

## SRHE 2011 Conference Paper Proposal

### Par 1: Abstract

#### **Internationalisation, mobile academics and knowledge creation in universities: a comparative analysis**

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This paper is an interim work-in-progress report on my SRHE-funded research which is to explore the relationships between academic staff mobility, knowledge creation and internationalisation in higher education within a comparative framework. The research paper analyses how the functioning – and ultimately the impact – of universities, in the production of knowledge, new knowledge creation and innovation is affected by the increasing prevalence of international academic staff mobility. The research employs a mix of documentary and empirical research methods, including face to face, semi-structured interviews for biographic narrative research analysis will be conducted in 10 research-led universities in England with 20 selected international academics. It offers an in-depth analysis of (1) the internationalisation of British universities through international staffing, and (2) the intricate relations of the legal framework (immigration/employment law), the institutional contexts of policy implementation, and the internal sociology and cultural assumptions of daily practice inside academe.

(146 words)

\* **Research Domain: Policy**

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### Part 2: Outline

#### **Internationalisation, mobile academics and knowledge creation in universities: a comparative analysis**

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This paper is an interim work-in-progress report on my SRHE-funded research which is to explore the relationships between academic staff mobility, knowledge creation and internationalisation in higher education within a comparative framework.

The mobility of academic staff is an important and yet under-researched subject area. Despite a strong emphasis on mobility *per se* in both contemporary higher education policy and research, there has been no systematic analysis of trends in academic staff mobility (Teichler, 2010). Most research on mobility in higher education, in fact, has focused on: student mobility and experience (e.g. Gürüz, 2008; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Marginson, et. al., 2010); the globalisation of the knowledge economy (Brown,

et. al., 2008); academic labour markets (Musselin, 2005; 2010); and the career paths of 'researchers' (EUI Max Weber Programme 'ACO'; IDEA Consult 'MORE' study, June 2010).

This paper will, therefore, make a valuable contribution to filling a critical void in the higher education literature. This paper builds on the author's research analysis on transnational academic mobility (Kim, 2008, 2009a; 2009b; 2010; Kim and Locke, 2010), and also furthers the work of the 'Changing Academic Profession' project conducted by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Innovation (CHERI), which has emphasised the importance of a comparative understanding of UK university academics.

The proportion of foreign and migrant academic staff in UK universities has increased significantly in recent years: 27% of full-time academic staff appointed in 2007/08 came from outside the UK (Kim and Locke, 2009), but in some of the major research universities, the proportion is much higher: e.g. in the University of Oxford, over 60% of academic appointments in 2010 went to non-UK nationals (Interview in Oxford, 27 April, 2011). The proportion seems also higher at the professoriate level: according to the unpublished survey data provided by INCHER-Kassel (Teichler, 2010), 41% of UK university professors have foreign citizenship. On the basis of current trends, UUK (July, 2007) has estimated that the overall proportion of international academics employed in British universities will rise to 50% in 20 years.

Against this background, this paper considers the intricate relations of academic mobility to, knowledge creation and internationalisation in higher education from a comparative perspective focusing on both space and time. Drawing on both documentary and empirical research on mobile academics and knowledge creation, it offers a comparative critique of Mode 1 and Mode 2 Knowledge (Gibbons, et. al., 1994), in the inter-war period (1918-1939) and during the last two decades (1991-2011).

During the inter-war period, Britain was lucky. Amongst the 1,500 émigrés who came to Britain during the Nazi period, eighteen went on to win Nobel Prizes, fourteen received knighthoods, and well over a hundred became Fellows of the Royal Society or the British Academy (CARA, 2008). Many more made significant contributions to the natural and social sciences and humanities. In the contemporary era, however, we are experiencing a different kind of academic migration - notably, a mass movement of academics (especially researchers) across borders at the same time as a new mode of knowledge production and the corporatisation of the university on a global scale.

The paper revisits the dichotomy of Mode 1 and 2 knowledge through the two distinct periods of transnational academic mobility - here interpreted as two moments of the mobility of 'persons' within the world-system: first, the period of the extreme politics of Nazism and the mobility of academics for liberty; and second, the period of the extreme politics of neo-liberalism and the mobility of academics for the pragmatics of 'optimization' in terms of marketability. It is argued that: (1) Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge itself is changing in an epochal moment of extreme politics. (2) The evolution of knowledge production is not a linear process from Mode 1 to Mode 2; the dichotomy of Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge was blurred in the inter-war period of transnational academic mobility. Furthermore, this research paper attempts to theorise a new "Mode 3" knowledge production embodied in academic mobility and transnational identity capital – a concept initially sketched by Kim (2010).

The paper presents biographical accounts of academic mobility and knowledge creation in the inter-war period as well as the contemporary period. On the basis of ongoing documentary data collection in this area, this research paper will show how *new* Mode 1 knowledge and Mode 2 knowledge were simultaneously generated and entwined as a consequence of the major shift in locale and networks of individual academics in this period, notably from Germany to the USA and UK.

However, the main focus of this research analysis is on the second moment of modern mobility. The initial presupposition is that we are seeing the mass mobility of 'academics' but much else has changed. In other words, transnational academic mobility has been structured by political and economic forces determining the boundaries and direction of flows, and also involves personal choices and professional networks. The patterns of transnational academic mobility in history are discontinuous. Barriers of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, religion and culture and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion shift.

The analysis is based on the interim research findings. The SRHE- research employs a mix of documentary and empirical research methods, including face to face, semi-structured interviews for biographic narrative research analysis are being conducted in 10 research-led universities in England with 20 selected international academics with the following research questions:

(i) Why is the proportion of foreign/international academics in British research universities notably higher than universities in other countries - e.g. Canada, Australia, France and Germany, which are also major players in the global higher education market? (The research will also investigate British traits in comparison with the USA.)

(ii) Are these foreign academics making – or taking the *longue durée* approach, expected to make - distinctive contributions to the internationalisation of British universities and new knowledge creation?

(iii) How should we understand and conceptualise the British version of internationalisation of universities and new 'knowledge' creation as distinctive from other countries?

Overall, this research paper will offer a critical analysis of (i) the contemporary redefinition of 'knowledge' - including the ways in which knowledge is governed and managed; (ii) the universalising demands of 'knowledge creation' and its shifting goals from emancipatory to entrepreneurial enlightenment; and accordingly, (iii) the globalisation of research industry as a force for academic mobility.

A key question, which underpins this research is: what are the boundaries of inclusion and *non*-inclusion (both legal-rational and cultural-reflexive), for international academics in moving between different national higher education systems for employment and knowledge creation?

The research paper takes a comparative approach to test whether the particular UK political economy serves to differentiate the experiences of international academic staff employed in English universities and their engagement in new types of knowledge creation from the mobile academics in other parts of the world - not only within Europe, but also North America, Australasia and East Asia.

It is a study in the sociology of a new political economy and dialectical relations of academic mobility and knowledge creation. However, the study also has major implications for 'internationalisation' in contemporary higher education policy and practice, and society as a whole, with special reference to the contemporary UK context.

It is expected that the interim research findings reported in this paper will feed into important policy debates about the implications for academic mobility and knowledge creation and innovation, especially given the newly introduced immigration cap and the significant changes to higher education funding in the UK.

(1,241 words)