

## Submissions Abstract Book - All Papers (All Submissions)

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The 'Global Scholar': Researcher perspectives on mobility and the implications for doctoral programme design and supervision.

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**Research Domain:** International Perspectives and context (IPC)

**Abstract:** There is a clear policy imperative, nationally (BEIS, UKRI) and internationally (EC, OECD) to provide researchers with mobility – geographical, disciplinary, sectoral, social. Current praxis in doctoral education takes many forms including placements/internships, research visits, international conference attendance, cotutelle/dual or joint award programmes. There has also been in the UK a sustained growth of postgraduate researchers (PGR) who are categorised as 'international' for fee-paying purposes. This international PGR population has tripled from 1994/5 to 2012/3 (Guthrie et al., 2017). This paper is based on empirical research that considers the 'Imagineries of mobility' (Devint & Machart, 2015: 8) in research policy - both incoming and out-going - in the light of the lived experience of 'mobile' PGRs. The paper presents an in-depth analysis of preliminary survey findings and explores how supervisors and HE managers can modify and extend their practice to meet the specific needs of this growing community.

**Paper:** There is a clear policy imperative, nationally (BEIS, UKRI) and internationally (EC, OECD) to provide researchers with mobility – geographical, disciplinary, sectoral, social. Current praxis in doctoral education takes many forms including placements/internships, research visits, international conference attendance, cotutelle/dual or joint award programmes. There has also been in the UK a sustained growth of postgraduate researchers (PGR) who are categorised as 'international' for fee-paying purposes. This international PGR population has tripled from 1994/5 to 2012/3 (Guthrie et al., 2016). The new government international education strategy talks explicitly about encouraging growth in dual awards and sets a target to welcome 600,000 international higher education students in the UK, by 2030. For aspiring PhDs from countries with nascent research infrastructure, migration is almost unavoidable and as global research capacity/capability grows, so greater flows of researchers around the globe become inevitable. League table metrics on international co-authorship and initiatives such as the Global Challenge Research Fund ensure that many researchers -

from PhD to professor and from the 'Global North and South' have an interest and an incentive to be mobile.

This paper uses a small empirical dataset (n=44), collected via an online survey, to reconsider the 'Imagineries of mobility' (Dervin & Machart, 2016: 8) as presented in research and innovation policy in the light of the lived experience of PGRs at three UK universities. Mobility is defined as having spent at least one month away from the PGR's main country of residence, either by

(1) undertaking a doctorate abroad;

(2) undertaking a doctorate by international dual or joint award, such as a cotutelle arrangement;

(3) spending more than one month based in a different research institution to the one where the researcher is registered for their doctorate.

The overarching research project uses a progressive focusing design (Stake, 1981) and takes a constructivist GTM approach (Charmaz, 2000) - acknowledging the researcher's influential role in the research process and aiming for a proactive focus on the data.

An initial literature review was carried out and a thematic analysis of the literature on researcher mobility identified two areas of focus where clusters of papers had looked at particular positive or negative impacts of mobility. These were: productivity and the production of new knowledge; and personal and professional network development, related to career progression. Cruz-Castro and Sanz-Menendez (2010) and Pezzoniet al., (2009) all explore how researcher mobility can cause a loss of networks, whilst Woolley et al. (2016) demonstrated how transnational networks developed through mobility can sustain productive international collaborations. Van Heeringen and Dijkwel (1986) linked mobility to decreased productivity whilst De Filippo, Casado & Gomez (2009) saw productivity enhanced, Guth (2008) cited access to equipment and technology as a positive impact of mobility for the researcher and Ackers (2005), Jöns (2011) and O'Hara (2009) connect mobility with the production of new knowledge; international transfer of existing knowledge; and establishment of research collaborations.

These areas of focus were mapped back to the Researcher Development Framework (Vitae, 2011) which provided the basis for more in-depth enquiry in the survey. Accordingly cognitive development was broken down into knowledge base, cognitive abilities and creativity; whilst career development was explored as options, values, transition, confidence and networks. Respondents were asked to think in depth about whether their development in these areas was more rapid or delayed than would otherwise have been the case, had they not have undertaken mobility. They were then asked to describe how they had experienced mobility, the impact it had had on them in the form of 'enablers' and 'barriers' and to speculate on how the mobility had supported or hampered them as doctoral researchers.

The project uses the interplay between emerging empirical data with multiple phases of literature review to better understand the specific lived experience of 'mobile PGRs'. A preliminary analysis of survey results identified key concepts and narrative tropes which then informed a second phase of literature review which looked at global workplaces, Southern Theory, internationalisation of Higher

Education and migration studies.

Several tropes emerged. The notions of 'loss', 'navigation' and 'rising to the challenge' will be explored in further detail.

Mobility at a doctoral level has clear advantages. 84.6% respondents saw it as a positive experience. However this small empirical study gives an insight into the barriers and challenges that doctoral mobility can bring which include the additional burden of inter-cultural working, loneliness and loss of social support. These findings call into question whether 'standard' UK-focused researcher development programme offers and current structural support mechanisms such as Graduate Schools and Doctoral Colleges are sufficient for what seems to be an increasingly mobile PGR population.

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