

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND DIASPORA: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an analysis of the lived experiences of academic mobility for three educational researchers, at various stages of their research career, from different European national contexts. Lived experiences were explored by examining the metaphors used by each educational researcher to convey their experiences of academic mobility. These metaphors were then explored in further depth via individual interviews. The purpose of this analysis is to extend the debate around academic mobility, which often fails to differentiate between academic mobility and mobile academics. In addition, this chapter explores the impact of the desire for, and experience of, academic mobility on the complex, hybrid and changing process of academic identity formation. In conclusion, the chapter questions whether conventional ideas of research

Academic Mobility

International Perspectives on Higher Education Research, Volume 11, 61–78

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ISSN: 1479-3628/doi:10.1108/S1479-362820140000011010

in the social sciences and humanities are essentially connected in one way or another to the nation state, or whether research is fundamentally an international occupation.

The rationale for this study stems from the MORE (**M**obility patterns and career paths of **R**esearchers) survey (Lykogianni & Van Den Broeck, 2010), which comments upon influencing factors and motivation for academic mobility for higher education and industrial researchers, stating that: ‘profession related influencing factors seem to be of low importance among academic researchers’ (p. 135). The MORE report suggests that:

A clearer distinction should be made between the motivations that are endogenously-determined by the researcher and the influencing factors of mobility, including barriers to mobility, that are exogenously determined by the researcher environment. (p. 147)

In response, this study comprises an analysis of the lived experiences of educational researchers from different European national contexts via three case studies.

Whilst academic mobility can hardly be thought of as a contemporary challenge, the current situation in Europe is particularly interesting. The creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) provides a framework for academic mobility policy across Europe, and the European Union’s Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7) 2007–2013 (European Commission, 2008) may be seen to create the conditions for cross-border competition for high-calibre researchers. To this end, Teichler (2009) observed that knowledge generation is increasingly driven by technological and economic utility, and that higher education is expected to compete globally and on a commercial basis. Accordingly, Teichler argues that academic and institutional interaction is being shaped by a notion of rivalry, wherein only selective ‘strategic alliances’ might be based on a cooperative approach. Within this debate he comments that advocates of such a shift often claim that higher education can either remain ‘traditional’, in preferring cooperation and open knowledge transfer, or become increasingly ‘competitive’ in strengthening income generating international activities, and in gearing activities towards the enhancement of international reputation, according to criteria employed in worldwide ‘rankings’ of universities (p. 15).

Given this backdrop, it is surprising that, whilst ministerial responses to the Bologna and Lisbon Processes have consistently named teaching staff

mobility as an aim, there is very little formal recognition of researcher mobility, and it has been argued that there is a 'relative lack of systematic approaches to international mobility in most European countries' (Wächter, 2010, p. 174). As such, it is fair to say that the current European context is worthy of continued examination.

The case studies used for this chapter have been chosen to represent educational researchers at various stages of their research careers, and our discussion focuses upon forms of academic mobility, factors that influence academic mobility and the impact of academic mobility on individual researchers. Whilst the individuals under study are also engaged in teaching activities, they have been selected as interesting case studies due to their primarily identifying themselves as educational researchers. In addition, participants were selected in order to give a broad geographic sample, recognizing the geographies of knowledge and power described by Fahey and Kenway (2010a).

ACADEMIC MOBILITY: CONCEPTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

An increasing number of commentators have explored the implications of the Bologna and Lisbon strategies across the European Union, analysing the degree to which the aim to create a EHEA and a European Research Area have been fully realized.

At the European Commission level, academic mobility has been identified as essential to the growth of the EHEA (European Commission, 2008), and as producing 'effects' that range from enhancing the quality of programmes to creating excellence in research, and strengthening the academic and cultural internationalization of European Higher Education (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2009, p. 4). Comments of this nature, from a supranational perspective, may indicate an expectation that teaching mobility programmes, such as the European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS), will naturally lead to a collective understanding of the important role of research for the standing of academics, institutions and nations. On the other hand, Huisman, Adelman, Hsieh, Shams, and Wilkins point out that, even though the Lisbon process touches upon elements of teaching and learning, the primary focus is on research, development and innovation 'if only for the fact that many higher education institutions in Europe deal with both teaching and research' (2012).

