Academic Mobility Patterns and the Competitiveness of Basic Units: The World Class, National Champions and Local Heroes of Finnish Universities

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Abstract

This study is intended for researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders interested in critically reexamining discussions concerning internationalization and Finnish higher education, particularly in terms of mobility issues associated with university personnel. These types of discussions are increasingly couched in terms of global markets, competitiveness and increasing Finland's international attractiveness – as a place to work and as a place to live (Finnish Ministry of Education 2008).

The primary purpose of this article is to present the analysis of a 2008/9 multiple case study of the relationship between the academic mobility patterns of university personnel and the competitiveness of basic units in Finnish universities. This multiple case study the incremental interview approach protocol (Hoffman 2009) was used to guide the collection of direct observations, texts and interviews that focused on 32 academic personnel in 30 basic units (Becher & Kogan 1992) in 10 Finnish universities. This study was conducted because of the significant attention attributed to the important linkages between internationalization and the current reforms of Finnish higher education system. The goal of this multiple case study was to probe for and illuminate overlooked, incomplete and poorly understood aspects of current policy discussion on internationalization in Finnish higher education.

During the cross-case analysis of *Phase I*, significant **differences** were observed in the competitive profiles of three types of basic units, termed: The World Class, National Champions and Local Heroes. These differences illuminate a *de facto* division of labor within Finnish higher education that is consistent with state-of-the-art conceptualizations of global mobility dynamics often missed in local policy discussion (Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008; Hoffman & Välimaa 2008). In addition, important **similarities** – across units – were observed, suggesting system-wide challenges, hurdles and potential. Finally, with reference to international literature, **key issues missing from Finnish policy discussion and practice gaps** concerning internationalization and related areas can be identified.

This study confirms that established debate in the social sciences, particularly seminal work on higher education, explains far more than assumptions about internationalization based on folk psychology or 'common sense', which are still prevalent in Finnish society, in general and higher education personnel practices in particular.

In practical terms, this study empirically illuminates key critical issues and questions which remain in front of Finnish researchers, policy-makers, decision-makers and stakeholders. The most important of these issues involves social stratification within academe, which has significant implications for stratification in society (Bourdieu 1988; Marginson 2006). In other words, while (over)reacting to global trends in higher education, it is easy to miss important changes and emerging challenges *within* Finnish society and her higher education system.

What remains unresolved is a clear lack of capacity and experience-based expertise in our current approach to human resources practices in universities – especially complex mobility involving academic personnel – with respect to the undisputed demographic pressure confronting Finland in the next decade.

An additional set of significant question emerges as 'elephants in the living room' for stakeholders in Finnish higher education. While this study focused on universities only: *What would the most significant similarities and differences be if the design logic is extended to universities of applied sciences? And what about cooperative efforts between these two types of higher education institutions amid merging higher education institutions? Who is doing the best job with respect to the complex issues identified in this study – universities or universities of applied sciences?* It is clear that higher education's stakeholders in Finnish society will benefit most from higher education institutions orientating to the demographic pressures immediately facing them. But it is not at all clear *which type of higher education institutions are actually doing that*, nor how, nor why. For the purposes of considering these questions, the introduction and analysis of *Phase I* are presented in brief, along with selected examples from each category of analysis. This is done to establish a basis for the discussion and allowing readers to move on to consider the direct implications our analysis has for Finland's universities of applied sciences.

GLOBAL DEBATE VERSUS NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ASSUMPTIONS: IS INTERNATIONALIZATION WORTH IT?

This study is intended for researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders interested in critically reexamining discussions concerning internationalization and Finnish higher education, particularly in terms of mobility issues associated with university personnel. These discussions are increasingly couched in terms of global markets, competitiveness and increasing Finland's international attractiveness – as a place to work and as a place to live (Finnish Ministry of Education 2008). In particular, this article will focus on important issues and implications our analysis has for universities of applied sciences (UAS) in Finland. In order to focus on implications for UASs, the analytical framing, analysis, and implications (below) are presented in highly abbreviated form. For a comprehensive account of these studies see: Babila Sama, El Massri, Hoffman, Raunio & Korhonen *in press*; Hoffman, Raunio & Korhonen *in press* and Raunio, Korhonen & Hoffman 2010.

Internationalization, Finnish universities and academic mobility patterns

The internationalization of Finnish universities is part of a larger – global – story of higher education change (Hoffman & Välimaa 2008; Marginson and van der Wende 2007; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007).The structural changes currently happening in Finnish universities may *appear* new to some higher education actors in Finland. However, recent and ongoing reforms are based on established practices in many locations dotted around the globe.

