International Academic Labour Market for Political Science Scholars

Veselina Lyubomirova [1], Aleksandar Dimitrov [1]

[1] *University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria*

Abstract **- The international academic labour market is in rapid development. This trend brings two questions. First, are political scientists in the international academic employers' focus of interest? Second: What kind of portfolio, requirements, and tasks are expected from them? To answer, the authors conducted empirical research on the academic job offer market in search of positions in the political science field. The authors reviewed 128 political science academic positions sourced from international online job postings. The empirical data is collected between January 2021 and June 2022 for job positions starting in the 2021-2022 or 2022-2023 academic year. The article outlines the profile of the political scientists welcomed and expected in the international academic labour market with its research, teaching, projects, collaboration, and further capacity. The findings can serve as a comprehensive guide to the evolution and progress of political science globally and in Europe for many years to come.**

Keywords **- Academic labour market, academic career, academic jobs, political science.**

DOI: 10.18421/TEM144-45
https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM144-45

Corresponding author: Veselina Lyubomirova,
University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria
Email: veselina@unwe.bg

Received: 10 February 2025.
Revised: 19 September 2025.
Accepted: 03 October 2025.
Published: 27 November 2025.

© 2025 Veselina Lyubomirova & Aleksandar Dimitrov; published by UIKTEN. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 License.

The article is published with Open Access at https://www.temjournal.com/

1. Introduction

The international academic labour market is rare as a specific research focus. Mainly, it is analysed as a part of the national academic labour markets. Several tendencies are significant regarding international academic labour market development. First, there is a virtual job market for academics through different platforms. Such channels are research social networks. Other important recruitment spaces are the websites of international scientific organisations. They have their own online job sections for spreading employment opportunities from and among their members.

The international academic labour market is more unified than the national ones, especially in Europe. The international requirements are highly standardised. One of the reasons is the growing internationalisation of universities. Different universities have published guidebooks for their young PhD holders with the essential steps to achieve international employment in the academic labour market [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. However, none of these guides are focused on a specific field of study. One of the most systematic articles about academic careers identified publications on the topic between 1981 and 2018 and sorted several leading factors from them: individual career development based on personal abilities and resources; contextual factors such as mentoring, career development programs, academic field and disciplines, work conditions, national culture; regulations; career stages; work and non-work behaviour [6].

The transformation in the academic sector in Europe is successfully described as a transition of "academic activities into academic work, while academics become wage-earner professionals" [7]. One frequently analysed issue in the academic labour market is gender's impact on academic career progress and mobility. As expected, the change of countries for academic employment is still easier for male academic employees or both sexes but when unmarried and without children [8].

The academic transformation has been thoroughly analysed in two European projects conducted independently within the last 15 years. The first compares normative framework and salaries for employing academic lecturers/researchers in Europe [9]. The second one is more recent and compares the working conditions and work requirements in different EU member states based on interviews with researchers in eight countries [10]. It is important to note that the earlier research analysis shows signs of change in the academic labour market. The authors conclude that the academic profession is moving from government to business-style organisation, management, and recruitment approaches [11].

The current research is focused on the political science field and the international employment for academics with this profile. The article aims to identify university interests' dynamic and territorial spread to political scientists. The main task of the research team is to structure the profile of expected qualifications and duties for newly employed academics in the field. The analysis proceeds from the assumption that a standardised profile of political scientists qualified for employment abroad already exists in the international academic labour market. The research tasks of the article are to identify the profile of a lecturer/researcher in the field of political science with the most competitive qualities; to outline the preferred thematic fields for hiring new scholars; to provide a territorial scope of the employer's interest in the field; to outline the wages for the job of political scientist in the academic realm. The research focuses on political scientists (assistant and junior professors) before habilitation. The results are based on empirical data collected between January 2021 and June 2022. The included job offers were with expected employment start for the academic year 2021-2022 or 2022-2023.

2. Literature Review

This section surveys the existing scholarly landscape that forms the foundation for this study. It examines key themes relevant to the transformation of academic careers, establishing the theoretical framework and identifying the research gap this paper aims to address.

2.1. The Changing Academic Profession

The academic profession and labour market have been research objects since the 40th years of the XX century. However, in the last 20 years, the topic has already a new direction – the international academic labour market. Some researchers underline the changed role of professors at universities due to the new management practices of all academic institutions.

Since the eighties of the XX century, academic institutions have faced educational instrumentalism due to globalisation, massification, and marketisation.

The academic results' measurable efficiency is a core university financing and management issue. The pressure for scientific activity and research productivity has increased in universities over the past 30 years, impacting payment formation considerably [12]. Work conditions and the importance of department support for the required research performance have also been discussed in recent years. Different authors underline the dependence of departments' research resources on "the ability to conduct research activity and demonstrate impact" [13]. They focus their attention on the growing accountability of academic performance "due to the use of public funds to support research" [13]. In the last three decades, academic work has evolved to a certain level where it is expected to coexist five academic roles – teaching, research, administrative tasks, and management responsibilities together with writing and dissemination of scientific results, binding of new project partnerships, etc. [14].

Evidently, the most significant change has been an increase in society's expectations of the university profession. At the beginning of the XX century, academic scholars and researchers had more scientific autonomy to choose topics based on their interests and work on them. Currently, social scientists are expected to have a regular impact on societal and institutional problems [15]. Nowadays, the new public management approach dominates universities with the rules for academic work dependable on expenses, productivity, and quantifiable results. This management principle deepened after the financial crisis of 2008 [16].

Analysis of the academic labour market in Great Britain and the USA between the 50s and the end of the 90s of the XX century, shows evidence that the university sector's remarkable transformation is in its more market-oriented management [11]. Nowadays, the professor has more pragmatic obligations related to the number of publications (measured yearly) in specific journals, regular financial grants, and project securing. Different research follows this process with national qualitative analysis of scholars performed by Scopus publications, citations, and the prestige of journals [17], [18]. Such constant pressure is a standard part of an academic career, and it becomes even more demanding with the attainment of a professorship. This situation is often explained as a result of the new public management in the universities. As [17] pointed "the academic enterprise is based on publication, their impact and individual publishing productivity", for a unit of time and publications are evaluated research for promotion, tenure, funding, etc.

Empirical research among Swedish universities concludes that competitiveness is the leading principle among academic staff. Regardless, this principle leads to unavoidable conflict in the equilibrium between teaching and research work. Academic employees with fewer teaching hours turned out to be more successful in the research results expected from them. This contradiction seriously conflicts with university scholars' two primary academic roles (teaching and research) [19], [20]. On the other hand, the Swedish academic development is described as highly driven by international publications and the journal's prestige [21].

