



The “Ramon y Cajal” Program: towards a tenure track system in Spain a case study?

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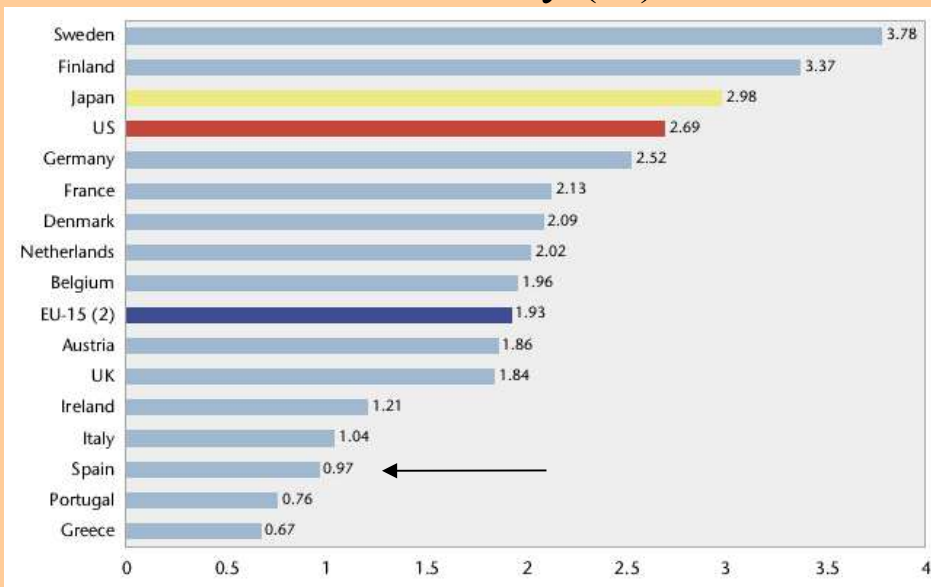
Stockholm, 25-28 August 2004



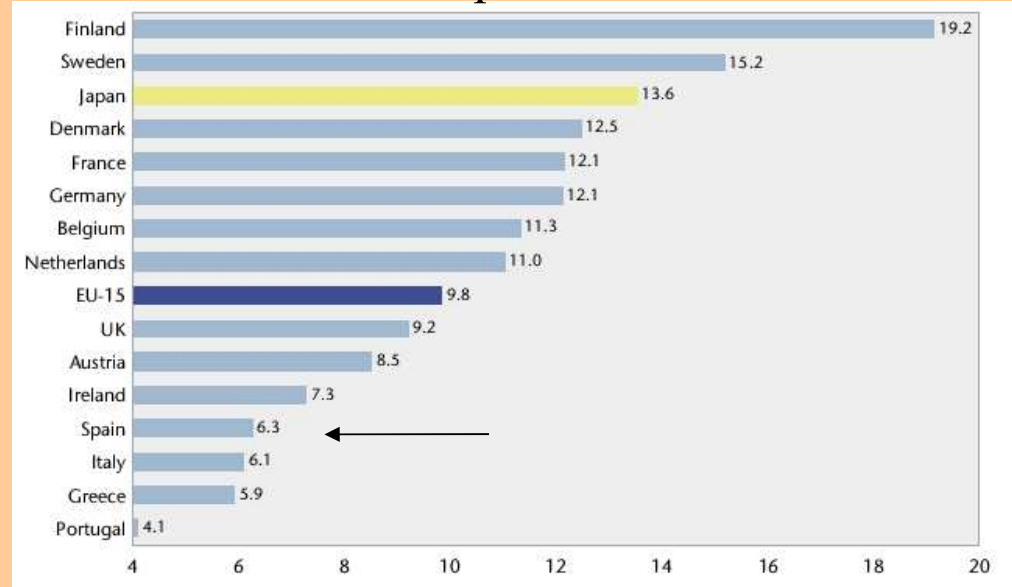
Background: Problems of the Research Career in Spain

Spain is below the European average in number researchers, research spending (*3rd European Report on Science and Tech Indicators*, Eur. Comm. 2003), ...

R&D Intensity (%)



R&D Researchers per 1000 work force



Spain has a very closed system, estimated over 90% inbreeding at Universities (M. Soler, *Nature* 411 (2001) 132). The selection process for permanent researchers is fraught with problems.



Background: Two tier system

PhD Students, postdocs

- Grants/short term contracts
- PhDs: Government awarded (often attached to research funds)

Professors,
Researchers

- Civil Servants
- Burocratic requirements mean a cumbersome process
- Controlled by receiving institution.
- Relatively low salaries in exchange for job security (30-50k€/year)

Nothing in
between?

