in HE and a rise in the number of academic staff (Vincent-Lancrin, 2006). Two decades later, the economic stagnation in the 1980s forced the HE to be more cost effective. To secure the standards and quality of HE, the Bologna process led in the 1990s to the harmonization of the architecture of the European Higher Education system, opening the doors for students from abroad (Teelken, 2019).

Second, the role of the government has changed. The direct interference and state control have decreased since the 1980s, and Dutch HE institutes have obtained greater institutional autonomy to promote efficiency, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and an entrepreneurial spirit. In exchange for institutional autonomy the national government demanded quality and accountability (in measurable objectives) in return (Enders et al., 2011).

Third, the European funding landscape changed considerably, with a shift from block funding towards project funding (Lepori et al., 2007). To an increasing extent, universities are encouraged to compete for external funding from industry, national, and European research councils. The Dutch government lowered direct and structural research funding of institutes, and increased the provision of individual research budgets via the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) (Castelló,

Pyhältö & McAlpine, 2018; Heiligers & Van Steen, 2008; Lepori et al., 2007). The competition to get a grant is fierce, and only academics with the best track record are eligible to get a grant (Herschberg, Benschop, & Van den Brink, 2018; Van Arensbergen & Van den Besselaar, 2012; Van Arensbergen, Van der Weijden, & Van den Besselaar, 2014a).

Finally, the number of external stakeholders involved in and affecting HE institutes has increased significantly (VSNU, 2018), which has led to a multiplicity of norms and expectations to meet (Zanoni, et al., 2016). The competition and greater institutional (financial) autonomy was meant to stimulate European HE institutions to become more sensitive to the varied consumers' demands for relevance, and the production of *useful* knowledge and *relevant* teaching necessary to solve societal and economic issues has been emphasized (Enders et al., 2011; Zomer & Benneworth, 2011).

### ***The Changing Academic Organization and Its Staff***

Due to these developments, the liberalization of the academic institutes took place and the entrepreneurial university arose (e.g., Meyer et al., 2005; Zomer & Benneworth, 2011). External economic and managerial pressures demanding efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and flexibility were adopted by internal actors whose power base has grown during the past decades (i.e., [professional] managers and support staff), and they implemented regulations, measurable standards, and performance management systems to coordinate and control academic performance (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). As a result, academics became more dependent on managerial and administrative staff controlling these systems (e.g., De Jong et al., 2011; De Weert, 2001). While organizational units became more interrelated, the core activities of the university (research and education) became more loosely coupled (De Weert, 2001). This resulted in a differentiation and specialization in work activities and skills (e.g., Musselin, 2007), in which research has greater value and status than teaching.

Furthermore, there is a change in the academic employment position. In the 1980s, a two-tier structure in education was introduced, making a clear cut between the education in general scientific skills in the first phase (available for all people), and the training in research skills in the second phase (restricted to a group of excellent students) (Hazue & Sprangenberg, 1991; Hulshof, Verrijt, & Kruijthoff., 1996). From that moment doctoral candidates in the second phase were hired as employees with a fixed-term contract, because the employee status would make it easier to control the recruitment and development of candidates (Hulshof *et al.*, 1996).

Many people perceived the PhD-phase as the first step in an academic career. However, the possibilities to pursue an academic career were limited because the majority of the existing academic staff – all employed in the 1960s and 1970s to provide education to the massive “baby-boom” student population then entering – did not show any tendency to leave the academic organization (Auriol, Felix, & Schaaper, 2010; Einaudi, Heuer, & Green, 2013; Hulshof et al., 1996). In order to increase organizational flexibility, new recruited academic staff was hired on a fixed-term or part-time contract (e.g., Bryson, 2004; De Weert, 2001; Herschberg et al., 2018; Musselin, 2007).

Currently two-third of the academics in the Netherlands are employed on a temporary basis, most of them are academics in the lower academic positions (VSNU, 2018). Moreover, research shows most of them will never get a permanent position in a university. Less than 30% of the PhDs and postdoc researchers in the Netherlands get a permanent job as a lecturer or researcher at a Dutch university (De Goede, Belder, & De Jonge, 2013). This job insecurity, combined with a lack of career possibilities and obscure promotion criteria, are major sources of dissatisfaction for young academics in the Netherlands (e.g., Thunnissen, 2015; Teelken & Van der Weijden, 2018; Van Balen, 2010; Waaijer et al., 2017).