When combined with long career patterns and fixed-term contracts, the motivation for the future in scientific work does not seem attractive enough. Empirical research with 1710 respondents in the Czech Republic outlines that for assistant professors and academic staff before habilitation, the pressure for results is enormous and does not correspond to the payment [22]. Based on Island universities, [16] summarise the expected benefits of employing a university's academic capital. They search for academic employees with sufficient impact on the institution. Island university academics, for example, rate their payments as partially satisfying because of the profession's prestige and academic freedom. At the same time, the increase in academic housework (administrative tasks, supervision of students, etc.) is seen as demotivating.

Academic teachers and researchers internationally discuss more often that academic work hours can exceed 40 hours without proper regulation. Generally, the organisation of engagement with students, projects, and research is part of the university professor's autonomy. However, with the increased pressure for academic results and their financial and prestigious impact on the institution, academics feel overwhelmed.

2.2. Changes in the National Academic Labour Markets

Despite these changes, the national academic labour market is a place for attracting and developing young academic professionals [12]. Many researchers underline the difficulty in analysing and comparing national academic labour markets because of the many local specifics. Countries have their tradition in labour legislation, development of academia and universities, etc. This preposition affects the labour conditions and the administrative and legislative framework for each national academic labour market. On a national level, the academic career is possible primarily through in-house development – from PhD students to postdoc researchers, assistant professors, etc. The tradition differs by country, but general categorisation is possible.

In Scandinavian countries, international scholars strongly influence the national academic labour market because of the attractive salaries and conditions comparable with the highest international standards [23]. However, for the local researchers from these regions, choosing a career abroad is mainly a risk because they can permanently lose the opportunity to find a place in their country of origin. On the other hand, there is evidence that a lack of research and employment mobility can negatively affect a research performance. The same authors criticize domestic recruitment (the so-called “intellectual inbreeding”) as less productive in achieving academic excellence [21]. Their evidence is for Sweden, but the inbreeding approach is spread throughout South and East Europe. An interesting classification is given to access different national academic labour markets in South Europe [24]. According to this research, there are different types of national academic employment traditions. Countries like Spain, Italy, and France prefer in-house scientific development – step-by-step academic development in a single university or, if not possible, in more universities but at least in the country. Regulations for hiring foreign researchers for permanent academic positions are very restricted and limited for international candidates. For example, the PhD has to be from the country of the new employment or at least the candidate's education.

In Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, hiring foreign candidates is possible for fixed periods and is rare as permanent employment. This is because of the specific regulations in the sector for these countries. They use fixed-term contracts for most academic teachers and researchers before habilitation [22]. The academic labour market is open to foreign candidates in the Netherlands, UK, and Switzerland. East Europe is more like the South – closed for international researchers. Nevertheless, in the Balkan countries, the research impact from publications in internationally visible and recognised journals becomes leading criteria for academic performance evaluation [25], [26]. Finally, [24] concludes that, for now, there are insufficient factors to determine the existence of a European academic labour market. The differences on a national level are too many and depend on legislation, tradition, and policy transformations. However, according to the same author, the fixed contracts praxis increased in the last three decades compared to permanent academic employment.

Academic mobility in the EU, US, and Canada has increased as part of the Bologna process. This tendency is also seen in researchers who directly started their academic development internationally [27]. Most attention is given to the importance of smart defined academic (research and teaching) focus, career time management, as well as day-to-day task management in scholarly workflow, and development planning.

Some researchers also note the importance of incorporating and constructing one's academic network, alternatives, and time management in cases of an academic field change, time spent in a professional career outside academia, strategies for academic development and challenges in teaching work [22]. The institutional changes in academia affect the relationship between researchers and science. This is because of the transformed status of universities – from primarily teaching to mainly research-interested institutions.

A recent comparative study systematized differences between the more flexible Anglo-Saxon academic labour market and the more conservative European one regarding academic payment. The research shows that "while in Anglo-Saxon countries, the university research mission traditionally pays off at an individual level, in Europe, it pays off in combination with administrative and related duties" [28].

Teaching is still considered a crucial responsibility, but the evaluation of academics is mainly based on their research work. Personal research quantitative and qualitative results become essential indicators for performance [29]. At the same time, scientific works depend on the author's respectable online visibility and its additional impact on the institution [30].

Universities, as well as academics, are comparing on the prestige market. Personal prestige depends on the institution. With the maximisation of personal academic image, university scientists affect the presentation of the academic institution as a whole. The individual academic prestige follows to more articles and books with well-respected publishers, to more highly funded projects, awards, and grants, which lead to better financial and operational status of whole units (faculties, institutes, departments).

Nowadays, European national higher education systems are in the process of internationalisation and globalisation, especially after they started competing for resources and talents among students, teachers, and researchers and generating their best minds and professionals. This extended campaign for quality tasks in front of Europe is mainly to avoid remaining behind the US and Asian states in having the best researchers of the time.

In this transforming reality, young researchers' most respected academic qualities are the experience and capacity to publish in the most impactful journals, to have educational, postdoc, grant, project, and conference experience from leading universities, and to behave as prominent scientists.

The last one is measured by the conferences and sessions taking part in, journals chosen for former publications, a topic from citation relevance, and well-managed presence in academic social networks, working groups, and associations. Underlined is even the importance of mobility from the periphery to the centre.

This is the case when scientists from less prestigious universities feel pressure to gain experience in the most important academic centres in their field to upgrade and verify their professional prestige and capacity [8].

Academic career management is a professional deployment process in research, teaching, and administrative work at universities and other educational institutions. Academic careers involve academically prepared scholars – PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, university teachers, and professors on different levels. All of them can be employed for a semester, for a fixed term of one, two, three, four, six, or nine years, but also on permanent contracts. The academic workers are highly specialised in their research and teaching area. They can also be engaged with different roles in their work – only research, research and teaching, plus administrative positions, etc. Academic workers in all stages have respect for science, motivation, and a desire to develop it.

The Bologna process affects these markets by making higher education more accessible, including the PhD education and development. With the increased number of students and especially with the affordable opportunity for international education, the number of international lecturers is also growing [12]. These conditions require more precise and ambitious criteria for academic employment. The result is a dual labour market – academics with habilitation have most often permanent contracts, and younger researchers and university teachers are on fixed-term employment.

In most of the related research is used the following classification: "young scientists" (including PhD students and postdoctoral researchers), middle ranking (assistant professors and junior professors), and senior academic staff, usually after habilitation (associate and full professors), [12] noted that between 2004 and 2009, the European Science Foundation, European Research Universities, and the European Commission started initiatives to create a roadmap for the career development of academic work in Europe. This marks the beginning of standardising the international academic labour market. The goal was to make academic careers more attractive, provide comparable conditions for researchers, and establish a European standard for academic portfolios used in job applications. However, many issues need to be addressed in internationalising the academic career.

For example, long transfers to universities abroad are preferred, but when there is a proposed opportunity for the spouse/partner. In other cases, researchers prefer up to one year stays when they have families at home. Most fixed-term contracts are for at least three years and rarely offer opportunities for a year or so.

