Spatial and social mobility of doctoral candidates in the context of Europeanisation and internationalisation in higher education

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1. Introduction

Why should research be done on the mobility of young academics – doctoral candidates in particular – when there is already so much research into (and focus on) the internationalisation of higher education (Alesi & Kehm, 2010; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Wit, 2015; Huang, Finkelstein, & Rostan, 2013; Knight, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2011; Seeber, Cattaneo, Huisman, & Paleari, 2016) and student spatial mobility (Aksakal, Bilecen, & Schmidt, 2019; Carlson, 2013; Findlay, 2011; Finger, 2011; Heublein, Hutzsch, & Lörz, 2008; Kmiotek-Meier et al., 2019; Knight, 2012; Lörz, Netz, & Quast, 2016; Netz, 2015; Rizvi, 2011; van Mol, 2014)? The answer is that the mobility decisions faced by doctoral candidates are different from those faced by students (Bilecen, 2013), and are embedded in vastly different institutional and personal settings (Ackers, 2004). The research corpus for mobility of junior academics in the higher education system is still relatively small compared to that of other groups such as students, senior academics, and professors. The doctoral candidate's intermediate position between 'student' and 'fully-recognised academic', not quite being defined as either, makes them a very interesting group to study, especially in the context of further Europeanisation and internationalisation in universities and research, and the candidate's above-average mobility within the European Union (Teichler, 2017). Doctoral candidates today are exposed to such processes and developments to a much higher degree than their supervisors and more established professors, for whom having such European or international credentials was less possible, and less of a requirement (Knight, 2014). This intermediate position between the student body and the faculty staff varies between the higher education systems of different nations, as do age at the time of graduation, duration of study, levels of supervision, and degrees of funding (Ackers, 2008). These differences are reflected in the respective terminology of different countries, e.g. the differentiation between a doctoral student and doctoral candidate in the American system, wherein the former still has to take classes and the latter only has a thesis

left to write. Other higher education systems do not necessarily demand classes for their PhD students, and therefore this differentiation is not mirrored in the language, or cannot be adequately translated into English. The higher education systems of different nations will also differ on whether they emphasise the doctoral candidate's educational status or their place on the academic workforce; the higher education systems that emphasise a PhD student's student status will not usually consider them to be acadamics, whereas other higher education systems encourage and expect proficient research output from their PhD students, and therefore consider them to be part of the academic staff, referring to them as 'junior academics', 'early-career researchers', 'young researchers, or something similar (Graybill & Shandas, 2010; Hakala, 2009). However, the common denominator between the higher education systems of all nations is their PhD students' pursuit of the doctorate. This thesis uses the term 'doctoral candidates', as it is most fitting for our sample of PhD students, all of whom were writing their doctoral theses at the time.

This dissertation considers doctoral candidates to be academic staff members, and will address the mobility of doctoral candidates from Germany in the context of Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education across five major topics:

1) Trajectories of mobility among doctoral candidates in different countries (taking a comparative view of France and the Netherlands).

2) The accumulation of mobility capital as a requirement of being able to become a mobile scholar and go abroad for a PhD.

3) Mobility as part of a horizontal Europeanisation process on a micro-level of doctoral candidates.

4) Mobility as a factor of influence on career perception of the mobile PhD.

5) The influence and perception of EU instruments among intra-EU mobile PhDs.

These research questions fill spaces in higher education research, migration and mobility research, and European studies. They also contribute to a better understanding of doctoral migration into France and the Netherlands from the perspective of young mobile scholars from Germany; of the ways in which academic mobility impacts the life of the individual; of how Europeanisation – which is mostly researched on meso- and macro-levels – shows itself on the micro-level for the educated elite; and of whether mobility experiences are really contributing to career development, as imagined by the architects of internationalisation and Europeanisation.

The idea and execution of this doctoral dissertation arose (and was embedded in) the research project 'Mobile Transitions – Mobile Lifestyles? Career Choice and Way of Living at the Transition to Transnational Scientific Careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm, El Dali, & Schäfer, 2017) under the supervision of Prof. Schittenhelm. The project – focussing on the transnational trajectories of university graduates of the social sciences and humanities – covered a range of research possibilities and therefore allowed me to find and set my own focus on the topics and research fields documented here: higher education research, European studies, and mobility and migration research. The methodology – and, partly, the theory – of my own work was influenced by the foundation of the project.

As a further introduction to the topics described above, I will give a brief introduction to the general state of the debate on academic mobility, its social dimension, the internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education, and the relevance and connection to my research of these topics. I will follow this with a summary and outlook of the constituent chapters.

1.1 Internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education

Internationalisation and Europeanisation are not entirely new phenomena: in the Middle Ages and later, when Latin was the language of academia, Europe was unified under a specific

umbrella of thought (Wuttig & Knabel, 2003). But the modern idea of internationalisation and Europeanisation, of course, has only existed since the 1970s, beginning with single cooperation and exchange programmes between universities and growing on a larger and more multilateral scale since the late 1980s (Teichler, 2007). As it developed, more and more aspects were included under the term 'internationalisation', and nowadays it can be classified along the following aspects: international study programmes, international exchange programmes, international research projects, integration of EMI (English as a medium of instruction) into the curriculum (Lueg, 2015), foreign languages courses, the award of internationally recognised certificates, use of international comparative theoretical approaches, double degrees, specific offers for international students and academics, and preparation for the international labour market (Teichler, 2007). However, in a more critical perspective, internationalisation (and also Europeanisation) is characterised as the 'anglifying' of national academic systems, which means the adoption of Anglo-American characteristics for the home country (Ackers, 2005) beyond the growing importance of English as the lingua franca in academia. Individual universities will usually develop more international strategies – thereby increasing general internationalisation – in order to increase their reputation and so attract more (international) students and academics, potentially increasing their competitive value (Altbach & Knight, 2007); this has also been the aim of various political reforms, such as New Public Management (Hazelkorn, 2011; Wieczorek & Schäfer, 2016; Wildavsky, 2012). Beyond those organisational and competitive reasons, internationalisation is connected to the perhaps more idealistic aim of enhancing the quality of research through the integration of different perspectives, as well as the addition of more manpower and expertise. It is repeatedly stated, however, that market-driven and financial arguments are usually among the strongest forces behind internationalisation (Alsharari, 2019; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Foskett, 2010; Knight, 1997; Maringe & Foskett, 2012; Münch, 2016). Consequently, individual researchers and individual doctoral candidates have to position themselves in a competitive field of researchers, 'selling'

their work to the universities and other higher education institutions. The field itself becomes bigger through internationalisation (and Europeanisation), which means an increase in both competition and opportunities for work and funding. In contrast to earlier studies (e.g. Musselin, 2004), new studies find sound evidence that an international labour market for academics has emerged (Børing, Flanagan, Gagliardi, Kaloudis, & Karakasidou, 2015; Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes, & Skeldon, 2012). Apart from the general trend of internationalisation on a global scale, other forms of supranationalisation – such as Europeanisation – have become more visible and more important for higher education. Although higher education has been described as generally 'at the political margins of the European integration process' (Chou & Gornitzka, 2014, p. 1), it has vastly developed over the last two decades, and interaction on a governmental and supranational level has been intensified. Milestones in this development include the Bologna Process (Alesi & Kehm, 2010; Keeling, 2006; Söderqvist, 2007; Wächter, 2004), the Treaty of Lisbon (Alesi & Kehm, 2010; Ertl, 2006; Gornitzka, 2007; Keeling, 2006) and the Salzburg Principles[1] (Christensen, 2005; European University Association, 2005, 2010; Kehm, 2007; Kottmann, 2011).

Beyond these official outlines of internationalisation, various studies have addressed concrete and specific developments on different levels of higher education and research (Huang et al., 2013; Jones & Wit, 2012) and through country case studies, such as for Germany (Borgwardt, 2012), Estonia (Tamtik & Kirss, 2016) or comparative perspective between Western and non-Western countries (Huang, 2006).[2] In context of our analytic work in context of the superordinate project (Schittenhelm et al., 2017), differences between our two case countries, France and the Netherlands, quickly became apparent. We were therefore able to reconstruct the specific mobility trajectories of German PhD candidates into the French and Dutch higher

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[1] The Salzburg principles highlight the importance and significance of doctoral education within the Bologna process and encourage European-wide standards for the doctoral phase and mobility schemes.
[2] For a broader overwiev of countries, see Huisman and van der Wende (2004); (2005) and Mihut, Altbach, and Wit (2017)

education systems, trajectories that are partly shaped by the degree of internationalisation of the respective higher education systems (Schäfer & El Dali, 2019). Consequently, we contributed to the discussion of the impact of internationalisation on the micro level and for the academics 'on the ground', while also showing that factors beyond the higher education systems – such as pre-university institutional cooperation between countries, and the appeal and 'attractiveness' of a specific country and its culture – have their impact on mobility trajectories in academia (Schäfer & El Dali, 2019).

As the word suggests, 'Europeanisation' is internationalisation on a European level, more regional and less global than the latter. On an institutional level, it is usually associated with the European Union (EU), but can go beyond the EU in matters higher education, as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)[3] and European Research Area (ERA)[4] exemplify. At the same time, Europeanisation goes beyond the possibilities of internationalisation, offering a 'thicker' web of multilateral cooperation and opportunities for institutions and individuals, a web in which the absence of borders and work permits and inter-country agreements on the transferability of pension and social security payments is of great help. For example, student mobility within the Erasmus programme is relevantly simple and easy, and includes almost every single European country, whereas there is no comparable programme on the global level (van Mol, 2014). The process of Europeanisation also includes the adjustment of national institutional characteristics to a common direction and framework, which includes career steps within the academic system, doctoral education, teaching load for the individual researcher, and role of management within higher education (Höhle & Teichler, 2012). Similar to internationalisation, there is reasonable concern that bigger, more powerful, and more prestigious countries will benefit more from the process of Europeanisation, and that the

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[3] The EHEA includes all European countries, Russia, Turkey, the Caucasian countries, and Kazakhstan EHEA (2020)

[4] Beyond the EU member states the ERA includes Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey as associated members European Commission (2019)

'developing' and smaller countries of Europe will fall behind due to a lack of resources to facilitate the integration, ultimately deepening the imbalance (Münch, 2014; Münch & Schäfer, 2014; van der Wende, 2003).

The putative goal of Europeanisation is to make the European Research Area a more competitive and attractive region for research on a global scale, thereby making Europe an even more relevant player on the global and internationalised field of research (Finger, 2014). To achieve this aim, EU instruments for funding and European research cooperation, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and European Research Council (ERC), were implemented by the European Commission. The perception of these instruments among the intra-EU mobile doctoral candidates is ambiguous, as my research has shown (Schäfer, 2018). My research offers something new, as it focuses on the perception, evaluation, and influence of EU instruments among those who are (or will become) the main target audience for such instruments – (intra-EU) mobile (junior) academics – not from a policy perspective but from a bottom-up approach, with the individuals and their experiences as the starting point.

Most of the work on Europeanisation, however, takes a political science perspective on Europeanisation, focussing on vertical Europeanisation, i.e. the integration of different governmental, institutional, and organisational levels of Europe. On the other side, there is growing interest in – and research into – the sociology of Europe (Favell, 2008; Favell & Guiraudon, 2011), focussing on horizontal Europeanisation (Heidenreich, 2019; Mau, 2015; Mau & Mewes, 2012; Mau & Verwiebe, 2010), which is the 'Everday Europe' (Recchi & Favell, 2019), or Europeanisation on the micro level of individual daily life. My own research contribution (Schäfer, 2021) ties in with this new research perspective, specifically asking about processes of horizontal Europeanisation among our intra-EU mobile PhD candidates against the institutional background of European Research Area and the European Union. This enables emphasis on the influence of mobility on individual horizontal Europeanisation against the

background of vertical Europeanisation and the European agenda in higher education (Fernández Zubieta & Guy, 2010; Repečkaitė, 2016; Young, 2015), thus bringing together the analytics framework of horizontal Europeanisation and academic (non-student) mobility with an institutional framework that aims to support such mobility explicitly (Schäfer, 2021). Such institional framework, which is mostly built and supported by the EU, aims to work actively for a deeper European connection within doctoral education by bringing together PhD paths, harmonising doctoral programmes and traditions among the European countries, and in general fortifying transnational ties (Bao, Kehm, & Ma, 2018; Enders, 2004). As one of many other keystones, doctoral education should become an integral part of – and a vehicle for – for the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area in the eyes of the EU (Kehm, 2007). The end stage, or end goal, of the Europeanisation process could be the development and manifestation of a (dominant or even exclusive) European identity (Schäfer, 2020b); this path is neither certain nor automatically achieved, however, but rather one trajectory among others. Thus, Europeanisation and European Identity should not be confused with each other, since they address different epistemological levels: one the one hand, Europeanisation as the sociological phenomenon in day-to-day life and its inter(actions), and on the other, European identity as the socio-psychological category in which people array and align.

1.2 Mobility in academia

Spatial mobility has become such a central theme in academia and that it almost seems an inevitable part of any successful career path up the academic ladder (Schaer, Dahinden, & Toader, 2017; Teichler, 2017). It is usually associated with more positive outcomes, such as academic productivity and wider representation (Fernández Zubieta, 2009), but the importance and prevalence of mobility differs between disciplines, faculties, and countries, and it is valued as generally more important in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) than in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) (Jaksztat, Briedis, & Schindler, 2011)

the former employing the greatest number of junior academics and researchers and receiving the majority of funding (Ackers, 2001; Ackers, Gill, Groves, & Oliver, 2006). Mobility, along with other forms of internationalisation, has a different standing in SSH disciplines, as these disciplines have to pay more attention to linguistic and cultural nuances, and are therefore are more embedded within, and connected to, specific regional, cultural, or national discourses and opportunities. This can inhibit mobility possibilities and expectations (Jöns, 2007), as research is more context-dependent, native languages and cultural understanding needing to be mastered on a higher level than in STEM careers (Ackers, 2008). In practice, the emphasis placed on the 'expectation of mobility' differs significantly between disciplines and national contexts (Ackers, 2001).

Other studies come to a slightly different conclusion, and show that young academics in the humanities are the most mobile, followed by their colleagues from the natural and social sciences (Jaksztat et al., 2011). These differences could be traced back to the national settings in which the studies took place, because requirements (and opportunities) of mobility vary between countries. Jaksztat et al. (2011) showed that the USA is the most popular destination for mobile academics, which reflects a general truth about internationalisation and mobility in academia: the dominance and leading role of the Anglo-American system. In the context of academic mobility, this means that mobility to – and time spent in – the USA or UK are more valued, with these countries more likely to be considered centres of academic excellence than other destinations, with other European countries usually following behind in terms of prestige (from the perspective of European academics) (Jöns & Hoyler, 2013). Mobility is often seen by mobile academics as very beneficial for professional and personal development, and – to a lesser extent – for maximising the chance for promotion within their home institution (Jaksztat et al., 2011). When mobile academics themselves are asked about their motivation, they answer mostly with reference to improvement of life quality, career development, and the realisation

of own research interests (Jöns, 2007). Family liabilities are on the other side inhibiting mobility plans (Børing et al., 2015).

The increasing emergence and relevance of mobility among academics is also mirrored in the increasing numbers of international mobile students, of which there were 4.5 million in 2012 and are expected to be 6.5 million in 2022 (Baur, 2016). Student mobility and academic mobility are closely connected (Børing et al., 2015), as the chapter on mobility capital (Chapter Four) and Europeanisation (Chapter Five) will demonstrate. Although student mobility is often supposed to be temporary, it easily transfers to long-term mobility and relocations to foreign countries. Transnational mobility and transnational spaces are created in academia to foster and boost border-crossing exchange. Therefore, the importance of signalling such mobility for career-building academics is increasing, with its association of 'good academic work'. Beyond the perception that such research cooperation across borders enhances the quality of academic work, it is also seen as a way to compete for the 'smartest masterminds', and to overcome limiting regional or national traditions and obstacles. While the requirement of mobility is changing the course of academics' lives, it also effects and restructures the national higher education systems by opening them up to external influences, changing or deepening internal power relations and old hierarchies (Baier & Massih-Tehrani, 2016). This is reflected in credentials, symbolic capital, and power, for example, which can be earned through mobility and transnational or international activities (Munk, 2009). Such things can also be accumulated by academics to give them better chances in home labour markets, rather than internationalising their own career in the long term (Ackers, 2001), showing that the motivation and commitment to academic mobility is manifold and diverse. Previous studies have tended to focus on senior academics and postdocs, and their employment outlooks (Teelken & van der Weijden, 2018a; Teelken & van der Weijden, 2018b; van der Weijden, Teelken, Boer, & Drost, 2016), whereas

research on doctoral candidates is still scarce, especially in the context of mobility experiences and expectations.

Career development and spatial mobility

Following this train of thought, my research contribution (Schäfer, 2020c) focused on imagining future career development and career options among our sample of doctoral candidates, taking into consideration their mobility experiences, adding to the discussion on academic mobility and employability. The novelty here lies in the emphasis on future prospects and on retrospective, the consideration for PhDs and their employability. Migration and mobility[5] as a sociological phenomenon is, of course, a very wide and general topic. Within this research field, highly-skilled workers and academics are one focus among many. In this context, Chapter Six will show that academics are a special sub-group within the group of high-skilled migrants and mobiles because they face specific problems and obstacles and move within a certain framework.

> 'Researcher mobility involves shorter or longer research visits to research institutions, collaborators, or facilities elsewhere. Researcher mobility is thus a multi-dimensional phenomenon (researchers may simultaneously move from one 'system' to another, one sector to another, one location and working site to another, and from one team or research group to another, with or without a change of employer) having a potentially wide range of positive and negative impacts at a number of different levels, from the micro-level of the individual researcher, their personal and family life, and their career path, through the research group and institution to which they belong, to a macro-level of 'national' (and European) research or innovation systems, labour markets, and even broader social,

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[5] Mobility becomes migration when a person relocates permanently in a new place (Neusel and Wolter, 2016),which means that migration is always also mobility, but not vice versa. In general, the term 'mobility' has more positive connotations than 'migration' and is usually considered 'better' or 'first class' migration. Therefore, it is no wonder that research usually speaks of the 'mobility' of academics (Faist, 2014).

economic, and business systems.' (Flanagan, Gagliardi, Karakasidou, Kaloudis, & Børing, 2011, p. 1).

The research output or research interests can be changed and altered by mobility, and thus mobility can have a more influential impact on individual academics on the move compared to those who work in other sectors. What is so special about academics, and do they really constitute so distinctive a group among the high-skilled? According to research in higher education, they do (Mahroum, 2000a, 2001; Thorn & Holm-Nielsen, 2008). Markers of distinction are mainly found in the motivation and decision-making process. Economic and financial factors are less important for academics (Lörz & Krawietz, 2011), and are not usually deciding factors, in comparison to managers, engineers, or technicians; the content of academics' research work and the work environment are more important (Jöns, 2007). These differences between academics and those employed in other sectors are easily overseen by classical, overly individualistic, or economically deterministic migration theories (Ackers, 2005), making the application of alternative theoretical models so interesting and fruitful, as the empirical results will show. My own research specifically investigated such decisive non-economic factors, an approach that had to be taken into consideration for the design of the study, which followed the open approach of the superordinate study 'Mobile Transitions - Mobile Lifestyles? Career Choice and Way of Living at the Transition to Transnational Scientific Careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm et al., 2017) to generate inductive knowledge about questions such as 'what are the underlining factors behind migration and mobility for academics?' and 'what are the important considerations for such a decision?' The reputation of the hosting/destination institution is a very important factor (Mahroum, 2000b), something reflected in global mobility among students and doctoral candidates, especially in a north-south perspective (Altbach & Knight, 2007; van der Wende, 2015). The influence of reputation can also be found within Europe (Ackers, 2001). As well as reputation and general career

progression, there are also 'private' factors such as quality of life, infrastructure of childcare, and social security (Ackers, 2004, 2008). Academics can also face barriers and obstacles to mobility that they might not share with their colleagues from other highly-skilled sectors, such as difficulty with mobility funding, lack of recognition of the experienced mobility, lack of corporate support or help, lack of time, and insufficient social security and life quality (Ackers, 2005; Ivancheva & Gourova, 2011; Jaksztat et al., 2011).

These are primarily obstacles to realising mobility ex ante, but mobility can also be disadvantageous and create challenges ex post for the individual academic. This stands in contrast to the 'official agenda' of internationalisation, and to the emphasis of many universities and the European Union, which very much focuses on the bright side of mobility, usually advertising it under the most positive assumptions. In reality, however, mobility can affect academics negatively. Similar to the expectations of mobility, some disadvantages derive from the institutional context, especially in the case of national higher education systems that are relatively 'closed' and rely a lot on informal connections and social capital for staffing; in such places an academic's mobility experience does not necessarily have much value. On the contrary, mobility can be a disadvantage in competition with colleagues who have stayed in their country of origin (Ackers, Gill, & Guth, 2007), sometimes even domestically 'closing the door' behind mobile academics, career-wise (Ackers, 2008). Mobility decisions also can negatively affect the private life negatively, with mobile researchers stating that

> 'mobility makes family life extremely difficult. The increasing necessity for dual income families, the difficulties in maintaining two careers and the problems encountered in moving families and partners abroad have emerged as clear inhibiting factors. The problem of having to 'choose' between a research career and family or relationship was frequently mentioned. Finding reasonably priced accommodation and associated moving

costs were referred to as being a problem in some countries.' (Cox & Verbeek, 2008, p. 46).

Furthermore, the idea of mobility emphasises the 'breadwinner model', where there is one (often male) person earning for the whole family, with the family following him or her to the next position (Cox & Verbeek, 2008; Jöns, 2011; Leemann, 2010; Vohlídalová, 2014). Such aspects of mobility can only be adequately researched when the research design is allowed to explore all the aspects of mobility, and is not restricted to viewing a subset of social indicators through an economic-focussed or otherwise narrow perspective.

Mobility capital

While previous studies focused overwhelmingly on cultural and social capital, and its recognition and transformation through the migration and mobility of academics (e.g. Brooks, 2018; Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke, & Weiß, 2014; Pherali, 2012), few studies so far have asked how academics are able to become mobile in the first place, and how they plan and realise mobility. For this purpose, my research (Schäfer, 2020a) has classified mobility as a capital (Corbett, 2007; Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004; Kaufmann, Maksim, Borja, Courty, & Ramadier, 2012; Murphy-Lejeune, 2003; Viry & Kaufmann, 2015; Weenink, 2007, 2008) in order to see the accumulation of mobility capital among our sample of mobile doctoral candidates from a perspective that takes into account the whole course of their lives. The research addressed the blind spot in the literature where mobility is too often taken for granted, or is explained solely by economic-academic pull and push factors, and the ability to relocate and move spatially is not conceptualised as a basic foundation of, or precondition for, any kind of mobility activity. My research demonstrated how mobile academics, as a specific sub-group of high-skilled movers, accumulated this capital throughout the course of their lives (Chapter Four).

1.3 The social dimension of spatial mobility in academia

As with others forms of migration and mobility, mobility in academia has the potential to overcome the social inequalities and social obstacles faced in national contexts (Beck, 2006; Leung, 2017). On the other hand, it can also deepen and extend existing social differences (Faist, 2014; Straub, 2007; Waters & Brooks, 2010). Most of the current research[6] regarding social inequality in higher education focuses on student mobility, overwhelmingly concluding that mobility during studies is highly dependent on the social background of the students and deepens social inequality among the student corpus (Bargel & Bargel, 2010; Fernex, Vries, & Lima, 2017; Finger, 2011; Lörz & Krawietz, 2011; Netz & Finger, 2016; Neumeyer & Pietrzyk, 2016; Powell & Finger, 2013). Experiences of mobility during studies also effect decisions about mobility after graduation, and therefore establish a link between the social question of student mobility and doctoral candidate mobility (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014). 'High social background positively affects the likelihood of gaining mobility experience during the undergraduate or graduate studies. Such experience, in turn, is positively associated with mobility plans during the doctoral phase' (ibid: p. 55). However, the same study suggests that social background itself becomes less relevant to mobility in the PhD phase. This phenomenon was observable in all the issues presented here, including mobility trajectories, horizontal Europeanisation, perception of career development, or – most surprisingly – the accumulation of mobility capital. Social background did not emerge as a decisive or distinctive category in our sample group – which was, of course, not representative. Nevertheless, was it noticeable that social class was relatively invisible, contrary to my initial assumption and to studies on the general social imbalance among students (Hauschildt, Mishra, Netz, & Gwosc, 2015) or

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[6] The referenced studies in this paragraph refer to the situation in Germany and its higher education systems, which seemed to be most relevant to my own research, as the sampled PhDs are from Germany. The social impact and premises for spatial mobility and its specifics can vary over different countries, but in general show a rather consistent direction of impact (Bilecen and van Mol, 2017; Brooks, 2008)

professors (Möller, 2013) and student mobility in particular (Bilecen & van Mol, 2017). A possible explanation is that a group of doctoral candidates has already been 'filtered' through a process of education and higher education, and is therefore more homogenous in terms of aspirations, plans, and habitus (Mare, 1980, 1981). Other studies second this observation and explanation (Jaksztat et al., 2011). This means that social background indirectly (through previous experienced mobility among other selection criteria) influences mobility during the doctoral phase, while having no direct influence in the doctoral phase itself. The academic habitus seems already very firmly established among the PhD candidates, and is mostly internalized, with little differences among the social classes.

## 2. Mobility of doctoral candidates in Europe: summary and outlook

Mobility is the binding theme of this dissertation, and the following five chapters (chapters Three to Seven) all address the mobility of doctoral candidates in Europe. They do so from different perspectives within the social sciences, with different objectives, theoretical underpinnings, and even different sub-disciplines, but they are united in the task to better understand the struggles and ideas of mobile doctoral candidates in contemporary Europe. While the approaches and perspectives to each specific aspect of doctoral mobility vary, they all are connected to each other in relationships that are, to varying degrees, conditional and reciprocal.

