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**Expectations and outcomes of a  
doctorate abroad: Career development  
and mobility patterns of expatriate  
researchers in social sciences.**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR PHD  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK  
INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	6
Declaration.....	7
Summary.....	8
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Knowledge-based economies, doctoral education and expatriation.....	9
1.2 Postgraduate student mobility.....	14
1.3 Research aim.....	17
1.4 Key assumptions and operationalisation.....	18
1.5 Research questions.....	20
1.6 Borders of the research.....	20
1.7 Definition of central terms used in the thesis.....	21
1.8 Structure of the thesis.....	23
<b>Chapter 2. Theoretical background and literature review.....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 Contemporary career theories.....	27
2.1.1 Theory of career construction.....	28
2.1.2 Boundaryless and protean career concepts.....	31
2.2 Research on doctoral students and graduates.....	36
2.2.1 Emergence of doctoral degree.....	37
2.2.2 Value of PhD degree for doctoral graduates.....	38
2.2.3 Characteristics of the labour market for PhD graduates.....	38
2.2.4 Factors influencing the career choices of PhD graduates.....	40
2.3 Research on mobility of highly skilled workers.....	43
2.3.1 Reasons and motivation for mobility.....	44
2.3.1.1 Structural factors.....	45
2.3.1.2 Organisational factors.....	45
2.3.1.3 Individual factors.....	46
2.3.2 Outcomes of mobility.....	47
2.4 Summary of relevant findings identified in the scholarly literature.....	53
2.5 Research niche.....	56
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology and research methods.....</b>	<b>58</b>
3.1 Methodological framework – mixed-methods approach.....	58
3.2 Research population and sample.....	59

3.2.1 Sample for qualitative interviews.....	61
3.2.2 Survey sample.....	62
3.3 Semi-structured interviews.....	62
3.3.1 Pilot interviews.....	63
3.3.2 Design of the thematic areas for the interview guide.....	63
3.3.3 Data collection.....	64
3.3.4 Profile of the interviewees.....	64
3.4 Data collection and analysis.....	67
3.4.1 Online survey.....	68
3.4.2 Design of the questionnaire.....	69
3.4.3 Survey data collection.....	70
3.4.4 Survey data analysis.....	71
3.4.5 Profile of the survey participants.....	71
3.4.5.1 Personal information – gender, age, and marital status.....	71
3.4.5.2 Doctoral education and previous mobility.....	75
3.4.5.3 Current employment.....	77
3.4.5.4 Country of origin, host country of PhD, and country of residence.....	78
3.5 Ethical concerns.....	80
3.6 Combining findings from the quantitative and qualitative datasets.....	81
<b>Chapter 4. Academic mobility: expectation and reasoning.....</b>	<b>83</b>
4.1 Reasons to undertake a PhD abroad.....	84
4.2 Decision where to live after a PhD abroad.....	88
4.3 Future mobility plans.....	92
<b>Chapter 5. Outcomes of mobility.....</b>	<b>102</b>
5.1 Benefits.....	103
5.1.1 Environment.....	103
5.1.2 Identity.....	105
5.1.3 Career.....	106
5.2 Costs.....	107
5.2.1 Environment.....	108
5.2.2 Career.....	109
5.2.3 Identity.....	110
5.2.4 Private life.....	110
5.3 Skills.....	112

5.1 People skills.....	114
5.2 Self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills.....	116
<b>Chapter 6. Obstacles and benefits of postdoctoral career of expatriate researchers.....</b>	<b>129</b>
6.1 Career planning of international researchers.....	129
6.1.2 Guided by past experiences.....	131
6.1.3 Minimising risks.....	132
6.1.4 Taking opportunities.....	133
6.2 Benefits of an academic job.....	135
6.2.1 Independent work.....	135
6.1.2 Social contribution.....	136
6.1.3 Flexibility.....	136
6.3.2 Academic lifestyle.....	137
6.3.3 Skills and training.....	138
6.4 Criticising academia.....	139
6.4.1 Criticising the process of job application in academia.....	140
6.4.1.1 Difficulties of finding a position.....	140
6.4.1.2 Path dependency.....	141
6.4.1.3 Non-transparent procedure of staff recruitment.....	142
6.4.2 Criticising working conditions in academia.....	143
6.4.2.1 Stressful and competitive.....	143
6.4.2.2 Pressure to publish and attention to ranking.....	144
6.4.2.3 University as a business.....	144
6.4.2.4 Low standard of living.....	145
6.4.2.5 Precarious position of the early-career researchers.....	145
<b>Chapter 7. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>149</b>
7.1 The main research findings.....	149
7.2 Discussion of the main research findings and contribution to the knowledge.....	152
7.2.1 Career attitudes of the expatriate researchers.....	152
7.2.2 Value of a doctorate abroad.....	158
7.2.3 Outcomes of academic mobility related to personal development.....	159
7.2.4 Skills development through academic mobility.....	161
7.2.5 Discussion of the findings posing a challenge to the theoretical developments underpinning this research.....	163

7.3 Limitations of the research.....	166
7.4 Practical implications of the research.....	166
7.4.1 Implications for prospective and current PhD students.....	167
7.4.2 Implications for European Union policymakers.....	168
7.5 Suggestions for further research.....	170
Epilogue.....	173
Bibliography.....	177
List of abbreviations.....	200
Appendix I. Interview guide.....	201
Appendix II. Information sheet for research participants.....	203
Appendix III. Informed consent form.....	204
Appendix IV. Online survey questionnaire.....	205
Appendix V. Sample of the interview transcripts.....	221

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

The work presented (including data generated and data analysis) was carried out by the author.

Parts of this thesis have been published by the author (indicated within the present thesis):

Section 5.3 on skills resulting from the experience of expatriation (Chapter 5: 111) is published in a revised and condensed version: Siemers (2016), “Skills for here or to take away? Outcomes of academic mobility for expatriate researchers”, *Journal of International Mobility* 2016/1 (N° 4), p. 149-170. DOI 10.3917/jim.004.0149;

the chapter on the obstacles and benefits of an academic career for expatriate researchers (Chapter 6: 128) is under second review to be published in a revised and condensed version in the journal *Career Development International*, Siemers, with the title, “Becoming an academic: Drivers influencing career paths of doctoral graduates in social sciences”.



## SUMMARY

The research presented in this thesis explores how expatriate researchers who completed a PhD abroad evaluate and articulate their experience of academic mobility with regard to their early postdoctoral career and personal development. Having adopted a mixed-methods approach, this study draws on an original dataset including 20 semi-structured interviews and 281 replies to an online survey. By conducting thematic analysis of the interview data in NVivo and descriptive analysis of the survey data in SPSS, the research presented in this thesis provides replies to the following three questions. First, what do expatriate researchers expect from their doctoral experience of academic mobility? Second, does academic mobility during a doctorate result in career-related outcomes, according to the perceptions of expatriate researchers? Finally, what is the individual value of a doctorate abroad for expatriate researchers?

This study argues that expatriate researchers in social sciences embark on a doctoral study abroad without necessarily expecting any immediate career-related returns but are influenced by contextual factors, such as the opportunity structure and insecure employment conditions in the labour market for PhD graduates. In addition, the present research has not found any strong evidence showing that academic mobility directly brings immediate career-related returns. In summary, this research provides evidence of widespread agreement among expatriate researchers that the value of a doctoral degree from abroad is in gaining a meaningful personal experience resulting in personal development and skills acquisition, rather than directly resulting in career advancement. This finding contributes to the knowledge of the value of a doctoral study abroad on the individual level, suggested as an under-researched area by the scholarly literature in the field (Raddon and Sung, 2006; Nerad and Cerny, 2000; Casey, 2009).

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This introduction chapter presents a broad overview of the research reported in this thesis by providing the background for the research aim and questions, outlining the area of research, and explaining the motivation for pursuing this line of research. Moreover, this chapter details the significance of the study presented in this thesis and outlines its potential contribution to knowledge in the area of academic mobility and studies focused on doctoral students and their postdoctoral careers.

### 1.1 KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMIES, DOCTORAL EDUCATION AND EXPATRIATION

This subsection provides the background for the present research by, first, outlining the meaning of doctoral education and explaining the importance of doctoral graduates for knowledge-based economies in the contemporary world and specifically for member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Second, the unique role of human capital for development and economic growth is highlighted in this subsection. Finally, concepts focused on the experience of expatriation and adjustment to a foreign country are discussed. By outlining the background related to the importance of doctoral education and graduates for knowledge-based economies, this subsection provides insight into the motivation for conducting this line of research and details its potential contribution to knowledge.

Knowledge, analytical thinking, and problem-solving capacity have become important assets in knowledge-based economies, which rely on development, innovation, and dissemination of information and knowledge (Dunning, 2002). Human capital as embodied knowledge has always been one of the central determinants of development and economic growth within societies. However, it was acknowledged as such only a few decades ago, as mentioned in some of the research in the field (Amesse and Cohendet, 2001; Godin, 2006; Miles, 2000). Presumably, the significance of embodied knowledge was recognised explicitly because its importance has been growing over the last two decades faster than ever, especially for the OECD countries, which are considered to be knowledge-based economies (Godin, 2006).

Knowledge and capacities embodied in human beings, called human capital, can be developed by individuals through education and experience. The concept of human capital is introduced and defined by Gary Becker in his human capital theory (Becker, 1964). According to Becker, human capital is similar to the physical means of production, such as by machines and equipment. So, investment into human capital through education and

training brings returns. Additional investment into human capital leads to additional outputs, according to the human capital theory. Like other means of production, human capital is substitutable but the main difference is that human capital is not transferable (Becker, 1964). By acknowledging the undoubtable importance of human capital for knowledge-based economies these days, it should be noted that globalisation and internationalisation processes have caused notable shifts in competition of global companies for human capital. The phenomenon of global competition for the best and brightest has been widely discussed in the scholarly literature (Drucker, 1993; Jones, 1999; Leitch, 2006; Stewart, 2005), with researchers arguing that the success and growth of a knowledge-based economy depends on the possession of high skills, including individual knowledge and expertise, individual capacity, and creativity. Therefore, countries and companies compete internationally for hiring highly skilled workers possessing the desired individual qualities, which are seen as assets contributing to growth, development and innovation, instead of lands, machines, and other means of production. Employees entering competition for jobs in the labour market seek to increase their skills and knowledge, as high skills and educational levels are associated with higher wages and secure employment conditions (Brown et al., 2008). First, in order to possess a higher level of skills, individuals are required to invest time and recourses into education and training. Second, not everybody has the ability to develop the high level of skills required in certain occupations. Therefore, those individuals able to develop skills and willing to invest in a prolonged educational process are supposed to receive higher wages when entering the labour market. So, companies and countries compete for best and brightest skilled workers, and employees seek to develop skills in order to get well-paid and secure jobs. Importantly, the ability to offer a higher quality or lower price on the market is crucial for the competitiveness of countries and companies functioning within a knowledge-based economy. Nevertheless, Brown and colleagues (2008: 134) argue that: “If knowledge is the key asset of the new economy, the task of business is not to pay more for it but less.” Therefore, in times when the importance of embodied knowledge and human capital is prized, the monetary value of knowledge and expertise decreases rather than increases (Brown et al., 2008). This shift in the value of human capital is a crucial conceptual point for the research presented in this thesis because it aims to explore the individual non-monetary value of pursuing a doctorate abroad according to the individual perception as opposed to monetary value captured by wages defined within the employing organisations and companies.

Research degree education can be considered as a source of growth and innovation for societies putting a special value on knowledge and information. Scholars confirm (Auriol et al., 2010) that doctoral graduates, as the highest educated group of graduates, are regarded as the ablest to advance technological growth and disseminate knowledge and information within society. Thus, doctoral holders can be seen as key players in promoting innovation and economic growth in knowledge-based economies. By taking into account the importance of doctoral education holders for societies these days, PhD education is expanding in terms of number of institutions offering places to study for a doctoral degree (Purcell et al., 2008; Richardson, 2000; Richardson and McKenna, 2003). At the same time, experiences of studying for a doctorate and postdoctoral career trajectories within and outside of academia attract high interest from scholars (Baruch and Hall, 2004; Bennion and Locke, 2010; Jepsen et al., 2014; Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Statistical data on doctoral students and graduates and career outcomes of PhD education is collected at national and international levels and becomes available for researchers. Studies using survey data explore which career path doctoral holders choose after being awarded with a PhD (for example, Purcell et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2008). Nevertheless, knowledge about the reasons and motivation behind the postdoctoral career choices of PhD graduates and studies exploring the process of studying for a PhD or becoming a postdoctoral researcher afterwards remain limited (Richardson and Zikic, 2007; Richardson et al., 2008).

The research presented in this thesis puts a subpopulation of doctoral graduates in social sciences in the spotlight, those who chose to experience expatriation during studying for a doctorate and after PhD graduation. Therefore, concepts and research studies discussing experiences of expatriation, adjustment and adaptation abroad should be reviewed. A number of concepts and studies provide information about the role of adjustment as part of the experience of being an expatriate. In line with work by Hechanova and colleagues (2003), the present thesis defines adjustment as a process that leads to the expatriate feeling satisfaction and acceptance. This area of research can be divided into three related strands. First, there are studies focusing on exploring the role and impact of challenges and difficulties during adjustment (Harris, 2004; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Shaffer et al., 1999). Second, there is research that examines how baseline individual skills and experience (prior to moving abroad) can predict subsequent adjustment in a foreign country (Bell and Harrison, 1996, Hechanova et al., 2003; Palthe, 2004; Shaffer et al., 2006; Shaffer et al., 1999). The third set of studies focuses on situational aspects; that is, which forms of external support or training

are required to ensure a successful and smooth adjustment process abroad (Maertz et al., 2009; Zakaria, 2000).

Existing research often tends to link expatriates' adjustment to skills and capacities obtained or held prior to expatriation (for example, Hechanova et al., 2003; Shaffer et al., 2006). Accordingly, an expatriate's success in adjusting to a foreign society is thought to be supported by the set of skills and experiences that an expatriate makes during this process (Hechanova et al., 2003; Shaffer et al., 2006). In other words, adjustment is considered as the outcome of skills, personal development, and situational variables.

Conceptually, the culture learning approach is important (Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Masgoret and Ward, 2006). In particular, this approach explores how individuals moving abroad adapt to the new environment while being exposed to a foreign culture. In order to be able to participate in a new sociocultural system abroad, an expatriate is expected to learn the parameters of this new system (Anderson, 1994). So, adaptation is seen as a learning curve, which is facilitated by self-directed learning. By learning the key parameters of a new society, expatriates are also expected to adjust successfully. The culture learning approach is closely aligned to the schema theory focused on the cognitive adjustment of an individual after moving abroad (Schild, 1962). However, culture learning is more socially driven than cognitively biased schema theory. The focus is on learning through social contact, specifically, the interaction of the individual with the environment and the support available within this environment. Good communication and language skills facilitate the process as this further enables the individual to learn about cultural differences (Hammer, 1992). Successful adjustment may therefore, via culture learning, support long-term skill and personal development beyond what is required at the beginning. There is further research-based evidence from previous studies in the field on skills development as the result of academic mobility (Black and Duhon, 2006; Jones, 2013; Sutton and Rubin, 2004). Jones (2013) reports that skills developed through expatriation include both people skills and self-efficacy skills. Sutton and Rubin (2004) focus on the outcomes of the experience of study abroad and highlight skills development as one of the learning outcomes. Black and Duhon (2006) similarly draw attention to personal development as an outcome of business study abroad experience. In addition, expatriate experience is also discussed as an important factor in future employability (Behle and Atfield, 2013; Crossman and Clarke, 2010) and the development of transferable skills for the sake of employment (Jones, 2013).

A relevant alternative concept is the notion of culture shock (Chapdelaine and Alexitch, 2004; Gaw, 2000; Oberg, 1960; Zhou et al., 2008). A related description is the idea of acculturative stress (Furnham and Bochner, 1986). Culture shock refers to symptoms such as sense of loss, confusion about one's role and feelings of anxiety, all resulting from the strain of adapting to a new and unfamiliar environment (Oberg, 1960; Zhou et al., 2008). For example, a move to a foreign country may result in a changed and potentially lower social status, culture, and confusion due to the new role (Furnham and Bochner, 1986). Culture shock implies that an expatriate may experience significant confusion and anxiety when trying to adjust to the new challenges, at least until he or she has "had time to develop a new set of cognitive constructs to understand and enact the appropriate behavior" (Furnham and Bochner, 1986: 49). The concept of culture shock is relevant for this research for highlighting possible negative outcomes of the adjustment period abroad. In addition, the negative experience may inhibit and slow down positive skills and personal development during the adjustment process.

Other outcomes include more informed and clear expectations about future mobility benefits and learning from experience (e.g., learning how to deal with stress). Isakovic and Forseth Whitman (2013) report a positive relationship between previous work experience overseas and cultural adjustment. The research presented in this thesis proposes, therefore, that past experiences of adjustment may influence future mobility tendencies and, similar to adjustment, shape the overall perceived benefit of mobility for individuals. This may represent how expatriates evaluate the experience, and also whether or not they gain additional benefits, such as mobility capital as proposed by Murphy-Lejeune (2002). This concept proposes that the experience of living abroad enriches individuals with new skills and capacities. These skills accumulate and enable individuals to build mobility capital (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Previously gained mobility capital is bound to grow further during additional stays abroad (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Mobility capital can be defined as a set of skills and individual capacities gained or developed due to experiencing international mobility (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). The concept of mobility capital is developed based on the concepts of cultural capital and social capital and, therefore, should be regarded as interplaying with both concepts. Culture is defined as "the shared knowledge, norms and attitudes that influence individual behavior" and "a long-standing sociological concept" (Mann et al., 2014: 41). Culture and cultural background is considered (Lukes, 1972) as an important determinant shaping individual attitudes, educational attainment, and career-related

outcomes. Bourdieu (1990) divides cultural capital into three forms: embodied or personal culture, including individual attitudes or habitus; material or objectified cultural capital, such as books and tools; and institutionalised or symbolic cultures, for instance, qualifications. All three forms of cultural capital introduced by Bourdieu (1990) are crucial for the development of mobility capital (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) because, by exposing themselves to a different culture in a foreign country, individuals acquire mobility capital. Social capital is another relevant concept, highlighting the importance of interaction communication, and networking for personal and professional development. The concept of social capital explains how communication with others through social interaction becomes an important resource supporting individuals or groups of people in their personal development and career progression. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1991: 119), social capital represents the “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”. The combination of social, cultural, and economic capital is regarded in the research (Bourdieu, 1990) as reproducing social inequality.

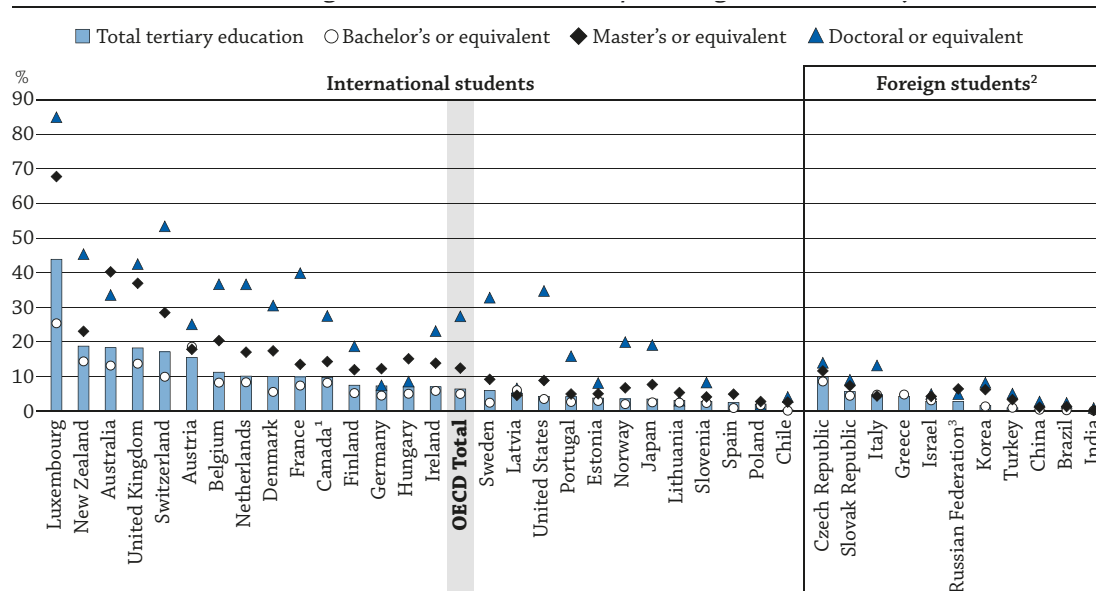
## 1.2 POSTGRADUATE STUDENT MOBILITY

The research presented in this thesis explores career paths and mobility patterns of doctoral graduates who completed their PhD degree abroad in different European countries. In the present research, Europe is operationalised as a geopolitical area and not limited to the countries of the European Union only. By adopting the definition of Europe from the paper by Kelo and colleagues (2006), the present research considers 32 countries as European: the 28 member states of the EU including the UK, Bulgaria, and Romania), and the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland). Turkey is not included in the definition of Europe adopted in the present research. To provide a comprehensive overview of postgraduate student mobility, this subsection presents descriptive statistical data about international postgraduate students hosted in the OECD countries. The section aims to demonstrate the trends with regard to the destination and origin of postgraduate students studying abroad. This overview demonstrates the position of Europe hosting international postgraduate students and the difference between European countries in comparison to each other and to other OECD countries outside of Europe.

According to the recent OECD report (2016), the percentage of international students studying in the OECD countries across levels of education reached six per cent in 2014, with

the highest proportion of international students enrolled in tertiary education in Luxembourg (44 per cent) (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Student mobility in tertiary education, by ISCED level (2014): International or foreign student enrolments as a percentage of total tertiary education



1. Year of reference 2013.

2. Foreign students are defined on the basis of their country of citizenship. This data is not comparable with data on international students and is therefore presented separately in the figure. While international students include only students who moved to a country with the purpose of studying, foreign students comprise all students who have a different country of citizenship than the country in which they study.

3. International students at the bachelor's or equivalent level are included in the master's or equivalent level.

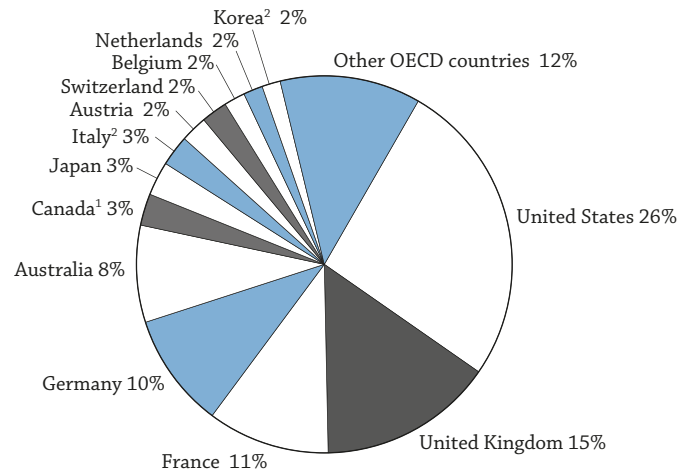
Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of international or foreign students in tertiary education.

Source: OECD Education at a glance (2016): [www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)

The largest proportion of international students (26 per cent) at the master's or PhD levels are based in the USA as a host country, followed by the UK (15 per cent), France (10 per cent), Germany (10 per cent), and Australia (8 per cent) (Figure 2 below).



Figure 2. Distribution of foreign and international students in OECD countries at the master's and doctoral or equivalent levels, by country of destination (2014): International tertiary students in each country of destination, as a percentage of the OECD total



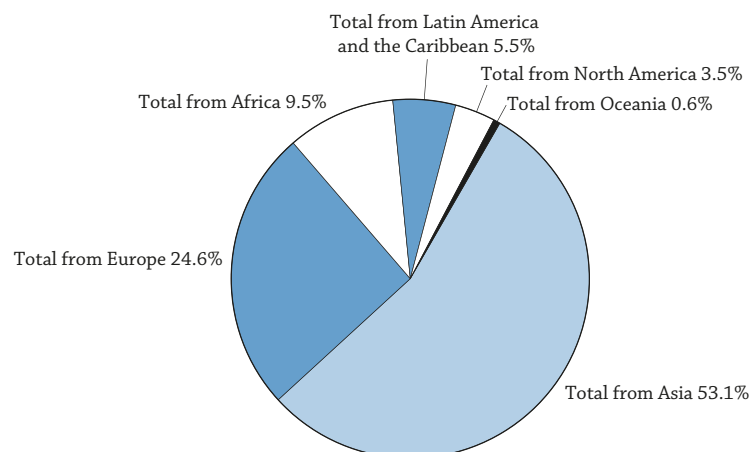
1. Data refers to foreign instead of international students.

2. Year of reference 2013.

Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2016): [www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)

In terms of origin, students from Asian countries account for more than half (53 per cent) of international students at master's or PhD levels hosted in the OECD countries (Figure 3 below).

Figure 3. Distribution of internationally mobile students studying in OECD countries at the master's and doctoral or equivalent levels, by region of origin (2014): Percentage of mobile students enrolled in OECD countries



Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2016): [www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)

To highlight some general trends within the OECD countries, the OECD report (2016) demonstrates that the percentage of international students hosted in the OECD countries constantly grows. Within the OECD countries 27 per cent of PhD students and 12 per cent of master's students are international. In terms of the gender balance, the proportion of female international students is lower than male and comparing to the studentship overall. Within the OECD countries 54 per cent of the students are female, with 48 per cent of women being international students (OECD, 2016). Importantly, three European countries – UK, France, and Germany – are among the top five OECD countries hosting a large proportion of international PhD and master's students.

### 1.3 RESEARCH AIM

This study addresses a gap in the knowledge and understanding of career development in the context of academic mobility, by exploring the postdoctoral occupational choices and discovering early career paths and mobility patterns of expatriate researchers in social sciences. So, this research contributes to the understanding of career development and academic mobility. The overarching aim of this research is to explore how expatriate researchers who completed a PhD abroad evaluate and articulate their experience of academic mobility with regard to their early postdoctoral career and personal development. In order to reach its aim, this research is focused on the postdoctoral career transition of expatriate researchers after completing their doctoral study abroad.

The experience of career transition has both individual and structural components. Structural components shaping the experience of career transition (Brown, 2015) are the state of economy at a point of time, job offers available in the specific labour market, alternative options available, and social support, which can be possibly provided by a state. The theory of occupational allocation proposed by Roberts (1968) discusses opportunity structure as an important structural component, which is also considered as a career determinant in a recent study by Brown (2015) exploring learning and development processes happening during mid-career reframing of mature workers. The theory of occupational allocation (Roberts, 1968) explains that the majority of individuals are restricted in their choice of occupations and career decision-making by the external opportunity structure depending on social variables such as gender, ethnicity and social class. The opportunity structure model was proposed by Roberts (1968). Roberts argues that “an adequate theory for understanding school-leavers’ transition to employment in Britain needs to be based around the concept not of “occupational choice”, but of “opportunity structure” (1977: 183). The determinants of

occupational choice as defined by Roberts (1968) are: the home, the environment, the school, peer groups, and job opportunities.

Undoubtedly, structural components are important factors influencing decision-making on individual career steps. However, this research focuses primarily upon the individual and subjective dimension of the experience of academic mobility and postdoctoral career transition. In order to explore the experience of postdoctoral career transition and academic mobility, this study collects career stories of expatriate researchers and focuses on the personal evaluation of their experience. How the experience of career transition is evaluated depends on the interplay of expectations from the career steps leading to this transition and its outcomes, as argued in the recent research by Brown and Bimrose (2014) presenting a model of learning for career and labour market transition. Namely, the decision to study for a PhD leads individuals who successfully complete their doctorate to experience transition between finishing doctoral education and embarking on a postdoctoral career. The decision to conduct a doctoral degree in a foreign country adds to the complexity of this choice. After time passes, a doctoral degree is obtained, and subsequent postdoctoral career choices are made and the outcomes of these choices can be seen and evaluated.

By narrowing down the main aim – to explore how an individual experience of academic mobility and a doctorate abroad is evaluated and articulated by expatriate researchers, this research examines expectations of expatriate researchers of a doctoral study in a foreign country, career-related outcomes, and the individual value of a doctorate abroad for the expatriate researchers. So, the dimensions of academic mobility and career development are brought together in this study in order to enhance knowledge about the reasons behind educational and career choices and the outcomes of those for the population of expatriate postdoctoral researchers in social sciences.

#### 1.4 KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND OPERATIONALISATION

Several assumptions are made in outlining the scope of this study and in justifying the research design. First, experience of career transition is evaluated in this research from the research participants' point of view. This research assumes that experience is a subjective category, which should be evaluated from the individual perspective. This assumption reflects the theory of career construction by Savickas (2005), arguing that careers are created by individual action in accordance with one's values and self-esteem. This theory is outlined in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2).

Second, evaluation of the experience of academic mobility and doctoral education abroad may be determined by a number of factors, which should be explored closely in this research. These factors are included in two dimensions – expectations (including the aspects of planning and reasoning) and outcomes (including benefits, costs, and skills). In this research, evaluation of the academic mobility experience during a doctorate is seen as an interplay of initial expectations and subsequent outcomes of the decisions leading to the postdoctoral career construction. This interplay is important for evaluating an experience, as this research assumes the decisions leading to the postdoctoral career construction are related to the decision to study for a PhD, to do the doctorate abroad, and to pursue a postdoctoral career within or outside of academia.

The present study considers a number of factors as potentially influential career determinants. These factors are initial motivation to study for a PhD, experience of studying for a doctorate, postdoctoral career planning, evaluation and satisfaction of expatriate researchers with their own postdoctoral career, and a range of personal circumstances affecting the career trajectory. A section focused on studies on doctoral students and graduates in the literature review chapter reviews research mentioning these factors as important career determinants (Calmand, 2011; Enders, 2002; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000). Exploring these career determinants contributes to an evaluation of the expectations of expatriate researchers from doctoral study abroad and linked career-related outcomes.

Career-related outcomes of academic mobility are operationalised in this research as perceived costs, benefits, and skills acquired through studying for a doctorate abroad. Costs, benefits, and skills are not specifically pre-determined in advance in this study but, in contrast, are explored throughout the research. Moreover, this research aims to explore the individual value of academic mobility during a doctorate abroad as perceived and articulated by expatriate researchers, which may or may not be related to career advancement.

Third, the present study attempts to understand how the context of being based in a foreign country during a doctorate shapes the experience of transition between doctoral education and postdoctoral career. Completing a doctorate abroad is seen as an experience of academic mobility. This experience of academic mobility plays a contextual role in the present study. Postdoctoral career transition and experience of academic mobility are seen in this study as interrelated processes mutually affecting each other. As the present study assumes, the fact that an expatriate researcher lives abroad at the time when decisions about the postdoctoral career should be made can be influential. Therefore, the experience of career transition and

academic mobility are studied as interrelated components of a process in the given research by highlighting central aspects of these experiences in the findings chapters.

### 1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to fulfil the research aim, the present study concentrates on several research questions related to the postdoctoral career transitions of expatriate researchers in the context of academic mobility. The overarching research question of the given study is:

How do expatriate researchers evaluate and articulate their experience of academic mobility and studying for a doctorate abroad?

Three sub-questions are formulated in this research:

What do expatriate researchers expect from their doctoral experience of academic mobility?

Does academic mobility during a doctorate result in career-related outcomes from the perception of expatriate researchers?

What is the individual value of a doctorate abroad for expatriate researchers?

Replies to these research questions are provided in three findings chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). A later section of this chapter (Section 1.8), outlining the structure of the thesis, provides an overview of the findings chapters.

### 1.6 BORDERS OF THE RESEARCH

After formulating the research aim and questions, it is important to outline the borders of the research. This research is exploring a complex process of postdoctoral career transition by focusing on the unique research population of expatriate researchers in social sciences, which is gaining more importance in contemporary society. Career stories collected through interviews with expatriate researchers in combination with survey replies are a very rich source of data providing evidence to support the findings of this research. However, the only findings included in this thesis are those relevant to responding to the research questions and reaching the research aim of the study. So, certain issues are left outside the borders of this study, offering space for further research, which can be conducted in the area of academic mobility and postdoctoral career development.

First, this is not a psychological study examining decision-making processes. Although this study explores the outcomes of expatriate researchers' decisions to make certain educational, career, and mobility steps and the motivations behind them, these decisions are explored and analysed from the personal point of view of the research participants.

Second, this study is situated within an international context. This research examines the experience of career transition of an international researcher population. The majority of the research participants of this study have lived in two to four different countries throughout their lives. All of them passed through an important period of studying for a doctorate abroad and many of them spent some other crucial stages of life and career in a foreign country. This study does not aim to conduct a comparison between groups of research populations with different countries of origin or residence. In contrast, the research population is treated as a group of people unified by their level of education and skills, area of studies, and experience of academic and occupational mobility.

Third, this research is focused on the individual dimension. Nevertheless, structural and organisational factors, which can be influential career determinants (Enders, 2002; Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000), are considered in this study. Some findings related to experience of postdoctoral career transition, identified in this research, go beyond the individual level. For this reason, relevant structural and organisational factors identified in the scholarly literature are briefly outlined in the literature review chapter. For the purpose of this research, structural and organisational factors influencing career trajectories and mobility choices are examined only through the lens of individual experience and from the point of view of the research participants.

Finally, qualitative and quantitative data collected for this research is analysed to provide answers to the research questions and to reach the main research aim of this study. Decisions about data collection and analysis were guided by the research aim and by keeping in mind the time constraints and financial limitations of a doctoral study. After analysing data, only the findings which are relevant for answering the research questions of this study were included in the thesis.

## 1.7 DEFINITION OF CENTRAL TERMS USED IN THE THESIS

In order to define the phenomena addressed in this study, the meaning of the central terms describing these phenomena and the research population of this study will be outlined. First, this study uses the term “academic mobility” to define the experience of the research population who completed their doctoral study abroad, to study, work, and live in a foreign country. This means that all the research participants have experienced academic mobility in order to be included in the sample. Academic mobility is geographical mobility with a purpose related to higher education or work within the academic labour market. So, academic mobility is understood as a specific form of geographical mobility in this study. It should be

stressed that using the term academic mobility does not mean that this study is focused on academics only.

Second, “expatriate researchers” is the term defining the research population of this study. The term expatriate researchers demonstrates that this study concentrates on a broader population than just academics by including PhD graduates occupied in research-related positions outside of the academic labour market. Academics employed in teaching positions within higher educational institutions are included in the term “researchers”, as teachers and lecturers at the university level are normally expected to be involved in research activities in addition to their teaching duties. The term “expatriate” is chosen to describe the research population because it means temporarily or permanently residing outside their native country. Some of the research participants returned to their native countries after completing their PhD abroad. Nevertheless, they have been expatriate researchers during their doctorate in a foreign country. Moreover, the term expatriate is associated with highly skilled migrants in the area of migration and mobility studies and considered as positive (Al Ariss et al., 2012). Terms “PhD holders”, “PhD graduates”, “doctoral holders”, and “doctoral graduates” are used to describe the research population of this study alongside “expatriate researchers”. When research participants of this study are described in the terms above, they always refer to geographically mobile or international PhD graduates. This study is focused on social scientists. When the terms “expatriate researchers” or “PhD graduates” are used in this study, they denote doctoral holders graduated with a doctorate in social science disciplines.

Finally, transition between doctoral study abroad and a postdoctoral career is called “career transition” or “postdoctoral career transition” in this study. Some expatriate researchers had work experience before or during their PhD studies, while others first entered the labour market after PhD graduation. So, some research participants entered the labour market for the first time, while others experienced their career on a new postdoctoral level after being awarded a doctoral degree. So, it is reasonable to define this as a career transition, as confirmed in the research by Bimrose and colleagues (2015). This transition between doctoral education and postdoctoral career is understood in this research not only as a period of time between PhD award and the first postdoctoral job after it but in a broader sense as a transition between being a doctoral student and becoming an early career researcher and establishing a position in the labour market for PhD graduates.

Transition between doctoral education and postdoctoral career is a period of time which needs to be defined for the purpose of this study. Doctoral education has got a clear ending

point at the time of graduation with a PhD. In many cases, the postdoctoral career has got a starting point when a PhD graduate begins a new appointment on the postdoctoral level of employment. However, the period of transition can begin before PhD graduation with individuals making plans about their future postdoctoral employment. Certainly, the ending point of the postdoctoral career transition can vary. In terms of duration, this period can differ individually dependent on their own understanding of being an expatriate researcher. For the purpose of this study, it was decided that this transition begins after final submission of PhD thesis and ends ten years after doctoral graduation at the latest. Thus, the sample for the data collection for this research includes expatriate researchers who finished their PhD between one to ten years ago. Career stories of doctoral graduates are captured at a point when the PhD is already completed and at least one year but not more than ten years have passed after graduation. So, expatriate researchers had a chance to look for and to find their first postdoctoral employment. At the same time, their memories about the postdoctoral career transition can be shared for the purpose of this research.

However, career transition between doctoral education and postdoctoral employment can vary in terms of starting and finishing points. Some researchers may enter postdoctoral employment before they have finished their PhD. Also thoughts and plans towards a career after their PhD graduation can be considered as a part of this career transition. In order to explore the postdoctoral transition, plans towards the postdoctoral career, experienced during doctoral study, and initial motivation to study for a doctorate should be captured alongside information on postdoctoral career trajectories. These plans, experience, and motivation can influence future career trajectories, as research in the field shows (Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Enders, 2002). Thus, career stories of expatriate researchers collected in this study start at a point when a researcher begins planning to study for a PhD and end at the time of data collection.

## 1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis adopts a simple comprehensive structure consisting of seven chapters, where each chapter clearly contributes to the achievement of the aim of this research. This first introductory chapter gives an overview of the research area and topic at the core of this thesis. Then it presents the research aim and narrowed-down research questions addressed in this study. Besides this, definitions of the main terms used throughout the thesis to describe the research population and phenomena addressed are given in this chapter. The introduction outlines the reasons why this research is relevant and indicates the potential contribution to



knowledge, which is presented in more detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis. This thesis does not contain an extra context chapter because the research is focused on the exploration of a process experienced by an internationally mobile research population coming from different countries across the world. So, there is no need to provide a specific country-related context for this study. Nevertheless, the research population is briefly outlined in the introductory chapter and presented in greater detail in the methodology chapter, containing some relevant information about the context of the working and personal lives of the expatriate researchers.

The second chapter provides the theoretical background for this research and reviews relevant literature in the area. First, contemporary selected career theories and concepts are outlined in this chapter by focusing on the issues especially relevant for this study. These theories and concepts shape the research questions and provide a theoretical grounding for this study.

Then, existing research studies focused on doctoral students and graduates are presented. This section reviews selected studies providing relevant knowledge and evidence about doctoral students and graduates regardless of their international or national status. It is not focused on PhD holders with international experience only and not limited to any discipline because knowledge about all PhD graduates could possibly be relevant for the research population of this study. It is important to be aware of knowledge available from previous research focused on a broader population of PhD holders because the research population of this study is specific and comparatively small. Nevertheless, some studies reviewed in this section are specifically focused on PhD holders with experience of mobility, or in the social sciences, or in the postdoctoral early career stage, which gives more explicit knowledge about this particular population. However, because of the narrow, specified sample for this research, it is difficult to find studies focused on exactly the same population and providing knowledge in relevant areas.

After outlining the historical emergence of the doctoral degree, the next section of the second chapter focuses on reviewing the research on doctoral students and graduates and the value of a PhD degree for doctoral holders, which gives information about the outcomes of studying for a doctorate. Then knowledge on the labour market available for PhD graduates from previous research is reviewed. Finally, factors and determinants influencing postdoctoral career choices of PhD graduates are reviewed.

The next part of the second chapter presents research studies concentrated on the geographical mobility of skilled workers outlining their motivations for and outcomes of mobility. This section includes studies focused again on a broader research population rather than just doctoral graduates for the same reasons as mentioned above. Knowledge about this broader population can be relevant to shape the research questions and some parts of the methodology for this study.

The third chapter presents the methodology of this study by focusing in particular on a mixed-methods approach. After providing an overview of the mixed-methods applied in this study, the research population is described and reasons for concentrating on this population are given. The next two sections of the third chapter are related to the use of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method and an online survey as a quantitative method of data collection. The design of questions, data collection, profiles of participants, and data analysis are outlined for each method separately as they differ considerably from each other. A discussion about ethical issues and the way qualitative and quantitative datasets are brought together in this research are presented at the end of the methodology chapter. These first three chapters described above present the overall research design of this study.

The next three chapters include the main findings of this study, divided into three subtopics to provide replies to the research questions and to reach the aim of this research. The findings chapters are structured according to the research subtopics covered and not according to the research methods. So, the results of the analysis based on qualitative and quantitative datasets are presented with relevance to the subtopic of each findings chapter. Quantitative and qualitative data supports findings by providing evidence from two different perspectives in this thesis.

Chapter 4 presents findings on the motivation and reasons for academic and occupational mobility, providing insight about expectations of doctoral graduates from their experience of living, studying, and working in a foreign country. This chapter presents reasons and motivation for moving or staying abroad in different stages of a career in chronological order. First, motivation to pursue a doctoral study abroad is presented. Then, the decision about in which country to live after finishing a PhD is discussed. Finally, plans for the future mobility of the expatriate researchers are analysed.

After discussing expectations from mobility in the previous chapter, the fifth chapter outlines findings on the outcomes of mobility and the value of a doctorate abroad from the expatriate

researchers' point of view. Chapter 5 is divided into three sections – benefits, costs, and skills. Costs and benefits of mobility are examined in four areas – environment, identity, career, and private life. Skills developed through mobility are presented but divided into three areas – communication, problem-solving, and reflection.

Chapter 6 is concentrated on the findings related to the postdoctoral career of expatriate researchers, demonstrating possible career-related outcomes. First, career planning and possible strategies for career development are addressed in this chapter. Then, the benefits of employment in the academic labour market are outlined. Finally, criticisms about academia voiced by expatriate researchers are presented in this chapter. The evaluation of postdoctoral careers by expatriate researchers is structured around benefits and criticism of the academic labour market and working conditions in academia. Conditions in the academic labour market are crucial not only for academics, but also for expatriate postdoctoral researchers employed outside of academia. Whether to work within or outside of the academic labour market is an important decision determining the postdoctoral career after PhD graduation. As expatriate researchers mostly have to choose between working as an academic or pursuing a career outside of academia, the academic labour market and its working conditions are important factors influencing postdoctoral career decisions.

Chapter 7 is the closing chapter of this thesis. It presents an overview of the main findings from this study related to the research questions and the central aim of this research. Also, limitations of this research study are outlined and the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings are highlighted. Finally, discussion of the findings identified through this research is demonstrated alongside ideas and suggestions for future research. Apart from the seven main chapters, this thesis contains acknowledgements, an abstract, a list of abbreviations, an epilogue, a bibliography, and appendixes placed after the conclusion chapter (Chapter 7).

## CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

By focusing on the transition between doctoral education and the postdoctoral career of expatriate researchers in social sciences, this study is situated across two main areas – career development and academic mobility. In order to explore this transition, this research draws on existing findings and theoretical knowledge available from previous studies in both areas. Research bringing together academic mobility and career development of researchers is most relevant for this study but remains scarce (Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Thus, it needs to be considered carefully and complemented by a review of studies in other related areas of research. In order to review conceptual and empirical literature for this study three areas were identified as important. These areas are: selected career theories, empirical studies focused on doctoral students and graduates, and research into academic mobility.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, contemporary theories and concepts providing knowledge about career development in modern society are discussed. Career theories give a theoretical foundation for this research to develop an understanding of the barriers and factors affecting the career development of contemporary highly skilled workers. Second, the literature on PhD students and graduates is reviewed by paying particular attention to the emergence and development of the doctoral degree, the characteristics of the labour market for PhD holders, and factors influencing the career choices of doctoral graduates. Finally, studies focused on the mobility of highly skilled workers are presented by highlighting research into the motivation for moving abroad and the outcomes of mobility. Although studies focused on academic mobility are especially relevant for this research, literature accessing international experiences of highly skilled workers outside of academia is also included in the review.

### 2.1 CONTEMPORARY CAREER THEORIES

Contemporary society is structured in a way which differs considerably from a more traditional lifestyle experienced by people in advanced economies during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sullivan, 1999). These changes of lifestyle influence different areas including education and career. Careers in the contemporary, fast-changing world become more flexible, and this has positive and negative sides. On the one hand, more social mobility across positions, sectors, and occupations is allowed. On the other hand, contemporary workers are exposed to higher risk and uncertainty (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001a; Cappelli, 1999; Sullivan, 1999). An important part of this research is a focus on the careers of expatriate researchers combined with their mobility experience. So, contemporary career

concepts are crucial to shape this study and to provide a theoretical background for this research. This section introduces the theory of career construction and boundaryless and protean career concepts, which are considered as important concepts in the career development field (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

### *2.1.1 THEORY OF CAREER CONSTRUCTION*

Career construction theory by Mark Savickas and colleagues (2005) provides knowledge about how people develop their career in contemporary society. This theory is defined by Savickas as explaining “the interpretive and interpersonal processes through which individuals impose meaning and direction of their vocational behaviour” (Savickas, 2005: 49).

By adopting the constructivist epistemological perspective, Savickas argues that career is constructed by an individual by making choices to pursue certain goals and does not unfold independently of an individual’s action (Savickas, 2002). Thus, an individual is an active person playing a central role in her or his career by making certain choices leading to career development or change step by step. By focusing on three core components: vocational personality, life themes, and career adaptability, career construction theory brings different elements of personality together in order to understand how careers are constructed by individuals.

One of the components – vocational personality – allows understanding of how different types of personality match with how certain occupational roles are stereotypically performed. The theory of career construction develops the rational model of matching people to positions (Parsons, 1909) by paying particular attention to vocational self-concepts alongside objective perspective for understanding occupations. This personal perception about the self, one’s own abilities and purpose of work and life unfolds in the life themes component of the career construction theory.

The second component of the career construction theory – life themes – is derived from Super’s (1951) concept postulating that individuals seek to find their self-esteem and personal realisation in choosing an occupation and entering employment. The concept developed by Super (1951) is grounded in the theory formulated by Eli Ginzberg and colleagues (1951) proposing three life stages which broadly correspond with the chronological age of an individual. The first stage, called the fantasy stage, lasts up until 11 years old. The second tentative stage, lasting from ages 11 to 17, includes three sub-stages of

interest, capacity and value. While the third stage, called the realistic stage, lasts from age 17 onwards, and includes the sub-stages of exploration, crystallisation and specification. Super (1957) extends Ginzberg's three life stages to five, by conceptualising the sub-stages differently. The concept of vocational maturity is developed by Super (1957) in addition to the concept of life stages. The timing of reaching vocational maturity may or may not correspond to chronological age, according to Super (1957). Super's five stages are: first, the stage of growth lasting from birth to the age of 14. The second stage called exploration lasts from age 15 to 20 and includes the sub-stages of crystallisation, specification and implementation. The third stage lasting from 21 to 44 is called establishment, and includes the sub-stages of stabilisation, consolidation and advancing. This is followed by the fourth stage, called maintenance, lasting from 45 to 64, with sub-stages of holding, updating and innovating. Finally, the fifth stage of decline lasts from age 65 onwards, with sub-stages of decelerating, retirement planning and retirement living. The concept of life stages developed by Super (1957) serves as a background for the second component of the career construction theory by Savickas (2005), which is called life themes. By deciding about a job, individuals not only find an occupation but want to implement a self-concept to improve the match between their self and life situation (Savickas, 2005). Nevertheless, reality offers diverse barriers in finding a job that can offer a perfect match. Thus, individuals still need to adapt themselves to their opportunity structure.