The academic self is also changing. An increasing number of scholars come from abroad (Holley et al., 2018). Recent research shows that the amount of foreign academics working in Dutch universities increased from 20% in 2005 to 33% in 2015; in the field of nature and science a whopping 45% of the academics are from abroad (Scholten, Koier, & Horlings, 2017). Moreover, Parker and Jay (1995) point at the rise of the “new academic”. Besides the traditional scientific skills, new skills have become

important features of excellent academics: cooperation, networking skills, leadership, and especially entrepreneurship (Thunnissen & Van Arensbergen, 2015; Van Arensbergen et al., 2014a; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012; Verbree, Van der Weijden, & Van den Besselaar, 2012;).

### **Talent Management in Academia**

Up until the 1990s, the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science was responsible for the direct governance and control of the Dutch public universities, including personnel management. In the late 1990s, the Ministry acknowledged that personnel management could only be shaped inside the academic organization, and delegated this responsibility to the individual HE institutes (Heiligers & Van der Steen, 2008). Within the university, the management responsibilities were further delegated to the university departments and research group, so personnel management became a line management responsibility.

In 2000, Van Vught Thijssen concluded that academic personnel management indeed had come to bloom. Personnel policies and practices at universities shifted from administration, basic job descriptions, performance appraisals, and carrying out collective agreements, towards a pro-active and strategic aligned HRM system. Yet, despite the advancements made, Van Vught Thijssen (2000) also warned that the universities were not ready and able to respond adequately to the massive outflow of retiring academics in the near future, and this would be a risk for the international competitive position of Dutch universities. Her study was a wakeup call for many universities, as they were strongly unaware of this worrying scenario that would lead to serious problems when nothing would change. In order to attract and retain excellent academics TM became a strategic priority for many universities.

Several studies investigated how (and how well) Dutch universities manage their talented academic staff. Van den Brink (2010) conducted an extensive (mixed-method) study on the process of recruitment and selection for professorial appointments within Dutch universities. Van Arensbergen (2014) also investigated talent selection, but in the context of grant allocation by funding organization NWO. Thunnissen (2015, 2016) investigated the intended and actual TM approach of five university departments, and how this was perceived by the academic staff. In this section, these studies (supported with other empirical publications) are used to present how universities 1) identify and select talent, 2) develop and retain talent, 3) manage the outflow of talent, and 4) how successful they are in doing so (in terms of perceived value).

### ***Talent identification and selection***

What is academic talent and how is it selected? Studies by Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen show that academic talent has both traditional (critical, analytical, top-level knowledge, and skills, etc.) and the academic skills (e.g., creative, innovative, entrepreneurial), social capital (communication, cooperation, and networking skills), and is strongly driven and able to prove this potential in excellent performance (Heuritsch, Waaijer, & Van der Weijden, 2016; Thunnissen & Van Arensbergen, 2015).

Academic excellence is clearly related to excellent performance in research (and often not in teaching), in terms of publications in top journals and obtaining research funds (Hammerfelt, 2017; Thunnissen & Van Arensbergen, 2015; Van Arensbergen & Van den Besselaar, 2012; Van Balen, 2010; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012). However, research also suggest that the precise operationalization of talent is highly subjective. In fact, who is considered as talent is a social construction by key actors in the identification and selection process (Van Arensbergen et al, 2014a; O'Connor & O'Hagan, 2016). In Dutch academia, this selection process takes place inside and outside the university. Both processes, and their subjectivity, are discussed below.

We start with the selection process *outside* the university. In the previous section we already mentioned the growing importance of grants. Although grants were introduced to stimulate and reward excellence in research and education, at least at the individual level, they resulted in an intensified competition

in academic careers because the ability to acquire funding became an essential enabler for career advancements (e.g., Van Balen & Van Besselaar, 2007; Van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2015; Waaijer, Teelken, Wouters, & Van der Weijden; 2018). More and more universities offer a position to academics with a grant, for the duration of the grant.