A fruitful empirical focal point that illuminates both changing – and unchanging – contours and conditions of global higher education are mobility patterns associated with distinct groups of university personnel (Hoffman 2007; Horta, Veloso & Grediaga 2009; Musselin 2004; Showkat et al. 2007). Mobility patterns and expectations of academic personnel do not explain 'the whole story' of higher education's globalization. However, careful consideration of the mobility of the human element of today's knowledge societies brings fundamental strategic, practical and ethical dilemma's into focus in many locations in the early 21st century, including Finland (Enders et al. 2004; Hoffman 2007; Musselin 2004; Scott 1998, 2005; Teichler 2004; Hoffman & Välimaa 2008).

Even the shortest conversation with university personnel from very different locations, for example Europe, Japan and the USA will reveal profoundly different assumptions that govern mobility within and between within these powerful economic regions. And widening the scope will do nothing to clarify this empirical reality. *Despite this, the topic of human mobility within, between and because of universities are mainly governed by regionally or contextually-based assumptions. More importantly, these assumptions will not withstand robust comparative, conceptually-based analysis* (Hoffman 2007).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY MOBILITY?

THE MOBILITY OF TALENT AND QUESTIONS OF SCOPE

An investigation of important mobility patterns concerning university personnel must immediately sidestep several well-documented weaknesses, the most prevalent of which are defining mobility in unnecessarily narrow, broad, vague or irrelevant terms with regard to the purpose of a study, policy discussion or organizational practice (Enders 2004; Teichler 1996; Hoffman 2007; Scott 1998). In this study, for example, restricting the scope of analysis to 'international mobility', 'academic mobility' or 'the mobility of research personnel' would have immediately eliminated several forms of mobility within the explicit scope of the Finnish Ministry of Education's most recent strategic internationalization policy (Finnish Ministry of Education 2008). The most important of these is the *social mobility* connected to the migration-related policy and practice shifts believed, by many, to be a precondition to maintaining the Finnish domestic standard of living in coming decades because of the aging of the general population (Finnish Ministry of Labour 2007; Koivukangas 2003). Because of the structural conditions of the Finnish labor market, many analysts point to interconnections and complexity concerning mobility patterns that have not been adequately engaged in earlier studies that fall within the scope of this topic (Forsander 2004; Whälbeck 2003; Hoffman 2007).
The most obvious – but overlooked – of these patterns is that of *local circulation*, specifically the very small geographical range – often *entirely domestic* – of Nordic scholars (Hoffman 2007; Vabø 2003; Välimaa 2001b).

In addition to the problems mentioned above, our present lack of knowledge about the most critical forms of mobility bearing on university personnel in Finnish universities stems from the systematic weaknesses that have characterized most policy discussion and research on academic mobility, in general. Specifically, reliance on an unnecessarily narrow range of methodological approaches, ignoring a broad range of university personnel and stakeholders when framing policy debate, failing to adequately account for migration-related phenomena, particularly concerning social inequities and inadequate conceptualization of topics (Enders 2004; Teichler 1996; Tremblay 2004; Scott 1998, 2005; Musselin 2004; Välimaa & Hoffman 2008; Whälbeck 2003).

MEANINGFUL ANALYTICAL COORDINATES OF CAREER MOBILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS IN FINNISH UNIVERSITIES

When considering process and structure in higher education, Becher & Kogan (1992), point to four levels of analysis useful in framing studies involving universities: *Central authority*, *institution*, *basic unit and individual*.

The variation in universities – at the regional and national level – as well as the level of higher education institution (HEI) warrants careful consideration of the way in which university careers play out within specific regions. This is particularly true of emerging change that occurs within regions, not nations (Blumenthal et al. 1996; Saarinen 2007). It is change at this level of analysis that suggests thinking about the level of central authority with respect to emerging supranational frameworks like the EU & the NAFTA (Saarinen 2007). Given global trends, especially commercial cross-border activity, wider, deeper and increasingly intensified distributed knowledge networks and research consortia based on funding schemes and interests outside the scope of direct interest of central authority, it is important to clarify if action on the part of nation states explains relationships between the mobility patterns of university personnel and basic unit competitiveness (Marginson & van der Wende 2007).

HEIs themselves – the institutional level of analysis – is popular, especially because of the current attention paid to well-known rankings, like those published by the *Shanghai Jiao Tong University of Higher Education* and *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. However, generalization at the level of HEI – regarding the mobility of university personnel in Finnish universities – especially concerning the types of research questions guiding this study – is not optimal. This is because there is no broad agreement about mobility forms – or even norms – concerning university personnel that 'exist' at the level of HEI in Finland – and that correspond to empirical phenomena, except perhaps in policy documents and plans (Hoffman 2007; Saarinen 2007).

Research questions indicated by the Literature: Focus on the Basic Unit and Individual Level of Analysis

Based on the conceptual discussion elaborated in Hoffman, Raunio & Korhonen (*in press*) and Raunio, Korhonen and Hoffman (2010), the following sections describe a purposeful selection strategy based on a combination of established concepts and emerging operational definitions used to locate 32 interview participants in 30 basic units in 10 Finnish universities, concerning the following research questions:

- **Is there important variation – and similarity – in the mobility patterns of native-born and foreign-born university personnel in Finnish university basic units?**

- **Are there salient relationships between the mobility patterns of university personnel and the competitiveness of basic units?**

These two main questions each have a number of sub questions which are elaborated in the above-cited studies.