The last component of the career construction theory is adaptability. This is defined as the ability of individuals to change their attitudes, skills, and capacities in order to adapt to a chosen occupation (Savickas, 2005). According to Savickas (2005), career construction consists of a series of steps, choices, and changes where individuals match themselves to the selected occupation in order to realise their self-esteem in employment. However, this task to match oneself perfectly to the job can never be completed entirely. This puts individuals into the situation where they need to adapt and develop themselves continually. Research in the field (Bimrose et al., 2011) suggests that career adaptability is an important component that has been absent from the policy analysis on skills development and, therefore, requires more attention. The importance of career adaptability is underpinned in the study by Bimrose and colleagues (2011) with an argument about the changing circumstances in the contemporary labour market and the requirement to adapt to these changes. To develop career adaptability, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own careers and to be autonomous in decision-making. By considering the argument by Savickas (2005) that career construction

is about finding a match between an individual identity and an occupational environment, the concept of career adaptability highlights that both elements may be subjected to change and shifting. So, these changes in the individual identity and the occupational environment should be explored, considered and re-considered by individuals throughout their career progression.

By drawing on the interview data analysis of 64 adults in transition based in the UK and Norway, the study by Bimrose and colleagues (2011) confirms that career adaptability is connected to identity development. Therefore, individuals who are seeking to develop their identity and career could differ in terms of adaptability from those who are looking for stability as opposed to development. In order to study career adaptability, five adaptive competencies are used as a framework to study the career narratives of the 64 adults in the UK and Norway. These competencies are: control, curiosity, commitment, confidence, and concern. Having adopted the psycho-social perspective, the study (Bimrose et al., 2011) highlights that certain individual characteristics, such as proactivity or flexibility, can act as prerequisites of adaptability.

Moreover, a number of individual factors and circumstances contribute to the complexity of adaptability by acting as mediators, as the research on the adults in transition based in the UK and Norway confirms. Several influential factors acting as mediators for developing career adaptive behaviour are discovered, such as: opportunity structure, prevailing economic conditions, and structural disadvantages related to the personal characteristics, such as age, gender, race, and ethnic background. Interestingly, the research by Bimrose and colleagues (2011) discovers that individuals facing structural disadvantages in the labour market, which are out of their control, react differently. Namely, some individuals demonstrate a low ability to adapt to transitions, such as job change or redundancy when combined with disadvantageous circumstances, while others develop adaptive behaviour and perceive the structural disadvantages as challenges contributing to the development of career adaptive competencies.

Scholarly literature suggests a connection between career adaptability and the concept of resilience. According to Bimrose and colleagues (2011: 17), career resilience refers to “the capability and capacity to withstand change, implying the development of individual (and institutional) coping strategies”. Therefore, career resilience can be explained as the personal ability to provide a reasonable reaction on any kind of happening which may affect an individual career positively or negatively. Individuals able to manage uncertainty, to cope with ambiguity and to develop their careers further owing to flexibility and an independent

mindset are regarded as highly resilient. Nevertheless, career adaptability as a component of career construction is broader than resilience and is not limited to developing a reaction to a set of negative circumstances related to career progression, as conceptualised by Savickas (2005).

Career construction theory is a suitable theoretical underpinning for this research. This theory argues that careers are constructed by individuals and do not evolve independently of human action. By adopting this point, this research explores career stories of expatriate researchers from their own perspective. So, career steps and career-related decisions are captured from the research participants' point of view. In addition to a theory emphasising the interpretive perspective of individual career construction, the theoretical background of this study should be complemented by career concepts focused on the circumstances of the contemporary labour market and explaining skilled workers' behaviours in this context.

#### *2.1.2 BOUNDARYLESS AND PROTEAN CAREER CONCEPTS*

The world of work has changed considerably in the last two decades, owing to globalisation of education and labour markets, increased diversity in the workplace, and technological advance (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Briscoe et al., 2006). These environmental changes mean that contemporary workers need to adapt their behaviour in career development and their decisions in employment are affected. Increasing numbers of people have become self-employed, use social media and the internet to develop their businesses, and arrange a workplace at home (Eby et al., 2003). These changes make contemporary careers distinctive from traditional careers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sullivan, 1999; Super, 1951). In addition, some workers become more self-directed in their career decisions by choosing to go abroad to find employment (Tharenou, 2009). Boundaryless and protean career concepts provide theoretical knowledge to advance understanding of careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Boundaryless and protean career concepts emerged in the 1990s (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996) and are considered these days as two influential concepts in the area of career development of highly skilled workers (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Skilled professionals involved in protean careers are considered (Hall, 1976; Hall, 1996) to be capable of adapting to the fast changes in the world of contemporary careers.

The protean career concept introduced by Hall (1996) describes a contemporary protean worker as able to adapt to a new situation in employment and the labour market in order to fit into a work role. This concept uses a metaphor of the Ancient Greek god Proteus, who was able to change his face and shape according to the situation. So, a contemporary protean



worker is highly flexible, adaptable, and value driven (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Two central dimensions defined by Briscoe and colleagues (2006) make the core of a protean careerist. The first is being value driven in making career choices, in the sense that individual values motivate an individual throughout her or his career progression and career success and outcomes are evaluated accordingly. The second is being self-directed in career decision-making, meaning that individuals actively build their careers by making career-related decisions. In other words, individuals direct their careers themselves. By considering both protean career attitudes, it is considered that protean careerists continuously seek to learn and develop and look for new challenges to overcome and to stretch their abilities. Research by Hall and Briscoe (2006) suggests that four career orientations can be developed based on the two career attitudes – being self-directed and value driven. Namely, those careerists who are low on both attitudes are labelled as dependent, because they prefer to be managed externally and they adopt or borrow external values instead of developing their own. The careerists who are high on both attitudes have got protean career orientation. Nevertheless, it is argued (Hall and Briscoe, 2006) that a protean career orientation can vary in terms of degree and is not an absolute category. Those individuals who manage their own careers but are guided by external values, such as the values of their employing organisation, are considered as having adopted a reactive profile. Finally, the careerists who are guided by their own intrinsic values in the career choices but prefer to be managed externally are considered (Hall and Briscoe, 2006) as having a rigid career orientation. The protean career concept goes in line with the core assumption of the career construction theory by Savickas (2005), arguing that careers do not unfold independently but are constituted by individual action and, therefore, serves as a theoretical underpinning for the present research.

The study by Segers and colleagues (2008) examines protean and boundaryless career attitudes with regard to motivation. As the present research is concerned with deepening the understanding of drivers for the construction of an academic career and the motivation for the international mobility of its research population, the study by Segers and colleagues (2008) should be regarded as an important point of reference. Drawing on the findings from the regression analysis and cluster analysis of the survey data, the study (Segers et al., 2008) suggests that employees who adopt protean career attitudes can be motivated through offering challenges and providing opportunities to stretch their abilities. For example, opportunities to develop skills and abilities through formal training or more informal learning

processes at work should be regarded as drivers for a protean careerist. This driver is considered for the design of the research instrument for the study presented in this thesis.

The protean career concept was chosen to drive this study theoretically because both dimensions – being self-directed in one's own career development and being value driven, linked to high adaptability to new circumstances – play an important role in this research. As expatriate researchers make decisions about their postdoctoral career in an international labour market, this study aims to investigate whether the research population is self-directed, value driven, and adaptable to the new circumstances of life and work abroad. In other words, the present research attempts to provide a reply as to what extent expatriate researchers can be considered protean careerists. The research population of the present research includes internationally mobile individuals who move between institutional settings, employers, and national borders. With changing countries of residence, expatriate researchers do not necessarily experience career change across sectors and areas. Nevertheless, the theoretical dimension identified in the protean career concept may apply to the research population of this study. So, this research will identify whether expatriate researchers can be considered as protean careerists. So, the protean career concept provides important insights into these aspects of contemporary career development for highly skilled workers.

The boundaryless career concept was introduced and popularised by Arthur and Rousseau (1996). The boundaryless career is defined in the study by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) as independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organisational career arrangements. So, a boundaryless career is opposed to a traditional organisational career. In the mid-1990s, Arthur and Rousseau (1996) drew attention to the changing nature of the economy due to rapid technological innovations and new opportunities for independent and remote working opening up at that time. The world of work offered more diverse opportunities and flexibility by becoming more uncertain and insecure at the same time, which is defined through the boundarylessness of careers. One of the main messages suggested by the book (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) is that the boundaryless career is neither better nor worse comparing to traditional organisational career arrangements. However, the system within organisational career arrangements, including promotions, plateauing, demotions and lifelong career prospects within a single company, was better understood by workers. Boundaryless careers demand more autonomy from any organisational arrangements and the proactivity of workers engaging with a more complex career strategy.

These new boundaryless career arrangements and demands occurring in the 1990s should be better explored and understood, as proposed by Arthur and Rousseau (1996).

In the book edited by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) a list of six different meanings or emphases of a boundaryless career is presented. Examples are given to demonstrate boundarylessness in specific careers. The first example is the career of a professional working in Silicon Valley, who moves across boundaries of separate employers. The second is connected to the validation or marketability of a specialist. When validation is drawn from outside of a current employer, this career is considered as being boundaryless. For instance, academics draw validation and increase their employability independently from their employer through the production of highly cited publications in peer-reviewed journals. The third example of a boundaryless career occurs through the role of external networks and information plays for career development, such as the career of a real-estate agent. The fourth description is when traditional organizational career boundaries, such as hierarchical order and advancement principles, lose their power for an individual career progression. The fifth is when career progression opportunities are ignored for personal reasons. The final sixth example is of the individual perception of a boundaryless future by a careerist, regardless of any existing structural components and constraints. The six meanings are all united through their independence from any traditional organisational career arrangements. As an academic career is clearly emphasised as being boundaryless, the concept of a boundaryless career is relevant for the research presented in this thesis. The research population of the present study consists of expatriate researchers and the majority of them are employed within academia, so the boundaryless career concept was chosen as an appropriate theoretical underpinning for the present study.

Initially, studies adopting the boundaryless career concept were concentrated on physical movement between disparate organisations, without even making distinctions between upward and downward mobility or self-initiated and organised movements across national borders, as was criticised in the paper by Sullivan and Baruch (2009: 1551). A number of scholars (such as Eby et al., 2005; Inkson, 2006; Greenhaus et al., 2008) called for the need to clarify and further conceptualise the boundaryless career concept. Some attempts have been made in the research to develop scales for measuring boundaryless career attitudes. For example, the study by Briscoe and colleagues (2005) examines boundaryless and protean career concepts and presents an operationalisation of boundaryless and protean career attitudes in the form of a scale, which can be applied in empirical research on career attitudes.

The scales measuring boundaryless career attitudes include boundaryless mindset and mobility preferences for changing employers and organisations. The scales measuring protean career attitudes consist of value-driven predispositions and self-directed career management. Drawing on the empirical survey data with university students and managers in manufacturing organisations, Briscoe and colleagues (2005) argue that the boundaryless career attitudes under research tend to vary across career stages. Therefore, they should be considered as attitudes, which can be effectively taught and developed, and not individual character traits which depend on one's personality.

The definition of a boundaryless careerist as independent from organisational career arrangements (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) is important for this research into career-related decisions of postdoctoral expatriate researchers in the context of mobility. Although the present research does not intend to measure boundaryless career attitudes, it is aimed at developing a better understanding of career attitudes of expatriate researchers in the context of international mobility. So, the research participants of this study overcome boundaries by physical movement across national borders in order to develop their education and career. By exploring the experience of the postdoctoral career transition, this research investigates whether expatriate researchers can be considered as independent from organisational arrangements. By focusing on the outcomes of their educational and career-related choices made before, during and after a doctorate abroad, expected costs and benefits from these choices are evaluated in the present study. The boundaryless career concept provides important theoretical knowledge in the field of this research about issues and obstacles that highly qualified workers can face when developing their career in contemporary labour markets.

In addition to the career concepts mentioned above, drawing attention to personal and organisational levels, Al Ariss and colleagues (2012) emphasise the importance of structural factors on the macro level influencing careers of highly skilled migrants. In their paper, Al Ariss and colleagues (2012: 95) suggest studying the career development of skilled migrants in their "temporal and spatial contexts"; e.g., by taking into account a historical perspective and by understanding the shifting meaning of rules when changing places. Although the body of literature concentrated on academic mobility is growing, there is still not much knowledge available about how mobile, highly qualified workers experience flexible careers in academia (Richardson, 2000). Moreover, it remains unclear whether expatriate researchers can be

regarded as boundaryless careerists. The research presented in this thesis complements existing literature in the field by addressing the gap in knowledge.

## 2.2 RESEARCH ON DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

The rising number of places and programmes offering doctoral education at universities around the world has resulted in growing scholarly interest in this field. Nevertheless, doctoral education and postdoctoral careers are still considered as a field offering many gaps for further research, especially in comparison to undergraduate education (Raddon and Sung, 2009; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Richardson et al., 2008). This research aims to address a gap in knowledge related to the mobility of doctoral graduates and the experience of transition between doctoral education and postdoctoral career. In order to address this gap, it is important to account for existing findings in the field.

Studies focused on doctoral students and graduates as a research population have been conducted in different national contexts, in Europe, US, and elsewhere (Enders, 2002; Freeman and Goroff, 2009; Purcell et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2008). Besides studies analysing the system of doctoral education and exploring postdoctoral careers of PhD students in national contexts (Calmand, 2011; Enders, 2002; Schwabe, 2011), there is a number of recent research studies which address the geographical mobility of doctoral holders during and after their doctoral studies (Bennion and Locke, 2010; Isakovic and Forseth Whitman, 2013; Kim and Locke, 2010; Kõu and Bailey, 2014; Richardson, 2000; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Richardson and McKenna, 2003; Richardson and Zikic, 2007). Findings from these studies with an international focus are especially relevant for this research. However, a more detailed overview of existing research in this area is provided in a later section about motivation for, and outcomes, of geographical mobility in this literature review.

Apart from studies with a focus on mobility, three aspects of research on postdoctoral careers are especially relevant: the value of holding a doctoral degree, the labour market for PhD holders, and factors influencing career trajectories of PhD graduates. These are the central aspects for this research, because two important dimensions of career transition between doctoral education and the postdoctoral career can be explained by concentrating on these aspects – personal perception of the value of a PhD for the career of doctoral graduates and circumstances influencing the postdoctoral career in the labour market for doctoral holders.

### *2.2.1 EMERGENCE OF THE DOCTORAL DEGREE*

With the establishment of the Humboldtian model of higher education in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on the holistic combination of research and studies, the doctoral degree became a modern research degree qualifying holders to conduct research and to teach in a specific area at university (Anderson, 2000). The Humboldtian model of higher education emerged with the establishment of the University of Berlin (now the Humboldt University of Berlin) by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1810. Prominent scholars were appointed to teach and to conduct research at this university in order to create a space where research, sciences and arts could come together to create an environment for generating unbiased knowledge and providing learning opportunities for students (Anderson, 2000). The Humboldtian model of higher education is still followed today as a model for a contemporary research university.

With a societal transition from an industrial to information society and knowledge-based economy over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the meaning and nature of the PhD degree has been transformed. Moreover, some concerns have been expressed about the structure of doctoral study at contemporary universities. Namely, there have been questions as to whether doctoral students are provided with sufficient training to develop skills and competencies to satisfy the needs of contemporary knowledge-based economy (Usher, 2002). This societal transition has created a dilemma for universities as institutions organising doctoral education (Gibbons et al., 1994). On the one hand, a doctoral degree is supposed to educate academics developing research according to their own disciplinary interests within a field. On the other hand, a doctoral degree should educate researchers to organize, conduct and promote research according to the actual needs of society and to present the results of their research in a comprehensible way. Certainly, in some cases a researcher's interests perfectly match the actual needs of society and research topics, where funding is available at a point of time. Then there is no dilemma. However, this perfect match is not achievable in many cases.

Another major concern regarding doctoral education, besides its prolonged study duration and potential non-completion of a PhD degree, is related to the growing number of places to study for a doctoral degree at universities, which does not reflect the number of academic jobs available in the labour market for doctoral graduates (Colebatch, 2002; Leonard, 2000; Taylor and Beasley, 2005). This situation leads some doctoral graduates to seek employment outside of academia.

In this case another question arises, namely, whether doctoral study provides PhD candidates with the relevant skills needed outside of academia. These and other questions are addressed

in the studies focused on doctoral education and the academic labour market. The next section provides an overview of the findings discovered in academic literature in the area.

### *2.2.2 VALUE OF A PHD DEGREE FOR DOCTORAL GRADUATES*

The meaning and value of holding a PhD for doctoral graduates can be examined from two different perspectives – an objective perspective through labour market outcomes and a subjective perspective through the perceived value of a PhD for doctoral graduates. Some studies examine the value of a PhD through wages earned by doctoral graduates compared to their peers entering the labour market after an MA or BA degree (O’Leary and Sloane, 2005; Rudd, 1986; Rudd, 1990; Williamson, 1981). Findings from these studies are controversial. Namely, research by Williamson (1981) shows that there is no significant difference between wages of PhD holders and graduates in the labour market. The study by Rudd (1986) confirms this finding and provides evidence that PhD holders do not achieve earnings much higher than graduates in science and engineering. However, unlike these dated studies, a more recent paper by O’Leary and Sloane (2005) shows that PhD holders have higher earnings over their life course compared to other graduates. This is even more significant for female PhD graduates (O’Leary and Sloane, 2005).

In addition to financial gain, the value of a PhD degree can be assessed through personal development and non-financial outcomes, and this has been undertaken in several studies (Casey, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 2000; Raddon and Sung, 2006). These studies (Casey, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 2000) discover that PhD graduates experience social and cultural change because of their doctoral education and put value on that. Nevertheless, this area remains under-researched as there is not sufficient evidence of how PhD study leads to personal, cultural and social outcomes for an individual (Raddon and Sung, 2006). So, this study develops knowledge about non-financial outcomes of studying for a PhD degree, and in particular, the value of doing a PhD abroad and developing skills and new attitudes through the experience of academic mobility.

### *2.2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOUR MARKET FOR PHD GRADUATES*

Although a doctoral degree is traditionally seen as a licence to teach at university level or an entrance to academia (Anderson, 2000), many PhD graduates look for employment opportunities outside of the academic labour market (Purcell et al., 2006). Nevertheless, a PhD is still perceived as a degree opening doors to the academic profession to an extent, because, according to the research by Auriol and colleagues (2010), the majority of PhD graduates from 14 selected OECD countries are employed in academic jobs. Besides working

in the higher education sector and on research within universities, PhD holders are employed in governmental and business sectors or international organisations (Purcell et al., 2006).

The labour market for PhD graduates is characterised by high insecurity related to temporary conditions of employment, especially in the first five years after PhD completion for those in academic jobs (Auriol, 2007; Auriol et al., 2010; Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000). Despite the insecurity of employment conditions, PhD graduates are widely satisfied with their jobs and conditions of employment, as a number of studies demonstrate (Auriol, 2007; Auriol et al., 2010; Calmand, 2011; Elias et al., 2005; Nerad and Cerny, 2000). PhD graduates' satisfaction with their current job varies on different indicators depending on the PhD discipline, but it remains high overall. For example, the study by Elias and colleagues (2005), presenting an analysis of 31 interviews with PhD graduates in social sciences, demonstrates high satisfaction of the participants with their current positions, measured across a number of indicators, including security, relationships with the colleagues, social contribution and opportunities to develop skills. Remarkably, PhD holders employed in positions outside of academia show higher levels of satisfaction compared to those working in the academic sector (Elias et al., 2005).

Some research on the job satisfaction of PhD holders was conducted with a sample of doctoral graduates in the disciplines within science and humanities (e.g., DTZ Consulting and Research, 2006; Jackson, 2007). The study examining job satisfaction of PhD graduates in engineering by Jackson (2007) demonstrates high satisfaction with job and employment conditions, mainly due to the opportunity of making a valuable contribution even at the early career stage, as perceived by the research participants. Moreover, PhD graduates in engineering show high job satisfaction because their skills and knowledge are relevant for their jobs. Similarly, doctoral holders graduated with a PhD in arts and humanities report being "very happy" (58 per cent) and "quite happy" (38 per cent) about their current job, as the study conducted by DTZ Consulting and Research (2006) reveals. In addition, 87 per cent plan to stay on the same career path, according to this study (DTZ Consulting and Research, 2006). So, doctoral holders graduated in different disciplines should be regarded as overall satisfied with their postdoctoral career, whether employed in or outside of the academic labour market.

The research outlined above delivers important information about specific features and conditions of the labour market for PhD graduates. However, the main limitation to the research is that no, or only a limited explanation of, reasons and factors influencing the



decisions of doctoral holders in developing their careers is provided. This study advances the knowledge available about the career development of PhD graduates by providing an in-depth understanding of how the career choices of this research population evolve and what the motivations are behind their decisions.

#### *2.2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CAREER CHOICES OF PHD GRADUATES*

In addition to the characteristics of the labour market for PhD graduates, it is crucial to know which other factors can influence career aspiration and the decision-making of this research population. The research by Archer and colleagues (2010) defines aspirations as “complex, multiple and often contradictory – young people may hold several aspirations at any one time, not all of which are complementary”. Research in the field (Lindhahl, 2007; Tai et al., 2006) proves that the age range between ten and 14 years old is the most important period for aspiration formation. Career aspirations are crucial for the job search process. A number of factors influencing the process of the formation of career aspiration are explored by researchers (Kintrea et al., 2011; Roberts and Atherton, 2011), such as schools, personal interests, family structure, career guidance, media and other recourses available to the individuals. Research (Croll, 2008; Strand and Winston, 2008) shows that, often, individuals expressing high aspirations for their future career but who do not have access to educational recourses and career advice (Croll, 2008), may experience major problems with regard to career progression because of not being able to realise their aspirations.

Career development involves a series of making decisions with regard to a number of educational and employment-related choices and preferences. Career decision-making is a complex process based on different individual and contextual factors, behaviours, surroundings, personal beliefs and preferences. According to Bimrose and colleagues (2011: 18), career decision-making and decisiveness should be regarded as a part of career adaptability and “successful career transitions, since they contribute positively to preparing for and managing, voluntary and involuntary changes in the workplace”. In addition, psychodynamic theories intend to explain behaviour through individual drivers and motivations to take certain career steps. The psychodynamic theory developed by Roe (1957) draws on Maslow’s (1954) framework presenting the hierarchy of basic needs. In her theory, Roe (1957) proposes that choice of occupation is the most powerful source of satisfaction for individuals and that social and economic status depend more on the occupation of an individual than on anything else (Roe, 1957: 213). The need for importance, respect and self-esteem is replaced in the theory with the need for self-actualisation.

There are a variety of factors potentially influencing the career trajectories of PhD graduates. These factors are not necessarily related to the contemporary social or economic circumstances when individuals are looking for employment; they can originate in the period during or even before studying for a doctorate. So, studies aimed at exploring career patterns of doctoral holders stress the importance of evaluating influential issues that may affect the career steps of PhD graduates (Calmand, 2011; Enders, 2002; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000). These factors identified by previous research are reviewed in this section.

Four crucial factors occurring during doctoral study and influencing postdoctoral careers after graduation are highlighted by existing research: funding for a PhD, quality of the PhD programme or institution of doctoral study, discipline of the doctorate, and the supervisor. Funding for a doctoral degree has been studied within a scientific community in the field as a factor affecting not only the decision to take a PhD in the first place but also the completion of it (Bowen and Rudenstine, 2014; Ehrenberg, 2002; Ehrenberg and Mavros, 1992). Funding for a PhD is regarded by some scholars (Recotillet, 2007) as contributing to the high selectivity of the academic labour market. This study builds on existing research by investigating the role of funding for the initial decision to study for a PhD in addition to other possible motivations and factors.

The quality and ranking of institutions offering doctoral programmes can crucially affect the future careers of doctoral researchers. Research by Hogan (1973) points out that the quality of the programme or institution of PhD study influences the quality of later academic publications after PhD graduation. The number of journal publications and the ranking of these journals is a crucial factor shaping research careers, especially in academia, which becomes more important after PhD completion. A study by Levin and Stephan (1991) emphasises the role of publications in academic careers in accordance to earlier research by Hogan (1973). So, the choice of institution for doctoral study can affect postdoctoral careers after graduation by influencing PhD holders' capacity to publish their research.

The discipline of the doctorate can also make a considerable difference for the future career prospects of a PhD holder. Research demonstrates that graduates in different disciplines apply for jobs in different segments of the labour market and do not compete with each other (Calmand, 2011; Enders, 2002; Recotillet, 2007). For example, a study by Robin and Cahuzac (2003) demonstrates that doctoral graduates in computer science and engineering are more likely to seek employment in the non-academic sector after graduation compared to

other graduates in physical sciences. So, the discipline of PhD study can make a difference for employment opportunities in the future.

Apart from the funding, institution and chosen discipline, a PhD supervisor can influence the future career of a doctoral student, as mentioned in the scholarly literature (Delamont et al., 1997a; Delamont et al., 1997b; Mangematin, 2000). Supervisors not only influence the selection of doctoral candidates but can also make a considerable impact on career prospects of their supervisees after completion of the doctorate through their own academic networks (Mangematin, 2000). Apart from networks, supervisors can influence the career trajectory of a PhD student by directly or indirectly giving career guidance to them. This guidance is often directed towards the academic labour market, ignoring employment opportunities for doctoral graduates outside of academia, as pointed out by literature in the field (Delamont et al., 1997a; Goldsmith, 2000; Jackson, 2007; Mangematin, 2000).

The personal characteristics of an individual can also influence the future career path of doctoral holders, such as gender or marital status. A number of studies focused on career trajectories emphasise the importance of character, personal preferences, and circumstances of life in a given moment for career development (Holland, 1985; Mitchell, 1996; Mitchell et al., 1999; Super, 1951). By drawing on the classical theoretical propositions of individual habitus of Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 1990), Archer and colleagues (2012) propose the form of family habitus to explore the role of family and social background in shaping the future career aspirations of young people. Family habitus is defined as “a framework of dispositions, developed through a family’s sense of its collective identity, that guides action, shapes perceptions of choice and provides family members with a practical feel for the world” (Mann et al., 2014: 27). Family habitus is conceptualised as interacting with capital (a combination of economic, social and cultural resources within a family), with the interaction of family habitus and capital defining the future career aspirations that children imagine as possible and desirable. The concept of family habitus provides a theoretical framework to analyse how families unconsciously shape and define the career aspiration of children.

In addition to family background, one of the popular personal characteristics affecting career is gender. Many scholars studying academic careers concentrate on gender differences and inequalities (Fox, 2001; Thune, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 1999). In particular, numerous studies explore barriers faced by women pursuing a career in the academic labour market (Asmar, 1999; Fox, 2001; Sabatier et al., 2006). Some studies aim at providing evidence that female academics still have less advantageous positions in the labour market compared to

their male counterparts; for example, through analysing income and ranking of institutions or journals (Fox and Stephan, 2001; Ward, 2001), or identifying the reasons for inequality, such as family constraints limiting the career prospects of female academics (Nerad and Cherny, 1999).

The initial motivation to pursue a doctoral degree is considered by some scholars as influential on the later career development after finishing this degree (Hodsdon and Buckley, 2011; Wakeling, 2009). For example, Purcell and Elias (2006) provide evidence in their paper that doctoral graduates are motivated by personal interest for their research topic when deciding to conduct a PhD study. Following this argument, Mangematin (2000) stresses that the motivation for embarking on a doctoral study depends on the discipline of the doctorate: PhD graduates in sciences see their choice in more instrumental terms, while those in social sciences and humanities tend to be driven by personal interest. Nevertheless, the motivation for doctoral study, especially linked to later career development, is still considered an under-researched area in the field of postdoctoral career studies (Mangematin and Robin, 2003; Leonard, 2000). So, this study advances knowledge regarding the motivation of expatriate researchers for taking a PhD and for moving abroad to do so.

Factors influencing the career choices of doctoral graduates reviewed in this section are carefully considered in this study exploring the postdoctoral career development of expatriate researchers. Career determinants outlined above are included in the research design of the study. In particular, topics for interviews and survey questions about career choices, motivation for the PhD and certain career steps are designed with reference to the research findings available from previous studies. The studies reviewed in this section are mainly focused on all PhD holders and mobile academics are not emphasised explicitly. So, this research explores which career determinants of PhD holders mentioned in the existing literature are influential for the career development of expatriate researchers with experience of academic mobility.

### 2.3 RESEARCH ON MOBILITY OF HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS

Taking into account the recent aims of European countries to attract foreign highly skilled professionals (Al Ariss and Özbilgin, 2010; Al Ariss et al., 2012), academic interest in this topic is increasing. In the last ten years the emphasis of scholars studying academic mobility in the European Union has shifted from the economically reasoned analysis of push and pull factors (Cassarino, 2013; Massey et al., 1993; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Wallerstein, 1974) to broader and more sophisticated research on migration motivation, decision-making processes

and migration trajectories within the life-course (Ackers, 2005; Kofman, 2004; Vysotskaya, 2011). The academic community working in migration research has recognised that migration is a complex process that begins long before the actual move and possibly never ends. Mobility is not just a move from one place to another but a complex process which can include several moves, following returns, or further moves to several places across the globe.

Recent academic studies concentrating on mobility of the highly skilled can be divided into three groups. The first group includes studies which concentrate on the reasons individuals give as to why they go abroad for working or studying (Carlson, 1990; Netz, 2013; Netz and Jaksztat, 2014). The second group consists of research focusing on understanding how individuals experience mobility, while also exploring advantages and disadvantages of mobility (Ackers, 2005; Favell, 2008; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). The last group includes studies which focus on the effects of mobility on future career, educational outcome, or further mobility (Carlson, 2011; Jepsen et al., 2014; Vysotskaya, 2011; Van Mol, 2014). The present research belongs to the second group, as it explores the transition process between the completion of a doctoral education and the establishment of the postdoctoral career of mobile PhD holders with mobility experience.

### *2.3.1 REASONS AND MOTIVATION FOR MOBILITY*

Existing research on motivation to move abroad can be divided into two groups depending on the research population. The first group of studies is focused on the motivation of students going abroad, either credit mobile students mainly through the ERASMUS exchange programme (Van Mol, 2014; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014), or degree mobile students (Carlson, 2013; Findlay et al., 2012). The second group includes studies exploring the motivation of skilled professionals to work abroad. These skilled professionals can be divided into organisational expatriates (OE) (Dickmann and Harris, 2005; Dickmann et al., 2008; Stahl and Cerdin, 2004) or self-initiated expatriates (SIE) (Froese, 2012; Dickmann and Cerdin, 2014; Dickmann and Harris, 2005; Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Expatriate researchers can be included in the SIE group if they decided to move abroad on their own volition or the OE group if they were sent to a foreign country by their home university or another employer. Thus, expatriate researchers are a distinct research population situated across the existing groups of expatriates, which needs to be studied explicitly.

In their qualitative study focused on British SIE academics, Richardson and McKenna (2002) suggest four main types of SIE academics based on their reasons for working in a foreign country. These types of expatriate academics are called: refugees, mercenaries, explorers and

architects. Refugees are academics going abroad to escape a certain situation in their home country (such as unemployment, a political situation or personal problems). Mercenaries move abroad for monetary reasons, in order to receive a better salary for their work. Explorers are curious about foreign countries and cultures, and architects are motivated to move abroad out of the belief that it will improve their curriculum vitae and enhance their career development (Richardson and McKenna, 2002).

Many studies concentrate on the reasons driving highly skilled workers to move to a foreign country (Dickmann et al., 2008; Richardson and Mallon, 2005; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). As expatriate researchers are a part of the broader group of highly skilled workers, it is reasonable to look at the reasons of this group to expatriate. These reasons can be explored on individual, organisational and structural levels. The majority of studies so far are focused on the organizational or individual level while mostly ignoring the structural level (Ng et al., 2007), although factors on the structural level can play a crucial role in motivating skilled workers to move to a certain country.

#### *2.3.1.1 Structural factors*

Structural factors are economic, social or even geographical conditions in a country or region, which can influence an individual's decision to live there. For example, research in the field of social geography by Fotheringham and colleagues (2000) explores the migration flow between different regions and countries by looking at economic factors, such as unemployment rates, social factors, such as the housing market, and the level of crime as a measurement of safety. In addition, Al Ariss and colleagues (2012) draw attention to the importance of macro-level factors which need to be considered while researching the reasons for international migration and mobility. Specifically, a relational and context-specific approach is suggested by Al Ariss and colleagues (2012) as a framework to conduct research about the international mobility and migration of skilled workers. This framework includes meso-organisational and macro-contextual levels. Workplaces are suggested to be considered as influential factors affecting careers of skilled migrant workers on the meso-organisational level. Events characterising social settings, such as institutional interventions, should be considered as factors constituting the macro-contextual level, as suggested in the paper (Al Ariss et al., 2012).

#### *2.3.1.2 Organisational factors*

In addition to the structural factors describing conditions of the labour market and general economic situation in a country, organisational factors play an important role in mobility

decision-making. This is an especially crucial factor when a skilled worker moves abroad to work for a certain employer, which is agreed in advance, and not when a skilled worker intends to look for a job after moving to a country.

A number of studies (Mellahi and Collings, 2010; Vaiman and Haslberger, 2013; Vaiman et al., 2012) confirm that certain practices of human resource management within an organisation, such as non-discrimination policies or diversity and inclusion policies, are important factors on the organisational level, attracting foreign skilled workers. At the same time, Al Ariss and colleagues (2012) make the point that discrimination practices related to dress code, culture or accent, owing to the lack or ineffective implementation of a diversity policy within organisations, are existing barriers for the migration of skilled workers. This point confirms the importance of the organisational level for the reasoning behind decisions to move abroad for skilled workers, specifically for the research population of the present study with the majority working in academic settings or non-academic but in research-related roles and occupations. Universities as employers of PhD graduates operate equality and diversity policies in the recruitment process and as a part of employment. Nevertheless, established diversity policies can be implemented and experienced differently through practices and behaviour in the workplace. So, practices at the organisational level can be influential factors affecting the career-related decision-making of the research population of the present study.

#### *2.3.1.3 Individual factors*

Reasons to move abroad on the individual level are numerous and diverse. Key motivations on the individual level are often distinguished by career-related considerations, factors related to personal interests, experiences and personality, and also by social background and private life motives (Dickmann et al., 2008; Richardson and Mallon, 2005; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). Often these factors influencing individual decisions to move abroad are interconnected.

First, existing research in the field (Stahl and Cerdin, 2004; Stahl et al., 2002) confirms that skilled professionals may decide to move abroad if they think that the international experience will advance their career perspectives and open opportunities for their subsequent professional development. In addition, expatriates may believe they will be able to gain new knowledge and acquire new skills through their experiences in a foreign country (Jokinen et al., 2008).

Second, the personality of skilled workers is often seen as a possible driver behind reasons to move abroad. For example, curiosity and the desire to travel, to know foreign cultures and to be challenged through the experience are all motivations to go abroad (Richardson and Mallon, 2005; Stahl et al., 2002). In addition, research shows that some traits of character, such as persistence, integrity and confidence, increase the chances for a skilled worker to look for and take the opportunity to live and work abroad (Dickmann et al., 2008; Sparrow et al., 2004; Tharenou, 2003). Moreover, individuals' social background, the open-mindedness of family members and previous experience of travelling or moving abroad, independently or with the family, also play a crucial role (Mayrhofer et al., 2004; Peiperl and Jonsen, 2007).

Finally, factors related to their private life, including their partner's or children's interests, can also be important drivers for individuals, especially in relation to dual-career couples considering working abroad (Sparrow et al., 2004; Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). Moreover, research by Richardson and Mallon (2005) provides evidence that family and children can be an incentive to migrate abroad if parents expect better educational provision in the new country.

This section of the literature review is important as a part of this study concentrates on reasons and motivations for expatriate researchers to move abroad for a PhD and to stay abroad for a job later on. Knowledge about the motivation of skilled workers to expatriate available from existing studies provides a background for designing this research on expatriate researchers' expectations and reasons behind moving and staying abroad. Understanding these reasons helped to provide a background to this research to explore how expatriate researchers developed their careers and came to their current positions in the labour market. In order to develop this understanding, first, the decision to study for a PhD degree abroad is analysed. Second, the reasons for living in the current country of residence are highlighted. Finally, future plans for moving abroad and possible reasons to relocate are explored in this study by bearing in mind the findings outlined in the above section.

### *2.3.2 OUTCOMES OF MOBILITY*

This section of the literature review consists of the research focusing on understanding how individuals experience mobility, also exploring advantages and disadvantages of mobility. Taking into account the recent aims of European countries to attract foreign highly skilled professionals and the increasing need for skilled migrants in the developed economies across the globe (Al Ariss and Özbilgin, 2010; Özbilgin, 2006), academic interest in researching the process and outcomes of expatriation for skilled workers has been growing.



A substantial body of scholarly literature on the outcomes of mobility is focused on the population of mobile students going abroad for their studies or participating in international exchange programmes (Black and Duhon, 2006; Favell, 2008; Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus, 2011). Moreover, recent research focused on the graduate career path and mobility intentions of intra-European mobile graduates is available (Behle, 2014; Behle, 2016; Behle and Tzanakou, 2014a; Behle and Tzanakou, 2014b).

Apart from students with international experience, business expatriates also attract the attention of researchers working in the field of mobility (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova et al., 2003; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). Large international companies employ expatriates from different countries across the globe. Thus, there is a need to generate knowledge about their experience abroad in order to improve the practice of global talent management. Despite the growing numbers of expatriate academics employed in universities around the world, the research on them remains limited (Richardson and McKenna, 2003; Selmer and Lauring, 2011). This study contributes to the field of studies on the mobility of the highly skilled by exploring the outcomes of mobility for expatriate social scientists as a part of the transition between doctoral education and a postdoctoral career abroad.

The academic literature focused on business expatriates concentrates mainly on the process of adjustment or labour market outcomes and employability of this research population after gaining international experience (Brewster et al., 2014; Kōu and Bailey, 2014; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). A number of studies focused on students experiencing international mobility explore skills developed as an outcome of mobility: namely, whether transferable employability skills can be acquired through this experience (Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2013). Drawing on a sample of stakeholders, including employers, business academics and students based in Australia, the qualitative research by Crossman and Clarke (2010) reveals that skills development is associated with international experience. This study (Crossman and Clarke, 2010) provides evidence that especially soft skills, including language acquisition, building networks, skills related to cultural understanding and ways of thinking, can be developed through mobility experience. The limitation of the research by Crossman and Clarke (2010) is that participants were not asked whether they all personally participated in international exchange and, if so, which type of international experience. This limitation is eliminated in the research presented in this thesis by the sample design, which includes only researchers who personally experienced international mobility.

The paper by Black and Duhon (2006) adopts a different research design and is focused on a graduate students' population. By examining the level of skills reported by the students before and after spending a year abroad, the paper by Black and Duhon (2006) provides evidence that international mobility experience leads to developing skills and capacities. This paper (Black and Duhon, 2006) draws attention to personal development, including confidence, resilience and self-awareness, and increased cultural awareness, including cultural empathy and intercultural communication, resulting from the international experience of students after a year abroad. The research presented in this thesis considers personal development as a potential outcome of experiencing international mobility, as suggested by Black and Duhon's (2006) paper. Moreover, the present research attempts to provide an understanding of reasons and mechanisms, explaining how mobility experience results in skills acquisition and personal development. The research by Jones (2013) serves as a conceptual underpinning for the present study and is discussed in greater detail later on in this section of the literature review chapter.

To explore the outcomes of mobility for expatriate researchers, this study highlights employment-related outcomes and skills developed through the experience abroad. This study draws conclusions based on information from the point of view of the research population about their perceived outcomes of mobility. In order to conduct this research, employability and research on skills development is reviewed in this section.

Employability can be understood as a set of skills and abilities a person has that enables them find employment, to remain and progress in employment and to change to a new employment, when required to do so (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Rothwell and Arnold, 2007; Thijssen et al., 2008; Green et al., 2013). According to Knight and Yorke (2002), employability goes beyond a set of skills and includes understanding, efficacy, beliefs and metacognition. Research in the field of skills suggests that, in addition to developing discipline specific skills, employees in different occupations are expected to bring a set of skills defined as "generic", "transferable" or "employability" skills (HM Treasury, 2004; Martin and Healy, 2008; Sheldon and Thornthwaite, 2005; Taylor, 2006; Tether et al., 2005). The employability skills required by employers in different sectors of the UK labour market include: communication (verbal and written), numeracy, IT, teamwork, problem-solving, ability to learn, leadership, motivation, discipline, self-confidence, self-awareness, networking, entrepreneurship and a capacity to embrace change (HM Treasury, 2004). These skills are considered as transferable because they are "seen as having a broad application

across a wide range of employment contexts and as transcending individual subjects” and are argued to be the basis for a “flexible” and “multiskilled” workforce (Keep and Payne, 2004: 57).

Different employability skills developed due to the experience of mobility are identified in existing research. First, a number of studies (Behle and Atfield, 2013; Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Sutton and Rubin, 2004) confirm that skills of intercultural communication can be developed through the experience of mobility, including those related to improved language skills. Second, international experience can result in developing project management and decision-making skills (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2009). These project management skills can also be labelled as problem-solving, risk-taking or organisational skills. Studies mentioning project management skills, acquired through mobility, are less numerous compared to research identifying skills development in the area of communication. Finally, self-awareness and personal independence are mentioned by Jones (2013b) and Crossman and Clarke (2010) as outcomes of mobility. These are the three main areas of skills identified in the existing literature that explores the outcomes of mobility with regard to skills development.

The study presented in this thesis examines which skills can be acquired by expatriate researchers as a result of their experience of academic mobility by adopting the skills framework developed by Jones (2013b). This skills framework, offering a distinction between people skills and self-sufficiency skills, is suitable for this research because of accounting for employers’ needs, on the one hand, and the chance to develop these skills through mobility, on the other hand (Jones, 2013b: 101). In the paper on skills development through the experience of studying abroad, Jones (2013b) presents a list of the key transferable employability skills that are sought after by UK employers according to the priority ranking of global competencies developed by Diamond and colleagues (2011) and presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Priority ranking of global competencies by employers (from Diamond et al., 2011)**

<i>Global competencies</i>	<i>Mean ranking</i>
An ability to work collaboratively with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries	8.2
Excellent communication skills: both speaking and listening	7.5
A high degree of drive and resilience	5.6
An ability to embrace multiple perspectives and challenge thinking	5.4
A capacity to develop new skills and behaviours according to role requirements	4.6
A high degree of self-awareness	4.4
An ability to negotiate and influence clients across the globe from different cultures	4.0
An ability to form professional, global networks	3.9
An openness to and respect of a range of perspectives from around the world	3.6
Multi-cultural learning agility (for example able to learn in any culture or environment)	2.4
Multilingualism	1.7
Knowledge of foreign economies and own industry area overseas	1.7
An understanding of one's position and role within a global context or economy	1.6
A willingness to play an active role in society at a local, national and international level	0.5

With reference to the priority ranking by employers presented in Table 1 (above), the paper by Jones (2013b) provides evidence that these competencies and skills can be developed through the international experience. Employability skills are divided in the paper into two categories – “people skills” and “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills” (Jones, 2013b: 101). The first category “people skills” includes a range of skills and abilities related to communication and the ability to work with other people, such as networking or international communication, while the second category “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills” includes skills related to individual performance, such as risk-taking or problem-solving. The framework of employability skills developed by Jones (2013b) is presented in Table 2 below. In this skills framework, Jones considers prior research in the field of skills developments as an outcome of international experience and aims to bring together employers’ skills requirements and key skills developed due to the international work and study experience.

Table 2. Key transferable employability skills and international experience (from Jones, 2013b)

	<i>Key skills requirements of employers*</i>	<i>Key skills developed through international work placement, study, volunteering or service learning (with relevant reference shown in parentheses)</i>
<i>Self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills</i>	Self-awareness Initiative and enterprise Willingness to learn Planning and organizing Integrity Commitment/motivation Problem-solving Flexibility Self-management	Self-awareness, self-confidence, sense of identity, and personal independence (Black and Duhon, 2006; Hadis, 2005; NUS, 2012; British Academy, 2012) Being informed, greater interest in global affairs and cross-cultural perspectives (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2010; Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus, 2011) Organizational skills, project management, decision-making, creativity and taking on responsibility (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2010 and 2012; NUS, 2012) Vision, independence, experience, broader outlook and attitude (NUS 2012) Problem-solving, coping strategies and risk-taking (Jones, 2010 and 2012) Patience, flexibility, adaptability, open-mindedness and humanity (Williams, 2005; Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2012)
<i>People skills</i>	Team working Communication skills Foreign language Networking Leadership Customer service Interpersonal skills Intercultural skills	Team work and team leadership skills (Jones, 2010 and 2012; NUS, 2012) Fluency, accuracy and appropriateness of language competence (British Academy 2012) Mediation skills, conflict resolution, sensitivity, humility and respect (Jones, 2012) Forging of relationships and networks (Crossman and Clarke, 2010) Challenge to personal stereotypes, cultural relativism (Sutton and Rubin, 2004; Jones, 2010) Enhanced intercultural communication, conducting business intercultural (Hadis, 2005; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2010 and 2012; Gu, 2012) Cultural empathy (Williams, 2005; Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke 2010; Jones, 2010) Non-judgmental observation, respect for local values without abandoning one's own (British Academy, 2012) Cultural understandings, ways of thinking and adaptation to complex cultural milieux (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; British Academy, 2012)

\*There are many similar lists produced by universities and employers around the world. This list is based on two sources, chosen to offer different national perspectives: Prospects: the UK's official graduate careers website ([www.prospects.ac.uk/job\\_applications\\_what\\_do\\_employers\\_want.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job_applications_what_do_employers_want.htm)), and University of Sydney guidance ([sydney.edu.au/careers/career\\_advice/downloads/id\\_emp\\_skills.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/careers/career_advice/downloads/id_emp_skills.pdf)). It has been grouped into two broad themes by the author. Also cited are literacy, numeracy, commercial awareness and technology skills which have not been included here.

The transferable employability skills framework developed by Jones (2013b) is selected as an appropriate conceptual underpinning for the present research for three reasons. First, the framework presents transferable skills as opposed to discipline-specific skills, which is fit for the purpose of the present research focused on the population of PhD graduates in the broad range of social sciences including different disciplines. Second, the skills framework by Jones (2013b) was developed for the population of university students and graduates, so it can be applied for the research population of the present study. Finally, by considering the priority ranking of global competencies by employers (Diamond et al., 2011), the skills framework by Jones (2013b) presents skills developed through international experience and employability. This is important for the research presented in this thesis which is aimed at exploring career-related mobility outcomes of studying for a doctorate abroad. Therefore, the skills framework by Jones (2013b) serves as a conceptual underpinning for the present research, exploring employability, global competencies and transferable skills as mobility outcomes of expatriate researchers in social sciences.

The studies mentioned above, which are focused on skills development through mobility mainly draw on the analysis of quantitative survey data. So, there is a need for more qualitative studies providing in-depth knowledge about the outcomes of mobility and explaining the emergence of these outcomes. This study is building on data providing information on how expatriate researchers perceive their motivation for moving abroad and the outcomes of mobility.

In conclusion, the literature outlined in this chapter provides the theoretical background for this study by reviewing conceptual and empirical research in the areas of career development and mobility of skilled workers. This review develops an overview of different studies relevant for this research. Some studies are focused on the career development of academics, others concentrate on the mobility of highly skilled workers, and yet others provide information about all PhD students and PhD holders regardless of their mobility experience. The studies included in this review were selected based on the research topic of this study, in order to outline a niche for this study in the scope of scholarly literature.

#### 2.4 SUMMARY OF RELEVANT FINDINGS IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

To summarise the most important findings identified in this literature review, they are divided into three main areas, according to the structure of the review: career theories, research on PhD students and graduates, and the mobility of highly skilled workers. The

theory of career construction, boundaryless and protean career concepts were reviewed in the first section about career theories.