2.3. Internationalisation of the Political Science Academic Employment

The research composition begins by discussing the evolving nature of the academic profession and the standards for university careers. In the theoretical part, attention is given to this process. At the same time, discussion about how this affects political science scholars has been open for ten or more years. "Just like other scientists, political scientists are expected increasingly to meet publication targets, be cited, secure grants, have a social impact, and so on. All these objectives are incorporated in different evaluation schemes, although to different degrees according to national contexts. This goes hand in hand with the scarcity of resources available to political scientists, which also differ in different contexts. Little is known about how these affect political scientists and political science. The general process of the rise of new public management mechanisms in higher education has been documented, but there are only a few studies that deal specifically with the case of political science" [31].

The cited systematisation of the changing professional expectations of political science scholars is the essence of the developing nature of the academic career. The observation made by Boncourt as an International Political Science keynote speaker was also a reflection of earlier conclusions by [32]. His article underlines several critical markers of the transformed academic employment, focusing on how these affect political science scholars. He stressed that:

"The global financial crisis has acted as something of a 'game-changer' in the sense that academics and universities are now under far more public pressure to account for the money they receive from the public (in either fees or grants)" [32].

- "Publicly funded scholars are increasingly expected to demonstrate the social value and relevance of their work" [32].
- "The need to cultivate public, practitioner, media or any other form of non-academic interest". [32].
- "The changing role and influence of public intellectuals; and what universities are actually for in the 21st century" [32].

Irrespective of the field of studies, we have learned to think that "famous researcher with lots of citations" is the dream job description, role model or career goal as members of this club, even if some of us might admit, reluctantly and rarely in public, that we rather prefer teaching or satisfying our scientific curiosities in a less stressful manner, especially without the need to constantly produce new texts [33].

She argues that all roles of the academic profession are essential in an academic career.

The political science field can stay unaffected by the described transformation. Different professional platforms regularly publish international offers for fixed and permanent employment. All job offers start with a detailed description of the host university and its advantages. Several studies, new programs, distinguished professors, and projects are mentioned. Declared is the potential of the department and faculty. Sometimes, the whole unit is relatively new and is searching for almost all its future staff. Most job offers have similarities, leading to the assumption of the existing international profile of academic political scientists.

3. Methodology

Despite these new formation lines of the academic labour market and especially those for political science scholars, a critical number of different empirical evidence from the political science field is still an open issue in the debate. To address these concerns, the authors conducted an empirical analysis of job offers especially in the political science field. Earlier research on academic salaries and satisfaction is cited and commented on above. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no empirical research has been conducted on job offers for political science scholars, as well as based on academic job offers in general.

In this regard, the article's methodology responds to its primary goal: to identify the profile of the political science scholars (academic teachers and researchers) expected from employers in the international academic labour market. The empirical research is based on the international job offers in the political science field published on four virtual platforms. The retrieved information is from the job vacancies section of:

- The International Political Science Association and the European Consortium for Political Research as scientific community platforms for political scientists worldwide.
- The Regional Studies Association and the European Regional Science Association as an interdisciplinary space for researchers focused on regional science but with researchers from different profiles, including political science.
- Research Gate as a social network for scientists from all disciplines with a job section that can be filtered by academic field.

The four used members' organisations are international, with individual and corporate/department membership or working as umbrella associations for national scientific organisations.

As support and social engagement to the members, they republished job offers initially announced by the members on their university websites. As a result, these international organisations' specific and highly profiled audience is used as an employee pool for the most interested and qualified political scientists. The job offers are detailed and complete information about the proposed opportunity and are directly linked to the original source (institute, department, university).

The additionally used source, the ResearchGate platform, is included because it is recognised by the international scientific community and broadly used.

In the period January 2021 – June 2022, job offers are collected from the virtual platforms and sorted according to three criteria:

- In the political science field,
- Academic employment before habilitation includes assistant professors' positions, junior professorships, and assistant professor positions with habilitation opportunities,
- Positions with labour contracts (fixed or permanent)

The job offers collection is not limited by countries or continents. Included are short-term academic employments (one–to two years), midterm offers (three–to four years), four-year fixed contracts with three-year extension options, six years of job positions with an opportunity for habilitation after the fourth year and resignation for new four years or permanent. Direct permanent employment is also part of the data. Scholarship and project-related employment is not included. The target was not to encompass all published job offers in the observed period. However, the idea was to include at least 100 job offers annually. The analysed data is retrieved from all possible continents with universities, including 91 universities with 105 job offers for 128 academic positions.

The goal was to follow empirically the game-changer situation for political science scholars in the international academic labour market. The data helped the construction of the authors' hypothesis that there is a specific, highly standardised set of requirements for political science scholars employed through international academic job offers. It is tested whether political science scholars are competitive in the international academic labour market as teachers, successful project managers, and grant recipients with a good publicity profile that includes media or similar political practitioner experience.

4. Results

The analysis of the collected data yields clear findings regarding the standardisation of requirements in international job offers. This section presents the empirical results in a structured manner, providing a factual account of the key patterns, data and statistics observed.

The data shows that 57 of the employers are public state universities, 22 are private, six are international (public-private), and 6 are regional (Figure 1). Most of the positions are offered in Europe (50) as well as the US (20). There are also 15 results from Asia and one to three from Africa, Latin America, and Australia (Figure 2). Most of the universities are in Europe, probably because the associations are European and Anglo-Saxon-centred in their work. Conversely, in Research Gate, suggestions are given based on the location of the interested scholars – in the presented case – again in Europe. These preliminary results (Figure 1 and Figure 2) supported the author's presumption that the international academic labour market is growing rapidly and, in its dynamic, political science has its place. Through content analysis of job offers, information regarding the most sought-after subfields and cross-fields in political science is gathered and quantified. The findings also include the expected scientific expertise, potential publication results of the new employee, as well as the evaluated future social, financial, and publicity impact of the new colleague. Additionally, the required qualifications and documents necessary for the job are identified.

