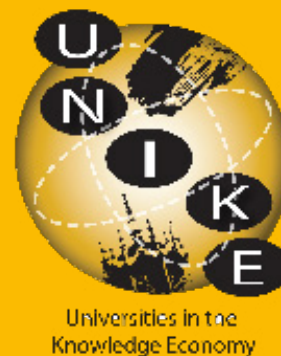UNIKE Notes on Doctoral Education No. 5

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POLICIES AND EXPERIENCES OF MOBILITY IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION

edited by Corina Balaban and Susan Wright

CONTENTS

The UNIKE Notes series can be found at www.unike.au.dk/publications/unikenotes

THE UNIKE PROJECT

The UNIKE project (an initial Training Network funded by EU FP7 – Marie Curie Actions) trains a networked group of critical researchers who are examining the changing roles of universities in the global knowledge economies of Europe and the Asia-Pacific Rim. The UNIKE project aims to generate potential research leaders who are equipped to develop doctoral education in their own institutions and internationally.

Many governments have embraced international agendas for university reform (put forward by the European Union, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Economic Forum, UNESCO and the World Bank) on the understanding that the future lies in the development of an ideas-driven competitive global knowledge economy. By arguing that the two ways to compete successfully in this economy are through transfer of research findings into innovative products and through a higher education system that can attract international trade and produce a highly skilled population, universities are placed at the centre of strategies to prosper in this new economic regime. The European approach to competing in the global knowledge economy is to create a European Research Area (ERA), a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and a Europe of Knowledge. Other kinds of strategies have formed in other world regions. These strategies have to be understood within a geographic shift in emerging centres of power from Europe to the Asia Pacific, and particularly East Asia.

The UNIKE project aims to generate new perspectives on the transformation of an institution central to policy projections of the future.

The project explores these issues through regular workshops, which are designed to cover different aspects of the debate. Each UNIKE workshop has a part dedicated to Aspects of Doctoral Education, covering the following topics:

• History of policy debates about doctoral education
• Secondments: Working for/researching in other organisations
• Academic freedom
• Governance narratives and the figure of the doctoral student
• Mobility and doctoral training
• Partners' own practices of doctoral education

From each of these events, a UNIKE Note on Doctoral Education will be generated. The current Note outlines the presentations and discussions that took place at the second UNIKE workshop, held at the University of Bristol on 24-26 February 2014. The main theme of the workshop was ranking and governance and included lectures, panel discussions and meetings with students to discuss their research proposals.

The main intended audience for this Note is composed of UNIKE fellows, full and associated partners and their networks, and other institutions and individuals who are interested in the subject.

INTRODUCTION

This Note discusses policies and experiences of mobility in doctoral education. It collects contributions from a wide range of perspectives. The issue starts with Pavel Zgaga's policy analysis of EU developments in doctoral education. He traces how mobility became a central idea in EU policies during the last four decades, starting with rationales for European cooperation and cultural understanding and gradually evolving into an economic rationale for mobility. He writes about initiatives like ERASMUS that targeted Bachelor's students and shows how mobility policies later developed into doctoral education. Finally, he explains how the concept of mobility has evolved and expanded from geographical mobility to other forms of mobility like social mobility, interdisciplinary mobility and inter-sectoral mobility.

The next contribution comes from Lisbeth Kristine Walakira who focuses exclusively on mobility in doctoral education. Taking on from Zgaga, she first investigates the policy landscape and maps some of the most influential reports on the mobility of doctoral fellows. In doing this, she concludes that, while a wide range of issues are covered in these reports, there is a noticeable lack of data on the implications of mobility for the professional and personal lives of doctoral fellows. Seeking to address this gap, she conducted a large-scale survey together with Susan Wright and with the help of a group of researchers in UNIKE to explore the mobile lives of young researchers, as experienced by Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctoral fellows. She addresses different kinds of mobility and discusses her results in terms of geographical mobility, intersectoral mobility, interdisciplinary mobility and social mobility.

The third part is written by Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and is based on an ethnographic writing workshop on academic mobility which took place at the UNIKE workshop in Oslo. Her contribution is more personal in style as it delves into themes that are very close to the fellows' personal mobile lives. She explains how the writing workshop unfolded, how it was structured and what it aimed to achieve. The themes that emerged from fellows' writing exercises touch upon very central issues in the field of mobility, such as what it means to travel and relocate, what the implications are for the fellows' lives, and what it means to be the 'foreigner' in an unfamiliar environment.

HOW HAS MOBILITY BECOME CENTRAL TO THE EU'S IDEA OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION?

by Pavel Zgaga, Professor of Education, University of Ljubljana

Mobility is a centuries-old phenomenon in the academic community; however, in recent decades the character and role of this concept have radically changed. The EU and its Member States have been strongly committed to enhancing the mobility of doctoral students. The effect can be seen in a recent survey of 34 European universities, which found that most respondents 'believe[d] that mobility [was] particularly important for the careers of doctoral candidates' (Colucci et al. 2012: 7). Why and how has mobility become central to the EU's idea of doctoral education? The following briefly describes the development of this policy idea over the past four decades.

In the early period of the European integration process, education remained outside the Treaty agenda and was considered an exclusively national responsibility. However, the development of the common market opened up completely new questions, such as the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications or issues related to scientific development (e.g. joint research projects across countries). Between 1970 and 1972, educational cooperation became recognised as a policy sector for which the European Community (EC) could promote action (Corbett 2005). From this time onwards it is possible to follow developments in European educational mobility as an idea, policy and practice.