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

In the qualitative, inductive stage of the study – a multiple case study design, based on the *incremental interview approach protocol* (Hoffman 2009) was utilized to guide analysis of direct observations, texts and documents analysis and interviews. A detailed **case study protocol** was developed and a **pilot study** was used to improve the protocol, as was feedback from experienced researchers at conferences, research seminars and an international group of specialists in internationalization and mobility issues – as well as case study methodology who commented on early drafts of the case study protocol.

University Selection

Regarding these research questions, solid analytical generalizations can be drawn by a focus on basic units from 10 of the 21 university-level institutions in Finland. The following HEI characteristics were considered relevant in grounding a purposeful selection:

- **Function type** (Multi-faculty campuses, Technical Universities, Schools of Business & Economics, Arts Academies, Defense Academy)
- **Geography** (Campuses in large metropolitan areas, regional universities, North, South, East and West of the country)
- **Size** (Large, medium-sized and small campuses)
- **Language** (Finnish and Swedish-speaking institutions – as well as basic units in which programs taught in other languages)

- **Merger activity** (Universities undergoing fusion, as well as universities forming cooperative alliances)

In this sense HEIs were selected as *contexts* from which basic units would be selected as *cases*. Within cases, two levels of analysis would consist of *basic units* and *individuals* – within those basic units.

Basic Unit Selection

Disciplinary cultures

Becher and Trowler's (2001) theoretical framework makes clear the most relevant concepts in illuminating variety – in conceptual terms – regards the *cognitive* distinctions between the *hard* and *soft* disciplines on the one hand, and the *pure* and *applied* specializations on the other. When these oppositions are put in the form of intersecting continuums, disciplinary clusters form in which the *'hard-pure'* sciences, like physics can be distinguished from *'soft-pure'* humanities, like history or pure social sciences, like sociology. The same can be seen when examining the *'hard-applied'* technologies like mechanical engineering, clinical medicine and the *'soft-applied'* social sciences like social work or law. (Becher & Trowler 2001; Ylijoki 2000,2003).

In these terms, the 30 basic units from the 10 selected universities were selected by paying careful attention to their location on this conceptual grid. This theoretical grid casts a non-partial, symmetrical spotlight onto areas inside Finnish universities that are extensively developed – as well areas that are sparsely covered (Hoffman 2007; Hoffman et al. 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007).

Chart 1: Basic unit selection by disciplinary culture

HARD-PURE	SOFT-PURE
✸ Mathmatics (2) ✳ Physics ✳ Biology	✳ Philosophy ✳ History (2) ✳ Sociology
HARD-APPLIED	**SOFT-APPLIED**
✸ Biology ✳ Health Sciences ✳ Chemistry ✳ Engineering (3)	✳ Language and literature (3) ✳ Perfoming arts (2) ✳ Management (3) ✳ Economics ✳ Communication ✳ Public Administration ✳ Education (3) ✳ Social policy ✳ Political Science ✳ Cultural studies ✳ Geography

A look at the basic unit selection in Chart 1, reveals some system-wide features of Finnish higher education which have been noted in earlier research, specifically the system's emphasis on *applied* versus *pure* specialities and it also indicates some traditionally highly valued areas within Finnish higher education, in particular, well-developed faculties in the areas of languages, performing arts (Hoffman 2007; Hoffman et al. 2008; Hoffman & Välimaa 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). These co-exist alongside recently developed units of importance to the national economy, particularly management. Further, the prominence in our purposeful selection was 'forced' in a sense as it is this quadrant – more than any other – in which it far easier to locate a wide variety of international profiles, in particular the absence of senior foreign-born personnel and other important proxies on internationalization, less common in other quadrants. For a more nuanced account of this selection, please refer to the cited studies above.

Internationalization profile

Based on the examination of documents, in particular, the internet pages of basic units, a further selection criteria was the way in which empirical proxies of internationalization were in evidence. Because internationalization – in and of itself – is extensively problematized in this study the focus advanced by Marginson, van der Wende (2007); Teichler (2004); Hoffman & Välimaa (2008); Scott (1998) and Kallo (2009) was used, as we interpreted the

profiles of basic unit web pages. In this regard, the most interesting tension that exists regarding the topic of the internationalization of higher education is between:

- State-of-the-art *zeitdiagnose* of *the internationalization of higher education*, which is – as Teichler titles his seminal 1994 article – a 'debate' amongst academics and experts in which nothing is taken for granted and almost everything is contested. At the global level, significant trends, variation and agenda setting are clear and lead to the obvious conclusion that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' form(s) of internationalization (Marginson & van der Wende 2007). At global level, 'right or wrong answers', absolutes or universal agreement on major concepts and optimal approaches to topics associated with the internationalization of higher education to not exist.