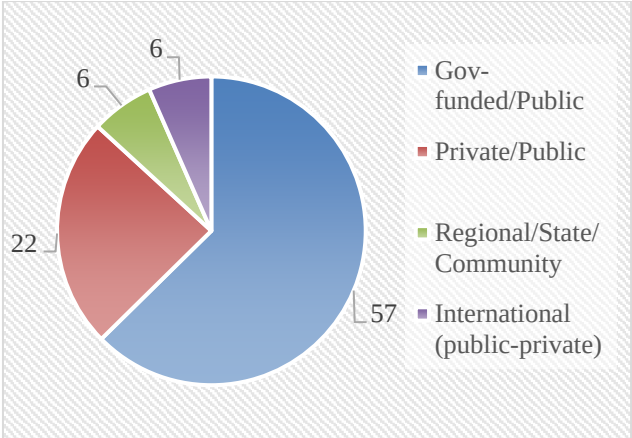

Figure 1. Number of job offers by university - type from the analysed academic employment offering in the political science field

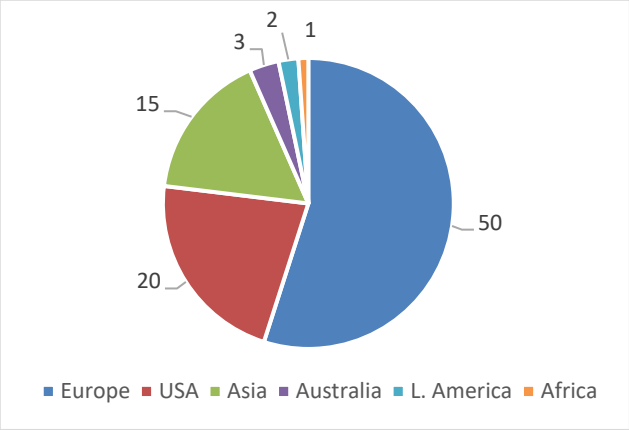

Figure 2. Number of the analysed university employers in the political science field by continent

This result does not mean the international academic labour market for political and social scientists is dominantly in Europe. However, this explains why most job offers are from state and public universities. More generally, the qualitative information about the territorial spread of academic job offers reveals that this tendency is growing internationally. It is important to note that public universities are part of the academic labour market globally.

The research reveals significant interest to political scientists. The research team collected 97 specific job offers during the monitored period (Figure 3). Only 27 are generally interested in political science academics. In 20, the employee focus is on international relations specialists. Six job offers are in comparative politics. Five samples are for public policy and governance.

Other mentioned subfields are the political economy (3 job offers), religion and gender (4), political history (3), and European studies (3). All searched profiles mentioned here are for teaching or teaching and research positions. Out of 97 political science job offers 26 positions are exclusively for research, without teaching and administrative obligations. The analysis outlines other job offers with interest to political scientists. Some samples from the broad social science field include political science profiles as eligible for their search. There are 31 such offers, and their requirements are the same as in the specific political science job offers. Political science candidates are allowed based on the interdisciplinary nature of the respective position. The requested specialisation is broader and includes sociology, philosophy, security studies, social geography, sustainable development and digitalisation. Whatever the sub- or cross-field in the 31 job offers is, political scientists are respected, eligible and expected candidates.

The conclusion based on Figure 3, is that more job positions are for teaching or teaching and research and less only for researchers. This means the research positions are mainly part of project contracts and scholarships. For jobs contracted in academic departments, most of the positions include teaching. Also, in most of them, a candidate with a PhD in political science is requested. The research team acknowledge that political science researchers are eligible in other social science contests. However, the analysis only considers only procedures in the subfields of political science that are expected to be filled primarily by political scientists.

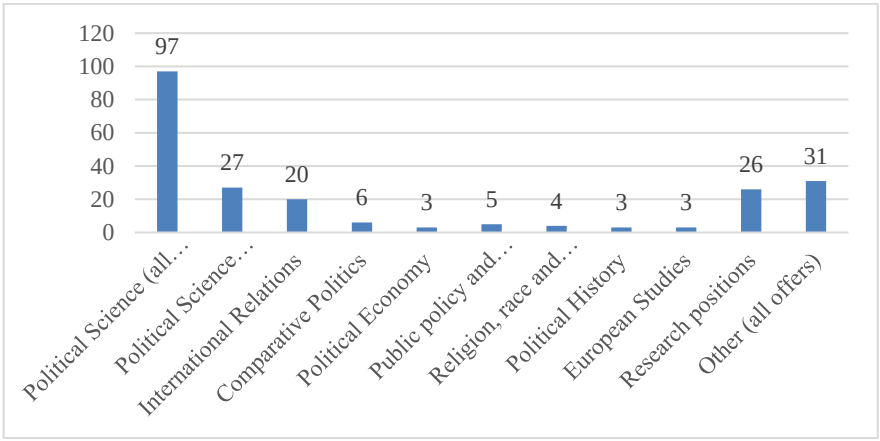

Figure 3. Requested field of study in the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

The interested candidates must fulfil a standardised set of criteria. In Figure 4, ordered by frequency, the requirements included in the analysed job offers are systematised.

A curriculum vitae is expected when applying for any job, including academia. Some universities have instructions about academic CVs.

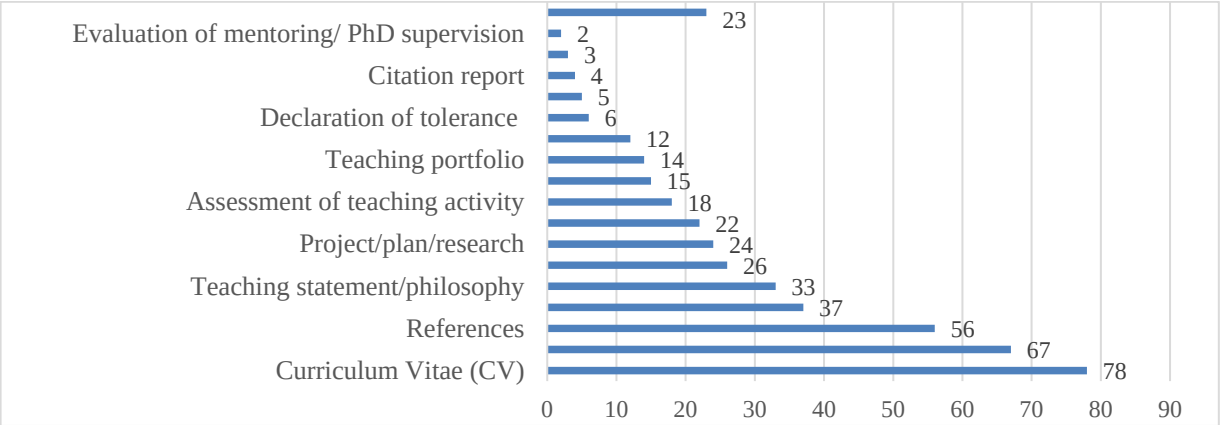

Figure 4. Requirements expected from candidates before habilitation based on the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

Usually, specific focus is given to particular experiences and skills such as teaching (including information about courses, disciplines, hours of teaching experience, and educational level of the students). With similar importance are also treated research projects and other external funding.

A specific category pertains to scholarships, academic awards, and postdoctoral programs. An academic CV also includes a list of publications relevant to the position's thematics and other prestigious research papers, chapters and, if applicable, books. The list is accompanied by links to the candidates' academic social network profiles, where the publication and citation status of the candidates are also part of the self-presentation.

Most contests require a motivation letter without significant differences from the same attribute in other sectors. More specifically, there is no motivation letter in most of the national and in-house contests in the sector. Other rare but specific requirements are the expected recommendations from two academics. There is no written instruction about the academic level or nationality of the referees. However, reference contacts or even full letters are expected from professors in the same field. One of them can be the candidate's former PhD supervisor, and it is better when the other referee is not from the candidate's home university but is a distinguished foreign colleague from a postdoc program or other respectful contact.