The most relevant point from the focal theory of this research is the idea that individuals construct their career by deciding to take certain steps in order to reach their aim, and that careers do not unfold themselves as independent constructs (Savickas, 2005). This research is based on this theoretical idea in exploring the career development of expatriate researchers from their own perspective by looking at particular career choices also related to the experience of mobility.

Apart from this point, three components of career construction – vocational personality, life themes, and career adaptability – serve as a background for producing the research design of this study. The concept of life themes, postulating that individuals want to realise their self-esteem through choosing an occupation, is incorporated into the study design by exploring the motivation of the research participants to engage in doctoral study, to work abroad, and to make decisions about their postdoctoral career after PhD completion. Career adaptability, the third component of career construction theory, is seen as an ability to change attitudes or develop capacities in order to fit into a new occupational role and is a crucial component providing theoretical underpinning for exploring skills development and identity changes of expatriate researchers in the findings section focused on the outcomes of mobility.

The protean career concept gives two conceptual dimensions for this research: being driven by personal values in choosing a career and being self-directed in career decision-making (Briscoe et al., 2006). Referring to this concept, this research aims to find out whether expatriate researchers can be considered as protean careerists. In addition, the boundaryless career concept offers a model for conceptualising the physical and psychological mobility of workers in the contemporary labour market and outlines possible barriers they may face when developing their careers (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

The next section of the literature review on doctoral students and graduates provided insights into the characteristics of the labour market for this population and the factors influencing postdoctoral careers and the value of a PhD degree. Several key findings from this section underpin the design of the present research. First, the labour market for doctoral graduates is insecure owing to temporary conditions of employment, especially in the early postdoctoral career (Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999), which is the period of career on which this research is focused. Nevertheless, research shows that doctoral graduates across different

disciplines and subject areas are mainly satisfied with their employment (Auriol, 2007; Auriol et al., 2010; Calmand, 2011). Building upon the knowledge available from previous studies, this research explores the satisfaction of expatriate researchers with their current employment situation and issues related to the insecurity of a postdoctoral career, also with regard to the coping strategies of expatriate researchers when dealing with these career-related challenges. Moreover, the research presented in this thesis suggests considering the initial motivation to pursue a PhD study as crucial for gaining understanding of subsequent satisfaction with the postdoctoral employment of the research participants.

Second, four factors were identified in the existing research as affecting postdoctoral career patterns. These factors occur during studying for a doctorate but influence later career development. These are PhD funding (Ehrenberg and Mavros, 1992), quality of institution chosen for doctoral study (Levin and Stephan, 1991), discipline of the doctorate (Calmand, 2011), and the influence of doctoral supervisors (Mitchell et al., 1999). In this research, these career determinants are accounted for when collecting and analysing data related to the decision to study for a PhD. Beside factors occurring during doctoral study, a number of personal characteristics are influential for postdoctoral career choices. Factors identified in the scholarly literature include gender (Nerad and Cerny, 1999), initial motivation to study for a PhD (Hodsdon and Buckley, 2011), and circumstances of private life (Mitchell, 1996). These factors are also taken into account when conducting this research.

The last section of the literature review focused on the mobility of skilled workers and provides insights into two aspects of mobility especially relevant for this research. These are: motivation for mobility and outcomes of mobility. Among identified motivations and reasons for mobility individual factors play an important role for this study as they highlight the ways individual factors can influence the decision of expatriate researchers to move abroad. So, knowledge about the reasons of skilled workers to move abroad are used as a point of reference in this research, generating knowledge about expatriate researchers as a part of the highly skilled workforce.

Three areas of reasons to move abroad were highlighted in the scholarly literature. These are: career-related considerations, individual interests, and circumstances of private life (Dickmann et al., 2008; Richardson and Mallon, 2005; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). First, research provides evidence that skilled workers move abroad because they believe that international experience will enhance their career perspectives (Stahl and Cerdin, 2004). Second, motivations identified by existing studies in the field are to do with the identity or



personal character of skilled workers, such as: curiosity, desire to travel, and wish to be challenged (Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Finally, private life circumstances can be influential, such as the partner's career and interests, and children's educational prospects (Sparrow et al., 2004).

Regarding the outcomes of mobility, research has shown that a set of skills can be developed or acquired through experience. The following skills belong to this set – skills of intercultural communication (Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010), project management and decision-making skills (Crossman and Clarke, 2010), and self-awareness and personal independence (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Johnes, 2009). These skills identified by the research on this topic were considered when designing the survey questions related to skills development and were also used to inform interview guidelines to be used with research participants.

## 2.5 RESEARCH NICHE

By drawing on the knowledge available, this study avoids repetition, and develops a relevant research question for the investigation. According to King and colleagues (1994), research is supposed to enrich existing academic studies by providing empirical evidence that allows an increase in understanding or generates new knowledge explaining the nature of relevant social phenomena or processes. In other words, besides social relevance, a research project should contribute to already existing knowledge presented in the scholarly literature in the field.

A research niche was identified for this study through reviewing the existing academic literature and career theories across the fields of academic mobility and career development and summarising the main findings that are relevant for the present research. The research niche for this study is identified as research into the experience of postdoctoral career transitions, looking at aspects of the academic mobility experience and the postdoctoral career development of a specific under-researched population of expatriate researchers in social sciences who had also been awarded their doctoral degrees abroad. Therefore, the present study complements the existing research and advances available knowledge, first, by combining two areas of research – academic mobility and career development. By building on the existing conceptual and empirical knowledge, this study brings different strains of the research together in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the career transition experience by paying attention to important contextual details.

Second, this study explores the mobility experience and career development of the research population of expatriate postdoctoral researchers in social sciences. Research into this area is gaining more importance for knowledge-based economies but is also considered to be underexplored in the scholarly literature (Leonard, 2000; Mangematin and Robin, 2003), especially in comparison with research on graduate careers and careers of researchers in the STEM disciplines (Ackers, 2005; Iredale, 2001; Sretenova, 1994).

Third, specific areas, where available research and evidence remains limited, in the fields of career development and academic mobility research were identified as underexplored in the literature review chapter. Scholars suggest that more research is needed to cover these gaps in knowledge. These underexplored areas are the non-financial value of the doctoral study experience for PhD graduates, especially regarding social and cultural change (Casey, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 2000), lack of in-depth understanding and explanations of the reasons behind the career choices of doctoral graduates (Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999), motivation for a doctoral study, especially linked to later career development (Leonard, 2000, Mangematin and Robin, 2003), and even the in-depth qualitative research into the experiences of expatriate academics (Richardson and McKenna, 2003; Selmer and Lauring, 2011). Moreover, the need for more qualitative research paying attention to important contextual details shaping experience and to the individual perspective of the research population is proposed (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Richardson and McKenna, 2003).

The present research aims to address the small gaps in the fields of academic mobility and career development, outlined in the above paragraph, in order to make a considerable contribution to knowledge and scholarly literature. In order to achieve this aim, the study adopts the qualitative analysis of the interview data accomplished by the quantitative analysis of survey data, explores the gaps in knowledge identified above by paying attention to the perspective of the expatriate researchers and to their own perception of their experience. The mixed-methods methodology adopted in this research allowed collecting and analysing research data about the career stories and experiences of academic mobility, and the evaluation of the postdoctoral career transitions of the research population from their subjective perspective. The literature reviewed in this chapter provides this research with a substantive theoretical background and allows for the design of relevant research questions and for choosing an appropriate methodology to provide replies to the formulated research questions.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

The methodology chapter presents the research design of the study, methodology and methods selected to conduct this research, and also ethical concerns. First, the methodological framework – the mixed-methods approach is outlined. Second, the research population and the sample of the study is presented, including the selection criteria of the sample. Third, semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method and the online survey as a quantitative method are discussed separately, by focusing on the data collection, data analysis, and presenting the profiles of the research participants. Fourth, the ethical concerns involved in the process of the research are discussed by demonstrating a careful consideration of the research ethics. Finally, this chapter explains how the two datasets – qualitative and quantitative – are brought together for the purpose of this research.

Qualitative interviews are the central method used in the research to investigate how expatriate researchers experience the transition between doctoral education abroad and their postdoctoral career. In exploring their experiences, the study aims to understand the reasons for career and mobility choices of expatriate researchers, leading to the postdoctoral career transition. An online survey supports this study by providing the numerical data collected from a bigger sample of the research population.

### 3.1 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK – MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

A mixed-methods approach combining the analysis of interview and survey data was adopted in this research. Twenty qualitative interviews and 281 survey responses by expatriate early-career researchers holding a PhD degree in social sciences were collected for this study. The qualitative interviews were analysed by using thematic analysis (Greg et al., 2012) in the software NVivo. Descriptive analysis of the quantitative data from the online survey was performed in the software SPSS. Both methods applied in this research complement each other in order to reach the major aim of this study – to explore the transition between doctoral education abroad and a postdoctoral career.

A mixed-methods approach was adopted in this study in order to overcome existing limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods, when used separately. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), one of the main purposes of mixed-methods research is to counterbalance the existing weaknesses of the separate research methods. On the one hand, quantitative methods cannot capture the context and circumstances of decisions and situations being researched. On the other hand, qualitative methods are not able to produce

generalisable findings due to a small sample size. By combining data from interviews and an online survey, this research overcomes limitations of both methods to a certain extent. Qualitative analysis of the interviews allows explanations for the transitions and career-related decisions made by participating expatriate researchers.

Although the methods applied in this study mutually complement each other, it was decided that qualitative interviews play the primary role and the survey a secondary role. This decision was made based on the research niche for this study, outlined in the second chapter of the thesis. Prior research claims that there is a need for more qualitative studies in the fields of academic mobility and the postdoctoral career (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Richardson and McKenna, 2003), to provide an in-depth, comprehensive explanation of the experience, paying attention to the context of decision-making and giving voice to the research participants to demonstrate their perceptions and perspectives.

The importance of mixed-methods research in the area of education and employment is highlighted in some of the studies focused on skills development of the professionals in the UK (Purcell et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2008). The role of the interviews providing more in-depth information besides a broader-scale quantitative survey is emphasised. The UK context is crucial for this study as the majority of research participants either studied or worked in the UK at a point of their education and career. Thus, this research follows the studies mentioned above by adopting a mixed-methods research design.

In this study a mixed-methods approach helps to provide a detailed and, at the same time, generalisable understanding of the complex and dynamic phenomenon of career development. Currall and Towler (2003) argue that a mixed-methods approach should be applied to explore process and dynamic phenomena. This study aims to explore transitions between a doctoral education abroad and a postdoctoral career and to understand the motivations for and outcomes of academic mobility, as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. So, a mixed-methods approach is a good fit for the research.

### 3.2 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research population of this study comprises of expatriate researchers with a doctoral degree in social sciences, completed outside of their country of origin. The country of origin is operationalised as the country where participants were either born and/or raised until the age of 18. Some participants moved to the host country of their PhD with the purpose of studying for a doctorate; while others moved abroad prior to embarking on their doctoral

degree for different reasons, such as studying for a master's degree or working in paid employment (Kelo et. al, 2006). As this study is focused on the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), all the research participants hold a doctoral degree from a European country and have experienced academic mobility during their doctoral studies abroad. After completing their PhDs, the majority of participants became academics involved in research or teaching at universities or research centres. Some, though, decided to work outside the academic labour market but still work in research-related jobs. This resulted in naming the research population of this study expatriate *researchers* rather than expatriate *academics*, in order to accommodate those working outside of academia after their PhD. Nevertheless, the majority of the research participants are employed within higher educational settings.

The sample of the research population used for the data collection of this study is a convenience sample (Flick, 2008), which means that research participants or cases selected to take part in the research are the easiest to access (Boyatzis, 1998; Flick, 2008; Saldana, 2009). Owing to the relatively small numbers and specific research population of expatriate researchers in social sciences and the limited time and budget for this research, the sample was constructed using a convenience sampling strategy (Flick, 2008). As a result, the representativity of respondents could be problematic. Expatriate researchers were invited to participate in the study by giving a qualitative interview or filling in the online survey until the expected sample size of survey and interview participants was reached. The call to participate in the research was distributed via email, social media platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn), and alumni offices of universities. In addition, a snowball strategy (Flick, 2008) was applied to invite further research participants. The sampling relied on snowballing, first via personal contacts, then via contacts of the interviewees. To minimise biases caused by this strategy, care was taken during the selection procedure to achieve a sample as diverse as possible in terms of country of origin, gender, and host country of PhD study. The data collection strategy is described separately for the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research in the subsection "Data collection" (Chapter 3) of the present chapter. Initially, it was planned to conduct 20 interviews and to collect around 300 survey responses. The decision regarding the sample size was made by orienting on the conducted research in an area with similar limitations and constraints (Tzanakou, 2012). The quantitative and qualitative sample should provide enough information in order to achieve the research aim and to reply to the research questions. The size of the sample should be achievable within the

financial and time limitations of the research project. The sample for the qualitative interviews differ slightly from those for the survey, as described below.

### *3.2.1 SAMPLE FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS*

The sample for the qualitative interviews include individuals fulfilling the following five criteria:

1. They hold a PhD in social sciences The doctoral degree was awarded in the last ten years
2. The PhD degree was completed abroad (for instance, outside the country they previously lived in)
3. The PhD was awarded either from a UK university or the European University Institute in Italy
4. They held citizenship of a European country or a work permit for the EU labour market at the time of the interview.

Social scientists were chosen as the research population for two reasons. First, there are relatively many studies about the mobility of highly skilled professionals focused on the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), while the career development of social scientists is less explored (Ackers, 2005; Iredale, 2001; Sretenova, 1994). Second, social scientists experience less external pressure to be geographically mobile after a PhD in comparison to the physical scientists. Specialists in the STEM fields are often required to be geographically mobile if they want to succeed in their early career (Ackers, 2005; Peixoto, 2001). Thus, exploring the reasons of social scientists to develop their career abroad is particularly relevant, as it can be expected that they experience less external pressure and expectation of the scientific community to do so and may be more inclined to make decisions based on their individual internal motivation.

The time range was set from one to ten years after completion of a doctoral degree. This was in order to capture individuals who have already made the transition to a postdoctoral job and yet recent enough so that they could still remember their motivation, the process of looking for a postdoctoral position, decisions taken about their postdoctoral career and their mobility.

To be included in the sample, graduates should have completed the entire doctoral degree abroad. Hence, this research is concentrated on degree mobility (Carlson, 2013; Gordon and Jallade, 1996), and not on credit mobility meaning that students have spent part of their

studies abroad, for example, ERASMUS students on a year abroad (Jahr and Teichler, 2002; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Rodríguez González et al., 2011). British universities were selected to be included in the sample for the interviews, because UK educational institutions attract many foreign postgraduate research students by offering degrees in English language combined with a good reputation. Descriptive data demonstrating the numbers of international postgraduate research students in the OECD countries is provided in the subsection “International postgraduate student mobility” in the Introduction chapter (Chapter 1) of the present thesis. The European University Institute (EUI) located in Florence, Italy, was also included as it offers an entire PhD degree in the English language and full funding to all accepted PhD students from any country.

In order to develop an understanding of the interviewees’ profiles and their life situations, Table 3 below provides descriptive information about their gender, age, background, education and marital status.

**Table 3. Information about the interview participants of this research**

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>EU/Non-EU</i>	<i>Country of origin</i>	<i>Country of PhD</i>	<i>Current country</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>PhD finished</i>	<i>Language of interview</i>	<i>Form of interview</i>
<i>Maria</i>	Female	35-40	EU	Denmark	UK	UK	Ethnic relations	Married	Yes	2011	English	Face-to-face
<i>Ingrid</i>	Female	28-34	EU	Norway	UK	UK	Social policy	Single	No	2013	English	Skype
<i>Sarima</i>	Female	28-34	Non-EU	Nigeria	UK	UK	Politics	Single	No	2010	English	Skype
<i>Gabriella</i>	Female	28-34	EU	Rumania	UK	France	Sociology	In relationship	No	2012	English	Skype
<i>Marina</i>	Female	28-34	Non-EU	Russia	Italy	USA	Politics	In relationship	No	2012	Russian	Skype
<i>Ahmet</i>	Male	28-34	Non-EU	Turkey	UK	UK	Politics	In relationship	No	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Feride</i>	Female	35-40	Non-EU	Turkey	Italy	USA	Politics	Single	No	2013	English	Skype
<i>Azra</i>	Female	28-34	Non-EU	Turkey	UK	France	Sociology	In relationship	No	2012	English	Skype
<i>Melis</i>	Female	28-34	Non-EU	Turkey	Italy	UK	Politics	In relationship	No	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Kerime</i>	Female	35-40	EU	Austria	Italy	UK	Politics	Single	No	2013	German	Skype
<i>Mattias</i>	Male	28-34	EU	Germany	Italy	Denmark	Politics	Single	No	2013	German	Skype
<i>Tim</i>	Male	35-40	EU	Netherlands	Italy	UK	Politics	Single	No	2013	English	Skype
<i>Laura</i>	Female	28-34	EU	Germany	Italy	Luxemburg	Politics	Single	No	2011	German	Skype
<i>Dilara</i>	Female	28-34	Non-EU	Turkey	UK	UK	Politics	Married	No	2012	English	Skype
<i>Paulo</i>	Male	28-34	Non-EU	Brazil	Italy	UK	Politics	In relationship	No	2013	English	Skype
<i>Alice</i>	Female	35-40	EU	UK	Italy	UK	Politics	In relationship	No	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Adriana</i>	Female	28-34	EU	Slovenia	UK	UK	Sociology	In relationship	No	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Levi</i>	Male	35-40	Non-EU	Israel	UK	UK	Employment research	Married	Yes	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Aglaia</i>	Female	28-34	EU	Greece	UK	UK	Employment research	Married	No	2013	English	Face-to-face
<i>Aydin</i>	Male	35-40	Non-EU	Turkey	UK	UK	Politics	Married	No	2013	English	Face-to-face

*\*All the names given above are invented to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.*



As the study is focused on the European labour market, a crucial condition to be included in the sample is either citizenship to any EU country or a work permit for the EU labour market at the time of the interview. In other words, the sample includes European citizens as well as researchers from non-European origin.

### 3.2.2 SURVEY SAMPLE

The survey sample differs slightly from the interview sample as it also includes individuals who completed a PhD in EU countries besides the UK or Italy to allow for a larger sample size. As this research is focused on the EHEA, all the European universities falling under the Bologna Process were included in the sample for the purpose of this study.

Research participants selected to be included in the sample are, undoubtedly, diverse as they studied at different universities, lived in different countries, conducted their PhD studies in different subjects, and have distinct cultural backgrounds and origins. Nevertheless, they qualify to be included in the sample frame of this research because they have all achieved their doctorate, within the EHEA and in social science. Their experience of academic mobility during their doctorate is a crucial component, as it means the participants are all expatriate and international, highly skilled professionals working in research-related positions.

### 3.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

As the first step of the mixed methods-approach, it was decided to conduct the qualitative interviews. After the interviews were conducted, transcribed and preliminary data analysis was performed, the second step of the approach was carried out – designing an online survey and collecting quantitative data. The decision to conduct the interviews first and the survey afterwards was made for two reasons. First, the qualitative data analysis is the more important part of the methodology in this research because the interviews provide in-depth, detailed information about expatriate researchers' career transition and experiences of mobility. The online survey was designed in order to reach a bigger sample size. Second, semi-structured interviews provide, first-hand, more detailed information about the issues faced by expatriate researchers during their career transition and mobility experience. So, the questionnaire for the online survey was designed based on the information provided by the same research population and not copied from previous research or developed based on existing theories.

A semi-structured interview method was chosen to collect qualitative data about the career and mobility stories of expatriate researchers. According to Silverman (2013), a semi-structured interview is an appropriate tool when the research aims to collect individual in-depth information about the interviewees and at the same time to assure that the data is comparable across the research participants.

### *3.3.1 PILOT INTERVIEWS*

A pilot qualitative study was conducted with three expatriate researchers with similar characteristics to the general research population in November and December 2013, prior to the main data collection. The general research population of interview participants is characterised in the subsection “Profile of the interviewees” of this chapter (Chapter 3). Pilot interviews were used to develop a list of questions for the main interviews and to get a background understanding of the research population. After transcription and analysis, the questions to be used in the main interviews were revised. Pilot interviews assured that questions for the main interviews are comprehensive, adequate, and straightforward. The interview guide for the qualitative data collection can be found in Appendix I.

### *3.3.2 DESIGN OF THE THEMATIC AREAS FOR THE INTERVIEW GUIDE*

A list of thematic areas for the interview and questions addressing these areas was developed prior to the field phase to address the research questions of this study. The interviews were focused on three thematic areas: experience before and during a PhD abroad, career development after a PhD abroad, and evaluation of mobility experience. This list of questions was flexible and topics could be modified or their order adapted, dependent on the interview situation. This strategy for conducting the interviews allowed the inclusion of some relevant follow-up questions and provided the interviewees as much room as possible to express their own perspectives and understanding of their experiences of academic mobility and career stories.

As CVs of the research participants were collected in advance, interview questions were slightly reshaped for each interview by using some of the information available from the individual’s CV. By including specific information about the individual’s education and career steps, it was possible to gain deeper information with some detailed explanation of these steps and decisions. Moreover, the researcher’s familiarity with the educational and career story of the participants, achieved through information from their CVs, helped to develop a higher level of trust between them.

In many cases, the order of the interview questions was changed and follow-up questions were added. This was especially the case with questions asking the research participants to reflect on their situation or experiences. For example, some research participants asked to repeat the question about advantages and disadvantages of mobility or identity change at the end of the interview because they wanted to have more time to think and reflect on it. The flexible structure of the interview questions gave room to the research participants to tell their career story and to emphasise experiences and situations that were especially important from their point of view.

### *3.3.3 DATA COLLECTION*

Individual career stories of twenty expatriate researchers were collected through semi-structured interviews from January 2014 till January 2015. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over Skype in English, German or Russian, according to the choice of the interviewee, and took between 45 and 90 minutes each. The interviewees were invited to share their experiences of living and working in different countries and to tell their individual career stories.

### *3.3.4 PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES*

The interview sample included 14 women and six men. Seven interviewees are in the age group between 35 and 40 years old, while the majority of the interviewees are younger – 28 to 34 years old. Half of the research participants have a European background, born and brought up in nine different European countries. The other half have a non-European background, coming from five different countries outside of Europe. In order to comply with the conditions named above (in the subsection 3.2.1 “Sample for qualitative interviews”), all hold a work permit for the EU. With regard to their relationship status, seven interviewees are single and 13 are married or in a relationship. Only two interviewees have children and these two are married to each other.

The sample includes early-career expatriate researchers with experience of academic mobility, and all the interviewees were awarded their doctoral degree outside of their country of origin between 2010 and 2013. Eleven participants completed their PhD in the UK and nine in Italy. At the time of the interview, the research participants were living in six countries: the UK, Italy, France, Denmark, Luxemburg and the USA. Thirteen interviewees lived in the UK, which is the most popular country of residence, followed by the USA and France with two interviewees each. Italy, Denmark and Luxemburg were countries of residence for one research participant each. However, capturing the country of residence at

the time of the interview is only a snapshot for this highly mobile research population. The majority of the research participants have changed their country of residence several times before and after their doctoral studies and some of them plan to move abroad again. More than half of the interviewees (11) moved to another country after completing their doctorate abroad and nine participants stayed in their PhD host country after graduation. All of those who stayed in the host country of their PhD completed their doctorate in the UK. Two other interviewees hosted in the UK during doctoral studies moved to France after their PhD graduation. After completing a PhD abroad, only one interview participant returned to her country of origin, which was the UK.

All the interviews were fully recorded and transcribed. Interviews in German and Russian were summarised and translated into English. Ethical consideration and data protection standards were followed as, before each interview, the participant was informed explicitly about the interview topic, the aim of the interview, and how her/his data was going to be used in the research. An information sheet was handed to the research participants prior to the interview (Appendix II). The anonymity of the participants was guaranteed during and after the interview. Research participants were asked to sign an informed consent form which told them about the recording of the interview, the anonymity of the participants, and also their right to withdraw their participation in this research at any time (Appendix III).

#### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The interview data was analysed by using thematic analysis (Greg et al., 2012) to assure a high quality of analysis and an in-depth explanation of the researched phenomena. This method of qualitative data analysis emphasises the rich description and organisation of the dataset, according to the literature on qualitative research methods (Boyatzis, 1998; Greg et al., 2012; Saldana, 2009). The qualitative data was analysed by applying structured categories and recurrent patterns. All the interview data was structured into analytical themes by applying a hierarchical coding system. The initial hierarchical codes were constructed based on the analysis of the pilot interviews and reviewed during the coding process as described below.

The qualitative interview data was analysed in six steps using the method of thematic analysis (Greg et al., 2012; Saldana, 2009) with a preliminary stage of the pilot interviews, as previously mentioned. As the first step, interviews were read in order to become familiar with the dataset by paying particular attention to the occurring and reoccurring themes. The second step was to generate initial codes. In order to do so, codes available from the pilot

interview analysis were taken into consideration as a basis. Then the qualitative interview data was collapsed into labels in order to create meaningful categories and comprehensive codes, to allow answering the research questions of the study. As the next step, codes were structured and restructured to combine them into overarching themes. The fifth step of the data analysis was to create an understanding of how the themes developed through the previous step corresponded with the theoretical perspective (Chapter 2) to assure that the research questions could be answered, the data supported the developed themes, and nothing was missing from the analysis. In order to ensure that nothing was missing, interviews were read again to reconsider codes and themes. At this stage, an understanding was achieved about how themes fitted together with the code, how data supported the codes, and how themes occurred through the analysis related to the theoretical background. The author of this thesis described and commented on every theme in several sentences in order to support the research findings with evidence from the qualitative interviews. As the last sixth step, themes relevant for providing replies to the research questions and achieving the aim of this study were selected for the writing-up stage.

#### *3.4.1 ONLINE SURVEY*

The quantitative data was collected electronically through an online survey, administrated through a commercial software package, Survey Monkey. This software package was chosen, after reviewing the packages available, as being the most reliable and appropriate in terms of assuring confidentiality of the participants and providing a user-friendly design of the survey questions.

The confidentiality of the participants was ensured at all times however, the participants had the possibility of leaving their email addresses at the end of the survey, if they agreed to be contacted for follow-up questions later on. The survey questionnaire was designed based on the findings from the qualitative analysis of the interviews and by referring to the theoretical background of this research and previous literature, outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2) of this thesis. The online survey with the expatriate researchers was conducted in order to base the qualitative findings into a quantitative context and to understand how the qualitative findings correspond to a larger group of respondents. So, the quantitative data analysis supports the qualitative data analysis by jointly orienting towards reaching the research aim of the present study.

### 3.4.2 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Topics covered in the survey questionnaire reflected the research questions so as to gather appropriate quantitative data for further analysis, in order to provide additional evidence and insights into the expatriate researchers' experiences of postdoctoral career transition. Before designing the questionnaire for this research, previous studies about career, education and academic mobility were consulted (Brown et al., 2010; Purcell et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2008). The survey questionnaire was designed by orienting on previous research in the field, the theoretical background of this study, and the findings identified through the qualitative interview analysis, specifically the overarching themes and the codes within these themes. Five pilot participants were asked to fill in the online survey and to provide feedback about comprehensiveness, structure and formulation of the survey questions. After the feedback from the pilot participants was received, the survey questions were reviewed and redesigned accordingly. Then the online survey was ready for the data collection (Appendix IV).

The survey questionnaire was designed following two main purposes – to be comprehensive and to be as short as possible. The survey questionnaire included 42 questions divided into four thematic sections. These sections are: general information, doctoral education abroad, postdoctoral career, and experience of mobility. In the first section of the survey questionnaire, personal descriptive data was collected, such as gender, age, country of residence and year of PhD award, in order to understand the context of the research participants. In the second section, information about the educational period abroad during the doctoral study was collected. Respondents were asked about their motivation to study for a PhD and their reasons to move abroad in order to study. The third section of the survey gathered information about the postdoctoral career development of the respondents by asking them about their current position and also motivation to live in their current country of residence. The final section of the survey was designed to collect information about the personal perception of the mobility experience by the respondents. In this section participants were asked about advantages and disadvantages of mobility, skills development, and identity change due to living and working in a foreign country.

Before the survey, there was an introduction section outlining the research topic and the criteria for the research participants to be included in the sample of the study. Moreover, several screening questions were included in the structure of the survey to ensure that all the participants corresponded with the sample selection criteria. However, the survey participants who did not meet the screening questions could still fill in the survey. These participants

were excluded from the sample for the analysis presented for this thesis. For example, survey participants who completed their doctorate abroad but in the USA instead of Europe, or experienced academic mobility but hold a PhD from their home country, or completed their doctoral studies longer than ten years ago were excluded from the sample. For further information, see “Research population and sample” (Chapter 3). Overall, 512 responses were collected. From these responses, 281 participants completed the survey questions entirely and passed through the screening questions at the beginning ensuring that they belonged to the target group; these were included in the sample of the present research.

The survey was designed as a mix of open-ended and non-open-ended questions. In addition, each question allowed the choice to select “other”, so participants could provide their own ideas and reasons if they were not available from the response options. The questionnaire was designed as a mix of single-response and multiple-reply questions. The questions about motivation and reasoning for decisions related to the education and career of respondents were asked in two steps. First, the survey participants were asked to select up to three reasons from the list of options. After that, they were asked to state their single main reason for the same decision. This approach for gathering information about motivation and reasoning was chosen to ensure the simplicity of the survey questions for the respondents and, at the same time, to acquire data for the main and secondary reasons underlying certain decisions related to education and career. The full survey questionnaire is included in Appendix IV.

### 3.4.3 SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

Expatriate researchers who completed a PhD in social sciences were invited to participate in the online survey via personal emails, posts on social media webpages of conference organisers, and alumni offices. Emails were sent out directly to researchers employed at universities within the European Union and to the alumni offices of the same universities to distribute the call among PhD graduates. Moreover, survey participants were asked to distribute the call to their colleagues and former peers during PhD studies. This strategy for the survey distribution allowed the finding of some participants working in research positions outside of academia. Nevertheless, the majority of participants were academics, as is shown in the later section of this chapter showing the profile of survey participants.

To distribute the personal emails, first, members of staff with a doctoral degree at the departments of social sciences employed in research-related positions were identified. Second, researchers with foreign-sounding names and surnames compared to names usual to the host country were selected to be invited to participate in the survey. This approach was

chosen as appropriate to reach the required research population following the study by Selmer and Lauring (2011), who adopted this method to identify expatriates in academic institutions based in different European countries.

In total, 1263 expatriate researchers were invited to participate in the survey via personal emails. In addition, the invitation to participate in the survey was posted on social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook, for example, on the Facebook pages of international conference organisers, and also sent to the alumni offices and departments within social sciences at universities. So, the call reached a high number of researchers overall. The survey was accessible online from April until July 2015.

It should be noted that one of the survey questions about the skills developed through the experiences of mobility was revised in June 2015. This was question number 37: “Which skills did you acquire because of living and working in different countries?” The list of skills which could be selected as a reply to the question was amended by adding the new skills of critical thinking, reflection, information-searching, and networking skills. 112 responses were received for this amended question. The reason for changing the list of skills was related to new findings from the qualitative analysis of the interviews. The interview analysis provided evidence that these skills could be developed through the experience of mobility at the time when the survey was running for data collection. So, it was decided to adapt the survey to the new findings from the analysis. As a consequence of these changes, respondents filling in the survey after the new categories were added to the list of skills had more categories to choose from. Nevertheless, these changes did not affect the number of responses collected for the initial skills listed because the survey question was designed as multiple-response, and the respondents could state as many skills as they wanted. In addition, an open-response option was provided to create additional space for the participants willing to provide a more detailed answer.

#### *3.4.4 SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS*

Quantitative data from the online survey was analysed using the software SPSS. Descriptive analysis of data was performed in order to explore possible associations between specific characteristics of the sample participants, such as gender, age group, ethnic background and outcomes of mobility experienced by them or reasons guiding their decisions related to education and career.



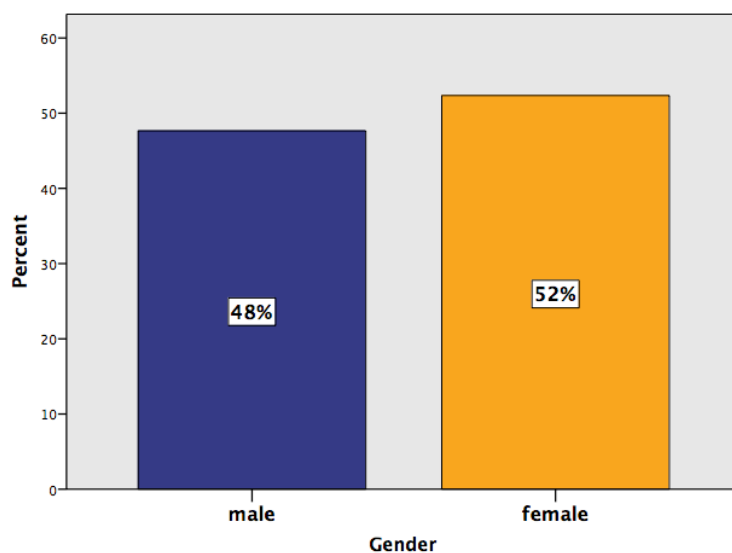
### 3.4.5 PROFILE OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

This section presents the main demographic information about the sample population participating in the online survey. In order to respond to the research questions of this study, demographic and contextual data was collected: who these expatriate researchers are – how old they are, where they live, and what the contexts of their doctoral studies and postdoctoral career are. So, before exploring the motivations for and outcomes of education and career-related decisions, the main characteristics of the survey respondents are introduced here.

#### 3.4.5.1 Personal information – gender, age and marital status

In terms of gender distribution, there are slightly more female than male survey participants, as Figure 4 (below) shows; but the difference is only six per cent. This gender distribution means it is possible to perform analysis for each gender within this research.

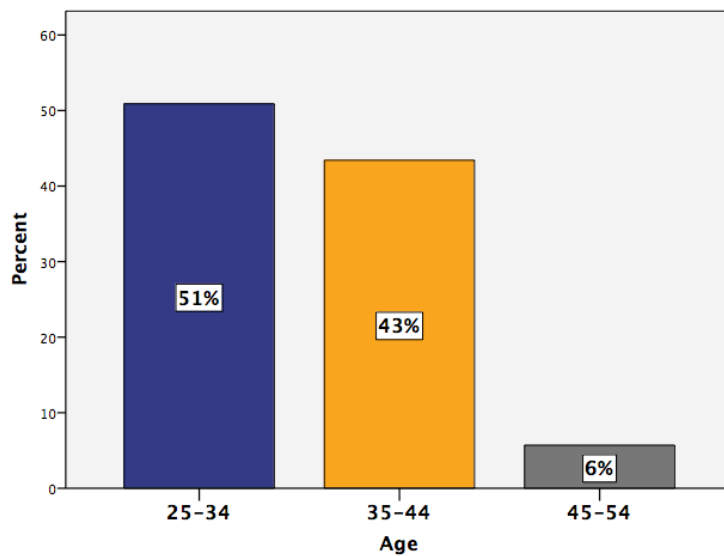
Figure 4. Gender of the survey respondents



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

In terms of age, as Figure 5 below demonstrates, the majority of the survey participants are 25 to 34 years old, followed by those aged 35 to 44.

Figure 5. Age of the survey respondents



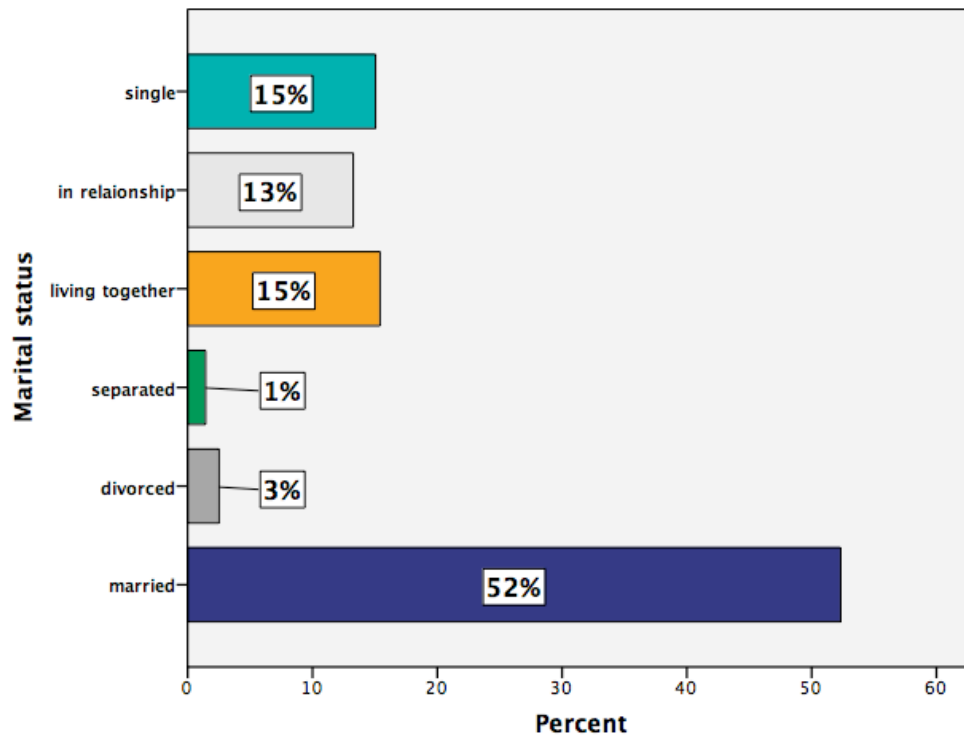
Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

Only five per cent of the survey respondents are older than 45 and no one is younger than 25. Thus, the research population of this study consists of young adults, and the majority of them are in their 30s. Age can be an important factor for exploring the transition between a doctoral education abroad and entering the postdoctoral labour market for PhD holders and, thus, should be considered for further analysis.

As the research population of this study consists of young adults, it can be assumed that they are passing through different transitions in their life course simultaneously. So, their career transition should be studied within the social, cultural and structural context of their life (Elder et al., 2003). Besides the transition between completing their PhD and beginning their postdoctoral career, expatriate researchers aged in their mid-30s may pass through transitions related to changing roles, for example becoming parents, and also experience changes related to the ageing process. This should be taken into account for the analysis of findings.

With regard to the relationship status of the survey population, over half of the respondents are married, as Figure 6 below shows. Another 28 per cent of the respondents are in a relationship with a partner, living apart or together. The remaining 19 per cent of the respondents are single or divorced/separated.

Figure 6. Marital status of the survey respondents

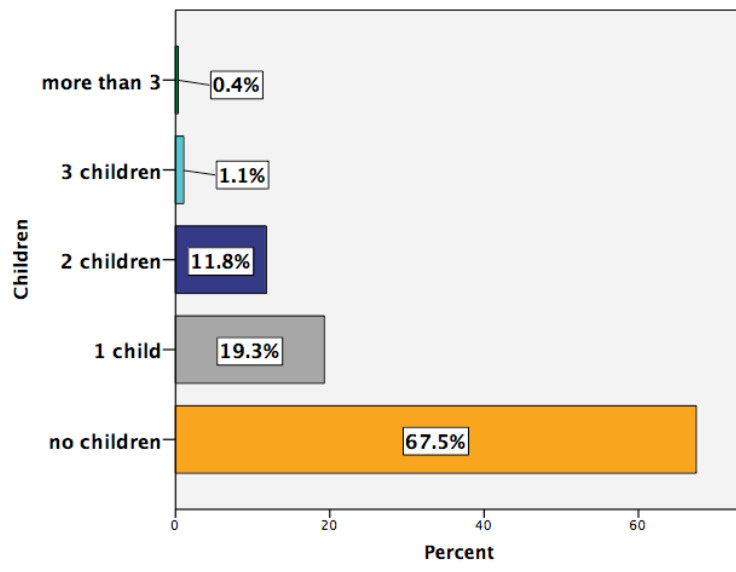


Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

The relationship status of the expatriate researchers is important for this study because it is focused on the analysis of decision-making and motivation for certain career steps, which can involve moving house to a different place or different country. Thus, it can be a crucial point influencing this decision-making, whether an expatriate researcher is single or with a partner. It can be assumed that single people are more independent in deciding about their education, career and mobility, especially if it is related to moving abroad. Some studies focused on geographical mobility consider family as being important during deciding about career and mobility (Kofman, 2004; Sparrow et al., 2004; Richardson and Mallon, 2005). So, the relationship status of the researcher is an important factor for this research.

Another crucial factor influencing individual decision-making is parenthood. Figure 7 below provides information about the parental status of the survey respondents. Although the majority of the research participants are in a relationship, either married or with a partner, only one-third of the respondents have one or two children. Only one per cent of the respondents have three children and no one has more than three.

Figure 7. Parental status of the survey respondents

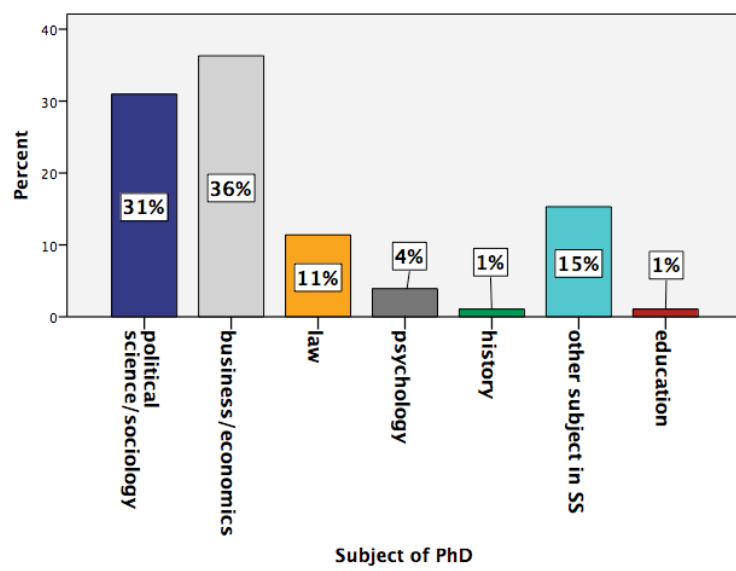


Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

### 3.4.5.2 Doctoral education and previous mobility

This section contains summarised information about the doctoral education and experiences of mobility of the research population. This information develops the understanding of the respondents' background and, thus, helps to analyse the next steps in their career.

Figure 8. Subject of PhD

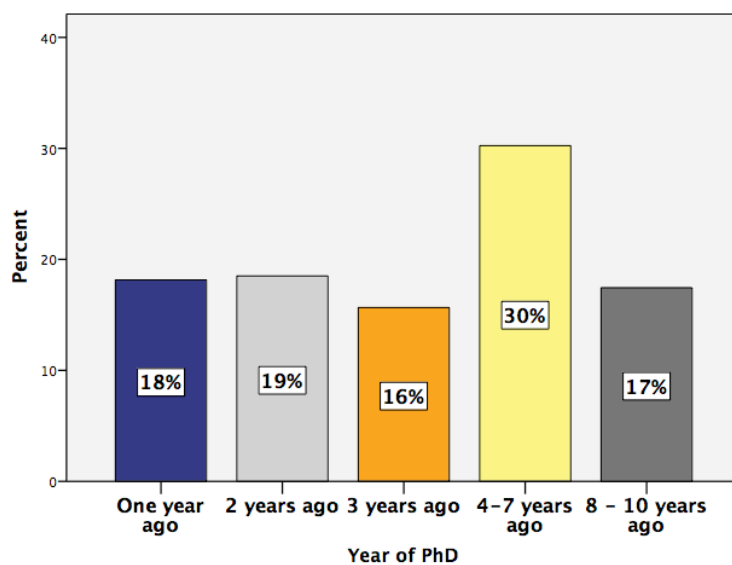


Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

As Figure 8 (above) demonstrates, the majority of respondents were awarded their PhD in business studies or economics, followed by politics or sociology. These social science subjects are the PhD subjects of two-thirds of the sample population. The replies from the column “other”, forming eight per cent of the responses, were checked to contain only subjects within social sciences, such as social entrepreneurship, employment research, interdisciplinary social sciences, media and journalism. Respondents who stated to have completed their PhD in subjects not related to social sciences were removed from the sample.

Figure 9 (below) shows the year of PhD completion of the survey participants. The online survey for this study was conducted in 2015. Half of the research population finished their PhD less than three years ago. A third of the respondents completed their PhD four to six years ago. Nearly a fifth of the participants completed their doctoral studies six to ten years ago.

Figure 9. Year of PhD completion

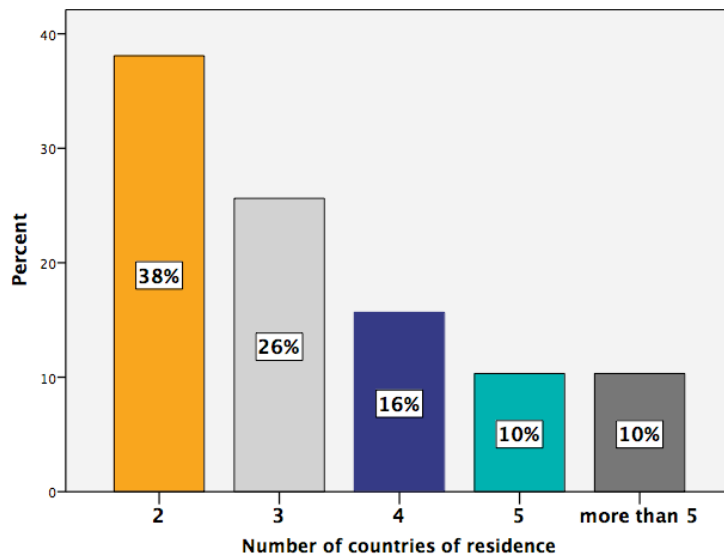


Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

As this study is focused on early-career researchers, it is important to know how many years have passed since their PhD completion.

The majority of the respondents have lived in two or three different countries, as Figure 10 (below) shows. Ten per cent of the survey participants are highly mobile. These expatriate researchers have lived in five or more different countries.

Figure 10. Number of countries of residence



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

Surprisingly, nine per cent of the respondents stated that they have lived in only one country. However, analysis of their responses on the questions about their current country of residence, country of origin and host country of PhD study showed that they had been living in more than one country. The reason for this response may be that these participants considered only the foreign countries they lived in and did not count their country of origin. So there was no need to remove these respondents from the sample. The reply to this question shows how challenging it is to collect the correct information through an online survey and how much the replies depend on the understanding of a question by a respondent.

#### 3.4.5.3 Current employment

Apart from general information and data about the educational background and mobility experiences of the research participants, it is crucial to gain knowledge about their current employment status. The absolute majority of the survey respondents currently work within higher education institutions, as Table 4 (below) shows.

Table 4. Current employment of the survey participants (participants stated “other” excluded)

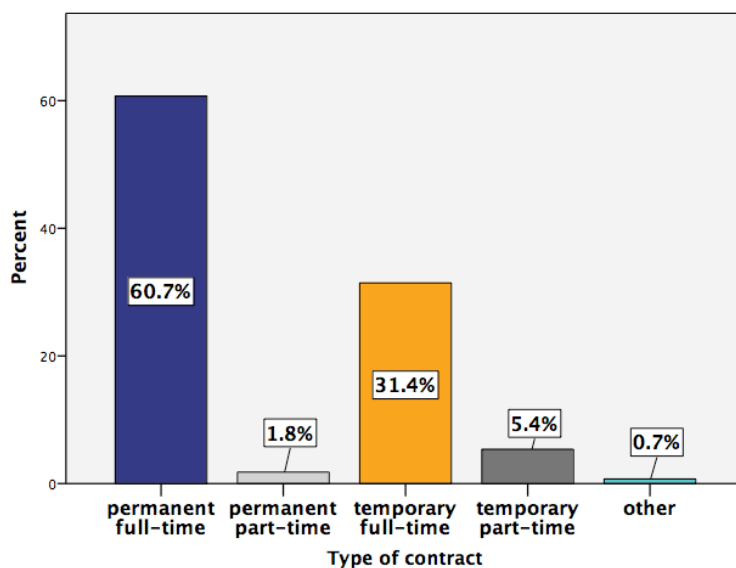
<i>Current Employment</i>	<i>Valid Per Cent</i>
<i>Academic job in HE</i>	94%
<i>Academic job outside of HE</i>	2%
<i>Academic and non-academic jobs combined</i>	3%
<i>Non-academic job</i>	1%

Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

Only seven per cent of the participants work outside of higher education, which is the result of the data collection strategy where the call to participate in the survey was mainly distributed in universities.