The perception of career development (Schäfer, 2020c) is heavily influenced by past mobility trajectories and the consequences of such trajectories, e.g. the focus on a specific country or language. Certain trajectories can potentially lead to a 'lock-in' move to a specific path of career or geographical space of future employment, but different trajectories can have the opposite effect, spatially expanding the imagined possibilities, eventually leading to a different decision regarding work after attaining a PhD. Furthermore, career development is connected to horizontal Europeanisation, because the feeling of belonging or being attached to a certain transnational space (in this case Europe; specifically, Northern and Western Europe), and the comfort to move and live in this space, can influence the imagination and later decisions, makes it more likely for someone to take a position in this particular space. On the other hand, the perception of career development has an effect on the perception of EU instruments: when such perceptions are shaped by past mobility, the instruments may seem irrelevant and uninteresting, or not viable, because of the conscious decision to pursue a highly mobile and potential prestigious academic career. The mobility trajectory can also alter the perception of EU

instruments when it leads to a more nationally orientated career, and with the option for national funding becoming more interesting and accessible.

Mobility capital and its accumulation is the foundation of all movements and decisions for relocation and spatial rearrangements, laying the groundwork for each of the above-mentioned subjects. Without the fostering of mobility capital, it would be extremely difficult (if not impossible) for someone to imagine a career in other geographical places, because the ability and readiness to actually put a plan into action influences the perception of the future. Horizontal Europeanisation would be reduced to a mere vision if not brought to life through actually realized mobility; and even when trajectories into a specific space (like a national higher education systems) differ, they still have to rely on the ability to become mobile at some point.

To further demonstrate the interconnection and arrangement in layers of the five topics, I have visualized the nesting of the five chapters:
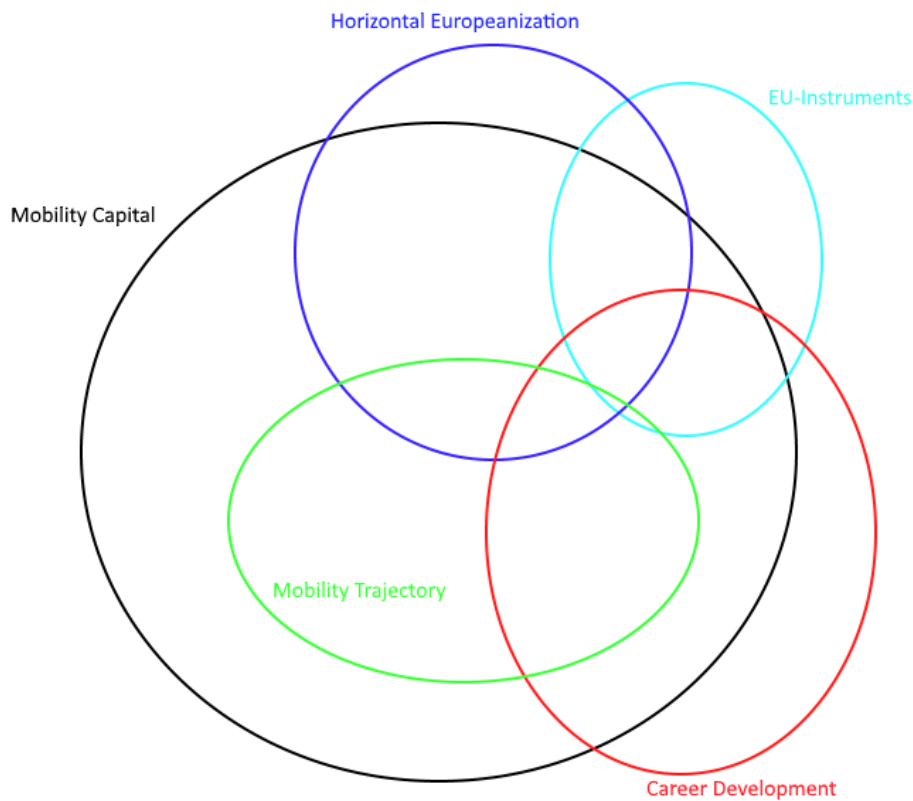
Figure 1: Visualisation of the thematical links

This figure gives an idea of how the topics stand in relation to each other. Mobility capital

functions as a sort of basic principle that underlines all other issues, with horizontal

Europeanisation going partly beyond mobility capital because it does not only comprise of

mobility (although mobility is a central characteristic). The same can be said about the

perception of EU instruments – although mobility capital is an important aspect of the

perception of those instruments (which demand high mobility), it is not the only decisive

factor – and the perception of career development. Only mobility trajectories are fully

embedded in the accumulation of mobility capital, with both standing in close relation to each

other during their development.

The different articles were published in different journals that represent a variety of disciplinary directions, including higher education research, European studies, educational studies, sociology of education and profession, and mobilities and migration studies. This variety represents the topical diversity and richness of my own work, with the three main cornerstones being higher education research, European studies, and mobilities studies. Previous research on (junior) academics already established a spanned view and research focus over migration/mobility and the academic agent as the corpus of literature demonstrates (Ackers, 2004, 2005; Ackers et al., 2007; Ackers, 2013; Bilecen & Faist, 2015; Kim, 2010; Pherali, 2012). However, the novelty in my work here also includes the dimension of Europe and Europeanisation – which usually is limited to research on student (mobility) – and the emphasis on the doctoral candidates, with their unique position within the field of academia. Doctoral candidates are employees with a salary or researchers with a scholarship, and bring their own contribution to their discipline, therefore being more than a mere student (while still learning). Although the different sub-disciplines operate under slightly different theoretical and methodological angles, the use of narrative-biographical interviews, in combination with theories that put emphasis on agent-action without denying structural influences, proved to be a very fruitful and unifying concept.

Chapter Three[7] addresses the different trajectories into the French and Dutch higher education systems that emerged from analysis of the interviews with doctoral candidates. Against the background of internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education systems, the chapter shows how the two countries with different strategies and different levels of openness

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[7] Chapters Three to Seven in this thesis are accepted (and published expect for chapter Five) articles in peer-reviewed journals, and the paper citation for each publication is given at the beginning of each chapter. The chapters are exactly based on the original articles, with the only changes made to formatting, citation style, and language (all were put into British English) to achieve consistency throughout the thesis.

to internationalisation are connected to different trajectories of doctoral candidates from Germany. Whereas the Netherlands started early with such efforts, and are engaged in internationalisation to a high degree, France makes less effort on this front, very much relying on its own tradition, an old area of influence (i.e. ex-colonies, and the spread of the French language), and a long history of higher education and research to make it more connected with the rest of the world, or with Europe. The analysis of this chapter utilises Weber's 'conduct of life' – a foundational concept in the superordinate project 'Mobile Transitions - Mobile Lifestyles? Career Choice and Ways of Living at the Transition to Transnational Scientific Careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm et al., 2017) – to retrace the passages of orientation and preparation toward entering France and the French system, and to demonstrate the absence of such an orientation and preparation in the Dutch cases. It shows that German-French institutional interlacing plays a significant role in creating and fostering interest in the culture and language of France among the future German doctoral candidates, whereas there are no comparable offers and interest in the Dutch sub-sample. However, all interviewees, regardless of their destination country, were able to become mobile, and so moving for their current PhD position was not the first time they had done so.

Chapter Four addresses these circumstances by developing the conception of mobility capital. This form of incorporated capital is developed by and through the prior mobility experiences of the doctoral candidates during the course of their lives, and also represents the ability to realise present and future mobility with more confidence and less investment of time and energy – the accumulation of mobility capital normalising mobility decisions. This capital also gives those who have it an advantage over their less mobile colleagues throughout different stages of their professional lives. The stage at which mobility capital is accumulated varies. During the early stages, e.g. school and pre-studies, the institutional framework proves to be very important in guiding and securing the pathway to mobility capital. Later, when further mobility capital

has been accumulated, institutional frameworks lose their importance, and agents are able to organise and realise decisions connected to mobility and the accumulation process by themselves. Therefore, it becomes clear that the accumulation of mobility capital not only follows the course of age and maturity in the context of a life course perspective, but also depends on institutional surroundings and offerings. Becoming and being spatially mobile is also central for a potential horizontal Europeanisation process.

Chapter Five follows this lead and retraces the process of Europeanisation for mobile doctoral candidates, who had spent much or all of their time in the context of the European Union or the European Higher Education Area/European Research Area. The Erasmus exchange programme had a huge impact on getting Europeanisation started, which mainly strengthened that exchange period throughout Europe through personal contacts. But by becoming a doctoral candidate, and therefore becoming more 'professional' (most of our interviewees had working contracts, or at least scholarships) the contacts in Europe relevant to the process of Europeanisation became professional ones. The benefits and advantages of the European Union – the freedom of mobility in particular, but also transferable pensions and health insurance – were mostly seen as a given and taken for granted, indicating a further development of horizontal Europeanisation. This wasn't an especially big surprise, as previous studies have demonstrated that highly-skilled migrants and higher educated people tend to be more Europeanized and make use of Europe as a transnational space. On the other hand, however, some decisions that seemed to be superficially connected to a Europeanisation process were actually based on more profane evaluations, such as the proximity of neighbouring countries as potential destinations; and the view of Europe as a common space only focussed on Northern and Western Europe, disregarding Southern and Eastern Europe, probably because working conditions there are seen as less desirable. This poses the question of whether or not we can speak of a real horizontal

Europeanisation if certain regions are explicitly or implicitly not included in such an understanding.

Chapter Six also embraces Europe as a geographical marker of relevance in its addressing of the perception of career development. This development was very much seen in the academic track, with the possible sacrifices of mobility perceived as reasonable for an adequate position within academia; mobility overall, however, was increasingly perceived as something undesirable and tiring, *because* of the previous mobility rather than in spite of it. The mobility experienced by academics helped to expand professional networks across borders, and therefore potentially widened employment possibilities in the future; but, at the same time, this mobility did not help establish a network in the academics' home country, occasionally even damaging the chances of doing so, thereby also lowering expectations for work opportunities. Additionally to the disadvantage of small or not-yet-existent networks in countries of origin, differences between higher education systems in epistemology, recognition of intellectual contributions, and specific field-related vocabulary were seen as major obstacles, especially in those countries and disciplines which were perceived as less internationalized. Knowledge and experience of higher education in different institutional settings across borders were seen as very beneficial, as they allowed academics to better understand differences (both positive as negative ones), therefore contributing to a supposedly more realistic academic career plan. As mentioned in the beginning, those perception vastly focused on an academic career and differed from an imagined path outside of academia, where positions overwhelmingly thought to be found in Germany and not somewhere else due to language barriers and missing networks, therefore not seeing any or even negative value in the mobility experienced so far.

Chapter Seven reconnects to the question of linkage between EU/ERA and individual researchers, and addresses the perception of EU instruments such as MSCA and ERC and the umbrella programme Horizon, as well as the more general vision of a united ERA, among our

interview candidates. For those with general or shallow knowledge about such instruments, their prestige is acknowledged. But the practical interest or even applications are very limited among PhDs, who do not consider themselves 'ready' or do not see themselves as the target group of such instruments. In short, they rarely see engagement with such initiatives and application for EU-funding as a pressing issue. Even those in the sample who worked within a project or in a position funded by the EU, such as Marie Curie, had no further knowledge or interest, although they became aware of the project's prestige during their work in that position. Besides the lack of practical application, doctoral candidates pointed out that the high demands of European mobility required a successful funding application, as well as the very high degree of bureaucracy involved makes application rather unattractive. They further demonstrated a critical awareness when addressing the sometimes rather shallow requirements of 'Europeaness' or European cooperation, which were considered merely buzzwords and trends. These concerns should be taken into consideration for the further development of a common EHEA and ERA, resulting (for example) in the lowering of bureaucratic obstacles and the simplification of the processes involved. It should also be appreciated that junior academics are not always available for high mobility, due to private circumstances.

Going beyond the current state of my research, I would also like to raise potential future research questions and fields of interest, and discuss developments of – and elaborations on – current research. The superordinate project provided a large and very rich dataset from over 60 biographical-narrative interviews with individual interviewees, a data set on which I based my doctoral thesis and the following paper. Beyond that, the superordinate project also included 20 'couple interviews' with those individual interviewees who were in a relationship and willing to participate in such a format. Although these couple interviews also provide a rich dataset, and touch on interesting topics (Schittenhelm, forthcoming) within the realm of academic mobility and beyond, my own research was limited to the 60 biographical individual interviews

for better comparison. More information on the sample and on the documentary method used as the tool of analysis of our dataset (Bohnsack, Pfaff & Weller, 2010) can be found in each of the following chapters (or papers). The individual interviews captured a specific moment during the doctoral and academic journey, from which the reality of the future can by no means be projected. Therefore, it would be very interesting to conduct further research, collecting qualitive data in a longitudinal way. This would make it possible to go beyond our interviewees' perceptions of certain topics, and to contrast their wishes, plans, and ideas with the subsequent reality of their lives. In a similar vein, it would be interesting to have comparative interviews with doctoral candidates who stayed at their university or in their home country and who have no mobility experience, enabling a closer look at the differences between mobile and non-mobile groups, to discover whether the differences are social, economic, cultural, or something else.

In sum, this thesis provides an insightful new perspective on the variance of academic spatial mobility in European higher education, with different emphases on social mobility, Europeanisation, differences in national higher education systems, the process of becoming mobile, and the percieved influence of spatial mobility on the development of academic careers. None of these phenomena can be understood in isolation, as they are all interconnected and reciprocal, existing together under the umbrella of institutional pressure on academics to become mobile and have a more globalised or Europeanised (transnational) career or, even to live a more globalised or Europeanised life. But academic has become also more common, because opportunity structures have massively changed for academics (and students) over the course of recent years (that is, before the coronavirus pandemic), allowing lives to span borders, and enabling the harmonisation of private lives with professional careers, even if they stretch betwen many countries and time zones. Common to all chapters and aspects of my research on academic mobility is the practical and theoretical distinction between mobility and migration,

as the differences between short-term and long-term are still in question and borders are sometimes more fluid than commonly expected and theorised (at least for highly-skilled intra-EU migrants), whether in a European context, on a global scale, or in a bi-national setting. The thesis utilised various theoretical and epistomological approaches, from capital theory over transnationalism to critical realism, to capture the different nuances of each social phenomenon and their consequences, but is consistent in taking agents and their perspectives seriously, even though (or because) they are restricted by or intertwined in their surrounding structures. Just as the accumulation of mobility capital has to be achieved with consecutive steps, the horizontal Europeanisation of life – or the penetration of a specific national higher education system – is based on different sequential phases of life, each with their own bond with time and place and being unique to the mobility experiences that constitute results of the present. Mobility has become a much more pressing and relevant topic within academia (and beyond), and it will most likely become moreso, even if the coronavirus pandemic has forced a halt on this development for now. But my research has shown that the path of mobility will continue, and that its effect on professional careers and private lives will become more visible and incisive – for better and for worse. Another important takeaway is that mobility (almost) never comes without burdens, without private and professional sacrifices and disadvantages, so the decision for mobility as an academic (but certainly just as much for other people) bears serious consequences, closing opportunities as well as opening up others. In this context it might be surprising how quickly and unexpectedly people can 'stumble' into mobility and lay the groundwork for further mobility. Then again, it is usually impossible for agents to see and evaluate all the consequences and the potential magnitude of their mobility decisions; and the research showed very clearly that the mobility process is also a process of emancipation and personal growth precisely because of the confrontation with new problems and obstacles and the necessity of finding solutions. In conclusion, academic mobility fosters connectivity – socially, professionally, cognitively, and in the way life is conducted – and the doctoral phase

is the crucial stage in the academic life when these factors are proven, skills are developed, and orientations are formed.

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3. Trajectories into foreign higher education systems for doctoral candidates from Germany: a comparative study of France and the Netherlands

Abstract[8]

The pathways and trajectories for foreign doctoral candidates to enter the host country can differ considerably. These trajectories are not completely embedded in the higher education systems, they also include factors outside of work and academia. Our comparative study reconstructs the perspective and trajectories of doctoral candidates from Germany who are doing their research in France and the Netherlands. This includes why and when they chose to pursue a PhD in France or the Netherlands. Our analysis shows that there are prominent differences between both of our case study groups, which can be explained by their varying attractions for foreigners and differing concepts of internationalisation and national research focus.

Keywords: trajectories; doctoral candidates; migration; mobility; internationalisation

Introduction

The question of the internationalisation of universities, national higher education and research systems is becoming ever more relevant and important (Knight 2004; Aerden et al. 2013). Therefore, this paper intends to take a closer look at a group of individuals who have been particularly affected by internationalisation policies—namely, PhD candidates (Netz & Schirmer 2017). Most of the previous research of internationalisation has focused on general institutional environments (de Wit & Knight 1999) from a macro and administrative sciences

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perspective, and using quantitative datasets. In contrast, in this study we have conducted biographical interviews with German PhD candidates, who graduated in the humanities and social sciences in France and the Netherlands. In this paper, we will present and examine their perspectives. In particular, we will use a case study design to compare the trajectories of German doctoral candidates in France and the Netherlands.

The recent trend towards internationalisation has pressured and affected every higher education system (HES) and university, who have been forced to constantly strive to become or remain competitive (Altbach & Knight 2007). However, research shows that the implementation of strategies and the general orientation towards internationalisation differs between European countries (Ackers et al. 2001). Consequently, a comparison of France and the Netherlands will be particularly interesting because France has maintained a very strong national tradition in the humanities and social sciences (Musselin 2004), while the Dutch system has had a long tradition of internationalisation (Huang 2006). This context is further complicated because the Bologna-reform has affected the French system and political actions have been taken to increase the international visibility of French universities (Liebeskind 2011).

Our paper addresses two research gaps in the research of internationalisation of higher education: the individual in the HES and the PhD candidate. Previous research of the internationalisation and internationality of an academic system generally uses an institutional and macro-level analysis. In contrast, this paper presents the perspective of the individual and it includes a multi-dimensional view of the interaction between professional decisions and private life conduct choices, while bearing in mind the context of the possibilities that different HESs offer. Our specific target group is formed of PhD candidates, who usually rank at the bottom of the academic workforce and are still shaping their career paths. However, this group of young academics is often neglected in migration and mobility studies of scientists. The previously researched target groups are usually academics, who are post-docs and beyond. In

contrast, we know very little about the mobility of PhD candidates. While previous research and policy have tended to focus specifically on the mobility of natural scientists (Ackers et al. 2006), our study exclusively includes PhD candidates from the humanities and social sciences, who face very different challenges and obstacles.

The HESs of France and the Netherlands

We begin our comparative case study by giving a short introduction to the HESs of France and the Netherlands, emphasising the status of the doctoral candidates and the internationalisation of these two systems. This will provide a basic understanding of the institutional frameworks in which the universities operate and the conditions that these researchers are subjected to. Internationalisation is understood as a process of opening and mainstreaming national academic systems towards each other (van de Bunt Kokhuis 1992). These measures can comprise, for example, the inclusion of international comparative theories, international study programmes and diplomas, foreign language classes, cooperation with foreign universities, international student exchange programmes, support measurements for foreign students and staff, and so on (Teichler 2007; Leask & Bridge 2003). While everything related to teaching, learning and research is considered to be a core service, the peripheral aspects of internationalisation include living conditions and other components, such as accommodation, security, social benefits, infrastructure, social and cultural activities, and so on (Bianchi 2013). Both the core and the peripheral factors will be revised in our analysis. The percentage of foreigners among the PhD candidates at a university can be seen as one of several indicators for the internationality of a higher education institution (Brandenburg & Federkeil 2007). Despite the general trend of internationalisation, the national character of an academic system and its practices can become an obstacle for new comers who are not familiar with its characteristics and peculiarities (Bourdieu 1988; Enders 2001), which go beyond the legal requirements and likewise official guidelines. For example, Musselin (2004, 58) found that: 'Informal and implicit rules of the

game that each discipline in each country uses to select among numerous candidates […] are rather difficult to know and/or to satisfy for foreign candidates.' Non-official criteria can function as an informal obstacle for foreign applicants because they are usually unaware of the unspoken and unofficial decisive factors.

Leišytė et al. (2006) have shown that competitive HESs are especially open to internationalisation. Given that state funding is minimal or absent, these universities have to *market* themselves to ensure adequate funding—internationalisation is a key part of this self-commercialisation. The Dutch use a competitive system, while the French system is still described as reluctant to bow to internationalisation trends and pressures thanks to its strong state funding (Kreckel 2008). Furthermore, the size of the country and its political, economic, academic and linguistic power and self-confidence will shape the internationalisation of its academic system (Enders 2004). France and the Netherlands are very different with regard to these dimensions, which is in part reflected in the fact that the Netherlands has a national strategy with regard to internationalisation and France does not (Craciun 2018). Prestigious European Research Council (ERC) grants are partly awarded on the applying research team's level of international cooperation. Therefore, the number of ERC grants that a country receives provides another perspective of the international integration of a HES. In a recent evaluation of its ERC-programme, the Netherlands was identified as one of three *top-performers* when measured with ERC grants per university. Although placed fourth, France was still seen to be in the *medium-performer* group (Ttopstart 2017).

France

France is a popular host country for international students and it has the highest share of non-EU PhD candidates (35%) (Deloitte 2014). This might be explained by the large share of incoming graduates from France's ex-colonies, who are fluent or even native French-language users. The École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales (EHESS) is one of the most prestigious

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establishments in France and was designed as an international institution. Currently, 50 percent of its PhD students are drawn from overseas. In the last few decades, universities and the grandes écoles have made considerable efforts to increase their international visibility and attract more foreign students. For example, the foreign student population at Sciences Po, another institution belonging to the most esteemed universities in France, is close to 50 percent. This institution is currently implementing a number of internationalisation efforts, such as dual degree programmemes and international collabourations (i.e. exchange and research programmes, partnerships, co-publications etc.). The French language still plays an important role, especially in the humanities and social sciences. For example, the majority of research results that were published by members of the Sciences Po academic society were published in French and only one-third were published in English (Sciences Po 2017, 5).[9] This suggests that the target audience is francophone or national, rather than international. This aspect will be discussed in the presentation and analysis of the French sample cases later on in this article. However, many critical voices complain that the French HES is still not open enough. There are many reasons for this, including a low percentage of PhD candidates from other EU countries (9%) (Deloitte 2014), resistance to incorporating international elements into the curriculum (Tran 2015, 7), and the strong prevalence of the French language. However, many younger academics are more willing to learn and use English, having realised its importance in the international research context, even though that the majority still prefer to work with French. Since 1994, the Toubon Law has required the use of the French language in many areas of French public life. This can be seen as another indicator of the measures that France has taken to protect and preserve the language (Pilkington 2014).

Today, extensive efforts are in place to encourage scientific exchange between Germany and France. These efforts are implemented through a variety of measures (i.e. bi-national study

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[9] Other common publication languages include Italian, Spanish, and German.

programmemes) that facilitate mobility for students, academics and researchers. This can be attributed to the signing of the Elysee Contract in 1963, which represented an important positive change in German-Franco relations that had been strained in the wake of WW2. The Elysee Contract marked the start of reconciliation between these two countries (Defrance & Pfeil 2005, 28), encouraging rapprochement on a number of levels.

The Netherlands

In 2000, the Netherland's government published its National Strategic Plan, which encouraged universities to sharpen their institutional profiles. One part of this plan was the change from the traditional master-apprentice relationship towards a system of structured graduate schools, which defines tasks and obligations between professor and candidate through a contract (Kehm 2004). Another part was an increased orientation towards internationalisation (Klumpp et al. 2014). The process of internationalisation intensified with the implementation of the Bologna-reform, the Treaty of Lisbon and the introduction of the Bachelor-Master-system, with the PhD as the highest academic degree (Luijten-Lub 2004). In Luijten-Lub's (2005) evaluation of university employees, these developments were considered to be rather positive for the Europeanisation and internationalisation of the Dutch HES. Compared to other European countries, the Netherlands implemented internationalisation measurements at their universities quite early (van der Wende 1997; de Weert 2004) and they prepared their university employees for the new changes (Stronkhorst 2005). Generally, the Netherlands and its university system have a long history of international orientation (Huang 2006; Rud et al. 2015), mainly because of the small size of the Dutch population and the need to attract good scientists, which are sometimes even specifically scouted (Kehm 2004) from abroad to ensure the reputation and high quality of research and teaching in the Netherlands. This becomes obvious when we look at the percentage of foreign students and academics. In the academic year 2014/2015, 10 percent of all students in the Netherlands and 45 percent of all PhD candidates were foreigners (Dorst

et al. 2016). Furthermore, 60 percent of the foreign PhDs are from Europe (van der Wende 2015), which makes it the EU country with the highest proportion (with the exception of Luxembourg) of doctoral candidates from other EU member states (Deloitte 2014). Over the last 10 years, the percentage of international students and PhDs rose between four and seven percent every year (Huberts 2017). English-based Bachelor programmes and especially Master's and PhD programmes were massively expanded and institutionalised during the implementation of Bologna (Kotake 2016). The switch to English as the scientific franca lingua in the Netherlands was justified by the general good level of English in Dutch society and the low knowledge and impact of the Dutch language globally (Kotake 2016). The Netherlands ranked top in a comparative study (Höhle & Teichler 2012) between different countries in the non-use of the national language in research and teaching.

Academic mobility and conduct of life

Academic mobility can be challenging and it includes a large number of considerations. It depends largely on a combination of factors concerning academia itself, such as transparent and open recruitment, working and employment conditions, a career system with long-term perspectives, salary, reputation and the expertise of the professors and supervisors (Ackers 2005; Deloitte 2014; Teichler 2007), in addition to more general factors such as transparent immigration rules, social security, possibility of balancing private and professional life, and a good quality of life (Børing et al. 2015). However, simplistic economical migration theory tends to not fully grasp complexity of mobility of academics (Urry 2016) by reducing it to economic-financial decisions, whereas economic determinants are less important for academics (Mahroum 2000, 2001).