The study by Van Arensbergen (2014) on the talent selection process by NWO shows that when spotting talent at the university level, the interviewed grant panel members (who are academics themselves) indicate that the right mixture of abilities, personal characteristics, and performance discriminates talents from their peers. Specifically, strong motivation and social skills are emphasized. However, in their role as grant panel members, they have a much narrower interpretation of talent and mainly focus on traditional academic abilities in combination with performance. In the first selection round they predominantly look for the best track record, mainly based on a résumé. Only in the second round of the selection process (in which applicants are invited for a panel interview) do intrapersonal characteristics become more important. Some applicants with a “good but not excellent” track record and grant proposal move up in the final ranking after showing their strong motivation, enthusiasm, and communication skills during the interview or vice versa.

This narrow interpretation of talent in the grant selection process is often adopted in the formal selection criteria and procedures *within* the university (Van Arensbergen et al., 2014a). Traditionally the identification of academic excellence is done by the academic community, making use of intersubjective evaluations instead of objective criteria (Van Balen, 2010; O’Connor & O’Hagan, 2016). To stimulate open procedures in which every applicant gets a fair chance, the HRM department developed and implemented regulations and protocols regarding the recruitment and selection process (Thunnissen, 2015, 2016; Van Balen, 2010; Van den Brink et al., 2010). Nonetheless, research shows a gap between the intended policy by the HR staff and the actual implementation by the academic managers in practice. The role of the HRM staff is mainly administrative and their impact is limited, because in the actual selection process, the influence of the academic community still is dominant (e.g., Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

The study by Van den Brink (2010) was one of the first studies that explicitly investigated the recruitment and selection of professors within Dutch universities. Her research revealed that despite the regulations and protocols, the recruitment and selection process was highly informal and not transparent. She detected a gender bias in the selection of professors due to closed procedures (which are not open to competition), scouting via the informal, male academic networks, the limited number of females in the selection committees, and a lack of transparency in selection procedures and practice.

Other studies also show that talent selection within the Dutch academic system is an informal and micro-political process (Herschberg, Benschop, & Van den Brink, 2018; Thunnissen, 2015; Van Arensbergen et al., 2014a; Van Balen, 2010;), in which the academic managers (deans, research directors, heads of research groups, etc.) play a crucial role (Holley et al., 2018). In most departments the selection of academics at the beginning of their career is the responsibility of full professors using their own often subjective selection method, often based on a mixture of proven performance (reflected in grades, papers, etc.) and, most of all, the professors’ personal impression of the potential of the young academic. For the medium and senior academic positions, a formalized, open selection procedure by a selection committee is gaining acceptance, but they are also often neglected when a brilliant top talent can be recruited (Thunnissen, 2016; Van den Brink et al., 2010).

Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) call the academic managers gatekeepers, because they determine who may enter the academic community. This gatekeeping process is cut up in different stages, and in each stage, excellence is re-assessed. Since, especially in academia, the effectiveness and quality of the creative, academic work is rather unpredictable, the organization aims to keep the employment relationship as flexible as possible, and with every continuation of the contract the university has a new moment to decide who can stay or have to leave the system (Van Balen, 2010; Van Balen & Van den Besselaar, 2007). Because of the scarcity of positions, only the best academics are selected for an

academic position, or even better, an academic career. This results in an “up-or-out” system that is characteristic for consultancy agents and law firms (Thunnissen, 2016).

### ***Talent Development and Retention***

Like in the classic Humboldt University, the identification and selection of talents is still the core activity in academic TM. Less formal attention is paid to the development and retention of talents. Thunnissen's (2015, 2016) study on academic TM shows that the TM approach of the university departments is one-dimensional and fragmented. First, the departments used different approaches for the academics at the beginning of their career and the more experienced academics. In the PhD phase, university departments use an inclusive and developmental approach to TM: PhD development programs are often standard policy, and are provided to all PhD's in the department.