The majority of the survey respondents were employed on a full-time basis, two-thirds with a permanent contract and one-third with a temporary contract, as Figure 11 (below) shows.

Figure 11. Type of job contract of the survey participants



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

#### 3.4.5.4 Country of origin, host country of PhD and country of residence

The participants of this study are expatriate researchers from 59 different countries of the world. Of these, 167 respondents are from 29 EU countries and 114 respondents are from 40 non-EU countries. Among the researchers coming from European countries, 34 respondents

are German, 33 are Greek, and 20 are Italian. Among the researchers of a non-European background, 13 come from China and 11 are from Turkey. So, the sample of the research includes more expatriate researchers of a European background, than participants of a non-European background. This is caused by a high number of participants from Germany, Greece and Italy. At the same time, many non-EU countries are the countries of origin for only one or two research participants each. In addition, 52 survey respondents stated that either they were born and brought up in different countries or their parents were of different nationalities and 17 per cent of the respondents hold two or three citizenships. With regard to the increase of academic mobility in Europe, the paper by Kelo and colleagues (2006) argues that it is important to define international student mobility in order to understand which mobility trends can be captured by the statistical data available. Moreover, this paper (Kelo et al., 2006), capturing students' mobility at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, draws attention to the existing challenges of capturing student mobility. Specifically, Kelo and colleagues (2006) criticise the use of the "nationality" of students for capturing student mobility. According to Kelo and colleagues (2006: 196), "the use of 'nationality' data as a measure of true mobility would not be a major problem if every foreign student (or at least the overwhelming majority) had also been mobile prior to taking up studies in the 'host' country. But, as the present study confirms, this is far from being the case." So, the need to include additional measures is recognised in order to capture and analyse the "true" mobility of students. The present research takes on board the suggestion in their paper (Kelo et al., 2006) to capture prior mobility experiences and multinational family backgrounds in addition to the nationality of the research participants and considers these dimensions for the data analysis.

To create a picture of the research population and their background, information provided by the survey needs to be summarised. So, the sample of this study consists of half female and half male adults around 35 years old on average. The absolute majority of the expatriate researchers in the sample are in a relationship with a partner but do not have children. The expatriate researchers participating in the survey completed their PhD studies in 14 European countries: UK, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, and Austria. Of the sample population, 60 per cent come from 29 European countries and 40 per cent come from 40 countries outside of Europe. Seven per cent of the respondents were awarded their PhD in Italy. The remaining countries from this list hosted less than five per cent of the research population during their doctoral



studies. At the time of survey, the participants lived in 16 European and 11 non-European countries. The majority (80 per cent) of the sample population resided in the UK. The rest of the countries from the list were countries of residence for six to one expatriate researchers each. The reason for this is the survey distribution strategy. Half of the sample population completed their PhD one to three years ago, and the other half four to ten years ago. The majority of the research population of this study were awarded a PhD in one of the four subjects: business studies, economics, sociology and political science. The absolute majority of the sample participants were employed in full-time, permanent or temporary positions within higher education institutions. Importantly, the UK as a host country plays a distinct role in the present research because nearly all the participants have had experience of either studying or working in the UK prior, during or after completing their doctorate. The absolute majority of the participants were residents in the UK at the time when they filled in the survey. All the respondents were awarded a PhD in one of the 14 European countries. Of them, 60 per cent did their doctorate in the UK. So, expatriate researchers participating in the survey either have experience in UK higher education during their doctorate or the British labour market in the postdoctoral stage of their career.

### 3.5 ETHICAL CONCERNS

As both methods for data collection – interviews and survey – aimed to gather personal data, including some sensitive issues related to the private lives of the research participants, for example, experiences of failure during career progression in some cases, and issues related to discrimination and bullying in the workplace in other cases, the anonymity of the research participants and protection of their personal data was a major concern in this research.

In the call to participate in the interviews and online survey, it was outlined explicitly that participation in this research was voluntary and data provided by the participants would be protected, used for research purposes only, and presented anonymously. Interviewees were asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to the interview, containing an introduction to the research project, the note about data protection and anonymity, and the information that the interview would be recorded and transcribed by the researcher only. Interview participants and survey respondents had the right to withdraw their participation in the research at any time. Nevertheless, an option was offered to the survey respondents to leave their email address and their consent to be contacted.

### 3.6 COMBINING FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATASETS

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were strongly linked to each other during the stages of designing the questionnaire, piloting the research methods, data collection, and data analysis in this study. Themes and findings from the qualitative analysis of the interview data informed and shaped the questionnaire for the online survey. Designing the questionnaire based on the findings from the interviews with the same research ensured that questions reflected the experiences of the interviewees. This ensured that the survey was comprehensive and reflected the previous qualitative stage of the same research project.

This process of referring to different sources of data and combining the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis is called methodological triangulation (Mason, 2002). During the analysis of different sources of data new perspectives on the whole dataset can be discovered, which informs the analysis overall. The combination of methods can bring results, which would not be achieved otherwise (Mason, 2002).

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis are presented together in the three findings chapters showing the results of this study. These findings chapters are structured according to the topics covered in the research and not the research methods. So, quantitative and qualitative data are not divided into separate chapters but they support the findings of this research by providing relevant evidence related to the same thematic area but from different angles. Statistics from the quantitative analysis show, for example, how different reasons for certain career-related decisions are distributed within a bigger sample of expatriate researchers are supported by more in-depth explanations related to the context of these decisions provided by the qualitative interview analysis of the smaller sample of the same population.

The mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods was applied in this study because of the potential to overcome limitations of these methods when applied separately. This approach was selected to gather data from the research population of expatriate researchers in order to address the research question of this study. The research results confirm that this methodological approach was appropriate for this study as it allowed the research population to be reached and an understanding of their career progression and relevant context to be developed. Although, the qualitative and quantitative data complemented each other throughout the study and allowed certain limitations to be overcome, some challenges were faced due to applying the mixed-methods approach. The challenges of applying the mixed-methods approach while conducting the research are in line

with the experience of other researchers applying the same method (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Namely, a mixed-method approach is time consuming, involves some difficulties related to analysing different datasets and presenting the results of the analysis, and requires the researcher to have skills, such as interviewing skills, survey design and distribution skills, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis skills, and appropriate IT skills to operate the software for qualitative (NVivo) and quantitative (SPSS) data analysis. However, these challenges were managed in the present research. In addition, the selected approach was the most appropriate to address the research question of this study.

## CHAPTER 4. ACADEMIC MOBILITY: EXPECTATION AND REASONING

In an increasingly globalised world, the amount of people moving abroad to live and work is growing (Richardson, 2000; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Selmer and Lauring, 2011). In this context, there is a need to understand individuals' reasons and motivations. Recently, research topics such as organisational and self-initiated expatriates, business and academic mobility, and global talent management have been attracting the attention of more and more scholars (Hechanova et al., 2003; Selmer and Lauring, 2011). Nevertheless, existing scholarly literature studying the international mobility of skilled workers is highly selective and covers only certain parts of the phenomenon. This results in numerous gaps in the knowledge about internationally mobile people (Froese, 2012; Richardson, 2000). In order to develop a comprehensive theory of the geographical mobility of skilled workers, more research-based evidence and knowledge needs to be collected. In this context, it is important to study the expectations and reasoning of the expatriate researchers to complete their doctorate abroad. There are two dimensions to consider: first, the expatriate researchers must decide to undertake their PhD abroad; second, after completing their doctorate, they must decide whether to remain in the host country or to move, either to their home country or to a third country, and to shape their plans for the future in terms of place of residence. The present research builds on the finding proposed in the paper by Murphy-Lejeune (2002), which argues that the experience of international mobility provides motivation to experience more mobility in the future. So, by considering these two dimensions of reasoning – before and after a doctorate taken abroad, it is possible to investigate the interplay between the motivation to move abroad for a PhD and the decision where to reside afterwards.

This chapter provides an understanding of the reasons motivating expatriate researchers. Moreover, this chapter explores what the expatriate researchers expect from their experience of mobility acquired through moving abroad to study or work. An awareness of the expectations of expatriate researchers when spending certain educational and career stages abroad is important in order to evaluate the outcomes of mobility, which are discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 5). Then, through studying the outcomes, it is possible to explore whether these expectations were fulfilled.

This chapter is divided into three sections focusing on the expectations of and reasons for expatriate researchers to move abroad at different stages of their education and career. First, the reasons to undertake a PhD abroad are reviewed. Second, the decision of the expatriate

researchers to remain in their country of residence after completing a doctoral study abroad are analysed. Finally, future plans for geographical mobility of the research population are outlined. This chronological structure develops an understanding of how expectations of and reasons for mobility can evolve and change over time.

#### 4.1 REASONS TO UNDERTAKE A PHD ABROAD

Findings about the reasons motivating expatriate researchers to pursue a doctoral study in a foreign country are presented in this section. First, a broad overview of the reasons is provided by referring to the survey results of the present study. Then each reason is elaborated and explained by bringing in examples and evidence from the qualitative interviews. The decision to pursue a doctoral degree abroad is considered a stepping-stone in the academic career as argued by the researchers (Anderson, 2000; Auriol et al., 2009). Moreover, research in the field (Calmand, 2011; Enders, 2002; Schwabe, 2011) highlights that a doctoral degree is mainly required to apply for a position in the academic labour market in Europe. Thus, in order to explore the academic career of expatriate researchers in social sciences, their reasons for pursuing a PhD and for doing it abroad should be explored.

In response to the question regarding the main reason for doing a PhD abroad, nearly a third of the survey participants stated that it was related to underdeveloped academia in their home countries. The following statements by survey participants and interviewees provide some further information on this:

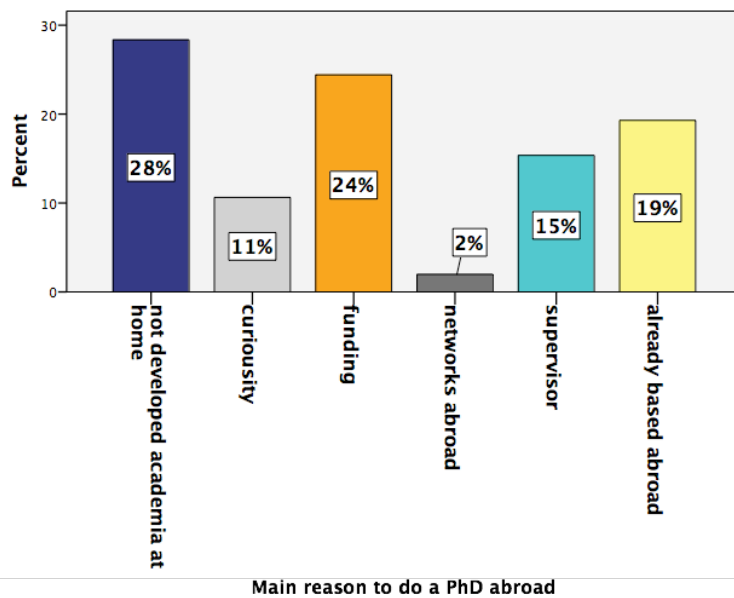
*Academia in my own country isn't as flexible and full of opportunities as it is in the UK.*

*Survey participant*

*Before I came here (to the UK) to do my master's I did my first master's in Turkey and I could see the differences, the approach, how things are valued here and overlooked back in Turkey. I had confidence that I could do something that is appreciated here. I didn't have any doubts or questions. I just jumped into (a doctorate in the UK).*

*Ahmet*

Figure 12. Main reason to pursue a PhD degree abroad



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

The second most popular reason for moving abroad for a PhD was funding. More than a fifth of the respondents were motivated to pursue a PhD abroad because of the funding they received for their doctoral study. This finding from the survey analysis was confirmed by the qualitative interview analysis. Namely, some expatriate researchers mentioned funding as an important factor in the decision to go abroad for a PhD. For example, Mattias said:

*I knew about this institute (where he completed his doctoral study) and I have applied there. Half a year later I received the invitation for an interview. Nevertheless, the actual reason to move there was not my doctoral study itself. But it was the place where I have received funding for it.*

*Mattias*

Initially, Mattias planned to embark on a PhD in his home country, Germany, but he decided to move to Italy because this was where he managed to secure doctoral funding. Mattias' decision-making about his study demonstrates that not all the expatriate researchers consciously chose to live abroad. On the contrary, some of them, such as Mattias, would have preferred to stay in their home country but moved abroad for financial reasons.

As the survey results show, not all the expatriate researchers moved to the host country of their doctoral study with the purpose of doing a PhD there. Nearly a fifth of the expatriate researchers stated in the survey that they had already been based in the country where they took their PhD. The reasons for including them in the sample are provided in the methodology chapter of this thesis. Like nearly the fifth of the survey participants, some of

the interviewees had already moved to a different country and then decided to embark on a doctoral study there.

Moreover, previous mobility experience could be observed in the qualitative interviews. All the 20 interviewees had lived abroad for at least three months prior to their doctoral study. For example, they had spent a part of their undergraduate studies in a different country organised through the ERASMUS exchange programme between universities, or they had already studied for a master's degree in a foreign country. Many of the interviewees mentioned that prior international experience had facilitated their decision to study for a doctoral degree in a different country:

*I wanted to do my PhD in England just because I liked the master's here so much compared to the master's at home.*

*Adriana*

The remaining reasons, stated in the survey, for pursuing a PhD abroad are considerably less popular. Only 13 per cent of the respondents moved to a foreign country because of a supervisor based there, and even less expatriate researchers were motivated by curiosity about foreign cultures. Only a small minority of the survey respondents mentioned private networks abroad as a motivation to do their PhD in a foreign country.

Interestingly, 12 per cent of the survey respondents selected the "other" option when replying to the question about the reasons for pursuing their doctoral study abroad. By providing open-ended replies, these respondents showed that they had more than one reason for doing their doctoral study abroad and they wanted to document this complexity. These are some examples of the reasons stated in the survey under the "other" option, demonstrating the diversity and complexity of the reasoning:

*Shorter and cheaper.*

*Survey participant*

*I got a teaching post at a UK University and was then able to do a PhD there, too, which made the process more convenient.*

*Survey participant*

*My parents were divorcing and I wanted to be far from them.*

*Survey participant*

*I was asked to apply for the Marie Curie Fellowship based in The Netherlands from Spain where I was working, one of the criteria of the fellowship is to work in a country other than the one you are applying from.*

*Survey participant*

*I had started a PhD in Spain and dropped out for not being happy about the supervision and academic culture there.*

*Survey participant*

*I wanted to move back to that country.*

*Survey participant*

The qualitative interview analysis confirms that, in many cases, the motivation to pursue a PhD abroad comprises of a number of interrelated reasons. For instance, Ahmet explained his reasons for pursuing his doctorate in the UK in the interview:

*I had such a nice year (abroad in the UK) and then I got a scholarship from the Turkish government. They paid a half of my PhD and then I got half of the scholarship from the university as well. So, I didn't need to pay my fees. So I decided that was an opportunity not to miss. So, I decided to stay. Before I came here to do my master's I did my first master's in Turkey and I could see the differences, the approach, how things are valued here and overlooked back in Turkey.*

*Ahmet*

Ahmet was born and brought up in Turkey. After studying as an undergraduate and completing a master's degree in his home country, Ahmet moved to the UK to study for a second master's. After completing his second master's, Ahmet stayed in the UK for a PhD and subsequently for a postdoctoral position at the same university. In the interview, he mentioned three reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree abroad. First, funding received was the decisive reason to study for a doctorate and to be hosted in the UK. Second, he was familiar with the environment in the UK because of coming to study for a master's degree prior to the doctorate. Finally, Ahmet compared the academic system in the UK and in Turkey and claimed to prefer the UK approach to research and study. So, Ahmet's responses demonstrate, first, how the decision to study for a PhD abroad is embedded in the career story and, second, how the motivation consists of an interplay of several reasons.

The decision to take a doctoral degree abroad can affect both the career and the future life of an individual. Expatriate researchers normally spent three or four years studying for a PhD. These years spent in a foreign country may affect future choices and aspirations regarding their life and career. Going abroad can considerably change people's perspectives on their place of residence. After completing a doctoral study abroad, the question of which country to live in will always be on the agenda for some expatriate researchers. So, the next section of



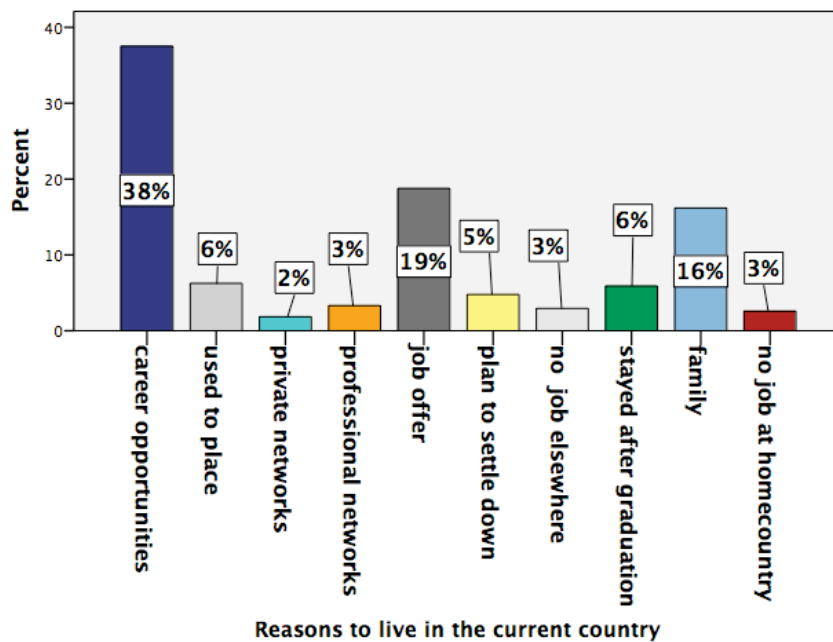
this chapter provides the analysis of expatriate researchers' decisions of where to live after finishing their doctoral studies abroad.

#### 4.2 DECISION WHERE TO LIVE AFTER A PHD ABROAD

After having spent several years abroad, the question of where to live in the next years becomes essential. For some expatriate researchers, it is not obvious any more where to build up their career and to spend their life, after they have ventured to move to a foreign country for the first time. This section explores why the expatriate researchers were living in their current country of residence at the time of data collection. For some of the research participants, it was the host country of their doctoral study; for others, it was their home country; and for others again it was another, different country. The reply to this question on the reasons behind the decision to live and work in a country during the postdoctoral career stage develops an understanding of which factors individuals consider important for choosing their place of residence. This section explores whether the factors influencing the decision of where to live after the PhD are mainly related to career or private life. Moreover, this section investigates the priorities for the expatriate researchers – place of residence, career opportunities, or a specific job offer received in a country. Exploring these issues increases the understanding of the expatriate researchers' strategy for organising their careers and private lives.

In the survey, respondents were asked to state their main reasons for living in their current country of residence. As Figure 13 (below) demonstrates, the majority of the survey participants were living in their current country because of career opportunities, followed by the second most popular reason – a job offer, which is the main reason for nearly a fifth of the respondents. A partner or children take third position as the reason for living in a particular country during the postdoctoral career stage.

Figure 13. Main reason to remain in the current country of residence



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

This data provides evidence for two findings. First, the two most popular reasons for living in a particular country are related to career. This finding provides evidence for the high career-orientation of the expatriate researchers who participated in the study, when discussing mobility-related plans. Specifically, the motivation to remain in the country of residence, where participants were based when taking part in the present research, is linked to career development. This finding goes in line with the research in the field (Stahl and Cerdin, 2004; Stahl et al., 2002) confirming the importance of career-related factors for the population of expatriate skills professionals when deciding to move abroad. Importantly, career development is captured in the survey through two categories – career opportunities in general and a specific job offer received in a country. The second finding shows that the category of general career opportunities is a more popular motivation to remain in a country than a specific job offer. In order to interpret this finding, a crucial difference between a job offer and career opportunities in a country should be highlighted. Namely, general career opportunities are an important factor for the whole family, while an individual job offer is important for one person only. As the majority of the survey participants were married or in relationships (Figure 6: 74), presumably, they needed to consider the careers of their partners as well as their own. The qualitative interview analysis confirms the relevance of career

opportunities for partners in the country of residence. Several interviewees stated this directly; for example:

*I would like to place my life here in the UK. I enjoy having the opportunity to travel, maybe with my partner. It should be good for him as well. It is not just about my career. It's about us. Otherwise we are not going to be very happy.*

Alice

Undoubtedly, there are other factors that are considered by expatriate researchers with families when moving abroad. For example, opportunities for children's education and schooling could play an important role. The research by Richardson and Mallon (2005) confirms that better educational chances for children are considered as a motivation to move and live abroad. As the research sample includes only a small proportion of participants with families and, especially, children (Figure 4: 72), this study does not attempt to provide an analysis of career-related factors for the subsample of participants with childcare responsibilities. Nevertheless, the third popular reason for living in a country of residence during the postdoctoral career stage is related to the participants' private relationships. Namely, 16 per cent of the survey respondents stated they were living in their current country of residence because of their partner and/or children (Figure 14: 93). Results from the qualitative data analysis support this finding. For instance, Gabriela was looking for a job in the same place as her partner:

*I will try to move closer to Brussels. This is just based on personal issues, as I prefer Paris. We both prefer Paris, me and my boyfriend, we have friends there, some family. So, we would both prefer to live in Paris. But he works for an organisation in Brussels which is a nice place to be, it's a permanent contract and it is a very good salary. It's kind of a golden case, which keeps you in a place, which you are not in love with.*

Gabriela

Some examples from the survey demonstrating how partner's career opportunities can be considered as an important factor:

*I do not have a strong preference for a country, as long as I like the job and can combine it with the job of my partner.*

Survey participant

*I will only move if it is required for advancing my girlfriend's career.*

Survey participant

The remaining reasons for living in a country are less popular. These reasons are: staying after graduation, being used to the place, no jobs at home or elsewhere, and private or professional networks. Each of these reasons received replies of six per cent or less.

The research provides an understanding that mobility drivers are mostly an interplay of several interrelated factors. Interview analysis demonstrates how some expatriate researchers adopted coping strategies by accepting certain compromises. For example, Mattias, a German researcher with a PhD from Italy currently working in the UK, emphasised several times during the interview that he would strongly prefer to live in Berlin. He had many friends in Berlin and enjoyed the environment of the city. However, Mattias was not able to find any appropriate employment there. So, after a while, he decided to build a base in Berlin but look for a job in different places in Europe:

*Then I decided that it may always be the case that I need to keep moving somewhere else. But I needed a stable base. So, I decided to keep a flat in Berlin. (...) There was a point in my life when I said, ok, I can move now wherever. But I will spend only my work time there. And I will spend as much of my private time as possible at this particular place. This place was Berlin.*

*Mattias*

Mattias' statement shows how he has had to find a compromise with regards to place of residence. Another example, demonstrating the influence of private circumstances on mobility and career development, is Marina's story. Marina is a Russian researcher with a PhD from Italy and was working in the USA at the time of the data collection. For her first postdoctoral job, she returned to Russia. Marina's French partner, based in Belgium after his PhD, tried to find an academic post in Russia to join Marina. At the same time, Marina looked for a role in Belgium. Unfortunately, they could not find employment in the same place. Their eventual solution was that they would both move to the country where at least one of them would have a good and well-paid job:

*Then we decided to apply everywhere. We did not apply to the same places. We said that we need at least one job. But this job should be really good for at least one of us. So, it should not be the compromise that you sit on a bad job and receive a low wage for it. And you two are trying to survive on this wage.*

*Marina*

Marina's career story is an example of how an expatriate researcher develops a strategy to cope with the postdoctoral career transition and maintain a private relationship at the same time. As the above quote by Marina shows, after the failure to find two academic jobs in one place, Marina and her partner decided that it was better to look for a good job for at least one of them. In other words, they wanted to follow their high-level career aspirations and put jobs prior to the place of residence. At the same time, Marina's career story demonstrates compromising on certain issues in order to reach the main career-related goal.

Interview and survey data analysis provides information that decisions where to live are based on a combination of career-related factors and circumstances of private life. By drawing on the survey analysis, it can be concluded that, first, career-related factors are a more important motivation to live in a country than private circumstances. Nevertheless, for some expatriate researchers, private life constraints play an important role when deciding about location. For example, career opportunities for the partner are taken into account when deciding where to live. Second, many expatriate researchers have to compromise on certain issues when deciding where to live and look for a job. After failed attempts at reaching their perfect goal in career and life, many of the expatriate researchers amend their plans and are ready to compromise. For example, they are ready to receive less money or to commute long distances. So, career-related issues and circumstances of private life influence the decisions of expatriate researchers on where to live in combination with each other and by compromising on some parts of the initial plan.

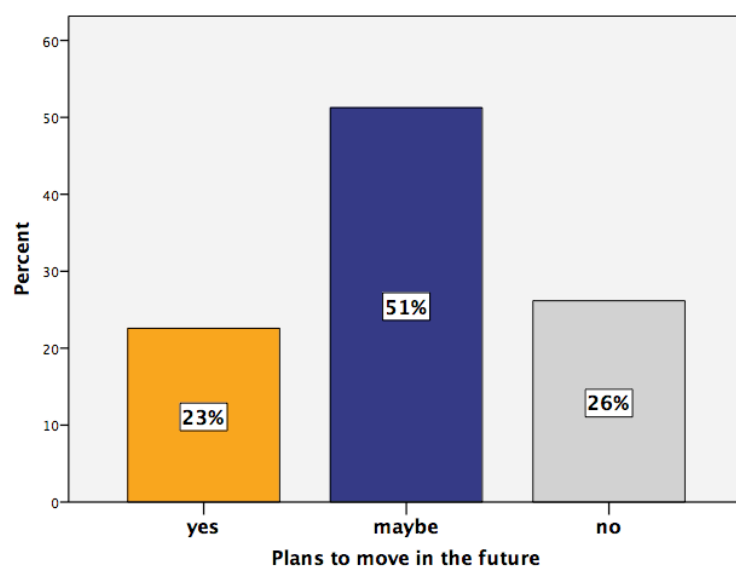
To summarise the findings outlined above in this chapter, four main points related to the mobility drivers of expatriate researchers should be highlighted. First, both career-related factors and considerations regarding families or partnerships are important in shaping the expatriate researchers' decisions regarding mobility. Career-related factors play a primarily role. Second, expatriate researchers apply different strategies to combine their career and family-related concerns, such as commuting to the workplace or trying to define a country where all family members can find a suitable job. Third, even those expatriate researchers who are single and without any family commitments intend to settle down in order to establish a base in a certain country. Finally, mobility drivers, career opportunities and partnership-related constraints are intertwined with each other.

#### 4.3 FUTURE MOBILITY PLANS

Many expatriate researchers who have passed several years of their doctoral education in a foreign country and especially those who decided to develop their career in academia are familiar to the idea that they may need to move abroad again in order to progress in their career. This population is experienced with moving across national borders and aware of the possible challenges to be faced. Nevertheless, some expatriate researchers are excited about their experiences abroad, while others are more sceptical. This section of the Chapter 4 explores the future mobility plans of the expatriate researchers. In order to do so, first, an overview of the survey results is presented. Then findings from the qualitative interview analysis are provided. First, it is important to know the proportion of the expatriate

researchers willing to move abroad again and how many would prefer to stay in their current place of residence. The present research shows that more than a half of the respondents were not sure whether they wanted to move or not (Figure 14 below), and more than a quarter of the survey participants said that they did not want to move again in the next five to ten years. Slightly less than a quarter of the respondents expressed their intention to move again to a foreign country in the near future (defined in the survey as the period between the next five to ten years).

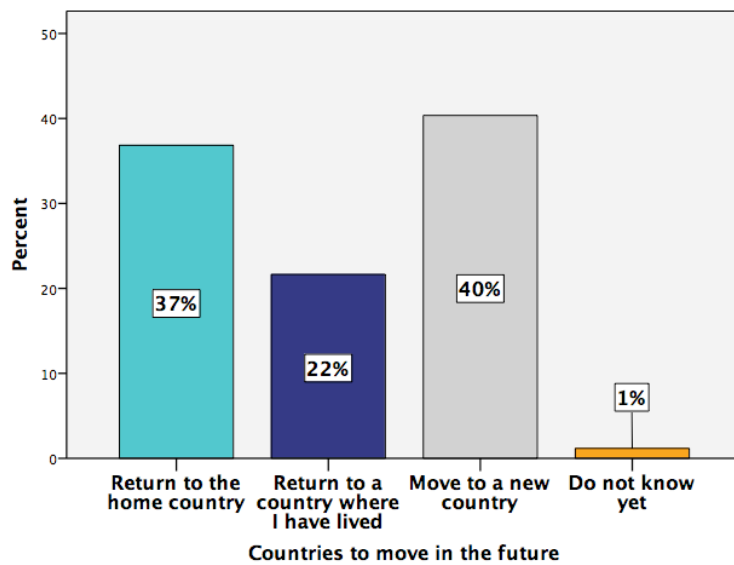
Figure 14. Plans to move abroad in the next five to ten years



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

The study participants who indicated that they would move abroad again were asked about the country they wanted to move to in the next five to ten years (Figure 15 below).

Figure 15. Mobility plans: countries to move to in the next five to ten years



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

More than a third of the respondents were ready to move again to a different country. Respondents preferred to move to a new country, where they have never lived before. Slightly more than a third would like to return to the home country. The last popular reply on this question was to return to a country where the respondent had previously lived before but not the home country. Of the respondents 18 per cent selected the “other” option. The participants choosing the open-ended reply explained that, even if they considered moving abroad in the future, either they did not have any explicit plans where they would move to or their preference of a country depended on career-related drivers:

*Depends on the job offer, don't care so much about the country/city.*

*Survey participant*

*Not sure, I'm not excluding the possibility of moving but don't really know more than that.*

*Survey participant*

*I don't know, wherever there is a permanent job for me.*

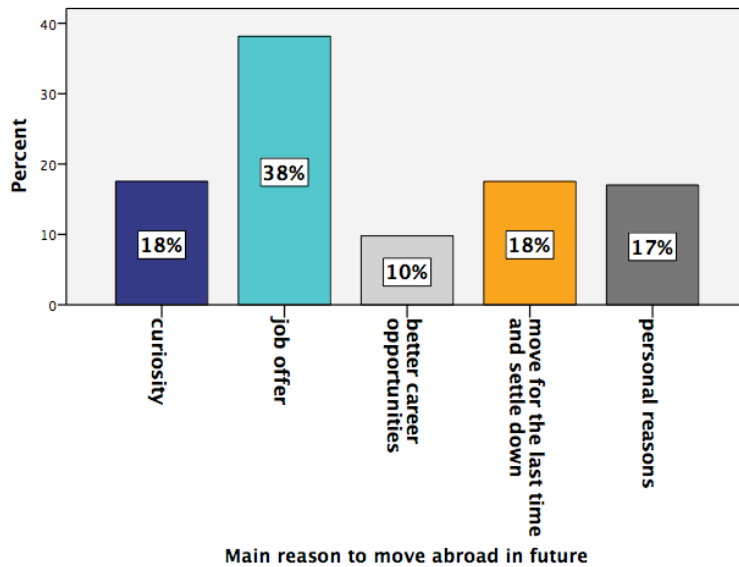
*Survey participant*

*I'd prefer to stay in the UK, but am after a permanent job, so have narrowed down the group of countries I'd like to move to, should I not secure a job in the UK.*

*Survey participant*

Having investigated the trends relating to the mobility intentions of the expatriate researchers, the reasons given by those likely to move to another foreign country should be explored. As Figure 16 (below) shows, a job offer is the most popular reply to this question. More than a third of the respondents stated that they would move abroad again for a specific job offer.

Figure 16. Main reason for moving abroad in the next five to ten years



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

Interviews with expatriate researchers provide some examples of individuals who considered further mobility for a job offer. For instance, Laura explained why she decided to move to Luxemburg and to settle down there:

*The most important reason for me was that I was offered a permanent position there. Also it was a country where I speak the most languages. I speak German and French, but not Luxembourgian, but it is similar to German. This place is relatively close to Frankfurt, so, I was in three hours driving to my parents' place. And again it was a permanent job.*

Laura

As the quote demonstrates, Laura's explanation for choosing to live in Luxemburg starts and finishes with the point about having a permanent job in the location. Ahmet echoed the same idea that a job, especially if it is a permanent job, is the most important motivation to move to a place in order to have security for the future:



*Job comes first. When I've got something secure, then I have the opportunity and the luxury to be more flexible and to pick a place where I want to live. But I have to have this security in the first place to be able to focus on the place rather than on the job.*

*Ahmet*

All the remaining reasons for moving abroad again are considerably less popular among the research population. Less than a fifth (18 per cent) of the respondents stated that they would move again for personal reasons. This amount is comparable with the 14 per cent of respondents who said that they lived in their current country because of their partner or children. Interestingly, a group of the respondents (16 per cent) stated that they would move to another country for the last time to settle down there. So, prior to defining a certain country, these participants confirmed their motivation to settle down in a certain place. By drawing on this finding, it can be assumed that a desire to settle might develop before the decision as to where. In other words, some expatriate researchers preferred a settled lifestyle and did not want to be mobile any more. However, they were ready to move one more time. A possible explanation of this phenomenon is that some expatriate researchers wanted to settle down but were not happy in their current location and would prefer to move to a place where they would be more comfortable. Alternatively, they might be tired of moving between countries but at the same time understand that, in order to develop their career (for example, to find a permanent position), they needed to move again. Interview analysis provides detailed information about the participants' thoughts regarding settling down. A number of the interviewees explained that they had reached a point in their lives when they did not want to move across borders any more. These expatriate researchers, who had lived in between three to five countries, stated that they had appreciated their experiences of living in different places, but now wanted to settle down:

*I thought that if I go to England now, it should be my last station. (...) England is maybe not the country of my dreams, where there is always sunshine but it is an ok option for me. Also, because of the practical thoughts. Maybe I would prefer Southern Europe but it is impossible to get a job there because of the labour market situation. England is a good compromise.*

*Kerime*

*Although I am mobile and I have moved after each stage of my life, I did not want any more to go to Germany for two years, then for two years to England and again to Sweden for two other years. I wanted to have it more under control, where I want to go. (...) So, I applied to the permanent or long-term positions only.*

*Laura*

*I was in a transition stage when I was at the end of my 20s. It was important for me to have all my belongings together. As I have said before, I had a stage when I was living in four places at the same time. Also, I had all my*

*stuff, my books, my clothes in these four places. It was simply too much for me. (...) At that point, I would prefer to have a permanent job in only one place.*

*Mattias*

*I think these things about living a mobile life are exciting and I still didn't give up but I feel a bit tired. I am just thinking to have a pause.*

*Melis*

As the interviewees explained in the quotes above, the place where they decided to settle down was not necessarily the country of their dreams. However, the life circumstances at that point in time led them to make the decision to settle. For example, Mattias said that there was a point in his life when he became nervous about living in different places and constantly moving across borders. Before he turned thirty he wanted to have his life in one place and to stay there for a longer period of time. So, for some expatriate researchers, the decision to stay in a country arose from the internal wish to be settled, which came at a point in life. For some that meant staying where they were living at the time and, for others, moving somewhere with a view to permanency. This explains why some of the interviewees compromised on their choice of country of residence for settling down. It can be concluded that timing affects the choice of the place to settle for many of the expatriate researchers. A number of the interviewees confirmed that this wish to settle came at around the age of thirty:

*How do I feel about mobility? It was so much easier until I was 30. It gets harder. It has got really hard for me now.*

*Melis*

*In my case, till the end of my 20s I valued moving between places as much as possible. (...) In fact, I made thousands of trips to different destinations that I could go to many places. (...) Then it was too much for me. It made me nervous. (...) At the end of my 20s I was in the transition stage when it suddenly became important to put all my belongings in one place.*

*Mattias*

Besides a job offer, general career opportunities motivate some expatriate researchers to move to a foreign country. The quote from the interview with Ingrid exemplifies the motivation to move to a country because of good career opportunities. Ingrid is an early-career researcher from Norway with a UK doctoral degree and currently working in the UK. In her interview she explicitly stated that she was interested in moving to another country after several years in her current position and explained her motivation for moving again:

*I need to stay in this job for a few years but I would like to work in another European country within the next five years or so. The most natural countries in my area are Netherlands, Germany, Denmark or Sweden. (...) I am*

*really passionate about what I do and I would like to be able to carry out a high level of research. Those countries would enable me to do so.*

*Ingrid*

It should be stated that the number of respondents ready to move abroad again because of career opportunities is relatively small: only ten per cent of the survey respondents (Figure 17: 104). So, general career opportunities play a less important role as a motivation for moving again than a specific job offer in a different country. General career opportunities are an important motivation for the majority of the expatriate researchers to remain in their current country of residence. The next popular reason is a specific job offer. These two reasons change places for motivating another move abroad. In particular, general career opportunities are the next to last reason for moving again, while a job offer is the most important motivation. Even curiosity motivates slightly more researchers to move again than general career opportunities, as the survey results demonstrate (Figure 17: 104). So, many expatriate researchers require a job offer to motivate moving abroad again, while they are staying in their current place, in the first instance, because of good career opportunities. Only a small minority of the survey respondents confirmed that they enjoyed moving and would move abroad again because they liked moving between countries. In comparison, curiosity motivates three times more respondents to move abroad again (Figure 17: 104). Although some expatriate researchers do not enjoy the process of moving abroad itself, they are curious to discover different places and countries.

This chapter aimed to explore which reasons motivated expatriate researchers to move abroad to study or work and what they expected of this international experience. In order to develop a better understanding several sub-questions were addressed, related to the experiences of mobility at different stages of the education and career of expatriate researchers. First, what motivates expatriate researchers to pursue a PhD study in a foreign country? Second, for which reasons do expatriate researchers live in their current country of residence? Third, what motivates expatriate researchers to consider repeated mobility? An understanding of the expatriate researchers' expectations and reasoning behind their decisions to move abroad to work or study is essential for assessing the value of a doctorate abroad for the expatriate researchers. Moreover, awareness of the motivations to move abroad provides information about the expectations of expatriate researchers for studying or working abroad. Expectations and outcomes of studying for a doctorate in a foreign country are evaluated against each other in this research in order to explore the experience of postdoctoral career transition and the

value of a PhD degree. Thus, by discovering the reasons for moving abroad to study or work, this chapter contributes towards achieving the main research aim of the study.

Three main reasons motivating expatriate researchers to pursue their PhD studies abroad were identified through the survey. These reasons are: academia is not developed in the home country, as a push factor; funding available abroad, as a pull factor; and being based abroad at the time of deciding to do a PhD. These findings echo the existing research by Richardson and McKenna (2002), which shows that many academics move abroad for “refugee” and “mercenary” reasons. Richardson and McKenna (2002) explain in their paper that refugees are academics going abroad to escape a certain situation in the home country (such as unemployment, a political situation, personal problems). Mercenaries move abroad for monetary reasons in order to receive a better salary for their work. In addition, this research confirms that expatriate researchers’ motivation to move abroad can be a combination of several interrelated factors, as stated in several studies on international mobility focused on a different research population (Ackers, 2005; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Richardson and McKenna, 2003).

Several findings discovered through the survey and interview analysis are related to the reasoning behind the decisions taken to live in the current country of residence. First, both of the most popular motivations to live in a particular country are related to career. These motivations are general career opportunities and specific job offers. Second, general career opportunities are a more important reason to live in a country for expatriate researchers than a specific job offer. Respondents were twice as likely to be motivated to live in a country by general career opportunities than by a concrete job offer. Interview analysis provides a possible explanation for this phenomenon, which could be explored further in later research in the field. Namely, career opportunities are a potentially important factor for the whole family, while a job offer counts for one person only. This finding corresponds with the research by (Sparrow et al., 2004) about dual-career issues for partners and families when moving abroad. As the majority of study participants are married or in relationship, many of them have to consider career opportunities of their partners when choosing which country to live in. Finally, by drawing on the results from the interview analysis, it can be concluded that many expatriate researchers have to compromise on certain issues while applying for jobs and deciding where to live. After a number of failed attempts to find a job in the place they wanted to be, the initial plan was amended, as articulated by some of the interviewees. For example, it was decided to compromise on salary or on the commute to the workplace.

So, some expatriate researchers adopt certain coping strategies when looking for a postdoctoral position in their early career, such as being ready to receive less money or to commute further to the workplace. This finding supports existing knowledge in the field from the study on a sample of binational couples by Van Mol and de Valk (2016), which confirms that challenges of dual-career couples with the experience of international mobility require compromises. Thus, career-related issues and partnership-related circumstances influence expatriate researchers' decisions to live in a particular country. Nevertheless, the main motivation is related to the career domain, as identified by the present research.

For many expatriate researchers, geographical mobility is acceptable in their future life and career. The survey results demonstrate that three-quarters of the respondents consider moving to another country again in the next five to ten years. By drawing on the survey and interview analysis, several conclusions can be made about future mobility plans of expatriate researchers. First, the three main reasons to move again, shown in this research, are: a job offer, personal reasons, and moving for the last time to settle down. A job offer in another country is an important motivation for the majority of expatriate researchers who are ready to move again. At the same time, better career opportunities in another country are a considerably less popular motivation for future mobility plans. Career opportunities are named as the next to last motivation for moving. Second, there is a group of expatriate researchers who would prefer not to move any more. Some would agree to move for the last time to another country in order to settle down there. From the interviews, it seems that the decision to settle down is related to a period of time in an expatriate researcher's life. Thus, the choice of a place to settle down in can be influenced by timing and age. Namely, some expatriate researchers decided to settle down in the country that they happened to be living in at the point. When explaining their desire to settle down, they mentioned their age (being in the age group between 28 and 34) and aspiring to reach the desired lifestyle acceptable for their age. Finally, the majority of expatriate researchers live in their current country of residence because of the career opportunities there, while only a small minority of them would move to another country motivated by the same reason. On the other hand, the majority of the research participants would move to another country if they received a job offer there, while a relatively small proportion of them live in their current countries of residence because of a job offer.

General expectations from the expatriate experience and specific reasons for moving abroad in the past and mobility plans for the future were explored in this chapter. It is important to

know what expatriate researchers expect from mobility and which factors consider mobility, in order to develop an entire understanding of the research population and to explore how they evaluate their international experience afterwards. Moreover, the knowledge about motivations for mobility, developed in this chapter, provides a ground for analysing the outcomes of mobility.

## CHAPTER 5. OUTCOMES OF MOBILITY

The current European labour market is characterised by high unemployment rates in some sectors and, at the same time, persistent job vacancies in another (European Commission, 2013b). After the economic crisis in Europe in 2010, both unemployment rates and job vacancies rates have increased (European Commission, 2013b). This phenomenon, when the high job-vacancies rate does not affect unemployment, indicates an inefficient job-matching process and existing skills mismatch. Thus, Europe is facing an immediate skills challenge, which can be resolved by increasing the geographical and occupational mobility of skilled workers (Favell, 2008).

The results of the Annual Growth Survey (European Commission, 2013a) indicated an urgent need to improve labour-market matching by supporting geographical and occupational mobility and by restructuring educational systems to provide skills and competencies complying with the demands of the EU labour market. So, the institutions of the European Union support the mobility of skilled labour to match skills with the vacancies in job-rich sectors.

In fact, the number of professionals exploring an international career is constantly growing currently, especially the self-initiated moves to work abroad (Inkson et al., 1998; Suutari and Brewster, 2001). This general trend influences the academic labour market. Some scholars (Baruch and Hall, 2004) argue that nearly all skilled workers engaged in academia experience international mobility in one or another form during their career. Thus, mobility and an academic career are becoming more and more interconnected. So, in pursuing a career in the academic labour market, individuals have to be aware of the potential need for international mobility. This trend could affect individual career development and potentially change the landscape of academia.

Moreover, the career development of skilled labour has considerably changed in the last two decades, compared to the traditional (especially male) career of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sullivan, 1999). Flexibility and uncertainty of career have increased in the last years, allowing for more frequent transitions between occupations and changes across sectors, functional areas, and organisations (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001b; Cappelli, 1999; Sullivan, 1999).

Although the body of scholarly literature focused on the outcomes of international mobility is growing (Dickmann and Harris, 2005; Harris, 2004; Myers and Pringle, 2005; Richardson and Zikic, 2007), there is not much knowledge available on how individuals experience this

flexible career in the context of increasing mobility, and which individual outcomes are to be expected from increasing mobility, related to new skills acquirement and career progression.

This chapter is focused on how expatriate researchers perceive the individual outcomes of their mobility experience and the value of their doctorate abroad. The perceived outcomes of mobility are divided in this chapter into three groups – benefits, costs and skills. Although skills acquired through mobility could belong to the benefits group, they are treated separately in this research as skills play a significant role in the personal and career development of expatriate researchers.

## 5.1 BENEFITS

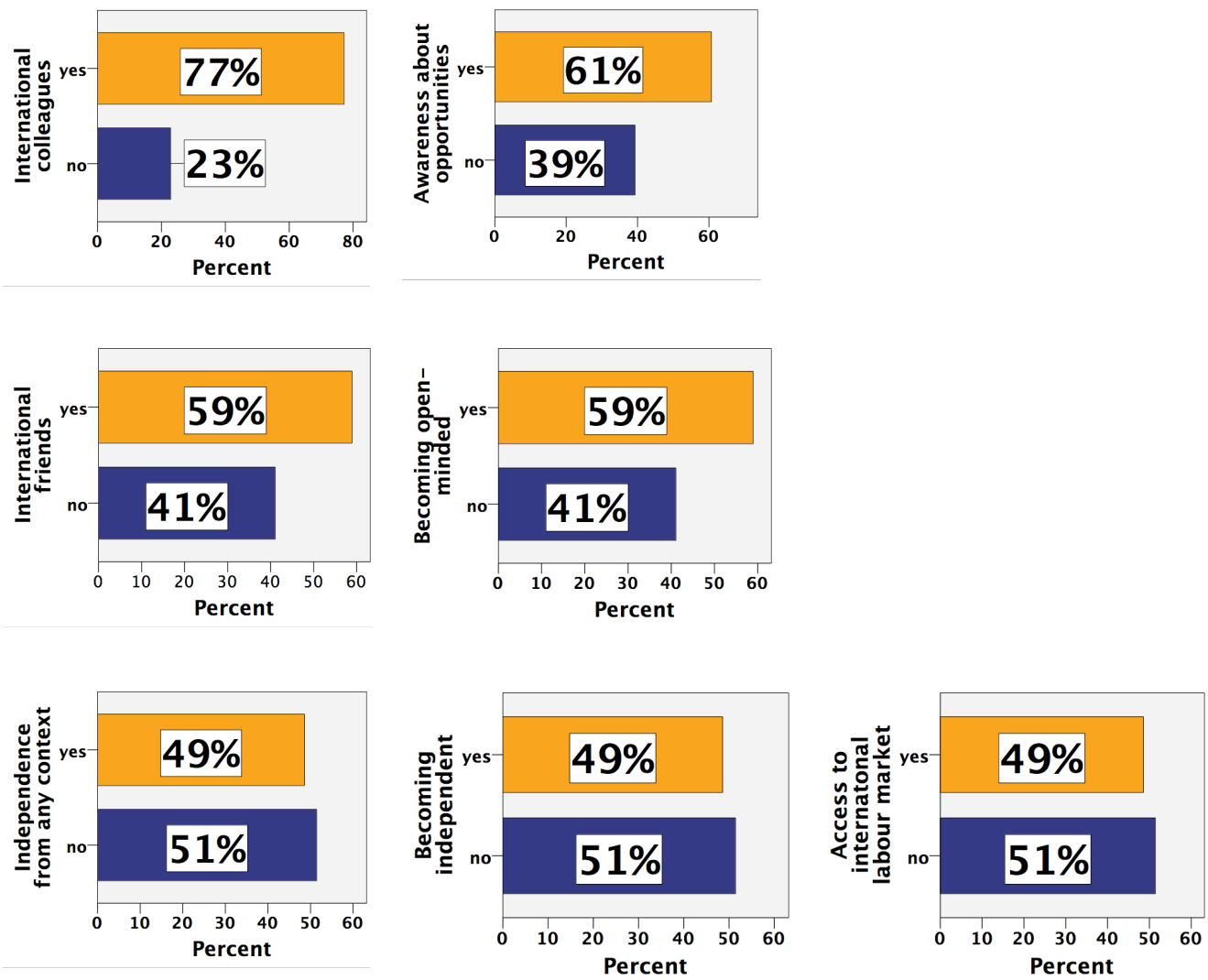
The survey results demonstrate that, from the perspective of the expatriate researchers, experiencing multiculturalism is the biggest advantage gained through living and working in a foreign country. This multicultural experience includes two aspects – change of environment and personal change. Personal change is related to identity change and personal development. Change of environment is related to the different surroundings experienced by the expatriate researchers after moving abroad. In other words, expatriate researchers put value on living in a multicultural environment and becoming internationals as a result of experiencing mobility.