As shown, we cannot simply look at academic mobility through the lenses of work-related issues because work is only one part of the conduct of an academic life (Abel & Cockerham 1993; Weber 2010), which is intertwined with private areas of life, such as family, friends,

leisure, etc (Brooks 2018). In this paper, we draw on theoretical conceptualisation on the conduct of life linked to mobile scholars (Schittenhelm et al. 2017). The conduct of life is maintained by the stakeholder and is the result of constant follow-up work by his or her action (Voß 1991). Therefore, the conduct of life is not something that is imposed on the passive individual by others, 'however, external influences like life chances clearly structure the options' (Cockerham et al. 1993, 419). Life chances are defined as the probability of realising the choice of life conduct, depending on structural patterns, such as open positions for doctoral candidates. Together they form the lifestyle, as Weber understood it. This expanded the classical view in the sociology of work, which had only focused on the area of work and long overlooked other factors and their impact on occupation and career. This is especially relevant for mobile workers (Huchler 2013) and, therefore, well suits our research question. Although the concept of conduct of life takes an individual perspective and micro-approach, it should not be assumed that the life conduct is subject to the person's will alone:

> It is always also (if not primarily) the consequence of situational decisions and pragmatic ad hoc arrangements, which come into being with limited reflexivity. Regardless of the fact that it is the product of an individual, life conduct gains both a functional and a structural autonomy in relation to its producer. (Jurczyk et al. 2016, 47)

Once the direction has been set, it cannot change at will at any time but it is subject to the individual's set up regime of regulation and routine. Established trajectories and pathways form and limit the freedom of action in specific situations. Therefore, the individual's life is integrated in a complex and multi-dimensional social context. Life conduct is always socially influenced through objective social conditions, which not only constrain and demand but also enable and enact the individual. Furthermore, sociocultural influences tell us what life conduct should look like and they set normative standards. This also happens through the individual's interaction with others, whether it be privately with friends and family or professionally with

colleagues and networks (Jurczyk et al. 2016). This is neither a deterministic concept of social structures nor a framework of total individual freedom: 'The conduct of everyday life represents a mediating category between the individual subjects and societal structures, articulating in particular the subjects' experiences and the scope of action as they grapple with these structures through collective and structuring actions' (Højholt & Schraube 2016, 4).

With regard to this present paper, the conduct of life of PhD candidates can be shaped and influenced by the conditions in their home country (i.e. Germany) and also in the host country, especially with regard to their private and professional lives. As shown, migration decision-making depends on a number of factors. Both the national framework of France and the Netherlands—both as a state and as a HES—and the French and Dutch cultures influence the interviewees' lifestyle and decisions. This concept allows us to analyse the biographical trajectories and orientations that led these doctoral students to migrate. In particular, these life course decisions and everyday coping mechanisms are framed in the particularities of the respective countries, including their HESs. As discussed previously, internationalisation efforts on the macro- and meso-level cannot be limited to the core services but should also include the conduct of private life. In our analysis, we will examine the trajectories of how these candidates' transition into a foreign system in respect to their private and professional lives.

Data and methods

The data analysed and presented in this paper was collected as part of the ongoing project 'Mobile transitions - mobile lifestyles? Career choices and way of living at the transition to transnational scientific careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm et al. 2017) which commenced in October of 2016 and is continuing through to September 2019. The qualitative study looks at results of different research areas and aims to add to the debate of topics such as migration and transnational mobility of the highly qualified in Europe, and the interconnection of professional mobility and a way of life (Schittenhelm 2014). It furthermore offers the

conceptual framework of our research. The sample consists of graduates of the social sciences and humanities (SSH) who completed their studies at German universities and chose to migrate to France or the Netherlands to pursue academic careers (i.e. PhD). These two countries were chosen as exemplary cases due to the fact that after the UK and German-speaking countries, France and the Netherlands have the highest EU percentage of German nationals among their students and academic staff (Schittenhelm 2014). The sample was later extended to include persons who had concluded their high school diploma in Germany and migrated at an earlier stage (prior to the completion of their Bachelor's and/or Master's studies). This extension enabled us to adapt to the field because our research had shown that a large number of interviewees migrated at earlier periods. In this paper, the interviewees who migrated from Germany prior to their PhD studies will be referred to as the extended sample, in demarcation to the original sample. The first interviews were conducted in December of 2016 and they continued till September 2018, resulting in 60 interviews: 35 in the Netherlands and 25 in France. The sample consists of 40 women and 20 men, the majority of whom are in their late-20s to mid-30s.

The first few months of the project were dedicated to research the field and to gain a better understanding of it. Institutions that were probably able to host potential interview partners were identified and contacted (i.e. doctoral schools, research institutes) and asked for support in establishing contact with the sample group (e.g. through sending information about the project and the search for interview partners via their internal mailing list). In addition, potential interview partners were researched on the institutions homepages (i.e. research labouratories) and contacted directly. Snowballing also led to the recruitment of volunteer participants.

This study applies narrative interviews for data collection (Schütze 1983).[10] Each participant was presented with the same narration stimulus.[11] In essence, interview partners were asked to narrate their detailed biography, including all of the occurrences and experiences that they recall, with the objective of triggering an impromptu narration in which the interviewee describes their experiences and orientations, unprepared and in their own words. The narrative interview is an important explorative instrument and is used to identify the interviewee's perceptions and priorities and orientations. Evidently, the initiation question—the narration stimuli—plays an integral part in the success of the interview and gives the interviewee an opportunity to introduce, emphasise and prioritise the topics that are relevant to them, without the researcher imposing ideas or notions on the interviewee (Corbin & Morse 2003). The researcher wants to trigger as many narrations as possible and influence the narrator as little as possible. Once the initial first narration comes to an end, the interviewer may then ask immanent questions, pertaining to issues already raised that need clarification, and trigger further narrations. Only after the last stage is concluded can the interviewer may ask questions raising topics that have not been addressed, namely exmanent questions (Nohl 2010). Before the interviews were conducted, several subjects of interest and topics pertaining to the research questions were identified. After the participants had concluded their narration, the questions helped to render the case complete.

In our analysis, we have applied the documentary method (Bohnsack 2014) as the method of interpretation. This method originates from the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim 2013). As a reconstructive analysis method, the documentary method looks at how a topic or action is portrayed and constructed. This enables us to identify an orientation frame, in which the issue

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[10] All but one of the interviews were conducted in German. Our analysis is based on the original transcripts and all of the quotes from the interviewees in this article are translations made by the authors. All of the names of persons and locations have been altered to avert identification and ensure anonymity.

[11] The stimulus was 'We are interested in life stories of young academics from Germany. I would like to hear now your life story with all the events that you remember. There is no limit of time, I will not interrupt you and only take notes for follow-up questions during your story.'

is processed and presented. This method is not only interested in the content of the interviews but also how topics are addressed by the interviewee (Nohl 2010). The findings of the interviews are contextualised with the results of other research regarding the internationalisation of the two HESs and way of life choices/approaches.

Findings

In this section, our findings will be presented. Prior and early connections and affiliations to the country of PhD choice are presented, and the path and transition to the actual PhD position are retraced.

Prior affiliations to France or the Netherlands

The most common connection to the Netherlands prior to the candidates' migration was a vacation, either with the family as a child or teenager, or with friends. The spatial proximity and the easy access played an important role, in addition to the general attraction of the Netherlands as a vacation destination. However, this did not lead to any specific interest in the country or investment in knowledge about Dutch culture, society or language, as in the following example:

> *I knew exactly six Dutch words: yes, thanks, bye and, um, watch out bump on the street, from our [laughing] vacations in the past. Let op trempel. This [laughs] is not so much a vocabulary, which will bring you something if you are um looking for a room in a shared flat [laughs].* (Anna)

Vacations were common among interviewees who had previously lived in the northern and western parts of Germany, and were less important for interviewees from other regions. However, even for candidates who grew up in relative proximity to the Netherlands, the neighbouring country would often remain unknown. For example, Alena, who is from northern

Germany, stated that she had never been in the Netherlands before and has '*no relationship*' to the country.

The transition to a new, mostly unknown country, was never framed in a negative or intimidating way, rather it was seen as a chance to develop new horizons and gain new experiences. Apart from these private dimensions of their lives, there was no further connection, mobility or orientation directed towards the Netherlands during their childhood and adolescence—neither school exchanges, languages-school classes, gap year abroad, or the like. Not surprisingly, none of the candidates from our sample possessed Dutch-language skills at the beginning of their Master's or PhD. For example, Linda did an internship at the same university where she later started her PhD. The internship was placed between her Bachelor's and Master's studies in Germany, and was described by Linda as the initial process for her interest in research. Her decision to do the internship was based on the outstanding reputation of the research institution and not on the fact that it was located in the Netherlands. There was only one more case in the Dutch PhD sample that mentions a professional connection prior to the transition—Nina, who had a brief and unplanned academic visit to the Netherlands during her Master's.

For the group who studied their Master's in the Netherlands, English-medium instruction (EMI, Lueg 2015) was one of the key factors behind their decision because many Master's studies in the Netherlands are taught in English (Kotake 2016). Another pattern can be found here is that many of the candidates had originally thought about or had sent applications to British universities but had eventually decided against it when they considered the disadvantages, including the high tuition fees, living costs and the struggle to find accommodation (especially in Greater London). The Netherlands presented a lower priced alternative that offers the same language of instruction as the UK:

I thought about it very, very long, if I want to go to London or to Leiden. Um, I would have found London just interesting as a city, but I thought regarding [...] regarding money it is of course very, then I will sit somehow in a small shabby apartment, two hours outside of the city, um, [...] plus the tuition fees. So, this was then also a consideration, that led me to the thought 'Okay, then [...] it is maybe a not so great place to go as a student.' (Julia)

This argument is corroborated in Anna's narration, who also focused on the high tuition fees in the UK and described her decision to do her Master's in the Netherlands instead of the UK as a very good choice in retrospect. In particular, she has no debt, which she doubts would be the case if she had gone to the UK. The adaption of the Anglo-American system in the Netherlands makes these decisions considerably easier for potential candidates, who are keen to study in this environment but without occurring the heavy financial burden. This is a good example of how structural circumstances can influence the professional conduct of life, which ultimately also has consequences for private life (e.g. a lower level of debt allows a greater range of actions in the future).

The time before the actual job search and the transition to the host country reveals a number of prominent differences between the two nations. These differences particularly pertain to the lack of mobility to the Netherlands before the start of the Master's or PhD. A connection or bigger interest in the Dutch country and culture was clearly not a decisive factor. However, the limited Dutch-related experiences did not affect the later professional decision, if any of those experiences were available at all. A common narrative pattern among our interviewees in the original Dutch sample group showed that they chose the location because of the job and not for the city, which they sometimes had no experience of.

The French sample stands in stark contrast to the Dutch in terms of the candidates' affiliations to the host country and mobility prior to PhD studies. Evidently, and pertaining to the language

aspect, Dutch is seldom offered or taught at German high schools. In contrast, French is very prominent, giving students an opportunity to not only learn the language but also acquire knowledge about France and its culture. Furthermore, French classes in high schools generally entail an exchange trip to France and possibly hosting a French pupil. This means that a significant number of German students have links to France or to the French language before commencing undergraduate studies. Even those who do not develop a great interest in the French language or excel at learning it in school, graduate from the classes with at least a minimal knowledge of France and its language. This is an example on how external influences can shape the individual's conduct of life into a certain direction. All of the interviewees in the French sample had studied French at school (albeit to different degrees of proficiency) and they had stayed at least once (in most cases more) in France or a French-speaking country prior to commencing their PhD. In several cases, early experiences with the country and/or the language had prompted the candidate's interest in France and the desire to improve their language skills. With regard to school exchanges, many of the participants recalled staying several months in France (or a French-speaking country), which is substantially longer than the more usual couple of weeks:[12]

> *I took part in an exchange in tenth grade, a student exchange to France, um: m [...] I spent three months there, that was near Strasbourg [...] And um [...] there I started somehow, so I liked foreign languages from the beginning, but - yes, um there I somehow [...] I somehow fell in love [...] – with French ((laughing)) and France a little um [...] - um, yes, that was when I think I thought about it for the first time, that maybe I could somehow go to study there, (um), because that was just such a great experience*. (Laura)

Another example came from Frieda, who recounted a number of stays (of different lengths) in France and other French-speaking countries during high school, one of which lasted almost six

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[12] The duration of school exchanges varies but mostly does not extend more than a couple of weeks.

months. Frieda had visited a special high school, which offered its students the opportunity to graduate with a German–French high school diploma (i.e. the AbiBac).[13] Frieda is not the only participant who obtained a bi-national diploma, Paul, Helena and Mascha also had this qualification. Hence, these candidates had already formed a bond to the host country.[14] These cases demonstrate an early German–French educational interchange, commencing even before the transition into the HES. For those cases, the internationalisation of the HES is less relevant because the focus is already very national-orientated.

Vacations are an additional and common connection to France (similar to the case of the Netherlands). A number of interviewees recounted vacations with their parents in France, such as Thomas, who stated that he had '*the best memories of France*' through the many holidays that he spent there with his parents.

Mobility to France or French-speaking countries after completion of high school and preceding PhD studies is also very prominent in the French sample and the interviewees gave various purposes for their stays. For several, the move was part of their studies (e.g. semester abroad/Erasmus) but Lisa and Mia, for example, had worked as Au Pairs and Nils had completed his community service in France. Our sample also includes participants with obvious affiliations, such as people who had been born in France, had a French parent, or grew up in close vicinity to the French–German border.

In summary, and as previously indicated, one of the main differences between the two country samples is mobility and the subsequent forging of affiliations to the host country prior to the PhD studies. In addition, the language aspect differs in both samples. All of the participants had knowledge of the French language (albeit to different degrees) prior to their undergraduate studies. Furthermore, stays in France were in some cases motivated by the wish to improve

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[13] Abitur/Baccalauréat.

[14] One has to bear in mind at this stage that which school their child visits is largely the decision of the parents.

language skills. For example, Thomas stayed and studied in France for one year during his undergraduate studies to gain professional (subject related) knowledge and also out of a desire to improve his language skills. One of the two subjects that Thomas studied was history, he recounted that:

> *I realised [...] how important French knowledge is for the study of history… and then I saw, the [...] Erasmus programme as the last opportunity ((laughing)) to properly learn French and go to France.* (Thomas)

There were several reasons behind Lisa and Mia's stays as Au Pairs, one of which was to improve their French-language skills. Thomas's statement also indicates another dimension of language, namely the relevance that it has for a subject/study programmeme. A few of the participants had lived in the United Kingdom, United States or Australia (e.g. exchanges, Erasmus, part of studies, etc.) for periods lasting up to a year. Overall, the participants' orientations towards these countries was low in the French sample. In addition, several of the participants also mentioned the high tuition fees in these countries.

In this first segment, we have shown that previous affiliations and connections to the later host country are much stronger among the French cases and they had little influence among the Dutch cases. The conduct of the participants' lives was shaped more by considerations of a private nature for the French group (e.g. family vacations). The lack of knowledge about the Netherlands did not deter the participants from transitioning to this country. In this case, more general considerations played a decisive role (e.g. study programmes in English and well-organised research communities with interesting topics of research), which are connected to the internationalisation of the Dutch HES.

Paths and transition to the current position

One of the most, if not the most important factor for applying and pursuing current PhD positions was the fit of research interest and previous academic work. This can be traced in both the original sample and in the extended sample and can be found in both countries, which is in agreement with the previous research (Verwiebe et al. 2014). However, as illustrated in the previous section, there are noticeable differences between the two countries in terms of affiliations and in the transition itself. For example, Nina, from the original Dutch sample, had never considered going to the Netherlands but was drawn there after meeting her research supervisor during her undergraduate studies, who offered her a research position and topic that was of interest to her. She appreciated the reliability between employees at Dutch universities in comparison to her previous experience of southern European countries, which also have a less-internationalised HES. This stay took place during her Master's studies in Germany. She returned to Germany to complete her Master's dissertation and received an offer from her supervisor to start a PhD at a different Dutch university, which she accepted. Nina's case also indicates a very big difference between the two countries—before she went to the Netherlands for her first visit, she could not speak any Dutch. This was the case for all of the participants from the Netherlands. English is far more widespread than Dutch internationally and it can be regarded as a lingua franca in academia. Dutch research policies allow foreign graduates to enter the Dutch research system without much cultural-linguistic preparation. Consequently, most of our interviewees in the Dutch sample had started their PhD positions without preparation or pre-knowledge.

In France, language plays a very different role because French is still very much prevalent in universities and study programmes. For a number of PhD programmemes, a certain level of knowledge of the French language is a prerequisite to enrol and, hence, indispensable. Mia moved to France to pursue her Master's studies after completing her Bachelor's degree in Germany. In the course of the interview, she describes the first semester as being very difficult,

causing her immense stress, because she did not anticipate the strong prevalence of French in the classes:

> O*f course I saw that the f- that the = that - the classes are mainly in French, that there are only a few seminars in English, [...] but that the literature [...] er is so [...] French influenced, I could not have anticipated [...] and that, I practically discovered in every seminar [...] uh: h [...], that is, that really umh [...] that there is a strong French tradition in ABC [subject in the humanities].* (Mia)

Although several of the interviewees intend to write their dissertation in English, adequate knowledge of the French language is necessary for the majority of study programmes, especially in the humanities and social sciences.

In the Netherlands, the positions themselves were found with the help of mailings lists or personal contacts, established (for example) at conferences. Several of our respondents from the extended Netherlands sample imagined that our search for interview partners who graduated from higher education institutions in Germany would be complicated, due to their own path and the path of their colleagues who all secured PhD positions through their research Master's at the same university. Julia told us that her PhD position virtually grew out of her Master's activities with her supervisor. She told us that she would have never considered applying for a PhD in the Netherlands otherwise. Despite the fact that PhD candidates did not have to possess Dutch-language skills, there were still mechanisms and procedures that made it easier for the homegrown graduates to secure a position within academia. Direct contact and established social connections offered opportunities that enabled them to secure a position from within the institution. As described at the start of this section, the relationship between PhD students own research interest and the focus of the supervisor/institute/PhD project was crucial for the application, and possibly also the acceptance. Therefore, graduates on *the ground* occupy an advantageous position because they have early access to information pertaining to the PhD

positions and can, on occasion, influence the research topic as regards content. In neither sample was financial compensation named as a decisive factor. Instead, the interviewees' narration tended to focus more on their intrinsic motivations and incentives, which is valued in academia (Bourdieu 1988). This finding is in line with other contemporary research (Briedis 2018). However, for some cases, the salary and financial conditions reinforced the interviewee's decision to move to the Netherlands to do their research. These interviewees emphasised that the employee status, salary and a secure setting for their PhD were attractive prospects, which they could not find in other countries at the time—including Germany.

In the French case, about one-third of the interviewees proceeded to enrol into a PhD programme after successfully completing their Master's studies in France (in some cases, both Bachelor's and Master's). They tended to remain at the same institution/university and they continued with the same supervisor. This corresponds with the homegrown graduates in the Dutch sample. Once they have been in the host country and institution for an extended period of time, they have built a network (both social and professional) and were familiar with the local structures. Therefore, the interviewees tended to pursue their career in France rather than return to Germany to do their PhD research. Another path pursued by interviewees in the French sample was to enrol into a German–French doctoral programme, which entailed stays in both countries and at two universities. In some cases, this also was a continuation of an already completed German–French Master's programme. It is important to mention here that motivations to become a doctoral candidate in France were not always or solely professionally motivated. About one-third of our participants were in a relationship with a French national, who at different points in time influenced their orientations. For example, frequent vacations left Thomas with positive impressions of France and created an affiliation to the country. He opted for an Erasmus stay in France, to improve his French-language skills. During this Erasmus, he met his French wife. Thomas mentioned that thoughts to pursue and enrol for a

PhD in France (after completing his studies in Germany) generally crossed his mind but his plans only became more concrete after he met his partner and the two decided to pursue their relationship, leading a long-distance relationship for two years while arranging for his return. In another example, Lea met her partner, also a French national, after graduating from high school, during a voluntary year in France. Both worked at the same facility and Lea decided, only a few months into the relationship, to remain in France and enrol in a one-year intensive language course. She described the first year as difficult, partly because her partner did not live in the same city. As the relationship evolved, Lea decided to commence her undergraduate studies in France and stated that until the end of her Bachelor's studies, her partner was the only reason for her to remain in France. Consequently, partners, and hence private dimensions of the conduct of life, played a significant role in the interviewees' decision to consider pursuing their studies and work in France instead of Germany.

Conclusion

This paper has compared the French and the Dutch HESs, and the trajectories of German doctoral candidates in these systems. Although discrepancies can be found on many levels, many similarities were also detected. For example, we found that prior connections and affiliations to the country of migration differed significantly. Whereas France and the French culture played an important role in the conduct of our interviewees' lives, the same cannot be said about the Netherlands and its culture. The latter was only mentioned by some as a destination for family vacations, with no further relevance to their private and professional orientations. In the French sample, linguistic and cultural interest, and also spatial mobility towards France were prevalent. The candidates had many different kinds of mobility experiences prior to their decision to move to the country. In addition, the acquisition of the French language occupied a central part of their early studies. This can be partly explained by the widespread French-language classes in German schools, while Dutch-language classes are

seldom offered. Furthermore, France and French culture have an attraction of their own, which cannot be claimed for the Netherlands. Although the specific pull factors and motivations varied, many of the interviewees in the French sample framed their decision with their wish to move and work in France. This decision was sometimes connected to their private lives, usually because they had French partners. This was almost never the case in the Netherlands. This may explain the candidates' higher interest in the culture and people in the French sample, and the more and longer stays in France previous to their PhD. However, the interviewees from both of the samples underlined the importance of the *good fit* between their doctoral position, supervisor and their own research interest, and they showed a high degree of situational life conduct. Finding a PhD position differed less between France and the Netherlands but was more important for those participants who had studied in the host country prior to their PhD studies and those who had completed their higher education entirely in Germany. The first group relied upon and used their contacts and network in the respective university or country, whereas the latter group had to seek and depended more on other more official paths. In general, the trajectory of pursuing (under)graduate studies in the host country proved to be the most common and successful way of entering a foreign HES as a doctoral candidate. An interesting insight is the perception of the Dutch HES as an affordable alternative to the United Kingdom for students who want to benefit from an Anglo-Americanised higher education without paying the high British tuition fees. Overall, the path into the French system was much more connected and it had a longer trajectory, which mostly started in secondary school. As expected, the Dutch HES proved to be more internationalised than the French one, which eased the entry for people who were not prepare for (e.g. language) or aware of the possibilities in the Netherlands. In contrast, it could be argued that a country like France has to rely less on internationalisation by mainstreaming their institutions and curriculums (e.g. EMI) because the national culture, language, HES, and so on are attractive enough to entice foreign students and academics. This is certainly mirrored in the self-confidence, pride and sense of mission that can be found in

French society and also higher education. For academic mobility, factors like quality of life and personal connections are additional important to research-related issues. Our findings point to the direction that such things have a bigger impact in France. Ultimately, France is a decision for a country and the Netherlands is a decision for a position.

This case study has also observed several limitations. First, our sample presented possible differences in trajectories in those two countries, but is not representative in terms of generalisability for all German PhDs in the two countries. Second, while it says something about how the PhDs entered the respective country, what role their private conduct of life played in that part, and what weight HES internationalisation had, we cannot state the distribution of such trajectories among the entirety of German PhDs. However, it has become clear that substantial differences can be attributed to the country of destination.

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4. Accumulation of mobility capital over the life course of mobile doctoral candidates

Abstract[15]

Mobility and the expectation of mobility are on the rise for academics, especially in the younger generation of scholars. Career steps in the academic game are very much associated with mobility and spatial flexibility. Current doctoral candidates, who are pursuing their PhD in a country other than their home country, are a good example of this kind of expectation and orientation in an international and mobile academic career. Mobility itself, and the ability to become and be mobile are, however, not free of premises. This paper conceptualizes mobility as a capital that is inherent to its carrier, and asks how this mobility capital is accumulated over the life course of mobile doctoral candidates. The sample includes candidates from Germany who were researching their PhD in France or the Netherlands at the time of the interview. This analysis reconstructs the consecutive steps of the accumulation of mobility capital, shows how it was used to secure the current PhD position and presents different trajectories of accumulation. The impact of supporting institutional environment varies over the life course phases of the person. The findings also show that regardless of the specific trajectory the accumulated mobility capital enabled the doctoral candidate to start his current position abroad.

Keywords: mobility capital; academics; life course; mobility; doctoral candidates

Introduction

'For, quite obviously, mobility is not given to everyone: it must be learnt.' (Murphy-Lejeune 2003: 7)

Spatial mobility becomes more important for academics, not only to enhance science itself and bring together the best minds to achieve better results and a more fruitful process but also for the career development of individual scholars (Jaksztat et al. 2011). This development is accompanied with a general trend of internationalisation in higher education and research (Teichler 2017). Pressure for academics to adapt to these changes and fulfil internationalisation expectations continues to rise (Børing et al. 2011). Mobility has become a norm and a 'usual thing' to do in an academic life (Thorn and Holm-Nielsen 2008), a habitus (Barjak and Robinson 2008) and is the attitude and the mindset of a whole academic sphere (Bauder 2015). Mobility can help to build and boost the academic career and it can help to accumulate all sorts of capital for the moving scholar (Bauder 2015), although it can also be a burden for the mobile academic (Enriquez-Gibson 2019). It functions as an 'excellence' requirement and highlights the ability of the applicant (Morano-Foadi 2005: 145) in the academic employment process in the logic under current neoliberal regime in higher education and is therefore enabled and praised by institutions, which is adopted by the academics as an indicator for a good career or good research – which does not necessarily reflect the reality. Although international mobility is certainly not a new phenomenon within academia, it has been increasingly attributed to be a fundamental element of academic habitus. This is mostly due to extensive institutional and policy pushes towards more internationalisation in higher education (Rizvi 2015). Although many (European) countries share important similarities when it comes to their internationalisation strategies and policies (Brooks 2018a), internationalisation itself is not an even process, as for example countries of the global north, countries with higher economic strength and English-speaking countries or HES have advantages in attracting incoming mobility (Brooks 2018b). This kind of neoliberal internationalisation, which has the tendency

to deepen social imbalances on national and individual levels, is closely connected to the global rise and triumphal procession of the Anglo-Saxion model of higher education, which emphasizes market-orientation, decentralization and competition (Brooks 2018a). Those HEI who can afford (in a financial and symbolic way) prestigious partnerships and extended exchange programmemes and the like are usually those, who have been better off before internationalisation already and shelter more privileged students than their more average counterparts (Brooks and Waters 2011). On the contrary, some studies suggest that mobility can be a helpful strategy for students (as well as for other migrants) to circumvent barriers of different nature in their domestic countries (Brooks and Waters 2011). Either way: MC is an investment into the carrier's (work) future.