The TM policies for the more senior academic positions are exclusive and performance oriented, in which the “tenure track system” plays an important role. This is a top talent program available for the most excellent performing academics, which ensures them a career path towards professor but only when they meet the predetermined performance criteria. In the performance appraisal, the focus is put on research activities, and to a lesser degree to the teaching activities. There is little attention for the development of academics with a fixed-term contract, such as postdoc researchers and lecturers, and they run the risk of being deprived of career and development opportunities and, eventually, of dropping out (Herschberg *et al.*, 2018; Holley *et al.*, 2018; Thunnissen, 2016).

Second, in their TM approach, the university departments address a limited set of talent components. The focus is put on either developing the classic academic, intellectual abilities (i.e. scientific understanding and academic expertise) for the junior positions, or on academic performance and leadership skills for the senior positions. The development of the “new” academic abilities (such as creativity and entrepreneurship) and the intrapersonal characteristics (such as motivation and drive), which are all also mentioned as important talent features, get no special attention in formal TM policy.

Third, like in the selection of talents, empirical research also points to a discrepancy between the intended and actual TM practices regarding the development and retention of talent. Managing professors take the liberty to deviate from the formal regulations and agreements to achieve the outcomes they find essential. Some managing professors even think that after the talent selection, a formal TM approach is not necessary because they believe in a “self-propelling” academic (Thunnissen, 2016; Van Balen, 2010). The employees detect a great deal of variation in the implementation by the supervising professors, and this causes talents (at all levels) to criticize whether the treatment has been just and fair (Holley *et al.*, 2018; Thunnissen, 2015).

### ***Turnover and Exit of Talent***

Hardly any attention is paid to a controlled turnover and exit of talent (Thunnissen, 2015). Some university departments encourage young scholars to (temporarily) leave the department to acquire some international work experience (Van Balen, 2010). This is often supported by the international academic network of either the supervisor or the employee his- or herself. Even though 70% of the young academics end up having a job outside academia (De Goede *et al.*, 2013), this transition to a career outside academia is besides occasional job interview training that is often not supported (Van der Schoot, Yerkes, & Sonneveld, 2010). Supervisors and HR hardly provide any labor market information (especially about the possibilities outside the academia), nor information about employment trajectories of previous PhDs and career advice. PhD candidates make little use of career centers, and mainly use the Internet and their networking to obtain a new job (Van der Schoot *et al.*, 2010).

Leaving the academic community is regarded as a taboo within academia and is often considered a failure. Therefore, early career researchers hardly dare to openly explore and ask for advice about career opportunities outside academia. However, more and more HR policy advisors are gaining awareness of

their role, adding value in this process, and offering activities to young academics to get them in contact with employers and jobs in non-academic settings (Van der Weijden et al., 2017).

### ***The Value of TM***

The studies by Thunnissen (2015, 2016) investigated the value of TM in academia, and showed that there is a large discrepancy between the perceptions of the organization and the employees in this matter. Both stakeholders have a biased, one-dimensional view. For the organization, TM mainly has economic value: increased flexibility and efficiency in managing the workforce is the dominant objective for many universities. To achieve this aim, an exclusive TM approach was implemented, with its accent on the attraction, identification, and deployment of excellent performing academics. From an organizational perspective, the TM system was regarded as effective and valuable.

The talented employees, on the other hand, mostly have non-economic goals they want to see fulfilled via TM: a meaningful and challenging work environment and opportunities for professional growth, becoming manifest in actual upward career advancement (Thunnissen, 2016). The academic selves show the preference for an inclusive, strength-based TM approach that enhances their personal and professional development. The economically oriented needs of the organization collide with the non-economic interests of the talents, and, as could be expected, the employees are, generally speaking, not satisfied with the inducements made by the organization. Yet, most academics interviewed in Thunnissen's research retained and even made some career progress. In the employee's perspective, the academic advancements and successes are the result of their own effort and ambition, and not so much the inducements by the organization.