### 5.1.1 ENVIRONMENT

Survey results show that the expatriate researchers who participated in this study value multiculturalism through international colleagues (77 per cent) and friends (59 per cent) (see Figure 17 below).



Figure 17. The most valuable experiences from living and working in different countries



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

The interview analysis indicates that the expatriate researchers who participated in this study value having international colleagues and friends and travelling a lot. Being surrounded by international colleagues and friends satisfy curiosity about foreign cultures and advances knowledge and experience. Interviewees explained that they would not have had a chance to experience multiculturalism, to work with so many colleagues from different cultures and to have friends in any corner of the world, if they had stayed in their home countries. So, they feel privileged to be able to have this special experience, which their friends from back home do not have:

*Here, multiculturalism is really nice, I like it. I have many different friends here from different parts of the world, from places where I would never go, like Chile, like some parts of Africa. I met those people here not back in Turkey. You get a chance to know new cultures, which is a nice experience.*

*Aydin*

*If I had stayed in Turkey, I would have other friends. You are exposed to more similar information that you get, similar culture, similar lives. Here you see different people that have really completely different backgrounds. You start thinking, wow. It's like seeing different movies about different lives.*

*Feride*

*I mean the biggest thing is that I have met different people. I'd never met any European person when I lived in Nigeria. And when I left South Africa I met different people from different parts of the world. I think that has been really been important for me.*

*Sarima*

This finding, that mobile academics value their international colleagues and friends and the ability to travel a lot, corresponds with existing findings from previous studies on mobility, which state that a curiosity to experience different cultures and a desire to travel, and to go on an adventure, motivate expatriates to move abroad (Osland, 1995; Richardson and McKenna, 2003).

### *5.1.2 IDENTITY*

Another aspect of experiencing multiculturalism is becoming an international person with an international mindset. Survey replies to the question on the benefits of mobility show that internal changes are valued by the expatriate researchers. These changes are: becoming open-minded (59 per cent), becoming independent (49 per cent), and being less attached to any culture (49 per cent).

For expatriate researchers having an international mindset means being open-minded and tolerant, speaking different languages and understanding foreign cultures. To be an international means, for the research participants, to be unique, to know more, and to be distinct from the majority of people:

*Multiculturalism, it is something that I am going to miss, I think, when I go back to Turkey. Although my social status is going to increase back in Turkey, I am going to be just a Turkish person.*

*Aydin*

*I think that the biggest advantage is to be yourself within an international community. I highly value it. I like thinking as an international person. I like having all the skills and mindsets which the international experience offers to you.*

*Azra*

*For me, the most important aspect is having this experience when you can see yourself from the outside. You are trying to understand what it is to be a British person when you go to mainland Europe, to Belgium or to France. And you see how people see the British.*

*Alice*

### 5.1.3 CAREER

More than half of the expatriate researchers who participated in the survey believe that their career-related benefits, gained through mobility, are access to the job market abroad (49 per cent) and greater awareness of their own opportunities (61 per cent). One interesting point is that an awareness of the opportunities is seen as a benefit by slightly more participants than access to jobs abroad. In other words, information about existing job opportunities and understanding which ones are more suitable are more frequently recognised as important benefits of mobility than real access to the labour market abroad. As Ingrid said:

*I think that the experience of living abroad gives you skills of mastery, you know that you are able to do something. (...) I think you also change how you see the opportunities that you have. The choices, which you think that you can choose in your life, are much broader than if you live your whole life in one country.*

*Ingrid*

Summarising the reasons for valuing multiculturalism, it can be concluded that expatriate researchers believe that it is a unique, exclusive experience to be an international within a multicultural society. They are convinced they have gained access to this multicultural experience by moving abroad. So, according to their own beliefs, expatriate researchers did not have a chance to experience multiculturalism in their home countries. Moreover, they argue that friends from their home country live less adventurous lives than themselves. So, expatriate researchers feel that mobility adds value to their life and career through gaining access to the experience of different cultures. Thus, this experience of multiculturalism is valued by expatriate researchers because of its distinctiveness. Findlay and colleagues argue in their paper about globalisation and student mobility that, in the UK, young people from higher classes move to a different country for education, specifically to the USA, to distinguish themselves from traditional students who, due to the expansion of higher education, have managed to enter a university in the UK (Findlay et al., 2012). Presumably, if more people moved to foreign countries, this experience of mobility would not count as unique anymore and its value would decrease.

In addition to the above, from the interview analysis it could be noticed that, after moving abroad, expatriate researchers value the multicultural environment and not the environment of the country they have moved to. Thus, the present research assumes that expatriate

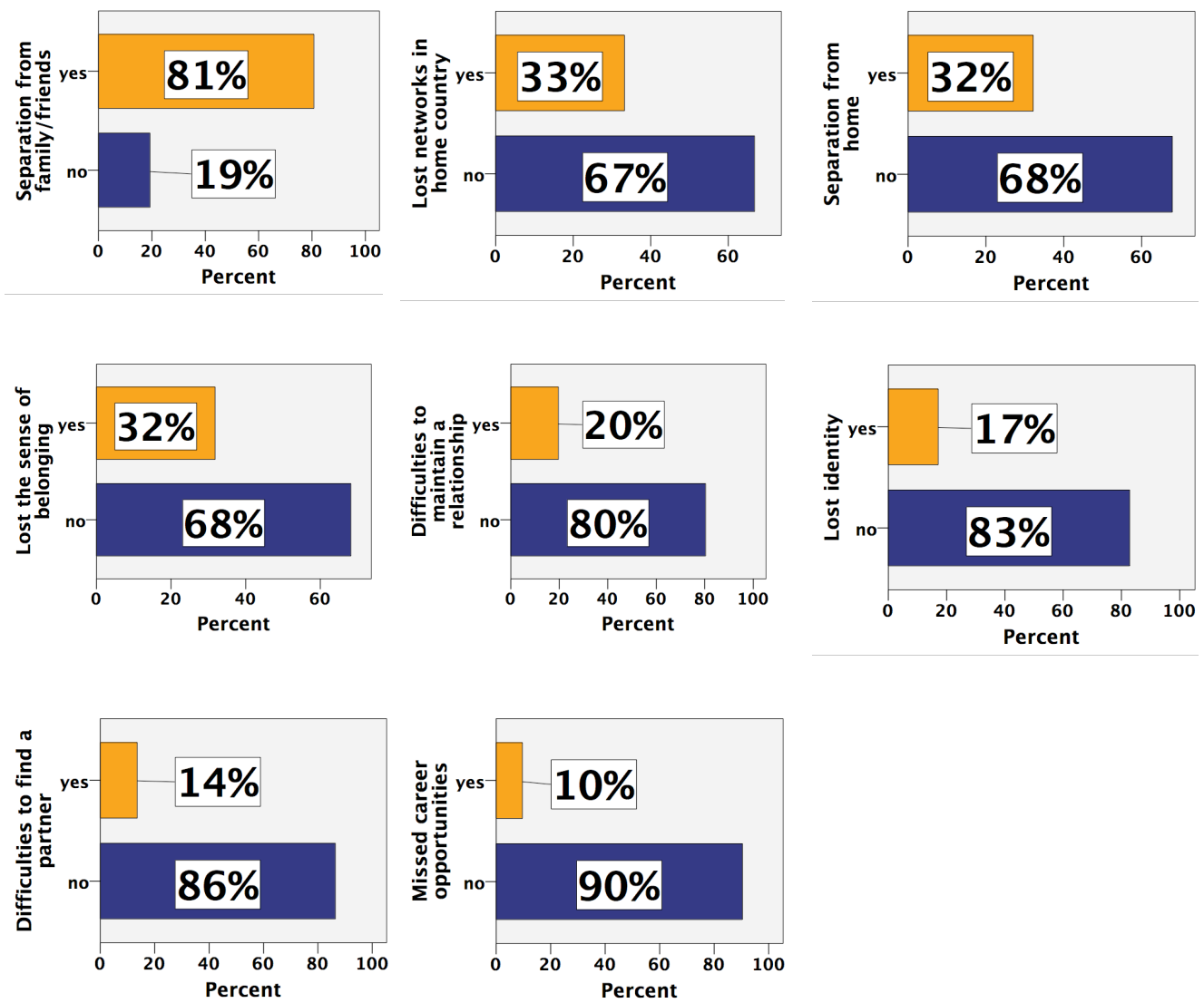
researchers build networks with other internationals after moving abroad, rather than concentrating on meeting locals from the host country. Even if there are international people in their home countries, they do not take the opportunity to make contact with them as much as they do abroad. Thus, the present study argues that mobility experience makes expatriate researchers put a special value on multiculturalism and to profit from the multicultural environment after moving to a foreign country. So, by becoming expatriate researchers, emphasis is given to the multicultural surroundings abroad. However, this assumption needs to be researched more and examined in further studies.

## 5.2 COSTS

Outcomes of mobility cannot be explored effectively without considering costs occurring due to moving abroad. Therefore, I aim to outline which issues and experiences expatriate researchers perceive as costs as a result of mobility. Even some of the study participants who were passionate supporters of mobility reported some negative experiences they had faced due to mobility. At the same time, some expatriate researchers explained in the interviews that they had not experienced any disadvantages and saw their experience of mobility as entirely beneficial.

The distribution of replies to the multiple-response question about the disadvantages of mobility is very skewed, as 81 per cent of respondents ticked the “separation from family and friends” as the only option. This is very different to the answers given to benefits of mobility where there is a higher variety of answers (more than half the options are ticked). Thus, the majority of the research participants concentrate on one particular cost of mobility – separation from family and friends. At the same time, the majority of the expatriate researchers consider a number of benefits of mobility as equally valuable.

Figure 18. Disadvantages of mobility faced by the survey participants



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

The survey results provide information about the costs of mobility for expatriate researchers. Costs that occur because of mobility are related to different spheres of life – changes of identity, changes of environment, career-related opportunities, and the private life of an individual.

### 5.2.1 ENVIRONMENT

The most often-given reply – separation from family and friends (81 per cent) is in the group changes of environment, beside another reply – separation from the environment back home (32 per cent). This finding shows that expatriate researchers suffer from being separated from people more than their home country. So, changes of environment is the factor that the majority of the study participants consider a cost of mobility. By drawing on the interview

data, why research participants perceive this disadvantage of mobility as important for them can be explored:

*My parents. They became older. I find myself being unable to take care of them. If you see them like three times a year for ten days – it's not much. If you see them becoming older, becoming not strange but more sensitive and fragile – that's negative. Relationships as well. I cannot be there for specific events when my friends invite me.*

*Aglaia*

*In terms of family, I have quite a lot of family in Rumania. My grandma had a birthday in the summer, and I couldn't be there. It is very frustrating that I cannot be there with close family more regularly, that I cannot see my siblings grow up.*

*Gabriela*

*If you live abroad, there are things you miss at home. For me, at least, I miss my family, I miss living around the corner from my father. I do not think that there is anything which could make it easier because this is just the nature of it.*

*Maria*

The interviewees talk mainly about missing close family members rather than missing friends when thinking about the disadvantages of mobility. At the same time, as Maria says, it is just the nature of mobility that one has to leave some people behind and move on and there is nothing that can be done about it. Therefore, by choosing a mobile career and lifestyle, expatriate researchers experience living apart from their family. However, the majority of them perceive this as a cost of mobility.

### 5.2.2 CAREER

A third of the survey participants (33 per cent) perceive lost networks back in their home countries as a cost of mobility. Only ten per cent of the respondents believe that missed career opportunities in their home country is a disadvantage for them. These two disadvantages belong to the group, career-related opportunities. As the data shows, only a minority of the expatriate researchers who participated in this study see missed career opportunities and networks as a problem related to mobility. Lost networks, and those that have not been built up, is a disadvantage for more participants than missed career opportunities in the home country. For example, Laura admitted:

*Every way has got its costs. In the beginning there is this idea that mobility is always positive. However, if somebody moves abroad, it can be difficult to return to Germany later on. In the German system it is extremely important to have networks. So, if you are not there, it will be so difficult to get there.*

*Laura*

Besides Laura, some of the others interviewees expressed the thought that it was difficult to return to their home countries, if they wanted, after having spent several years abroad.

### 5.2.3 IDENTITY

After the missed career opportunities, issues related to changes of identity are perceived as one of the costs of mobility by some of the expatriate researchers. Less than one-third of the study participants admitted that changes of identity was a cost of mobility for them. Less than a fifth (17 per cent) of the survey participants reported that they had lost a part of their identity because of moving abroad; and less than one-third (32 per cent) mentioned having lost a sense of belonging. It should be highlighted that some study participants see the issues related to the change of identity as a benefit of mobility, while others perceive it as a cost.

### 5.2.4 PRIVATE LIFE

Only a minority of the survey participants admitted that mobility affected their private life in a negative way. A fifth of the participants (20 per cent) claimed that it was difficult for them to keep an existing relationship after moving abroad. In addition to that, 14 per cent of the participants said that it was difficult to find a partner because of their mobility. Even if only a small minority of the survey participants agreed that mobility creates challenges for the private life, nearly all of the interviewees mentioned some difficulties with keeping or finding a partnership due to mobility. Some of the interviewees talked a lot about private issues while others mentioned them just briefly:

*My relationships haven't been very successful because of travelling. I was trying to do my best to keep it. But it was not really the best way for either of us. So, we made a decision and I went off. But ultimately you take your choices and even sometimes for a reason you don't like. At the end of the day, it's ultimately better for you.*

Alice

*Of course, my life would have been easier back home. Maybe I would have been married, had a kid. Because if you live abroad, it affects your relationship as well. It is very difficult really to sustain strong relationship when you are moving all the time.*

Feride

*Obviously, if I had stayed in the same place, it would have been easier for me to meet a new partner and to develop a long-term relationship. I do think that is, for sure, one aspect of life that I could see is a bit more difficult for me. The thing is that to fit into the professional life, it is better when you have a stable family. So, that is something that I am currently missing.*

Tim

Several interviewees stated that mobility results in difficulties with sustaining an existing personal relationship or developing a new one, also starting a family. However, not

everybody agreed on this. Some of the interviewees, even those claiming that mobility may have affected their private life in a negative way, said that it is possible to build up a family anywhere:

*Sometimes I think that maybe I could have a family now. However, at the end of the day, you can have a family everywhere, if you want to. This is just about the circumstances.*

*Kerime*

Another disadvantage of mobility, which was not mentioned in the survey but was in the interviews, is the delay in the settling-down process. Many of the interviewees mentioned that moving abroad resulted in delaying many processes of their life. On the one hand, mobility helps to maintain a young person's lifestyle, which could be potentially evaluated as positive. On the other hand, several interviewees said that they are not happy to live like 20 year olds, when they are already in their 30s or even beginning their 40s:

*I do see some advantages of being rooted in a place. I am getting older. I am not 26 anymore. I usually see it as a positive thing and I try still to be open. I was in a long-term relationship when I started my PhD. At that time I was thinking about settling and creating a stable something that I can root myself there. Then it didn't work out. So, that might be a price that I've paid.*

*Tim*

*I feel like I am getting old. I am not 23 years old. I didn't even think of starting a family. Even though I have been married since 2007. So, I didn't have time and I didn't have the capacity because you always have to move. I am somehow maybe anxious that next year I don't know where I will be.*

*Dilara*

*You know I told you before, moving prevents you from settling down. It can cause delays in the settling process. We are still living like students. I am feeling too old to live in a student-like environment because I am not a student any more.*

*Aydin*



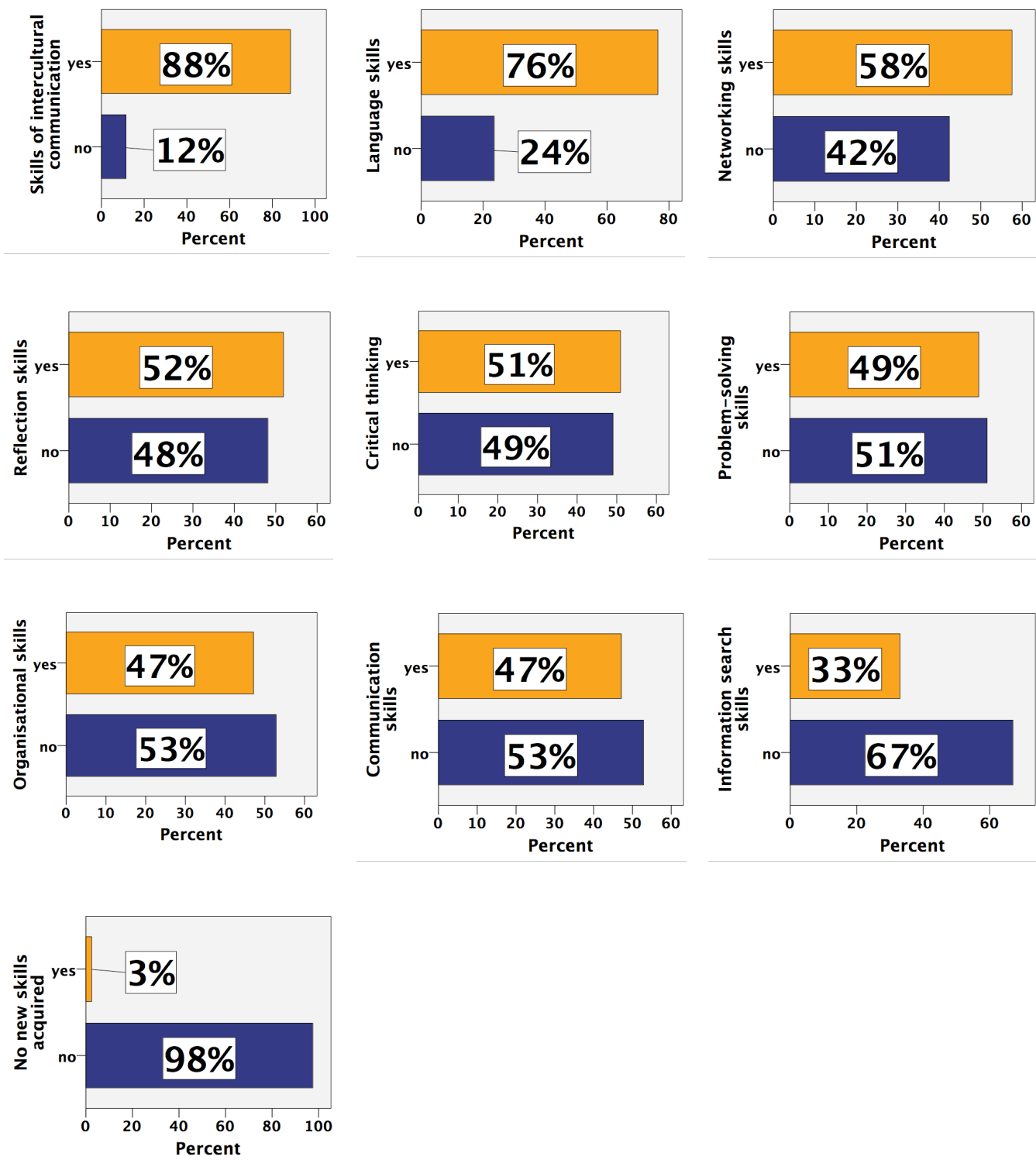
### 5.3 SKILLS<sup>1</sup>

Besides the overall costs and benefits of moving abroad, this research is aimed at examining whether expatriate researchers acquire new skills due to academic mobility. Figure 19 below represents a summary of the replies to the survey question regarding which skills expatriate researchers have acquired through their experience of mobility.

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<sup>1</sup> This section on skills resulting from the experience of expatriation is published in a revised and condensed version: Siemers, O. (2016), Skills for here or to take away? Outcomes of academic mobility for expatriate researchers, *Journal of International Mobility* 2016/1 (N° 4), p. 149-170. DOI 10.3917/jim.004.0149

Figure 19. Skills acquired due to the experience of mobility



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

As the survey chart above (Figure 19) shows, only three per cent of the participants stated that they had not acquired any skills through the experience of mobility. In other words, the majority of expatriate researchers (97 per cent) believe they had acquired a set of skills

because of mobility. By drawing on the data from the interviews and the survey, this research provides evidence that expatriate researchers develop skills in both areas – “people skills” and “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills”, as proposed in the employability skills framework developed by Jones (2013), which is outlined in the literature review chapter of this thesis.

### 5.1 PEOPLE SKILLS

This research confirms that expatriate researchers build up communication skills because of the experience of mobility. The category “people skills” (Jones, 2013) includes skills that are essential for dealing, working, and communicating with other people, also including people from different cultures. This research explores that the following skills from the category “people skills” can be developed by expatriate researchers: communication skills, skills of intercultural communication (developed by 88 per cent of the survey respondents), language skills (76 per cent), and networking skills (58 per cent) (Figure 19: 113).

The survey participants, as well as the interviewees, were asked to evaluate their experience of mobility by saying explicitly what was the most valuable experience for them. According to the survey results, living in a multicultural environment and especially meeting people from different cultural backgrounds was the most valuable experience of mobility. Three-quarters of the respondents stated that being able to work with international colleagues (77 per cent), followed by having friends from different cultures (59 per cent) was the most valuable mobility experience for them (Figure 17: 104). The qualitative interviews provide an explanation of how the research participants perceive the advantages of mobility and their reasons for valuing the multicultural environment as a particular aspect of mobility over other ones.

Some of the interviewees put value on meeting people from different cultures because it is a unique experience for them, which they would not been able to have in their home countries:

*Meeting different people, it is like reading different books. It also reflects back on your work.*

*Ahmet*

*I see people as books I do not know what another page is going to bring and I love this.*

*Aglaia*

As Ahmet says, communication with international people can influence current and future work, especially if this work is about social research. Therefore, living and working in a culturally diverse community improves communication skills and increases general knowledge about people from different cultures and their social behaviour. These skills of

intercultural communication and enhanced knowledge about social behaviour of people from different parts of the world can be applied in jobs in both the academic and non-academic sector.

This research demonstrates that living in a multicultural environment is not just about having contact with people from different cultural backgrounds. It also means being a part of the international community. Being an international is another valuable aspect of mobility for the research population of this study:

*No matter where you go, you are a foreigner. This is not your home country. But if you go somewhere and you meet so many different people from different parts of the world, you no longer feel like a stranger or foreigner. You feel a part of this multicultural society.*

*Aydin*

*I think that the biggest advantage is to be yourself within an international community. I highly value it. I like thinking as an international person. I like having all the skills and mindsets which the international experience offers to you.*

*Azra*

*Experience of living abroad is connected to learning and improving languages as a tool of communication with people. To learn a foreign language is like obtaining a key to understanding foreign cultures: I think working abroad and working with different people is an enriching experience. You learn and you grow up in a way. You learn different languages. With the language you learn different cultures.*

*Alice*

*Due to staying abroad, I think, it is language skills mostly. Communicating with people from certain nationalities, making jokes they would understand. And if there is someone else from this culture you can easily start a conversation about sensitive issues. These are international skills.*

*Azra*

This study provides an explanation of why and how communication skills develop because of the experience of mobility. Two main reasons explaining this process were identified through the qualitative analysis of the interviews. First, after moving to a foreign country, an individual meets many new people at once – from new neighbours to new colleagues. So, by external circumstances, people living abroad are brought into a situation where they have to learn how to talk to people from different cultures, how to understand their jokes, and how to be sensitive about some specific topics. Second, people living abroad require more support from strangers than if they have been living in their own country. Thus, they have more interaction and communication with strangers. In their home country people are surrounded by family and friends who can give support if needed. In addition to that, people living in their home countries know how the system works. So, they do not need to refer to those

around them that much. Therefore, people living abroad unintentionally experience more contact with others and automatically learn how to communicate with them.

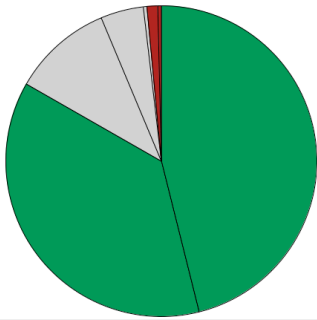
## 5.2 SELF-SUFFICIENCY/SELF-EFFICACY SKILLS

Moving across borders adds extra tasks to the regular amount of jobs on the list. After coming to a new place, it is necessary to set up a new life from a scratch, including finding accommodation, opening a bank account, discovering new places and processes from how to pay the bills to where to do shopping. At the same time, daily tasks and jobs have to be managed as usual. There are two dimensions to these new tasks. One dimension includes finding accommodation and discovering new places around the new home. This might occur when moving from one region to another within the same country. The second dimension is relevant to movers between countries. This includes additional tasks, like opening a new bank account or finding out how the post, schooling system, payments for expenses, and so on, work in the new country. So, there are more tasks to be managed during the period of settling down in a foreign country. Facing these challenges increases self-sufficiency skills of individuals with the experience of mobility.

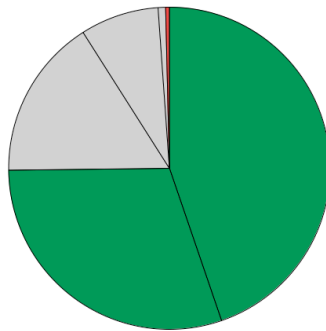
The category “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills” (Jones, 2013) include skills and capacities which are essential for an individual’s performance. By drawing on the survey and interview data, this research discovers that expatriate researchers are able to develop the following skills included into group “people skills”: problem-solving skills, organisational skills, adaptability, information search skills, critical thinking, confidence, and reflection skills (Figure 19: 113). Almost half of the survey respondents stated that they had developed problem-solving skills (49 per cent) and organisational skills (47 per cent) (Figure 19: 113). A vast majority of the survey participants (82 per cent) agree or strongly agree that they became more adaptable because of living abroad (Figure 20: 117).

Figure 20. Changes of personality due to the experience of mobility

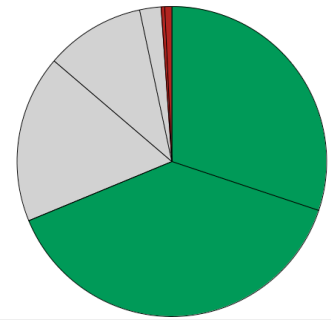
**More adaptable**



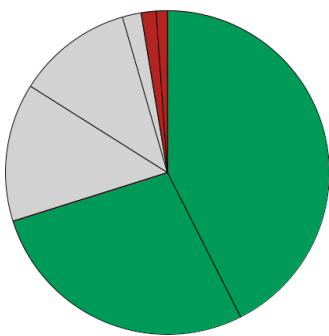
**More open-minded**



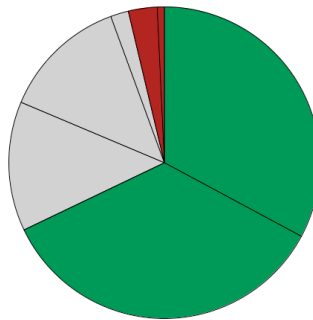
**More confident**



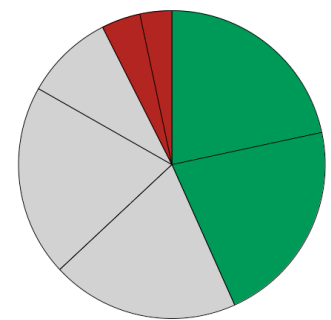
**More successful in career**



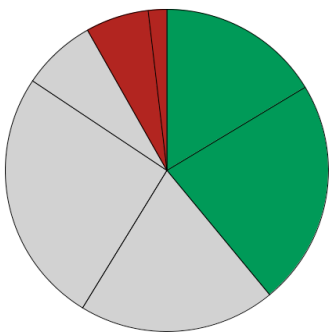
**More myself**



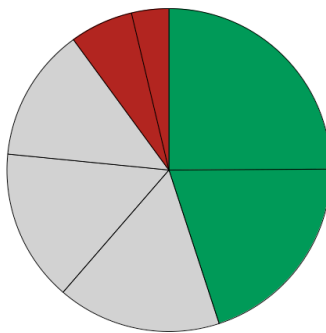
**More ambitious**



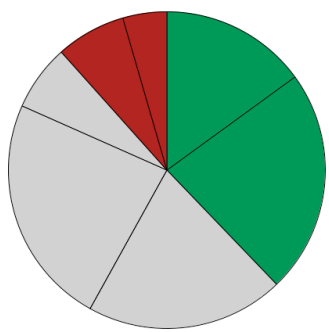
**More adventurous**



**Less attached to any culture**



**More challengable**



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

Interviewees provide explanations of how they have developed their problem-solving skills during living abroad and give some examples from their daily lives to show this process. While talking about skills acquisition as a result of mobility, Aglaia claimed she became more adaptable by saying:

*I know how to adjust. I know how to go and find information. Where should I find drugs, all this stuff, which you do not know when you go to another country. You can find out. And it's like because you've been experiencing that again and again.*

Aglaia

Through some daily life examples, Aglaia explained how the experience of mobility had enriched her personality step by step. By resolving all the new problems and tasks in a foreign country, like finding medicine or going to the doctor, she developed confidence in her abilities. So, she was not anxious any more about moving to another country because she knew how to manage it. In the end, the development of her problem-solving skills resulted in increasing confidence. Ingrid's statement illustrates this idea:

*The experience of living abroad gives you skills of mastery. You know that you are able to do something. You gain confidence that you know that you can deal with a lot of situations, such as getting new friends, establishing a network, gaining employment in a different country. You have a mastery of language. You gain a set of skills that you would not have had if you stayed in your country.*

Ingrid

Moving to a foreign country was one of the first independent steps in the life of many research participants as they moved to a foreign country for the first time when they were in their 20s. They were proud to have managed to set up a life in a new place without any support from parents. Azra described her experience of moving abroad for the first time:

*I just got my suitcase and left my parents and I started to rent my own apartment. My parents were wondering how I would do that and whether I would need help but I said no, that's fine. It was harder than it seemed to be. It is hard to survive in a new country in a new situation. So, definitely survival skills develop due to staying abroad. Also, to develop a new social network and to set up a life in a new social context.*

Azra

After admitting that it was difficult starting a life in a new place, Azra stated that mobility caused the development of problem-solving skills – what she called “survival skills”.

Simple processes of life in another cultural context, which might be different from the home country, lead to the increase of adaptability as well. For instance, Tim described how he became more adaptable by getting used to the lifestyle in Italy:

*Learning to live in Italy and not just going there on a tour. There is something, which is not straightforward there, especially if you grew up in a country like the Netherlands – a country with efficient public services, where everything works as expected. In Italy, everything is a little bit more unpredictable. So, I learned there how to adapt to different attitudes, like how not to be impatient or not to expect things to work like they used to work at home.*

*Tim*

So, this study provides evidence that, owing to the experience of mobility, people develop organisational skills, information search skills and become more adaptable; these can be combined under the umbrella concept of problem-solving skills. There are two aspects of the development of problem-solving skills through facing and resolving the many new challenges of living abroad. First, people living in a foreign country know how to manage their life in a new place and how to solve problems that arise. Second, mobile people become more confident about their ability to solve problems. On the one hand, after moving abroad, individuals have information about which problems to expect in a foreign country and, therefore, become more challengeable. On the other hand, people with the experience of mobility know that they can solve potential new problems. This knowledge increases their confidence and makes them less anxious about solving new problem or moving again. Thus, knowing what the possible challenges of living abroad might be, and being confident about their own ability to face these challenges, results expatriate researchers acquiring problem-solving skills.

This research has identified that the expatriate researchers acquired or further developed reflection skills because of their experience of mobility. Research participants said, that after spending several years abroad, they became more themselves by gaining a deeper understanding of who they were and about their values and abilities. Two-thirds of the survey participants (68 per cent) either agree or strongly agree that, because of living and working in different countries, they realised who they were and became more themselves (Figure 21: 130).

The analysis of the qualitative interview data provides an explanation of exactly how the research participants developed reflection skills out of their experience of mobility. For example, Sarima acknowledged:

*In a way I feel that this experience of mobility has made me become myself rather than to change myself. I think it would be really difficult for me to be who I feel that I've always been, if I had not had this experience.*

*Sarima*



By developing the idea of becoming “more herself”, Sarima links growing self-awareness to the broader opportunities available for mobile people. She gave an example about choosing friends:

*Friends that I chose to make are not just friends who are there because I grew up with them. I became more the person that I imagined I would be, when I was younger.*

*Sarima*

After Sarima left her home country, she was in charge of deciding who her new friends were going to be. There were many people around her to choose from and not just people that she grew up with. Therefore, it could be said that the research participants developed an ability to think critically because they were living in different countries. Experiencing different cultures and languages allows an individual to understand that there are many different perspectives on politics, international relations, social behaviour or values in different parts of the world. This shift of perspectives helps individuals to develop the ability to think critically. Several interviewees called this phenomenon “out of the box thinking”. For example, Alice, a British researcher with a PhD from Italy, said:

*You are trying to understand what is it to be a British person when you go to mainland Europe... When you move to Africa, you can see how Europeans are perceived from their point of view. I think in many ways that helps you to question what you believe, what are your values. Or you question the politics of your country even.*

*Alice*

By gaining an understanding about how British people are perceived outside of the UK, or how Europeans are perceived outside of Europe, Alice claimed to become a more critical person and to develop her self-awareness.

The findings of this research provide an understanding of the reasons why reflection skills develop due to the experience of mobility. Namely, mobility gives individuals the chance to increase their reflection skills in two ways: first, by broadening opportunities available and, second, by putting them into new and unknown situations. Ingrid explained the idea of how mobility broadened opportunities:

*I think you also change how you see the opportunities that you have. The choices, which you think that you can choose in your life, are much broader than if you live your whole life in one country. So, the opportunities and choices you make, what I see as possibilities you have, are much wider.*

*Ingrid*

This process happens, not only related to friendship ties but also to making career choices or understanding abilities. For instance, Dilara said:

*I think during my PhD abroad I have learned what I am capable of and what I am not capable of. Although I like interactive sessions with my students, I prefer doing research alone. I am introvert person.*

*Dilara*

Dilara's statement is an example of how educational mobility can lead to individuals understanding their own personality type and professional capability. By increasing their awareness of their own abilities, individuals are able to realise that difficult situations are manageable. Thus, through increasing self-awareness, mobility results in growing confidence. For instance, Aydin admitted to becoming more confident after living abroad:

*This country and my experience of being in the educational system in the UK changed me. I have developed myself. I am much more experienced. I am much more confident in myself.*

*Aydin*

Not only by broadening opportunities but also by going through new situations and experiencing different lifestyles, people increase their self-awareness. Diverse lifestyles and behaviours become normal from the point of view of an international person. Moving between countries enriches personal experience and erases the borders of normality. The same behaviour can have completely different meanings in different cultures. For example, in Germany it is acceptable to blow the nose in public spaces, whereas this counts as indecent behaviour in Russia. Thus, depending on the cultural context, the same behaviour can be perceived as normal or not. After having spent a few years in different countries, borders of normality become extended. Experience of living abroad provides an understanding that some behaviour, unacceptable in an individual's home country can be acceptable in another country.

By expanding the borders of normality, the range of acceptable social behaviour grows as well. Thus, individuals have got a broader range of acceptable social behaviour to choose from. So, people become more open-minded and tolerant. Ingrid exemplified in her statement how a broader range of choices increased her consciousness of decision-making:

*I think that also how I see and manage my life is broader because I am not so structured by expectations. If I had lived in Norway, there are certain ways and expectations of how you live your life: you study, you get a job and other things. I think that, when you live in another country, you become much more conscious about how these choices are different and you can make different choices in life.*

*Ingrid*

Two factors from the experience of mobility lead to developing reflection skills. First, individuals knowing and accepting different lifestyles have got higher chances of

understanding what is suitable for themselves, because of being open to many options. Second, observing and experiencing different cultures and lifestyles makes individuals think more deeply about themselves, by trying new behaviours. This thinking leads to growing self-awareness.

By developing reflection skills, the experience of mobility increases individuals' awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as professional and general abilities. By knowing their own strengths and weaknesses, individuals can make more conscious decisions about their career. In addition to that, awareness of their own abilities helps individuals to understand their lack of skills in certain areas and to improve themselves, if needed.

The present chapter provides an overview of the outcomes of mobility for the expatriate researchers, divided into groups – skills, costs, and benefits. This approach gives a deeper understanding of the personal and career-related outcomes of mobility, according to the perceptions of the research participants.

By drawing on the survey and interview data, this study provides evidence that expatriate researchers experience both benefits and costs with regards to mobility in four areas: environment, identity, career and private life (Table 5 below).

Table 5. Benefits and costs of mobility

	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<i>Environment</i>	International colleagues International friends	Separation from people in the home country Separation for the home country environment
<i>Identity</i>	Open mind Independency Less attached to any culture	Lost a part of identity Lost the sense of belonging
<i>Career</i>	Access to jobs abroad Awareness of the opportunities	Missed career chances in the home country Lost networks in the home country
<i>Private life</i>		Difficulties of finding a partner Difficulties of keeping an existing relationship

First, expatriate researchers see the benefits and costs of mobility in a different way. Both questions about the benefits of mobility and about the costs of it were formulated as multiple-response questions. The distribution of the responses to these questions demonstrates the main differences. The distribution of responses to the question about the disadvantages of mobility is very skewed, as 81 per cent of respondents ticked the “separation from family and friends” as the only option. On the opposite hand, in answering the questions about the benefits of mobility, the majority of the respondents ticked several replies, as all the options received more than a 50 per cent response. Thus, with regard to the costs of mobility, the absolute majority of research participants concentrate on separation from family and friends. At the same time, the majority of the expatriate researchers value a broader range of the benefits of mobility (Figures 17: 104 and 18:108).

Second, identity-related costs and benefits demonstrate how the same phenomenon can be perceived as beneficial or disadvantageous by different people. Being less attached to any culture is a benefit of mobility for half of the respondents. At the same time, the lost sense of belonging is a disadvantage of mobility for a third of the same research population. Whilst many mobile academics become less attached to any culture, many also lose their sense of belonging as a result of mobility. Obviously, these two statements describe the same phenomenon from different angles. Some expatriate researchers see this independency of any culture or a country as positive, while others perceive the lost sense of belonging as negative. So, the expatriate researchers perceive the changes of their own identity related to the weakening sense of belonging in absolutely different ways. Some see this as a personal advantage that they become more independent, while others perceive this as a cost of mobility. Also, another associated point of view to the change of identity “becoming more independent” is related to this discussion. Slightly less than half of the survey respondents (49 per cent) see becoming independent as a positive outcome of mobility (Figure 17: 104). This indicates that a higher proportion of mobile researchers experience their identity changes as beneficial rather than as a cost of mobility.

The third category, career-related costs and benefits, includes mobility outcomes related to career opportunities, networking and the labour market. Access to the foreign labour market and awareness of job opportunities are seen as beneficial outcomes of mobility by more than half of the survey participants (Figure 17: 104). Career-related costs are missed career opportunities and lost networks in the home country. These are acknowledged as disadvantageous by only a third or less of the expatriate researchers (Figure 18: 108). It is more challenging for expatriate researchers to return to their career after returning to their home country, because of lost networks and missed career opportunities there; however, the majority of expatriate researchers believed that they had gained access to jobs abroad and were more aware of the professional opportunities available to them. So, more expatriate researchers value the career-related benefits of mobility, compared to those regretting the costs.

Finally, the category “private life” includes only costs of mobility and no benefits. This result reflects the perception of the interviewees and survey respondents jointly. Only a small proportion of the survey respondents experienced the costs of mobility related to keeping an old relationship or finding a new one after moving abroad. However, no research participants reported any straightforward benefits of mobility in the area of private relationships. Thus,

mobility makes it more difficult for some expatriate researchers to find or keep a partner, without there being any benefits regarding the private life. Information from the interviews did not provide any evidence of there being benefits for the private life of the individuals taking part. By talking about their benefits, interviewees concentrated on the three remaining areas and ignored the private life.

Besides costs and benefits experienced by the expatriate researchers, skills acquired due to moving abroad are important outcomes of mobility. In this research, skills acquired through mobility were divided into two categories – people skills and self-sufficiency skills (Table 6 below).

**Table 6. Skills acquired through the experience of mobility**

People skills	Self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Skills of intercultural communication</li> <li>• Language skills</li> <li>• Networking skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Organisational skills</li> <li>• Reflection skills</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Risk-taking</li> <li>• Information search skills</li> </ul>

Underlying mechanisms were discovered to explain why the expatriate researchers participating in this study developed this particular set of skills due to experiencing mobility and which aspects of mobility result in the development of new skills.

The first category “people skills”, as developed in the framework by Jones (2013), includes communication skills, skills of intercultural communication, language skills, and networking skills. There are two reasons explaining how mobility influences the development of these skills and capacities, related to communication with other people. Both reasons are related to the period of adjustment in a new country after moving there. First, after going to another country, individuals meet many new people at once and have to communicate with them. So, individuals are surrounded by strangers in a foreign country. Thus, the amount of interaction with strangers is higher in a foreign country than in the home country, especially during the

settling-down period. In addition to that, all these new people have a different cultural background and might speak a foreign language. So, individuals have to adjust their communication according to the circumstances.

Second, individuals living abroad require more support from people around than those staying in their home countries. After moving to a foreign country, individuals have to set up a life there. In order to do so, they need information about how a range of processes work in this country. Sometimes it is difficult, or even impossible, to find information about certain procedures abroad without talking to people. So, individuals need more informational and practical support from people after moving abroad, compared to living in the home country. Two factors explain why this happens; first, out of the lack of knowledge about how things work in a new country and, second, because of a high number of tasks to do during the period of adjustment. So, as a result of moving abroad, people tend to intensify their communications and interactions with strangers, especially during the period of adjustment to a new place.

The period of settling down after moving abroad is important for developing the set of skills from the second category “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills” (Jones, 2013). The present research explores the skills from the second category, which can be developed by expatriate researchers through academic mobility. By drawing on the interview and survey data, the following skills can be developed by the research population through mobility: problem-solving skills, organisational skills, information search skills, adaptability, reflection skills, self-confidence, risk taking, and critical thinking. After coming to a foreign country, individuals have to set up their life from a scratch. This process involves solving many new tasks and problems in parallel, while some of them can be fairly challenging. Finding permanent accommodation, opening a bank account, organising childcare and schooling for children – all these tasks need to be sorted out quickly after moving to a foreign country. At the same time, normal daily jobs have to be done as well. Thus, the amount of tasks increases due to moving abroad. This challenging period of adjustment in a foreign country leads individuals to develop problem-solving skills.

Two aspects of problem-solving skills development are important. First, through having the experience of living abroad, individuals gain knowledge of which problems and challenges can be expected after moving to a foreign country and how to solve them. Second, after having the experience of solving these problems, individuals gain more confidence in being able to settle down in a new country. So, individuals are proud of themselves for having gone

through the adjustment period in a foreign country. Thus, problem-solving skills acquired through the experience of mobility result in growing confidence and higher awareness of their own powers, as explored in this research.

As an important part of self-sufficiency skills, reflection skills and self-awareness can be developed by expatriate researchers through the experience of academic mobility. Knowing their own abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and understanding their own type of personality increase individual self-awareness and self-reflection. Moreover, critical thinking can be acquired and further developed through mobility, which relates to the ability to criticise independently and constructively and the habit of questioning everything, rather than taking everything for granted.

Living abroad can teach individuals that there are different perspectives on certain social phenomena or behaviour. Common values and principles differ in different parts of the world. Rare or unacceptable behaviour in one country can be perceived as normal in another. Thus, the experience of mobility extends the borders of normality.

The period of adjustment in a foreign country again plays a crucial role for developing reflection skills by putting individuals into new situations. Two factors related to the experience of mobility explain how expatriate researchers develop reflection skills. First, experiencing different lifestyles makes many expatriate researchers think about their own lifestyle. By increasing their knowledge of different cultures, a broader range of options to choose from becomes available, especially when a greater diversity of lifestyles becomes acceptable. The process of evaluating these lifestyles and cultures leads to a better understanding of the self, and, thus, to increasing self-awareness. Second, separation from the home country and the environment back home makes many expatriate researchers become more independent from the cultural context of their home country. Thus, they become more independent and have to make conscious decisions about their values, norms and lifestyles. This results in the development of reflection skills by expatriate researchers who participated in the present study.

In conclusion, moving to a foreign country challenges expatriate researchers through being in a new environment, needing to set up everything from a scratch, and solving problems of adjustment. This period of adjustment to a foreign society is especially intense for expatriate researchers as it involves dealing with a higher amount of tasks than usual – communicating with strangers, potentially speaking a foreign language, and experiencing a lifestyle different



to that back home. The major challenge is that all these changes happen at once. However, after passing through this challenging period of adjustment, many expatriate researchers become proud of themselves. They experience benefits of mobility but have to pay the costs associated with moving abroad. After passing through this experience, expatriate researchers develop a set of skills. The experience of mobility and its outcomes lead to the growing confidence of the majority of the expatriate researchers.

## CHAPTER 6. OBSTACLES AND BENEFITS OF THE POSTDOCTORAL CAREER OF EXPATRIATE RESEARCHERS<sup>2</sup>

The European academic labour market has been experiencing major transformations in the last decades due to the decline of traditional employment relationships (De Vries and Balazs, 1997) and to the globalisation of the sector (Harvey, 2011; Inkson et al., 2007; Richardson et al., 2008). On the one hand, internationalisation of the higher educational sector in Europe is supported and welcomed by the institutions of the European Union. On the other hand, this process brings some new challenges for academia and also certain difficulties for international researchers working in the academic labour market, which should be accounted for (Richardson and Zikic, 2007). Thus, it is important to explore how international researchers establish themselves in academia in the context of flexible careers and the internationalisation of the higher educational sector.

To understand how international researchers establish themselves in the European Higher Educational Area (EHEA), this chapter is focused on three aspects of the academic career. First, the career planning after finishing a PhD abroad is discussed. Second, the advantages of an academic job for international researchers are explored. Finally, criticism of the contemporary academic labour market is introduced.