In the context of this rising relevance of mobility in the academic sphere and in general through the 'mobility turn' (Sheller and Urry 2016), this paper will look closer into how people are able to become mobile. Mobility itself has become an analytical category (Thimm and Chaudhuri 2019) and it therefore appropriate to retrace the steps towards mobility in an analytic way as this paper will do. Mobility is not free of requirements and preparation (Munk 2009), which are represented in mobility capital. Although the accumulation and use of mobility capital (MC) is not limited to high-skilled workers or academics, in this paper I will exemplify it with the help of mobile doctoral candidates who have been interviewed as part of our project. *The research question focuses on when, where and how the doctoral candidates gained the MC that they later used when securing a PhD in another country.*

I have chosen to use the concept of MC (Corbett 2007 and especially Murphy-Lejeune 2003) because it emphasizes the act of moving around and because it takes a process-perspective, which will be the focus of my analysis. Next, MC itself will be defined and how a life course perspective can help to understand its process of accumulation. I will then present the empirical results, which are based on 60 biographical interviews with doctoral candidates from the social

sciences and humanities, who researched their PhD abroad. The results focus on their initial experience of own mobility and the ensuing accumulation process over the (pre-)academic life course that enabled the doctoral candidates to take up a PhD position abroad. For the purposes of this paper, it is necessary to define what MC is, focusing on how it is gained initially and how it is accumulated.

What is mobility capital?

The use of the term 'capital' in sociology generally addresses two main threads: first is human capital, as Becker (1964) understood it: human capital is the sum of embodied skills and sets of knowledge in a person. It is an investment in the future that yields returns in the form of higher income. It can be improved and accumulated through learning and educational investments of the individual. Second, capital is the trinity of economic, social and cultural capital, as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1984, 1986). This places emphasis on social and cultural capital as ways of distinction, when economic capital fails in this function. Similar to human capital, social and cultural capitals are mostly incorporated, which means that they are not transferable between individuals. Both concepts add to the notion of MC because mobility is used as a tool of distinction, as shown previously, and MC is tightly attached to its carrier and is not portable. Murphy-Lejeune (2003), who coined the term 'mobility capital' called it 'a sub-component of human capital, enabling individuals to enhance their skills because of the richness of the international experience gained by living abroad' (ibid.: 51). However, even as an incorporated form of capital its applicability can be restrained in new fields (e.g. in a new country after migration) due to restraints that lay beyond the accumulation, such as race, gender and so on (Ong 1999).

MC include different aspects, such as the general awareness of opportunities in a bigger context than the national one (e.g., a European or global context). This is the ability to move away from well-known places and disconnect from established surroundings, to settle in a new

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environment, and to be open to meet new people and engage with otherness (Kim 2010). It can also include the willingness to take professional and private risks when going into the spatial unknown, but with the confidence that it is possible to do so. Furthermore, it requires the ability to change places, loosen old and establish new social contacts (Netz and Jaksztat 2014), and 'the ability to abstract oneself outside a particular locale' (Corbett 2007 783). Mobile persons are less locally integrated, and they have weaker social ties (Hofmeister and Schneider 2010). On a less abstract level, mobility also can involve the reception and consumption of foreign journals and media (Weenink 2008) and above-average language skills, especially in English (Weenink 2007). English as a global language and the lingua franca in science reflects the practical usefulness for its speakers (Medrano 2014), and experience of other languages can also indicate symbolic power and earn extra credentials (Rössel and Schroedter 2014). MC also helps to penetrate new national academic systems (Neusel and Wolter 2017). In the context of the concept of 'motility' (Kaufmann et al. 2015, Kaufmann 2017, Kaufmann et al. 2018), MC reflects one of the three dimensions of motility, which are called 'competencies.' These competencies are acquired skills that allow the subject to adapt the behaviour of mobility to the context and time and includes the organisational skills to plan movements in spatial and temporal contexts (Kaufmann et al. 2010). In short, MC is the disposition to move and be mobile. The range of 'social imaginary' (Rizvi 2009) to picture oneself in different and new places.

Although spatial mobility in higher education is often discussed as a possibility for upward social mobility, it also reproduces existing inequalities and produces new inequalities among the stakeholders in academia (Bilecen and van Mol 2017). Requirements for the accumulation of MC are unequally distributed along social class lines, which includes the ability to think and construct future settings realistically (Corbett 2007). Social differences can be found in different dimensions of the MC. Linguistic proficiency (for example) is closely connected to the

language skills of the parents, which itself is connected to the social background (Rössel and Schroedter 2014). Cultural openness, economic support, and social networks are socially unequally distributed (Bourdieu 1986). At the same time, these things, among others, contribute and lay foundations for the accumulation of MC. However, the clear connection between social background and academic mobility can be challenged in the case of doctoral candidates with the life course hypothesis (Mare 1980, 1981): the higher that individuals climb the educational ladder, the more homogenous the group becomes in term of habitus, intellectual capacity and aspirations of education. At each step towards the (higher) education system, pupils/students drop out and the group of aspirants grows smaller. This procedure is by no means random and independent of social background. Persons from lower social backgrounds have higher drop-out rates. This selectivity especially works at lower levels of education and it loses its influence at higher levels of education. This is explained by the growing independence of persons from their social conditions and the influence of their social milieu with preceding age. Decisions, work and mobility are taken by themselves and rely less on parents and other influences (Müller and Karle 1993; Lörz and Schindler 2011). Although the share of persons from lower social background has already dropped in the doctoral phase in comparison to previous educational steps, the pattern of mobility for those who stayed in the system does not vary much in regards of social background (Netz and Jaksztat 2014). The absent impact of the social background on mobility decisions in the doctoral phase could be explained by Mare's life course hypothesis (1980, 1981).

Life-course perspective on mobility capital

The accumulation of MC is a chronological process, which is in agreement with the previous research: 'Another central dimension of high mobility is the life course, as mobility requirements and motility are likely to evolve over life events and past mobility experiences.' (Kaufmann et al. 2015: 212). This means that the analysis of accumulation has to be embedded

in a theoretical framework that considers the dimension of time. The life course approach (Heinz and Krüger 2001; Mayer 2009) includes both a perspective of time and a micro-meso perspective. This is important for the consideration of MC because it depends on individual initiative and on structural opportunities. The objects of analysis on the meso-level are institutions, organisations and social networks. Meanwhile, the micro-level analysis is composed of personality, socialization and biographical action (Heinz et al. 2009). This 'emphasizes both changing social circumstances and personality development over the lifespan and thus shifts the perspective to the interrelationship between individual characteristics and social structures and processes across time' (ibid: 21). An individual's personality develops through an active process of dealing with changing living circumstances (Heinz 2002), which includes the geographical surrounding and changes to that surrounding. For example, the relation to the family, as research on highly-skilled migrations from India in the Netherlands has depicted (Kõu et al. 2015). Life course concepts can retrace the individual's steps of accumulation and implementation of capacities and competence (which equals the MC), while treating it not as a passive observer of its own life but as an active agent of its biography. However, mobility exerts implications on the life course of the mobile individual. Because it is a consequence of life events and choices, it also shapes and changes future decisions and outcomes in the biography of the mover. Nevertheless, mobility rates and trajectories vary over different socio-economic subgroups of society and, therefore, it is also bound to structural circumstances (Geist and McManus 2008). The motivation for mobility varies not only over age but also over the form of mobility, such as local or long-distance (ibid.). In general, people in their 20s are the most mobile in their life span (Glick 1993). This also has to be taken into account when looking into the accumulation process of MC of doctoral candidates, who are usually in their 20s. In contrast to rational choice approaches to the understanding of mobility, the life course perspective considers not only the timing but also the sequence of mobility that plays an important role in the life course perspective of mobility (Findlay and Li 1997).

Different sequences of the same mobilities can make an important difference in the evaluation of the mobility and have implications for the further accumulation of MC: 'The life course approach emphasizes the importance of the succession of events and the accumulation of resources over time for the understanding of behaviours, representations or goals of individuals as they currently stand' (Viry et al. 2013: 141). The information and analysis of pathways and consecutive steps of an individual's experiences and events over time allows us to understand their current behaviour and outcomes. The timing of experiences is an important part in the explanation of the accumulation of MC because chronological experiences shape later in life decisions and preconditions for mobility. Becoming mobile and variations of mobility are rooted in life course experiences (ibid.).

The time period of interest in this paper is considered to be a 'complex movement' (Findlay et al. 2015: 392) from the perspective of a life course approach. The mobilities of students in transition towards their first position after their studies involve multiple relocations between the city of studying, parental place, and the place of the new job and this contribute to the complexity of the process (Sage et al. 2013). This highlights the relevance of the incorporation of MC at the time of the transition to the PhD, which was the first paid position for most of our interviewees—although a disbalance between France and the Netherlands has been found (Schäfer and El Dali 2019). Complex movement can only be handled and realized if the experience with mobility (meaning the amount of MC) is sufficient. When we understand the gain of MC as a cumulative process, we have to include a life course perspective that is sensible to time, timing and sequences/succession. That means, for example, that student mobility has direct and indirect consequences on other forms of migration (which happen during a later stage of the life course), spills-over and becomes more indistinct with other forms of mobility and migration (Raghuram 2013).

Data and methods

The empirical data was collected through biographical face-to-face interviews from graduates of the social sciences and humanities (SSH), who had previously studied at German universities and/or secondary schools and who worked as PhD candidates at Dutch or French universities at the time of the interviews. The interviews were conducted (and recorded) in the university office, at home or in a café in the city of work or living of the interviewee. The data collection was part of the project 'Mobile transitions - mobile lifestyles? Career choices and way of living at the transition to transnational scientific careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm et al. 2017). France and the Netherlands were chosen because of the high percentage of Germans among their doctoral candidates and also because of their attractiveness for foreign students and academics. A total of 60 interviews were conducted between 2016 and 2019. Interview partners were found with the help of a flyer, which was distributed via doctoral schools at French and Dutch universities, as well as sent directly to doctoral candidates via e-mail. Those e-mail addresses were manually extracted from the university websites.

The biographical interview[16] format was used throughout the project because it can be specifically utilized for this research question as an explorative instrument. In particular, it gives the interviewees the chance to emphasize relevant topics without imposing the researcher's ideas and notions on them (Corbin and Morse 2003). We started with an open stimulus[17], which aimed to put the interviewees at ease and allow them to speak freely. This ensures a good quality of information because the interviewee is not forced to talk about a certain topic but instead are enabled to cover subjects that are important to them, which should enhance motivation and contribute to the quality of responses (Juhasz Liebermann 2012). An interview guideline was only used for topics that were not addressed by the interviewees themselves. In the context of

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[16] All but one interview was conducted in German. The analysis is based on the original German transcripts, and quotations from interviewees in this paper are translated by the author, except for the one interview in English. Names of people and locations have been altered.

[17] The open stimulus was 'We are interested in life stories of young academics from Germany. I would like to hear now your life story with all the events that you remember. There is no limit of time, I will not interrupt you and only take notes for follow-up questions during your story.'

this research it is important to mention that the interviewees were potentially aware of the project title, which addresses mobility, as the title of the project was included in the flyer.

For analysis, the documentary method (Bohnsack 2014) was applied, which is rooted in the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim 2013). The method not only takes into account the content but also how and under what circumstances a topic is addressed in the narration. This is especially fruitful in combination with the explorative function of the interview design because it uncovers and reveals explicit and implicit motivation and orientation, which includes the gain of MC in the context of this paper, which was not necessarily explicitly mentioned but found within the flow of the interviewee's narration.

One of the common characteristics of our sample is that every interviewee had been working on their PhD abroad – either in France or in the Netherlands. Furthermore, some of them had previously studied outside of Germany. This means, that all of our interviewees had experience with (professional) mobility and had accumulated some form of MC (the PhD was the latest mobility experience). Our sample includes people from different social backgrounds, from those where the parents have no formal education at all, to those where both of the parents had studied formally. Heterogeneity can also be found among the mobility trajectories of their families. Some of our participants were used to all kinds of (high) mobility from an early age, while others described their upbringing and biography as relative immobile. Social background and parents' spatial mobility were not necessarily closely connected among the sample, e.g. participants, who had parents working as doctors (high social rank and spatially bounded) and specialized technicians, who serviced machines for their company in many countries (mid social rank and spatially mobile). The sample consists of 40 women and 20 men with the majority of them in their mid-20s to early-30s. This gender imbalance was not an aim of the study nor expected, but might reflect the general gender imbalance in the SSH.

Findings

All of the participants had experience with spatial mobility across borders and also domestically prior to their PhD. This shows that a step towards a PhD in a foreign country requires a certain amount of MC given that it is a far-reaching decision that brings with it a set of responsibilities and a longer-term perspective of the doctoral phase abroad, which takes up several years. Here, I present my findings along with some examples of different initial experiences of mobility and its consecutive accumulation of MC, which will be embedded in a life course perspective. The initiation to mobility, together with its differences and also similarities in building up MC, highlights the different ways in which these doctoral candidates had realized mobility for themselves. The accumulation of MC has to start somewhere. Although there was seldom one explicit and outstanding occasion that ultimately led to the first mobility decision, many of the interviewees described certain passages, in both pre-student and student life, that had formed their ability to be mobile. In most of the cases, the interviewee's first mobility was connected to their studies and included mainly exchange and/or degree mobility, and to a lesser extent internship and the like. Almost none of the interviewees had stayed in their home city/region throughout their undergraduate and Master's degrees. Few cases had been mobile prior to their studies. These mobilities included school exchanges, a full school year that was studied abroad, a gap year or work/internship unrelated to their studies.

The interviewees described these experiences in several passages in their narrations. For example, some interviewees started their narrations with a detailed disclosure, how they have been always very mobile, the significance of mobility for their conduct of life or those of their parents. Although this can be partly explained by knowledge of our project, which indicated that we[18] are interested in mobility, it also showed the importance of the topic to those particular

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[18] Interviews were conducted either by one male or one female research assistant, both not limited to interviewees of their same gender.

interviewees. In contrast, other interviewees only talked about their mobility experiences when explicitly asked by the interviewer.

In the presentation of the results, I will focus on the initial experiences that are connected to self-made decisions. The first self-made decisions proved to have much more of an influence in our participants' biographies than family mobility (for example) where the interviewee only occupied a passive role. The relevance of these self-made decisions was manifested through their prominence in our interviewees' narrations. Our interviewees' accumulation process of MC, especially their ability to think and orientate themselves in a foreign place, started with their own practical experiences. Current research stresses that other factors are indeed more important in the gain of MC than intergenerational transmission—at least for students (Finn 2017). Our findings are presented in a semi-chronological order of the initiation process over our interviewees' life courses, which can be distinguished between mobility experiences in school, exchange mobility during studies, domestic mobility experiences, and degree mobility during studies.

School-related initiations to mobility

Schools are specifically interesting for the research of MC as they are 'a bounded portion of geographical space within which certain rules apply and particular activities occur' (Collins and Coleman, 2008, p. 282, quoted in Brooks and Waters 2017). Such activities include school exchanges and the possibility of taking a school year abroad. Those interviewees with MC from their pre-studies mostly took advantage of such activities. While school exchanges are organised by the schools themselves, students who take a school year abroad are often supported and organised by companies, which professionalized these student's mobility. To be embedded in such programmes and a framework for the first mobility experience has an obvious advantage, in that it reduces effort and insecurity for the individual, while it does not completely restrict the freedom to make new experiences. These experiences include learning a new

language or enhancing language skills. They also help to understand differences in unknown cultural, national, and social contexts. For example, Laura (FR, 29) described her school exchange:

> It was very hard in the beginning somehow, I remember that I really—this was the first time abroad and the first time so far away from home (laughing) and it didn't work out with the family in the beginning. But then the moment came where it clicked and it somehow worked with the language very well, and I was somehow very enthusiastic about it when I came back. (Laura)

She continued to explain that she had to leave her hosting family after a period of time due to external circumstances that were outside of her control. This would have meant that she had to return to Germany earlier than planned. However, by this time, she had formed a friendship with a French schoolgirl, who took her into her own family. This was an experience that she recalled with great enthusiasm, such as describing her new host family as 'feeling like home.' She remembers that at the same time, her spoken French suddenly and massively improved. Regardless if this improvement was due to a real learning progress or a change of attitude to speaking because of the new and more comfortable environment, it enabled her to interact more with her surroundings and to be more socially active. This event was framed in a very positive way, which paved the path towards more mobility. Laura's friendship with a girl from her French school, who was not a direct participant in the school exchange programme, gave her not only the needed infrastructure but also endurance and strength to stay for the whole exchange. Experiencing a 'home feeling' in a different place gave her the confidence that mobility does not have to include strangeness. Her mobility also allowed her to experience new horizons, which were unavailable at home.

Laura's accumulation of MC continued when she served an internship in a private company in an eastern European country after leaving high school. Already familiar with mobility but without the fitting linguistic skills and not embedded in a school or university programme, she

struggled a lot at the beginning, which she described as being dominated by homesickness. In particular, the missing institutional framework to socialize and 'get started' was a big obstacle for her. This again shows the importance and influence of a clear framework, which eases the discomfort of mobility and alienation. Being 'alone' as the only new intern in the company, she did not find the social contacts that she wished for—partly because of the age differences between herself and her co-workers. This is not usually a problem when people do their gap year, school exchange or start a study programme, when they placed are together with peers from the same age cohort. Although she was already equipped with MC from her school exchange, Laura had 'underestimated' the size of the step into an internship abroad. Although it was unpleasant at the time, it was a very valuable experience for her later transition to France for her studies. By then, she was already more independent than her fellow students, who sought more help from their parents, while Laura was able to organise everything herself. She had already learned during her internship to cope with stress and situations of this type. This gave Laura a level of self-assurance that her colleagues had yet to achieve.

Start small: mobility within Germany

Although degree mobility within the home county has no linguistic obstacles, it can still include experiences of shock and adjustment. A large number of our interviewees had previously moved to another city in Germany for their studies, for many different reasons. For example, if they lived in a small town or in the countryside, they had to move to study at a higher education institution, because there was none in their region. In addition, some hometowns were not perceived as very attractive to live in generally, even if they had a university. For example, Annette (NL, 29) described her home town as small and with a limited offering of cultural and academic activities, which made it very clear that she wanted to move away to study and not return home every weekend. This led her to a city in East Germany, many hours of travel away from her home town. In contrast to her home town, the city of her studies was presented as

having a lot of life, culture, and intellectual impact. Which is again a positive affirmation of the first mobility and added to her MC. Annette later explained that she just wanted to see 'other parts of Germany' driven by her curiosity. A gap year was financially not possible to realize for her and, therefore, she framed the move within Germany as an alternative to the missed chance. This first mobility was followed by temporary mobilities across borders during her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Although Annette liked the city of her studies, she eventually grew tired of it and the people after her Master's—in contrast to the end of her Bachelor's degree—and had consequently decided to move along to 'see something different.'

When she talked about the transition from school to studies, Lydia (NL, 31) described how she had experienced a more ambivalent process. In contrast to Annette, Lydia explicitly chose a university that was commutable from her home town, to which she had a strong connection because of her greater family, and where she stayed to live in the first semester of her studies. Through this non-relocation to the new place of studying, she delayed the accumulation of MC because she was not forced to orientate and adapt to a new environment. This meant that she was not able to socialize from the beginning due to her physical absence in the university city. The lack of MC (and especially the lack of a push-factor to relocate) posed an obstacle to accumulate more MC. This only changed slowly after she had made the decision to move to a new city. Although she was very attached to her hometown and her family, Lydia did an Erasmus exchange semester. However, because her department had no exchange contract to that country, Lydia had to find a way through another department to move to this European country. This was connected to a lot of personal effort and paper work, which shows that her attitude to mobility had changed by that time and she was now willing not only to relocate to another country but also to 'fight' for it.

The Erasmus/exchange experience

When our interviewees talked about their exchange mobility, it was mostly framed as almost a necessity of modern-day studies. The implicitness of this was quite strong in their narration and the advantages or disadvantages that an exchange semester can include were not questioned. They had internalized the mobility demands of internationalisation in academia. Simon (NL, 32), who described the thought of the possibility of mobility during school as scary and presented himself overall as a very reserved and introvert person in school, we can see how the Erasmus exchange had another impact on him—thanks to the preparation through English-language classes at university, he found the courage to go abroad:

> I think, this exchange semester has had changed me somehow again in that sense, that I realized back then: 'Hey, I can do it somehow.' I have done it. I have been abroad for half a year somehow. I have now very many friends all around the world. Hooray! And I realized: 'Okay, cool!' I have made such a great experience and I wrote assignments in English for the first time back then, which I had done never before. And it was good. It worked out well. And I realized: 'Hey, I can do it.' And I think this made me again— so, before that it was a step, like: 'Okay, I will dare myself to such an effort.' And after that, it was a kind of confirmation again: 'Okay, I think I have become more self-confident after that.' And much more extroverted, I think. (Simon)

The experience of being abroad, finding a way to live there and finding new friends had contributed to an overall very positive evaluation of the time in exchange. The key term here is self-confidence, which is central to MC. People who relocate have to embrace a certain level of self-confidence—a belief that they can actually plan and do it. Similar to the pre-studies experience with mobility, a positive affirmation of the first mobility is crucial to the willingness to continue mobility and accumulate MC. Erasmus and similar exchange programmes are also an advantage, similar to the pre-studies mobilities, because they are standardized and need relatively little organisational self-work. This lowers the threshold for potential candidates, who are mobility-curious but who also dread the workload or uncertainty of free and self-organised mobility. Furthermore, the exchange programme is always temporary (usually one or two

semesters) and is therefore more calculable. The return to the pre-exchange situation is not a failure of the original mobility plan but part of the whole scheme. At the same time, periods of exchange in a different country allow the participant to accumulate their MC through fostering new social contacts with people from different countries, enhancing their language skills and adapting to a new situation in general. Even before he gave detailed information on his exchange semester, Simon explained in his narration that he wanted 'to do something international again' after his graduation (which he did, he moved to the Netherlands), because of this exchange experience. The experience of a semester abroad changed his whole mindset and frame for the future. He has kept this pattern and is very keen to move again after his PhD. These findings are very much in line and a good amendment for previous studies (e.g. Favell 2008), which have emphasized the importance of Erasmus for further mobility, through the establishment of romantic relationships, professional opportunities or simple wanderlust.

Degree mobility abroad: The toughest start into mobility

Another, and perhaps the most difficult, path of initial mobility during studies is degree mobility outside of Germany. Due to the variations in our sample, it included a few interviewees who had gone straight to another country for a full Bachelor's degree programme after finishing their schooling in Germany and without having prior experience of long-term mobility. Janine (NL, 32) emphasized on the moment of loneliness that she felt at the moment that her parents dropped her off in the Dutch city of her studies:

> And I remember it well, how my parents dropped me off here with the car and, well, with a backpack[19] and so on. I had a very small room and, well, I have never been, I mean, I have been to the Netherlands several times, of course but never alone here. And I knew 'Oh god, I will stay here, too.' They dropped me off here and it was a feeling like 'Oh, [laughing] now they're driving off and I'm here all alone on this world […] or in this city.' (Janine)

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[19] 'Rucksäckchen' in the original German transcript, which is a diminutive of backpack.

Even though the Netherlands is not far from Germany, the first impression was a shock and realization that she now has to stand on her own two feet. Janine's feeling of being alone is emphasized through her diminutive description of her backpack and her room. By making herself and her setting smaller, the world around her appears to be much bigger, confusing and possibly dangerous. The cross-border mobility does make a difference in terms of linguistic alienation, which was not experienced by the cases who moved within Germany. However, Janine continues to recall how this shock and feeling of being alone faded with time, as exemplified by the frequency of driving home to visit her parents. Whereas at the beginning she returned back home quite often, to see her family and her boyfriend, this behaviour became less frequent after she had separated from her boyfriend and found her way in a new host city and society through new friends, activities in sport clubs, better language skills, and so on. She called this a 'process of detachment,' which in retrospective she seems to perceive as being a crucial process for herself (and young people in general).

The accumulation of MC depends on push-factors in the previous environment. In the case of Janine, this was her old boyfriend who caused her to visit home more often. Once such old connections are weakened or terminated, the settling process in the new place appears to be much easier. Meanwhile, MC itself captured the ability to reconnect socially, which includes cutting loose from old contacts or transforming them into a different stage. Although it was hard to cope at the beginning, her mobility experiences have enabled her to move and experience spatial distance in a very different and more relaxed way. Mobility becomes increasingly normal and with its normalization, the range of movement also increases. Janine exemplified this—at the beginning she experienced stress when she was 'just' visiting friends in another city but now finds it normal to attend a conference in another country. This pattern of MC accumulation reflects the probably toughest start into mobility because these interviewees were 'thrown in at the deep end' and had to figure out the advantages and

disadvantages of mobility for themselves most of the time when compared to the temporary mobility and institutionalized paths among the other interviewees.

