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Abstract

Academic careers are social processes which involve many members of large populations over long periods of time. This paper outlines a discursive perspective which looks into how academics are categorized in academic systems. From a discursive view, academic careers are organized by categories which can define who academics are (subjectivation) and what they are worth (valuation). The question of this paper is what institutional categorizations such as status and salaries can tell us about academic subject positions and their valuation. By comparing formal status systems and salary scales in France with those in the U.S., Great Britain and Germany, this paper reveals the constraints of institutional categorization systems on academic careers. Special attention is given to the French system of status categories which is relatively homogeneous and restricts the competitive valuation of academics between institutions. The comparison shows that academic systems such as the U.S. which

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are characterized by a high level of heterogeneity typically present more negotiation opportunities for the valuation of academics. From a discursive perspective, institutional categories, therefore, can reflect the ways in which academics are valued in the inter-institutional job market, by national bureaucracies or in professional oligarchies. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Angermuller, Johannes, E-Mail: j.angermuller@warwick.ac.uk