Student mobility
The story begins with the establishment of a political coordination body in the field of education: the European Community's (EC) Council of Ministers of Education. One of their first achievements in the field of higher education was the creation of joint study programmes between higher education institutions in different member states in the academic year 1976-7. This was ten years before the Erasmus programme was launched. The joint work of the European countries and their higher education institutions required overall coordination; this is how the EC initially gained its responsibilities in the field of education. On the other hand, some new questions arose, which had not previsoulsy been on the agenda: how to create a *common policy on the admission of students* from other countries to higher education institutions (later also *recognition of credits earned*); how to extend national schemes for *studentships and research and teaching fellowships* so as to increase mobility; and how to develop instruments to *eliminate obstacles to mobility* (Council

1976). These issues have remained at the centre of the discussion on mobility until today and have mainly determined the development of the concept and the implementation of educational mobility.

Academic mobility was gradually recognised as one of the most important objectives of EC educational cooperation. The next step in a series of policy developments was the adoption of the *EC Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students – ERASMUS* (Council 1987).* The creation and implementation of the ERASMUS programme was anything but easy. Although there was great enthusiasm about what Europe could achieve with the new scheme, there were also fears that a jump in student mobility from around 1% to 10% not only looked expensive but unfeasible (Corbett 2005). Regardless, ambition won.

The EC adopted the ERASMUS scheme for the mobility of students in the Council Decision of 15 June 1987, a document that reflected the complexity of members' objectives for academic mobility. First, mobility appeared as an intrinsic value with a particular emphasis being put on the academic aspects that would be secured by mobility (cooperation between universities and their intellectual potential). Second, mobility was to enhance the 'European dimension' (the cultural project of creating 'a People's Europe'). Third, there would be intensified cooperation in the economic and social sectors (Council 1987 Art. 2) Although 'competitiveness of the EC in the world market' was not forgotten, economic objectives were not initially listed. In later years, the economic argument became paramount and the aims of fostering collective academic values and cultural understanding diminished.

* The original aims of the ERASMUS programme were very ambitious: to significantly increase inter-university mobility, to intensify cooperation between universities in all Member States, to harness their full intellectual potential and thereby improve the quality of education and secure the competitiveness of the Community in the world market, to strengthen the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of People's Europe and to ensure the development of a pool of graduates with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation (Council 1987 Art. 2).

ERASMUS was not only a radical shift in the promotion of European educational cooperation; it also meant the beginning of the 'mature period' of European academic mobility. The emphasis shifted from 'foreign students' to 'study abroad', or in other words, from an individual to a systemic level: mobility was confirmed as part of a strategy to improve the quality of higher education and in that way it became an instrument of educational policy (Baron 1993). The European Commission (EC) initially had quite limited responsibilities and powers in the field of education and the focus on mobility was one way in which the EC succeeded in increasing its power in the educational sector. Further significant strengthening occurred as European integration progressed. In particular, in the *Maastricht Treaty* it was agreed that 'the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action' (Treaty 1992 Art. 126). This article clarified many of the dilemmas developed and discussed within the EC over the previous two decades and gave political legitimacy to the bodies of the EC to operate in the field of education.

This shift enabled the EU (the EC was renamed the EU by the Maastricht Treaty) to make a further strategic step in higher education policy, represented by the *Memorandum on Higher Education and the EC* (Commission 1991). It stressed that 'European involvement, including mobility, will be at its highest among people with advanced educational levels and the functioning of the Internal Market will require significant numbers of people who would have these extra European dimensions' (para. 19). The Memorandum placed strong emphasis on the link between higher education and research and on the role of postgraduate studies (par. 25, 26) – an emphasis that cannot be found in older documents. Further on, it promoted the 'external dimension', i.e. the growing world role of the EC in the field of higher education (par. 149). While emphasis on 'studying abroad' (i.e. at other EC countries) remained high on the agenda, 'foreign students' as well as 'foreign researchers' from throughout the world had now entered the game.

Although the Maastricht Treaty gave the European bodies their first – although limited – jurisdiction in the field of education, during the 1990s some tensions between the 'national' and 'European' levels of decision-making became evident. Most noticeably, the Bologna Process was launched as an inter-ministerial cooperation, not an EC initiative, and the EC only attended the Bologna Conference in 1999 as an observer. It was only at the first follow-up conference in 2001 that the EC became involved as a full member. The highly complex issues of the Bologna Process will not be delved into here; the focus is on the question of how the issue of mobility and doctoral studies was addressed.

Mobility and the doctorate

Although the notion of *mobility* had been at the forefront of EC/EU discussions from the beginning, the notion of mobility during the *doctorate* only entered the policy documents later. Among the six 'action lines' agreed in Bologna in 1999, three of them addressed mobility directly: [3] the system of credits as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility; [4] the promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement and [6] the promotion of the 'European dimensions in higher education', e.g. curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research (Bologna Process 1999).

These action lines have been the central focus of all subsequent conferences of the Bologna Process. Considerable developments have been achieved, and 'tools' and 'instruments' (e.g. a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications) have been developed. It has been reconfirmed again and again that the mobility of students and academics as well as of administrative staff forms the basis for establishing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Before the emergence of the Bologna Process, and during its early stages, the policy emphasis had mainly avoided the specifics of doctoral studies. A big change occurred at the Bologna Process' Berlin Conference (2003). Ministers considered it necessary to go beyond the focus on the two main cycles (bachelor and master) to *include the doctoral level as the third cycle* in the Bologna Process. They called for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encouraged universities to increase their co-operation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers (Bologna Process 2003). This change was influenced by several factors, but the key role was probably played by the European Commission's initiative to build the *European Research Area – ERA* (Commission 2000). The Berlin Conference firmly linked the ideas of the EHEA and the ERA together. This combination was crucial to further promote European cooperation – and mobility – in the field of doctoral studies.