The normalization of mobility

The longer that we read these stories of mobility and moving, the more normal and ordinary they seem and nation states become less relevant (Rizvi 2015). This is also true for the movers themselves, especially when they are embedded in an environment where this behaviour is very common and taken for granted (Conradson and Latham 2005), and their colleagues and friends also move all the time. This blindness to the degree of one's own exceptional lifestyle is corrected when they are confronted with less or non-mobile persons. When explaining their biographies to others, they often reflect on how unusual such a high degree of mobility is. This is mostly reflected in conversations with less mobile family members and old friends, or in observations of their home towns. This again shows how very useful mobility can be as an instrument for distinction (Hof 2019).

The different initial experiences show that MC can be gained through different patterns and during different phases of the life course. Each phase includes particular obstacles and possibilities. During and after the school period, some of our interviewees were too afraid or reserved to commit to long-time mobility and relocation but at the same time these phases offer a lot of mobility programmes that make it much easier to become mobile later in life. These findings show that timing and sequence of mobility is, in line with the life course perspective, enormously important for the accumulation of MC. Bigger and individualized (meaning not integrated into an institutional framework) decisions of relocation (such as moving to the PhD position) are built on mobilities of shorter range (within Germany), of shorter time (exchange) or of a more institutionalized framework (school exchange, gap year). Although the reputation and symbolic value of the destinations varied (in an academic and socio-economic sense), they

all proved to be useful in gaining the MC and therefore contributing indirectly to a potential advance on the future job market whenever mobility is necessary and demanded.

Conclusion

This paper asked when, where and how doctoral candidates started to gain and continued to accumulate their MC. Its contribution is to retrace the steps of becoming mobile over a life course perspective and to show how those steps built on each other from a perspective of 'lived experience' (Brooks 2017) of the PhD themselves. The findings show that every start of personal and own-chosen mobility is specifically connected to a certain phase of the life course. Whereas schoolchildren and pre-studies youngsters are more reluctant to become mobile due to their age and lack of life experience (Viry et al. 2015), their surroundings offer possibilities to 'help' them with their first mobility and to 'soften' the initial shock. Structural support plays a bigger role in this phase of the life course. Not accidentally, the most common life course phase for initial mobility was during studies. This phase provides frameworks, similar to the pre-studies phase, where mobility can be realized with less effort, such as the Erasmus programme as an exchange possibility. At the same time, the years of study allow students to relocate for full degree mobility or as a first step into the spatial unknown in a move within Germany. All of these variants share mobilities that are built on each other in an individual biography and these consecutive steps almost always became bigger with each step.

None of our doctoral candidates made their first move into a PhD position in a foreign country. They had already learned to be mobile over their life course through low-threshold opportunities, such as school exchange, semester exchange or intra-national mobility. At the same time, this is not only an increase of the mobility itself but also an increase of the range of mobility. Long(er) distances become smaller and less intimidating once the person gets used to travel distances of short or medium-range. This ability is the essence of the MC. With more accumulated MC, the realization of mobility becomes easier. This is a consecutive process. The

life course perspective shows that present day actions and realities are heavily linked to past actions and decisions, and cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the past. Similar to other forms of capital, MC cannot be transferred to other people because they do not understand and experience how it feels to be alone in a foreign city without language skills, or to work in a stranger's family. Explanation without experience is inadequate to 'get' the MC and this is what it makes it incorporated. However, in demarcation to the original capital theory, MC seems not to be as class-bounded as other forms of capital are. This is in line with a current study on post-graduate mobility (Kaufmann et al. 2015).

There are no clear patterns in the social background in our sample that would allow to determine different trajectories for different social milieus, although economic and social capital could play a role—such as when elder siblings passed experiences of and information about exchanges down to younger siblings and sometimes school exchanges were not realized because of insufficient funding. However, our interviewees showed no differences in their current MC along class or milieus lines. Even though the family may have provided sufficient social and economic capital, it did not automatically lead to better or earlier mobility. Nevertheless, the question about how much MC is class-bound was and cannot be the central question of this paper because our project sample only consists of mobile doctoral candidates. This is already a specific pre-selection of a group of young academics[20] and does not give insights into how social class may be an influence among non-mobile PhD candidates. Another explanation is the life course hypothesis (Mare 1980, 1981), which states that the social selection process takes place before the doctoral phase, resulting in a quite homogenous group in terms of habitus but not necessarily in terms of social background. Further research with more adequate sample groups is needed. Another limitation is the focus on an individual but not relational perspective. Although MC has to be accumulated through individual action, the

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[20] This is, amongst other things, reflected in the fact, that there was only one interviewee with a second-chance education, which is more often found amongst students of lower social background (Orr and Hovdhaugen 2014)

relations to other people (family, partner, children) can shape the process in different ways.

This paper has focused on a life course phase that is relatively free from obligations. Certainly,

this changed and still changes for many in the PhD phase and beyond, when children are born,

partners get married and parents are in need of care.

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5. Horizontal Europeanisation among mobile doctoral candidates in the context of the European Union and the European Research Area

Abstract[21]

The processes of Europeanisation—meaning the deepening of European integration on various levels—have previously been discussed from the point of view of political science, economics, linguistics, and cultural studies, with a macro-perspective on states, institutions, and organisations. However, Europe and the European Union (EU) are populated by individuals, who are actors of European transnationalism, which this paper conceptualises as horizontal Europeanisation. Spatial mobility is also becoming more relevant for thriving academics, and the EU aims to close ranks in Europe in the field of higher education and research. Therefore, this paper asks how the process of horizontal Europeanisation among early-career academics manifests itself. This process is discussed against the background of the framework of the EU and the European Research Area (ERA), where academics make use of a common scientific market. The basis for the qualitative empirical analysis is 60 biographical interviews with intra-EU mobile doctoral candidates. The findings show that the EU and ERA contribute to the processes of horizontal Europeanisation and supports it. However, many decisive factors for horizontal Europeanisation lie beyond the EU and the concept of ERA. The novelty of this article as a contribution to European studies is the explanation of horizontal Europeanisation among academics through spatial mobility patterns.

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1 Introduction

This article is part of a special issue focusing on European perspectives on internationalisation in higher education and micro-level analyses of internationalisation. This article merges these two strands into a microlevel analysis of Europeanisation. The analysis is conducted against the background of institutions, which potentially support Europeanisation, namely the European Union (EU) and its European Research Area (ERA).[1] Both aim to promote migration and free movement of scientists within the borders of the EU (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). This is a self-proclaimed attempt to build and strengthen a Europeanisation process among researchers from different EU countries and to create a common European Research Area, as well as a united supranational job market (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). A goal is also to enhance the competitiveness, internationalisation and scientific exchange of EU countries (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). This is a macro and top-down perspective on (vertical) Europeanisation, which has been formulated by the EU as a goal. On the other hand, *horizontal* Europeanisation refers to the orientation and socialization,—on the level of individuals— that consists of the lived experiences of people in Europe (Howe, 1995).[2] Previous research on Europeanisation (e.g. Chou, 2016; Corbett & Henkel, 2013) has had a tendency to focus on the "extent of convergence (or divergence) with respect to top-level policies" (Brooks, 2018, p. 513); therefore, little work has explored the perspectives of individuals on the micro-level, such as non-academic staff members, students, or researchers. But it is difficult to draw conclusions on micro-level horizontal Europeanisation from an analysis of the macro "political process of

integration, since social lifeworlds have a momentum of their own" (Mau & Mewes, 2012, p. 11). Insights on European integration of institutions, states, policies, and the like can hardly tell anything substantial about the European practices of individual agents living in Europe. Even evaluation studies, such as the report on Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA)[3] (Franke, Humburg, & Souto-Otero, 2017) do not include the individual perspective of Europeanisation, although they do speak about other consequences on the individual level in the context of such instruments (e.g. work- and skill-related effects). This article discusses the processes of horizontal Europeanisation among junior academics with intra-Europe transnational mobility experiences, from a micro perspective. Spatial mobility[4]—the mobility of students and researchers between countries in Europe can support horizontal Europeanisation (Barbulescu, Ciornei, & Varela, 2019). The connection of the two research strands—mobility of academics on the one hand and horizontal Europeanisation on the other hand—is especially fruitful because spatial mobility is becoming more common, frequent and important in academia (e.g. Bilecen & van Mol, 2017; van der Wende, 2015) and spatial mobility is also seen as one of the key factors for Europeanisation and other forms of transnationalism (Recchi & Favell, 2019). Embedded in this theoretical outline, the empirical analysis follows 60 biographical interviews with doctoral candidates from the social sciences and humanities, enrolled in French or Dutch higher education institutions and who have previously studied in Germany.

1.1 Horizontal Europeanisation

In contrast to the dominant use of the term *Europeanisation*, this article does not focus on political-institutional Europeanisation on the macro level, but on the sociological-individual Europeanisation on the micro level (Beck & Grande, 2004; Mau & Mewes, 2012). The article analyses *Europeanisation* on the level of individual lives and orientations (Trenz, 2015) and not institutions, states, organisations, policies or the like; hence the differentiation between a

vertical form (political-institutional integration) and a horizontal form (sociological-individual deepening) of Europeanisation. Horizontal Europeanisation "affects people's lives, social networks, and forms of mobility. It constitutes horizontal relations among the people of Europe, which again are collectively interpreted and used as elements of life histories" (Trenz, 2015, p. 209). Horizontal Europeanisation is the "everday Europe" (Recchi & Favell, 2019) of the individual EU-citizen, which includes border-crossing social networks, practices, activities, relations to persons, groups or issues in other European countries, and—most important for this paper—mobility within Europe. It is about the interrelations of the social and work life, the individual conduct of life within a European context, without the necessity to connect the everyday life in question to Europe as a political and institutional entity (Mau, 2015, p. 102). Therefore, horizontal Europeanisation can also be characterised as European transnationalism, insofar as individuals (Faist, 2000) are engaged in cross-border mobility, networks, social practices and interactions and use Europe as a reference for their actions, perception, orientations and attitudes (Heidenreich, Delhey, Lahusen, Gerhards, Mau, Münch & Pernicka, 2012) which is in line with the general understanding of transnationalism: moves, relations, interactions and everyday practices and networks, whether they are professional or non-professional, across borders. The result of European transnationalism can be the replacement of previous connectivity to a national entity by a comparable attachment to a European transnational space (Nowicka, 2020). This would involve the development of regular intra-European relationships and movements, a deeper sentiment and interest towards political and social issues in Europe (Gerhards, Hans, & Carlson, 2014), such as reading European-related news and potentially adopting a European identity (Scalise, 2015). The created space is "called Europe" (Mau & Mewes, 2013, p. 178) and it is populated by individuals, who do not remain passive but actively construct and work on their horizontal Europeanisation through above described measures and actions, which include holidays, friendships, consumption, professional and educational mobility and a common labour market (Heidenreich, 2019; Recchi & Favell,

2009, 2019). It is about "doing Europe", the daily experience and practice that constitutes horizontal Europeanisation. This does not have to be a conscious decision, but can remain implicit and taken for granted (Trenz, 2015).

Horizontal Europeanisation is closely connected to the individual's spatial mobility (Mau & Mewes, 2012). Those who move within the EU are more strongly Europeanised than those who do not, which is reflected in more knowledge about the EU, a more positive image about it and a higher likelihood of having a European identity (Rother & Nebe, 2009). European orientation and identity among students were surveyed in a recent study by Brooks (2018), who concludes that there are still considerable differences among European students and their mobility patterns and activities, despite the effort to create a common European higher education area, which aims to harmonise mobility (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2012). Another kind of difference can be found not between countries, but social classes. Highly educated upper and middle classes act as pioneers for horizontal Europeanisation and profit from it the most (Mau & Mewes, 2012). In contrast, lower and educationally deprived classes are much more bound in their national contexts and are therefore less likely to support Europeanisation (Büttner & Mau, 2010). The individual (in this context, the mobile academic) aims to establish social spaces beyond borders, to create new transnational spaces that are of relevance for their work and life (Kim, 2009). The supranational institutional environment (EU) can help to create and support such a development (Trenz, 2011). Therefore, the national academic system can lose some of its relevance for job opportunities and career development compared to the perspective that includes all European countries: "Our knowledge of the 'lived experience' of higher education across Europe is thus partial" (Brooks, 2018, p. 513). On this background it is appropriate to examine manifestations of Europeanisation with particular attention to the experiences of individual academics (Papatsiba, 2005). The main research question addressed is: *How do mobile academics experience horizontal Europeanisation against the background of the framework of the EU and ERA?*

An important contribution of this article is that the concept of horizontal Europeanisation is applied to transnational mobile and working academics as a group—in contrast to the usual focus on students. Another is the emphasis on mobility patterns with regard to the macro institutional framework (i.e. EU and ERA): Where and when can the role of the EU or the ERA be observed in the horizontal Europeanisation process of the mobile individual academic? This approach allows to develop the concept of horizontal Europeanisation further and strengthens the perspective of a sociology of Europe in research on Europeanisation and higher education.

2 Data and Methods

The empirical data was generated through biographical-narrative interviews with doctoral candidates[5], who were educated in Germany and who worked in the social sciences and humanities at Dutch or French universities at the time of the interviews. The data collection was part of the project *Mobile transitions - mobile lifestyles? Career choice and way of living at the transition to transnational scientific careers in the European Union* (Schittenhelm, El Dali, & Schäfer, 2017). After the United Kingdom and German-speaking countries, France and the Netherlands are the favourite destination countries in Europe for German students and academic staff (ibid.) (1767 graduates in France and 6945 graduates in the Netherlands (Destatis, 2019; Burkhart et al., 2018)). The study on which this article reports focused on German academics working at French and Dutch universities, thereby only a part of the ERA was addressed; notably, three countries that were among the founders of the European Community and therefore have a longer history of European linkage than other member-states. Mobility in the social sciences and humanities is harder to achieve (Ackers, 2008, 2013) because "language skills and cultural knowledge are often necessary for conducting research projects" (Jöns, 2007, p. 88). The sample was limited to these fields to achieve a better comparison between the cases. A total of 60 interviews were conducted between 2016 and 2019,

with 35 women and 25 men. All names used in this article are pseudonyms. The majority of the participants were in their mid-twenties to early thirties. Meanwhile, 26 of the interviewees graduated (master or equivalent) from German universities, some of them with double degrees, whereas the others had already moved for their master's or bachelor's studies to France, the Netherlands or a third country, which represents the variations of the field. Fifteen of the participants studied history, twelve studied political sciences, seven linguistics, seven social science, four communication science, three media sciences, four worked and graduated from interdisciplinary doctoral programs and eight were in other various disciplines.

Biographical-narrative interviews[6] were used for exploring the research question analysed in this article. The method allows participants the chance to emphasise relevant topics without imposing the researcher's ideas and notions on them (Corbin & Morse, 2016). The interview started with an open stimulus for putting interviewees at ease and for encouraging them to speak freely. This ensures good quality information because the interviewee is not forced to talk about a certain topic. Instead, they cover subjects that are important to them, which should enhance motivation and contribute to the quality of their responses (Juhasz Liebermann, 2012). The method supports an analysis that includes the context of narrations, not only the content (e.g. when, where and under what circumstances a certain topic was addressed). The more open the form of the interview is, the more the interviewee will 'tell' something about himself or herself indirectly by constructing the process of the interview. An interview guideline was only used after the initial narrative account was completed. The guideline covered any topics that were not addressed by the interviewees themselves. The omitted topics would vary a lot with the length and depth of the single interview and included various topics such as relationships, family, educational background, upbringing, to name a few. For analysis, the documentary method (Bohnsack, Pfaff, & Weller, 2010; Nohl, 2010) was applied. This is especially fruitful in combination with the explorative function of the interview design. It uncovers and reveals both explicit and implicit Europeanisation processes and orientation towards Europe in the

interviewee's biographical narrations. My analysis looked specifically into those sections of the interviews that dealt with Europe-related experiences or topics.

3 Findings

The findings address those issues that evolved out of the analysis as relevant for the process of horizontal Europeanisation. Specifically, when, how and to what extent our interviewees were engaged in horizontal Europeanisation relating to the framework of EU and ERA. Quotes and selected cases are used to exemplify characteristics and variance within the sample.

3.1 Erasmus as a decisive factor

In the interviewees' narration, the initial process of horizontal Europeanisation was usually embedded in their experiences during studies. For the group with no degree mobility before the PhD, participation in the Erasmus exchange programme for a semester marked the beginning of their Europeanisation process. For interviewees with degree mobility prior to their PhD, the start of their Europeanisation was either an Erasmus study abroad semester or the start of a degree programme abroad. Confronted with a new environment in a new country, the participants had to establish new contacts, deal with previously unknown rules and customs, and adapt to some extent. For example, Simon explained that he had rarely travelled with his parents anywhere. The exchange semester with Erasmus was for him the first time abroad for a longer period and this gave him not only wanderlust and the idea to go abroad again, but he also developed more confidence through improved English skills and studying in a foreign language. Interestingly, he expected shared knowledge among Erasmus students when he described it as a great time. He assumed that everyone with Erasmus experience would immediately know and understand him and his sentiments. Certainly, one of the main aims of the Erasmus programme is to Europeanise its participants (Stratis, 2014), but it also seems to build a certain in-group feeling, which limits spill-over effects for Europeanisation to non-

Erasmus persons. A similar limitation is the lack of integration into the host (academic) society that was often expressed by the interviewees, which is in line with previous studies (Papatsiba, 2006). But even if a bubble was formed by Erasmus students during their exchange, it still confronted them with students from various other European countries, which led to friendships and partnerships that continued beyond the exchange period. Another reaction to the limited contact with domestic students and citizens during an Erasmus stay was the wish to realise degree mobility or academic-work mobility in the Erasmus host country, because a longer stay would increase the likelihood to integrate and interact more.

For interviewees without degree mobility prior to the PhD, spending an Erasmus semester abroad was standard practice. Among the others (degree mobility before PhD), there were some interviewees who had not done an exchange semester but who had gained their initial European experience through their degree mobility. But even when Erasmus was not a part of their studies, it had an impact on the decision of being mobile as part of their studies. Anna made this clear when she spoke in a very negative way about the Erasmus program, referring to a friend's experience: "She had her Erasmus-thing and that's it. And I don't know what she got out of it, besides very much alcohol and two words of the native language" (interview, Anna, Netherlands, 2017). However, during her bachelor's studies, she felt some kind of pressure to participate in mobility for her career. In direct comparison to her friends who had participated in the Erasmus programme, she felt that something was missing. Because of the general mobility expectation, which is partly built and supported by the Erasmus programme, she felt that she had to give her academic career a new turn and thus should not stay in Germany. This was the point of departure for her decision to start in a master's programme in another European country. Consequently, Erasmus lays a foundation for the Europeanisation process for students, who eventually will become researchers later. This becomes even more relevant when one compares the high visibility and publicity of the Erasmus programme compared to other EU-instruments, which fall far behind (Favell, 2008).

Europeanisation started for interviewees prior to PhD studies in another European country. For most of our participants, their Erasmus experience played a crucial role in realising Europe (Delhey & Deutschmann, 2016) and it started their practical process of Europeanisation through transnational-European friendships and partnerships. For those participants who have been Europe-orientated before their studies, it was a chance to strengthen and deepen their mostly theoretical Europeanisation, which was based on idealistic imaginations and thoughts on Europe, but not reflected in their daily life practises. The ability to move around within the European context with the help of such exchange programmes as Erasmus enabled the participants to improve their language skills and come into direct contact with other European peers and students, adding to their Europeanisation. Not surprisingly, the main focus was personal and not professional (work or study-related) contacts and experiences. For students, the role of academia- or profession-related contacts were not yet as important as the direct and personal contact with fellow peers.

3.2 Spatial proximity: Europe as a common space

Moving from experiences as students to doctoral lives, the focus of participant narrations shifted more to geographical considerations, which also have to be considered in the process of horizontal Europeanisation. These arguments designated—sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly—Europe as a common geographic space. This space is not only to a certain degree culturally integrated and similar but it is also physically close enough to move around quickly. Similar arguments were made by the participants who had no migration background. The non-professional reasons to stay in Europe were mostly parents, partner and children. For example, Anna had a close relationship with her parents and a sibling, who still live in her hometown in western Germany. This influenced her career choices and she consequently only searched for jobs in the Netherlands, Belgium and northern France. This, rather specific, outline of a

geography of possibilities was justified by three factors: conditions and research environment in the national academic system, language, and a close proximity to her hometown. For example, the United Kingdom's prestigious academic system and potentially attractive positions were excluded because Anna perceived that Britain is too far away from her home region in Germany. She added that the United States would be too far away and too expensive for a short-term trip home if there was a family emergency. In the same segment of her narration, she included the benefits of EU-wide social security in her views of spatial proximity.

This indicates that EU-policies have had a direct impact on the mobile academics themselves, which can also be acknowledged explicitly. Spatial closeness is nevertheless a very important argument, as Maike explained: "The decisive factor is the distance. Like, I would do right now—like before I would accept a position in the United States, I would have to think about it very thoroughly. And a position in the Netherlands, I would have to think about it much less. (interview, Maike, Netherlands, 2017) She did not articulate any specific sentiment towards ERA or the EU in general but made it clear that parts of Europe have priority in her shared future planning with her husband and child. Language and proximity were the most important considerations for plans to move. A pragmatic factor such as spatial proximity can have a bigger impact on the Europeanisation of mobile academics than sophisticated and well-intended supranational umbrella EU-programmes. Academics move around Europe (or parts of Europe) not because of the ERA but because they are simply neighbouring countries or reachable through a convenient connection within two to three hours of travelling. Proximity and distance were not discussed in specific numbers, but through geographical references and travelling time.

In contrast, mobility to the United States, Canada and Australia, which provide attractive positions in highly-developed research environments were perceived as an "extreme decision" (interview, Laura, France, 2017).

3.3 Social networks as support and obstacle and the limitation of Europeanisation

Close proximity is connected to another decisive factor for Europeanisation: private and professional contacts and networks (van Mol, 2014) that are established during exchange and degree mobilities in Europe. The more academics moved in Europe, the wider their network grew, not only with people in the cities that they lived in but also with other mobile people (mostly other researchers). This became clear when participants talked about different friends and friendships in their lives. Friendships from schooldays and older friendships were described as quite immobile friends, who usually stayed in their hometown or home region, or returned to home after studies. In comparison, friends who were made later (e.g. at university or as a PhD) were described as very Euro-mobile themselves. Therefore, their own social network expanded and changed over time in Europe (and to a lesser extend beyond Europe). With friends all over Europe, the participants were more likely to keep some kind of connection to the countries where their friends are, such as by visiting them, having conversations about social and political developments in these countries (Mau, Mewes, & Zimmermann, 2008). Furthermore, the probability that their friends are from other countries or move around other countries is higher when they meet in an academic environment or where the work environment is more international or European (e.g. in a local company). A further development of horizontal Europeanisation was defined by more professional European contacts in comparison to private contacts during Erasmus or graduate studies. Additionally, short-term research-trips, visits as associates and conference attendance all strengthened the professional profile of the participants' Europeanisation.

However, this process was also sometimes limited or slowed down due to personal reasons, such as elderly parents, and children's or partner's expectations. Similarly to Anna, Linda wanted to be close to her family and parents in east Germany, this was a linchpin for her future plans. In addition, she already had two children, which contributed to her decision to return home. "But it [a Marie Curie position] is rather not a big option for myself anymore, because the motto now is rather to go back home again, and not to move with the children somehow throughout Europe. This is not so relevant right now, no." (interview, Linda, Netherlands, 2017). In Linda's case, the ideal Europeanised academic position as defined by the European Union's Marie Curie programme was too demanding (Walakira & Wright, 2018). The obligations of being a parent were more important than the gratification of a strong(er) Europeanised career. For the future, she saw herself working in Germany. This is a crucial difference to Anna, who still included neighbouring countries in her future plans. Linda explained why this choice was not an option for her:

This is coincidentally in Germany less important. Like, if, so to say, our … my family home, if that would be more somehow the Ruhr area, then I would orientate myself more again towards, I don't know, Belgium or the Netherlands. But like this, it is always automatically rather Germany, also because somehow Poland and Czech Republic give no perspective in that [work], that I do right now. (interview, Linda, Netherlands, 2017)

Although proximity tends to play a role for private reasons, it appears that the EU is not as integrated as it has seemed so far. Professionally, horizontal Europeanisation involving more recent EU member states was limited. Although a school exchange to the Czech Republic featured prominently in her biography and in the initiation of her Europeanisation process, and even though she is fluent in the Czech language, Linda did not consider continuing her career in neighbouring eastern European countries located close to her hometown and family. From her description, it was unclear if the problem was that Poland and the Czech Republic have

insufficient academic infrastructure only in her field of scientific work or if the problem was more general. Nevertheless, there is an objective disequilibrium between western and eastern Europe (Williams, 2015) in terms of the prestige and attractiveness of their academic systems (Dang, 2018; Matthews, 2018). Consequently, it is worth asking if she would take an academic position in general in these two east-European countries. Her horizontal Europeanisation seems to be split into a private and a professional Europeanisation. The former, which was closely connected to the Czech Republic, is not echoed in the latter.