### **Discussion**

In this chapter, we described how universities have managed and mobilized their human capital in the changing institutional context. Several studies indicate that the Dutch universities shifted from a collegial system to manage the recruitment and employment of personnel, to a more managerial model for TM. Yet, in the actual implementation, the traditional collegial system of personnel management is still dominant. This lack of congruence leads to tensions and dilemmas. In this section, we address the most dominant tensions and dilemmas in managing academic talent, and present some recommendations for future research.

### ***Tensions and Dilemmas***

#### ***Who Is in the Lead?***

This chapter illustrates that TM consists of multiple underlying processes, in which several actors participate. The interests and talent philosophies of multiple actors have a significant impact on the implementation and effectiveness of TM (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Despite the formal TM policy, the actors involved in the implementation process (specifically academic management) can act in a different and unforeseen way. Many studies show that TM in academia is most of all the responsibility of the scientific community. The impact of the HR department is marginal, although this may be changing due to the increasing impact of performance management systems and regulations. The managing full professors and the dean take the crucial decisions on labelling and enabling talents. This gives them the opportunity to adjust the talent definition to their department's needs and preferences.

The tension between the role of HR and line management is not unique for the academic context. What is unique for the context of academia is the involvement of external stakeholders in talent identification and selection. As we have pointed out before, the external stakeholder NWO has a significant

and increasing impact as well, since personal research grants are seen as a crucial criterion in selection procedures and performance appraisals (Van Arensbergen *et al.*, 2014a). Heiligers and Van der Steen (2008) already posed in 2008 that the funding programs for individual academics were effective, but also could reduce the institutes own responsibility to develop a career policy. This warning seems to be justified. So, even though the universities are (as an employer) responsible for the attraction and retention of their talented academics, the actual identification and selection of talent is often not in the hands of the academic organization but of an external organization such as NWO (Van Arensbergen, 2014; Van Balen & Van den Besselaar, 2007).

### *Homogeneity versus Diversity?*

The elite academics involved in the recruitment and selection of new staff not only have the power to decide who is excellent, but also to make explicit claims about their own definition of excellence and knowledge of the talent pool (Herschberg *et al.*, 2018; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012). Any talent not seen or recognized by them is therefore not considered excellent. These judgments concerning excellence are made by academics who are already eminent, and those at the top of the various informal scientific hierarchies exercise considerable power over the standards that govern their fields.

Candidates who wish to advance their careers and produce results accepted as significant contributions to knowledge must comply with the standards set by these leaders (Gregory, 2009; Holgersson, 2013). Elite academics often select candidates congruent with their own personal and scientific preferences (Van Arensbergen *et al.*, 2014a; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012). The wish to “clone” (Essed, 2004) oneself is understandable, and has some merit, but risks the exclusion of dissimilar people, often women and ethnic minorities. This might not serve the long-term interests of science as diverse perspectives can add value to the scientific endeavor. The person selected is not necessarily the best or creative academic, but rather the most suitable or the one most similar to the recruiters. It seems questionable whether “more of the same” advances creative and innovative science.

### *How to Differentiate between Similar Talents?*

Within the university departments, academic managers struggle with the question of how to take care of the talents in the “gray area”. They can easily identify the top talents and the absolute non-talents, both relatively small groups, but what about the group in the middle? They might have qualities that do not directly qualify them individually as talent, but which are valuable for a research group. Is it therefore worth investing in the employees in the gray-area, who may not excel on the traditional criteria? The question arises whether a differentiated approach towards talent is required, such as an inclusive, strength-based approach for optimal development of academics within this gray-area to enable them to enhance their specific strengths so they can differentiate themselves from other academics, and an exclusive approach for retaining and developing the positive outliers.

The grant panel members also struggle with the dilemma of the gray area, comprising the majority of the applicants of about equal average quality. These applicants may vary on which aspects they excel in and to what extent, resulting in minimal differences in their average quality around the cutoff point (the point above which the candidates will be given grants and under which they are rejected). Therefore, the review panels spend most of their time discussing the applicants around the cutoff point (Van Arensbergen *et al.*, 2014a). Panel members are very aware of the potential consequences of their decisions, because a rejection can mean the end of the applicant’s scientific career. At the same time, they indicate that they are aware of the subjectivity of their decisions, inherent to any process of group decision making (Van Arensbergen, Van der Weijden, & Van den Besselaar, 2014b).