The Bologna Process follow-up seminar on 'the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process' (Bologna Process 2005; Zgaga 2014) was especially important: an agreement was reached on 'ten basic principles' (the Salzburg Principles) that should underpin further consideration of the key role of doctoral programmes and research training in the EHEA. This was the first document within the Bologna Process that explicitly linked the topics of mobility and doctoral studies: 'Doctoral programmes should provide mobility experience to doctoral candidates' (principle 9). These principles have been repeatedly

reconfirmed in the subsequent Bologna Process conferences and extensively implemented. Importantly, this trend has been supported by the activities of the EU.

While the initial EC/EU push towards enhancing the mobility of students and staff through ERASMUS (since 2014 *Erasmus Plus*) was restricted to EU and EU associated countries, in 2003, the *Erasmus Mundus* programme was launched to connect to 'non-Europeans' and meet the challenge of globalisation. This opened up ample room for promoting mobility in doctoral studies. In addition to the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus, which were EU *higher education programmes*, the EU *framework programmes for research* have been particularly relevant to mobility in doctoral studies. These programmes have a history that also dates back to the 1990s: the *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions* programme for example, has been available since 1996 and has provided financial support to young researchers wanting to expand their horizons through a period of work in another European country. More recent decisions, e.g. *Horizon 2020* (Council 2013), have importantly strengthened this policy trend.

The expanded concept of mobility
Throughout the last decades, the impact of European policies on higher education and on research has made mobility – in its various forms – central to doctoral studies. However, this was not an easy process. When looking at mobility from the perspective of policy developments, we cannot avoid the impression that there has been a 'saga of obstacles to mobility'. Over the years, the 'obstacles' have only expanded: mobility can no longer be understood only as physical mobility and obstacles are no longer only physical or geographical. Among subsequently found problems, the social dimension of mobility in the broadest sense emerged as a particularly important one in the last decade (e.g. students with special needs, students with children, social background of students, unidirectional mobility among different disciplines and in particular from 'peripheries' to 'centres'). In other words, the concept of mobility has gradually expanded from narrowly conceived geographic mobility to social mobility (across social class or between lower and higher ranked universities), interdisciplinary mobility (where doctoral candidates work with researchers from another discipline) and intersectoral mobility (between universities and industry, policy making, and non-governmental organisations).

According to a recent survey,

it appears that geographic mobility in Europe from peripheral to Northern European economies is largely unidi¬rectional. A lack of adequately funded doctorate and post-doctorate opportunities in peripheral countries/Southern Europe risks undermining development and driving further asymmetries. Policies that monitor and support more balanced regional inflows/retention of doctorate holders need to be explored at national and European level. (ESF 2015: 35)

On the other hand, mobility within and across disciplines can be quite irregular and there is a feeling that some areas are neglected. Dissatisfaction has been noticed with regard to the possibilities offered by the Horizon 2020 programme, in particular among researchers in the social sciences and humanities. There is no doubt that there is still a lot of work to do in this field.

UNIKE STUDY OF MOBILITY EXPERIENCES AMONG DOCTORAL FELLOWS

by Lisbeth Kristine Walakira, UNIKE Research Assistant, Aarhus University

REPORTS ON MOBILITY OF DOCTORAL FELLOWS

The first part of this piece looks at four influential surveys that have investigated mobility among doctorate fellows and maps their key findings. The rationale for this review was to identify key issues on the topic of mobility among early career researchers as well as identify gaps in understanding.

The second part of the piece includes the main findings from a study, which a team of researchers in UNIKE conducted about doctoral fellows' own experiences of mobility as a part of their doctoral education.

1. Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice (EUA 2012)

The European University Association (EUA 2012) published the report *Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice* as an outcome of the project MAUNIMO (Mapping University Mobility of Staff and Students). The report was a response to the intensification of European-level policies, programmes and targets concerned with academic mobility. These had led universities to experience increased policy pressure to internationalise, which meant that they had to manage increased mobility among their students and staff. The report discussed what mobility meant to universities in Europe from a strategic point of view, and how mobility was managed. It investigated the impacts of policy pressures on the mobility strategies devised by European universities.

The MAUNIMO project developed an institutional self-assessment tool – the so-called Mobility Mapping Tool (MMT) – designed to be used across European universities and to shed light on different types of mobility; these included short-term student mobility, academic and administrative staff mobility and researcher mobility. The tool aimed to enable universities to compare opinions on mobility among their students and staff and thereby generate information for strategic decision-making. The report mainly considered geographical mobility of Bachelor's, Master's students, PhD fellows, as well as academic and administrative staff.

Some of the key findings were:
- While acknowledging the potential social and cultural benefits of mobility for all members of their institution, most MMT respondents believed that mobility was particularly important for the careers of doctoral candidates.
- Actions at faculty and departmental level tended to focus on the mobility of Bachelor's and Master's students. The mobility of doctoral candidates was also of considerable strategic interest but this was often managed by separate structures within the institution. Mobility at Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels was not well coordinated.
- MMT respondents reported that the mobility of administrative staff at their institution was not as highly prioritised as that of other potentially mobile groups (ibid.: 7).

2. Career Tracking of Doctorate Holders (ESF 2015)

The European Science Foundation (ESF) published a report based on a questionaire about doctorate holders' mobility patterns in Europe and beyond. The report was entitled *Career Tracking of Doctorate Holders* (ESF 2015) and one of its aims was to design a joint methodology and collaborative approach to career tracking and produce an online post-doctoral career progression and outcome instrument, which could provide data for monitoring, evaluation, and policy planning purposes. The report included geographical and sectoral mobility, and it explored mobility from a variety of perspectives: 'physical/geographical', 'virtual', and 'intersectoral mobility'. The questionnaire touched upon a range of topics, from demographics, virtual, physical, sectoral and occupational mobility, research outcomes, roles and responsibilities, competence development, and skills utilisation.