The same pattern of a limited professional Europeanisation can be found among the majority of the interviewees, although Linda's interview is one of the few examples where it was addressed directly. Although the majority of interviewees claimed that they would migrate to another European country for a new position after the PhD, if any examples were named, then they were always limited to western or northern European countries, where the quality of research and work is perceived as being higher than in the rest of Europe. The focus on the west and north of Europe is an implicit rejection of the south and east. Furthermore, in a few examples, southern European countries were openly excluded from possible migration plans, mainly because of the language barriers and the low spread of English among their universities. Meanwhile, other participants reported that their private lifestyle guided their decision to move only to countries where they would enjoy legal protection and live without restrictions—in short, liberal democracies. Eastern EU-member states such as Poland were explicitly named as countries that do not grant these securities and freedoms. Consequently, there is a division in the ERA, which is not only an institutional division but also a mobility barrier, which is rooted in societal differences. Although many of the interviewees had visited and a few had even worked periodically in southern or eastern European countries and they did not voice unfavourable opinions in general about them, it is questionable if a Europeanisation process

can be limited to parts of Europe and still be called Europeanisation—where it is more of a *Western Europeanisation*, which mainly comprises the old European Community plus Scandinavia, Austria and Switzerland, and not the younger EU member states in the Mediterranean and Europe's post socialists states, also indicating a wealth gap.

4 Conclusion

This article presents analysis on horizontal Europeanisation processes among mobile young academics in the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Union (EU). Its focus on the micro-level experiences of individual academics has provided a different angle as prior research on Europeanisation has mostly focused on meso- or macro-perspectives. The findings contribute to the sociology of Europe and research on Europeanisation using a mobility-related-perspective to carve out the development of horizontal Europeanisation processes among the higher educated in the context of EU and ERA macro-infrastructures. In contrast to other micro-level studies on Europeanisation in higher education, which mostly focus on students and their activities, the novelty of this article is that it exclusively examines young academics, who face different situations than students and can resort to different resources. This paper looked beyond the snapshot of the time of studies, to analyse a longer time perspective in which the process of horizontal Europeanisation is understood as continuous and rooted in previous experiences.

For study participants, Europeanisation was initiated by experiences with the Erasmus programme, and was very much embedded in the infrastructure of the EU. Even for those who did not participate in Erasmus, the programme had an indirect influence on their decision to take up European mobility and therefore start their Europeanisation process. The interviewees' Europeanisation process usually evolved further through deepening transnational social contacts and especially through widening their professional European network following their migration to another European country. Interpersonal relationships played a vital role in

building and maintaining horizontal Europeanisation; friends from later stages of life were more mobile in Europe themselves and the social networks of our participants spread over Europe. These results are in agreement with prior research, which concludes that "[through] experiences abroad and through their social interaction, mobile students from EU states appropriate Europe as a personal project, in which the social predominates over the political" (Van Mol, 2013, p. 220). This process was supported by the EU-infrastructure through the freedom of mobility, the harmonisation and recognition of national diplomas, smoothing transitions and EU-wide social security measures. Although the common European infrastructure and its advantages for mobile academics were seldom pointed out in the interviews, the majority of interviewees moved within the framework and it was implicit in their narration. This omission indicates a processed Europeanisation that is taken for granted instead of being treated as something special or peculiar.

Nevertheless, the process of horizontal Europeanisation stemmed sometimes from reasons not connected to the framework of EU or ERA. Those participants based their decision to stay in Europe more on the spatial proximity of specific countries than on the idea of a common research area or social-political union. These participants created their transnational spaces under the condition of geographical reachability, which was usually defined within the European continent. This result is in line with research on the mobility of non-academic high-skilled workers, where spatial proximity can also be a decisive factor (Ackers 2008; Ryan and Mulholland 2014). In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic and all its consequences for crossing borders and transnational mobility, proximity became even more central for workers (including academics) abroad. Mainly, because a closer proximity to the home country ensures a greater flexibility to react to the spontaneous global outbreak of a health threat, the sudden closing of national borders and cancelation of almost all cross-border flights, if the worker abroad wants for example to stay with his or her family, parents, etc. in his or her respective home country and not be isolated for an indefinite time abroad. This flexibility is supported by

alternative low-cost means of transportation when flights are cancelled. In the specific example of Germany, some of its borders to neighbouring countries like the Netherlands and Belgium were not entirely closed during the COVID-19 disease pandemic (BBC, 2020a) which made it easier for academics from Germany to return. This decision was made by the German federal government and not by the EU. However, the EU did and does play an important part to ensure and support (academic) mobility during the pandemic, as the national borders and transportation connections within the EU were opened and re-established much earlier than outside of the EU (BBC, 2020b).

The findings highlight limits to the process of horizontal Europeanisation. On the one hand, a gap between north–west and south–east within the EU in terms of academic quality and work prospects was perceived (Guth & Gill, 2008; Lulle & Buzinska, 2017). On the other hand, European transnational mobility, which plays a key part in the Europeanisation process, could not be upheld over the course of life—especially if new private obligations arose, such as caring responsibilities (Ackers, 2010; Ivancheva & Gourova, 2011). Private and professional dimensions of horizontal Europeanisation diverged to a certain amount, which means that work-related, professional, horizontal Europeanisation was not congruent with private horizontal Europeanisation and the latter was broader whereas the former was more limited to a specific part of Europe.

Consequently, to speak of a horizontal Europeanisation process being completely embedded in the EU or ERA would go too far for the presented sample of young academics. Reasons beyond the influence of the EU played a role for horizontal Europeanisation. Furthermore, a full and wide integration of all EU-member states into a common academic space is not visible. There is a lack of horizontal Europeanisation when one understands Europe to include also the eastern and southern countries of Europe, which were implicitly or explicitly ignored by the sample's participants. The EU can provide an environment and framework that can constructively foster

a Europeanisation process and lay the foundation for a more integrative and integrated ERA, although personal-private contacts and spatial proximity as key factors for horizontal Europeanisation are partly independent of these actions. If the EU is honestly interested in a common and united space for European academics, then it should address the perceived difference of the rest of Europe to northern and western Europe to a greater extent (Hoareau, 2014); including differing standards in salaries, infrastructure for families, or subjective perceptions of different academic reputation, as the findings showed.

Some of the limitations of this study on academic mobility in Europe have been outlined in the above. The sample consisted of academics from Germany, who are doing their research in the Netherlands or France. In the context of intra-European mobility, the Netherlands and France host the most doctoral candidates from Germany, excluding other German-speaking countries (Schittenhelm et al., 2017). This by no means captures the heterogeneity of the European Union, nor the full mobility and transnationality of academics from Germany in Europe. Processes of horizontal Europeanisation for mobile academics from eastern or southern Europe might have a different sequence and may be differently embedded in the framework of the EU and the ERA. Also, some participant responses showed a pattern where their described Europeanisation might be part of a bigger horizon and cosmopolitanism beyond Europe. More research is needed to investigate this phenomenon. Universities and research institutions play a role, on the meso level, in the process of transnational mobility and horizontal Europeanisation of academics. This represents a new field of research, which poses interesting questions of influence and shaping of transnational mobility and horizontal Europeanisation—but which could not be included in this paper, as it focused on the micro-level of individual experiences against the more general macro context of the EU and the ERA. However, the findings point to a certain plausibility that the specific organisational characterises of a higher education institution curb or boost transnational mobility and horizontal Europeanisation of academics on the move. These differences can be found in the ability of the university to offer career outlooks, economic

resources, social networks, and organisational involvement in EU-schemes (Schäfer, 2018). The symbolic status of the university can also play an important role in horizontal Europeanisation, depending on geographical location within the EU or the ERA. This becomes clear when we take into account the varying perceptions among the interviewees of different higher education systems in northern and western Europe as compared to southern and eastern Europe. The perception spills over to the reputation of the university—regardless of the *objective* quality and reputation of individual universities (measured e.g. by rankings - which should be evaluated critically (Münch, 2013)) (Gerhards, Hans, & Drewski, 2018). Therefore, the university is overlooked by potential interested academics and not on their radar on the one side, and consequently can only play a limited part and contributor to horizontal Europeanisation. This study researched academics and their horizontal Europeanisation, which is a group of people who are part of an educational elite. In light of recent developments in the political sphere in many EU-countries (e.g. voting for nationalistic parties), these results can hardly be translated to the overall societies and they leave room for further research.

Endnotes

[1]The European Research Area (ERA) is an initiative of the European Commission, that aims to create a common academic market, improved cooperation and coordination between national research institutions and the development of European research policy (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). This paper refers to the ERA and not to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), because the sample consists of doctoral candidates, who are engaged in research and academic publishing and therefore are approached here as researchers and not as students. The ERA (as well as the Erasmus programme) include countries outside Europe and beyond the EU. This article focuses on academics from EU-states.

[2] The concept of horizontal Europeanisation is not to be confused with horizontal (and vertical) integration of European governance as discussed in Chou and Gornitzka (2014, 2f.), which solely addresses the institutional level of Europeanisation.

[3] MSCA is an EU-scheme that provides grants for all stages of researchers' careers. One of the requirements of a MSCA position is spatial mobility in the ERA and cooperation of research institutions from at least two different countries.

[4] Spatial mobility is physical movement from one location to another across national borders, for a defined amount of time, which can span from short-stay visits to entire phases of employment (Ackers, 2013). Academic mobility is the spatial mobility of academics for the purpose of research, work collaborations and teaching at an institution abroad Ackers (2013).

[5] I use the term *young academics* to describe our sample group, because doctoral candidates contribute to academic research and can be defined as young researchers. Their status in higher education systems in Germany, France and the Netherlands is closer to being a part of the academic workforce rather than being part of the student body (as e.g. in the UK), through their engagement in teaching and research collaboration based on work contracts with the university rather than scholarships (Andres, L., Bengtsen, S. S., Gallego Castaño, L., Crossouard, B., Keefer, J. M., & Pyhältö, K., 2015; McAlpine, Jazvac-Martek, & Hopwood, 2009)—which is also the case for this sample.

[6] All but one of the interviews were conducted in German. The analysis is based on the original German transcripts and all quotations from interviewees in this paper were translated by the author, except for one interview that was conducted in English. The names of people and locations have been altered for anonymity.

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6. Spatial mobility and the perception of career development for social sciences and humanities doctoral candidates

Abstract[22]

The spatial mobility of students and academics as part of the internationalisation of higher education is becoming increasingly relevant in securing top-tier positions, especially within academia. Mobility can occur in multiple stages of the academic career, including the doctoral stage. While the number of doctoral candidates is rising, new positions are not created at the same rate, leading to scarcer career opportunities in academia and the need to develop alternative career paths. Previous studies have much focused on the connection between mobility and career development among junior academics in the STEM fields, but the significance of mobility for SSH PhD candidates and their career development remains unanswered. Does spatial mobility have any effects there, and if so, which? For this reason, this paper studied doctoral SSH candidates from Germany with mobility experiences in the Netherlands. The findings show that spatial mobility affects the perception of the PhD candidate's career in several, sometimes ambivalent ways. It shows that the experience of mobility narrows the planning to a career in academia, contributes to the informal learning process of the candidate, and expands the horizon for possible opportunities in academia. The perceived asset of mobility varies alongside the internationalisation of disciplines and whether the candidate plans to return to Germany or pursue an international career.

Keywords: doctoral candidates, PhDs, mobility, career development, social sciences and humanities

Introduction

Spatial mobility[23] plays an increasingly important role in the development of an academic career (Bilecen & van Mol, 2017a), which is closely connected to the process of internationalisation of higher education (Teichler, 2017a, 2017c) Current doctoral candidates have many more opportunities than previous generations to experience mobility within their institutional settings but they also face a higher pressure to do so, especially if they want to secure a suitable position after their PhD has been completed. Meanwhile, the numbers of doctoral graduates continues to rise, and the imbalance between the rising number of graduate doctoral candidates and the number of available postdoctoral positions continues to worsen (Halse & Mowbray, 2011), which often leads to the threat of unemployment. Consequently, large numbers of postgraduates are leaving academia to find a position in the non-academic labour market, without clear chances of success. Considering the rising numbers of doctoral candidates in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) and the lack of available positions for further academic careers, it is striking that there is a lack of research on these SSH candidates in terms of their career perspective and mobility (Marini, 2018). This might be due to the fact that many studies (e.g. Fitzenberger & Schulze, 2014 on Germany; deGoede, Belder, & Jonge, 2014 on the Netherlands) have focused more closely on domestic career opportunities because career systems and career pathways can vary significantly between the different countries and their labour markets (Hauss, Kaulisch, & Tesch, 2015), whereas academic careers are more likely to be cross-national. While some attention has been given to either the mobility of academics or the employment of graduates in the SSH, this paper brings these two issues

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[23] Spatial mobility is the physical moving from one location to another for a defined amount of time, while in this paper the focus lies on long-term mobility, ergo the geographical relocation for an entire phase of work and/or education.

together. This will be achieved through an agent-focused life-course perspective of biographical interviews, which allows the patterns of the significance of mobility on different aspects of career development to be reconstructed. This analysis will address the gap in the literature of a reconstructive understanding of the interplay between spatial mobility and career building in the SSH. Which is important to understand in times, where mobility develops into a benchmark in higher education and becomes an integral part of the perception of 'good research' or 'good career' on the one hand, but its social impact and consequences are less prominent discussed on the other hand. In addition, the extensive amount of research on international experience for management careers (Richardson & McKenna, 2003) can hardly be applied to academic careers because the requirements of managers differ significantly from those of academics, especially in the SSH. Therefore, the central research question is: **How does the experience of mobility throughout the working life shape the doctoral candidate's perception of his or her future career development?** This includes the doctoral candidate's views of mobility, including if it is seen as an asset or as a hinderance for a career path inside or outside of the academy. The basis for the analysis of this paper consists of 35 narrative in-depth interviews with German doctoral candidates in the Dutch SSH. This is an especially interesting group for this research question because the Netherlands has a very high number of doctoral candidates from Germany, although only a few studies have researched them (Schittenhelm, El Dali, & Schäfer, 2017b).

To approach this question, this paper draws on concepts of academic life course (Ackers & Stalford, 2007) and agency-structure (Ackers, 2004b). Previous research has shown that mobility is often connected to earlier mobility experiences (Netz, 2018; Schäfer, 2020b). Furthermore, in-depth interviews allow us to include both private and professional dimensions of mobility. This paper understands the perception of career development and mobility not in retrospect but as a preparation and evolving consideration from an individual perspective in the context of current PhD work and mobility experiences (Chen, McAlpine, & Amundsen, 2015).

Career perspectives and the development of doctoral candidates in the SSH

Academia is still the largest and most important employment sector for PhDs from the SSH (Ackers et al., 2015; Rasmussen & Andreasen, 2017) and it has much greater importance when compared to their colleagues from STEM, where many graduates do not want to stay in academia (Hauss et al., 2015). Despite some variation among subdisciplines, in general, the non-academic work sector has become more important over recent years (Derycke, Kaat, van Rossem, & Groenvynck, 2014). Although the knowledge-based society does and will demand more academic workers in the future (Baschung, 2016), PhDs from the SSH do not necessarily profit from this development. The same goes for higher salaries outside academia, which is true for academics in general over all disciplines (Huisman, Weert, & Bartelse, 2002) but is especially doubtful in the case of the SSH. If graduates from the SSH are able to find work outside academia, then they often move into public administration and teaching, as well as - but to a lesser extent - into business and finance related sectors (Rasmussen & Andreasen, 2017).[24]

The number of graduate doctoral candidates is rising quickly, while available positions within academia for follow-up employment remain rare (Gemme & Gingras, 2012). For example, more than half of all doctoral candidates leave academia after graduation (McAlpine Lynn & Emmioğlu, 2015) in search of work because of the lack of academic jobs. This is true for all disciplines but it is especially relevant or problematic for PhDs in the SSH because the majority still rely on a career at university (Briedis, Jaksztat, Preßler, Schürmann, & Schwarzer, 2014), whether because of the lack of opportunities outside of academia (Rasmussen & Andreasen, 2017) or because of a strong interest and identification with the research topics (Golovushkina & Milligan, 2012). In Germany, only 10 percent of doctoral graduates will eventually secure a professorship, which is one of the few positions within the system that is tenured (Hauss et al.,

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[24] Rasmussen and Andreasen (2017) only covered Denmark with their study, but there is a strong indication that career opportunities for SSHs in other countries are similar Ackers et al. (2015).

2012). Despite these extreme odds, the majority of doctoral candidates in the SSH continue to strive for an academic career (Hauss et al., 2015). In comparison to other higher education systems, the German system offers few secure alternatives to the professorship for its academic workers. A total of 86 percent of non-professorial academics in the SSH in non-university research institutions are on fixed-termed contracts, compared to 93 percent in the universities (Konsortium Bundesbericht Wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs, 2017). This share has grown over the last few years as a result of the growing numbers of graduates, whereas the number of tenured positions has not kept pace with the demand. In comparison to Germany, the way to a full-professorship in the Netherlands is less risky thanks to a significantly higher number of other tenured positions below the position of full-professor (Vossensteyn, 2017). However, the general trend towards an increasing number of PhD graduates despite a stable number of permanent academic positions can also be found in the Netherlands (Rathenau Institute, 2016). For example, in the Netherlands the share of temporary positions has risen from 53 percent in 2003 to 61 percent in 2016 (Rathenau Institute, 2016), with an associated decline in job security. The higher education system in the Netherlands is rather international. Overall, 30 percent of the academic workforce in the Netherlands are international (deGoede, Belder, & Jonge, 2013). Meanwhile, half of the doctoral candidates are international, which continues to rise (Rathenau Institute, 2016). In contrast, more senior positions have smaller numbers of international staff: only 24 percent among assistant professors, and just 15 percent among associate and full professors (deGoede et al., 2013).

Career planning and its development rely on opportunity structures and also on personal preferences, skills, intentions, knowledge, and horizons. In particular, doctoral candidates who take their first steps into academia by completing a PhD grow in their understanding of the structures and rules of academia (Brew, Boud, & Un Namgung, 2011). This process is predominantly directed towards academic positions and it often neglects non-academic career

pathways (McAlpine, Amundsen, & Turner, 2013). In two studies on Danish PhD graduates from SSH (Drejer, Holm, & Østergaard, 2016; Rasmussen & Andreasen, 2017), the following main strategies for career progress were described: (1) remain strategy, (2) mixed strategy and (3) exit strategy. The first strategy is the most popular given that PhDs from the SSH have relatively few job opportunities outside of academia (Kyvik & Olsen, 2012) when compared to their colleagues from STEM. The second strategy refers to going into teaching and research outside of university, such as colleges. The third strategy consists of candidates who have deliberately opted out of academia and gone into positions in public administration or business services and finance (Drejer et al., 2016). Consequently, this study pays attention to the academic as well as the non-academic job market as an envisioned space for a career.

Theoretical considerations

The theoretical considerations of this paper are based in academic life course (Ackers, Gill, & Guth, 2008; Ackers & Stalford, 2007; Heinz & Krüger, 2001; Mayer, 2009) and structure-agency approaches (Ackers, 2004b; Archer, 2008; Kahn, 2009). These considerations imbed the academic actor in a life-course perspective, in which the individual is systematically perceived in the light of their past experiences and development, which influences their present situation and future decisions (Ackers, 2007). It is also very feasible for this study because it put notions on mobility in the context of life course decisions:

> 'In common with many other areas of life, decisions about whether and where to move and for how long do not take place in a vacuum; neither do they take place in a fully informed and 'rational' manner. Migration decision-making, of the highly skilled at least, can best be described as the exercise of choice (or agency) within a shifting framework of resources and constraints; shifting not only in objective terms in response to changing conditions but also in response to evolving levels of awareness and need.' (Ackers, 2004b, p. 3)

Individual considerations concerning life conduct are under constant review and vary over the life course. This becomes especially relevant for the perception of career development because work is usually a big part of the (academic) life course and is therefore likely to be influenced by other factors, such as mobility. Attitudes towards mobility are also likely to change over the course of a lifetime, and hence the possible alternation of career development perception over time. Agency, whether it be of mobility or career development, is embedded in the life course and structure of academic careers (Hakkarainen et al., 2014). This structure is likely to be identified in this study in the form of the higher education system, countries and their specifics, and also in other areas, such as the family. Furthermore, paying attention to mobility is self-evident because non-economic factors do shape academic careers (Ackers & Stalford, 2007).

The aim of this study is to avoid downplaying social agency through overly deterministic approaches, which reduces the individual to a product of society's influences, as well as avoiding hyper-individualistic point of views, which do not account for the structuring surroundings and overemphasise the power (and isolation) of agency. In particular, 'the effects of structural and cultural factors are mediated to the agency of the individual' (Kahn, 2009, p. 199). This mediation includes three stages: the agent's confrontation with the situation shaped by structural and cultural properties, followed by the agent's own (re-)configuration of the situation based on his/her experience, leading to the action itself which is based on the subjective agent's practical reflection in relation to the surroundings (Kahn 2009). Personal agency includes but is not limited to intentionality, pursuit, deliberation, language and forming concerns, which distillates into the performance of the individual stakeholder. Therefore, this study understands agency and structure as an interplay, in which the agent (doctoral candidate) bases their perception of career development on their life-course experiences. This follows Clegg's conclusion: 'If higher education research is to render a sensible account of itself, it needs a theory of human agency, although this is of course not all we need – analytical dualism

also requires us to think through the relationships between structure and agency through time.' (Clegg, 2005, p. 160) These theoretical considerations then translate into the analytic scheme by focusing and carving out the freedom and range of action of the interviewed doctoral candidates in respect to their current structural embedment, such as institutional trajectories or expectations of internationalisation, and past life-course experiences (Archer, 2008).

Materials and methods

This paper focuses on PhD candidates from Germany who are based in universities in the Netherlands. This group poses an interesting subject for research because they are one of the largest groups of emigrant PhDs from Germany (Schittenhelm et al., 2017b), are less visible compared to their non-European colleagues (Kõu, van Wissen, van Dijk, & Bailey, 2015), and are therefore rarely discussed. Although the mentioned PhDs candidates are obviously not limited to Germany or the Netherlands, when they think about their career development, it is self-evident that we should look closer into the specifications of these higher education systems because they are the visible references for decision-making. Working conditions and contract options in the work hierarchy will be especially discussed because these factors were central for the interviewees.

The empirical data was collected through biographical interviews with 35 graduates of the SSH, who had been educationally socialized in Germany and who were PhD candidates at Dutch universities. In total, 32 out of the 35 interviewees were employed by their university and the remaining three were funded with scholarships. Among the 32 university positions, funding came for 14 from NWO[25], funding for seven came from ERC/MSCA[26], and funding for 11 came directly from the university. One scholarship came from the NWO, while the other two came from other foundations. The high number of employed PhDs and the NWO/ERC/MSCA

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[25] Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Dutch Research Council)
[26] European Research Council / Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions

as a financial source will be part of the discussion of the findings because they hint to a specific population of PhDs. The data collection was part of a larger project: 'Mobile transitions mobile lifestyles? Career choices and way of living at the transition to transnational scientific careers in the European Union' (Schittenhelm et al., 2017b), which also defined the focus on doctoral candidates from Germany in particular The vast majority of the interviewees were in their mid-20s to early-30s, of whom 25 were female and 10 were male.

The narrative-biographical interview format was used throughout the project because it can be used as an explorative instrument. It gives the interviewees a chance to emphasize relevant topics, such as what mobility means for them, and allocate it with significance without imposing the researcher's ideas and notions on them (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Therefore, it provides an effective way to collect data for an explorative way of analysis. We started with an open stimulus[27], which aimed to put the interviewees at ease and allow them to speak freely. This ensures good quality information because the interviewee is not forced to talk about a certain topic but instead is enabled to cover subjects that are important to them, which should enhance motivation and contribute to the quality of their responses (Juhasz Liebermann, 2012b). An interview guideline was only used for topics that were not addressed by the interviewees themselves.

The documentary method (Bohnsack, Pfaff, & Weller, 2010a; Nohl, 2010b) was used for data analysis, which is rooted in the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 2013). This method pays attention to the explicit and the implicit knowledge and presentation of the interviewee, as well as the context and sequence of statements. This allows for the explication of the 'modus operandi' (Bohnsack, Pfaff, and Weller 2010, 103) –, which is the interviewee's outline of his or her agency. The analysis of the first statement on a topic is complemented with additional

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[27] 'We are interested in life stories of young academics from Germany. I would like to hear now your life story with all the events that you remember. There is no limit of time, I will not interrupt you and only take notes for follow-up questions during your story.'

analysis and comparisons of following statements on the same topic or connected topics to verify or change the initial modus operandi: 'The important point here is the way a text or action is constructed, or the limits within which its topic is dealt with, i.e. the "orientation framework" within which (Bohnsack 2007, 135) a problem is handled.' (Nohl 2010, 200). The orientation frameworks are developed from single cases but are confirmed or differentiated through constant comparisons with other cases from the sample. The orientation frameworks are represented in the three strands presented below. The analytic approach is especially fruitful in combination with the explorative function of the interview design because it unpacks and reveals the interviewee's explicit and implicit motivations and orientations through a great degree of freedom for the interviewee (see the open stimulus). The documentary method allows me to systematize these new insights by carving out the common patterns in the single cases through connecting them. The findings are the result of contrasting passages of past experiences and future considerations across the sample's cases. Quotes are used to exemplify different traits and the variance within the sample and the three presented themes.

Findings

The topic of mobility was automatically brought up by all of the interviewees when future career development was discussed. This may have occurred because the interviewees were aware of the project title. Nevertheless, the analysis has shown that being spatially mobile plays an important role for their considerations and their lives. Mobility to gain a doctoral position and a position after the PhD seemed almost natural to the interviewees. Most of them relocated for a longer period of time, usually for the full time of their doctoral contract.

The overwhelming majority of the interviewees planned to stay in academia, either as the most likely option or as the only option without alternatives. Therefore, thoughts on a career development within academia were more pronounced and detailed in the narrations than alternative paths outside of academia. This might be explained as follows. First, PhDs in the

Netherlands do not have a master-apprentice relation with their supervisors. The master-apprentice relation creates a bigger dependency which allows more possibilities for mistreatment and abuse, which is a decisive factor why doctoral candidate (plan to) quit academia (Hunter & Devine, 2016). Second, graduates of PhD programmes (Fitzenberger & Schulze, 2014) or with formal agreements with their supervisors (Hauss et al., 2015) are more likely to stay in academia than others. These programmes and agreements are widely spread in the Dutch SSH (in comparison to Germany) and almost every interviewee was embedded in a doctoral programme. This might explain why the wish to stay in academia was dominant among the sample, in addition to the general expectation and push from supervisors that their candidates will continue in academia (Golovushkina & Milligan, 2013). The narrative emphasis on career development within academia is also reflected in the analysis, which will pay more attention to the construction of academic pathways than non-academic options.

