

'Policy Impacts on Internationally Mobile Researchers and Research in Education'



CAROLINE HEALY
38TH EDUCATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF
IRELAND CONFERENCE
LIMERICK (21–23 MARCH 2013)
THEME - 'EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN CHANGING
TIMES: CONSULTATION, IMPLEMENTATION
AND IMPACT'

Focus of Talk Today



- Address the question: what is the *added value* that the international mobility of researchers may bring to education research in the contemporary era?

In terms of the:

- i) Policies, their implementation and impact;
- ii) Research funding dimensions;
- iii) Conceptual and research quality aspects.

How Research Came About



- Conceptualised as part of the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) policy and research funding call for possible max. project funding of €1M out of €18.5 M total available across Europe;
- Very competitive funding process; pooling of national and European research.
- Process began in Feb. 2012 and projects commence June 2013 – June 2016 (max. 36 months).

Criteria for funding



Outside of measure of research excellence, originality and creativity, new policy emphasis on:

- **Collaboration:** at least three Principal Research Investigators from three participating countries (18 in total) but only one leader to host funds (key countries not included) and demonstrate European Added Value of collaboration.
- **Relevance:** to theme of 'Cultural Encounters' (no autonomy).
- **Potential impact** on knowledge exchange and research with non-academic 'user communities' e.g. schools; museums.

Two types of collaborators across Europe



Academic:

- **Ireland:** Dr Kelly Coate, Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT), NUI Galway – (Co-PI).
- **UK:** Dr Terri Kim, School of Sport and Education, Brunel University, London – Project Leader
- **Germany:** Professor Halit Ozturk (PI) and Niels Klaubunde (Co-Investigator) – Friedrich Alexander University (FAU) Erlangen-Nuremberg, and Humboldt University, Germany.

Academic Research Backgrounds



- Varied in age and levels of research experience from professor to post-doc
- HERA is about younger researchers gaining experience and funding
- Individual research specialisms to complement project in terms of HE policy; comparative education and cross-culturalism.

Non-Academic Collaborators



To participate in an **advisory** capacity and be **self-funded** (only travel and subsistence covered) – letters of support had to be provided.

- **Ireland:** Higher Education Authority (HEA) – European Programmes and Policy (Mary Kerr and Gerry O’Sullivan).
- **UK:** Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA)
- **Germany:** The Alexander of Humboldt Foundation and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)

Demonstration of Impact Shifting



- **Non-Academic Partners had to be:**

‘Stakeholders in the cultural, heritage or educational sector, media or creative industries who may provide significant added value and valuable insight to the project from the user’s perspective’.

Researchers responsible for knowledge exchange with civil society.

High levels of co-ordination and project reporting required.

Conceptual Theme One (Ireland)



- To consider the **benefits and challenges** of European, national (macro level of cross-country analysis) and higher education institutional **policies** (meso level analysis) in terms of international mobility of researchers (comparatively);
- Situate them in context of **conceptual and analytical debates** in higher education discourse (Clark, 1983; Gibbons et al. 1994; Kogan and Hanney, 2000; Ireland's Hunt Report on Higher Education, 2011).

Conceptual Theme Two (UK)



- Focus on international mobility of researchers in terms of a new '**transnational identity capital**' concept (Kim, 2010). Researchers part of researchers.
- Critically examine the functioning and impact of university in terms of **production and new knowledge creation and innovation** and how this may be **enhanced** by the increasing prevalence of international researcher mobility in education

Theme Two (UK)



- Building on Gibbons et al., (1994), Mode 1 (single-disciplinary) and Mode 2 (multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary problem-solving approach) to knowledge-production.
- **Mode 3 knowledge introduced** as a new concept (Kim, 2012) with mobile researchers **travelled** and **embodied** knowledge formation becoming an essential part of creativity leading to innovation.
- Emphasis on in-depth biographical narrative method.

Theme Three (Germany)



- In-depth analysis of **intercultural encounters** and **learning processes**, ways of working of international mobile academics;
- Examination of training provided to negotiate different cultures (in higher education context) and



Research Method

- Qualitative semi-structured **interviews** with policy-makers, higher education managers, researchers and partners in civil society.
- **Disciplines:** policy and higher education policy studies; comparative policy studies, international and intercultural education, sociology and pedagogy)

So what is different?



- New transnational policies and spaces created – making academic migration different in this era; e.g. **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** and the **European Research Area (ERA)**.
- To promote the free movement of people and knowledge (so-called Fifth Freedom) – generating new mode of knowledge production.

National Policies



- 27% of full-time academic staff appointed in 2007/08 came from outside the UK (Kim and Locke, 2010) **Changing Academic Profession Study** which noted global competitive and corporatisation of higher education.
- In major research universities in UK, the proportion is much higher, almost 60% of appointments in 2010 at Oxford went to non-UK nationals.
- The proportion is high among post-doc researchers (UUK, 2007) and professoriate level (Teichler, 2010).