Whatever the explicit documents in the offer are, each international academic job content in political science is expected to provide information in similar categories. In some content, part of the candidate's professional bio has to be sent in a specific format and others with the CV. In other contests, all information is mentioned but can be systematised in the candidate's bio. Despite the cases' technical form, most employees are interested and evaluate four clusters of information.

- Most relevant and representative publication. (This usually means high-indexed publications, impact factor articles, studies and chapters from respected academic publishers, internationally, and high-indexed citified works). Some employees prefer a more extended list of publications than the most relevant and representative. In this case, the most common practice is for the publications to be ordered by year and in the following order: books, chapters, articles, and reports.
- A research statement: Include the candidate's research intention for the new position. (For example, planned topics, approaches and methods, collaborations, conferences, projects, and goals, including book preparation and/or habilitation). A separate attachment is a research plan, especially in fixed-term contracts.
- A teaching statement: (Part of it is the candidate's teaching methods, principles, standards, and approaches. Here can be included the declaration for tolerance, which in some contests is a separate requirement). Some employees even require attaching former teaching evaluations (if available). Another attached document is sometimes a complete teaching portfolio in front of bachelor's and master's students and co-supervision or consultations of PhD students (if applicable). The teaching portfolio includes the title of disciplines, the period of the engagement, and possibly even the given academic hours.
- In many job postings, applicants must submit copies of their diplomas at the start of the application process. Generally, here is applied PhD documentation, postgraduate academic teaching certificates, qualification proofs about specific research software, and language knowledge evidence. The PhD diploma is also used to prove the academic age of the candidate. For example, is he/she in the postdoc period or shortly after that stage? The job offers here are for assistant professors and relevant positions before habilitation.

Most of them expect candidates after a postdoc level of experience. Usually, the teaching certificates are not an obligation but a plus for the candidates. It is worth mentioning that teaching positions are often based on scientific achievements in academia, which poses a problem. The pedagogical part is often underestimated in university education and teaching. In the international academic labour market, candidates with teaching expertise are identified based on experience and qualification.

In all international academic job offers, at least in the first year, the working language is English, including for teaching. Some universities require C1 certificates based on European standards, but most allow a stated level written in the CV. The candidates are expected to learn and teach the local language after a year or two, but not as a primary requirement.

Some job offers also expect additional information such as received academic grants and achieved specialisations, citation reports, academic awards and other documented achievements. Commonly, the job offers do not explicitly list the required documents. In these cases, it can be concluded that the same list is accepted and appropriate.

Based on such applications, the candidates are evaluated first by documents, afterwards via online interview and finally by the hiring university. Usually, the position contest is open for applications for about a month and a half (Table 1). Despite the term in which the contest is open, employment typically starts in the upcoming academic year. The whole employment process takes approximately three to six months.

Table 1. Time for applications of the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

Less than a month	14
1 month	34
2 months	35
More than 2 months	9
As the perfect candidate is found	13
Average length	1,5 months

In the field of political science, academic contracts are primarily full-time permanent contracts (Table 2). There is an open position for part-time academic employment. Often, full-time fixed contracts are available for 3 to 4 years with one option for a second period of the same length.

Table 2. Length of proposed employment of the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

Full-time	**F**ull-time (tenure-track)	**P**arttime
66	34	5

Common in the sector is the employee searching for a candidate firstly for a full-time tenure position (fixed for a period of three to four years and offering a full-time contract after habilitation).

Some of the positions have two tenure parts. They are announced as follows – full-time tenure position for four years, habilitation option and two-year extensions after it, followed by attestation and a new three-year full-time tenure position. The formula 4 + 2 + 3 ends with a full-time permanent contract. These job offers are primarily for teaching and research and include full engagement with the department/institute/faculty and university. However, there are also positions only for teaching for short periods of one academic year, mainly when the corresponding professor has another engagement and is searching for someone for the discipline. At the same time, research positions as part of a project team are expected for PhD students, especially postdocs, but not for academic staff with more than a postdoc experience. The results show that political scientists are searched on the international academic labour market for positions including both teaching and research. The employment requires teaching primarily in English and partly in another language after the beginning. This means, firstly, a sufficient number of courses in English as well as students in these disciplines.

Academic pedagogy certificates or other qualifications related to proactive and high-quality academic methods, particularly with students, are additional advantages for hiring a prospective candidate.

All job offers are related to subtopics within the general theme of political science (specified in the contest). Appropriate publications help prove relevance to the general topic. This is rarely possible about topics or issues related to national political specifics. However, such job offers are not the dominant trend. Most of the described profiles in the postings relate to classical political science topics.

What are universities expecting from new political science assistant professors on board? As it was already clarified, most new employees must be engaged with teaching, research, and consultations of different level students (bachelor and master). It is often announced that this should be 36-38 hours a week with fixed teaching.

One of the most mentioned requirements for the future employee is enrolment in research projects, scientific partnerships, and collaborations for project applications and publications (Figure 5). It is better when the candidate's CV can provide experience in that field. Typical for the job offers is to expect a research plan, as it was underlined earlier in the article.

Some applications must provide evidence or reason-based declaration for their upcoming engaged contribution to the department's research work. Job offers without specifications about the research engagement are not rare, but generally, the same rules and expectations are applicable in such cases.

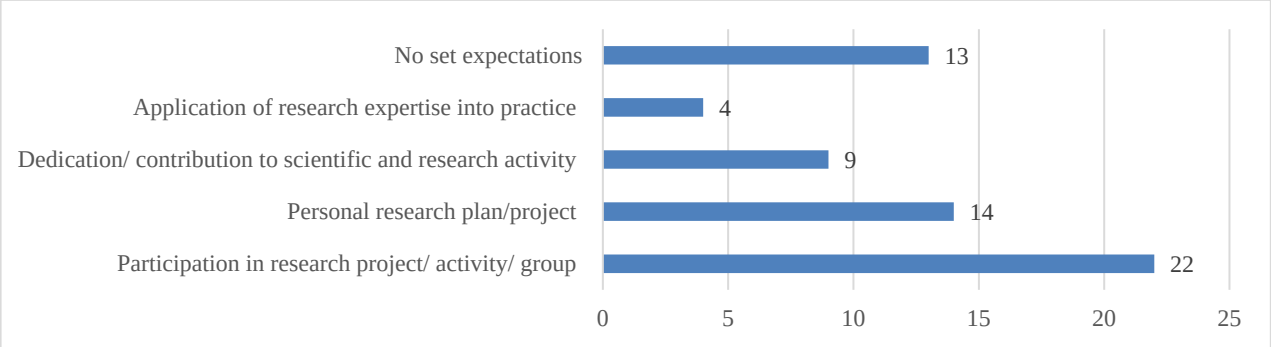

Figure 5. Expectations of the new employee stated in the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

All specific requirements related to research must be met for publications, projects, grants, and professional networks to have an impact as presented in Figure 6 and Figure 7, 48% of the analysed job offers expected the candidate to demonstrate potential for quantity and quality of future publications with the provided publication plan (19% of the research postings) and/or proven capacity for achieving high indexed publications (33% of the job applications explicitly underline this condition).

