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Abstract

This study examines the purposes for which leaders in universities use academic career systems. It focuses on the tenure track system which is new to Finland. Tenure track represents a newly established internal career path in a situation in which Finnish universities' organizational autonomy increased via new legislation from 2010. Drawing predominantly on interviews with academic leaders at two universities, the study investigates the goals of the career system. Shared aspirations include using the tenure track to attract high-performing junior researchers and to allocate resources within the university. The study's main focus is on governance structures: it examines the extent to which internal career paths contribute to making Finnish universities organizational actors. In that respect, the study presents an analysis of the organizational procedures related to tenure track decisions, the tensions created by hierarchical governance structures, and deans and department heads' sense-making of ambiguous situations for which no clear procedures or instructions exist. Tenure track committees represent new controlling bodies by which universities influence their research

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fields and the recruitment of academics. As a result, universities strengthen their position as stronger organizational actors, but at the same time they limit the freedom of departments to respond to field-specific needs. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)