Under-researched Area



- Most emphasis in Europe on student mobility studies e.g. ERASMUS (Teichler) but **little on mobility of academics** (Teichler, 2010 and Academic Co-operation Association, 2011).
- Even though researchers **cultural** and **epistemic backgrounds** are multi-layered and increasing transnational.
- Attempt to fill this gap in research and literature.

Challenges – Global Competitiveness



Argument:

- While researchers have always been interested in working with other scholars ‘invisible colleges’ of disciplines (Clark, 1983).
- Now due to policies, much more **formalised, structured and collective process e.g. HERA.**
- Challenges competing for increasing **scarce global resources and career opportunities** (marked by a much more competitive edge).

National Policies In Conflict



- EU objective of **flexible mobility** becomes much more complicated within **national systems**, policies and economic conditions.
- In UK – Research Assessment Exercise / Framework ‘head-hunting’ and output important.
- The **Employment Control Framework (ECF)** in Ireland and impact on recruitment. Research is growth area, but need to be bring portable funding with you.

Higher Education Authority Figures



	2011	2012	2013	2014
Core-funded posts	18,249	18,240	18,232	18,223
Non-core funded posts	2,900	3,000	3,080	3,160

Internationalisation of Irish HE



- **First Strategy 2006-2015;**
- **Greater emphasis on incoming international students to raise revenue than on international researchers and scholars;**

Hunt Report (2011) Ireland



- Vision in National Strategy to 2030 is **multi-disciplinary and problem-solving** research
- Career paths of researchers in Ireland not clear **impeding international mobility** (no dual system as historically a teaching system and has suffered from 'brain-drain' due to lack of career opportunities in research) (IRSA, 2011)
- Need to increase PhDs: 125 in every million in 2004 while UK was 239.

Public-funding prioritisation / competitiveness



- 14 research priorities (Forfás) do not include education;
- Governments in austere times put less money into certain types of research that may not be seen as strategically important and prioritised;
- Global Research Funding much more competitive e.g., HERA funding.

The Statistics



- What International HERA Review Board said:
- ‘there was *fierce* competition for a *limited* amount of funding’ ‘interesting and valuable applications could not be retained’.
- 593 outline proposals were submitted.
- 89 made second stage for full proposals (15%) of which 18 funded (**success rate: 3%!**)

Problems Noted



- **Mono-discipline proposals that did not reach out to other disciplines and civil society;**
- **Missing fields of knowledge with no experts on team and lack of theoretical debates;**
- **Projects disparate and researchers working in silos not being part of genuine cross-cutting collaboration;**
- **Inadequate mentorship of junior researchers.**

Problems



- ‘Missing distinction between ‘outputs’ and **‘impact’** which are not always the same, and often differ **within and between/outside** disciplines

Value-addedness of international mobile researchers



Returning to valued-added of international mobility:

- While single country case studies have always been useful to read in journals without physical mobility,
- It is comparisons between two or more countries and particularly **thematic** comparisons that enhance conceptualisation, new knowledge and theory-building.
- There are many debates in the use of qualitative comparative approaches in education and higher education.

Comparative Education Research



- Should it be used to simply verify pre-determined hypotheses, as with deductive quantitative approaches in scientific disciplines?
- In qualitative education studies, thematic comparisons provides **supporting research evidence** that could be considered the most useful and systematic;
- Even if focus is only on one level of analysis.

Triangle of Forces



- With education systems, focus is usually at the macro level e.g. on government reforms and impact on schools and teachers, which makes it difficult to make valid generalisations in one country, let alone many.
- While this research method does not build in hypotheses, it uses an inductive approach to constructing knowledge.
- Possible hypotheses: revolve around the triangle of influences in education system (government/managerial/church; school/teacher or market/civil society/interest groups e.g. parent councils)



- **It considers hypotheses and theories in its analysis and, therefore, does contribute in a valuable way to education research and knowledge and international mobility of researchers does clearly add value to solving problems.**
- **An analysis of comparative education and comparative higher education reveals this.**



- **Thematic comparisons allow for common questions to be asked about political and education systems**
- **Can be used reiteratively as explanations of certain factors (Finer, 1956)**
- **Comparativists are interested in explaining why educational systems, structures and processes vary**
- **how education relates to wider societal factors and forces e.g. economy so also includes political scientists, sociologists and economists**



- **An example in schools analysis is government policy (macro) and how far schools have autonomy in terms of curriculum reform; whole school evaluations and quality assurance (meso).**
- **However, schools and universities are social institutions and have unique and complex cultural and political contexts e.g., work of Sugrue and Fullan important here and in higher education (van Vught).**

Quality of Research



- Due to this cultural complexity it can be argued that the synergies that result between the close integration of physical mobility and creativity significantly enhance the quality of research in the education domain and its related disciplines.
- Individuals develop a transnational identity with travelled and embodied knowledge that is unique.

Final Thoughts on Changes in Research