It was interesting to see that all job offers start with teaching engagement but generally demand less concrete proof of teaching capacity and quality than the research capacity criteria. On the one hand, they are searching for experienced lecturers. They often have to provide a list of former and ongoing courses, attestation and even certificates for academic pedagogical skills. However, these conditions are less precise and formalised than the research capacity category of qualities and experience.

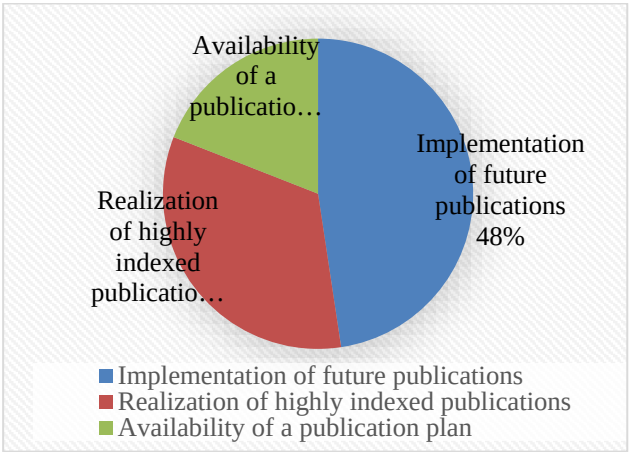

Figure 6. Requirements for publication intentions, activity, and portfolio in the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

Regarding the job offers for assistant professors, it is rare for the candidates to be responsible for projects and co-funding from corporate partners. Still, some academic employers include such possible advantages in the desired profile of the candidates. Out of 128 job offers, 24 have a bonus for assistant professors with a strong international professional network. This means some of the following: finished international projects, active membership in scientific and professional organisations (nationally and abroad), co-authorships with colleagues from other universities and countries, participation and moderation of international congress and conference sessions, visiting summer and method schools, short and long term period scholarships and visiting lecturing or research, enlistment in the editorial board of academic journals in the field.

Although these bonus criteria are usually mentioned as optional in job postings, 16 job offers make new grants and project achievements a part of the employee's work obligations. In 13 contests, project development is specifically expected. Nine employers prefer assistant professors with experience in project writing, funding, and partnership collaborations. Seven universities expect the new researchers to disseminate science results effectively. Only in 2 job offers are expected assistant professors to have managerial roles in research projects. Nevertheless, in a large number of a job offers, there is no specific social impact and funding requirements (53 job contests). However, most of them will be a bonus or even a hidden condition to prove some of the experience from Figure 7.

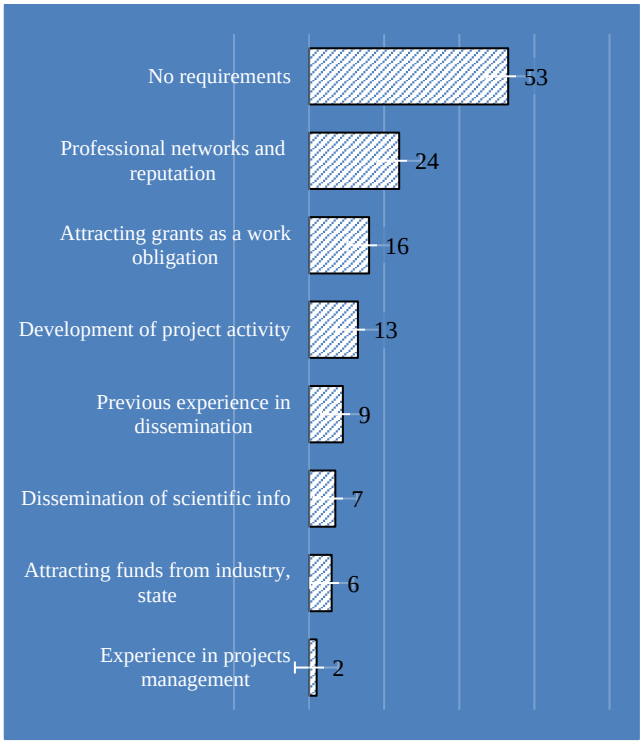

Figure 7. Expected social impact from the future employee based on the analysed job offers for academic employment in the political science field

The expected professional performance comes with the opportunity of realisation in a high-ranked university with a respected international image and reputation, with high-performing colleagues and supported by a significant university budget for science. The job offers information about a working week of approximately 35-38 hours per week, but with flexible use. They announce personal yearly budgets for research performers (conference and publications costs). Among the mentioned is paid leave and sometimes bonuses (often 8%) twice a year. More importantly, almost all international academic job offers announce the payment for the proposed position. Table 3 shows the systematised minimum and maximum wage per month and yearly amount. One specific point must be noted: Germany is given two annual average values. Germany 1 reflects the significant number of positions with very high salaries (from only one institution) within the salary range. Germany 2 reflects a simple average, ignoring the proportional weight of high-salary positions.

As can be seen, there is a significant difference, monthly and annually, between EU countries. The range between the lowest in Slovakia and the following EU country (Spain) reaches approximately fourteen thousand euros and 42 thousand euros, respectively, compared to Germany on an annual basis. Such disproportions, but on a smaller scale, are evident in the UK, where the difference between London and other regions of the country is almost 20000 euros.

Table 3. Wages in the collected job offers by country

	Country	Annual average/ euro	Range of salaries/ monthly
European union			Min. - Max.
	Spain (Barcelona)	36 600	2900 - 3200
	Austria	56 400	4500 - 5000
	Germany 1	64 560	3500 - 8000
	Germany 2	57 120	3500 - 8000
	Belgium	46 800	2100 - 5500
	Portugal (Lisbon)	42 000	3500 - 3500
	The Netherlands	59 640	3700 - 6900
	Denmark	63 240	4400 - 5700
	Slovakia	22 800	1900 - 1900
	Italy	38 400	3200 - 3200
Europe			
	UK (London)	64 680	4100 - 6200
	UK	46 200	3000 - 4600
	UK (Scotland)	47 160	3700 - 4400
	Russia (Moskow)	27 600	2300 - 2300
US			
	California	61 200	4900 - 5300
	New York	66 000	5500 - 5500
Asia			
	China	50 400	4200 - 4200
Australia			
	Sidney	78 000	5900 - 7100
	Melbourne	70 800	5900 - 5900

Figure 8 presents a better comparative picture by country. It illustrates numbers based specifically on the collected job offers for political science scholars. The varieties from lowest to highest payment depend on the experience (mainly academic work in years and teaching hours) and other criteria different by institution and related to employment tradition, collective bargaining agreements, etc.