That data was complemented by focus group interviews. One of the survey's key findings was that there was a significant difference in performance and satisfaction levels between doctoral holders who were employed on permanent contracts and those working on temporary contracts. It concluded that doctoral holders who had permanent contracts were more productive and were also significantly more satisfied with their scientific environment and workplace. In contrast, employment uncertainty throughout a succession of post-doctoral appointments made research careers less attractive (ibid.: 5).

3. Careers of Doctoral Holders: Analysis of Labour Market and Mobility Indicators (OECD 2013)

Auriol, Misu and Freeman published a paper called 'Careers of Doctorate Holders: Analysis of Labour Market and Mobility Indicators' as a part of the *OECD Science, Technology and Industry Working Papers* (2013) and as a joint project between the OECD, UNESCO's Institute for Statistics and Eurostat (see www.oecd.org\sti\cdh). The paper relied on large-scale surveys based on data sources at national levels in 25 countries with the aim of better understanding the global labour market, career paths, and mobility of doctorate holders. The surveys focused on the careers of doctorate holders in a much more comprehensive way, with mobility featuring as only one of several topics. The surveys investigated different aspects of mobility such as 'job-to-job mobility', 'intra-sectoral mobility', and 'international mobility' (geographical mobility between countries). It also considered aspects of social mobility (although the term 'social mobility' was not actually used) by examining the growth of the doctoral population in relation to gender as well as figures of highly educated migrants (foreign-born population) associated with policies aimed at attracting the best talents.

Some of the key findings of the paper are summarised below:

- The past decade has witnessed a steady increase in the number of doctoral degrees being awarded across the OECD, rising by 38% from 154,000 new doctoral graduates in 2000 to 213,000 in 2009.
- Although female and younger doctorate holders do relatively worse in terms of employment rates than their older and male counterparts, women doctorate holders did not fare so badly as women with lower levels of educational attainment.
- Natural scientists and engineers are more likely to engage in research following the completion of their doctorate compared to social scientists who tend to find more opportunities in non-research-related occupations.
- Job mobility patterns, explained in the report as doctoral holders' changing jobs, including job position and the origin and destination sector, differ markedly across countries but mobility is more frequent among doctorate holders working in non-research-related sectors. Knowledge transfer between university and industry is of particular interest for policy makers, especially through the mobility of doctorate holders from the higher education sector to enterprises. However, such mobility remains moderate. In most countries mobility is more prominent the other way around: from the business sector to higher education.
- International mobility [geographical mobility] is a widespread and increasingly important phenomenon. (ibid.: 6).

4. Eurodoc Survey 1: The First Eurodoc Survey on Doctoral Candidates in Twelve European Countries (EURODOC 2011)

The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC) conducted a survey in 2008-2011 and published the report as *Eurodoc Survey 1: The First Eurodoc Survey on Doctoral Candidates in Twelve European Countries* (EURODOC 2011). This is a large-scale, quantitative study of doctoral candidates' experiences of their training and careers. Aiming to address the lack of comparable data about the situation of European doctoral candidates, the goal of the survey was to provide a comprehensive analysis that could inform policy-making at European level.

The study set out to answer two main questions: a) What is the real situation concerning present employment, social benefits and working conditions of doctoral candidates and junior researchers? and b) What are the differences regarding models of doctoral education across Europe? The topics included questions about qualification requirements, career paths, funding schemes, models of training and supervision, working conditions, expected and achieved results of scientific work, as well as mobility. In relation to mobility, the survey presented data concerning doctoral candidates and junior researchers' interest in mobility, either concerning their current situation, their future situation, their future plans or expectations, as well as their previous mobility experiences. The aim was to provide data on respondents' reasons or motivations for going abroad, to identify the most common types of mobility, any perceived barriers to mobility, sources of funding, and the ways in which those who are mobile stayed in contact with their home countries. The report mainly concentrated on physical/geographic mobility.

A STUDY OF DOCTORAL FELLOWS' PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF MOBILITY

The four reports mentioned in the review above shed light on mobility experiences among doctorate fellows from different perspectives; they develop tools for assessing the extent of mobility in higher education for management and strategic decision-making purposes, and they also track doctoral fellows' mobility patterns beyond their doctoral training. While these reports covered a wide range of issues related to mobility, none of them discussed the professional and personal implications of living a mobile academic life. In order to address this gap, and given the increase in EU policies promoting mobility in doctoral education, the UNIKE project established a group of researchers who explored doctoral fellows' actual lived experiences of mobility.

UNIKE's 'mobility group' devised a questionnaire and distributed it to former and current Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctoral fellows. This survey population was identified because these doctoral fellows were required to engage in various types of mobility throughout their PhD. Due to contractual rules designed by the European Commission (the funding agency behind the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), the doctoral fellows could not have resided in the country of their host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment. As a result, all doctoral fellows moved to another country in order to take up their fellowship.

The questionnaire yielded 3,410 responses and this data was complemented by qualitative material from 12 interviews with respondents who had given interesting answers on one or other aspect of mobility. The results of the research were published as a UNIKE working paper *The mobile academic. A survey of mobility among Marie Curie Doctoral fellows* (Walakira & Wright 2017) and organised around the EU's four types of mobility:

1. Geographical mobility (physically movement between countries)
2. Intersectoral mobility (between universities and industry, policy making, and non-governmental organisations)
3. Interdisciplinary mobility (where doctoral candidates work with researchers from other disciplines)
4. Social mobility (across social class or between lower and higher ranked universities).

The report concluded that, overall, the doctoral fellows enjoyed many benefits from geographical, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility, most significantly from work experience outside academia, international work experience and international networks. However, the fellows also acknowledged the downsides of mobility. For instance, one doctoral fellow explained that extensive periods of geographical movement meant that 'You compromise many things', referring to a lack of contact with family and friends in her home country. Many doctoral fellows felt that they compromised their personal relations with close family and friends by being mobile. Other challenges related to settling in the host country, learning a new language, and being enrolled in universities that were ill prepared to host international doctoral fellows.