Networking

Networking is important for career development. This is true also for academia. But how did mobility shape the perception of our doctoral candidates in their networking? Those interviewees describing their desire to stay in academia abroad in specific countries or regions usually justified this wish with their already on-the-spot established professional research networks. These networks could only be established through their previous mobility experiences throughout the doctoral phase and beyond, including conferences, research visits, exchange semester and so on. Their mobility-orientated agency made the best use of the structures that were provided for them during their time in higher education, which they could potentially benefit from in their next career steps. But the structures also added to their agency because previous mobility enhanced the confidence to find access to international academic markets. Going beyond the mere professional dimensions of networking, private relations also arose as an important factor in the imagination of a future academic career abroad. Especially

for those PhDs with a partner from another country, proximity to their native countries became a decisive factor in seeing oneself in or close to those countries. Here, the agency is limited or rather focused on specific destinations in terms of professional development by the mobility through the way of partnership. The perception of an academic career abroad in terms of networking stands in stark contrast to a non-academic career, where virtually no networks were developed abroad for that purpose and the interviewees did not see a viable way to change this in the future or to foster a non-academic career in this environment. This was very much connected to the structures that they were professionally socialized in because the path of the PhD in the SSH does not consider much options outside of academia, even less when doctoral education and work is embedded in a university that is not in the native country of the PhD (Bloch, Graversen, & Pedersen, 2015).

While mobility can improve the network-building through the establishment of contacts in different regions and countries (Franzoni, Scellato, & Stephan, 2015), it also limits the agency for a future academic career when not directed to a specific (national) context, as the following quote demonstrates:

> These positions, also in Germany, also through networking. Through networks comes someone who you've been working with for a long time gives you another position as research associate or someone. I think that is not all of the positions of course, but my feeling is: I don't have this network in Germany at all anymore. And therefore, I imagine it will be quite difficult to enter there again. (Julia)

Developing work-related networks in the Netherlands proved to be simple and self-evident for the doctoral candidates, but this clearly does not help to penetrate an academic system that is (subjectively) closed. The perception dominated that a lack of a network in Germany is a disadvantage, especially under the impression that positions are often only available through the help of contacts in the specific field. Mobility, as their own agency, had removed them from that access to a network in Germany, which could create an insurmountable obstacle to a

postdoctoral or equivalent position in Germany. The impact of this disadvantage also depends on the higher education system itself and its closeness to people without sufficient networks. Therefore, the structure also adds to the perceived disadvantage of mobility when it comes to networking. Research shows that (subjective) scepticism is indeed appropriate and networks do play a role in securing a position (Jungbauer-Gans & Gross, 2012).

In contrast to professional networking, the connection of private networks to career development seems less obvious and is usually not in the focus of such research. However, private networking, or the lack thereof, can influence the decision of career development in terms of spatial horizons. For those PhDs with limited social contacts and networks, or even social isolation in the doctoral city (partly due to language barriers or lack of spare time), this environment led to feelings of disintegration and alienation. These feelings were decisive for reorientation back to Germany in the future, and therefore also influence the interviewee's career development (i.e., by looking for positions in Germany only). This variation in the sample demonstrates how mobility does not necessarily create new horizons for employment if it has a damaging impact on private social networking.

Intellectual

Intellectual discomfort and stress as a result of mobility can be caused by differences in academic and epistemological traditions across countries, which can be perceived as an obstacle for academic career development. Contributions to the research field and the academic habitus (Bourdieu, 1988) are possibly not acknowledged (to the same degree) beyond national borders. Our sample helped unpack this problem because the interviewees perceived that the entrance to the German academic market would be relatively hard because they had 'un-learned' the German terminology and technical language of their discipline, which can be very distinctive. Mobility estranges from the field in Germany, which is more likely in the SSH where national traditions are stronger compared to the STEM (Jöns, 2007a). Here, mobility subordinates the

agency to the structure and limits the first to the latter. Domestic peculiarities in expressing oneself in a manner that is adequate to the subject contrast transnational or global mobility pattern and bear the risk to raise barriers for re-entry of the domestic national field or further mobility into a third-party higher education system (HES). This highly depends on the reproducibility and openness of the HES.

Going beyond the mere vocabulary, the epistemological and organisational structure of a research field in different countries is also connected to the reproducibility and openness— internationalisation would be another fitting term. All of the interviewed doctoral candidates wrote their thesis and published their output in English, and departments and some fields in the Netherlands maintain a different (epistemological and organisational) style than their German counterparts in which they are more orientated towards the Anglo-Saxonian discourse and tradition (Frølich et al., 2018). This is usually an aspect of internationalisation (Breetvelt, 2018). A showcase for this difference is the style of the dissertation thesis. The thesis can be article-based or it may consist of a monograph. This organisational difference is then reflected in the way in which research is structured. While the English-tradition academics are usually tailored to a specific argument and therefore more on point in their publication, the German tradition is more focused on capturing a topic in its entirety, hence the preference for a book. Seemingly a minor difference, this can curb perception for a further academic career in Germany, as the following quote ascertains:

> I think I'd rather had problems in Germany, because I did not do my PhD there. I can imagine that, first, a German dissertation looks different. My dissertation will look like much thinner. Which does not mean that it was less work. But it is just a different format, right. (David)

Although not a product of less work, the superficial impression of a 'thinner' thesis is here imaged to be misjudged by German academics and therefore translated into a more pessimistic and more reluctant position towards further career-building in Germany. Again, mobility

curbed the agency, due to structural circumstances (or at least the interpretation of those structures), similar to the above-described terminology problems. Both incidents of curbed agency lie in the life course because previous experiences brought our interviewees to their conclusion that Germany is harder to reach after being academically socialized in the Netherlands. This was explicitly not the case for countries with HES that more closely resemble the Anglo-Saxon model, such as the Netherlands. Mobility can narrow the track to a certain group of highly internationalised HESs, whereas other HESs are less accessible and interesting.

Apart from different intellectual traditions across countries, this paper also addresses the struggle with language. Although basically familiar with the Dutch language and working mostly in an English environment, for some of the participants it was 'not the same' to live in a non-native country where German is not the language of daily life, which resulted in a strong future orientation towards Germany. Insufficient language skills inhibit these candidates from pursuing a postdoctoral position in the Netherlands because teaching in Dutch is part of the position (usually, Bachelor's courses are taught in Dutch). In contrast, the high internationalisation of the Dutch HES (see above) led to the development of English-language skills during the PhD phase in the Netherlands, which was seen as an asset when applying for positions in Germany because experiences abroad are equated with advanced English-language skills. Drawing on this proposition, mobility can enhance the perception of career development on the intellectual strand. However, insufficient language skills can restrict career development in another way, which is portrayed as follows:

> I had thoughts, actually, that I don't have to work at the university forever. At the same time in the Netherlands … my Dutch is not … I can speak, I can present things, I can live the daily life, but I cannot write in a good way. That means, actually I am not very well qualified for the Netherland in a non-academic context. […] On the one side, I am qualified for the—how do you call them?—the higher qualified positions, but at the same time I lack this Dutch on a level of proper writing. (Heike)

While English is the lingua franca of academia and is sufficient for a research job in the Netherlands, very good Dutch-language skills for a job outside of academia are essential in the case of these SSH graduates. As mentioned earlier, most non-academic jobs for SSH graduates can be found in public administration, where proficiency in the domestic language is indispensable. While mobility plays a slightly positive role in the intellectual strand, it has a rather negative effect for the perception of career development outside of academia, especially in the Netherlands. This was repeatedly affirmed by our interviewees, who overall mastered a certain degree of Dutch language but which they deem insufficient for a fluent technical or official conversation. Hence, they do not see themselves applying for non-academic jobs in the Netherlands. Those interviewees who evaluated their own Dutch-language skills as good enough to secure a position outside of research in the Netherlands had a longer history of staying in the country (usually since their undergraduate studies) but were a minority in the sample.

Institutional

The interviewees could rely on their experience with different academic systems, which they had gathered during their mobility. This is especially true for the Dutch and the German system, but also included third-country academic systems (such as the US or Scandinavia). In their aim for an academic career, the candidates need to have insights and information about the work conditions, in both the short-term and long-term. Generally, acquiring a professorship is a highly valued career path once graduates decide to research a PhD (Gemme & Gingras, 2012). One perceived approach to career development was to secure a professorship in Germany by going through lower positions in other countries and building an international experience and reputation. This perception is again rooted in the specific circumstances of the discipline because some disciplines value international experience more than others (Rostan, Ceravolo, & Metcalfe, 2014), as in the following example:

> Yes, I would like to have two to three postdoc positions, or—yes, academic positions (laughs) fixed-termed academic positions, with which we have to get used to, abroad. With the plan or with hope, or both, that one will get a professorship in Germany. In the long run, I value living in Germany as very attractive. But I only came to that conclusion when I was in the USA and here. I started to value Germany very differently somehow. On the other hand, I don't find the academic positions in Germany attractive and therefore would like to use the time rather abroad, which goes along with a lot of uncertainty, only, , I think that this will make my academic background and myself personally much stronger. (Alena)

Here, postdoctoral positions abroad (which would require further future mobility) are mainly seen as a means to secure a professorship in Germany. Mobility had led to realization how attractive life in Germany can be in comparison to the lifestyle in the United States, hence the long-term orientation to Germany. Mobility opens up the room to see disadvantages of living abroad but also creates new perceptions of how to avoid the conditions in Germany for non-professorial employment and give their CV a competitive edge. Mobility is subjectively advantageous and helps to reach the long-term goal of a professorship without the need to work the way up within the (insecure) German academic system. In comparison to friends and colleagues in Germany (the personal), interviewees with the aim of a professorship concluded that PhD conditions in terms of supervision and structure are much better in the Netherlands. Furthermore, fixed-term contracts and the lack of security led our interviewees to the overall conclusion of a 'precarious' situation for the non-professorial staff in Germany. This was contrasted by long-term security for non-professorial staff outside of Germany (whether this is accurate or not).

Mobility allowed them to explore other academic institutional realities and discover the potential disadvantages in the German system and become more 'open-minded' and informed than their less-travelled colleagues. To reach the goal of professorship, limiting oneself to specific countries was not seen as a viable option but instead postdoctoral positions in the research topic have to be searched everywhere. Mobility expanded the agency extensively in

the institutional branch and gave a better understanding and overview of how one can work towards the desired aim of a professorship in Germany. Participants with the plan of becoming a professor perceived postdoctoral positions outside of Germany as a reasonable career step. Their rather positive evaluation of better security within the Dutch system after the PhD stemmed from their positive evaluation of circumstances for doctoral candidates, especially in direct contrast to their friends' experiences in Germany. The good working conditions were then projected into postdoctoral positions in the Dutch or similar organised HES. However, this influence of mobility on the understanding of institutional frameworks and the better positing within those HE frameworks was less straightforward for those interviewees who did not have a clear vision or aim of becoming a professor at the end of their career, not because they would make different experiences or not understand it but rather because it was less relevant for them and their future plans. Extended comparative knowledge on different HES is useful for future career planning in academia, but of rather limited use outside academia and does not contribute to an enhanced perception of a non-academic career.

Conclusion

The papers starting point was relation of spatial mobility and the perception of career development among SSH doctoral candidates. While spatial mobility and its influence on employment is very well researched for (under-)graduate students, the literature on spatial mobility and career among doctoral candidates is still scarce, especially for doctoral candidates from the social sciences and humanities, who differ in their mobility patterns and career perspectives from their STEM colleagues. Therefore, this paper asked how mobility shapes and influences the perception of future career development for PhDs in the SSH. Overall, the doctoral candidates in our sample showed willingness to stay mobile if it led to a fitting academic position to their own satisfaction (which was mostly interest/fit in topic, but working conditions or salary are other examples), which is in line with previous research: mobility

generates more mobility (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014a). Although constant mobility itself was described as tiring by some, even those cases could not deny the necessity of mobility for a further academic career development. Mobility shapes the perception of one's own career development. This includes expanding the professional network across borders (especially but not limited to the Netherlands). However, mobility can weaken or never allow the scholar to develop a network back home. Intellectually, confronting mobile candidates with another working and research language and specific vocabulary is helpful in similar internationalised environments but is not helpful in academic systems with a strong national tradition (depending on the field of research). Institutionally, mobility allows access to more and better knowledge about possible alternatives to plan a future (academic) career abroad, even if the long-term goal is to return to Germany. In these cases, mobility can be a steppingstone towards a prospective career in academia. Those ambivalences show that mobility is multidimensional in its forming and in its consequences. Not all mobility outcomes affect the perception in the same way or even direction. It is possible, or even likely, that the hindering and encouraging aspect of mobility influence the PhD's agency at the same time over different dimensions, as these findings described for the three realms. Eventually, the doctoral candidate, as the agent, has to prioritise and balance the various aspects and bring them together to seek for new professional opportunities, whether inside or outside academia. The success of the individual usage of mobility also lies within the institutional frameworks of national HES and whether they are prepared for acknowledging merits outside of their immediate control and horizon. This paper also showed that mobility can be understood as an informal learning process in the lifelong learning process (Goh Yuen Sze, 2019), which is nevertheless important to imagine and construct an academic career.

These findings mainly address a career within academia. In our interviews, mobility had a less affirmative influence on career development outside of academia. Non-academic jobs were

imagined to be found back in Germany and not in the Netherlands or a third country, while the experience of mobility has no, or rather negative, influence on this perception. Against the gap in literature, it became clear that mobility in the SSH reduces the perceived opportunities for employment outside of academia, which are already smaller compared to STEM graduates, because the mobility is a lock-in move towards an academic career. The findings help us to understand these phenomena by placing the personal agency of the doctoral candidate—as a human being with a past and with a private life—in the centre of the focus without disregarding structural influences, such as the degree of internationalisation of the academic system or the discipline in which they are currently working. It cannot and shall not be predicted if the candidate's agency (influenced by mobility experiences) will be successful or not, but it shows that their horizons for action are expanded by their experiences of mobility. This paper's novelty is the emphasis on the agent's perception of the experience of mobility in connection with career perception in the area of SSH, which is an academic area that can be described as disadvantageous compared to the STEM within the neoliberal logic and academic capitalism. Mobility is seen as useful if there is some kind of intellectual connectivity between the country of the PhD and the post-PhD destination country, and also as an experience to enhance one's own institutional knowledge in academic systems.

This paper only presented observed patterns within the sample and its inherent characteristics. It did not link the influence of mobility on the perception of career development to socio-demographic or economic indicators, which would be the work for another paper. In addition, several limitations have been observed. The sample only consists of mobile doctoral candidates, which does not allow a direct comparative view with their immobile colleagues in terms of career perception. This paper focuses on PhDs from Germany in the Netherlands, which are a specific group within the larger community of SSH doctoral candidates, while other destination countries may offer different possibilities and obstacles for mobile PhDs. Although I would

argue that the general pattern of informal learning through mobility can also be found beyond the sample, since the discussed obstacles are not alien to the general population of mobile PhDs, it is important to point out that the researched group is privileged in terms of citizenship, immigration regulation, race, income/standard of living differences between the two countries, and proximity – especially when we consider mobility of PhDs from the Global South. Therefore, PhDs from a different home country may have varying perspectives and nuances in their informal learning process. Furthermore, due the limitation of space, the reciprocity of personal and professional matters in the career development could only be briefly touched upon. The sample might also be subject to some pre-self-selection. Based on the high number of NWO, ERC and MSCA position-holders in our sample, it could be asked whether primarily very ambitious and outstanding doctoral candidates answered our interview request. Those positions are usually very competitive and candidates who secure these positions are probably more focused on an academic career than those in less competitive positions. Further research is needed to address these issues properly.

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7. Academic Mobility in an Emerging European Research Area: Perception and Realization of its Instruments among PhD Candidates.

Abstract[28]

This paper considers perception and realization of EU-offered instruments and frameworks from the perspective of intra-EU mobile PhD candidates. In the context of current discussions about European Union research policies and their development, this paper shows who, how and under what circumstances doctoral candidates are participating and evaluating programmes designed to encourage mobility and 'excellence'. The basis for this research is 38 interviews with mobile PhDs candidates. It is shown that general knowledge about these programmes is limited but positive, as the programmes are known for their prestige. Universities and colleagues are the main distributors of information. The majority of our sample are not taking part in such programmes and have no concrete plans to do so. This may be connected to their status as early-career scientists and their uncertain future.

Introduction

The European Union and its programmes in higher education promote migration and free movement within the borders of the EU for scientists. This is an attempt to build and strengthen European identity among researchers from different EU countries and to realize the 'European Research Area' (ERA) as a coherent and united supranational job market. Such EU programmes

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are based in the current framework programme of Horizon 2020. They aim to make intra-EU movements and work for individuals more practical. Europeanisation as a general process (Altbach 2015) as well as specific programmes and funding from the European Union (Enders 2004; Baier & Massih-Tehrani 2016), such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), are much discussed topics in the field of higher education research. However, most of the research is done from a macro-institutional perspective and deals with efficiency and effectiveness of those programmes and framework in quantitative terms (e.g., Chou 2014; Repeckaite 2016). The same applies to the various evaluations of the European Commission (EC) about their policies (e.g., European Commission 2012, 2014a).

This paper takes a different perspective. The two main research questions are: What relevance do the EU framework and its programmes have for mobile PhD candidates? What orientation can be found amongst the mobile researchers who use the programmes and those who do not use them? Examples of specific EU programmes are Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and EURAXESS. These will be used for this paper, because they are available for PhD candidates in contrast to other EU programmes, which are only open to postdocs and senior researchers. Individual perspectives and experience are compared with the official outline of the EU. The aims and goals of ERA, Horizon 2020, MSCA and EURAXESS are drawn from statements and strategy papers (European Commission 2014a; European Commission 2016) and previous research.

Background

The paper considers strategies and efforts from the EU to build a European framework in academia along with perception and usage among scholars. The general trend towards more inter/-transnational mobility amongst researchers is meant to enhance competition between institutions and individuals for the best and brightest ideas, innovations, persons and results, and to overcome local and national scientific traditions that are deemed inefficient (Baier &

Massih-Tehrani 2016). The higher the pressure for mobility in one's research career is, and the more usual it is perceived to be, the more likely a national academic system will open itself up and make structural and institutional changes (ibid.). This is especially true for countries in the European Union, because the EU is actively working towards the European Research Area, and the above-mentioned ideas about competition play a crucial part in its plan. Although Europe was already a big player in the global scientific world before ERA and its countries cooperated more than on other continents (Chou & Gornitzka 2014), the pressure of competition and EU's losing ground to other parts of the world resulted in the idea of an ERA, to stop the development of decreasing share and prestige (van der Hijden 2009). Therefore, the ERA will be examined more in detail.

When the Bologna reform was introduced, the European Commission (EC) was very surprised by it, because it was 'what the Commission had always wanted but was never allowed to do because education was deemed to be a national responsibility' (Kehm 2006: 57). However, the EC immediately began to support the Bologna Process and expanded it to include research and development through the Treaty of Lisbon, to create a common European space and market for higher education and research (ibid.). The enhancement of knowledge exchange through the mobility of academic personnel and students in the context of the ERA was even added as the fifth freedom to the principles of the European Union (Chou 2014). The document, 'Towards a European Research Area' (Commission of the European Communities 2000) embraced specifically the idea that mobility is of high importance for academic development and excellence in the future and should therefore be promoted wherever possible. The member states were asked to remove obstacles to mobility, to foster the circulation of knowledge and improve the quality of education EU-wide (Ackers 2005). 'In addition to its emphasis on mobility and the institutional integration of researchers, the code focuses on improving approaches to the recruitment, selection and evaluation of researchers, encouraging greater

transparency, openness and equality in recruitment and selection. Non-discrimination on grounds of nationality (at least among European citizens) is a fundamental principle of European law and one which the Charter upholds in the context of scientific careers.' (ibid.: 307).

Mobility plays an important role in the shaping of the ERA and it is designed to enhance and encourage such academic mobility (European Commission 2001; Morano-Foadi 2005). Later, the issues of social security, pension, employment rights and soft skill training for better employability among mobile researchers were addressed by a new initiative (Ivancheva & Gourova 2011). The mobility claim was integrated in the '2020 vision' of the EU, which means that 'by 2020, all actors fully benefit from the fifth freedom across the ERA: free circulation of researchers, knowledge and technology' (Ackers 2005: 28). The new model is envisaged as a free trade zone for knowledge and science. 'Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programmeme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), is a key EU asset to this end. It aims to stimulate economic growth and create jobs by coupling R&I[29], promoting excellent science and industrial leadership, and tackling societal challenges' (European Commission 2018). The implementation of Horizon 2020 is presented as a crucial part of the realization of the ERA (Official Journal of the European Union 2010). In line with the argumentation for the ERA, Horizon 2020 was designed to raise competitiveness and visibility of the EU as a player in international academic competition (Young 2015). Since 1984, when the first framework programme (FP1) was introduced, Horizon 2020, the eighth FP, is the first to have a distinctive name. This is to represent its importance and innovation: 'We want the CSF [Common Strategic Framework] to mark a clear departure from business as usual. We are not simply moving from the 7th to the 8th Framework Programmeme. And what better way to demonstrate this shift than with a new name?' (Geoghegan-Quinn 2011, cited in Young 2015: 17). The budget was

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[29] Research and Innovation

extended to €80 billion, which is significantly higher than previous programmes. It also combines top-down and bottom-up approaches for the first time, which is supposed to steer agenda as well as innovation (Kalisz & Aluchna 2012). It was specifically defined that the new framework should be more than just a mere funding scheme, and that it should coordinate national efforts for better science and also attract more investments from third parties (Young 2015). However, the definition of what is 'better', 'high quality' or 'best science' must be based upon a specific concept. In the case of Horizon 2020, it follows the general outline of the European Commission, which pairs best science with the best research proposals in a competitive environment (European Commission 2013). The same notion of 'best' with the same implications is also used to describe aims and goals for researchers, ideas and infrastructure. Still, it remains unclear how the best proposals can ensure and forecast the best science. And even if they could, there is still the problem of the Matthew-Effect[30] (Merton 1968). As resources are limited for deciding for or against an application, there is the possibility that decisions also rest upon former reputation, names, etc. and not solely on the quality, innovation and the like of the proposal. There is also the matter of whether funding 'excellence research' should be distributed between European countries more or less equally, or concentrated in few but very prestigious and internationally visible places. The mobility of researchers is an important factor here; they could either stay in their home country or region, to benefit from funding for smaller universities and research institutions, or move to centres of visibility (Young 2015). Another important point for the scholars is bureaucracy and paperwork when applying for funding from the framework programme. Horizon 2020 aims to simplify and harmonize the application process to cut back time and effort expended on filling in forms (Horvat 2011).

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[30] The Matthew-Effect borrows its name from the biblical gospel of Matthew: those who have will get more, while those who have less or nothing will lose even more.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, named after the first female Nobel Prize winner, is part of the 7th Framework Programme, which aims to promote research and innovation in universities and other research institutions. Marie Curie Actions consist of various parts and schemes that all share one feature: the requirement of European mobility. Applicants must be citizen of an EU member state, and cooperation with and movement to other European scientific institutions is compulsory (Ackers 2005). In many cases, this includes at least three different countries. One part of the Actions is Initial Training Networks (ITN), which focuses on 'doctoral education and aimed to improve career prospects for doctoral candidates, called early career researchers, by offering them mobility, access to high-quality research infrastructures, and competitive funding. ITN accounted for around 40 percent of the budget of Marie Curie Actions' (Repeckaite 2016: 258). It is accessible in two forms. The first is host funding, where the research institution applies for the money and creates open positions for researchers, which will then be advertised. This form is most common amongst doctoral candidates, as it was also the case in our sample. The alternative is individual funding, where the researcher, most likely a postdoc, applies directly for financial support for a research project at the Commission (Ackers 2005). Within the framework of MSCA (and in Horizon 2020 in general), PhD candidates are defined as junior researchers, and not primarily as students, which puts them in the sphere of the ERA and not of the EHEA.

EURAXESS is an internet portal that lists science jobs. Target groups are employers, such as university, research institutes and the research facilities of private companies and employees in the fields of research and development. It lists every position within the European Union, regardless of the field of science or career stage (European Commission 2009). The European Commission itself admits that the visibility could be better amongst the scientific community. Only nine percent know of it and only seven percent have used it in the past. This stands in stark contrast to other sources of information, like acquaintances, colleagues or institutions,

which 60 percent of academics surveyed have used (ibid.). The goal of EURAXESS is to foster an 'open, transparent and merit-based recruitment' (Deloitte 2014: 46) and to function as an indicator on the openness of national recruitment systems. This is seen as 'indispensable for the realisation of ERA' (ibid.: 46).

The frameworks and programmes are sometimes criticized as contributors to social stratification in the academic sphere, as they can spark the Matthew-Effect. Applied to this context, it means that instruments and funding from the EU will primarily benefit those who already have been more mobile than the average before, which is often connected to their social background (Netz & Jaksztat 2014). This deepens social differences, as a programme like MSCA will boost scientific careers even more. Another criticism is raised in connection with the EU-proclaimed concept of 'brain circulation' (Musselin 2004) in a programme like MSCA. As previous studies (Ackers 2005; Münch 2016) showed, countries and centres of academic reputation drain scholars from countries with limitations, which include low salaries, poorer quality of research and education, limited access to scientific infrastructure, and poorer quality of life (Fernández-Zubieta & Guy 2010). If remigration afterwards is not the usual pattern and the rate of incoming and outgoing scholars is imbalanced, there is a brain drain instead of brain circulation. This was observed with MSCA fellows in the year 2000 (ibid.). Countries with a good academic reputation, like the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and the Scandinavian countries, hosted more foreign fellows when their own nationals went abroad with the help of MSCA. The opposite occurred in countries with less prestige, like Spain, Italy, Greece and Poland.