The salary is primarily a function of the gross national salary and its average in the higher education sector. So, the min/max range in Slovakia and Russia is significantly lower than in Denmark, Germany or the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the inequality in the EU is evident, with differences of 200 to 2600 euros in the minimum salary and 1300 to 6100 euros in the maximum.

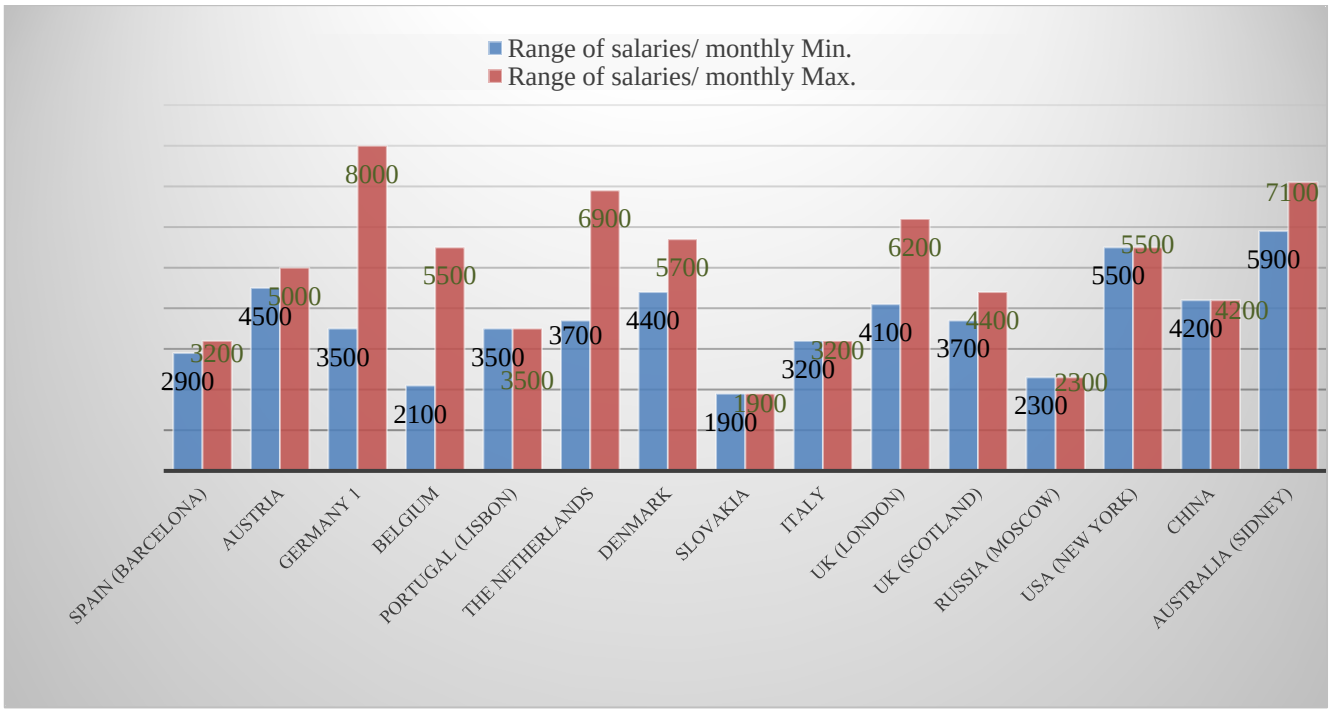

Figure 8. Comparison of monthly payment by country based on the collected job offers for academic employment in the political science field

As expected in the US, Australia, and even China, the salaries for international positions are highly competitive and are, without exception, higher than the overall average within the EU. There is no doubt that Europe has much to do concerning competitiveness and efforts to attract foreign researchers. The disparities between Europe and the rest of the world in the sample are noticeable. Still, further specifics favour EU universities.

In addition to their regular compensation, candidates are rewarded with social bonuses that are diverse but not dominant. These bonuses are an excellent way to recognise and encourage individuals' social contributions, significantly impacting morale and overall productivity. The benefits obtained from the offers can be classified into different types. Some are related to travel expenses to the home country once or twice a year and the departure to the new place of work. Travel costs are covered for conferences but sometimes also for the city transport network. The second significant cluster of possible benefits is health-related. This option depends on the national health system and social security regulations. In Europe, the new employees are included in the national health, pension, and social security plan. There are proposed dental plans and life and medical insurance in the US.

Interestingly, there are few working engagements during the adaptation period, cultural grants to explore the new city and country, language courses, and other educational costs. Universities with campuses propose housing and catering/meal options.

Most remarkable are opportunities with dual career propositions. The job offers are for one assistant professor, but if he/she has a family, it also includes job opportunities for the spouse. Universities declare both: engagement to search for a work position at the institution for the second researcher or, if it is not in the same sector, to support him/her in the job finding. Children of the researchers are provided with kindergartens. The family allowance for relocation to the new city is the most often additional support.

5. Discussion

Are there any specifics for the political science field in the described situation? The answer to this triggering article's question has two parts. First, as in any academic field, the quality standards for political science align with those in the social sciences in general, including academic career development. Second, the profile of today's young political scientists interested in international realisation includes several standard characteristics:

- Teaching experience in the home university.
- High-indexed publications on dynamic cited topics.
- Participation in international projects in academic consortiums with significant reputations and funding.
- Awards, grants, and other self-impactful academic achievements.
- Public practitioner profiles of political science scholars are rarely part of the international academic labour market requirements.

The precise analysis of this short list shows specifics for the political scientist's capacity, experience, and academic value and potential. Such diagnostics give preliminary assurance that the candidate can provide quality research for the new employer. The teaching quality is evaluated as a second important quality. Previous teaching engagement must be measured in the number and relevance of disciplines spent on academic hours and the degree level of the students. An interesting finding was the expected attestation and teaching evaluation documents from other universities. The most unexpected additional attribute is the position of pedagogical certificate for higher education. However, teaching remains the second valuable variable in candidate evaluation. This is particularly an issue for discussion because all analysed job offers were hybrid (for teaching and research). As in all other fields, in political science international academic talent search, the capacity to secure new funding is a great advantage.

6. Conclusion

The question about the academic market for political science researchers in Europe and beyond motivated this research. Surprisingly, the results revealed a growing number of handbooks with advices for academic employment and career development. The difference between national and international labour markets was expected, but only partially. Firstly, because every university is in a specific country. Generally, the academic labour market system depends on the national labour normative framework. Previous research mentioned above suggests a shift from a national to an international academic job market. The last one co-exists with the actively changing national academic labour markets. Secondly, on a national level, local systems tend to be more traditional and slower to change due to their well-known habits and regulations. The third conclusion was that the international academic labour market has mainly developed in the last 20 years and has been rapidly active in the last decade.