This policy context requires some analysis of the potentially competing forces of top-down regulation, institutional flexibility and individual initiative if the European Commission's policy discourse really does seek to present a sense of 'European-ness through mobility' (Kenway & Fahey, 2008).

Yet, even in the context of this evolving policy drive, it has been argued for a number of years that national definitions and modes of data collected for European statistics on researchers, including researcher mobility, are so diverse that they can hardly be regarded as trustworthy (Le Mouillour, Lenecke, & Schomburg, 2005). More recently, Teichler (2010) noted that statements on outgoing staff mobility are rather vague, which undermines their credibility, and that, in many national governments and most supra-national organizations, there is a divided administrative responsibility for the higher education system, often viewed as part of the educational system, on the one hand, and as a research system on the other hand (2010, p. 117).

This situation could be said to encourage limited conceptions of academic mobility around physical movement, as even physical mobility is something of a minefield. For example, Wächter asserts that the term staff mobility is ambiguous and often gives only a partial account of the difference between short- and long-term physical mobility (2010, p. 187).

Physical/Geographic Mobility

A significant amount of thinking around physical mobility focuses upon imbalances of power and opportunity, with Welch (2008) arguing that the assumption that mobility is now free of such imbalances contributes to the creation of 'mobility myths'. For example Musselin (2004) examined case studies of inter-European academic mobility in France, Germany and the United Kingdom, arguing that academic mobility may be a haphazard interlude abroad en route to a nationally specific career. Likewise, Ackers (2008) critiqued the mobility of early career, postdoctoral and junior researchers, and conceptualized mobility as coerced movement from job to job, describing this as 'forced mobility'. Interestingly, Fahey and Kenway (2010c, p. 569) contest that European belonging, awareness, citizenship and knowledge is premised on mobility beyond the boundaries of individual European nation states, but that it is nonetheless based on a construction of a bounded Europe.

However, it is important to acknowledge that concerns of this nature are not peculiar to Europe. Teichler (2009, p. 3) also argued that the

globalization agenda tends to assume that borders and national systems get blurred or might even disappear. More recently, we have seen deeper analysis of the impact of physical mobility, with authors such as Cantwell (2011) stressing that globalization renders knowledge and knowledge workers as mobile, but that the rewards of this knowledge are enjoyed by the nation states that capture knowledge generating mobile workers (p. 427). These analyses have enabled important questions to be raised around the effect of serial-superficial networking becoming the dominant form of global engagement, increasingly framing conferences and forums. From this, it has been posited that networking and constantly moving between various global forums can become ‘fetishised mediated interaction and scholarly tourism’ (Fahey & Kenway, 2010b, p. 112), rather than substantial integration with fellow researchers in other places.

Taking this a little further, Kim (2010) differentiates between the mobile ‘academic expert’, the mobile ‘manager academic’ and the transnational ‘academic intellectual’, exploring the benefits to knowledge of the ‘academic intellectual’ as ‘stranger’. Kim highlights the potential of being a stranger, arguing that this ‘enables mobile academics to bring to their new locations a lens that, in turn, enables a political reading of place and its socialities and relations of power’ (2010, p. 584). In a similar vein, Byram and Dervin (2008, p. 1) differentiate between academic mobility and mobile academics, arguing that the two are too often conflated.

Such thinking is further complicated by the multiple forms of what might be termed physical academic mobility, with Teichler (2010) arguing that modes of short-term academic staff mobility seem to be the smoothest element of mobility in higher education. Whether such forms of mobility become fetishised mediated interaction and scholarly tourism is debatable, particularly as it has been said that: ‘income disparities in the European Higher Education Area cause a great strain on mobility’ (Orr, Schnitzer, & Frackmann, 2008, p. 146). Whilst Orr et al. were talking here about student mobility, the same point has been made about staff mobility, with Wächter (2010, p. 3) arguing that there is a strong tendency for individuals around the world to ‘stay where they are as long as the conditions are not too hostile’.

Pertinently, Musselin identifies two obstacles to a European academic labour market, suggesting that all European countries share the first obstacle, comprising the formal, cognitive and structural differences that exist between various national academic labour markets. A second obstacle concerns the way in which academic mobility is instrumentalised by welcoming research centres. As a consequence, she argues that ‘one can

expect international careers to primarily include a few top academics. Most others, and especially young candidates still develop national careers' (2004, p. 72).