The majority of participants in this survey stated that the benefits of mobility by far outweighed the challenges or disadvantages, both in terms of geographical, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary mobility; more specifically, 86% stated that, overall, the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. The fellows who participated in interviews considered themselves privileged to be having

a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship and overall thought the challenges of the diverse forms of mobility benefitted their doctoral education, despite the personal and professional difficulties incurred. In fact, 71% of doctoral fellows stated that the overall quality of their scientific contribution had improved as a result of their mobility experiences.

Several doctoral fellows interviewed in this survey found it challenging to complete the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship within the normative time (three years and four years for industrial PhDs). This point was also supported by statistical data, which showed that of those who had finished their Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctoral fellowship, only 39% had done so within the normative time set for the fellowship.

Geographical mobility
For fellows who were not EU citizens or who had a partner from a non-EU country, the requirements for visa and residence permits were often a great challenge. The fact that many had continuously to apply for visas and residence permits in order to participate in conferences, training workshops and secondments and to explore possibilities for future employment made their experience as doctoral fellows more challenging. To many, the procedures of acquiring visas and residence permits added considerable insecurity to their lives and delayed their research projects. They typically faced obstacles as to whether they were permitted to stay or work in their host country; whether they could live together with their partner and/or family; and whether they were able to meet the national requirements for a residence permit at the end of their doctorate. This put them in a more vulnerable situation when trying to enter a job market dominated by temporary and short-term contracts. Visa requirements for some doctoral fellows even prevented them from participating in events and activities planned as part of their doctoral programme.

In addition, some fellows fell into different visa/resident categories in different European countries. A fellow could be classified as a 'student' in the country of their host institution and an 'employee' of the secondment institution by the immigration system of a second host country. This meant that they had to meet different requirements in different countries to obtain a residence or work permit needed for their secondment or research stay. This was time consuming and problematic.

Generally, the fellows who were in their mid-twenties and/or single were more likely to become mobile that their older counterparts, and faced fewer challenges as a result of having fewer family commitments. Doctoral fellows who were married or lived together with a partner had a harder time reconcil-

ing job opportunities and family life. Some fellows worked in one country and their family was in another; others had been joined by their spouse or partner, but then could not find them employment. The results of the questionnaire indicated that fellows mainly thought of mobility as taking place relatively early in their career. This, however, is not reflected in current policy trends, which promote mobility at all stages throughout one's academic career.

Intersectoral mobility

Eighty-five percent of the fellows who had experienced intersectoral mobility, for example by combining research in a university with work in a private industry, reported that they perceived no negative aspects of their intersectoral collaborations. Doctoral fellows especially reported that they benefitted from work experience outside academia, gaining specific scientific and technical qualifications and skills, new and broader views on their research field, increased networking and experience with research in practice.

For the 15% that reported having negative issues with their intersectoral mobility, these were often in relation to their secondment periods as a part of their doctoral training, when, for example, the secondment entailed little relevance or alignment with their PhD project or academic career. Bureaucratic challenges and time-consuming processes of resettling in a new place such as administrative issues and getting access to labs were also common issues.
Some found that the communication between their host university and the secondment organisation was poor or that the secondment period was not well-coordinated. Many fellows experienced that their secondment institution was not prepared to host them as they were not able to engage them in relevant research tasks, and some even stated that their secondment period was not prioritised by their host university/supervisor and was treated as a waste of time or that they experienced that the secondment institution was using them as manpower or free labour.

Interdisciplinary mobility

Ninety-two percent of the fellows who had engaged in interdisciplinary collaborations answered that their experience had been entirely positive. Among the positive gains, doctoral fellows reported that they benefited from broader perspectives and a more complete and strengthened knowledge about their research. On a positive note, many fellows thought that interdisciplinary mobility gave them access to technologies, expertise and new knowledge from other disciplines. A larger scientific network, new data, joint publications, and understanding different approaches to their research field were also among some of the most popular gains.

Of the 8% who had had negative experiences with their interdisciplinary mobility these often concerned researchers from different disciplines using different academic languages or the gap between the disciplines or expertise being too great. This was experienced by many as a time-consuming process, as establishing fruitful collaborations took time away from their research process. Many also answered that experiencing interdisciplinary mobility made little or no contribution to their research.

Social mobility

In terms of social mobility, the questionnaire clearly indicated that most doctoral fellows were the first in their families to enrol in a doctorate. Only 4% of doctoral fellows' mothers had an education at PhD level and only 8% of the fathers. This meant that more than 90% of the PhD fellows were pursuing a higher level of education than their parents. However many fellows came from families where their parents were relatively well-educated. In fact, 68% of mothers and 75% of fathers had a professional qualification and 45% of mothers and 47% of fathers had either a Bachelor's or a Master's degree.

These results could indicate some social mobility; however, doctoral education has also been 'massified' and has changed significantly during recent decades. While doctoral education previously trained candidates for careers in academia, doctoral education today is increasingly aiming at preparing candidates for employment in sectors other than academia. Furthermore, the number of fellows enrolled in a doctoral programme in Europe has significantly increased in recent decades, resulting in a much higher proportion of the population acquiring a doctoral degree today.

The research showed a clear pattern of mobility with fellows moving from Central and Eastern European countries to Central and Western European countries, and especially to countries whose education is ranked highly. The majority of the fellows came from Italy (18%), Spain (8%), Germany (7%) and India (7%) and they moved to countries like the United Kingdom (18%), Germany (16%) and France (9%) to take up their fellowships. Not many fellows moved to Eastern Europe to pursue their doctoral degrees. A risk of brain drain was identified as a result of this imbalanced mobility pattern, where most privileged countries were able to attract the best talents from less privileged countries, but not vice-versa, unless the graduates return to their home country or country of origin with enhanced education.