Versus

- The characterizations of *regional*, *national or local narratives or variants of internationalization* which have emerged in the past several decades – often becoming unquestioned, highly normative, assumptions based on local beliefs about the relationship between higher education and society and *how* – or even *if* – global trends *should*, *could* or *are* in fact are affecting higher education (Hoffman & Välimaa 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). At this level there are often clear preferences, very selective focal points, assumptions and internationalization is approached in a highly normative manner.

Empirically it is possible to distinguish basic units in Finish universities that have *high*, *low* or *no* profiles with regard to recognizable empirical proxies of internationalization. In operational terms the working definitions that emerged during the purposeful selection were as follows:

- **High profile: 10 basic units (7 in pilot)** Internationally recognized centers of excellence, senior foreign-born personnel common, complex mobility in recruit, select, promote, retain cycle at all levels and has been for some time. Highly visible evidence of international state-of-the-art programs and operations.

- **Low profile: 15 basic units (5 in pilot)** International options available in some areas by default or if one knows where to look. Mainly marketed to national or European audience. International recruiting not obvious, promotion and retention not normally an issue – but sometimes happens. Some foreign-born personnel, possibly senior, but most likely PhD level. Often one English-language topic-based program (or sub/parallel-program) run by Finnish-born 'international contingent' of personnel.

- **No profile: 7 basic units (2 in pilot)** Traditional, temporary, internationalization 'between' countries, cultures and institutes dominant logic. One, maybe two active Finnish-born personnel, programs 'on paper', but close-ended, designed for occasional exchange students visiting the program. No clear links career paths for personnel. Junior positions are the *de facto* 'career-ceiling' for foreign-born personnel.

Competitive horizon

The heuristic device of the competitive horizon draws attention to the most critical resources and processes that basic units – and the scholars in those units – orientate to over time (Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). An empirical look at these orientations to resources and processes reveals a specific relationship to the state-of-the-art in any discipline, field of study or specialty. The distinctiveness of the competitive horizon elaborates a basic unit's emphasis on mission combination, as explained above. Conceptually, the competitive horizon illuminates a tension between basic units that *transform* the state-of-the-art and those who *reproduce* it. The interesting feature of the university – as a social institution – or as a specific site, is that both processes are vital, simultaneous, ongoing and in demand (Bourdieu 1988; Brennan 2002; Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008).

The competitive horizon, as a heuristic device, focuses attention on the scope within which three types of units – and the individual personnel inside them – compete – for very concrete resources and for very different reasons. Our initial operational definition was based on recent case studies in Finnish universities in which basic units could be found with *global*, *regional/national* and *national/local* competitive horizons (Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). These focal areas are not mutually exclusive as overlap can and does occur. However as our results indicate a basic orientation can often be found.

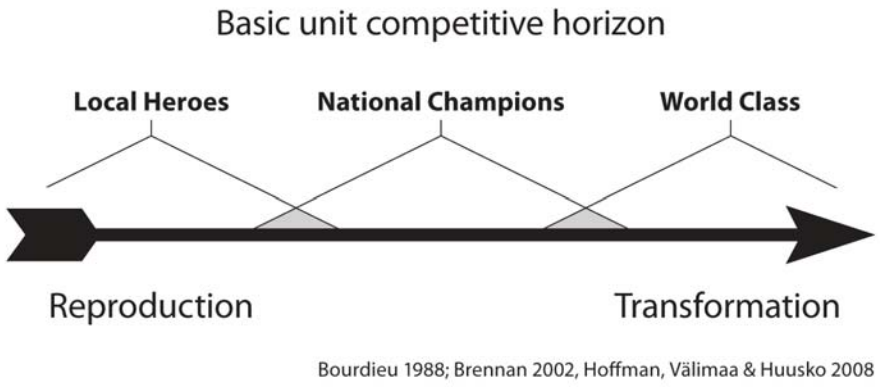

Figure 1. Basic Unit Competitive Horizon

The Individual Level of Analysis

Individually speaking, one of the most socially relevant – and systematically ignored – questions in Finnish higher education is the relationship of between a full range of ascriptive characteristics (defined below) and the trajectory of an academic's career (Hoffman 2007). This study problematized this question at the funding and design stage, stating from the outset that the mobility of foreign-born university personnel would be compared to native-born Finnish personnel. The problematic 'hypothesis of vertical mobility' (Hoffman 2007), posits that *the circumstances of one's birth do not explain or bear on career trajectory in Finnish universities*. *Rather*, *career trajectory is better explained by merit-related factors.* The difficulty with asserting this hypothesis is that there has never been any convincing empirical evidence offered to back this assertion with regard to a wide range of ascriptive characteristics, in fact the opposite is the case, even when only gender is in focus (Hoffman 2007; Huso 2000). In light of the demographic pressures immediately facing the Finnish university system, this relationship was conceptually problematized by using the coordinates of *position*, *career stage*, *employment status* and *ascriptive characteristics* to guide the purposeful selection of individual university personnel within basic units.