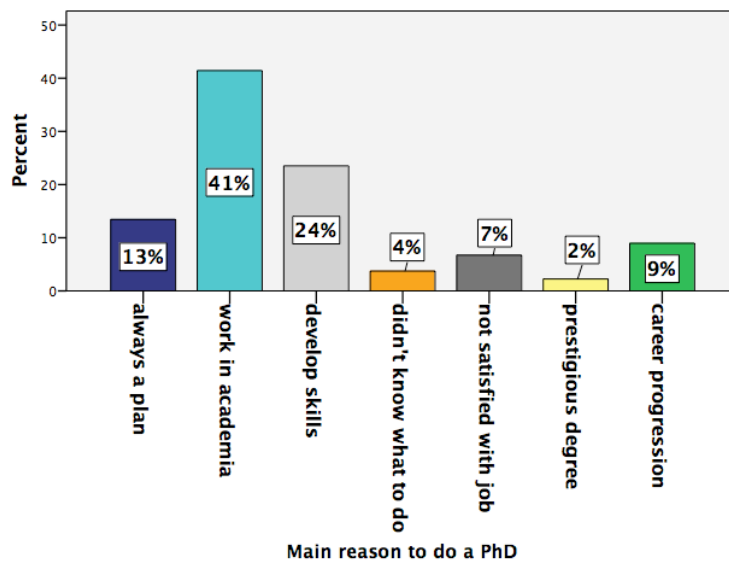
### 6.1 CAREER PLANNING OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS

In order to become an academic in the emerging European Higher Education Area (EHEA) a PhD degree is generally required. Thus, the decision to complete a PhD study should be seen as the basic step in pursuing an academic career (Anderson, 2000). The survey results provide evidence that the most popular reason for respondents to pursue a PhD was to have a qualification for entering the academic labour market. The second most popular reason was to develop skills and enhance knowledge, followed by the third, which was that they had always had a plan to pursue a PhD. The other reasons, including work and life balance and career progression, collected only minority of responses (Figure 21 below).

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter is under second review to be published in the journal *Career Development International* in a revised and condensed version: Siemers, O., "Becoming an academic: Drivers influencing career paths of doctoral graduates in social sciences".

Figure 21. Main reason to do a PhD



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

It should be emphasised that, even if the wish to work in academia was given as the main motivation for pursuing a doctoral degree, less than half of respondents indicated this as the main reason. This finding suggests that an initial decision to study for a doctoral degree does not necessarily mean that individuals are planning to become academics. This lack of a clear desire to become an academic is even the case for some of those who subsequently pursue this sort of career. Also, some survey participant indicated that they were motivated to do a PhD for reasons other than being able to work in academia but still became academics afterwards. The present research demonstrates that, even though the decision to study for a doctoral degree and the decision to enter academia as a workplace are interrelated, they should be treated as two separate decisions. This finding is explained in greater details at the end of the present chapter by the results of the interviews' analysis. Results of the analysis of the interviews show that, often, the decision to study for a PhD results in employment in academia, rather than it being a conscious decision to study for a PhD as a mean to an academic career. It is not obvious for everybody in the beginning of a PhD study that by, embarking on doctoral research, they have already made an unconscious decision for their later career.

### 6.1.2 GUIDED BY PAST EXPERIENCES

The interview analysis shows that, by deciding about education and career, many international researchers are guided by their past experiences and present life circumstances and not by hypothetical future benefits and advantages. Rather than trying to reach a certain career aim, they try to improve their present situation in their job and private life. Certainly, future benefits and long-term aims are important as well. However, it is difficult to calculate what will happen in three to four years' time in the life of an individual, particularly at the start of a career. Unlike this uncertainty about the future, the present situation and past experiences are clear and give a more solid orientation, while making career-related decisions. This can be exemplified by the statements about the decision to study for a PhD:

*In the first couple of years after I started working my job was quite interesting. But I did not really want to stay in this job. I started to look at ideas and things I can do in a PhD. I took the time to develop an idea and at the end I had a clear idea what I wanted to do.*

*Ingrid*

*Back then I had no idea what I should do otherwise. Secondly, I had an offer from my MA supervisor to develop my master's thesis to a PhD.*

*Mattias*

*It was also because I wanted to stay in Europe. I didn't want to return to Turkey. A PhD was a good option. I wasn't 100 per cent sure that I wanted to be an academic. But I just knew that I wanted to stay in Europe for a little bit more. I am honest here.*

*Melis*

The age group of the research population of this study should be taken into account as well. The majority of the research participants were between 28 and 44 years old at the time of data collection. In this age group, an individual passes through a number of transitions related to finishing education, beginning a career, building up relationships with people, and starting a family (Newman and Newman, 2014). Thus, this period of life is intense and full of different circumstances and experiences, which should be taken into account when analysing career decision-making.

The career story of the interviewee Marina illustrates how life circumstances and past experiences influence career planning:

*Firstly, I did not have this understanding that there is a career after a PhD. My plans about after PhD were quite limited. Actually, I did not think about it for quite long.*

*Marina*

Marina admitted that her entire academic career was built on a series of unconscious choices related to the specific circumstances of her life, rather than careful planning. As she was unhappy with her current job, she decided against changing that job but to do a PhD in Italy. Italy was chosen because of her then boyfriend, who could speak Italian and had a great interest for this country. However, after a failed marriage and subsequent divorce with the former boyfriend, she stayed in Italy on her own. Towards the end of Marina's PhD project, all her peers were looking for postdoctoral jobs and were struggling to find an academic position. By following her peers, Marina looked for a postdoc too:

*I was like in a tunnel. In the fourth year of my PhD I did not have this question any more, what happens after my PhD. There are postdocs I thought. I had a number of options in front of me and even did not think creatively that maybe there are other possibilities available.*

*Marina*

Marina's story illustrates how present life circumstances and past experiences influence individual career decisions, which again affect subsequent career-related choices in the future.

### *6.1.3 MINIMISING RISKS*

The labour market and employment relations have changed over the last decades (Gappa et al., 2007). In particular, job uncertainties and instability have increased in the higher educational sector. It has become more difficult to secure an academic position at a higher educational institution compared to 20 or 30 years ago (De Vries and Balazs, 1997; Richardson et al., 2008). The present research shows that many international researchers follow a risk-minimising strategy while deciding about their career. This strategy is related to the changes in the academic labour market.

A number of the research participants of this study show their awareness of the difficulties in getting an academic position. Moreover, the interview analysis provides evidence that this awareness of difficulties affect the career strategies adopted by some international researchers during their transition from doctoral study to an academic career. Namely, being aware of the potential challenges they may face after PhD graduation, many international researchers try to minimise risks and make it easy for themselves to find their first job after a PhD:

*It is always risky to apply somewhere else. Maybe you will not like being there. That's what I thought. So, I always tried to minimise the risk.*

*Feride*

Instead of aiming to find a more appropriate or well-paid position, some research participants admitted to being focused on minimizing risks and making the transition into academic labour market as easy as possible:

*I think that I did think about the place but, by the end of my PhD, also the economic circumstances had changed to such an extent that I thought while applying for jobs that the most important thing is just to get my first position and hopefully I will end up close to where I would like to be.*

*Tim*

*Most of the PhD students in the UK know how the academic market works and plan their career accordingly. Because of the economic crisis, the job market has almost collapsed. So, my plan was to do a postdoc, which I got. I was only focusing on getting a postdoc position, as I thought, ok, this is the only way.*

*Azra*

*I could see how my older peers with good PhDs and perfect profiles were struggling to find a job. So, I have chosen a strategy to secure my financial situation and to avoid going to a new cultural context. After weighing all the risks the idea of returning to Saint Petersburg was attractive.*

*Marina*

According to the interviewees, a risk-minimising strategy originates in an awareness of the challenges in the academic labour market. During their PhD study, doctoral candidates receive a lot of information about the difficulties they might expect in academia by older peers, supervisors and during career workshops at university. This is how the current situation in the academic labour market influences the career choices and strategies of many international researchers.

#### *6.1.4 TAKING OPPORTUNITIES*

The final crucial factor for deciding about a career is chance and the opportunities available at the time. By drawing on the theory of occupational allocation developed by Roberts (1968), the present research considers opportunity structure as a career determinant and determines the role and importance of this career driver for the expatriate researchers. The recent study by Brown (2015) considers opportunity structure as a crucial component determining the mid-career reframing of mature workers and suggests considering opportunity structure for conducting research with a distinct population. By following the studies by Roberts (1968) and Brown (2015), the research presented in this thesis confirms that opportunity structure plays a role in all the career stories of the interviewees to a greater or lesser degree. For instance, Kerime said directly that she never planned to work in academia and it just happened by chance. After completing her MA degree, Kerime was offered a job by a professor in Austria, her home country. The requirement for this job was to

study for a doctoral degree. So, Kerime enrolled in a PhD programme in Austria in order to be able to accept this job offer. Due to the lack of time and low quality of supervision she was not able to complete her doctoral study in Austria and decided to start another doctoral study in Italy from the beginning. After being awarded a PhD degree, Kerime wanted to work in a practice-oriented job but her entire work experience was academic only. She did not find a non-academic job and ended up as a researcher at a British university:

*It was not my decision to work in academia but a decision of my CV. Maybe I should have been more patient. I sent a few applications to non-academic jobs but I was simply overqualified for them. I am also responsible for my income. So, I needed a job straight after I finished my thesis.*

*Kerime*

Half of the interviewees (ten out of 20) had received an offer for their first job after their PhD by chance, without going through a formal application process. Even if they were actively looking for a position, the first job offer they accepted was proposed to them either by their external examiners after the viva, or by a person they met at a conference, or via their supervisors. So, they took advantage of available opportunities:

*I applied to three places. When I got negative responses, I said ok, I give up. At the end of summer I just saw an email from one of the professors who was on my panel. He asked me would you like to do the job for us.*

*Aydin*

The findings discussed above reflect the fact that the career choices of academics are not necessarily based on a conscious strategic decision-making process. By drawing on the qualitative interview analysis, this research demonstrates which factors influence the career decision-making process of many international researchers.

First, past experiences and present circumstances guide career decision-making more than a calculation of future advantages and aims.

Second, awareness of difficulties and uncertainties lead to adopting a risk-minimising strategy in career decision-making.

Finally, chance and opportunities play a crucial role in career decision-making.

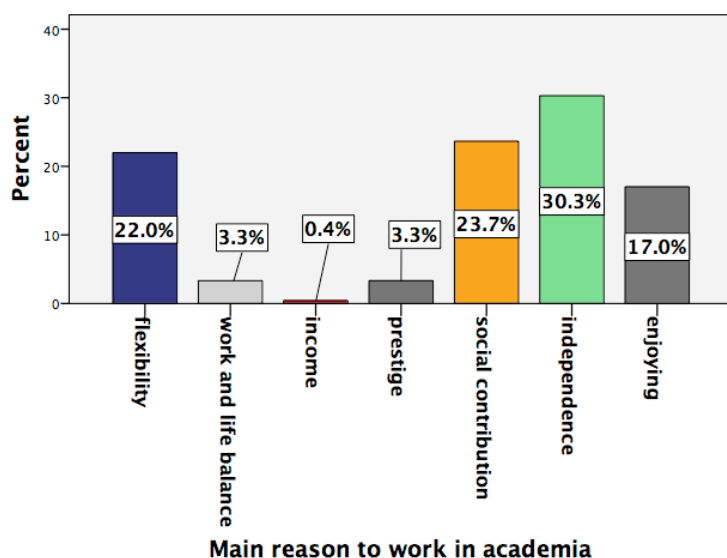
Deep analysis of the narratives combined with the results of the survey about academic careers put a spotlight on some details and this helps to gain a better understanding of how exactly certain choices are made. The next step is to understand what motivations make international researchers follow academic career paths.

## 6.2 BENEFITS OF AN ACADEMIC JOB

This research provides an explanation why international scholars choose to pursue an academic career in Europe. By focusing on the individual perception, personal and subjective reasons and motivations for working in academia are highlighted in this chapter. The approach of this study has to account for certain limitations. Namely, gaining an understanding of personal motivation needs a high level of self-awareness. Not everybody has the ability to explain her or his own reasoning behind a career decision. Nevertheless, this research provides evidence about factors motivating many international researchers to become academics in EHEA.

The survey results demonstrate (Figure 22 below) that the most popular reason to work in academia is independence. In this research, autonomy refers to the ability to decide about the content of the job. Two further popular reasons for embarking on an academic career are flexibility and social contribution. The remaining three response options – work and life balance, prestige, and income are less popular. None of these accumulated more than four per cent replies.

Figure 22. Main reason to work in academia



Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015

### 6.2.1 INDEPENDENT WORK

To be independent in designing and fulfilling their own work is an important driver for many international researchers for choosing an academic job. Almost a third of the survey respondents stated that the ability to decide about the content of their work was their main



reason for working in the academic labour market. Interviews provide a deeper explanation why the ability to work independently is so important for researchers and show how this reason can influence career decision-making in combination with other drivers:

*I don't have a proper boss.*

*Levi*

*I think that the most attractive thing about academia for everybody is to get full authorship of what you do and being able to decide what you work on. So, you are the author of your own products.*

*Azra*

### 6.1.2 SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Doing a useful job for society, producing applied results, and changing and improving the world around is an important driver for many international researchers to work in academia. According to the survey data (Figure 22: 135), a fifth of the respondents (23 per cent) give social contribution as the main reason to work in academia. During the interviews, participants explained that they feel committed to research in general or to their area of research in particular. They want to be useful and appear as idealists passionate about their work and want to produce results valuable for the society in which they live:

*I think the world is getting overcrowded, the competition is too harsh right now and titles matter a lot. But it's not for the title that I am here. I am an idealist. I am committed to this research oriented work.*

*Dilara*

*I feel really happy, I feel really lucky. I am not interested in money, I am interested in working in the field. I just want to have money for life and to do the job I believe in.*

*Alice*

*I like academia, I think it is really a nice environment. I think, it is very interesting and you meet a lot of interesting people. You have a lot of flexibility. These are good things about it. I would like to do research that can be used for people.*

*Maria*

### 6.1.3 FLEXIBILITY

Another group of international researchers who are working in academia because they enjoy comfortable working conditions could be identified through the interviews. These researchers value flexible working hours and the ability to work from home or abroad:

*I think that for parents with small children it is ideal in a way. Sometimes it is not ideal, because we have to work in the evening. But sometimes you are flexible. You do not have to stay nine to five and you do not have to call in*

*sick if a child is sick. You can stay in the weekend or work in the evening if you did less during the week. I think it is quite convenient at the moment.*

*Maria*

Azra is working as a researcher outside of academia but would like to return to the academic labour market. She explained her choice by saying that academia offers a higher level of flexibility, which was important for her:

*As my project relates to academia, I enjoy working with academics. But I have to do regular working hours. A good practice is to show up around nine to nine-thirty and be in the office until six to seven. I am not able to work from somewhere else, like from abroad. So, these things make academia attractive.*

*Azra*

Survey results demonstrate (Figure 22: 135) that a fifth of the survey participants work in academia, first of all, because of the flexibility of their job. One view might be that flexibility could contribute to a work and life balance. However, the survey results do not show this, as only three per cent of the survey respondents said that work and life balance was their main reason to work in academia.

The statement given by Maria explains why, on the one hand, flexibility in academia is valuable but, on the other hand, many international researchers are not satisfied with their work and life balance. Maria said that, by having flexible working hours, she can decide herself when she works. Also, she does not have to be in the office from nine to five, if she needs to collect her children from school. However, this means she should work more during evenings or weekends, which affects her work life balance in a negative way. Two survey respondents replied to the question about reasons for working in academia by saying:

*You must be joking about high income and work-life balance, among others.*

*Survey respondent*

*Seriously? There is no work and life balance, nor a high income in academia.*

*Survey respondent*

So, even if they are enjoying flexible working hours and independence, some international researchers complained about the lack of work and life balance and the low incomes in academia.

### 6.3.2 ACADEMIC LIFESTYLE

The next drivers motivating many international researchers to pursue an academic career are lifestyle, environment at work and the community of colleagues, all of which they enjoy:

*I think we are very lucky here because it's really an amazing team. There are a lot of people in the centre, who have practical experience. I really like this combination of the fieldwork and practical experience, academic research and reflection, questioning.*

*Alice*

*I realised this is itself very nice as well. For a long time I was thinking, ok, I want to have an academic career. This is really what I enjoy. I like the academic community. I like the lifestyle. I like the autonomy.*

*Azra*

Interview results demonstrate that, even when admitting to being exposed to a high level of stress and competition within academia, some interviewees believe that the conditions in academia are much better compared to those outside the academic labour market.

### 6.3.3 SKILLS AND TRAINING

The last reason for international researchers to choose academia, explored through the interview analysis, is the ability to conduct academic research. A number of interviewees admitted that, simply, they were trained to work in academia and they had got the skills and abilities to do this job:

*During my postdoc, I realised that I do like academia and I do want to stay in academia and I invested a lot of time and knowledge and this is what I can bring to the world. And I actually enjoy it, I am not so bad in it, so, I shall continue.*

*Gabriela*

*I had more experience in the academic area rather than in other areas. This means I have got higher chances to get a job in this area.*

*Kerime*

By deciding to do a PhD, international researchers invest time and other resources into academic research and acquire research skills and relevant work experience. After passing through doctoral study many of them realise that academic research is the only job they are able to do at the moment due to their particular skills, training, and education.

As the sample of this study includes international researchers in social sciences, this finding is related to the career of social scientists only. It may be different for PhD graduates in other academic disciplines, especially, if during their doctoral studies, they have acquired skills which can be equally applied in academic research and outside of academia. This finding corresponds with the theme about path dependency which will be discussed explicitly below in findings on criticisms about working in academia.

So, by drawing on the interview analysis and survey results, five drivers could be identified, motivating many international researchers to pursue a career in academia: independent work, social contribution, flexibility, academic lifestyle, and skills available. Survey results provide statistics that help to understand the ranking and importance of the drivers for individuals when making a career decision. Then, interview analysis provides a detailed explanation, embodied in the context of individual career stories, of how these drivers motivate the research participants to pursue an academic career.

In particular, the interviews demonstrate that the reasons for working in academia do not exist independently from each other in researchers' minds but are highly interrelated and produce a career decision in combination. According to the research participants, certain drivers play a central role in pushing individuals towards an academic career, while other drivers are rather supportive. The main motivations of the research participants to work in academia could be identified as independence, social contribution, and flexibility of the job. The remaining reasons: academic lifestyle and available skills play a supportive role in decision-making. By drawing on the survey results and interview analysis, it can be concluded that work and life balance, income, and prestige are of minor relevance for the decision about working in the academic labour market.

#### 6.4 CRITICISING ACADEMIA

Although international researchers decide to pursue an academic career after their doctoral studies, they are not always entirely happy with their work environment in academia. First, as this research shows, the decision to become an academic is not always a strategic one, but can be a result of circumstances or opportunities available at the given moment. In this regard, this study is in compliance with the findings from the previous research on career decision-making (Evetts, 1992; Mitchell et al., 1999). The research by Mitchell and colleagues (1999) provides evidence of the importance of the opportunity structure and other contextual factors for the career decision-making process.

Second, motivation to become an academic and expectations of how professional life will look are not always realised in practice, even if the individual remains at the same university after finishing a PhD. Being a doctoral student at an institution and being a member of staff there can be very different experiences. These two reasons, lack of strategic planning and experiencing the conditions of work in academia, can lead to the dissatisfaction of scholars in certain circumstances in the academic labour market. So, to get a fuller understanding of

pursuing an academic career in Europe, this research attempted to explore how international scholars criticise academia.

Several findings related to criticisms about working in academia could be drawn from the interview analysis. Some of them have already been discussed in previous research about the academic labour market, while others are emerging themes in the contemporary scholarly literature. Criticism about academia can be divided into two main groups – criticisms related to the job application process and criticisms related to the working conditions in the academic labour market.

#### *6.4.1 CRITICISING THE PROCESS OF JOB APPLICATION IN ACADEMIA*

Three main problems related to the process of looking for and applying to an academic position were identified during the interviews with international early career researchers.

##### *6.4.1.1 Difficulties of finding a position*

According to the interviewees, it is difficult to find an academic position these days. Moreover, it is even more difficult to find a permanent position after finishing a PhD and having spent several years on a temporary contract as a postdoctoral fellow:

*It is not necessarily related to the UK system itself, but it is related to the overall economic situation in Europe. The job market is shrinking, especially the academic job market. I know British friends who get a PhD and are still unemployed, and trying to do some part-time jobs before finding something permanent.*

*Aydin*

*I did realise that the most difficult transition is not so much from the PhD to the postdoc but from the postdoc to the more permanent, let say, at least tenure track, to break through into a more secure segment of the academia. For postdocs you have, I think, much more options and publications are not so important as they are later on.*

*Gabriela*

As some interviewees said, the situation in academia, when the number of PhD programmes is growing but the number of academic positions is shrinking, puts international researchers in a difficult situation, especially if they progressing in a postdoctoral career. Namely, they have invested time and financial resources into the doctoral education and their early postdoctoral career. However, they do not receive any rewards for it but have to struggle again to get a permanent position. After having invested time and acquired academic skills (and also owing to not having acquired other skills for a non-academic job), it is challenging to try to change career because many international researchers have become path dependent.

#### 6.4.1.2 Path dependency

Path dependency is a challenge for many international researchers aiming to change their career trajectory or planning to combine an academic and a non-academic job. According to the interviewees, it is difficult to change career path from the non-academic to the academic labour market, as well as the other way around. Even though, nowadays, for many people careers have become more flexible, compared to traditional career patterns (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001b; De Fillippi and Arthur, 1994; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009), certain issues remain a barrier for changing a professional path:

*I am not sure whether I have this freedom to choose because my CV is academic only. I have heard from many of friends of mine that they would like to do something different but they have been working in academia only their whole life. It is really difficult to change.*

*Kerime*

An academic-only CV can be a problem if individuals wants to develop their career outside of academia because of a lack of relevant skills and experiences. To return to the academic labour market after spending several years outside of academia after a PhD can be difficult too, because of the lack of academic publications. However, a number of the interviewees expressed their plans to combine an academic and a more applied practical job outside of academia. They believed that it would be possible to achieve this:

*My wife for sure is staying in academia. I like academia as well. When I am thinking about the social value of this job. But at the same time I like a social life. I like to work in consultancy as well. We are thinking of establishing a consultancy firm back in Turkey if we go there. So, I could work there and at the same time teach at university.*

*Aydin*

*I would like to stay in academia, but I am not sure whether I would like to combine it with something else. I like academia, I think it is really a nice environment. I think, it is very interesting and you meet a lot of interesting people. You have a lot of flexibility. These are good things about it. Sometimes I also would like to do something more applied. But obviously, you can combine things. I would like to do research that can be used for people.*

*Maria*

Although the majority of the survey respondents (78 per cent) planned to have an academic job in the future, the second most popular response option (16 per cent) is combining an academic and a non-academic job (Table 7 below).

**Table 7. Future plans about work and career**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>In HE</i>	78%
<i>Outside of HE</i>	1%
<i>Combine HE and non-HE jobs</i>	16%
<i>Self-employed</i>	1%
<i>Other</i>	4%

*HE - Higher Education.*

*Source: Survey for the international early-career social scientists, 2015*

#### *6.4.1.3 Non-transparent procedure of staff recruitment*

Academics who participated in the interviews blamed the staff recruitment system at universities for not having transparent job application processes. Interview results demonstrate that many international researchers in Europe experienced difficulties applying for academic jobs because of a lack of connections and relationships to the “right” people:

*The UK system seems to be so transparent, you know what I mean. There is no nepotism, you just apply and then get a job or not. So, I’ve started to have less faith in this argument. I haven’t applied officially for my current job and I haven’t been interviewed. And I made it. It has been five months that I am working here right now. So, it is not transparent at all. It is similar to Turkey in that regard. If you know the right people, if you have the relevant, right references, then you will get the job.*

*Aydin*

*There is one particular problem that the academic system in Germany is based on connections. You know somebody and you stay there, then this person will help you to get a position. I am outside of this system because I have spent too much time abroad.*

*Mattias*

*And when you apply for jobs in the UK, it’s really important that someone makes a phone call and says look, this person is good... I feel that I am missing these links in the UK. It has been three years but I feel that I still need three more years to establish a network of my own where I can ask them, could you please give me this favour. I am not even sure, could I ever ask this question.*

*Melis*

Facing numerous challenges, as discussed above, does not completely demotivate international researchers in pursuing an academic career. If, after applying for a job in academia and receiving an appropriate offer, international researchers get an academic job they discover its advantages and disadvantages.

#### 6.4.2 CRITICISING WORKING CONDITIONS IN ACADEMIA

Five central critical points related to the organisation and conditions of work in academia are highlighted through the interviews with the international researchers working in the academic labour market. As the sample of this study includes only early-career researchers the findings are relevant only for the people in this career stage. Possibly, more established academics on the professorial level would criticise completely different issues within the academic labour market. However, this remains beyond the borders of this research.

##### 6.4.2.1 Stressful and competitive

Although flexibility and lifestyle are two of the drivers motivating people to work in academia, many international researchers perceived their job as stressful due to the high level of competition and pressure, and precarious, unsecure conditions of work:

*The thing that I don't like about academia is that I think that it's sometimes too competitive. Between academics, even colleagues, there is a lot of competition, not that much collaboration.*

*Adriana*

*I do not have a good dream job because the truth is academia is very stressful. You feel very like, you are supposed to always publish and improve your work. And in economics people are very macho, very male dominated with, like, fast racing cars. They are making very complex models and staff publications. So, it is rather stressful.*

*Levi*

*It was never for certain and this is exactly about stress in academia. It is not nice for me to have one-year contracts, obviously, because you do not know what is going to happen. Everyone would probably like more stability, but how it would work, I do not know.*

*Maria*

*PhD programmes are structured in a way that funding ends earlier than the thesis is ready. Funding is limited and does not allow writing a PhD thesis on the level expected from you by the university. If you do not have money, you start working. And the first year of work is so intense, but it is exactly the year when you are supposed to finish the PhD.*

*Marina*

As the quotes from the interviews show, stress in academia is related to the specific circumstances and structures of academic work. As an example, Marina described her transition from PhD to postdoctoral career as stressful because she did not have enough resources to finish her thesis on time without taking paid employment. So, a researcher is supposed to finish a PhD thesis, find a postdoctoral position, and work at the same time because of the lack of funding. These challenges happening simultaneously create a high level of stress. In addition, stress in academia can be related to the lack of change in the



structures of the academic labour market, when attention is paid to publishing research and too much weight is given to the names of the famous institutions where their research has been made.

#### *6.4.2.2 Pressure to publish and attention to ranking*

Published research in academic journals plays one of the most important roles in choosing candidates for academic positions. High pressure to publish research is criticised by the participants of this study because this pressure means additional stress for the international researchers working in academia. Pressure to publish has already been criticised in the existing literature on the topic because of having a negative effect on creativity, intellectual lives, and the mental state of faculty (De Rond and Miller, 2005; Piganiol, 1971).

The same argument counts for the discussion about the ranking of universities. If a researcher is based at a highly ranked university, does she or he automatically produce better research? Even if this is not the case, employers in academia rely on the ranking of universities as a selection criterion for choosing candidates for an academic position. This research demonstrates that a number of the interviewees are sceptical about this phenomenon:

*When I asked some professors, they just said to me that really they only look at CVs of somebody who has a degree from Oxford or Cambridge or UK nationals, or a Harvard degree. The rest is automatically eliminated.*

*Aydin*

*Unfortunately, people really care about these brands. I don't care about them. I see that there are so many people who are working at the top universities but they don't produce that much. They don't have a good quality and professional qualification. And I don't respect those people, even if I know that they are affiliated with top universities. And I respect people who are not affiliated with the top universities but who produce interesting work. Maybe they were not really lucky and they didn't get a chance to be affiliated with a top university.*

*Dilara*

*I have developed a more specific understanding of the academic world now. There are some issues in academia which I am not happy about. For example, I enjoy thinking, reading and conducting research. However, I am sceptical about chasing publications. I am not sure whether I want to participate in this race.*

*Marina*

#### *6.4.2.3 University as a business*

Related to the point about the role of ranking in academia, mentioned above, the trend of universities to become more teaching-oriented is criticised by the international researchers who participated in this study. This point relates to UK universities rather than to the universities on continental Europe because of the high fees for study introduced in the UK. By attracting more students, especially international students obliged to pay higher fees,

universities become a business. This process results in the declining orientation of universities towards research:

*I think that everywhere, not only in the UK, not only in Europe but everywhere, I hear that my colleagues are complaining about the tendency of universities. They are becoming more and more teaching-oriented, so, accepting more and more students rather than allocating funding to the new research.*

*Dilara*

#### *6.4.2.4 Low standard of living*

This research shows that many international researchers are not entirely happy with their standard of living due to their low earnings in academia. First, after having achieved the highest level of education, they expect to receive a higher salary. Second, by comparing the salaries in academia with the salaries in the non-academic sector on the same level of education and responsibility, international researchers understand that they could earn more money if they were working in the private sector. Third, studying for a PhD postpones entering the labour market because of the time investment in doctoral study. So, when securing their first academic job, international researchers are often older than their peers, who entered the labour market straight after their undergraduate degree and have already achieved a higher standard of living. These factors make many international researchers dissatisfied with their earnings:

*I am now 36 and I am just living in a student apartment. I'd like to have more. Some of my friends back in Turkey, some of them are managers and have high positions, fancy cars, nice houses. I don't have that and never had. So, I feel a lack of those actually.*

*Aydin*

*Obviously, the salary, if you compare it to a private job, it is less than what you could have.*

*Maria*

*I cannot say that I have the best salary ever. The academic salary in the UK is pretty bad compared to the private sector. I would also like to have more stuff.*

*Levi*

#### *6.4.2.5 Precarious position of the early-career researchers*

Early-career international researchers often find themselves in a precarious position after finishing their PhD and entering the academic labour market. As mentioned above, it is difficult to find a position after a PhD. Employers are aware of this. In addition to that, international researchers rely on recommendation letters of their past employers. So, they are interested in building up good relationships with employers. Thus, some of the early-career

international researchers have to work lower than the level they believe is appropriate when recruited for big projects at universities. Obviously, they do not feel happy about their precarious position:

*It's about power relations in academia. Until you get your permanent position somewhere, people will use it because they may think that you have no other choice.*

*Melis*

*It was also quite challenging (to be a postdoctoral researcher within a department) because, when you are trying to input about the direction of the department, you get a sense that they say they are hearing you, but they are not listening to you because you are in this precarious position within the staff.*

*Sarima*

In conclusion, findings of this research contribute to the field of knowledge explaining the drivers of expatriate researchers to pursue an academic career. By combining statistical survey data with the qualitative interview data, the present research makes it possible to create a more complete picture demonstrating the postdoctoral career development of expatriate researchers in academia. Interview analysis provides a deeper understanding of the drivers, which were identified as important factors influencing the career development of international early-career researchers through their survey replies. Three main subtopics related to a career in academia were explored in this research: career planning of international researchers, benefits of an academic job, and criticisms about the academic labour market.

First, by analysing career development in academia as a process, the present research explored that some factors that influenced the career planning of young international scholars are interrelated and do not exist independently of each other. This research shows that it is difficult to capture the moment of a conscious decision to become an academic. This decision is a fluid one which is often difficult for the researchers themselves to understand. This research provides evidence that the decision to study for a PhD is not always connected to a plan to pursue an academic career. Some PhD students think strategically about conducting a PhD study in order to be able to work in academia, while others merely want to extend their student experience or enjoy working on a topic. This finding goes in line with the previous research by Purcell and colleagues (2006) confirming that the decision to conduct a doctoral research can be explained by different drivers, which may or may not relate to career development. So, when deciding about doctoral study, it seems to be too early to commit to an academic job later on. However, after completing a doctoral degree many international researchers realise that it is too late and the decision about becoming an academic has already

effectively been made by investing time and other resources in their PhD, by publishing research, and acquiring research skills. So, after passing the viva, some expatriate researchers believe that academic research is the only job for which they are qualified due to the skills, education and work experience on their CV. In addition, lack of certain skills and not having invested time and resources in alternative activities (such as an internship in business or networking in the corporate environment) is perceived as a constraint to choose an alternative career path outside of academia. This finding suggests that the decision to pursue doctoral study often results in subsequent employment in academia, rather than it being a conscious decision to study for a PhD as a means to achieve an academic career.

Second, this research demonstrates how past experiences, awareness of difficulties, and opportunities available at a certain time affect career decisions of some international researchers. Past experiences and present circumstances of some international researchers guide their career decision-making more than a calculation of future advantages and aims. In addition to that, awareness of difficulties and uncertainties leads some international researchers to adopting a risk-minimising strategy in career decision-making. And finally, chance and opportunities can play an unpredictable role in choosing a career. This finding suggests that, in many cases, instead of following a long-term strategic career aim, some international researchers try to improve their current situation, minimise risks, and react to the opportunities available to them.

Third, the benefits of working in academia were identified through exploring the drivers motivating the international researchers who participated in this study to pursue an academic career. Five main drivers are highlighted in this research: autonomy, social contribution, flexibility, academic community and lifestyle, and research skills and training acquired. As a result of this research, it was discovered that work and life balance, income, and prestige of an academic position do not play a considerable role in motivating international researchers to become academics. It is perhaps surprising that the flexibility of the academic job is highly valued by international researchers as something which motivates them to work in academia. At the same time, a number of international researchers are not satisfied with their work life balance even if they enjoy the flexibility of an academic career.

Finally, this research explored how international researchers criticise the academic labour market. It could be identified that the main criticisms related to the process of job application and the conditions of work in academia. Many international researchers expressed their concerns about the difficulties they encountered in finding a job, especially after progressing

to a higher level of academia, because of path dependency and the difficulties of changing between the academic and non-academic labour market, and the non-transparent processes of job applications in higher education. In addition to that, a stressful and competitive environment, pressure to publish research, the trend of universities to become more teaching-oriented and to invest less money in research, the low standard of living of academics because of low incomes, and the precarious position of early-career researchers within the university were named as the main challenges that trouble international researchers in the academic labour market.

The main advantages and disadvantages of working in the academic labour market in Europe as well as the career planning of academics were spotlighted in this research. The mixed-method approach adopted in this study enabled the main trends within the topic to be found out and provided a more detailed explanation of these trends.

## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The significance of this research is in its contribution to advancing knowledge in the fields of career construction and academic mobility, including a contribution to theoretical developments in these fields. This chapter provides a summary of the main research findings and highlights how the findings support or contradict the concepts and theories underpinning this research. The discussion presented in this section demonstrates the variety and richness of the research findings related to the expectation and outcomes of academic and occupational mobility during the doctoral and postdoctoral career stages of the expatriate researchers.

In order to provide a comprehensive summary and a discussion of the research findings in this concluding chapter, first, the main three broad-scale research findings of this study are presented. Second, the smaller-scale findings are discussed, divided in three categories: the career attitudes of the expatriate researchers with an emphasis on the motivation and reasoning behind the educational and career choices; the individual value of a doctorate abroad; the outcomes of academic mobility during doctoral and postdoctoral stages. Third, after summarising and discussing the findings, the limitations of this study are outlined in this chapter by signposting the borderline of this research. Finally, the practical contribution of the research for current and potential doctoral students and graduates, and EU policy-makers is discussed alongside some ideas and suggestions for further research in the field.

### 7.1 THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

At first glance, researchers and academics in Europe seem to have many opportunities and choices to develop their careers across national borders. Academic mobility and international exchanges are praised as positive and important experiences for enhancing the career prospects of individuals (Carlson, 2013; Kelo et al., 2006). Expatriate researchers may appear as privileged, boundaryless careerists (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) enjoying autonomy, flexibility and independence from traditional organisational career arrangements (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1976). Nevertheless, the present research suggests that expatriate researchers experience boundaries in their career, primarily related to the current situation in the labour market for PhD graduates. So, it is not always correct to represent expatriate researchers as a privileged group of skilled professionals enjoying a wide range of opportunities for international mobility and career development in Europe. Indeed, the opposite is often the case, with expatriate researchers seen as trying to secure a postdoctoral position against increased competition after a prolonged investment in their education. In

addition, they are often ready to compromise on a number of issues, including the place of residence and commuting to their workplace. This research contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the career paths and mobility patterns of the expatriate researchers in social sciences by providing evidence for the following findings.

First, the decision to study for a doctorate and the decision to experience academic mobility is not necessarily a carefully considered choice with regard to maximising subsequent career-related returns. Moreover, contextual factors play an important role for the expatriate researchers when deciding to embark on a PhD study and to move abroad for education- or career-related purposes. These contextual factors include the private life circumstances, labour market conditions and career opportunities available in a certain time and space.

Second, the present research has not found any strong evidence showing that academic mobility directly brings immediate career-related returns for the expatriate researchers during the early-career stage, from focusing on the research participants' perspective. So, this study argues that academic mobility may or may not result in career development and advancement.

Finally, the expatriate researchers value their experience of a doctorate and academic mobility for personal development and the skills acquired throughout this process, as perceived and articulated by the research population. Therefore, this study suggests that academic mobility linked to pursuing a doctoral degree may indirectly bring career-related returns due to the skills and capacities developed and personal experience gained through studying for a doctorate abroad.

In order to provide a reply to the main research question how do expatriate researchers evaluate and articulate their experience of academic mobility and studying for a doctorate abroad, expectations and outcomes of this experience are explored in the present research. The present study argues that the expatriate researchers in social sciences embark on a doctoral study abroad without necessarily expecting any immediate career-related returns but are influenced by contextual factors such as the opportunity structure and insecure employment conditions in the labour market for the PhD graduates. This insecurity of the employment conditions becomes even more evident and influential after PhD graduation and embarking into the subsequent postdoctoral career. The shift from permanent employment conditions in academia in the past towards more project-based jobs for the early-career doctoral holders today, accompanied by the constantly growing numbers of PhD programmes

and graduates at European universities, create high competition for postdoctoral positions, especially for the permanent ones. Unlike thirty years ago, it is much more difficult to get a job straight after doctoral graduation. So, many contemporary PhD graduates have to accept that they hold the highest educational degree, have invested time and money into their prolonged education, but still struggle to find a postdoctoral position. The awareness about the insecure employment conditions for the PhD graduates makes many expatriate researchers re-think their career strategy, to react to opportunities available, and even to make an alternative career plan. Academic mobility is often a part of the career plan, not because of promising career-related returns, but because more positions are available if relocation abroad is considered. The present research argues that academic mobility often does not bring any immediate career-related returns directly. Nevertheless, the experience of academic mobility during a doctorate abroad is valued by the expatriate researchers for personal development and skills acquisition. Therefore, it can be assumed that academic mobility may indirectly advance the expatriate researchers' careers through providing an opportunity for gaining new skills and developing capacities. Nevertheless, this assumption requires additional research in order to be claimed as supported by evidence. The present study suggests further research is undertaken in order to explore and to support this assumption.

Insecurity of the employment conditions in academia and high competitiveness in the labour market for PhD graduates define the context of career development in research after studying for a doctorate. These days, it is difficult for PhD graduates to develop a "traditional" organisational career (Hall, 1976) within a company or a university because there are not enough permanent positions available for researchers. As opportunities for developing a postdoctoral career within one institution are limited, expatriate researchers have to develop the career attitudes, such as responding to the need to be flexible, ready to move abroad, and to develop a set of skills and capacities (through research and teaching experience, track of publications, and acquisition of grants in their name) allowing them to change career and to adapt to the new circumstances. So, for the expatriate researchers, it may not be a conscious choice to be independent of a "traditional" organisational career path (Hall, 1976) but a reaction to the lack of opportunities and the current situation in the labour market. Expatriate researchers develop these career attitudes out of necessity and as a reaction to the boundaries and challenges of the contemporary labour market for the PhD holders.



## 7.2 DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE

### 7.2.1 CAREER ATTITUDES OF THE EXPATRIATE RESEARCHERS

By drawing on career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and protean career concepts (Briscoe et al., 2006), this research advances knowledge about career attitudes of expatriate researchers in social sciences. The career construction theory of Savickas (2005) underpinning this research theoretically argues that careers are constructed by individuals and do not unfold independently of human action. Career construction consists of a series of decisions and steps leading towards realising the individual's self-esteem through employment. This research supports this theoretical argument related to career construction by exploring how expatriate researchers explain their choice of moving abroad for a doctorate and pursuing a research career afterwards.

The present research confirms that the initial decision to study for a PhD is not necessarily connected to a plan to become an academic. Based on reports of the expatriate researchers who participated in the present study, for many of them it appears to be too early to make the decision about becoming an academic at the point of deciding about pursuing a PhD study. By drawing on the findings from the survey and the interviews, this research argues that some expatriate researchers want to extend their student experience while others enjoy a particular research topic and want to conduct a study about it. The present research suggests that it is not always a conscious plan to become an academic at the point of embarking on doctoral study. This finding resonates with the research on career planning of social science PhDs by Purcell and colleagues (2006), arguing that many PhD graduates are initially motivated to study for a doctoral degree for reasons not related to improving their prospects for an academic or non-academic career.

After completing a PhD study, many doctoral graduates realise that they have already partly followed a path which could lead to employment in academia by investing time into their doctoral degree, publishing research results, and going to conferences. Moreover, this research demonstrates that some expatriate researchers decide to pursue an academic career because they feel that this reflects their skills and abilities – academic research is a field they know and they believe they can work in this area. Somewhat surprisingly, when doctoral students start a PhD they often feel it is too early to commit themselves to academia. However, after finishing their doctoral studies, they believe that they are already partly committed by time investment in this long educational journey. In addition, for some

expatriate researchers it already feels too late to change the academic pattern, as the findings of the present study demonstrate.

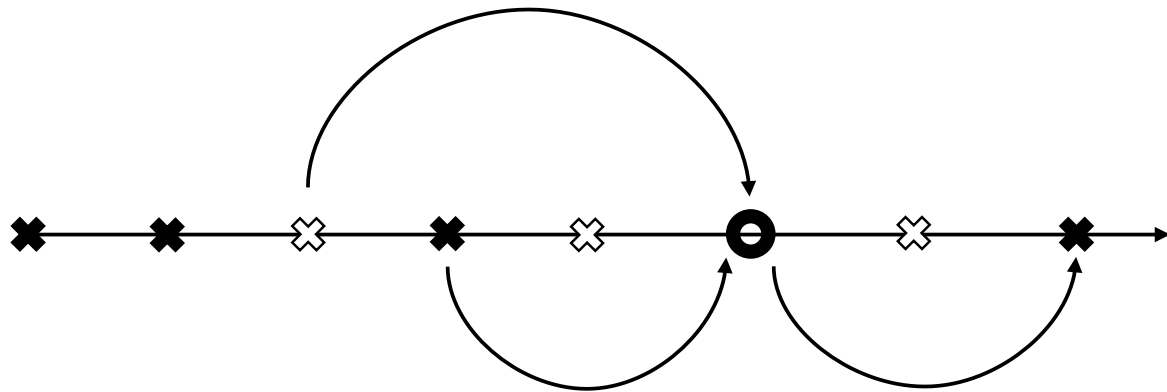
Some expatriate researchers employed in academia argue that their initial decision to pursue a doctoral degree lead them to become academics subsequently because they feel this is one way to realise the value from the years they have invested in their lengthy doctoral education. In addition, a research-related job allows them to realise their capacity and knowledge based on the training they have received and the skills they have developed. Interestingly, the expatriate researchers not only reflect on their previous career steps made and time invested into certain educational choices when explaining their career choices; they also perceive and articulate career steps not made and certain skills not acquired as important considerations driving their career development. One of the interviewees, Kerime, described the decision about her career being not her own decision but a decision made by her CV, because the CV contained some skills and experiences and a lack of other skills and experiences. So, the career steps of the expatriate researchers are made by considering both the acquired and non-acquired knowledge and experience, as the present study confirms. The decision to study for a PhD can, therefore, be seen as a step (albeit often an unconscious one) towards career construction in academia for many expatriate researchers. This finding supports the theory of career construction by Savickas (2005) proposing that individuals actively construct their careers by making certain steps and decisions leading to the realisation of their self-esteem in employment. Importantly, the individual career stories are collected and analysed in this research from the perspective of the participants after becoming a postdoctoral researcher. The present research discovers that many of the participants were not initially aiming to pursue an academic career when making their decision to study for a doctorate. Furthermore, this research argues that the decision to pursue a doctoral degree abroad often results in becoming an academic rather than it being a conscious decision to work in the academic labour market.

By drawing on the evidence of postdoctoral careers of expatriate researchers, the present research allows arguments to be generated contributing towards a better understanding of how careers are constructed by individuals. However, these arguments should be considered with much caution, because the findings are made based on a sample of expatriate researchers in social sciences. Due to the approach adopted in the present study, the generalisability of its findings is low. Nevertheless, detailed descriptive information about the sample is provided in the methodology chapter of this thesis. Therefore, it is possible to make decisions for

future research on careers, and whether the arguments discussed in this section are applicable to a distinct population. By confirming Savickas' (2005) argument about careers constructed through the steps and decisions made by individuals, this research develops two arguments. First, the career steps are not always made consciously with a career-related aim in mind. Indeed, the steps and decisions leading to a certain career construction are often realised retrospectively. Furthermore, realising the importance of the certain steps is crucial for making subsequent career steps in the future. Second, the present research draws attention to the importance of the not-taken career steps in individual career construction. Indeed, behind every made career step there are a number of rejected or non-realised career-related steps. A decision not to make a career step can be an important decision for the career construction. For example, the decision to accept a postdoctoral position in academic research means not taking another job in industry or a teaching-related position. Also during studying, the decision not to take certain subjects as core modules can influence career construction similarly to the decision to take some other subjects. These not-taken career steps may result in non-acquired skills and the lack of knowledge in certain areas. In other words, when individuals develop certain skills and experiences, some alternative skills remain undeveloped because of time constraints. This lack of skills in certain areas can play a role for the subsequent career construction.

To summarise the arguments discussed, the present research suggests considering three components as important for career construction (Figure 23 below). These components are: made career steps, not-taken career steps, and retrospectively considering certain steps as important. Furthermore, the present study argues that those career steps (made and not-taken) are considered as important influences for future career development.

Figure 23. Three elements influencing career construction: made career steps, not-taken career steps, and retrospectively realising certain steps as important



**Legend:**

- ✕ Made career steps
- ✕ Non-made career steps
- Retrospective realising
- Career construction

As shown in Figure 23 above, career construction is presented in this study as a series of career steps and realising the importance of some of these steps. For instance, the decision to study for a PhD is regarded in the present study as a step leading towards career construction in research and academia. As the present research shows, the importance of this career step is realised by many expatriate researchers not straight after the decision-making but in the final stage of the doctorate studies. This stage is also the beginning of the postdoctoral career transition. Drawing on this finding, the present research suggests that, first, realising the importance of a career step for the career construction can happen straight after the step is made or later on in the retrospective. Second, not all but some career steps are regarded as important and influential for the subsequent career construction. Finally, the decision not to make a certain career step (which was considered at a point) is also influential for the subsequent career construction. For future research in the field of career construction, it is suggested to explore whether retrospective realising of certain career steps as important is associated with a career transition. Presumably, career transition (such as the transition between a doctorate and the postdoctoral career) can be regarded as time to evaluate and reevaluate previous steps in order to make the next step. However, this is an assumption and should be explored further by the future research. The findings discussed and presented in the Figure 23 (above) support the career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) and the protean

career concept (Hall, 1976) by accepting the argument that expatriate researchers actively build their careers. Nevertheless, some other findings from the present research contradict the protean career concept (Hall, 1976) as applied to the population of the expatriate researchers.