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING WORKING WORK-SHOP ON ACADEMIC MOBILITY

UNIKE writing workshop at Oslo University, 1 December
Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Introduction

EU-funded doctoral programmes demand academic mobility and during the first two years of the UNIKE project, the entire project team had experienced a very high level of mobility. The UNIKEs PhD fellows and partners were invited to participate in a workshop where they would have an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of mobility and at the same time develop their skills in ethnographic writing. As described on the UNIKE website (mid 2015):

In this one-day workshop we will work through and analyse our personal experiences of mobility in the knowledge economy. The EU guidelines for multinational projects demand a research design that is based on constant periods of short term or long term mobility of the academics involved. Mobility is thus depicted as part of a normal academic life; it is not a choice but an inbuilt part of our careers. How then do we live with such mobility and how does mobility affect our research, our data and our findings? How also, does it shape our perspectives on what it means to be a knowledge worker?

This workshop will utilise ethnographic writing as an exercise to reflect on the above questions. Ethnographic writing draws on our observations, data and, most importantly, our personal analyses of the research process. Spending time in the company of fellow writers and fellow mobile academics, writing and sharing academic narratives of migration and mobility will give us an analytical and theoretical insight on what is happening to us and how policies of academic mobility shape us as scholars…Together we will produce a body of text that will engage with personal narratives of mobility; this will not simply serve as a tool to understand the everyday of your mobility; it will create an analytical platform to engage with the powerful and evocative ideology that mobility is at the heart of what we need to be doing.

The writing exercises used in this workshop were inspired by the workshop convenor's (my) participation in one of Kirin Narayan's (2012) ethnographic writing workshops, and she encouraged me to design this one reflecting on academic mobility. The aim was to create a space for personal reflection on mobility rather than to analyse EU mobility policies or serve as a career planning exercise. Two very similar workshops were also held in New Zealand universities in 2014 and 2015, from which I also draw in this account. The content created in these workshops had an auto-ethnographic fabric and allowed for an experience-centred analysis of an emotionally grounded body of writing.

The UNIKE workshop was based on individual writing exercises that were done in a group setting, with prompts followed by short bouts of writing. These writings were then shared with the group offering intensive listening, comments, questions and support. The workshop convenor (myself) was the chair and note taker. Two weeks before the workshop, participants were given the task of writing an ethnographic vignette capturing a brief scene that gave insight into their experiences of mobility. They circulated these to all the other members of the group for prior-reading. Using a sample of possible writing exercises derived from the content of these vignettes, the chair chose writing tasks that best supported the flow of thought developed during the day; this also created a safe space for voicing challenging experiences without creating a feeling of inadequacy or intimidation.

A day of (ethnographic) writing

For the first writing exercise, the ethnographic vignette that was written and read by all participants before the start of the workshop, I gave the fellows the following instructions:

Looking back over your life as a mobile academic so far, chose a situation, a discussion or a reaction you had that is closely linked to your experience of professional mobility. For example, this might be administrative confusion, an incident of culture clash, or a clash between the official expectation of mobility and the reality of doing mobility. This can be an interview, a conflict or a personal problem or revelation. Select a scene that, when you experienced it, lasted for about three to five minutes. Take care to 'paint' the scene for us — try and give a colourful impression of people, sounds, location, pace of interactions, and your presence in this scene. Describe and think back about your emotions and other sensual impressions that are characteristic for that moment. Don't tell us what the theoretical issue might be; concentrate on the narrative rather than analysis (Writing exercise November 2015).

By asking the fellows to choose a three to four minute scene that would serve as a deep insight into their experience of academic mobility, the aim was to concentrate on describing an encounter or sudden revelation - the setting of the scene, any actors involved, emotions, (internal) dialogue and auto-ethnographic reflections - and to refrain from analysis or theorising the experience. Although most participants were not anthropologists and hence might have never tried to write ethnographies or personal vignettes, most of the writing submitted was beautiful, at times haunting, deeply insightful, touching and revealing. It was revealing in the sense that it opened insights into the lived experiences of academic mobility and provided rich ideas on how to structure the workshop.

The writing exercises set for the day were chosen to encourage different styles of reflection as well as different genres of self-focussed knowledge production. Participants were asked to write a short piece from what they imagined to be the perspective of one person who accompanied them in their mobility experience: 'I am Monica, Brigitte's eldest sister. May I introduce Brigitte to you....' The participants chose partners, children, colleagues, a parent and also pets to shed light on their mostly private experiences of mobility. This exercise invited the participants to share emotions of guilt, joy, admitted absences, constant travel and goodbyes; it brought into the foreground the search for gifts to bring home, promises made and broken to spend more time at home, pride of being cherished, admired, and supported, as well as laughter about challenges overcome together. For most participants, it was the constant absence that was emphasised; the questions asked and answered in these texts were around 'when (are you going and when will you be back)?', often coupled with 'why', and not so often 'where'. The stories written were also slightly gendered in that female academics more often chose to write about the troubles of love and being loved and missed, as well as the feelings of being responsible for the emotional ramifications of mobility. Men were more inclined to write about relationships in ways that mirrored negotiated absences, agreed and accepted arrangements, and stories about people who accepted their mobility.