Academic position

In recent exploratory and interpretive studies of internationalization and Finnish higher education, particularly those that focus on personnel, the most internationally significant results have focused on a wide range of positions in all mission areas of the university, as well leadership and management. A narrow focus on one type of position is justified regarding many topics. However, the research questions guiding this study indicate a narrow focus, in terms of position, eliminates – by definition – several important types of mobility related to the demographic societal pressures immediately facing Finnish society and her universities (Hoffman 2007). A wider focus, in terms of positions is necessary because there is no substitute for the experience-based perspective that one finds in personnel occupying senior positions. On the other hand, personnel in senior positions are not the optimal place to begin a search for experiences and perceptions of the types of personnel of those just entering faculty ranks or who are securing their initial position – from outside the university. In order to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences regarding mobility, especially forms of mobility which are not understood well in university settings – particularly by senior personnel, it is necessary to 'cast a wide net' in terms of positions (Hoffman 2007; Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008).

Chart 2: Interview participant selection by position

Professors (6)		**Teaching personnel (5)**
- Academy of Finland Professor: 1 - FiDiPRO Professor: 1 - Professor: 2 - Assistant professor: 1		- Senior lecturers: 1 - Lecturer: 3 - Teaching assistant: 1
Research personnel (14)		**Management / Administrative personnel (3)**
Senior researchers: 4		- Upper/strategic level: 2 *(1*)*

- Post Doc: 2 - Researchers: 3 - Project researchers: 1 *(1*)* - PhD/Graduate students: 2 *(2*)* - Unfunded PhD students: 2 *(1*)*		- Program coordinator: 1
** Dual position, not primary position*		**Other personnel (4)** - Senior Assistant: 1 - Assistant: 1 - Visiting scholar: 1 - Translator: 1

Ascriptive characteristics

Robust, comprehensive consideration and analysis of the relationship between a full range of ascriptive characteristics and university career trajectories lays beyond the state-of-the-art in studies and much policy discussion regarding of university personnel in Finland (Hoffman 2007). Ascriptive characteristics are characteristics of a person or group that cannot be changed by individual effort, for example, gender, age, kinship, skin color, national origin, sexual orientation, physical disability and ethnicity (Beck 1992). Because a robust and wide scale examination of the relationships between academic position and ascriptive characteristics lay in front of policy makers (Finnish Ministry of Education 2009) the interview participants of this study were selected based on a full range of ascriptive characteristics. The criteria used corresponds closely to conceptual and legislative interpretations of the explanatory factors that bear on the lives of individuals. It is important to note that it is not common practice to consider a full range of ascriptive characteristics in studies of university personnel in Finnish higher education, although the hazards of ***not*** engaging in such consideration are well known internationally (Beck 1992; Bird 1996; Castellanos & Jones 2003; Hoffman 2007; Li & Beckett et al. 2006; Scott 1998; Tierney & Dilley 2002; Thompson & Loque 2005). Deliberately selecting approximately one half foreign-born and half native-born interview participants was designed to circumvent national/local conventions by designing the country/region of origin into our selection criteria. This initial design feature opened up a focus on mother-tongue, ethnicity, kinship ties and visible ascriptive characteristics, such as skin color. These types of empirical proxies allow a much more robust examination of the relationship between ascriptive characteristics and career patterns than is possible using an unnecessarily narrow focus on gender and age.

Chart 3: Interview Participants and Ascriptive Characteristics

32 interview participants

- **Gender (Pilot: 7 + 7)**
  - 16 Men
  - 16 women
- **Age**
  - Range: 1949 – 1983
  - Born before 1946 (0)
  - 1946 – 1964 (11)
  - Born after 1964 (21)
- **Country/region of origin**
  - 15 native-born
  - 17 foreign-born from 17 different countries
    - Africa (3)
    - Asia (1)
    - EU countries (8)
    - Other European countries (3)
    - North America (1)
    - Middle East (1)
  - Visible acriptive characteristics
    - Obvious to untrained eye (4)
    - Obvious to practiced eye (5)

As important as age, is identifiable ascriptive characteristics, especially mother tongue, which applied to all foreign-born personnel, as well as visible ascriptive characteristics associated with ethnic origin. Of the 17 foreign-born

university personnel, four were of obvious as being persons of very probable recent foreign origin. In addition another five of the 17 were identifiable to those practiced at noticing social and culturally based clues of origin.

