Call for papers – Special issue
Development and Socialization of Academics

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Outline

Entrance into the academic profession entails an intensive process of induction into the sociocultural, disciplinary and professional norms of academia, as well as a demanding development of attitudes, conceptions and competencies with regard to teaching and research functions. It is also a lengthy process, beginning with study as a doctoral student, then attaining a first academic appointment as a teacher and/or researcher, and reaching your first permanent or tenured position.

To a great extent, the motivation, satisfaction, professionalism and effectiveness of academics is dependent on how the higher education institution (HEI) addresses their process of development and socialization. Aware of this significance, most HEIs, schools and departments design specific programmes and support arrangements aimed to smooth and facilitate the process of socialization and development of, especially, new and novice academics. Integration into the collegiate life is probably a pre-requisite for the success of other attempts to support the teaching and research of full-time and part-time academics (GIBBS & COFFEY, 2004).

The examination of the process of socialization and development is crucial to understand how academics adapt to and learn about their work and academic/disciplinary culture; to capture the importance of establishing membership with a particular group of academics and their disciplines and recognize the teaching and research microcultures (MÅRTENSSON, 2014), as well as to understand the forms of agency – understood as the ability to identify and implement choices (ARCHER, 2008) – that academics employ to circumvent constraints and attain career progress.

A considerable body of research approaching the topic from various perspectives emphasizes the importance of academics' socialization and enculturation in higher education. The sociological perspective has often used MERTON's (1957) definition of socialization – understood as "*the processes through which [a person] develops [a sense of] professional self, with its characteristic values, attitudes, knowledge and skills … which govern [his or her] behavior in a wide variety of professional situations*" (p. 287) – to frame the research of socialization in higher education. Other scholars have contributed to its development suggesting that socialization "*is a learning process through which the individual acquires the knowledge and skills, the values and attitudes, and the habits and modes of thought of the society to which he/she belongs*" (BRAGG, 1976, p. 3). TIERNEY & RHOADES (1994) question the assumption of rationality and constancy of culture embedded in the previous definition because it ultimately contributes to assimilation and homogeneity, and suggest a non-linear, serial progression through a set of specified activities. Differently, THORTON & NARDI (1975) describe the stages through which novices move toward the goal of role acquisition, and WEIDMAR, TWALE & STEIN (2001) identify the core elements of socialization (knowledge acquisition, investment and involvement) that map onto the stages and constitute a model of doctoral student socialization.

Elaborating upon the interactions between academics and students as a significant frame, BAIRD (1993) examines the organization of the practices and processes of doctoral education, and TINTO (1997) and TIERNEY (1997) explore the link between doctoral persistence and socialization. Research on the experiences of socialization and development of underrepresented groups, namely women and doctoral students of color (ANTONY & TAYLOR, 2004) argue for a better clarity of what successful socialization entails, assuming the distinction between "*developing an awareness of, versus developing a personal acceptance of, a field's content, values and norms*" (ANTONY, 2002, p. 373). BOURDIEU (1990) extends this discrepancy by emphasizing the experiences that students bring to doctoral education and how the efficacy of socialization practices can fluctuate across doctoral students and contexts. BECHER & TROWLER (2001) and BIGLAN (1973) also discuss the significance of disciplinary culture as a distinguishing variable.

From a broader perspective, research has addressed the topic of academics' development of skills, competencies, conceptions and attitudes throughout their academic career, and the role of academic developers in improving it. In fact, for many years, academic developers have worked actively to develop an informed, worthwhile and robust initial professional development agenda for new academics. Programs on 'teaching and learning in higher education' or 'academic practice' are usually voluntarily (mandatory in a few countries as part of probation), mainly organized within every institution. They either focus on preparation for, and professionalizing of, the teaching role (GIBBS & COFFEY, 2004) or on the promotion of a holistic socialization to academic practice (BREW & BOUD, 1996).

In this regard, ÅKERLIND (2003) argues that individual academics experience the world of teaching differently and, therefore, have different conceptions of it. Importantly, academic development programmes might influence changing conceptions of teaching with consequential changes in teaching practice and student approaches to learning (STES, 2008; STES et al., 2010). Moreover, academics' teaching approaches and conceptions can change and develop towards a learning-centered approach if the provision of academic development programmes fit the teachers' particular needs and concerns at the different phases of their professional development as teachers (FEIXAS & EULER, 2013). However, although academic developers can facilitate and contribute to educational development, they cannot do it on their own; teachers' engagement must also come from within. In thinking systematically about teaching and learning the conditions under which teaching and learning are embedded in our institutions, academic development has the potential to influence organizational development (EULER, 2015). MÅRTENSSON (2014) suggests increasing the number of signification relations within microcultures as well as between them, so that academic teachers are mutually influenced by, and can influence their collegial context. BOUD & BREW (2013) maintain that the most powerful influence is not the provision of learning opportunities but changing work demands to drive learning. In sum, this scope of institutional programming is needed to continue addressing emerging issues as articulated by students, faculty members and institutions as it may encourage new academics' professional development and retention.

Meanwhile, the development of university league tables and global competition between universities is putting increasing pressure on development of the research aspect of academic roles (LUCAS, 2006). Yet literature on academics' development and socialization as a researcher beyond doctoral studies is not yet well developed (BREW & LUCAS, 2009; McALPINE & ÅKERLIND, 2010). As much as with the world of teaching, the world of research is also experienced differently by different academics (BREW, 2001), though with clear signs of integration between experiences of teaching and research (ÅKERLIND 2005, 2008; PROSSER et al., 2008).

Building on the above-mentioned insights from previous research, the aim of this issue of the Zeitschrift für Hochschulentwicklung is…

(1) to contribute to the state of the art about the process of development and socialization of academics, the construction and development of academic identity and the forms of agency academics employ to attain career success.

(2) to highlight approaches to supporting the development of academics as teachers and researchers that positively impact professional growth during their academic career.

The issue focuses on the socialization and development of novice academics, including particular groups of academics such as part-time, international, female and academics from minority groups, and how they negotiate institutional cues and adapt to the institution to define their professional role. The focus is on both the teaching and research role of academics. Excluded topics in this issue are processes of faculty selection, evaluation and promotion in academia, and the administration, service and leadership roles of academics. The following questions may provide guidelines for authors to focus their contributions:

- What kind of challenges do new academics encounter during their socialization to the Higher Education Institution?
- How do specific groups of academics (part-time, international, novice, female teachers, minority groups, etc.) adapt to the Higher Education environment?
- How do novice academics develop throughout the initial phase of their career concerning e.g., motivation, emotions, attitudes, approaches to teaching and learning, approaches to research?
- What does evidence say about the quality, impact and outcomes of programmes and initiatives designed to support academics' development?
- How can support for beginning academics be implemented in order to both address individual needs and match the disciplinary culture?
- How does the institutional environment enhance or impede beginning academics' socialization, development, success, and academic progress?

With regard to empirical contributions, we encourage both qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixed-method studies as well as design-oriented studies. We especially encourage innovative research designs that are suited to address the challenging topics of (a) development of academics' identity, conceptions about teaching and research, attitudes, motivations and (b) development of microcultures and the social interaction among peers. Conceptual contributions should preferably address the development of academics over time and provide clear references to underlying theoretical considerations.

We are keen to receive empirical or conceptual contributions which aim to enhance academic socialization and development and especially where there has been evaluation of practice. We look forward to your article referring to one of the above guiding questions.

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- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

Workshop reports comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

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Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Mònica Feixas (monica.feixas@unisg.ch).
For technical and organizational questions, please contact Michael Raunig (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!

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