The protean career concept (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 1976) providing a theoretical background for this study describes a protean careerist as being self-directed in career decision-making by actively building a career. Hall (1976) notes the emergence of the protean career as a shift away from the organisational career. The protean career is a concept that requires everyone to monitor and assess the job market; anticipate future developments, trends, and industry shifts; gain the necessary skills, qualifications, relationships, and assets to meet the shifts; and adapt quickly to thrive in an ever-changing workplace (Hall, 1976). This research provides evidence that many expatriate researchers feel themselves to be already committed to academia when deciding about their postdoctoral career. So, for many it is too late for them to change their career pattern, according to their own perception. This finding shows that expatriate researchers can hardly be seen as protean careerists, because they realise their commitment to an academic career retrospectively and try to keep to their career path rather than anticipating the possible shifts in labour market and being prepared for these shifts.

Another theoretical concept of a boundaryless careerist provided background for this research. The boundaryless career concept was introduced and popularised by Arthur and Rousseau (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and is defined as independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organisational career arrangements. Boundaryless careers – as being the opposite of organisational careers – highlight the importance of moving across the boundaries of separate employers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Expatriate researchers have to navigate their postdoctoral career through a series of options available in the labour market. By doing so, expatriate researchers develop specific career attitudes, which influence their decision-making about educational and career choices. These career attitudes are: reacting to opportunities available and minimising risks in career-related decisions. Taking into account the increasing insecurity of the employment conditions in the labour market for PhD graduates and the high competition especially for permanent positions in academia, expatriate researchers have to shift their mind towards reacting to opportunities instead of following a longer-term career aspiration. This finding does not suggest that expatriate researchers are opportunistic careerists with regard to their career decision-making styles, as defined in the research by Bimrose and Brown (2013) and therefore less aspirational,

strategic or evaluative. Indeed, the opposite applies, as many expatriate researchers have their long-term career plans and aspirations in mind. Moreover, they are undoubtedly different in terms of personality and career decision-making styles. Nevertheless, the increasing insecurity in the labour market for PhD graduates can fracture any long-term career planning and push individuals to consider certain career options, which are sub-optimal in terms of following their long-term career plans. Accepting an appointment abroad and moving to a foreign country is one of these options for some expatriate researchers. So, expatriate researchers are not necessarily opportunistic careerists (Bimrose and Brown, 2013), but they have to react to the opportunities available as a result of the insecure employment conditions in the labour market for PhD graduates.

This finding goes in line with the argument about insecure employment conditions of doctoral holders occupied in academia in the first five years after PhD graduation, as identified by the scholarly literature (Auriol, 2007; Auriol et al., 2010; Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000). Moreover, this finding demonstrates the awareness of expatriate researchers about the insecure conditions in the academic labour market for their early careers by highlighting the risk-minimising strategy in career-related decisions. So, it is difficult to link the desire to follow a traditional occupational career with the awareness of the new insecure conditions of the labour market for PhD graduates, which means they may take work in a related area which gives them greater options within their current institution.

The insecurity of the labour market conditions for PhD graduates makes it difficult for expatriate researchers to follow a long-term career plan. As a result of this insecurity, many expatriate researchers try to improve their current career situation by adopting a risk-minimising strategy in career decision-making and by reacting to opportunities immediately available. So, their postdoctoral career decisions happen in a specific time and space when certain career opportunities are available and given other contextual factor that should be accounted for, such as private life circumstances. Thus, contextual factors are influential on postdoctoral career decisions, besides a calculation of potential future advantages and consideration of any long-term career aims. This finding draws attention to the role of context and circumstances for the career-related decisions of expatriate researchers. Thus, this research confirms the idea developed in the study by Al Ariss and colleagues (2012) arguing that more attention should be paid to the context and the role of macro-level factors when researching about international migration and mobility.

### 7.2.2 VALUE OF A DOCTORATE ABROAD

A significant contribution to the knowledge made in this study is related to developing an understanding of the value of a doctorate abroad from the subjective perspective of the expatriate social scientists. As already stated in the literature review chapter of this thesis, the value of a doctorate can be examined from either an objective point of view, through evaluating the labour market outcomes, or through the subjective individual perspective of doctoral graduates. A number of studies in the field (Casey, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 2000; Raddon and Sung, 2006) claim that the value of a doctorate from the subjective perspective remains an under-researched area because there is not sufficient evidence available whether and how studying for a doctorate results in personal, cultural and social outcomes. By focusing on the individual level, this study develops knowledge about the subjective value of a doctorate for expatriate researchers. Importantly, this research concentrates upon the experience of studying for a PhD in a foreign country. So, the findings relate specifically to the value of a doctorate abroad and may differ from the experience of a PhD in the home country. By concentrating on the research population holding a doctoral degree from a foreign country, it is difficult to distinguish between the experience of studying for a doctorate and the experience of being based abroad during this period. These are two processes which are interrelated. So, the expectation, experience, and outcomes of pursuing a PhD and doing it abroad are integral parts of the same process, which is explored in the present research.

A doctorate abroad has individual subjective value for expatriate researchers by resulting in personal change and development. This finding supports the argument by Jepsen and colleagues (2014) that international mobility enables an academic to gain a meaningful personal experience, which may positively affect their career prospects. Specifically, there is a widespread agreement among the expatriate researchers who participated in the present study of the value of the experience of pursuing a doctoral degree abroad as an enriching experience on the individual level. In line with the research by Casey (2009) and Nerad and Cherny (2000), the present study confirms that expatriate researchers experience social and cultural change due to their doctoral experience and put value on it. A decision to study for a PhD abroad causes changes related to different areas of life, such as changes in their private situation and personal development.

Nevertheless, in line with the recent qualitative research by Jepsen and colleagues (2014) claiming that academic mobility may or may not bring career-related returns in the academic

labour market, this study suggests that on the individual level expatriate researchers do not associate their career success with the experience of academic mobility during or after their doctorate. By building on this research result, this study provides another finding that not all the doctoral graduates awarded a PhD abroad initially wanted to pursue their PhD in a foreign country.

In contrast, the present research demonstrates that some expatriate researchers chose to move abroad for their doctoral study or a postdoctoral job because of the funding or position available. So, academic mobility is a necessity for some expatriate researchers to succeed in their career rather than a choice made after consideration of different available career options, as demonstrated in this study. With this finding, the role of funding during a doctorate is confirmed as an influential factor for the postdoctoral career pointed out by some previous studies (Bowen and Rudenstine, 2014; Ehrenberg, 2002; Ehrenberg and Mavros, 1992). Furthermore, the finding from this research about the role of PhD funding suggests that the availability of the doctoral funding can crucially affect individuals' postdoctoral career by leading them to move abroad for a PhD and to experience academic mobility during several years of a doctorate.

### *7.2.3 OUTCOMES OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY RELATED TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT*

With regard to personal change, expatriate researchers become more independent from the culture of their home countries. The present research discovered that some expatriate researchers regard this change as beneficial, while others look at the same phenomenon as a downside of mobility, according to the survey results. Becoming less attached to the culture back home is described by some participants as loss of a sense of belonging. In the opposing view, others see this phenomenon as becoming more independent from any single cultural pattern and more self-determined. This finding demonstrates the importance of differences in individual perception for this research.

In terms of career-related outcomes of academic mobility during and after the doctorate, expatriate researchers value increasing awareness of their professional opportunities and access to the labour market abroad, as this research demonstrates. At the same time, they regret lost or not built-up networks and missed career opportunities in their home countries. As the survey results demonstrate, more expatriate researchers value career-related benefits of mobility in comparison to those regretting the costs. Nevertheless, this research has not found any strong evidence of academic mobility directly resulting in career advancement of



the expatriate researchers, which goes in line with the previous research findings (Behle and Atfield, 2013; Jepsen et al., 2014).

There are costs associated with going abroad for a doctorate. In line with the research by Richardson and Zikic (2007), this study confirms that international academic careers have got their “darker side”, associated with the experience of mobility in the macro context of global higher education. However, this study discovered a number of challenging issues related to the experience of academic mobility and taking a doctorate abroad, which should be accounted for, in addition to the finding by Richardson and Zikic (2007), mostly highlighting the issues of transience and risk linked to accepting an international academic appointment. Specifically, when evaluating negative outcomes of pursuing a doctorate abroad and academic mobility, expatriate researchers tend to focus on one major issue, which is the separation from family and friends back in the home country. On the other hand, the positive outcomes of mobility are seen as a number of different advantageous experiences, where it is difficult to point out the main one.

In the area of the environment, international researchers gain from communication with international colleagues and friends but may lose from less frequent contact with family and friends back home. More expatriate researchers strongly regret losing contacts with people back home, compared to those who value gaining new international friends and colleagues. Based on the evidence provided by the interview analysis, this research argues that costs of losing old contacts in the home country are regarded as more important and higher than happiness of gaining new contacts abroad. Moreover, mobility can cause some difficulties in private life. Namely, for some expatriate researchers, it was challenging to keep an established relationship going because of moving abroad or to find a new one in a foreign country. At the same time, it was not evident from researchers’ responses that mobility brings some benefits in the area of private life and relationships. This finding does not propose that there are no private life-related benefits of mobility but it may be that individuals realise the negative consequences of their mobility experience for their private life much more strongly. This perception may outweigh other possible positive sides of the mobility experience. The loss of a partner could be keenly felt at particular times. Moreover, it is assumed that the combination of insecurity in employment during the early postdoctoral career stage and some private life difficulties make many expatriate researchers feel unstable and claim that mobility causes private problems. However, when more stable employment conditions are

secured, expatriate researchers may reconsider their view on mobility affecting their private life.

In addition to the value of the doctoral and postdoctoral experience abroad on the individual level, expatriate researchers develop skills and capacities as an outcome of academic and occupational mobility. Moreover, this research highlights the importance of increased confidence for the expatriate researchers, which can be gained through experiencing a doctoral study abroad and the consequences of this study.

#### *7.2.4 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC MOBILITY*

Drawing on the perception of individuals who participated in this study, this research provides evidence that expatriate researchers develop a specific set of skills due to their experience of academic mobility. The skills acquired due to mobility are divided into two categories – “people skills” and “self-sufficiency/self-efficacy skills”, as suggested by the skills framework developed by Jones (2013: 101). This finding confirms the previous findings in the field of skills development through mobility for different research populations (Behle and Atfield, 2013; Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Sutton and Rubin, 2004). A number of studies in the field confirm that experiences of international mobility result in the development of communication skills, also related to improved foreign language skills (Behle and Atfield, 2013; Black and Duhon, 2006; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Sutton and Rubin, 2004), project management and decision-making skills (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2009), and growing self-awareness (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2009). The skills framework developed by Jones (2013) includes all the skills which were discovered in this research as developed by the expatriate researchers through the experience of international mobility. This study contributes to the knowledge available from previous research on skills development due to mobility, first, by confirming skills development through the experience of mobility for its research population of expatriate researchers in social sciences.

Second, through giving voice to the expatriate researchers and studying skills development from the individual perspective, this research adds value to its findings by explaining the individual meaning of the skills. In particular, this research confirms that reflection skills and self-awareness can be developed through academic mobility and explains how the expatriate researchers understand this skill. Some expatriate researchers believe to become themselves due to living in different countries. In other words, they realise who they are by increasing their self-awareness and gaining reflection skills. Reflection skills and self-awareness

develop due to receiving information about different cultures, behaviours, and customs when living abroad. By increasing knowledge about different lifestyles and practices expatriate researchers see how diverse behavioural patterns can be acceptable in different parts of the world. So, a greater number of different lifestyles and patterns of behaviour may be accepted as normal. Even if a certain behaviour is not common or acceptable in the social reality of a home country, it can be, in contrast, appropriate and normal in a foreign country. Expatriate researchers evaluate this opportunity to experience different cultures and lifestyles as an enriching experience that they never could gain without moving abroad. After having lived in different countries, they are aware about the existence of different lifestyles, which may differ from the standard back home. Therefore, individuals can choose their own lifestyle out of a broader range. This finding suggests that mobility leads to extending borders of normality by providing information about different cultures and styles of life. More styles of life and behavioural patterns become normal and acceptable. At this point, some individuals start questioning the way they previously lived their life. When individuals are aware of the existence of so many different ways to live that are acceptable, they think about themselves and start evaluating their own lifestyle more intensely than they would in their home country. This experience leads expatriate researchers to develop reflection skills and to increase self-awareness.

Finally, this research contributes to the understanding of why and how skills are developed through academic mobility. By drawing on the qualitative data, this research discovers some mechanisms that can potentially explain skills development. Namely, this study highlights the importance of the adjustment period in a foreign country, when expatriate researchers face a number of challenges and new situations to install their live in a new place and to communicate with many strangers in a foreign language. By pointing out the adjustment period abroad as crucial for skills development, this research makes a significant contribution to the knowledge and suggests concentrating on exploring the adjustment period abroad with regards to skills development for further research in the field.

Overall, the abovementioned findings about the value of a doctorate confirm one of the main findings of this research proposing that expatriate researchers value academic mobility during their doctorate abroad for the chance to experience personal development and to gain new skills and capacities rather than for specific career-related outcomes.

### *7.2.5 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS POSING A CHALLENGE TO THE THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS UNDERPINNING THIS RESEARCH*

Some findings presented in this research pose a challenge for the established theories in the field. Discussing these challenges leads to a question of whether further conceptual development is required in order to generate knowledge applicable for the changing situation in the contemporary society and the current labour market circumstances. Specifically, the concept of cultural capital by Bourdieu (1990) introduced in the Introduction chapter (Chapter 1) of this thesis can be discussed in light of the findings presented in this doctoral study. Bourdieu (1990) explains that cultural capital consists of three forms: embodied culture in the form of habitus, material culture, such as books, and institutionalised culture, for instance, academic qualifications are seen as a crucial element in reproducing social inequality. According to Bourdieu (1974), by acquiring and developing cultural capital upper- and middle-classes are able to reproduce the existing class relationship within the meritocratic system. Moreover, Bourdieu (2006: 110) observes how institutionalised cultural capital in the form of comparable academic qualifications creates a hierarchy of achievements, which can be transferred from education to labour market. Building on this conceptual argument, it can be argued that to retain its position within society upper- and middle-class are supposed to be willing to invest money, time, and effort in developing cultural capital in all its forms.

The research presented in this thesis confirms the initial willingness of its research population to invest resources into a prolonged PhD education (as the highest level of education) in order to acquire a doctoral degree confirming their academic qualification. However, challenging the concept of cultural capital, the present study argues that early career doctoral holders do not report any immediate labour market outcomes after obtaining the highest educational degree as a form of institutionalised cultural capital. Therefore, it is debatable whether a hierarchy of achievements based on comparable academic credentials can be created and transferred from education to labour market. Due to the changes in the contemporary labour market for PhD graduates, permanent academic positions became more competitive. So, completion of a doctorate does not guarantee a tenure position in academia as it often did several decades ago. Besides having a doctorate as a formal academic qualification, PhD graduates are expected to demonstrate professional skills, soft skills, a record of published research, and the ability to present their competences well in comparison to others. These requirements go far beyond the institutionalised cultural capital in the form of a formal academic qualification. Consequently, based on the findings from the present research,

additional effort is required in order to prove one's cultural capital and to transfer it from education to the labour market because of the changing circumstances in the current labour market and academia – increasing number of PhD graduates leading to rising competition for the postdoctoral jobs. Based on the findings discovered in the present research, expatriate researchers do not expect any direct career-related returns from studying for a doctorate abroad when they decide to engage with a PhD degree. However, they want to achieve a match between their skills and knowledge and their formal qualifications by moving towards completion of their doctoral studies. Nevertheless, no direct career-related returns during the early career postdoctoral stage were found in the present research.

The current situation within academia and labour market for PhD graduates is puzzling because the number of places to study for a doctoral degree within institutions is increasing, partly due to the interest of universities to increase their income from students paying university fees. Having research students also has a reputational advantage in allowing institutions to represent themselves as research institutions. Therefore, the increasing number of PhD graduates leads to the overproduction of qualifications. This overproduction creates higher competition in the labour market for PhD graduates as it does not mean an extended demand on the labour market and thus reduces the monetary value of the highest academic degree. As mentioned in the introduction chapter of the present thesis (Chapter 1), when the importance of human capital is prized, the monetary value of knowledge decreases (Brown et al., 2008). The research presented in this thesis demonstrates, however, that despite this decrease of the monetary value the number of PhD students and graduates is constantly growing. This suggests the importance of intrinsic non-monetary value of a PhD degree, which was discovered in the present research. Based on the findings presented in this thesis the non-monetary value of studying for a PhD is in personal changes and skills development achieved through experiencing mobility.

By presenting its findings, this doctoral research contributes to understanding of the concept of mobility capital and its relationship with the established concept of cultural capital. It is questionable whether the concept of mobility capital is needed if there is already existing well-established concept of cultural capital and how the concept of mobility capital should be regarded within the framework of other forms of capital. The research presented in this thesis suggests that mobility capital should be seen in an interplay with cultural capital because all three forms of cultural capital (habitus, embodied, and symbolic capitals) are crucial for acquiring mobility capital. However, there is now an important difference between cultural

capital and mobility capital as discovered in the present research. This difference is in individual perceptions of the experience and purpose of cultural and mobility capitals. Namely, individuals are ready to invest resources in acquiring cultural capital (such as academic qualifications or books) in order to receive returns later on by transferring education-related credentials into employment-related benefits, such as higher wages. While in the past this may also have been the case for mobility capital there is now a clear distinction between cultural and mobility capitals. Individuals choose to experience mobility in order to improve their structure of opportunities and to find a job or a PhD position abroad faster and easier, as the findings from the present study confirm. Mobility capital in the form of personal changes and skills development is acquired as an unintended result of experiencing international mobility. So, when cultural capital is perceived as requiring investment and promising returns, mobility capital is acquired as a side-effect of a decision to move abroad in order to improve short-term career opportunities immediately rather than expecting long-lasting career-related returns. Nevertheless, the present study suggests focusing and exploring the longer-term outcomes of moving abroad and acquiring mobility capital for future research. By drawing on the finding from the present research reporting no direct career-related benefits during the early postdoctoral career stage, this study suggests exploring whether personal changes and skill development bring any career-related returns in the more advanced stages of career after a doctorate.

In conclusion, the present research suggests that developing a new revised conceptual framework of cultural capital is needed in order to adapt the concept to the new and continuously changing circumstances in the current labour market. Mobility capital should be reinforced as a form of a capital potentially leading to unexplored and unexpected labor market outcomes and career advancement, even if this is not intended and anticipated by individuals engaging with international mobility for education and career-related purposes. More research is needed in order to explore and understand the interplay of cultural and mobility capitals because the present research merely indicates that these two concepts are interrelated but different. Moreover, this research explains and discusses the nature of these differences. To capture educational and societal changes and new labour market constraints, a new conceptual framework is required as suggested in the present research contributing to understanding of these crucial changes.

### 7.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It should be acknowledged that this research has a number of limitations as to what extent the findings can be generalised and applied for a wider population. These shortcomings are rooted in the methodological approach and the nature of this research.

First, all data collected in this study through qualitative interviews and the online survey was based on self-reported information. For the research participants, it can be challenging to estimate which skills and abilities were developed through the mobility experience and not through the process of personal maturation or educational and professional development. Hence, when analysing the data and interpreting the findings of this study, it should be kept in mind that the outcomes of mobility identified in this research are based on subjective self-reported information.

Second, although the research population of this study consists of the same type of respondents, expatriate postdoctoral researchers in social sciences, they come from different, European and non-European backgrounds from all over the world and were based in different EU host countries during their PhD studies. Although the host universities of their doctoral studies fall into the framework of the Bologna Process, they still differ with regards to size, ranking and location. Nevertheless, the sampling criteria are justified through the nature of the research population: highly skilled expatriate researchers, connected through the shared experiences of living and working in a foreign country during the years of their doctoral studies.

Finally, retrospective questioning with regards to skills development and personal change which occurred through the experience of mobility may affect the replies given by the research participants. As the participants of this study are supposed to have completed their doctoral degrees from one to ten years ago, their perceptions of the outcomes of mobility may change due to memory effects. Moreover, by developing their careers further, their narratives and perception of their own career stories and evaluation of their past experiences may also change. The limitations of this research should be accounted for while interpreting the results of this study.

### 7.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Findings of this study present practical implications for two groups of people: potential PhD students considering whether to pursue a doctoral degree abroad and European Union policy-makers. Besides practical implications, this research provides some ground for further studies

in the area of career development of doctoral holders and research on academic mobility, which are presented in this section of the concluding chapter.

#### *7.4.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT PHD STUDENTS*

Findings of this research offer implications for the group of PhD students and prospective PhD students considering doctoral study. Prospective doctoral students thinking about pursuing a PhD degree should find it useful to know about the potential outcomes from this study on the doctoral level and, in particular, if they decide to do a doctoral degree abroad. This research provides specific information about skills, abilities, and personal changes which can be gained as a result of a doctoral study abroad. By giving this information, findings of this study can help masters' graduates considering a PhD study to make an informed decision based on expected outcomes of a doctoral study abroad, instead of deciding out of general interests.

This study demonstrates that many postdoctoral researchers feel committed to an academic career, not consciously but by having made a substantial time investment into their doctorate. Moreover, this study suggests that expatriate researchers experience path dependency in their postdoctoral career. Namely, it is difficult to change between the academic and non-academic labour market in the later stages of career.

So, by drawing on the findings of this research, prospective PhD students should be advised to think carefully about their postdoctoral career in the future even before embarking on a doctoral study. If an individual studies for a doctorate with the purpose of becoming an academic, it would be reasonable to invest time in publishing the results of her or his doctoral research and to present them in conferences. In contrast, if an individual prefers to pursue a career outside of academia after completing a doctoral degree, it would be more meaningful to invest time in doing an internship with private companies in the area of interest with the purpose of gaining some work experience in the relevant field. Alternatively, considering insecure employment conditions in the contemporary labour market for PhD graduates, potential doctoral students should be advised to develop their career adaptability by acquiring a set of skills that enables them to pursue a career in or outside of academia and to change between these different career options if needed.

Doctoral students are able to benefit from the findings of this study if they consider carefully positive and especially negative experiences of the transition between doctoral study abroad and the postdoctoral career of expatriate researchers, explored in this study. This research



claims that this career transition and professional choices made during the early postdoctoral career are stepping stones in the future career prospective of a researcher. At the same time, this is a challenging period with many obstacles and downsides, according to the findings of this study. So, doctoral students should consider which difficulties they expect to face after PhD graduation and prepare in advance emotionally and financially to overcome them.

According to this study, many expatriate researchers struggle with uncertainties and difficulties in securing a permanent position during their early postdoctoral career. Moreover, this research demonstrates that PhD graduates try to minimise risks and to improve their immediate situation when deciding about postdoctoral employment, rather than following long-term career plans. Based on these findings, doctoral students are advised to try to build up their savings during their doctorate, which would provide some financial stability for the uncertain time after graduation with their PhD. Financial stability could take some pressure off. Rather than being under pressure to have a source of income after finishing a PhD and doctoral scholarship, savings would allow them to decide about their postdoctoral career with regard to long-term advantages.

By providing findings about the outcomes of pursuing a doctoral degree in a foreign country, this research suggests that doctoral students should consider and evaluate prospective outcomes according to their personal expectations and motivation to move abroad for a PhD. Doctoral students can then make a conscious decision, whether it makes sense for them to do a PhD abroad or whether it is more reasonable to stay in their home country.

#### *7.4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN UNION POLICY-MAKERS*

For at least two decades, the policy of the European Union has been designed to emphasise the importance of international exchange of researchers, students, university staff members, and global talents to increase European competitiveness in the global market. Academic mobility and the international exchange of skilled workers within Europe is supposed to enable individuals to establish collaborations with their colleagues internationally, exchange ideas and knowledge, and, thus, should be enriching for all the participating parties – individuals and institutions. Therefore, there is a high expectation to receive positive outcomes from this investment into and promotion of international mobility in Europe. However, the research-based evidence about the real outcomes of this mobility remains limited. Nevertheless, as a result of the higher educational policy on the European level, companies, organisations and universities enabling their employees to gain this international experience are supposed to benefit from it, by increasing their international competency,

competitiveness and overall quality. This policy is promoted as aiming to overcome the fragmentation of the labour market, to unify the European Higher Educational Area, and to create international clusters of research excellence, based on strong networking and the international exchange of a highly skilled workforce across European borders, as the EU higher educational policy documents confirm (Communiqué, 2012; de Lisboa, 1997).

This EU policy promoting international mobility within Europe needs financial investment and, thus, decisions of EU policy-makers to increase chances for researchers to organize a stay abroad leading to extra financial costs. So, it is crucial to know which outcomes on an individual level can be expected from this experience of international mobility in the European Union, in order to evaluate potential outputs of this financial investment in promoting European mobility. In order to create clusters of research excellence and to unify the EHEA, first of all, attention should be paid to human resources, because only people involved in international exchange can ensure these aims of EU policy are achieved. Thus, outcomes of academic mobility on an individual level, which are explored in this research, are crucial influences for designing European policy.

By drawing on individual perspectives, this research provides evidence that outcomes of mobility include not only benefits but also costs for expatriate researchers in social sciences. Besides this, time investment in a longer education on the doctoral level does not always bring career-related returns. In order to maximise the positive effects of promoting European mobility on the EU policy level, the disadvantageous experiences of expatriate researchers during their early postdoctoral career should be considered as possible obstacles. To ensure that expatriate researchers' potential to contribute to the economy of EU countries can be used to the maximum, European policy-makers could attempt to minimise potential costs of mobility and increase returns from investment into doctoral education by trying to help create more secure employment conditions for expatriate researchers. However, there are some practical obstacles hindering the realisation of this plan – to create secure employment conditions for the researchers on the European level. Namely, the secure employment conditions for expatriate researchers can be assured by creating more permanent positions in the labour market for PhD graduates. This can be hardly achieved on the European level because it would mean that EU money should be invested into some national states' educational systems to create and finance a permanent research position. However, EU educational policy tends to finance project-based research because it can be justified as an important project for the whole of Europe and not for some national states only. This project-

based funding of research on the European level leads to the increase of temporary contract positions in research and, thus, supports growing insecurity of employment conditions for PhD holders. In contrast, creation of more permanent research positions in national states would overall increase the security of employment and, thus, potentially bring positive outcomes for the whole of Europe. Expatriate researchers who acquired new transferable skills due to academic mobility could contribute to economic growth and prosperity of European countries if they are incorporated into the EU labour market and have a chance to utilise their skills in postdoctoral employment.

#### 7.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The population of expatriate researchers is growing, partly because of academic mobility being promoted by the European Union policy. Nevertheless, research about the outcomes of academic mobility for personal and professional development of researchers remains scarce. So, more studies exploring results of academic mobility on a personal level and beyond are needed. By focusing on this underexplored field, this study develops some new knowledge in the field and identifies some gaps which should be studied further.

First, this research highlights the importance of the adjustment period in a foreign country for skills development. By drawing on this finding, further research could concentrate on the adjustment period abroad in particular, in order to explore skills development during this time more in-depth and to understand the mechanisms behind this process. Drawing on this suggestion, an additional data analysis on the extended survey dataset was conducted by Siemers and Jeske (under review) for the paper on expatriate adjustment and mobility outcomes. The summary of findings from this paper is presented in the Epilogue (Epilogue: 169) of the present thesis.

Second, a longitudinal study following up expatriate researchers in different stages of their career, including later stages, could build on the findings of this research and develop them further. By exploring the experience of expatriate researchers in later stages of their career, it could be investigated whether they have stayed in the academic or non-academic labour market according to their earlier plans. In addition to that, outcomes of mobility experiences on professional development in the later stages of their career can be accessed. These outcomes could be reevaluated by looking at them in comparison to the earlier perception of outcomes, as outlined in this study. Considering the ongoing promotion of academic mobility and the international exchange of skilled workers within Europe and the lack of real evidence about its potential outcome, there is a need for further research focused on assessing the

outcomes of academic mobility for career-related and personal development in different stages of individual careers.

Finally, further research could be built up on the qualitative findings about motivation for and outcome of mobility as well as postdoctoral career planning and evaluation discovered in this study. By drawing on these findings, hypotheses can be formulated and tested using data from a large-scale survey with the same research population of expatriate researchers who completed their doctoral degree within the European Union. This would increase the generalisability of the findings and provide some new knowledge in the field.

In conclusion, this research suggests that, from an individual point of view, many expatriate researchers initially end up in academia often in relatively short-term employment rather than making this as a conscious career decision. As this study assumes, PhD graduates expect to receive clear returns after their long-time investment in their doctoral education. The academic labour market can offer such returns as a PhD degree can open doors to an academic career. On the other hand, potential returns from investment into a doctoral degree when pursuing a career outside of academia seem to be less obvious for many expatriate researchers. It can be concluded that the decision to study for a PhD often results in starting out on an academic career rather than this being a conscious decision. Consistent with the theory of career construction by Savickas (Savickas, 2005), this study confirms that expatriate researchers seek to realise their self-esteem and to improve the match between themselves and their life situation when looking for a postdoctoral position and construct their careers by making certain career steps and decisions. However, this research reveals that these career steps and decisions are not always made as a conscious choice with a clear career plan in mind. In contrast, many expatriate researchers understand the importance of their decision to study for a PhD for constructing a research career only retrospectively, when this career plan has been realised.

This research provides evidence about a widespread agreement of the expatriate researchers to anticipate the value of their doctoral degree from abroad in gaining a meaningful personal experience resulting in personal development and skills acquisition rather than directly resulting in career advancement. This finding contributes to the knowledge about the value of a doctoral study abroad on the individual level, suggested as an under-researched area by the scholarly literature in the field (Casey, 2009; Nerad and Cerny, 2000; Raddon and Sung). In

addition, this study suggests that, on the individual level, expatriate researchers do not directly associate their career success with the experience of academic mobility during or after their doctorate. This finding echoes the research by Jepsen and colleagues (2014) arguing that academic mobility may or may not result in career-related returns.

A risk-minimising strategy and reacting to the opportunities available are the career attitudes of the expatriate researchers in social sciences explored in this study. In particular, expatriate researchers are not necessarily opportunistic in their career decision-making style as they are still following an overarching career plan (Bimrose and Brown, 2013), but they have to react to opportunities available to secure a position in order to develop their postdoctoral career. Increasing insecurity of the employment conditions of the labour market for PhD graduates makes it necessary for expatriate researchers to adapt themselves to the reality and reconsider some of their longer-term career plans. This finding resonates with existing research about insecure employment conditions for early-career researchers, especially for those employed in the academic labour market (Auriol, 2007; Auriol et al., 2010; Calmand, 2011; Nerad and Cerny, 1999; Nerad and Cerny, 2000), and demonstrates the awareness of the expatriate researchers about this insecurity by adopting a risk-minimising strategy when looking for a postdoctoral position. This finding suggests that careers are constructed in a time and space and highlights the importance of contextual factors, such as vacancies available in the labour market during a specific period when looking a postdoctoral job. Thus, this research conducted on the individual level reveals the importance of contextual factors for career development and highlights the need for further research on the macro level, in line with the paper by Al Ariss and colleagues (2012).

Overall, this research suggests that academic mobility during and after a doctoral education is not associated with career-related returns on the individual level. Moreover, many expatriate researchers claim that it is a necessity to move abroad in order to secure funding for a PhD or a postdoctoral position. Therefore, academic mobility is perceived as a necessity rather than as a privilege by many expatriate researchers. Nevertheless, this perception does not prevent expatriate researchers from valuing their doctoral and postdoctoral experience abroad as enriching and resulting in personal development through gaining new skills and capacities.

## EPILOGUE

After the findings are presented and discussed in compliance with the research aim and design of the study, an important dimension remains uncovered. This dimension is the researcher's reflection on her own developmental journey as a doctoral student based in a foreign country. In light of the findings discovered by the present research, arguing about the increase of insecure employment conditions in academia, pressure to publish and attention to institutional ranking, it is important to create space for reflection. Moreover, as the present research focuses on analysing the experience of expatriate researchers and the author is a part of the research population, it is important to provide some details and reflections for the purpose of generating knowledge and creating better understanding. This epilogue as the final section of the thesis is dedicated to providing some insights and reflections explaining how the research presented in this thesis was developed and organised, which are not covered by the methodology chapter (Chapter 3: 58). First, the research topic and the approach adopted to narrow it down is discussed. Second, the approach of how to define the scope of the research in the data analysis stage is presented. Finally, the researcher's reflection with regards to the own experience as a doctoral student abroad are presented. As this is a reflective part of the thesis, the first-person perspective is adopted.

First, I would like to discuss the reasons for choosing the research topic and the process of defining the focus of this research. At time of making the decision about the research topic and applying for doctoral funding, I was based in Italy at the European University Institute in Florence. As a European English-speaking institution, the EUI is a place gathering academics and doctoral researchers from different countries in one place. Having the intention of pursuing a doctorate, I was curious to discuss with the doctoral students from the EUI their reasons for their PhD studies and their motivations to be based abroad at the EUI. My initial interest was to collect some information from others in order to make an appropriate decision myself. As I had already made the decision to pursue a funded doctorate, my dilemma was about the host country to be based in during my PhD – returning to Germany, staying in Italy, or moving to another country. Therefore, the discussions with the doctoral researchers from the EUI were mostly focused around their choice of Italy as a host country for PhD. As I talked to a number of researchers in different stages from the doctoral students to full professors, the discussions were extended towards academic mobility and employment in the contemporary academia. Overall, I found the stories about doctoral studies and academic careers rich. The combination and interplay of different reasons driving academic mobility

and career progression was so intriguing and surprising that I decided to embark into the theoretical literature in the field. After realising that there are numerous gaps in understanding the career and mobility choices of doctoral graduates, I decided to develop a PhD proposal with the title “To stay or go after obtaining a PhD degree abroad? Analysing the motivations of mobile researchers in Europe”. As evident from the title, the proposal was focused primarily on exploring the mobility patterns of researchers in Europe. The initial aim of the doctoral research project was to understand whether international mobility is a valuable experience and to explore the individual value as perceived and articulated by the research participants.

In order to explain how the topic of the present research was developed and narrowed down, I would like to mention a book which influenced my thinking about the value and outcomes of the international mobility experience. This is not an academic publication but a children’s book *The trip to Panama* (1978) by a German children’s story writer Horst Eckert, known as Janosch. To explain why this book had an influence on me, first, I would like to recall the story shortly. So, in the story *The trip to Panama*, a Bear finds an empty box in the river near his home. This box smells nicely of bananas. The Bear reads the inscription “Panama” placed on the side of the box. From that moment, the Bear knows exactly that Panama is his dream country where he wants to move to with his best friend, Tiger. The Bear returns home and tells the Tiger many stories about his dream country, Panama, where everything smells of bananas from one end of the country to another and everything is much bigger. For sure! Next morning the Bear and the Tiger decide to move to Panama. After a long journey full of adventures, the Tiger and the Bear take a wrong pathway leading them back to their home place. However, they do not recognise their own house because everything has changed during their time on the trip – trees have grown higher, the house door is covered by bushes and everything looks differently. After the Tiger finds a board lying around the house with the inscription “Panama”, there is no doubt any more that the friends have arrived at their final destination. So, they settle down in their old house and improve it with some refurbishment and a new sofa. At the end of the story the author suggests a question: whether this journey was meaningless, as the Tiger and the Bear return home. They could have avoided the trouble of going on the trip to Panama and lived happily at home instead. However, then they would not know the importance of a new lovely sofa where they can sit with the new friends gained on the trip to Panama. After reading the story *The trip to Panama* (Janosch, 1978), I started thinking about the individual value and the outcomes of

experiencing international mobility. In my interpretation, the story argues that travelling is not only about reaching certain destinations but about the experience of the trip. This experience can bring additional value for developing understanding, gaining knowledge, and meeting new people. So, the children's story draws my attention to the point that many potential outcomes can make the experience of mobility enriching and valuable.

While progressing with the doctoral research, the focus shifted towards career construction with academic mobility playing a contextual role. Several reasons explain the shift of the research topic from mobility to career. First, the decision to accept the offer for a PhD in Employment Research from the University of Warwick is the main reason. The environment, interests and expertise of the majority of researchers at the IER (Institute for Employment Research) is related to career, employment, and the labour market. If I accepted an alternative offer for a PhD, either in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex or in Sociology from the University of Vienna, this would have influenced the focus of my doctoral research. Second, data collection and analysis during the pilot stage of the research clearly showed that the research participants were keener to discuss their career stories embedded in the mobility context rather than other way round. Due to the approach adopted in the present research, as described in the methodology chapter of the thesis, attention was paid to the results from the pilot study, suggesting shifting the focus of the research by placing career stories at the centre. Nevertheless, academic mobility remained an important dimension of the present research.

After having defined the main focus and the aim of the doctoral research project, I embarked into the data collection and following data analysis. This stage of the research included certain challenges for the project. Specifically, it was challenging to define which findings resulting from the data analysis should be included in the thesis. The data collected through the online survey and semi-structured interviews was rich and detailed, especially the interview data. Due to the semi-structured form of the interviews, an opportunity was given to the participants to discuss the issues which were important for them and their career stories. This approach resulted in rich data with many details and background information. Although the data collection was designed to give voice to the participants, the data analysis was conducted strictly guided by the methodology (described in the Methodology Chapter 3: 58) in order to reach the research aim (formulated in the Introduction Chapter 1: 9). As the data was rich and provided many insights for different aspects of participants' lives and careers (some of them were outside of the scope of the present study), it was necessarily to



exclude some of the findings from the research presented in the thesis. So, I decided to set up three criteria for the decision about which findings to include into the thesis. First, the findings presented in the thesis should allow providing a comprehensive reply to the main overarching research question in order to reach the research aim. So, I selected the findings corresponding with the main research question. The second criterion was that the findings presented in the thesis should be new and interesting to enable claiming a contribution to the knowledge made through the doctoral research. As the next step, I selected the findings which satisfied this criterion – being new and most interesting in the field of literature and theories on career construction and academic mobility. The last but important criterion was that the selected findings should be well-supported by the data available. By applying this criterion, I had a clear understanding which findings should be included in the doctoral thesis. So, I formulated three specific sub-questions supporting the overarching research question. This procedure was applied to ensure the comprehensiveness of the thesis and to increase the clarity of the arguments.

After having selected the findings to include in the thesis, numerous findings were left outside of the defined research scope. Some of them were not well-supported by the data and, therefore, required additional research. While others were new and interesting findings but less relevant for the research aim as formulated in the thesis. So, I decided to use these findings for publishing academic papers in addition to working on the PhD thesis. This decision was motivated by the idea that, first, publishing papers is a valuable experience for my future academic career. Second, publishing research results means sharing them with the community of scholars in the field. Finally, publishing from the doctoral research is positive for improving the PhD thesis through working on the comments received in the process of peer-review. So, I decided to write two single-authored papers (Siemers, 2016; Siemers, under review) by revising two chapters of the present thesis (Section 5.4 – Skills developed

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

am – ante meridiem or before midday

CV – curriculum vitae

DTZ - Debenham Thouard Zadelhoff

Dr – Doctor of Philosophy

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EHEA – European Higher Education Area

ERASMUS – an EU exchange student programme

et al. – and others or et alii

EU – the European Union

EUI – European University Institute

HE – Higher Education

HM – Her Majesty

IER – Institute for Employment Research

ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education

IT – information technology

MA – master's degree

NVivo – qualitative data analysis computer software package

OE – organisational expatriates

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy or Philosophiae Doctor

pm – post meridiem or past midday

postdoc – postdoctoral position and/or researcher

SIE – self-initiated expatriates

SPSS – statistical analysis computer software package

STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

UK – the United Kingdom

USA – the United States of America

## APPENDIX I. INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: SKILLS FOR HERE OR TO TAKE AWAY? ANALYSING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE PHD GRADUATES IN EUROPE.

### **Introduction**

Good morning! My name is Olga Siemers. I am a PhD student at the Warwick Institute for Employment research. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research about the career of international PhD graduates in Europe.

The aim of our talk is to develop an understanding of how you have experienced the transition between doctoral study and postdoctoral employment in the context of mobility. I would like to understand your reasons and motivations for making certain decisions in your career and to know how you evaluate your experience of working and living in different national contexts.

The personal information given to me in this interview will be treated strictly confidentially. All the interviews will be anonymised. So, it will not be possible to identify the identity of interviewees.

I would like to record the interview. The recording will be used only for the writing up of our discussion. It will not be used for any other purposes. I just want to make sure that I do not miss anything. Do you allow me to record the interview?

### **Personal information**

Name.....

Age.....

Marital status.....

Children.....

Country of origin.....

Country of PhD study.....

Current occupation.....

Current country.....

## **Interview Protocol**

### ***Before and during the PhD***

**Q1** When did you first have the idea to go abroad for a longer period of time?

**Q2** For what reasons did you decide to do a doctoral degree?

**Q3** For what reasons did you decide to complete your doctorate in a foreign country?

**Q4** Reflecting back, what were the benefits of your studies abroad?

**Q5** What were the costs and disadvantages?

**Q6:** Some people say that the parental home can affect one's career choices. Do you think that there are any important issues within your family which have affected your educational and career pattern?

### ***Career pattern after the PhD***

**Q7** When did you start to think about your future career after the PhD?

**Q8** Did you have a plan or a strategy for the job search?

**Q9** For what reasons did you decide to stay/return/move to a certain country after your PhD?

**Q10** Do you enjoy your current job?

**Q11** What are the advantages of living and working abroad/in a particular country for you?

**Q12** What are the costs and disadvantages of this?

**Q13** Reflecting back, would you have done the same if you had a second chance to decide about your PhD and career again?

### ***Evaluation of mobility experience and plans for future***

**Q14** Do you think that you have changed yourself, your personality and your mindset due to living abroad?

**Q15** Would you agree that you have acquired a set of skills due to living abroad?

**Q16** If you look back at your experience of living abroad, what do you value most about it?

**Q17** What do you regret most about it?

**Q18** Do you have any long-term aspiration for the next five to ten years in terms of a country to live in and with regard to your career?

**Thank you!**

## APPENDIX II. INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS



**Dear Interview Participant,**

I would like to invite you to participate in the research project about career and mobility in the European Union by giving an interview about your own career trajectory.

I am a doctoral researcher at the Warwick Institute for Employment Research. The research topic of the project is **‘Skills for here or to take away? Analysing the career development of mobile PhD graduates in Europe’**.

The aim of the research is to identify the reasons which guide the decisions of PhD graduates about their mobility and career after completing a doctorate abroad. The following topics will be covered in the interview:

- your own experience as a PhD student in a foreign country;
- your experience of mobility in general;
- reasons and motivations to choose your current occupation and a particular career pattern;
- reasons to decide to live in the country where you currently live.

I would like to stress that the participation in the interview is entirely voluntary. Anonymity of respondents will be assured at all times. The data produced will not include any identifiable names. The information will be used solely for research purposes and will not be passed to any third parties.

Your contribution will be invaluable for this study. Should you have any further questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me under [o.siemers@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:o.siemers@warwick.ac.uk).

In appreciation,

Olga Siemers

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**Expectations and outcomes of a doctorate abroad. Career development and mobility patterns of expatriate researchers in social sciences**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

I understand that my identity will be treated in the strictest confidence by the researcher and that the information I provide will be anonymised.

I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

Your signature

Date

**Olga Siemers**  
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## APPENDIX IV. ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

Welcome to this online survey for the early career PhD graduates in social sciences!

You are invited to participate in this survey if you:

- hold a **PhD degree in social sciences** (including economics, business school, psychology, etc.);
- were awarded a doctoral degree **up to 10 years ago**;
- have completed your PhD **abroad** within the **European Union**.

Conducted by Olga Siemers, doctoral student at the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER), the survey focuses on:

- your doctoral education in a foreign country;
- your postdoctoral career pattern;
- your experience of living and working in different countries.

It will take you up to 15 minutes to fill in this survey. Your responses will remain confidential. You will receive an executive summary of the survey findings if you opt in at the end of the survey. If you have any questions about the study or in case you are experiencing any technical difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact Olga Siemers at the IER under [o.siemers@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:o.siemers@warwick.ac.uk) or 0044 (0) 7597 704110.

Many thanks for your support!  
Olga Siemers

Next

### Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

#### Part 1: General information

*First, I would like to ask you several questions about your education and background.*

**1. When have you completed your PhD degree?**

- 2014
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011 to 2009
- 2008 to 2005
- Before 2005

**2. In what country have you completed your PhD degree?**

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

#### 3. In which subject were you awarded your doctoral degree?

- Political science, sociology, international relations, or area studies
- Economics, business studies
- Law, international law
- Psychology
- History, contemporary history and politics
- Other subject in social sciences
- Other subject in physical sciences
- Other subject in humanities
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

#### 4. In what country have you completed the degree qualifying you to do a PhD? (e.g. MA, MSc, Diploma)

#### 5. In what country do you currently reside?

#### 6. Do you work in a different country than the country where you currently reside?

- No
- Yes (please specify)

#### 7. Please describe your level of the language spoken in the country, where you currently reside.

- Fluent
- Good
- Basic
- I do not speak this language at all
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

8. What is your country of origin?

9. If you were born and brought up in different countries, or your parents have different nationalities, please, comment here.

10. Please state the citizenships, which you currently hold.

First citizenship

Second citizenship

Third citizenship

11. In how many countries have you been living longer than three months?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

12. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other

13. What is your age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 or older

Prev

Next



## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

#### 14. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- In a stable partnership or civil union
- In a relationship with a boyfriend or a girlfriend
- Single, never married
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 1: General information

#### 15. Do you have caring responsibility for any children under 18?

- No
- Yes, for one child
- Yes, for two children
- Yes, for three children
- Yes, for more than three children
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 2: Doctoral education abroad

**Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your doctoral education abroad.**

**16. Why did you decide to do a PhD? (Please tick all that apply)**

- I always had a plan to do a PhD
- For being able to work in academia
- For developing my skills and enhancing my knowledge
- I did not know what shall I do otherwise
- I was not satisfied with my current situation in job and career
- Because I think it is prestigious to have a doctoral degree
- To progress in my career
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 2: Doctoral education abroad

**17. What was your MAIN REASON to do a PhD? (Please tick one option only)**

- I always had a plan to do a PhD
- For being able to work in academia
- For developing my skills and enhancing my knowledge
- I did not know what shall I do otherwise
- I was not satisfied with my current situation in job and career
- Because I think it is prestigious to have a doctoral degree
- To progress in my career
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 2: Doctoral education abroad

#### 18. Why did you decide to do a PhD abroad? *(Please tick all that apply)*

- Academia in my country is not well developed
- I was curious about different cultures and wanted to go out
- Because I could secure funding for my PhD in this country
- I had some networks of family/friends in this country
- Because my prospective supervisor was based in this country
- Because I have already been living abroad by that time
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 2: Doctoral education abroad

#### 19. What was your MAIN REASON to do a PhD abroad? *(Please tick one option only)*

- Academia in my country is not well developed
- I was curious about different cultures and wanted to go out
- Because I could secure funding for my PhD in this country
- I had some networks of family/friends in this country
- Because my prospective supervisor was based in this country
- Because I have already been living abroad by that time
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

***Here I am referring to your career after finishing the doctoral degree.***

**20. What is your current main job? (Please write your position and the company where you are employed)**

**21. Please, describe your current employment.**

- Research or teaching in Higher Education Institutions
- Research or teaching outside of Higher Education Institutions
- I combine an academic job with a non-academic one
- Self-employed
- Other job not related to teaching or research
- I am not employed at the moment
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

**22. What are your reasons to work in academia? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Flexibility of my job
- Work and life balance
- High income
- Prestige value of my position
- Valuable social contribution of my job
- Ability to decide about the content of my job
- Other (please specify)

**23. What is your MAIN REASON to work in academia? (Please tick one option only)**

- Flexibility of my job
- Work and life balance
- High income
- Prestige value of my position
- Valuable social contribution of my job
- Ability to decide about the content of my job
- Other (please specify)

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 24. What are your reasons to work outside of academia? (Please tick all that apply)

- Flexibility of my job
- Work and life balance
- High income
- Valuable social contribution of my job
- Prestige value of my position
- Ability to decide about the content of my job
- Other (please specify)

#### 25. What is your MAIN REASON to work outside of academia? (Please tick one option only)

- Flexibility of my job
- Work and life balance
- High income
- Valuable social contribution of my job
- Prestige value of my position
- Ability to decide about the content of my job
- Other (please specify)

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 26. What type of contract do you currently have?