Online academic visibility plays a significant part in this process. All varieties of internet appearance and professional merits are part of evaluating this newly established market for scientists. Such attributes are profiles in academic and social platforms with high citation scores, projects with visible international collaborations, etc. Other platforms and official information pages with proof of academic excellence and achievements are a significant part of the evidence in international job contest applications. The findings indicate that this visibility and the components of quality behind it will also affect the university job contests on a national level. Finally, it is essential to underline that the standards of an international academic labour market have the potential to affect employment locally.

The collected and analysed information, leads to the conclusion that there is a specific highly standardised set of requirements for political scientists employed through international job offers that are not different from the requirements in other job offers in the social sciences realm internationally. Anyway, this profile is important for further research about the profession's development or for the same analysis with new data after 5, 10, and more years. The research team strongly believes that as a professional community, the political science society has an obligation to give attention to its development, challenges and the ongoing realisation tendencies in the field.

Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported by the UNWE Research Programme.

References:

[1]. Blaxter, L., Hughes, Ch. & Tight, M. (1998). *The academic career handbook*. Open University Press.
[2]. Colón Semenza, G. M. (2005). *Graduate study for the twenty-first century: How to build an academic career in the humanities*. Palgrave Macmillan.
[3]. Buller, J. L. (2009). *The essential college professor: A practical guide to an academic career*. John Wiley & Sons.
[4]. Wells, T. T., et al. (2013). The academic job market: Advice from the front lines. *The Behavior Therapist*, *36*(2), 39-45.
[5]. Hay, I. (2017). *How to be an Academic Superhero: Establishing and Sustaining a Successful Career in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (How to be an Academic Superhero series)*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
[6]. Zacher, H., et al. (2019). Academic career development: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *110*, 357-373. Doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2018.08.006.
[7]. Musselin, C. (2005). European academic labor markets in transition. *Higher Education*, *49*(1), 135-154.
[8]. Nikunen, M., & Lempiäinen, K. (2020). Gendered strategies of mobility and academic career. *Gender and Education*, *32*(4), 554-571. Doi: 10.1080/09540253.2018.1533917

[9]. European University Institute. (n.d.). *Academic Careers Observatory*. Max Weber Programme for Postdoctoral Studies. Retrieved from: https://www.eui.eu/en/academic-units/max-weber-programme-for-postdoctoral-studies/aco-academic-careers-observatory [accessed: 20 January 2025].

[10]. Fumasoli, T., Goastellec, G. & Kehm, B. (2015). *Academic Work and Careers in Europe: Trends, Challenges, Perspectives*. Springer. Doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-10720-2

[11]. Baruch, Y., & Hall, D. T. (2004). The academic career: a model for future careers in other sectors?. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *64*(2), 241-262.

[12]. Goastellec, G., et al. (2013). Academic Markets, Academic Careers: Where do we Stand?. *The Academic Profession in Europe: New Tasks and New Challenge*, 93–120. Springer.

[13]. Weinstein, N., et al. (2021). A conducive environment? The role of need support in the higher education workplace and its effect on academics' experiences of research assessment in the UK. *Higher education quarterly*, *75*(1), 146-160.

[14]. Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (1998). Writing on academic careers. *Studies in Higher Education*, *23*(3), 281-295. Doi: 10.1080/03075079812331380256

[15]. Lindholm, J. A. (2004). Pathways to the professoriate: The role of self, others, and environment in shaping academic career aspirations. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *75*(6), 603-635. Doi:10.1080/00221546.2004.11773579.

[16]. Heijstra, T. M., Steinthorsdóttir, F. S., & Einarsdóttir, T. (2017). Academic career making and the double-edged role of academic housework. *Gender and Education*, *29*(6), 764-780. Doi: 10.1080/09540253.2016.1171825

[17]. Kwiek, M., & Roszka, W. (2024). Top research performance in Poland over three decades: A multidimensional micro-data approach. *Journal of Informetrics*, *18*(4), 101595. Doi:10.31235/osf.io/uyzrx

[18]. Lambovska, M., & Todorova, D. (2021). 'Publish and flourish'instead of 'publish or perish': A motivation model for top-quality publications. *Journal of Language and Education*, *7*(1), 141-155. Doi: 10.17323/jle.2021.11522

[19]. Angervall, P. (2018). The academic career: A study of subjectivity, gender and movement among women university lecturers. *Gender and Education*, *30*(1), 105-118. Doi:10.1080/09540253.2016.1184234.

[20]. Angervall, P., Gustafsson, J., & Silfver, E. (2018). Academic career: on institutions, social capital and gender. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *37*(6), 1095-1108.

[21]. Henningsson, M., & Geschwind, L. (2022). Recruitment of academic staff: An institutional logics perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *76*(1), 48-62. Doi: 10.1111/hequ.12367

[22]. Vohlídalová, M. (2021). The segmentation of the academic labour market and gender, field, and institutional inequalities. *Social Inclusion*, *9*(3), 163-174. Doi:10.17645/si.v9i3.4190.

[23]. Frølich, N., et al. (2018). *Academic career structures in Europe - Perspectives from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK*. Oslo: Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education.

[24]. Afonso, A. (2016). Varieties of academic labor markets in Europe. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *49*(Special Issue 4), 816-821.

[25]. Simeonova, E. (2023). *When Hundredths Matter: Scaling and Calibrating Indicators in NEAA Criterion System*. *Strategii na obrazovatelnata i naučnata politika*, 31(4s), 51–64.

[26]. Lambovska, M. (2024). Effects of Research Evaluation on Balkan Post-Socialist Countries. *TEM Journal*, *13*(4), 3276-3285. Doi:10.18421/TEM134-62

[27]. Sadler, D. R. (1999). *Managing your academic career*. Allen & Unwin.

[28]. Kwiek, M. (2018). Academic top earners. Research productivity, prestige generation, and salary patterns in European universities. *Science and Public Policy*, *45*(1), 1-13. Doi: 10.1093/scipol/scx020

[29]. Lambovska, M., & Yordanov, K. (2020). Motivation of researchers to publish in high-quality journals: A theoretical framework. *TEM Journal*, *9*(1), 188-197. Doi: 10.18421/TEM91-27

[30]. Petersen, A. M., et al. (2012). Persistence and uncertainty in the academic career. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *109*(14), 5213-5218. Doi: 10.1073/pnas.1121429109

[31]. Boncourt, Th. (2021). What next for the studies of political science as a discipline? A tentative research agenda". *Annals of the University of Bucharest. Politica, Science series*, *23*(1), 17-27.

[32]. Flinders, M. (2013). The politics of engaged scholarship: Impact, relevance and imagination. *Policy & Politics*, *41*(4), 621-642. Doi: 10.1332/030557312X655783

[33]. Ghica, L. A. (2021). What are academic journals good for? An editorial outlook on the possibilities of contemporary political research, *Annals of the University of Bucharest. Politica, Science series*, *23*(1), 3-16.