Another exercise consisted of taking three minutes to write down, as fast as possible and without too much thinking, 'a list of words that you associate with being a mobile academic: write for two minutes, then take one minute to mark out your top five words'. Everybody then, proceeded to read out their top five terms. We ended up with 66 items that could be grouped in the following categories:

- A sense of curiosity: taking photos, writing about a city, search and locate, excited disorientation, food, observing and getting lost
- Staying in touch: farewell, catching up, emails, i-phone, social media, phone calls, the mobile office, whats-app, power adapter, wife/spouse, buying gifts, skype

- Emotional work around mobility: catastrophising, apologising, missing, confusion, brain tiredness, values, explaining, deciphering
- Organising mobility: planning, packing, boarding pass, moving, applying, passport, visa, weather forecast, diarising, checking-in online
- Analytical terms: physical mobility, social mobility, identity, values; language (problems), temporality

A further exercise was to write about a scene where one had the definitive feeling of being THE Stranger; describing and recounting an episode where you were made to feel like that, or that produced that feeling or ended up with your being labelled as the outsider. In the case of the UNIKE workshop, this writing was inspired by a fellow and also a senior project member who had interrogated such a situation in their vignettes. The first piece of writing described here delves into a personal perspective of detecting the other, '"Ah, um nome estrangeiro". I zone out. All the sounds seem to weave into each other. I am perplexed: Me, a stranger? No, you are mistaken, you are the weird ones, you so abundantly present in this room, you are the weird ones'. Another vignette that inspired the writing exercise on being the stranger pointed to the unceasing nature of being othered, 'the haunting instances … when thoroughly nice people in the university, at the doctor's, in our walking group, exhibit both welcome and exclusion in alternate breaths'.

Writing about this topic and subsequently reading the pieces out loud to the group was a very emotional exercise. Laughter, tears and moved silences led to a discussion of the darker side of mobility. Stories about racism and xenophobia emerged very clearly in accounts coming from fellows who were not from an EU member state and did not look 'European': instances of border control and humiliation, of being labelled and dismissed. 'Welcome and get out' as one fellow put it, were part of what defined their UNIKE experience. Most other stories coming out of this writing exercise were told around culture clash and language problems; stories about failing to read a situation, 'subtle hints not taken', about the 'departmental lunch as a lonely lunch for foreigners', about 'Julefrokost' (Christmas lunch) being for Danes, about 'matter out of place'. Stories about language problems discussed both English competencies as well as mastering the local language on campus. Notions of feeling un-intelligent because of language, of being silenced, of 'I couldn't be funny', 'I did not know how to small talk in English'; about fake smiles and painful learnings. A few participants, however, described 'being the stranger' as a hugely rewarding experience, as an entry into a new and exciting world and possible careers.

Much more positive and light-hearted was an exercise to describe a place of comfort, a space 'I really like and that is defined by my mobility'; this writing exercise was used as an anchoring activity to lighten up the group atmosphere and to encourage a focus on the positive sides of mobility. It was inspired by one of the vignettes that had 'scened' arriving at Copenhagen Airport as 'I was back where I belonged. I would stop moving around for

a while and stay put in Copenhagen. … [it] had become home – at least until the next big move'. This was indeed an uplifting writing exercise as participants were encouraged and even empowered to reflect on positive and individual activities of place making. They wrote about places where they felt secure, often work spaces full of light, offering positive sensory experiences, places of rest, peace, creativity and concentration and communal spaces of collective recharging of energy. Examples for these were a familiar and beloved library floor, one's own bookshelves/study, a place by a library window ('my favourite hidden spot'), city noises ('I am a cosmopolitan girl'), the sun filled office ('This office is my living room on top of the world'), outdoor spaces and being in nature, the departmental kitchen as well as the kitchen in a shared living space. Recurring themes were around Scandinavian departmental settings with their communal eating spaces, with their complimentary fruit bowls and the constant humming of the coffee percolator.

For the purpose of planning and writing this report, the richest source of analysis on academic mobilities was the vignettes that were submitted before the workshops. In these stories, the scenes narrated offered a rich repository of insights into understanding what it means and what it feels like to be a mobile academic, especially in a project like UNIKE – a project whose design was based on an EU framework that required and encouraged mobility. Airports and travel-associated stress played a significant role, especially when one held a non-EU passport, or had the 'wrong' skin colour, or did not know the local language. The theme of not belonging was extensively discussed, alongside 'language' narratives. In contrast, in New Zealand and Australia, international projects and the mobility experiences that they encourage rely on English language proficiency, but in the workshops held there the dominance of English, its underlying hegemony and the colonialism of western thought were all questioned.

'Where are you from?'
Leading themes for further discussion
Some preliminary thoughts emerging from some of the vignettes and their analytical potential will be discussed here as concluding remarks. Most vignettes jumped into a scene of disjuncture, or sudden realisation; they told a story of adjustment, of cultural learning, personal re-positioning and critical analysis of mobility from a personal point of departure. Some, however, started with dreaming and daring to plan or applying for a job or scholarship that would then lead them into their mobility experience. '*The project, its spark, offered that nourishment, and from that – from the hard wooden floor of our Hong Kong apartment – began to emerge, withdrawing from the back of my mind, relinquishing its dormancy, the very beginnings of this present reality'*. Participants wrote of luck, of coincidence, of last minute decisions, sometimes even of rushing into the move; '*my first real experience of longer academic mobility was based solely on my guts'*. But for most colleagues the vignettes mirrored their immediate past and therefore described one or

more aspects of being mobile, as well as what there was to be learnt and gained from being mobile.

The topic of belonging and shifting belonging was important for all the mobile fellows, but it was especially important for the UNIKE project. Belonging to a project as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow meant a transient, liminal and still very real social and scholarly attachment. In one vignette a fellow associated with the UNIKE project, but funded by another source, described that although at conferences she was drawn towards her UNIKE colleagues, she felt that she really belonged to the university campus that hosted her PhD scholarship and offered her a secure place, income and ongoing comradeship. By contrast, she described the 'real' UNIKE fellows as behaving like visitors on their resident campus because of their constant mobility: '*just as my colleagues, I am more familiar with the EU programme partners from other countries than the people working on the other side of the building where I am based'*. Such contradictions and shifts in emotional attachment or detachment seem to be a constant experience Indeed, from observing the UNIKE group over time, I would certainly say that deep and lasting friendships, a kind of academic kin group seemed to have emerged that carried the fellows through their good and bad stretches whether they had to reside on their host campus or travel for conferences and fieldwork.