- Permanent full-time contract
- Permanent part-time contract
- Temporary full-time contract
- Temporary part-time contract
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 27. What type of temporary contract do you currently have?

- Postdoc position (*one or two years*)
- Postdoc position (*longer than two years*)
- One year contract (*non-postdoc*)
- Two or three years contract (*non-postdoc*)
- Long-term contract (*longer than three years*)
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 28. Why did you decide to live and work in your current country? (*Please tick all that apply*)

- Here I have better opportunities for my career
- I am used to the environment in this country
- I have established my networks of friends here
- I have established good professional network in this country
- I came here for a job offer
- I want to settle down and it is easy for me to do it in this country
- I could not find appropriate employment in other countries
- I cannot find appropriate employment in my country of origin
- I have stayed here after finishing my education in this country
- Because of my partner or children
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 29. What is your MAIN REASON to live and work in your current country? *(Please tick one option only)*

- Here I have better opportunities for developing my career
- I am used to the environment in this country
- I have established my networks of friends here
- I have established good professional network in this country
- I came here for a job offer
- I want to settle down and it is easy for me to do it in this country
- I could not find appropriate employment in other countries
- I cannot find employment in my country of origin
- I have stayed here after finishing my education in this country
- Because of my partner or children
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 30. Do you plan to move to a different country in the near future *(the next five to ten years)*?

- Yes, I would like to move again in the near future
- Maybe I will move again but I am not sure about it
- No, I intend to stay here

Other (please specify)

Prev

Next



## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 31. Where would you like to move in the near future (*the next five to ten years*)?

- I would like to return to my home country
- I would like to return to a country where I have lived before
- I would like to move to a new country where I have never lived
- Other (please specify)

#### 32. Why would you like to move again in the near future? (*Please tick all that apply*)

- I would like to explore new places and cultures
- I would move for a good job offer
- I enjoy moving around and do not want to stick in one place for long
- I believe to have better professional opportunities in that country
- I like to move for the last time to settle down in that country
- For personal reasons (*e.g. I have to follow my partner*)
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 33. What is your MAIN REASON to move again? (*Please tick one option only*)

- I would like to explore new places and cultures
- I would move for a good job offer
- I enjoy moving around and do not want to stuck in one place for longer
- I believe to have better professional opportunities in another country
- I like to move for the last time to settle down in that country
- For personal reasons (*e.g. I have to follow my partner*)

Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

**34. Why do you intend to stay in your current country? (Please tick all that apply)**

- This is the perfect place for me
- I am tired of moving around
- At a point I realized that I like to settle down in a place
- I have established a good network of friends here
- I am familiar to the environment here
- It is a good place to develop my career
- I have got a really good job here
- Because of the circumstances in my private life (e.g. partner)
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

**35. What is your MAIN REASON to stay in your current country? (Please tick one option only)**

- This is the perfect place for me
- I am tired of moving around
- At a point I realized that I like to settle down in a place
- I have established a network of friend here
- I am familiar to the environment of this country
- It is a good place to develop my career
- I have got a really good job here
- Because of the circumstances in my private life (e.g. partner)
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 3: Postdoctoral career

#### 36. Where do you plan to work in the future?

- Research or teaching in Higher Education Institutions
- Research or teaching outside of Higher Education Institutions
- I would like to combine an academic job with a non-academic one
- Self-employed
- Other job not related to teaching or research
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 4: Individual experience of mobility

***In this last section I would like to ask you some questions about your experience of working and living in different countries.***

#### 37. Which skills did you acquire because of living and working in different countries? *(Please tick all that apply)*

- Skills of intercultural communication
- Other communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Organisational skills
- Networking skills
- Reflection skills (e.g. self-awareness, evaluation)
- Critical thinking
- Information search skills
- Language skills
- I have not acquired any new skills
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 4: Individual experience of mobility

#### 38. How far the following statements apply to you?

*Because of living and working in different countries:*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Rather agree	Not sure	Rather disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I realized who I am and became more myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more adaptable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more tolerant and open-minded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more successful in my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more ambitious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became less attached to any cultural context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became less anxious about difficulties and challenges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more adventurous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 4: Individual experience of mobility

#### 39. Which experience from living and working in different countries do you value the most? (Please tick all that apply)

- Having friends from different cultures
- Being able to work in an international context
- Being aware of a broader range of opportunities available
- Being more independent from any cultural or political context
- Being more open-minded
- Having access to the job market in a foreign country
- Being more independent
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

### Part 4: Individual experience of mobility

#### 40. What disadvantages did you face due to living and working in different countries? *(Please tick all that apply)*

- Being separated from family and friends back home
- Being separated from the environment back home
- Difficulties to find a partner
- Difficulties to maintain an existing relationship
- Having missed the career opportunities somewhere else
- Not having built up a professional network in the home country
- Having lost the sense of belonging to any country
- Having lost a part of the own identity
- Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

## Career and mobility of PhD graduates in Europe

#### 41. If you like to tell something interesting and relevant about your own career story please comment here.

42. Please, provide your email address here if you agree to be contacted later on *(e.g. for giving an interview or for replying on follow up questions)*. Please, be aware that your personal data will be used for the research purposes only and will not be passed on any third parties.

Please, write your email here:

**Thank you for participating in this survey!**

Prev

Done

## APPENDIX V. SAMPLE OF SELECTED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

NOTES FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH MELIS ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2014

The area of my research interest is the Kurdish and Turkish diaspora. For my PhD thesis it was Germany and Sweden. Then for the postdoc this has shifted. For the postdoc I also went to France, Kurdistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan.

**Q1: Where did you first have this idea to go abroad for longer? Was it in school or was it during your undergraduate?**

I always wanted to live abroad since I was 10. I was born in a small town. That was too small for me. I was imagining myself like a war zone journalist or a diplomat, always abroad. Then I started thinking about it seriously during my BA, I think. I did it (BA) in Istanbul. So, it was like a routine, everybody from us has just finished and then they went to the US. This was like the standard procedure. After the BA I stayed one more year as a research assistant at my university. But I used that year to apply for master's programmes.

**Q1a: Then you went to Sweden to do your master's, right?**

Yep, then I went to Sweden. It was actually like a random choice because I made many applications. I didn't want to go to the US. It was too far. I preferred to stay in Europe. I wanted to try it in Brussels but then I could find a very good scholarship from Sweden. I said: ok, I don't know where is it on the map but they give me money. So, I'll go there. So, it has started with Sweden. At that time, I think, I've been abroad only two times. So, I didn't know anything about any country in Europe. I just spoke fluent Italian. So, I wanted to do something in Italy. But I've just applied for programmes about peace and conflict and European studies. I didn't consider programmes without a scholarship because I couldn't afford it myself. So, I did maybe 10 applications.

**Q2: How did it come that you could speak fluent Italian? Did you learn it at school or during your BA?**

Since I've moved to Istanbul for my BA, I have started to learn a foreign language.

Everybody was learning Spanish and French. So, I've decided to learn something different. Just Italian. It is only spoken in one country. But I always had some interest in this culture. So, I said that I wanted to do something different and it was Italian.

**Q3: How long have you stayed in Sweden?**

I have stayed for one year for my master's degree. Then I decided to stay for one more year because I got an offer from the supervisor I was working with. He said: we are having a project about Turkish migrants here. So, why don't you become a research assistant? So, I said it is ok. I stayed for one more year and was working as a junior research assistant. In total it was two years.

**Q4: When did you start to think about a PhD?**

I think it was straight after my master's degree. Because the project I was working for with my supervisor in Uppsala was really interesting. I wanted to continue working on this topic. So, I started applying around. It was also because I wanted to stay in Europe. I didn't want to return to Turkey. PhD was a good option. I wasn't 100 per cent sure that I wanted to be an academic. But I just knew that I wanted to stay in Europe for a little bit more. I am honest here.

**Q5: What were the reasons why you didn't want to return to Turkey?**

I was just impressed with the topic that we were studying in Sweden. In Turkey my university was really good but you were always limited by the state ideology. We've never talked about the Middle East. We've never talked about the Armenian genocide. And then when I was in Sweden, I was studying issues related to Africa, Latin America and stuff I've never had a chance to talk about before. And also my supervisors were really good. It's like when you come from countries like Turkey, I think it is the same for all Middle East, when you are in Europe, you feel like you are one step further now and you don't want to go back. And you think that it is like the best career – Europe or the US. And you didn't want to make a step back. And also I was in love. So, I've decided to stay. I thought that if I return to Turkey now, I will need to have a visa every time I want to come and to visit him. I am sure many people are saying the same reasons.

**Q6: Were you also thinking about the PhD earlier on when you were in Turkey or did you come to that idea through being in Europe?**

We have four years BA in Turkey. For example, for me during my third year in Turkey I thought: I don't want to be an academic, it is so boring, I would like to be a journalist. I worked as a journalist for one year in one of the biggest newspapers in Turkey. But then I've noticed that if you don't know anyone in the area, it is really hard to climb upstairs. Then one of my former professors has said to me: just come back and be my assistant. And I did it. Then I started to grow my interest for academia again. It was not like a plan that I wanted to be a professor at some stage. It was more about exploring other countries, living abroad, adventures. Now it seems that I am having a very good academic career path going on. I've just decided to work for a research centre right now but I might end up at a think tank. I was actually that close to accept a job at a think tank because I am always following my instincts. I like to explore stuff but it shouldn't necessarily be an academic paper. After the master's in Uppsala, when I was working on the research project, I knew that I wanted to stay in Europe. So, my options were PhD related. Then I started applying for jobs. So, I got accepted to maybe 15 places out of 20 PhD applications. In the end I had three to four scholarships. So, I remember I was between two choices, Geneva and the EUI. The EUI was my dream place. Because I was doing European Studies back in Turkey. We were always reading their articles. It was in Italy, perfect place for me. I speak Italian. I think now if I got accepted in Oxford or the EUI, I would still choose the EUI. It was like my dream coming true. Actually, when I got the notification, I cried for an hour. I was like, oh, I am so happy. It was in Florence, fantastic professors, the biggest names in my field. I couldn't have a better life. I thought also, it would be really hard for me to do a PhD in French in Geneva. I spoke French but not enough to write a thesis. But at the EUI it was in English.

**Q4: In terms of career, when did you start to think about further employment and to make some plans during your PhD?**

I started thinking about these issues when I realised my topic is interesting for many people. When I realised many people appreciated my work, because I was asked to write reports, I was asked to do this and that, I was invited to talks. And this is very rare when you are second/third year PhD student. So, I thought ok, I am doing smth important and I have to be



careful with my career plans. I think I've started, I always meet my deadlines, I worked really hard and I just didn't want to do a five-year PhD. I wouldn't be able to afford it anyway. Financial constraints and visa issues also affect my decisions. As soon as the fourth year is over, I have no visa any more in Europe, I have to go back. Or I don't have any money to stay and look for jobs. So, I always had to find it before I jumped to the other place. So, I started in the beginning of my first year, I consulted Rainer, I've sent so many emails around that I am going to defend my thesis just next year, maybe, you need anything. So, I've already started planning one year ahead.

**Q5: Did you send your requests within academia, like universities, or did you also approach some non-academic employees?**

I've sent my emails to the professors that I liked and I've also started to follow the job.ac.uk website and that was good actually. I also used my previous connections. I knew the Swedish system very well. So, I applied to the Swedish research grant. Then some jobs in the UK but they didn't work out. Then I thought maybe I've got enough from Europe, maybe I should go somewhere else. So, I started to look for jobs in the Caucasus like Azerbaijan and strange places, just to go and to do some fieldwork because I worked on this issue before, I speak the language. So, why not. I didn't have a strategy but it was usually previous connections, I would say.

**Q6: How did it work out? Have you received some offers?**

I think maximum I made ten applications until the end of my PhD. Let's say from September 2011 till April 2012. I just made ten applications and focused on the submission of my thesis because I've already got the acceptance of the Swedish grant for one year postdoc around February/March. So, I was relaxed that I have one more year. And then I got an offer from Azerbaijan for the second interview. And I could really get the job, and it was a really good salary and everything. But then this professor at "a university" contacted me because she knew my profile and she needed somebody for her, a postdoc. She contacted me through Rainer and then I said: ok, I'll come to the UK because it's one step higher. Although it is not as adventurous as I would like it to be. It's a place to go now. Rainer also encouraged me because he said he got his postdoc from here as well. Like many years back. I decided to come here then. It was in the "a department" where I have stayed for two years of postdoc.

**Q7: I would ask you a question about your mobility experience and your feelings about it, as you've stayed in many places. There is always a period of time adjusting when you come to a new place. Could you say how long it takes you to feel comfortable in a place?**

My adjustment takes three days. I think I have my to do list. My adjustment to a place is: buy a local phone number, buy the bus pass and then go for a walk and get lost in the streets on the first day you arrive, find a cafe to work and find a Turkish kebab guy to ask some practical questions. Those are my tactics. It takes up to five days, maximum one week. Then I feel that I am ok. Because it was always like, this is for example my fifth country in the last seven years' life. The country where I lived in. I was in Germany for almost a year in total, one year in Sweden during my PhD, in Portugal, I lived in France for some time. Because I know that I have only a short time for my field work, I just keep my adjustment level very low. It's also because I have friends in every single city, we have in Europe I have at least one friend because of the network. I always have someone who can give me information, practical things. How do I feel about mobility, it was so much easier until I was 30. It gets harder. It has got really hard for me now. When I was in the EU or in Sweden, I just loved travelling so much, I went somewhere every weekend. And it didn't affect my work. Now I travel too much. I was just charged for the UK Border Agency because in three years' time you can apply for a permanent residence. You have only 80 days, you can spend out of the UK. I made myself find out how much I spent outside of the UK in the last two years. So, I was away for 280 days. And this is a lot. So, I was in Iraq, in the Netherlands and I just feel that I am a bit tired of travelling. That's why, for example, after "a university" I got a job in "a city" and then there was this "a university" job. The salary is almost the same, career aspirations are the same. "A university" is so much higher in the rankings than "a university". But even moving from "a city" to a different city was just too tiring for me. So, I didn't go for "a university" and just accepted this job in "a city". Of course for other reasons as well. But for the first time in my life I said: I have my friends here, I have my life here. So, maybe I should stay. For the first time in my life I have started thinking, maybe, I should buy a car or a house. This just appeared to me, maybe, just in the last few months.

**Q8: Do you think that it is due to your character, or to your life situation? Or is it due to your experience, which you have passed?**

I mean it is travelling and exploring places. It is my character. I said it in my job interview: I

am a gypsy soul. Don't think that I could stay in a place for longer and I move here and there. Because of my gypsy soul I like these things since I am a little kid. But now what makes me think that I should at least settle down somewhere in the UK, I think it has more to do with the life and your situation where I am right now. Because I've started suffering a lot from visa-related issues. So, I am looking at it from the practical perspective. If I cannot have a residence permit. Because I've been living in Europe for the last ten years, I wasn't qualified to ask for a citizenship anywhere, because I didn't live anywhere long enough. So, I decided ok, to be honest, this is the country which I love the least. This is not where I imagine myself to live for the rest of my life but I need to facilitate my life and I need to have a residence permit, a permanent one and a maybe citizenship. This would make things easier for me. This is like a short-term plan for me because it is like, I cannot take a loan to buy anything. I cannot leave the country, I can't even go to Ireland. This affects my conference participation. I have always to be expansive. I always have to plan too much in advance and I also work on really sensitive issues. So, if I go back to Turkey, they may even arrest me because it is about Kurdish issues. So, having a permanent residence permit somewhere would give me some kind of security feeling. So, my character is still the gypsy soul but I've started thinking more pragmatically. For example, there was a position in the US for one year. And I really wanted to apply but I said to myself: no, no, no, just three years, sit on our ass for three years and don't go anywhere, calm down, just focus on some other issues. Because travelling makes you lose too much time on the road. So, I decided ok, these three years I just stay in "a city" and just produce some good journal articles. This is just a short-term period plan, just to settle down right now.

**Q9: What will happen after that, if you have got your residence permit and then you are going to travel again, like the same lifestyle will come up, is that possible?**

Yes, I think this is actually one of the reasons why I love my job very much in "a city" and I even didn't go to other interviews because "a city" job is my dream job. It's perfect. It's permanent. It's 100 per cent research. And it's home office. So, all they expect from me is to publish really good articles and to contribute to the research projects. So, they told us that after the first six months, when we integrate with the team, we don't have to come to work. So, people commute from Belfast, people commute from Majorca. I am thinking, I'll stay here for three more years, maybe four. You never know what life shows but my idea is always moving back to the Mediterranean, maybe, living somewhere like Greece or Portugal.

I always wanted to go to Lisbon. So, I might go there and I have affiliations to some research centres there. We are now applying for a project together. If I get that project, I could keep this going. My plan is to move to the Mediterranean, where I am happy. But my short-term plan for three more years is to be here.

**Q10: You've said that the UK is not your favourite place. What are the reasons for that?**

I think everything functions very well here. I have no problem with, you know, coming from Turkey, I don't think I can complain about anything here, it is really good. The university and the research quality is fantastic. So, this is one of the reasons, why I am here, which keeps me here, especially at "a city". I wasn't happy at "a university" so much. In "the university" it's really very professional. It's a growing research centre. Everybody is so nice. I like collegiality issues at "a university". So, I am happy in that regard. But my soul belongs to these cities by the sea. Just the lifestyle here doesn't fit me because I don't drink very much. So, I cannot integrate very well into UK night-life culture if I don't drink very much. And the weather. I like doing social things during the weekend but I am not a hot biker or I don't like cycling. These are, you know, the social environment here. My friends sometimes come here and fit well because they do these kinds of sports and I don't. I want to go out to the cafe under the sun. This is how I rest. These kinds of things. After four years in Italy, I miss the piazza, gatherings, people like four hours sitting together and like that. It's so close to Turkey. I think that I feel it closer to home. If I go to some Mediterranean country, of course, maybe I will grow up in three years and my interests will just change. I don't know.

**Q11: You've said that you are happier at "a university" in terms of how things work compared to "a university". So, what is that exactly about?**

My job at "a university", I was a postdoc at a project. And it was a horrible experience for me because it was a labour exploitation. I was gathering data for some primer investigators and I wasn't told about the reality on the project until I was in my first year. There were a lot of issues related to freedom of speech and academic freedom in general, for example. It was a big trouble for me. And I joined a conference in London about Gaza and Palestinian issues. And I was told that I am damaging the brand of the university et cetera. These kinds of things. There were some bullying issues. So, actually, it wasn't just me but some other

students complained about bullying. But the university prioritised the primer investigator because she brought an almost two million euro project to the university. And we were only early-career researchers, maybe like with a few publications to contribute and that's it. We were the disposable ones. I mean the permanent secretaries, they tried their best but there are limits. I saw that. I think that institutions like "a university", they know they are very good, they know they are in the top ten. So, you are always disposable because there are many others. They always knew these kinds of things. I felt a bit disposable. Many of my friends, who were early-career researchers, research fellows or teaching fellows at "a university", they run away from there. All fast. When I left "a university", the day I left "a university", we celebrated with champagne. Many of my other friends, they were so happy when they left. In the near environment "a city" is not the best university but they appreciate every single one of us. I feel like my work is appreciated. I feel like whatever I say it's listened to with interest. So, that was the difference. You are very welcome to mention these things but make sure you anonymise very well. It was about bullying cases. The other students have complained about bullying. In person, they were also foreigners.

**Q12: Was it also related to some sort of issues related to race and ethnicity?**

No, it was just personality. I realised, these things are really common in Europe. I made complaints about academic freedom, because basically I was told that I was not allowed to write any newspaper articles. I may not appear in the media because whatever I said may be negative for the university. For example, any academic conferences, I am not talking about protests but conferences, I wasn't allowed to go. They said they wouldn't give funding to me. After I made my complaint and nothing happened, I just withdrew it and another person has just opened a case for bullying. This was a bigger issue and I was invited to testify. And this got really big in the department. Fifteen professors were deciding. It was like, they showed some solidarity but it wasn't enough. I was anonymously asking for advice and I realised there were tons of people, especially in natural sciences. There is so much labour exploitation. They know that we are vulnerable. They know that after a PhD it's really hard to find a job. For example, people ask me why did you endure these things. That was really a horrible stress for me. People say: why didn't you leave? I said that, because if I left, I would lose my visa. Again, it would be the same thing. I would need to go back to Turkey and apply for a visa again. And I could be rejected. There is no guarantee of anything. I couldn't live in the middle. And I decided I would endure it for just two years and then look for another job.

But, again, there are so many people who are in the same situation, who are exploited. It's about power relations in academia. Until you get your permanent position somewhere, people will use it because they may think that you have no other choice. So, this is not about ethnicity or anything, but everything is about that you are young and vulnerable. Also, it's not a good thing on your CV that you resigned from your job. Because, for example, it can put me in a very difficult situation, let's say, if I apply for jobs in the UK, and you fill in the online form. And they ask you for reasons for leaving my last job. My answer was that because it's a fixed-term contract. But what if I say that I have resigned from my last job. And they will ask why, and why you don't have a letter from your last employer. That's why I thought that I had better endure it for a short period of time.

**Q13: Did you also experience some other disadvantages due to your experience that you have lived in different countries and that you have stayed away from your country? Could you say that you have lost something or maybe not?**

I don't think that I've lost smth. I've never regretted what I've done because it has made me who I am. I am grateful for all these experiences. But some other disadvantages that I am thinking about are, for example, I came to Europe and I came to the UK and I knew some professors here, which I've previously met on conferences but at the same time I know maybe a maximum of five people. But I don't have any intense relationships with them. So, one of the disadvantages is that I knew some people but I see some of my friends who did a PhD in the UK who were doing their postdoc in the UK, they knew so many people and they have a really dense network here. They knew these people for ages. And when you apply for jobs in the UK, it's really important that someone makes a phone call and says look, this person is good. And I had no idea about it. This year I made a lot of applications but I've never asked anyone: could you, please, make a phone call for me. Because I thought this only happens in Turkey to be honest, but this is also very important here, And everybody's supervisors help them to get jobs in the next ten years. So, it never stops. I feel that I am missing these links in the UK. It has been three years but I feel that I still need three more years to establish a network of my own where I can ask them, could you please give me this favour. I am not even sure, could I ever ask this question. But I felt disadvantaged when I made my applications here. You of course build some kind of network. For example, you and me, we maybe could write an article together or we can maybe find some money to organise a new panel or smth. But you know, I cannot ask you to find a job for me. The whole of

Europe is a different case and UK is a different case. I think that European academics are much more mixed but UK academics are like separated. On the other hand, for example, I was very much positively surprised by the fact that I was invited to the interview. They agreed to do it on Skype. Another two people came for the interview for “a university” and they had European citizenship but they still hired me even though they knew that they have to pay for my sponsorship. But when it comes to advancing career and networks maybe it’s the same everywhere, but I find it a bit hard. In Italy, I was applying for just a PhD, we should consider that. This is actually my first application for a job in a serious manner. Others were PhD, scholarships and it’s not the same thing.

**Q14: If you also think about your whole experience and about your personality, do you think that you have changed (yourself) due to having this experience of living abroad? If you just imagine that you had stayed in Turkey for your whole life and compare this to you now, do you think that you have changed?**

If I had stayed in Turkey I would be a different person for sure. I would be much more conservative, less open-minded, including political things for sure. Even the party that I vote for, my religion, everything would be different.

**Q15: As I understand, you don’t consider going back to Turkey. Is that right? Or could that be somehow a long-term consideration?**

I thought about it a lot last year and I made quite a lot of applications in Turkey. So, I said if I don’t go back now, I will never go back. It has been ten years. I think that it is a threshold – ten years. I am 30. I spent ten years abroad, 20 in Turkey, So, I applied and I found that the working conditions would be horrible for me as a woman who is working on Kurdish issues, it would be a disaster. So, I think that I don’t plan to return unless it is a family emergency and I need to go there. Otherwise I don’t really plan it. I still work on Turkey’s soul, doing fieldwork and stuff but I don’t plan to return permanently.

I think that I really have my dream job now because it gives me the opportunities to realise my dream and also to stay in academia at the same time and to have some good quality work and to work in a high-quality research centre with some really good colleagues. So, I plan to stay at my current job as much as I can. It’s a permanent job. I just want to plan my next

career steps there. But in terms of residency, I don't know; because, as soon as I receive the UK residence permit, I will be much more mobile and free and then I could see if I can move to Portugal. But you never know. Lisbon is my favourite place. This is what I would like to do because I have really good friends there and really good academic networks there. I speak the language. So, these things would be natural to me. For example, Berlin would be another choice but as I don't speak German, I always feel that I wouldn't belong there. If you speak German, that's heaven, but there are so many social events where I wouldn't understand what is going on. I am just now trying to change my subject from Kurdish studies to a subject related to Africa and South America because I want to do something else. So, maybe that will require me to leave these places for a while. I really don't know, but at least for three to five years I have decided that I really wanted to settle down a little. Maybe I would like to integrate more into British society and try to appreciate more what I have here. In the end everything has to do with having friends and having a social environment, which you are comfortable with. I could go back to Florence now as I had a job offer from Florence. I rejected it, I choose "a university", because if I go back to the EUI now I don't know any people there any more because everybody moved away. All my friends are somewhere else. I know a maximum of ten people now out of the 600 that I knew during my PhD. I was mobile but my friends were also mobile. So, I don't have any place to go back to. That's why maybe I've decided to stay here because if I go back Uppsala I will know just few people there. All my friends are all around the world from Seychelles to Argentina.

**Q17: Do you feel comfortable about it or do you think that it is the downside of mobility?**

Oh, sometimes I want to put all my friends that I love very much on a plane and I hope that that plane crashes on a small island and I will live there forever. But I know that this not going to happen. It is really hard sometimes and I spend a lot of time on Skype but I have learned to live with it. We have coffee dates on Skype with my friends or sometimes a glass of wine, it depends. I've learned to be in touch and I've learned to love them and to be in their lives despite we cannot see each other for six months. I think we all got used to it, to living like that. I think these things about living a mobile life are exciting and I still didn't give up but I feel a bit tired. I am just thinking to have a pause.



**Q1: When did you have the idea to go abroad for longer for the first time in your life?**

I think probably from the end of my bachelor studies. First, I started studying history and then I was studying law and I was given the opportunity, basically, when I was studying history, one my programmes in my home university offered to add one more year to the degree for studying in the United States to study abroad. Maybe, it was even earlier because it has developed gradually. I was a member of the student association. Then I became more and more interested in spending time abroad. But I think that the idea to spend more time there came later, probably, once I realised that there was a real possibility.

**Q1a: Then you went to the US for that year as an exchange student?**

Yes, I went to the US but I was interested in going abroad even before that. But when I went to the US for a year, I enjoyed it but I hadn't decided on an academic career at that time. I did want to work internationally or to have a strong international dimension in whatever I wanted to do in my life. And this can involve living abroad for some long periods as well.

**Q2: You were basically born and brought up in the same country. Or were you travelling with your parents as well?**

No, I was born and brought up in Netherlands. I was living there until the end of my bachelor.

**Q3: How did you have the idea to do a PhD? You've said that you didn't have this idea when you were doing your undergraduate studies. So, when did this come in mind?**

It was also a bit later because I thought about it back then but I considered myself to be a little bit too young to take a decision like that. That happened later when I came back from the US. Then I spent two years to finish my law studies because I didn't really know what to do with my life. But when I got into law, I basically became more interested in developing an academic career. But still then I was not sure whether I wanted to do a PhD. So, this decision has formed afterwards. After I had finished my studies and I was working, actually I moved to England to work. Then I found a topic for a PhD to do. But I applied for a PhD a number of times before that. I wasn't quite sure during some of these applications whether I really

wanted to do it and maybe I reflected my hesitation during the interviews. I think the point that I did these applications a number of times meant that I became more sure that this is what I wanted to do.

**Q4: Did you apply with different topics or was it the same research project but you applied to different institutions?**

Yes, I was quite sure that I wanted to do a PhD in international law but with different proposals. And each proposal was basically in the same area. They were interrelated but still on different topics. Then I got a PhD position in Italy at the EUI.

**Q5: But you were staying in the UK previously, right?**

Yes, what happened was that, after I finished my undergraduate, I also finished my law degree. I started teaching even before I finished. I had an opportunity to teach a little bit longer. So, I worked at the University of Amsterdam as a temporary teacher. Then I worked in the International Court for a while and still did some teaching. After that I got a job in the UK which was also a practical job which didn't require a PhD. These days I think that these research jobs do not require PhD yet but what I found and what I could do in the job, I really came up with a PhD topic. And suddenly I thought that this is what I really want to do.

**Q6: For what reasons did you apply to the EUI? Were you interested in this institution or in the country?**

It was probably a combination of both. I applied to it because I had heard about this place before. When I was in the UK, I was at Essex. I was looking for other opportunities as well. But the EUI was the first place which came up. It was also recommended to me by a number of people. So, I submitted a proposal. I was interested in this institution as such, also because it was internationalised. The country – I didn't mind. It was also by chance. Also, because it was a fully funded PhD. When I got in, I was preparing a few other applications but I hadn't submitted them yet. And then actually I got into the EUI.

**Q7: How did you feel then when you came to Italy? It's a completely different surrounding there. And also in terms of the institute, it's the same academic system like**

**in the UK, but a small institute, so international, in a different country. Did you feel comfortable or did you need a period of time to adjust yourself?**

I really loved it actually. One thing is also, which can be a personal preference, that I always like the Mediterranean environment. In those years I've been in a long-term relationship with a Greek girl. So, I have been travelling to Greece quite regularly. So, it was not that much a transition for me. I have noticed that some people, especially from the Northern European countries, were struggling with some aspects of life. Although, the institute was also quite welcoming as an environment. I really, really liked it when I arrived there. And I was really happy because the environment was really stimulating. There were loads of people and they all were doing a PhD. Bearing in mind that a PhD existence is quite lonely. Normally at a university all the PhDs are quite hidden and they don't really know what to do with their lives. So, in the EUI this was not the case. I do think that it helped me that at that time I was a bit older compared to other people who started a PhD. So, I think that this change which happens to you in the same time period that it used to be that who started a PhD were in different ages. And nowadays they come straight after a graduate school or straight after their master's. Me, since I had worked for a few years and I did some other things, it was quite a conscious and delivered decision. So, I think some other people in my environment were like – ok, I take a few decisions and then I'll see what happens.

**Q8: Some people say that this transition between being a professional and then becoming a student again can be a bit weird. Did you experience this as well?**

Yes, I had this problem too just because of the income difference, I think. But it was something which was explicitly asked me, when I applied to the EUI. One of the members of the panel asked me whether I thought I would have a problem with not having a sufficient income for a few years. And I think that helped me to make this decision and to say: ok, I am going back to the student life. But I was at a point in my life when it was actually helpful to me. Like I took the decision and then I did it fully. But yes, I had to make a switch in my head. It was not really difficult but it was really special.

**Q9: When did you start to think about your future career during your PhD? Was it your aspiration for sure that you want to work for academia later on or did you also consider looking for other jobs outside of academia?**

I think that by the start of my PhD I was quite sure what I wanted. My general idea was that I wanted to have basically one foot in academia and one foot in practice. Also, because in law it is smth which is common. If you are an academic lawyer but you don't do anything in practice, it's also a bit strange. From that I didn't have a concrete plan, but I always had it in my head. It was always that in the future I want to retain an academic position or I want to have one that I can have my independence but hopefully I will be in the position to work in practice either in cases, or in projects, or in policy-relevant issues. But I like to be in academia because I like teaching.

**Q10: When did you start to apply practically and also to think about where you were going to go or would you have preferred to stay in the Mediterranean area or even return home? Did you have these sorts of considerations?**

I think that I have started thinking about it more seriously in the fourth year when I was finishing my PhD. Initially I thought that I will start doing this from my third year onwards. Like I did have a plan in the beginning because I didn't really want to have a gap in between the end of my PhD and the beginning of whatever I was going to do. But the years at the EUI were quite intense. Also in my personal life. So, smth got a little bit delayed. So, I really started doing this later. I think that I did think about the place but, by the end of my PhD, also the economic circumstances had changed to such an extent that I thought while applying for jobs that the most important thing is just to get the first position and hopefully I will end up close to where I would like to be. My PhD was on China. So, during my PhD I started thinking that I would like to move in direction to the East. So, I would like to be in Australia, for example. It was smth in the long term for keeping in mind. But if I meet somebody, as I am currently not in a relationship, I might compromise on the location.

**Q10a: What do you mean exactly when you say East? As China and Australia are so different.**

Well, I wouldn't necessarily want to be in China, well, maybe in Hong Kong. It has partially to do with my background. I am half Chinese, my mother is Chinese. I was raised bilingually. So, I do think that it would make sense in my academic life to spend some time closer to

China. But as I want to focus on human rights, I wouldn't necessarily want to be in China itself.

**Q11: Did you practically apply for jobs there when you were looking for a job? Or was it just a theoretical long-term plan?**

I am not the most strategic thinker in the sense that I had a very deliberate plan but sometimes I think I have some intuition, which is based on my longer-term desire when I was applying. Earlier on you asked me whether I would like to go back to my own country. I did think about it as well. But I don't really want to go there. That's actually a bit strange, also, from the academic point of view because the Dutch academic environment is so internationalised. And I even don't need to be internationalised because I am a Dutch national. But I don't really want to be there. So, maybe it is a personal thing because I do not really see myself living in the Netherlands during this part of my life.

**Q12: Does it relate to the academic environment there, even if it is so great? Or does it relate to how do you feel in this country?**

For sure it is more personal. I can give an objective reason or one that feels objective to me. I recommend it to other people when I speak to them and they ask me – shall I go to the Netherlands. I say – yes, it's amazing and it's a great academic environment there because it is so nice. So, it must be personal. Actually, to your earlier question, I did apply for a number of positions towards the East. I applied for a postdoc in Singapore, I applied for some jobs in Australia and I also remain in contact with some universities there with a plan maybe to apply there in the future. So, I have tried and I will continue to try to find a position there. Last year I went to a conference in Taiwan and I also retain some contacts there. The thing is basically that I don't have a grand master plan in terms of what I want to do. I just want to be flexible in things that I like researching but I do have a sense of direction where I want to go to. And it doesn't matter if I need one year or five years that I need to get there. And if I am happy in the meantime with where I am, that's of course also fine.

**Q13: How did you end up with where you are now, in Manchester?**

I am working right now on a research project where we have five postdocs in a position similar to mine. Basically, it was initiated by a professor who leads the project and who had a grant from the European Research Council. So, I applied for a position in somebody else's research project and was recruited. And it is a two-year position. Afterwards I will need to find something else.

**Q14: Did you come straight after Italy to the UK or did you go somewhere else in between?**

I did not really have anything in between. I defended my PhD last year, in September 2013. As I've said because my personal life was a bit more chaotic, just before I finished my PhD, I did not start applying for the positions one year before I finished. That was what I had in mind and this is what your supervisor says to you, if you want to have some continuity. So, it was a bit more problematic. Just after I finished, I took a number of freelance and other research jobs to stay busy. I did have one other affiliation, I was involved in a Chatham House project. At that time I stayed in Florence and I would have stayed there until I came to the UK. But I ended up moving to the Netherlands in February this year for family reasons because my father passed away and I wanted to keep my mother company. But if that hadn't happened, I would have stayed in Italy. But I did know that I did want to stay specifically in Florence and not somewhere else in Italy because I was down in this place.

**Q15: Did it feel too long to stay in the same place for longer or did you just want to change your environment?**

For me it was like that I came there to do my PhD and it was time to leave. I also think that it is something embedded in the environment. If someone would ask me, I would say that like it's good to change because I've noticed in my life that people who do academic work and get attached to the same places, it is like you don't continue to develop personally if you stay in the same place for too long. Even people who really make a very good career, but they do it all in one institution. My perception is that it diminishes your position a little bit, even if you are a very good academic. And I also have that impression that it affects their self-perception, like a professor, for example, in my home university in Leiden. He became a professor and had a very good academic career but it seems that it's still, you know, he is a

professor, he also has got a lot of publications and he is a brilliant teacher, but still it looks a little bit less than people who have been around, basically, in my view.

**Q16: Do you think that you want and will be able to continue with this lifestyle – to change places for developing yourself, when you stay to work in academia?**

Ideally, I would like this but at the same time, and this maybe comes with age, that it feels maybe less necessary than it used to. That is one aspect. The other one is that I am currently single but when I was in a relationship, I was thinking that, if I had children, it would not be necessarily nice for them to be travelling around every few years when they are small or especially once they have reached a certain age. So, from that point of view, it would be better to be settled in a certain location. So, in the future I personally think that I will like travelling because I like exploring new environments and so on. But I don't know how I will think about it in a few years and I definitely think that if I have children that they might be an important reason for me to stay in one place. It's also not only for the children, because if I met somebody who has her own career and that career has to be in a certain place. But it's a bit difficult to talk about these things at this stage because these are choices, which are easier to make in a specific situation. But I think that I am a person who would be able to compromise.

**Q17: As you've said that mobility can help you to develop your personality, could you continue on that part by telling me, have you yourself changed due to having this experience of mobility in your life? If you imagine you had stayed in the Netherlands for this period of time, do you think that you would be somehow different?**

Yes, I think so. I am sure that I would be more frustrated about certain things because I would be aware that there is a world out there that I don't know. That is one thing. I think at a certain point I really wanted to see how can I work in different environments. So, I do think that it has quite an impact because I have changed different countries and you take away smth from each place that you go to. I mean I have to say that I didn't like the UK when I came here for the first time. I was in Essex and now I am in Manchester. And I enjoy Manchester a lot better. Maybe because now I feel that it was my choice to come here. In Essex there was also an opportunity but there was also a personal dimension to it. I think it just, what I mainly feel that these are things about personal issues or things that I wanted to deal with. I've been

able to get to know myself better. I do feel that I am a better person now. I am a more capable one, I am taking more advantages of the capabilities that I have. I have been in different international environments a number of times. I think in the Netherlands I would feel more stuck.

**Q17a: Can you also say that you have learned smth, acquired some new skills or knowledge?**

Yes, I do think so because in each place life is so different. For example, when I came to the UK for the first time, it was so interesting because it is a neighbouring country of the Netherlands and I always had an impression that it would be very different. But I've noticed more similarities than differences with the Netherlands than I thought. Italy was quite different. But learning to live in Italy and not just going there on a tour, I think, is also quite an experience. There is smth, which is not straightforward there, especially if you grew up in a country like the Netherlands – a country with efficient public services, where everything works as expected. In Italy, everything is a little bit more unpredictable. So, I learned there how to adapt to different attitudes, like how not to be impatient or not to expect things to work like they used to work at home. Of course, some things I mean, maybe it sounds like a bit of a cliché, but I think that someone who spends a bit of time in Italy, becomes more Italian in terms of appreciation of food and life. These kinds of things. There are many small things that I've learned and also few big things. It's a bit contradictive but I think, it affects my attitude and life right now. One example, for different reasons in Italy the economy now is a bit stagnant. Many people don't have jobs, they stay with their parents for a very long time. And they have so different a lifestyle. What you see that if you know different people, you can get a different perspective on life. So, it makes you reflect on your own life. I think that's one life lesson that I've also started learning for the first time I went abroad and then I continued with going somewhere else, and my notion of identity has become extremely fluent. In a sense that I feel much fear to construct my own identity and to define who I am. And usually it happened that I've picked up something in different places where I lived to basically to define what I think is right. Things do not necessarily have to be one way or another.

**Q18: Is it a good think for you or is it a bad thing? I mean have you lost some part of your identity or you have gained some different parts.**



I think that it's a struggle as I feel that I've been in process, in which maybe I did lose a little bit. But then I regained it later, but it was necessary to reflect on certain things and to look back and to realise what has happened. But I see it really as an advantage. I don't think that in the long term I have lost anything. I feel that I like I've only gained in this regard. Maybe this is relevant also because I do think that it requires some action on the part of the person. It's like you get these opportunities and I think everybody can have this. But it is often that people who move abroad can be scared of the new environment. So, they isolate themselves instead of going out to the environment and engaging with it. Then I can really see that they don't get any benefits of the environment. And it might even be regressive because people are just preoccupied with themselves. So, I can see how this would go wrong.

**Q19: Do you believe that you have managed this well, to be engaged with the local community?**

Yes, I did make a point from the beginning because there was one thing which I didn't like at the EUI. For example, if they (international PhD students at the EUI) would go to the shop, they wouldn't even try to speak Italian. These kinds of things. And I've noticed it by some people that they really, really hated it. And they try it that their entire life consists only of the university, and of their homes, and of the EUI social environment, which is not always especially healthy. Because there are all the same people around you all the time, so, you work and play with the same people. In the last years there I started to get out there, as I joined a local association for sport in the centre, where there were only Italians. People there were not connected to the institute, which was really healthy from my personal point of view. So, I did do that. Even before that, which has helped, is that I was a little bit older. So, I didn't feel fully connected to the environment. I think that the worst thing which can happen when you arrive there, is that you feel like on a four-year ERASMUS, basically. The social environment can also be a bit oppressive and you need to deal with this in a healthy way.

**Q20: Can you also think about some disadvantages that you have missed or lost smth due to moving across different countries?**

Yeah, I do see some advantages of being rooted in a place. Like when I look at the life of my friends, I do feel that that might be an artificial dimension to an extent, because you move

somewhere all the time. But, of course, I am getting older. I am not 26 any more. And sometimes I do think – am I still acting in this way? I usually see it as a positive thing and I try still to be open. But, at the same time, it will depend on how the next few years go, because I was in a long-term relationship when I started my PhD. At that time I was thinking about settling and creating a stable smth that I can root myself there. Then it didn't work out. So, that is smth that I am missing right now. I think it would be a bit, it is not an immediate answer to what you are asking, because it is smth for myself that I've lost. But there is a link with the choices that I've made. So, that might be a price that I've paid. Obviously, if I had stayed in the same place, it would be easier for me to meet a new partner and to develop a long-term relationship. That is smth, which is more difficult to do at a place like the EUI, which is by definition a transitional place. I am in a two-year position and still I have a plan to go somewhere else. I do think that is for sure one aspect of life that I could see is a bit more difficult to me. The thing is that I do think that, to fit into the professional life, it is better for your professional work, when you have a stable family. So, that is smth that I am currently missing.

**Q21: For what reasons do you think it is better to have a stable personal life for your professional development?**

I think it is a matter of focus but this really depends on your personality. Some people are more loners. I also see that many successful academics are quite self-sufficient. Maybe, they are less capable or suitable to maintain a meaningful personal relationship. But I don't see myself there. I've learned over the years to be more self-sufficient but I have to say that I always see myself as somebody who is better in a relationship than being single. Also, I think mainly because you have an emotional support. I am not sure it would apply to everyone but for me it would be helpful to be in a longer relationship. I think at least there are a few questions that I don't need to ask myself any more: who do I want to be with or where do I meet somebody, or shall I keep myself in the environment where I could meet somebody to be with. Because you know, this is then all I don't need to care of. So, then I can focus on my work instead. In the past it has also affected my work, basically, in the times when I was single after the break, I am not that kind of person who can basically switch that off and focus on work. For some people it can be the opposite – when everything is hurting, I'll just focus on my work and I get some confidence from that. It's not like that for me.

**Q22: What is your plan for the next position after your postdoc?**

I think what I will do is. Actually, I am taking advantage now, since I have a two-year contract. So, I have one year of peace to focus on academic work, still need to publish my PhD. So, I will do that. Maybe, I will do publications outside and inside the project that I am working on now. In the next year, I will start looking for opportunities and it will be, most likely, again a combination of what I have been doing previously – I will look at positions which are available and apply for them if it is suitable to do. And I will try to look for opportunities for myself by applying in Australia or looking for funding that will bring me closer to those places.

**Q23: What I also would like to understand is your feelings about going back home. You said that you are don't feel comfortable about going back there but I didn't really understand what exactly makes you feel so. Do you enjoy being international in a place and rather not to be a local in your home country?**

Well, to start with the last part, I think I enjoy both. My home place has become much more international in the years since I've left. It started when I went away from there because the city was attracting international institutions and organisations. As this happened many of those people ended up living in the neighborhood where I grew up. It is slightly ironic, if I went back there and had a job there in the area where I grew up, it would be actually very recognisable because I am living in this kind of community abroad. I think the thing that you've described at the very beginning that I've moved on and things have stayed the same back home, I had this impression the very first time, when I went to the US for a year and when I came back. Now it's a little bit less because I think I return home more regularly. So, I am staying there but I don't feel uncomfortable there. But I do know after I've been there for a while, I feel happy that I need to leave. I think that the last time when I was back in the Netherlands for a long time was, of course, from February onwards. But that was a very difficult period but for different reasons because I was living with my mother and of course my father had just passed away. So, there was smth to deal with. In addition, I was also mourning for my life in Florence – this was also suddenly taken away. To make it even worse, I didn't have my own place, I was staying with my mother and it was not necessarily good. I think that I realised the importance of having my own house. If I had moved back in different circumstances, I would probably have had my own apartment or my own place.

Then it seems much more feasible to live there and to have a normal life, to have a life in which I feel generally more comfortable during that time. There is maybe smth specific which I can address here. But I don't really have a sense to be detached from my own place originally. Sometimes, these years, I say to people that I appreciated Netherlands more when I am not there, living there all the time. There is maybe smth more specific which I can address. The thing is that I could picture or imagine, should I really move back there. Yeah, I would not be really happy about this, but I would be able to do this.

**Q24: Some people say that going back is not a step forward but a step back? Would you agree with this?**

Yes, this can be smth like a defence. Maybe some people would say that I was about to make it to be abroad but for some reasons you didn't. I don't think, I have this. No.

**Q25: One of my last questions would be that if you had a chance to do your education and career again, would you do the same what you've done or would you change smth?**

Well, I think that I would get to it much earlier in the sense that I only learned about certain international opportunities that have existed fairly late. After my undergraduate, when I have completed my first degree. If I could go back basically, I would probably first of all, I think I would participate in my student life even less that I had in the Netherlands, I would go earlier on ERASMUS. Well, I have to provide some background. It actually means the opposite because in the Netherlands students normally, they are kind of insular – you join an association, you get drunk with the same people, you do your things there. I think that life of the internationalised students is much more interesting, beginning from your ERASMUS. There are so many opportunities. I think I would have already picked one or two places for an ERASMUS exchange from the very beginning. In the beginning, and not wait till I finish my first degree to go abroad for the first exchange. Also, maybe, of course if I had money, immediately do an international master's. And maybe I would do my PhD much earlier. Maybe I would have picked the EUI still for the PhD because there were still some people around from earlier years. I really think that it was a fun place, but I think it might be even more fun ten years before I was there. So, maybe to summarise, I would maybe do the same things but I would do them a bit earlier. I would definitely do the entire international part.

**Q26: May I ask you how old are you?**

I am 38 now. The thing is that I've been speaking realistically because I know that, if you really want to have a good academic career, it's really an advantage to do everything a bit earlier. It's a bit contradictory to an extent because, from the point of view of personal development, I really don't mind, because I wonder, what do you want to do with all those kinds of people who are, I don't know, 26 and already have a PhD. I don't know, that those PhDs are worse. I think, they are really good academics, but I think it used to be that you need to have some life experience because it affects the way you research. At the same time, there was a story the other day that someone was posting on Facebook – what happens much more now is that, if you have really a more senior position early on in your career, you basically are getting stuck in it for quite a long time. So, I don't know how I will be doing in that respect. I think that British people tend to be exceptionally young when doing a PhD. At least at the EUI, the British were younger than average.