Only some contracts (very low pay, in the range of PhD students)



Trying to bridge the gap

- Several solutions have been put in place (2000-):
 - ICREA: senior researchers, permanent positions in Catalonia
 - Ramón y Cajal Program
 - Universities: new categories of non-civil servants professors
 - ...
- European trend:
 - Junior professor,...



New government program: “Ramón y Cajal”

- Government sponsored plan for “incorporating” 2000 researchers to the spanish public research system
- the start of the ‘**tenure track**’ in Spain
- Status similar to assistant professor or staff researcher
- New government (2004) has announced the continuation of the program and pledged to support it

Source: Ramón Marimon, Secretary of State for Science and Technology Policy, 23-4-2001



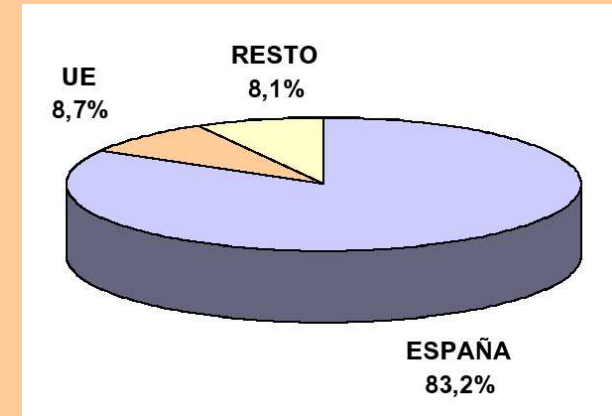
What is a RyC researcher?

- **5 years contract to do research**, open to any doctor (spanish and NON spanish alike)
- Selection by a government agency (responsible also for funding research in Spain, ANEP)
 - **contract awarded to the researcher**, NOT to the institution/group
- Full research responsibility (PI in research proposals): not a postdoc!. Teaching allowed
- Salary 30k€/year, bit of installation money (6k€-12k€)
- Salary cofinanced by Government and institution (“co-responsability”, 80%/20%)



Main results

- Close to 2000 contracts awarded
- Up 16% non-spanish citizens
- Up to 25% awarded to spanish citizens residing in other countries (fighting brain drain?)
- Average age: 35,5 years
- **Better quality** of awarded personel than for permanent professors as measured by papers/year, lower inbreeding (A. Ribero y A. Navarro, *Apuntes de Ciencia y Tecnología*, 11 (2001) 33).



Source: Spanish Ministry of Science and Tech,
6-2-2004



We are researchers with a term contract

- **NOT civil servants! Novelty in Spain**
 - Problems on a nacional level:
 - Lack of comparable evaluation applied to civil servants
 - Govt programs are oriented towards civil servants (ex., sabbaticals)
 - Research financing, funding of proposals
 - Institution-level problems:
 - Non-integration within the governing bodies of the centers
 - Discrimination relative to civil-servant type researchers/professors.
- **Future???**



Example: Research evaluation

- Several agencies in Spain:
 - ANEP (Funding, RyC):
 - Responsible of initial selection
 - Research evaluations at 2 and 4 years. Positive result mandatory for continuation
 - ANECA/Local state agencies (Universities):
 - Responsible for University studies, and voluntary positive evaluation compulsory for professor contracts. Most RyC can get it, problems with teaching requirements and PhD title recognition
 - CNEAI (only for civil servants):
 - It is used for salary incentives, but also as a measure of scientific merit



How do RyC researchers fit in?

- **Example: Universities** (which are still debating the role of research)
 - RyC are an anomaly/outside
 - Outside of regular professor scale
 - Even considered administrative staff at places
 - Teaching responsibilities varies wildly
 - Department status and rights also differ greatly
 - Lack of support from Universities to form groups (no start-up money)
 - Existing research groups show mixed feelings. More competition for scarce funds?
 - Less than 4% of existing personnel (average)



Current future options...

- New RyC normative excludes former RyC, or older researchers (closed track).
- In Hospitals there are no formal research positions to be filled.
- In Universities to offer *research-based* positions is under discussion.

Institutions are waiting for the spanish government to bail them out of the problem

Current Spanish government is committed to increase R&D budget by 25%/year



What happens at the end of the 5 year period?

- Institutions under the program had to have shown plans for future personnel as a prerequisite for participation
- So far institutions are not offering any solution (some exceptions) other than:
 - Apply to regular civil-servant positions (wait in the line)
 - Go the industry
 - Move to Europe or other countries!

To implement a tenure track we need a tenure after the track!!



Summary

- The Ramon y Cajal program is a great step forward, but only a step.
- The destination of that trail is still undefined (look for the result at the next ESOF conference!)

National Association of Ramon y Cajal Researchers (ANIRC)

<http://ramonycajal.dhs.org>

Ramon y Cajal Program at the Spanish Ministry of Education

<http://www.mcyt.es/cajal>

Association for the Advance of Science and Technology in Spain (AACTE)

<http://www.aacte.es>