Epistemological Communities and Knowledge Mobilization

In relation to educational researchers, [Fahey and Kenway \(2010b, p. 103\)](#) point out that, although it is often unacknowledged, conventional ideas of research in the social sciences and humanities are often implicitly connected in one way or another to the nation state. In addition, they suggest that most researchers like to think of their epistemological communities as beyond the nation state, even though they remark that this may often be more a conceit than a reality. This presages the arguments of others, such as [Vincent-Lancrin \(2010\)](#), who notes that reports on the internationalization of the research function of higher education do not emphasize mobility; rather they concentrate on output measures such as joint publication. Within this context, it is worth acknowledging that modes of transfer of knowledge across borders have been portrayed as having 'altogether a stronger weight than physical mobility of students and scholars' ([Teichler, 2009, p. 2](#)).

Such debates highlight an ever-growing recognition that the nation state has what [Fahey and Kenway \(2010b, p. 104\)](#) describe as 'a porous quality, that its' sovereignty is insecure, and this has significant implications for governance including research governance', indicating knowledge networks and knowledge transfer as an increasingly significant feature of the knowledge economy. As researchers address the big global issues of our times, they begin to challenge narrow visions of the national interest ([Fahey & Kenway, 2010b, p. 107](#)). Indeed, it is increasingly felt that researchers need to see themselves as self-sovereign actors who exercise agency in the mobility process ([Pestre, 2009](#)).

In terms of the approach taken in this study, it is worth mentioning recent arguments that human capital framing, which views the subject as an economic agent, misses:

ways of thinking about subjects as active social and political agents, negotiating, interpreting, contesting their social worlds by mobilizing and materializing the knowledge's through which that social world is constituted. ([Robertson, 2010, p. 644](#))

[Fahey and Kenway \(2010c, p. 563\)](#) also argue that 'earlier paradigms have not sufficiently considered the epistemological, ontological or ethical

issues associated with international academic mobility’, and explore how a biography can add nuance to concepts of academic mobility (2010a, p. 627).

RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to access ontological perspectives, we chose to examine the metaphors used by educational researchers to convey their experiences of academic mobility. Huang and Ariogul describe metaphors as ‘bridges that allow us to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another’ (2006, p. 226); metaphors were requested in this study in order to see how far they encapsulated individual experience.

The method used (individual semi-structured interviews) is consistent with other studies around metaphorical analysis in educational research (Bartlett & Mercer, 2000; Hofer & Pintrich, 2002; Huang & Ariogul, 2006; Jensen, 2006), and each interview began with a request for a metaphor (or metaphors) that represented experiences of academic mobility. The transcribed interviews were analysed for levels of congruence between the espoused ontologies of researchers (gleaned from the metaphor) and particular experiences as articulated.

As a consequence of the differences in career patterns in different types of institution across different countries, past efforts at creating a common classification of scholars’ career stages have faced insurmountable problems (Teichler, 2010, p. 123). For this study, three types of researcher were approached; an early-career researcher (within three years of completing their PhD and beginning to produce published outputs); a mid-career researcher (a postdoctoral researcher who had published at least five academic outputs in their field) and an experienced researcher (a fully matured, independent and influential scholar).

Texts were coded using inductive and deductive techniques to organize transcript data into categories for primary analysis. These categories were further organized into themes, and particular emphasis was given to participants’ case examples, which were used to inform the thematic analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The themes that emerged related to forms of mobility, influencing factors and the impact of academic mobility. These were characterized as:

1. negotiating multilingual and multicultural academic identities
2. betwixt national enculturation and global networking and
3. short-term versus long-term academic mobility.

RESULTS

Negotiating Multilingual and Multicultural Academic Identities

I come from no country, from no city, no tribe.

I am the son of the road, my country is the caravan.

Narratives of the research participants on their long-term international academic mobility experiences demonstrated that the development of multilingual and multicultural academic identities is a complex, hybrid and changing process. In this study, we employ the term *identity* to refer to our sense of who we are, what we want to become and our relationship to the context in which we live. Many aspects of our 'selves' contribute to our understanding of who we are: ethnicity, gender, class, race, sexual orientation and age, among others. Which part becomes a salient feature of our identity depends on the context. In this study, we are concerned with parts of our identities that are related to academic mobility and culture. Thus, by *multilingual and multicultural identity* we refer to where academics position themselves between two (or more) languages and cultures, and how they incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of who they are as academics.