### *Transparency Versus Autonomy?*

This dilemma involves the desire to control and objectify recruitment and development versus the strong desire for academic freedom. The section on TM in Dutch academia reveals that academic TM (in particular recruitment, selection, and promotion) is realized in a rather amateur and ad hoc manner. HRM managers have formulated protocols and rules for academic recruitment and selection that provide steps and guidelines for the decision makers and committee members involved. However, the implementation of these protocols seems to be a different matter (Van den Brink et al., 2010). At all stages of the selection process (and with every time a decision is made about continuing a contract) there are actions that go against the regulations for transparency. The various academics in the process have their own agendas, which interfere with the goal of increasing the openness and formalization of procedures.

We detect a difference between HR managers who stress the importance of a more professionalized approach, and the academics who are critical or even cynical about the policies concerning transparency and performance indicators and tend to dismiss them as time-consuming bureaucracy and a violation of their academic freedom (Van den Brink, et al., 2010). They maintain that these HRM policies curtail their professional expertise and that the need for more “accountability” restricts their freedom to select the best candidates on an academic basis.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

With their focus on excellence, the university is a breeding ground for talent. However, with the rise of the entrepreneurial university, the universities have adopted a “hard” approach to managing and mobilizing their academic staff, in which they accentuate individual performance and production. With this exclusive TM approach, the organization’s interests are well served, but the well-being of the talents is undermined. Although the representatives of the organization think their TM approach policy is effective, the question still remains whether their TM approach is indeed effective, but most of all, desirable and ethical.

The studies in this chapter showed the institutes’ TM system shows little care for the intrinsic motives of the academics to excel in their work. The universities attempt to motivate their employees in an extrinsic way. The possibility of pursuing an academic career after obtaining tenure is used as a “carrot” to reward academics, while performance agreements are used to pressure academics to be productive (the “stick”). The ones who do not meet the performance agreements do not get tenure, or are reprimanded in another way, (e.g., by reducing their research time). This approach is incompatible with the self-propelling power that is so characteristic for most academics. Many Dutch academics and students have protested against these developments and wonder whether the efficiency and flexibility lead to decreasing quality in research and education (e.g., De Jonge Akademie, 2011).

According to these stakeholders the current academic approach creates productive but non-committed scholars and leaves little room for diversity, which can be a risk for the academic organization in the long run. Recently, Dutch universities acknowledge these issues and a change towards more appreciation for education and societal impact has started (VSNU, 2018).

The data discussed in this chapter are based on research conducted in the Netherlands, but other studies on HRM, TM, and academic careers in HE in, for example, France, the United Kingdom, or Japan, show similar results. A comparative study by Buchholz et al. (2009) indicates that way American universities manage and employ their academic staff (with its tenure track system and its emphasis on individual excellence and performance) is copied as a good example by many universities in other countries, including the Netherlands. Nonetheless, we recommend more in-depth empirical research on academic TM in other countries, in which the specific institutional context of that country (cf. Deem, 2001) is taken into account.

The present study showed that the success of a TM policy is probably more dependent on the actors involved in the implementation of TM than on the (consistent and strategically linked) TM policy. Within Dutch academia, this particularly refers to the full professors who manage their own team of researchers and teachers. Most research on the role of the managing professor is conducted from the perspective of his or her subordinates (e.g., Van Balen, 2010). The perspective of the academic manager themselves needs further exploration in empirical research.

Finally, the hard, exclusive approach to TM probably does not harmonize with the corporate social responsibilities and tasks of the Dutch public university. It is remarkable that the Dutch universities do so little to invest in the development of the largest portion of their workforce (i.e., their temporary staff). To increase their chances in the external labor market, they should develop more skills and competencies than the purely academic skills. We argue that, as a public sector organization, a university needs to apply a TM policy that looks beyond the boundaries of the organization. It is necessary to focus explicitly on the outflow of talented young academics who are not permanently appointed. Although there is a lot of research on careers inside academia, there is limited information about the career possibilities for academics outside academia. This needs further empirical exploration.

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