Methods and fieldwork

The data collection and this paper are part of the project 'Mobile transitions - mobile lifestyles? Career choices and way of living at the transition to transnational scientific careers in the European Union' at the University of Siegen (Schittenhelm, El Dali & Schäfer 2017). Empirical

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data are collected through biographical interviews from graduates of the SSH (social sciences and humanities), who completed their studies at German universities and were working as PhD candidates at Dutch or French universities at the time of the interviews. Mobility in the SSH is less frequent and harder to achieve (Ackers 2008; Ackers 2013), because 'language skills and cultural knowledge are often necessary for conducting research projects' (Jöns 2007: 88). The sample was therefore limited to these fields of science to achieve a better comparison. France and the Netherlands have the highest percentage of Germans amongst students and academic staff in the EU after the UK and German-speaking countries. The research is still ongoing and 45 interviews have been conducted since December 2016. Graduate schools and individual researchers were contacted via e-mail with our request for interview partners. Contact addresses have been found on the websites of the universities, faculties and graduate schools as well as with the help of personal third-party contacts. The administrators at graduate schools functioned as gatekeepers to potential interviewees, and distributed our request via mailing lists. Another way of finding interview candidates was the browsing of the staff member lists of the universities. Employees with (supposedly) German names were contacted by us directly. This approach has the disadvantage of only including ethnic Germans, while it cannot find Germans with migration background or foreigners who studied in Germany. However, because this was not our exclusive approach to find candidates, our sample also includes the latter groups, which were found through graduate schools and personal contacts. In a later adjustment due to the low response rate, we also included people who either only did one degree (e.g., bachelor's) in Germany, or went to school in Germany, or had already completed their PhD up to three years before the time of the interview. The biographical interview format was used throughout the project and can be specifically utilized for this research question as an explorative instrument. It gives the interviewees the chance to emphasize relevant topics without imposing the researcher's ideas and notions on them (Corbin & Morse 2003). We started with open stimulus, to put interviewees at ease and allow them to speak freely. This ensures a good quality of

information, because the interviewee is not forced to talk about a certain topic. Rather they cover subjects that are important to them, which should enhance motivation and contribute to the quality of responses (Juhasz Liebermann 2012). An interview guideline was only used for topics, that were not addresses by the interviewees themselves. For analysis, a combination of Documentary Method (Bohnsack 2014) and Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1990) was applied. The former is especially fruitful in combination with the explorative function of the interview design. It uncovers orientation and perspectives on EU frameworks and programmes. The latter one is useful for organizing the analysis over the large number of interviews. The findings of the interviews are compared with the official presentation and requirements of the EU frameworks and programme as described above. In particular, the need and expectation for mobility will be put in contrast. All but one interview was conducted in German. The analysis is based on the original German transcripts, and quotations from interviewees in this paper are translated by the author, except for the one interview in English (Carla). Names of people and locations have been altered.

After compiling outline of general research interests, I looked specifically into sections of the interview that dealt with EU-related experiences. These sections were coded and categorized for further analysis with Reflective Interpretation as part of the Documentary Method (Nohl 2013).

Results

As a consequence of the analysis, I elaborated on three groups for the perception of the EU framework and its instruments: a) personal involvement, b) little knowledge and further interest, c) peripheral knowledge and no further interest. These groups were differentiated through their approach to addressing the topic, their factual knowledge and self-proclaimed interest in it. Each group is represented by selected excerpts from the sample. This does not imply that these groups are completely distinguishable from each other. Certainly, their borders are fluid and

the group titles only represent ideal types of knowledge and usage, whereas a concrete case can often be located only somewhere in between. EURAXESS as an example for an EU programme of relevance for PhD candidates will not be further discussed, as there was only one participant (Marlis) who actually used it and another one who *'thinks he has heard of it'* (David: 295[31]) but never used it for himself. No other respondents knew anything about it. This may not surprise, as the earlier-mentioned statistics about ERAXESS showed (European Commission 2009). Results from another survey confirm the very low visibility of the portal (Gourova & Sanopoulos 2010).

Personal involvement

For the Documentary Method, it is not just *what* is said that is important, but more *how* it is said. The main differentiation between this group and the other three is the mentioning of an EU programme (MSCA in this case) without being asked about it by the interviewer. Not surprisingly, those researchers whose position had been financed through the MSCA, fall into this group. When they talked about their positions and funding, they also mentioned the source of funding. In contrast, it was not mentioned by other interviewees who were paid by their university when they talked about salary and position. People who were funded by national grants (especially the Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)) put more emphasis on the source of income. The more exotic or exclusive the source of income was, the more likely the interviewees were to mention it. There was another case where the person's PhD position had been financed by the European Research Council (ERC). To elaborate my point, I will draw on those cases that were financed by the MSCA, because they were the only ones to emphasize the topic themselves, which indicated high importance.

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[31] Numbers behind interviewee's names or interview quotes indicate lines in the transcript.

When the beneficiaries of MSCA started to talk about it, they began with the financial aspect and mobility respectively. For Carla, the higher salary compared to other PhDs at her faculty, was seen as a helpful advantage. This was because she needed to settle in a new environment where she had to buy new things and '*spend a fortune here buying everything*' (606). This points to an earmarked use of her income, which is seen primarily as an enabler for her mobility and not as extra disposable income for private activities or shopping. Martin mentioned salary later in his response, where he downplayed the difference between his salary and those from other members of his department. He mentioned that he only gets a higher salary for the first year of his PhD, which will be equalized in following years. Regardless of objective truth, this shows that he tried to avoid distinction through economic capital. Instead, distinction is created though symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1983). His supervisors were '*very proud*' (626) of the creation of the MSCA PhD position, because '*funding from the European Commission is a great figurehead*' (627) and it is very '*prestigious in the Social Sciences*' (628) and they were '*happy to create the position*' (630). In this passage, it remained unclear whether his supervisors were proud of him or themselves. Without doubt, their pride was connected to MSCA funding, which was the source of the position's symbolic force. Symbolic power is created through the scarcity of opportunities for funding from the EU. The success rates are between 14 and 15 percent for MSCA (Myklebust 2015). Carla also stressed the symbolic meaning of her MSCA position, but she was not aware of it when she applied for the job. She only found out after she started to work, when '*everyone at the university told me, "Oh! You have a Marie Curie? This is very good" and I say, "Why? I didn't even know about these things"*' (681). The symbolic meaning of her PhD position only became apparent to her through compliments from colleagues. This shows that information and perception about EU programmes is still unequally distributed even amongst the recipients. The symbolic power of EU instruments is closely connected to the mobility they enable (Munk 2009), which itself is a distinction in the academic world (Jaksztat et al. 2011). Mobility was also the first aspect Martin stressed in his narration

about MSCA. He only went to the Netherlands, because the application could not be started in Denmark, where he had lived for over two years in total before for his master's and an Erasmus exchange in during his bachelor's degree. Due to a regulation that only allows stays of not more than one year in the last three years in the country of application for MSCA, he had to move to another country if he wanted to apply for funding. However, the initial information about the possibility of an MSCA-financed PhD came from a workshop at the university where he was doing his master's degree, where there also MSCA-funded positions. This regulation, called 'European Mobility', demands intra-European mobility and Europeanisation of the receiving scholar.

Symbolic power attributed to (high) academic mobility is an advantage. But there are also disadvantages connected to mobility. Martin carried on explaining that he chose the MSCA position because of the chance to move around, which was very appealing to him. At the time of his decision he was doing a bachelor's degree. After he found a local girlfriend in the Dutch city of his PhD, his opinion about the mobility expectations and commitments changed a lot. He describes his current life in the Dutch city as '*very pleasant/good*' (777) as he '*likes it*' (777). Therefore, he has '*absolutely no desire*' (776) for the upcoming constant mobility, as he is expected to attend seminars and workshop at partner institutions and is also expected to stay and work there for a period of time. His reluctance is emphasized, as he repeated the phrase '*absolutely no desire*' (779). Although he was fully aware of the mobility expectations before he applied for the position, it shows how changes in the private life of academics alter their stance towards the demands of their profession and its institutions (Ackers 2008). Furthermore, in a different passage, he differentiated between the shallow perception of academic mobility from the outside, where it seems interesting and '*better than it is*' but '*it is not as great as it sounds. […] You arrive in Madrid in the evening, tired, and you just want to sleep, the bed in the hostel is uncomfortable. And of course, you don't tell something like this. In that sense,*

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mobility sounds more attractive to others than it is for yourself.' (1296). Negative aspects of mobility are seldom addresses by the EU documents. If they are, they focus on professional aspects, such as 'progression in their remuneration' or declining job options (European Commission 2014b: 25). The negative impacts of mobility on private life are not considered or discussed. Scientists are imaged as self-optimized workers, with no strings attached when, in fact, private considerations do matter (Ackers 2005; Cox & Verbeek 2008; Jaksztat et al. 2011). Nevertheless, the MSCA can also have minor positive side effects for the private life of its recipients, as Carla explains. She met another PhD candidate in the programme and befriended her after a while. Although certainly not crucial to the programme, these social components can be a very nice addition for the candidates, as most of them moved to a new place for their MSCA position, where they still have to build their social networks. As the salary was not of great importance to her, something different was stressed as helpful and positive:

> *'I think the best thing with this is like there is a lot of money for research […] could have like people transcribing and even if it's a lot of money, no problem, because it's a lot of money like this, //mhm// a lot of money like that will not be used'* (646)

For her, the better conditions in her MSCA position are not primarily reflected by a better salary, but by better financial resources for her research. All spending that is connected to her fieldwork, could be covered with money from the MSCA, which she saw as a greater degree of freedom and ease in her empirical research in comparison to other PhDs. She was very satisfied with these benefits, as she was not even able to spend the whole amount of money available. This was seconded by Martin, who mentioned a '*big budget*' (307). The financial status of their positions certainly contributed to the symbolic capital of their work.

In general, both students were bothered less about personal financial gain or improvement, but more about the reputation of their position (Martin) and the research conditions (Carla). Interestingly enough, even they did not have any more or closer information, or interest for that

matter, in other EU programmes or the general framework of the European Union for academics. It was evident for both cases, that they had to become mobile, in order to start the positions. Both showed a high to very high mobility even before the PhD. They had moved for every cycle of their higher education, firstly between cities, and later between European countries. In that sense, they had accumulated enough 'mobility capital' (Murphy-Lejeune 2003) to be ready and to approve the requirements of mobility for the MSCA. Carla's professional biography was not linear. She worked full-time in different jobs and in different countries between her bachelor's, first master's and second master's degrees. She worked mostly within Europe, but also outside of Europe, in Africa, where she did an exchange for one semester during her second master's. She showed a willingness for high work-related mobility in general, which was not limited to Europe. She was Europe-orientated in terms of academic mobility, because she realized how big the quality differences of research and teaching are outside of the European academic system. Martin's professional biography was much more linear, as he did not work between his bachelor's degree in Germany, master's degree in Denmark, or PhD in the Netherlands. His narration about future plans involved mostly these three countries, where he had some kind of professional and/or private network. His MSCA position contributed to the establishment of such networks and is therefore in line with the outline of the frameworks. Furthermore, both were integrated in structured and internationalized doctoral programmes, as was the aim in the ERA. Both realized European mobility within the EU framework before. Martin did an Erasmus programme exchange to Denmark. Carla's second master's was an Erasmus Mundus[32] programme, which raises the question of the Matthew Effect (Merton 1968) in the design of EU programmes and if they are possibly only preaching to the converted. Carla was already highly mobile beforehand.

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[32] Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme from the EU to enhance the mobility of master's students. The candidate studies their master's at two to three partner universities in different countries.

Little knowledge and further interest

The common orientation in this group was a notion of the frameworks and programmes, but without specific or detailed knowledge. Interviewees did not talk about the relevant topics themselves but were ask about it by the interviewer. No concrete application attempts had been made so far. They separated themselves from the third group with their further interest in usage of the EU instruments and frameworks. The limited information's they had were received through workshops and information pamphlets at their universities and via senior colleagues who had been successful in gaining EU funding.

'Yes, yes. Those, yes, of course, those are things, which you can read homepage. Errm, what that includes and how to apply for it somehow and if it is an option.' (Samuel: 1946)

The way the information is presented differs from the information itself. By using the non-personal term 'you' instead of 'I', he distances himself from a specific activity that could be related to the interviewer's question if and how he knows about EU programmes and frameworks. Following information's are presented vaguely and without specification. Nevertheless, he continued to explain that he wanted to engage himself more in those activities with the goal of establishing an international postdoc project. The wish for more internationalisation arose from the discontent with the narrowness and small size of his discipline in the Netherlands, which he described as a '*limited scientific world*' (1954). At the same time, he rejected the idea of going back to Germany and being part of a national context and only working with Germans. He '*really would like to see some bridges*' (1957) between the two scientific cultures in his field. The difference between the two academic traditions in his discipline played a crucial role in his narration overall. After years of working in Dutch universities, he still struggled with different scientific paradigms. The programmes and frameworks mentioned present possible opportunities to overcome national inertia and other problems he saw as someone who knew both systems and traditions.

Similar national differences are described by another interviewee (Michael) in a French context. He was more familiar with the relevant programmes and had already made an unsuccessful application attempt in cooperation with his wife, who is also a scientist. He acknowledges EU mobility and the involvement with EU programmes as a strategic benefit for a scholar's career in general. At the same time, he distanced himself through his wording from a development that he obviously sees just as a current trend in the acquiring of funding:

If I look at this document [official statement from his university] here, how it includes these [EU-related] terms, to have better arguments.' (Michael: 2912)

For his personal career development, he aims to '*enter*' (2916) the French system. Therefore, his orientation is primarily '*nationally orientated*' (2928), because he sees the French academic system as very national and closed, and that EU programmes would not help his cause. Only after he had found his place in the French system would he look out for other frameworks. However, like Samuel, he would like to use EU structures to overcome national barriers in his academic discipline. Similarly, he criticized a big gap and separation in the discourse and tradition between France and Germany in his field of expertise. For the moment, he expressed disappointment with the ERA, as he imagined it as far more developed with fewer obstacles for mobile researchers in daily life but also in cooperation and interplay between the national academic systems. This statement was complemented afterwards with the reservation that this observation might be only true for France. This is a point that is wise to consider, as countries show differences in the implementation of superordinate EU structures (European Commission 2014a). The respondents expanded their scientific interest across national borders, aimed for synergies and were interested in work relations or projects that were more Europe-centreed. This is certainly something that can be described as desirable by the frameworks. But they were not blind to problems and barriers related to EU funding. This is an overlap with the third group, as similar obstacles are described such as too much paperwork, low success rates, problems

with cross-border coordination, discrepancies between application effort and outcome. Their own efforts towards more and deeper European collabouration can only be as good as the infrastructure allows it to be. It certainly jeopardizes future engagement and motivation if scientists see that the structures and circumstances are insufficient to realize a certain idea or project. Their scientific careers were nationally focused. but because they had the experience of moving and working in a different country, they were more aware of disadvantages or problems in the academic systems of their choices. The usage and perception of EU programmes and EU frameworks were less an approach for personal career development, but seen as a chance to improve the quality of doing research by fostering intra-European cooperation. The idea was to have a more intense scientific cooperation in Europe than a space where the scientists themselves would move around.

Peripheral knowledge and no further interest

Most interviewees can be found in this group. They also had some information about EU programmes but were, in contrast to the second group, not interested in further usage. As in general, the MSCA was the most prominent instrument.

> *Marie Curie is a big topic here too and this is also the only gateway, through which I know*
>
> *about Horizon 2020.* (Alena: 846)

As they have no personal experience with programmes or frameworks and no imminent urge to take advantage of them, their arguments and orientation against a use or interest at the time of their PhD are presented. When asked for programmes and frameworks, they stated that their university put a lot of emphasis on programmes from the European Union and encourages the staff to apply for such funding. This engagement included workshops with general information about the opportunities and classes on how to apply for the relevant funding. This is in line with observations from other research: 'We are beginning to see significant investment from universities and other research organisations in administrative functions aimed at increasing the

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chance of obtaining EU funding' (Young 2015: 28). This engagement can be seen as an appraisal of the symbolic impact these funding initiatives have (see the first group). After all, the university also profits from the fundraising efforts of their academic stuff, as success with funding is a popular indicator for university rankings (Ordorika & Lloyd 2015). It can also indicate that funding from universities is cut back and scientists have to look out for third-party funding for their research. A development that is not unfamiliar to the general academic world (Enders et al. 2015). This was mentioned by one interviewee in the Netherlands, who was not part of our core sample, because she had graduated from her PhD several years before the interviews. However, her long-term experience in research showed her that universities had put more pressure on scientists to fund themselves over the decades. This university's activities were described from the perspective of a non-involved observer, who is not encouraged or particularly interested in those activities. Even though the universities presented the EU-programmes as a possibility for follow-up financing when the PhD comes to an end, the interviewees showed little enthusiasm for it. Those in their earlier stages of their PhD research were not yet bothered about subsequence finance. Academics usually have to deal with uncertainty when it comes to their career planning (Möller 2011; Sigl 2015), which means they have to show flexibility and think in the short term. This may give an explanation for why no specific plans for the period after the PhD were made. After all, they were unsure whether they wanted to stay in science or leave it after their doctoral studies. Work in a MSCA position (or similar programmes) was imagined as '*incredible pressure*' (Vanessa: 1354) and the application process as something with 'very, very, very many formalities' (Julia: 944). Those motifs were repeated several times. Especially the last point stands in contrast to the guideline of Horizon 2020 to 'continue simplification' (European Commission 2018: 5) in comparison to the predecessor framework FP7.

The perception was rather distant and the efforts of their universities to stimulate fundraising from the EU were mocked as '*hysteria*' (Alper: 1462). Surprisingly, the last quote was the viewpoint of the only PhD candidate who was financed through the ERC. His future planning involved less mobility and a more settled life with his wife, which he deemed incompatible with the demands of EU instruments. The disadvantage of the demand for high mobility that was already described in the first group was also a decisive factor in this group, when another interviewee with children stated that the requirements for intra-European mobility for the MSCA were not an option in her situation. Here again, private circumstances shaped perception of the EU programme quite negatively. As we saw in the first group, a relationship complicates the requirement high mobility, but does not make it impossible. Having children or other personal factors that require a person to stay in one place, like care of elderly relatives (Ackers 2005) - rules EU programmes out as an option almost entirely. Similar to Martin's negative approach to mobility (first group), the personal situations and circumstances of scholars are not taken into account in the EU programmes and frameworks. People of limited mobility are excluded in the first place. Other cases had spatial reference points. These were either the parents or the partner or both, around whom mobility plans evolved. Proximity to these points of reference was an important and decisive factor for mobility, which means they planned their career steps along geographical considerations. They could consider crossing national borders, but only to countries or cities close to their centre of reference. In these cases, the demand for high mobility throughout Europe was also unattractive. As all of our interviewees were mobile scholars who went abroad for their PhD, above-average mobility could be detected. Mobility decisions are mostly the result of past mobility and will encourage further mobility (Lörz et al. 2016). Therefore, there was a high degree of mobility in Europe, which resulted in a certain awareness of Europe and the EU, which likely cannot be found amongst domestic doctoral candidates. Some interviewees were mobile beyond Europe and included other world regions in their academic biography for various reasons. There were private reasons, like the origin of

a partner and the wish to go back to the home country. There were also mobility considerations for prestige and career development. This was especially true for mobility in the USA. Others planned longer research-related stays outside of Europe. For all those cases, programmes and frameworks that aim exclusively at intra-European mobility may seem just not relevant enough for an academic future. In the context of USA-orientated interviewees, the EU frameworks seem not to comply with aims to make the EU more attractive and to keep European researchers in Europe.

Another factor acting against further interest was the status of employment within the MSCA when granted for an individual scientist and not for a university or another research institution. In the latter case, the MSCA transforms into paid employment at the funded institution. But individual funding is paid as a scholarship, meaning no insurance, social security etc. These terms were seen as too unattractive for future planning by some of the respondents, which is in line with research (Cox & Verbeek 2008). Then again, this is a problem faced by many postdocs regardless of EU funding (Weijden et al. 2016). Interviewees who mentioned this problem were more concerned about security in general and preferred secure employment either within or outside the academic system. This shows that applicants for MSCA and the like must deal with a certain degree of risk-taking. Another pattern in this group was the higher relevance of topic-related engagement in a European context in comparison to EU-affiliated frameworks or programmes. Examples were memberships and engagements in various European scientific organisations of the respective fields of science. These included the attendance of conferences and summer schools, which represented a chance to meet both old and new European colleagues. These meetings represent a better opportunity for networking, because they allow a relatively small group (as they are topic-focused and specialized) with the same or very similar interests to engage over a longer time on a regular basis. One interviewee describes them as a '*class reunion*' (Alper: 1490), which gives a certain degree of intimacy and familiarity. Personal

contact represents a central part of recruitment and collabouration for PhDs (Puustinen-Hopper 2005). In this context, EU programmes such as MSCA are seen as too anonymous and general to use them for networking or other actions that go beyond financial support. For further financing and employment in sciences, nationally embedded programmes and initiatives were stressed as a more interesting option for the future, in contrast to the EU programmes. A prominent example is the NWO in the Netherlands, which provides funding for all phases of an academic career. These funding alternatives were presented as more attractive or reachable, as the interviewees were already familiar with the structures and saw them as less competitive. This indication corresponds with previous research on EU frameworks, which are especially popular amongst scientists from countries with weak national funding opportunities (Morano-Foadi 2005). On the other hand, academics in countries with good and numerous funding schemes are less interested or dependent on EU funding.

As the differences between the groups have been presented, the similarities must be addresses as well. All groups shared a common feature when they talked about the EU programmes and frameworks. It always was discussed primarily as a source of funding. This perspective was articulated by the individual scholars, but it was also perpetuated by universities through workshops on grants and funding. The realization of a common ERA as a more comprehensive concept or vision played no role in the narrations of the interviewees. Nevertheless, as mobile scholars, they benefited from the EU when they moved to another EU country and faced few administrative obstacles. This was certainly stressed as positive by the respondents.

Conclusion

EU frameworks like ERA and Horizon 2020 and EU programmes like the MSCA and ERC are key actions of the EC to forge a European academic space. Besides activities on other institutional levels of science, these initiatives aim to achieve higher mobility among scholars within Europe, and a European job market for academics. This analysis of interviews with

doctoral candidates who moved within the European context for their PhD (and sometimes previous studies cycles) shows that knowledge is mainly limited among these early-stage researchers, but varies with their personal academic involvement and level of engagement. Key concepts and buzzwords of the relevant EU programmes and framework were somehow known, but remained irrelevant for most of the early-stage academics. Universities' initiatives to highlight EU funding and make it more visible to the scientists by contributing information about it and helping them to apply for it seem to work, as our interviewees often received their information through their universities. But 'the relative attractiveness of EU funding opportunities (such as the Marie Curie fellowship scheme for example) depends on the opportunities available at national level. In some situations, applications to the Marie Curie scheme, for mobility fellowships reflected not so much a desire for mobility, but rather the sheer lack of opportunities for scientific research in the home country' (Ackers et al. 2001: 9). This also applies to our interview group. Many were financed by national or bi-national research programmes and organisations by the time of the interview and saw little relevance or advantage in applying for EU funding in the future. This can be seen as a good situation for national third-party funding in both countries. The minor relevance of the EU programmes for the PhD candidates can be understood in terms of the very early stage of their scientific career. Many individual funding schemes and programmes in the European Union are aimed at scholars at a more advanced stage of their career, such as postdocs and senior researchers (European Commission 2009). The expectation of high mobility in EU programmes excludes certain persons, who cannot or do not want to maintain a high level of mobility, such as (young) parents or other private reasons. These mechanisms of exclusion are not based on scientific evaluation and therefore can restrain the academic development of junior researchers with potential, who are just 'unlucky' enough to find themselves in situations where the mobility requirement cannot be sufficiently fulfilled. Additionally, EU programmes and frameworks are seen as too bureaucratic and the effort to apply for them disproportionately high for an individual

application after a PhD, despite other promises for Horizon 2020. Those interviewees who had already benefited from the schemes during their doctoral phase praise their symbolic prestige. Furthermore, the conditions for research are highlighted positively, which eased their work.

Overall, the doctoral candidates did not put much explicit emphasis on EU frameworks and EU programmes in their narration. However, their mobility was made implicitly easier by the general legal framework of the EU and a bigger job market. Their mobility, although within the European Union, was more influenced by research topics and personal contacts, which were established outside of the discussed frameworks. It is fair to say that the majority did not follow the guideline of the frameworks and programmes discussed. This does not mean that there was no interest or enthusiasm for Europe amongst these interviewees. But the personal realization and mobility did not necessarily develop along the official EU-guidelines. It developed through inter-European friendship, partnership and colleagues. This may not surprise, as a former study showed that 'incorporating an "experience-based" social dimension into the existing theoretical frameworks of political and cultural dimensions of European identity [is needed]. Instead of equating a European identity with an EU identity, such identity should rather be conceived as multilayered. In conclusion, from their experiences abroad and through their social interaction, mobile students from EU states appropriate Europe as a personal project, in which the social predominates over the political' (van Mol 2013: 220). The EU frameworks and programmes did not initiate mobility in a top-down way, but can be helpful to realize mobility decisions on the micro level. The presented results have limitations. As a qualitative study, the results cannot be numerically representative. EU programmes for students, like Erasmus, were not included, because their visibility is much higher and would demand an article of their own. Also, the questions of personal Europeanisation in the context of the ERA was not addressed, as it demands further

research. This is also true for the much-discussed brain drain and brain circulation, which

could not be discussed in this paper, but play a critical role in the future of the ERA

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