Richard, a senior professor in the United Kingdom, was one of our research participants who indicated that his multilingual and multicultural academic mobility experiences helped him to create an academic identity and a niche for himself that allowed him to have better dialogue with other academics from different cultures and nationalities:

I learned not to have a particular tribe and particular identity, I think, to be able to understand people from other traditions, from other cultures and from other disciplines in their own way, and to recognize how different they are, and to tolerate and value differences. At the same time, I realized that what I wanted to do may be seen differently by them. So working with social psychologists for example in some states, I am very aware of the traditions that they come from: the realist tradition and the essentialist position that many of them take. However, my position is much more relative and my perspective is more social constructionist. To present myself to them in a way that can show my academic difference with their position and show, I hope, my sense of respect with their position. Trying to get them to see me the same way as I try to them without undermining their position helped us better understand each other.

All participants in this study agreed that the notion that identity is not fixed gives rise to the possibility that it can change over time. Even though Richard had stayed in one academic institution for more than 25 years,

particular forms of mobility, that had largely centred around long-term European Commission funded projects, provided him with opportunities to reflect upon his academic and cultural identity. In one of these projects, Richard, as the coordinator and the director of the project, developed a thematic network programme that involved partners from 24 European Union and candidate countries. Richard described how the mobility experience in this network project impacted upon his view of academic identity as follows:

We had a real international experience that we were outside of our comfort zone. We tried very hard to structure things so that each member of any working party or any working group had an equal chance to make a contribution. We always thought how to explain our structure to people from other national cultures which have different cultural values than ours. It was exciting for me to join a meeting with 24 people from different countries to talk about the projects equally and I was the only British person. That was a liberating experience.

When we asked Richard to convey his mobility experience in this network project with a metaphor, rather than offering a typical metaphor, he gave us a quotation from a novel by Amin Maalouf (*Leo the African*). The book is a fictional description of the life of Leo Africanus, an African in the early sixteenth century from Morocco, who was captured by Italian pirates and became a Christian. The book talks about several accounts from the early sixteenth century of what Africa was like for a western audience. Richard gave us the following quotation from Maalouf: 'I come from no country, from no city, no tribe. I am the son of the road, my country is the caravan. All languages and all prayers belong to me'. The first section of this quotation has been selected as a metaphorical illustration for this theme. In order to explain what he meant in using this quotation, Richard stated that:

I think my experience of academic mobility in that context has been to make me challenge my own sense of national identity, and in a sense to realize its insignificance, and to place myself very often in a context where I can find a cultural relation to other countries as part of the broad culture to which I think I belong.

When we asked Richard to give us a case example that demonstrated how he positioned himself among academics from different cultures and languages, in order to negotiate his identity and reconcile his multiple connections with other languages and cultures, he mentioned a dialogic experience with his French colleagues in the thematic network development:

I got personally involved in running a couple of observation and analysis programs for the commission on multiculturalism and teacher education, which involved colleagues

from Iceland, Poland, Greece, UK and France. But French ones were not the members of our network but because of their similar interest we let them in. Then later they became a member of the network as a result of that. That lasted three years. It was different in a sense that it was a smaller group, and it was a much more intense analysis to come together of our different paradigms for understanding what citizenship and multiculturalism meant. And we had great interesting debates about the different cultures and about the differences and trying to understand, for example, the mindset of the French understanding of the citizenship and being a citizen in the Republican tradition that didn't allow differences in gender, ethnicity or social class to be regarded as part of that identity. Whereas, in UK tradition, we saw them very much as part of that. It wasn't a cultural clash but it was an enormous exchange of ideas and learning process for us all.

Overall, Richard predominantly described the impact of his international academic mobility experiences as positive:

For each of the projects I have been involved in would not have been possible without the activity I had been engaged in previously. I could not have conceived starting a network without having the contacts, dialogue, mobility knowledge and understanding. Having done all of that has given me not simply the contacts, very important those are, but insights into the different genres, disciplines, cultures of those countries. I am not saying that differences are enormously important. But differences are significant that one needs to acknowledge them. After having those mobility experiences, I don't think that I am a naïve outsider anymore in those cultures. I think, in a sense that, I have got a fair understanding of the basics of the cultures and basics of the frameworks of policies and processes that people are involved in that country.