Incremental Interview Approach Protocol

The data collection in this study was guided by the incremental interview approach protocol (Hoffman 2009) in which protocols for direct observation, text and document collection and interview analysis were developed specifically for this case. The interview data presented below was collected between October 2008 and May 2009, with the observation and document data collection analysis continuing through the write up of the cross-case analysis in December 2009. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed interpretively in terms of both the concepts guiding purposeful selection (Kvale 1996). The interviews were on or near the participant's campus and each signed a letter of consent indicating the interview purpose, uses of the data and that their anonymity would be protected. Verbatim transcription was used in analysis, however, the quotations have been edited for clarity. Any part of a quotation which would reveal the identity of a participant or raise privacy concerns has been modified (Poland 2002). Draft manuscripts were sent to participants for critique and to address privacy concerns. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, 4.1, was used during analysis.

Design Limitations

This qualitative multiple case study aims at *analytical generalization* – to *theory* – not *statistical generalization* – to *populations* (Creswell 2002; Yin 2003). That said, the analytical generalizations outlined below illuminate several areas in which an internet-based survey extended the analytical reach overcoming some of the methodological limitations inherent in a single methodological tradition. Conceptually, methodologically and empirically, strict attention was paid to developing an approach that would withstand an expansion of scope to international comparative studies.

IV) CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

During the cross-case analysis of Phase I, ***significant differences*** were observed in the competitive profiles of three types of basic units that illuminate a division of labor within Finnish higher education. These differences illuminate a *de facto* division of labor within Finnish higher education that is consistent with state-of-the-art conceptualizations of global mobility dynamics often missed in national or local policy discussion (Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008). This orientation – most closely linked to the competitive horizons of these units – in turn is associated with three distinct 'worldviews' within these units and perceptions of internationalization and mobility needs that vary accordingly. A sports metaphor is applied to these units: ***The World Class, National Champions and Local Heroes***. The metaphor draws attention to the very specific types of activities more common – and less common – in these units and the personnel most likely to populate them. In addition, ***important similarties*** – across units – were observed, suggesting system-wide challenges, hurdles and potential. Finally, with reference to international literature, ***key issues that are still 'under the radar screen'*** regarding the relationships between internationalization, the mobility of university personnel and competitiveness can be identified.

For the purposes of focusing on emerging questions relevant to both universities and universities of applied sciences, one example from each of the organizing analytical framework ('Differences', 'similarities', 'under the radar screen') will be presented for illustration purposes. For a complete account of these studies, please refer to the cited studies.

THE BEST SCIENCE, THE BEST SCIENCE IN FINNISH – AND ENGLISH – AND THE BEST FINNISH SCIENTISTS: *The World Class, National Champions and Local Heroes*

