The Individual’s Perspective and Trends in HE Mobility

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• Shifting patterns of academic mobility
• Post-imperial effects
• Increasing dominance of the English language
• Interlocking relations of political and economic forces, personal choices and professional networks

Universities have become once again universitas informed by the universals of a (new) lingua franca and by the mobility of academics and ideas which are clustering into a few centres of excellence within competition on a global scale.

(Kim 2009b, p.402)
• The existing theories and collected evidence have not engaged sufficiently with ‘The University’ as an aggregation of mobile individuals

• This specific context promotes new types of knowledge transfer and transformation (Kim, 2010 : in press) – novel processes that are occurring along with academic mobility

• These differ from codified knowledge explicitly required by any funded research contract, or corporate management skills

• They occur in the interface between the mobile individual and ‘The University’ – better understanding of may be key to success of the internationalisation agenda

• They need to be investigated via different instruments (cf Welch 2007)
• We provide narrative interview data used as a research instrument to investigate these areas (see text for detail and Hughes (forthcoming))

• We report findings from the mobile academic (German Economist in UK) and the individual in the mobile organisation (Chinese administrator in a UK university in China)

• We distinguish:
  – Macro-level effects on the individual
  – Knowledge creation and transformation in the contact between very different systems, languages and cultures
  – Significant micro-level events – some linguistic – that shape the individual’s experience and identity
Conclusion

• We propose that work such as this – sociological and qualitative/applied linguistic – can be used to complement quantitative methods and provide insights that illuminate trends more clearly.

• These methods are particularly relevant to contexts of inter-cultural communication and the building of knowledge in ‘hybrid’ academic environments.
References