On the other hand, Richard mentioned his observation about the hegemony and domination of English language in academic mobility experiences:

So finding those networks, I was particularly fortunate, I suppose, coming from a UK background since the EU's lingua franca is English. It was an embarrassment at first because I was always keen to get things translated, get things with interpreters. My colleagues in other countries said "No no no!!" we want to get our English better. So first couple of years we decided that English is the lingua franca, a common language. Ironically English became more and more dominant. That was an enormous advantage to me. People wanted to use me, using in a gentle sense, as an English speaker talking to them in English and helping them get their English better.

Richard's reflections on his mobility experiences demonstrate that academic identities are multiple, hybrid and changing. Even though academics may be subject to ideologies, prejudgements, language barriers and power relations that constrain the range of identities available to them, it can be seen that within, and sometimes against, these constraints academics can exercise agency in order to choose where and how they position themselves among multiple cultures and languages.

Betwixt National Enculturation and Global Networking

A house with a roof that is too low

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that narratives given by early and mid-career researchers elucidated the challenges of competing national and global identities. From an early-career perspective, Isabel, a postdoctoral researcher from Portugal, gave examples of having developed a national identity predominantly defined by a single institutional context, whilst seeking opportunities for international academic mobility. This was in contrast to the mid-career researcher, portrayed in the third case study, who gave examples of beginning to see beyond the horizon of his institutional and national context. In juxtaposition to the first case study, the unsettling realization of the limitations of a particular institutional and national context was clearly articulated by Isabel; her explanation of the metaphor given, of a house with a roof that is too low, demonstrated a tangible sense of frustration:

Well, in my case when I think of academic mobility I think of two separate situations. I think of mobility in terms of my career within an academic institution and I also think of my life in terms of geographic mobility when I teach in different schools. In my case I teach in schools that belong in the same institution.

I feel that in the institution where I am there is no more room to grow unless I want to pursue a career in school administration. I think I have quickly reached the maximum that the institution allows. In terms of the metaphor, this is because the institution will not build more floors in the house so I have already hit the limit.

Another thing is that I would like to try to go to a different school. If I remain in my country I would like to move to a public school because, unlike the United States, in my country the public schools are still the better ones. I have always worked in the same institution my whole life so I would like to change and see how that affects my career mobility. I have to move on and move out. I have worked for too long in the same place and I think that I have reached my limit there and will not grow unless I move to another institution or another country.

Here, Isabel paints a picture of an ambitious researcher unable to envisage a fulfilling research career in her current institutional and national context. She clarified her frustrated ambitions with a further metaphor, which she used to contextualize the way in which she perceived her situation:

Regarding geographic mobility the metaphor could be 'an escape ahead', when animals have no choice they fly forward in order to survive. We have to accept geographical mobility within our institution because it is a way not to lose our jobs, you know, it's an escape forward.

Isabel defined this experience as ‘bitter-sweet’. Whilst recognizing the value of getting to meet different students and beginning to understand different cultures and alternative ways of looking at life, she lamented being away from home and failing, in her own eyes, to ‘make any academic progress’. Interestingly, when asked for a concrete example of the impact of this perceived constraint, Isabel reflected upon the way in which her own research development had been undervalued:

I postponed, for too long, the completion of my PhD, essentially for two reasons. Firstly, for lack of time, I did my PhD whilst doing almost 400 hours of teaching per year and while I was coordinating the undergraduate course, the internships and a thousand other administrative tasks. Secondly, my school has a rule that prevents us from having a doctoral grant that allows you to continue to work and study at the same time; either we work or we have a scholarship. As scholarships are insufficient to meet our expenses most teachers continue to work and, therefore, do not have time to do a PhD.