A constant theme in the writing was also the negotiation of cultural difference and of remaining conscious of one's positionality. White privilege was touched upon at times, but more importantly, fellows from non-European and non-settler societies reflected on their place-making and contested the rules of their receiving country. Why is it, one fellow asked, her 'expat hormone' rising, that '*they never questioned … why their academic expectations are the only standards against which our performance must be measured. How much do they know about our academic traditions? We were perceived by what we lacked instead of what we were able to contribute'*. This reflection points to the reality that academic mobility means personal change and it also often means the emergence of a dual personality: bi-multi-lingual, bi-multi-cultural. Mobility then, asks for constant adjustment of these personalities; one is another in the new and old culture and on campus. One fellow aptly wrote her story as the story of a woman with an Asian and an English name. Carrying and using the English name made her feel more like an individual, and an outgoing person 'with a mindset that is more or less western'. When using her real name, '*her identity is always anchored within collective identities … That probably means more compliance … but it also means more support and connections, which are the sources for security, happiness and value'*. Living with a permanent dual identity seemed to lead towards a less securely anchored personality, although not necessarily to a less connected life. It certainly required ongoing identity work and a toolkit for shifting and refining two or more personalities as one.

This nicely led to the paramount topic of *being* in English and on getting by in English. In the UNIKE workshop only two of the participants had English as their first language and only one did not have to grapple with another language other than English during their period of mobility. All participants in the three workshops spoke and wrote about language. They worried about their accents and dialects, and much more pressing problems and concerns such as aiming for a very high standard of academic English in challenging everyday settings. '*I looked at the university website, encountered the word whanau for the first time and wondered how much of an obstacle my lack of familiarity with Te Reo Māori would be*'. The topic of deciding whether to get by in English or by learning the local language of the country that they were in was an unsettling issue for many; this problem remained unsolved, half done, shelved for later consideration. The nature of time limited contracts, of 'being home in this town until the next big move' led to a bracketing of adjustment and language learning. Often, it is simply too much to learn the local language, *in addition to* becoming proficient in English. This sometimes required local colleagues to 'switch to English' in order to allow mobile fellows to get by in English. It also resulted in stories of strategically silencing oneself in order to be culturally respectful, of doing guess work and trying to cope in different ways by taking cues, and picking up words. A poem entitled '*A moment of comprehension*' written by a New Zealander residing in Finland is evocative of this puzzling dynamic: '*How are you? – Just learn how to shut up – how are you? – the weather – make your point and shut up – wait, linger, shut up – fill in with uhhs and mmhmms*' (Personal communication 15 August 2015).

One of the hardest habits to overcome was assuming sameness on the new campus – assuming that the rules would be familiar, that academic life and its conventions were transferable (Bönisch-Brednich 2010 2016). A great story of the sudden realisation that conventions were not transferable was written by a colleague transferring from the UK to New Zealand. At his previous university it was customary to have a pre-meeting to ensure certain outcomes in the actual meeting. Therefore, when invited to his first departmental meeting in New Zealand he went to the Head of Department asking when and where the pre-meeting would be held. By assuming sameness he created a short but very funny moment of comprehension on his side and puzzlement by his Head of Department on the other side. Such stories of assuming or even demanding sameness often resulted in much more serious clashes and unsuccessful mobility experiences. Such incidents also resulted in long term avoidance of situations that were experienced as humiliating or alienating (e.g. Julefrokost in Denmark; meetings where people resisted switching to English; the university Marae as an alien space in New Zealand).

Assumptions of sameness were fairly low among PhD scholars and fellows, given that the PhD was the phrase when the fellow initially got acquainted with the ways in which certain things were done. These 'learned lessons' on how academic life was supposed to be like would then be carried onto their first 'real' university job. Experiences and lessons learned during these formative years defined in many ways how academics viewed university life. As was pointed out in the final discussion of the UNIKE workshop, most participants believed that there was a time for mobility, and the best time for it was certainly during the early career stages. Senior academics enjoyed mobility that was short-term and framed as such; long-term mobility was harder to negotiate, albeit often rewarding when it came with social and financial security. It seemed, however, that experiences of mobility were always connected to the assumption of sameness, with longstanding feelings of loss and gain and ongoing reflection. As one senior academic of the UNIKE project remarked, '*it seems to me that [taken for granted] differences in academic culture have made the most profound impression on me … A great experience. Without it, all articles, books and discussion about the "multicultural classroom" – would have been useless theory for me.*'

On being international
The impression that I took away from these workshops is that the opportunity that they offered to reflect, write and think ethnographically about personal mobility was hugely rewarding and insightful for the participants. Sharing stories, writing together, condensing and collectivising the narrative around required and dreamed academic mobility was felt to be an uplifting experience. It was also deeply insightful for me, as the convener of the workshops and an ethnographer. Overall, all stories demonstrated learning, coping, place-making and an intense dedication and enjoyment of academic life itself. Mobility seemed to be what the participants signed up for consciously and therefore the sample of writings was clearly defined by participants who set out to build their mobile curriculum vitae. They were conscious that they most likely needed to be mobile and there was an underlying awareness that there was also perhaps a price to pay for that.

'*The person that was being described in the [project] call was the sort of person I knew I wanted to become one day: independent, self-reliant, culturally aware - I just didn't think it would be so soon! I was still not sure if I was ready for it, but I took the challenge and decided to apply*'.

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