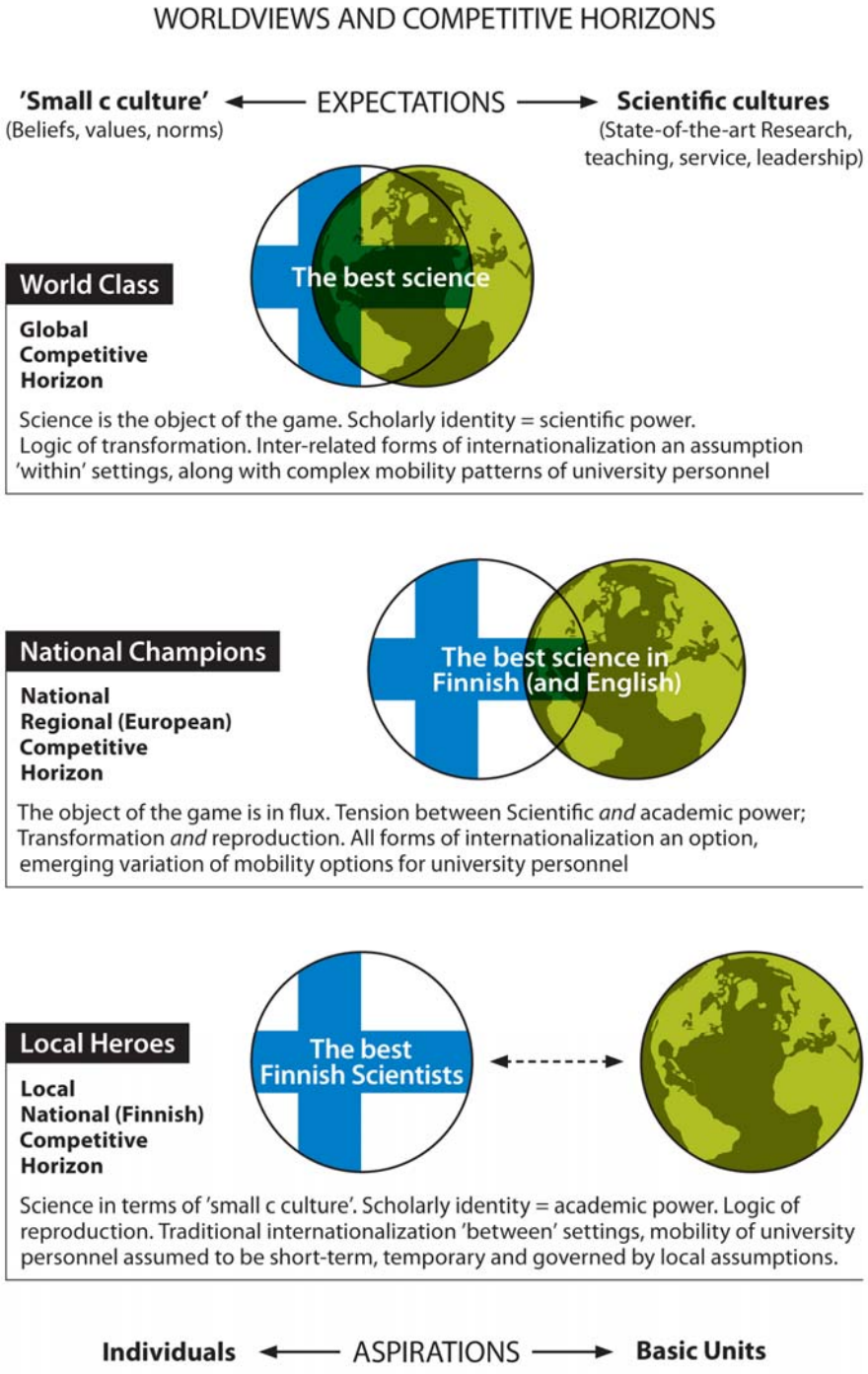

Figure 2. Basic unit Worldviews and Competitive Horizons

Basic units and their personnel cannot focus on *every available resource* that could be used to their advantage. Rather, the heuristic device of the competitive horizon draws empirical attention to the *most critical* resources different basic units and scholars orientate to, over the long and medium term (Hoffman, Välimaa & Huusko 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). These orientations to resources reveal a specific relationship to the state-of-the-art, in any discipline, field of study or specialty. The distinctiveness of the competitive horizon is further enhanced with regard to emphasis on mission (combination) and the management of the three university missions. Conceptually, the competitive horizon illuminates a basic tension between basic units and university personnel who *transform* the state-of-the-art and those who *reproduce* it. In addition, between these two extremes are basic units who attempt both. The result of this tension is three distinct *world-views* that are not difficult to locate in Finnish universities. These worldviews are not mutually exclusive and are ideal types based on a heuristic. However, simultaneous, effective action at all three levels, while possible, would require a large and complex unit.

The Best Science (The World Class)

It is easy to locate basic units and individual university personnel in Finnish universities focused on the *transformation of their discipline*, for example research Centers of Excellence. These basic units and scholars orientate to *scientific power*, a field-specific form of capital initially identified by Bourdieu (1988). Academics concerned with scientific power are concerned with *the advancement of state-of-the-art knowledge in their discipline*. Position in World Class units is governed by the publication of high impact, international, peer-reviewed scientific texts, a consistent ability to secure research funding from a variety of sources and innovative presentations in relevant venues concerning disciplinary developments (Bourdieu 1988; Fairweather 2002). Human resources are recruited to these units – from anywhere they can be located – because of their potential with regard to pushing beyond the state-of-the-art in their discipline.

In World Class units, scholars compete – and cooperate – head-to-head with their counterparts dotted around the globe, in locations actively defining the state-of-the-art. The competition is for human resources, funding, results and status. Complex mobility patterns are an assumption at this level as this **native-born senior researcher** in the *hard-pure sciences* points out.

In principal, in order to be competitive it's almost impossible to manage without having experience abroad. Generally, looking for a position at group leader level, I mean, if you don't have any international experience, you are not going to be taken seriously. Research is global – you do not research at the local level. You have to have networks in all EU areas and you have to know people abroad. You have to have international experience.

The Best Finnish Scientists (Local Heroes)

At the other end of the spectrum, university personnel who *draw on the state-of-the-art, but take no direct part in the transformation of their discipline or field of study*, for example, university instructors in a regionally – in domestic terms – orientated campuses, in programs that emphasize teaching and who orientate to academic power. Academics who act with respect to *academic power* are focused on the social dynamics that will reproduce *the next generation of academics*. Relative position in Type 3 units is governed by the control of a subordinate's time, departmental politics and the control of administrative practice (Bourdieu 1988). Teaching-orientated basic units need competent teachers and guides for thesis work, the occasional dissertation, in the local language, which is sometimes different than the journal articles and academic texts that chronicle the advance of scholarship in any particular field. The 'pastoral care' (Delamont & Atkinson 2004) needed to guide large numbers of students through their stay in university, seeing them through their graduation – while making sure the curriculum corresponds to needs identified as important by university stakeholders – will be of paramount interest in this unit.