Being so close to the completion of her PhD, Isabel, unlike the other case studies explored here, appeared to see the acquisition of her doctorate as a passport to progress. As such, she developed the ‘escape ahead’ metaphor in order to articulate her plans for international mobility, saying that:

For a long time I did not think about opportunities for academic mobility as I did not have my PhD and, at least in my country, you cannot progress in academic terms until you have your doctorate. For this reason I settled for a long time. I think this case is the same as the second metaphor, birds flying forward in order to escape, but the reasons now are a bit different. When I was talking about mobility within my institution I was using that metaphor to mean that I have to do that, I have to keep moving forward and teaching in different schools in my institution to not lose my job. But now I think that the same metaphor applies but the reason is different; I have to move forward to get away from the institution, and even to leave my country if necessary, and find one that is better for me.

When we asked Isabel to identify how she might put these aspirations into practice her lack of confidence was palpable:

I haven’t been involved in any other type of international projects yet, but I think it would be interesting to be part of such a project. I don’t think I will start anything new, you know, a new project, but I might write to someone that already has a project like that. I think I will only be able to make these kinds of contacts if they already belong to a network, even if they are people from different countries, the network has to already exist.

In this sense, Isabel identifies the value of global networking, acknowledging that this wouldn’t necessarily require physical mobility. Indeed, it

is of some interest that she had experienced physical mobility in terms of what Benion and Locke have identified as ‘magnetic flow’ (2010), moving within a single national context. This had clearly motivated her to think about both geographical mobility *and* the value of epistemological communities of knowledge mobilization. She combined these forms of mobility when describing her first forays into short-term international mobility:

Each year I try to attend international conferences that might be a way of creating a form of academic mobility. You know, when you do social networking in those environments, when you go to conferences and start networking, good things happen. That can be something that helps your academic mobility because you get to meet more people, if you want to do research you have more help, if you want to start a new project you can ask people that you meet if they want to participate. You know, for research now, international projects are more valued than smaller national projects alone, so that’s a way that can help your career mobility.

The danger, for researchers like Isabel, keen to develop an international profile, is that, as articulated by Fahey and Kenway (2010b, p. 112), networking and constantly moving between various global forums can become ‘fetishised mediated interaction and scholarly tourism’ rather than substantial integration with fellow researchers in other places. How early-career researchers avoid these semi-superficial experiences may have as much to do with serendipitous experiences as it does with a planned international career, as described in the final case study.

Short-Term versus Long-Term Academic Mobility

It’s like doing two jobs, in this case, it’s actually like doing two shifts because when I wake up in the morning I pretty much deal with all the issues in Finland, and then I go to the host university here and do all the stuff I’m supposed to do here.

Metaphors of this nature demonstrate the challenges of mobility experiences beyond the boundaries of individual European nation states. However, in this case, the developing identity of the researcher goes beyond the competing expectations of two institutions, due to his planning an international career from the outset. Antony, a mid-career senior researcher from Finland described his experiences of both short- and long-term mobility, stressing that he had anticipated the need for both from the start of his academic career. With regard to short-term mobility, Antony reflected

upon the limited, but useful, nature of this form of exchange in enabling the greater goal of long-term mobility explaining that:

It has always been part of my career plan so I was actually surprised that it took more than ten years before I actually left somewhere. I always thought I was too busy back at home but that's not the case. I always considered being a researcher in a university to be a very international occupation so it's always been part of the way that I perceive my work. Finland is a very small country and my field is very narrow there, so there really aren't that many opportunities to progress in my own career.

This motivation was clearly viewed as an aspect of national enculturation, as Antony went on to say that:

In Finland we have a funding model that means that if I spend more than two weeks abroad the university gets money from the Government, and also my own department gets more money from the institution, so we are very much encouraged to go abroad, both as researchers and as teachers.

We asked him for an example of how short-term European mobility had led to a desire to expand his field of vision towards long-term international mobility, and he described his experiences of conference attendance and travel within Europe:

I have mainly travelled in Europe and attended conferences in Europe, but over the past two years I have been in the United States and I was in Australia, so I have learnt much more about Europe as I have learnt what's good there. In terms of, let's say, higher education or life in general it has really opened my eyes much more than it would have if I travelled, let's say, from Finland to the UK, as I have travelled there so many times that it doesn't really bring me any new insights or added value. Going outside Europe has really opened my eyes and I am hoping to get a chance to visit some Asian countries, as well, which should really bring some new insights.

From this, Antony explored the benefits of more sustained international mobility, describing an OECD funded project that involved an international consortium which was led by the Australian Council for Educational Research. His role in the project was as a national project manager funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland:

It seems to me that I learn much more when I am outside Europe than when I am inside Europe. I enjoyed it not only because of the topic that we were investigating but I really learnt what it is to work in an international or multi-cultural community. We were an extremely diverse group of people; we had colleagues from countries such as Korea, Mexico, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Egypt, Norway, the United States, Australia and Colombia, so they were very different when it comes to, for example, how we each would carry out the meetings and how people react in meetings. Participants from countries like Finland or Italy or the United States didn't prepare anything, we just

faced things when we got there, so you really have to know the cultures and how people behave and work internationally.

This experience, funded and supported by his national context, clearly motivated Antony to seek further opportunities for sustained international mobility, evidenced by his dual position at the time of the interview:

I really wanted to find out more about higher education in America which actually I didn't know that much about. This has given me the opportunity to familiarise myself with a topic that I have studied in Europe.

When asked whether his experiences were a result of financial support and national expectations of mobility, Antony acknowledged that these mechanisms had given him the opportunity to enact his career plan. He did, however, contend that as he had always 'considered being a researcher in a university to be a very international occupation', he would have developed an international research career under any conditions.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This, albeit small, sample of case studies from the European context seeks to extend the debate around academic mobility, which, as argued by [Byram and Dervin \(2008, p. 1\)](#), often fails to differentiate between academic mobility and mobile academics. Whilst current literature indeed acknowledges the differences between short- and long-term mobility, a predominant focus upon mobility that requires movement beyond national contexts can obscure the complexities of knowledge mobilization exemplified by the first case study. This is particularly surprising, given that modes of transfer of knowledge across borders have been described as having 'altogether a stronger weight than physical mobility of students and scholars' ([Teichler, 2009, p. 2](#)).

Another facet of academic mobility explored in these case studies relates to the degree to which mobility of any kind is endogenously or exogenously determined ([Lykogianni & Van Den Broeck, 2010](#)). The first case study would appear to convey a mixture of the two, with the prime determinants being endogenously determined, over time, by the growing interests of the researcher. In contrast, the researcher studied in the second case study appears to exhibit endogenous motivation which, thus far, has been thwarted by exogenous forces, some of which relate to economic utility ([Teichler, 2009](#)). In particular, this case illuminates the competing

forces of institutional (*in*)flexibility and individual initiative or motivation (Kenway & Fahey, 2008). Intriguingly, in the third case study, Antony clearly articulates a distinct combination of endogenous and exogenous determinants, both of which he perceived as having a positive impact upon his career.

The more nuanced argument of Fahey and Kenway (2010c, p. 569), that 'European belonging, awareness, citizenship and knowledge is premised on mobility beyond the boundaries of individual European nation states but that it is nonetheless based on a construction of a bounded Europe', is worthy of deeper consideration here. In the second case study, when talking about a desire for knowledge exchange and involvement in international research projects, Isabel appears to conflate international and European mobility, perhaps because her experiences of short-term mobility had predominantly been in a European context. Conversely, Richard and Antony acknowledge the role of European mobility whilst clearly seeing themselves as international 'self-sovereign actors who exercise agency in the mobility process' (Pestre, 2009, p. 244). It is also noteworthy that Antony described national support for, and expectation of, international mobility. Perhaps this experience extends Cantwell's argument that knowledge is 'enjoyed by the nation states that capture knowledge generating mobile workers' (2011, p. 427). In this instance it could be suggested that the main beneficiary of knowledge mobility is the supporting institutional and national home context.

This suggestion aligns with the argument that being a 'stranger' 'enables mobile academics to bring to their new locations a lens that, in turn, enables a political reading of place and its socialities and relations of power' (Kim, 2010, p. 584). That this lens can be turned back on the home context is evidenced in the first and third case studies, enriching the quality of research conducted within the original national context and encouraging both Richard and Antony to refine their research identities.

In conclusion, it could be argued that the examples cited in this study support the view put forward by Fahey and Kenway (2010b, p. 103) that conventional ideas of research in the social sciences and humanities are often implicitly connected in one way or another to the nation state. Yet, when we consider the subtleties of the research identities explored here, it would be equally compelling to argue that research is fundamentally an international occupation. Further examination of this proposition, across a wider range of case studies, may serve to sharpen our understanding of academic mobility and the ways in which mobility can serve to shape academic identities.

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