Local Heroes also compete, but in completely different terms than personnel in World Class units. The competition is for control of very limited number of positions and predictable supply of students seeking well-defined knowledge to be used in tightly regulated job markets in the Finnish context. In several sectors, for example law, teaching, and social work, universities have a nationally significant monopoly on the production and supply of new professionals. National student and key stakeholder demand, for example, public sector employers, provide the primary rationale for these programs – and the positions that exist in them. In terms of positions, Local Heroes mainly compete amongst themselves or with scholars from similar units within Finland. Their publications are normally in Finnish or Swedish and aimed at well-defined stakeholder needs, particularly with regard with translation of state-of-the-art findings that are initially produced outside Finnish universities (Hoffman et al. 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). Because of the national and local competitive horizon, mobility is confined to one's basic unit or similar units in other Finnish universities. Mobility beyond this is often regarded as positive but clearly 'optional'. For unit personnel,

there is no urgency or expectations about mobility beyond, for example, a teacher exchange, taking in the occasional international conference or possibly participation in visits associated with an international research project.

However, low *perceptions* for mobility needs is not the same as actual low mobility *needs* and this implies a risk for basic units in which the mobility of university personnel could be highly desirable. This highly competitive, **foreign-born post-doc**, in a *soft-pure specialty*, pinpoints the way in which the recruitment, selection, promotion and retention is disrupted at *low competitive horizons*, where 'hiring only those you personally know' governs entrance into the field, not an appraisal of scientific power, as would be more typical in units identified as World Class or National Champions.

As one of my professors mentioned, it's commonly agreed my discipline is still a patronage system. So, it's EXTREMELY important to know 'The right persons'. I think the main hindrance for me was NOT having been part of this system long enough, because I did my Ph.D. somewhere else. And as a completely unknown person and IT TAKES SOME TIME to get to know the right people. It's hard to say, but I think that by now I may have been successful within the framework of the Academy of Finland or in applying for department positions … Another thing, is that here, my subject is a particularly NATIONALISTIC subject. When I was teaching, I asked my students 'What are the tasks of a current university, at the moment?' And one of the first things they mentioned to me was 'NATION BUILDING, the formation of people in order to keep up the NATIONAL identity.' You would NEVER get such an answer in my home country. And I think you would never get such an answer in other subjects, like biology. It's very clear that the majority of publications of the department are STILL in Finnish or in Swedish. Much more so than in my home country, where we publish much more in other languages. There is a large public interest in the publications of our department. And in that way it's good to see the discipline as a national subject, because it's a demand from the public. But this makes it much harder for outsiders to come into the department.

The idea that a particular subject field could be focused on 'nation building' and 'fostering national identity' could well be imagined as arising in several types of units inhabited by Local Heroes, especially in soft applied sciences in the humanities, education and social sciences, where the competitive horizon of basic units may not extend beyond the local or national scope (Hoffman et al. 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007). This fact, as this post-doc pointed out, this does indeed correspond to concrete local demand, but, at the same time excludes routine consideration that foreign-born scholars may have something unique to add to local or national scholarship.

The Best Science in Finnish – And English (National Champions)

In between the extremes of the World Class and Local Heroes are National Champions, in which the pursuit of original research results – while also regularly producing students – is balanced, although one may receive more emphasis. While some unit personnel spend the majority of time on students, there are solid research outcomes alongside instructional programs. In an increasingly competitive environment, research is more emphasized than in units with low or local competitive horizons.

For National Champions, both worlds – reproduction and transformation – are present, depending on one's ability to assess and orientate to the balance of rewards based on scientific and academic power. The main difference between units populated by National Champions and Local Heroes is the external funding required for the pursuit of new knowledge. However, teaching demands in these units is significant. Because the scope of the unit's interest extends beyond translation or reproducing state-of-the-art findings for local or national consumption, these units may attract students or personnel from outside the local or national scope. The stakes of competition in these units correspond to a wider spectrum of resources and these units are more likely to have topic-based degree programs taught in different languages, particularly in English, in order to compete for students on a regional – or perhaps wider – scale.

Complex mobility patterns into and out of these units is more likely than in units populated by Local Heroes , but generally not as usual than in World Class units. While traditional, short-term, temporary mobility is strongly encouraged for the native-born personnel (and students) in units termed National Champions, there are emerging problems. Specifically, the idea that some of the students invited from abroad – to participate in English-language topic based master's program – might decide to 'stay' and attempt to enter PhD and faculty ranks. This is causing growing pains in these units. This competitive **foreign-born PhD student** in the *soft-pure* sciences is quite articulate about what lay beyond their PhD.

If I move someplace, another higher education institution or research center, what will I expect from them? And what will these people expect from me? These two things are important. I have to think about my academic future, my contributions, what I aspire to. So, if these match, that is the greatest attraction of all. If I find the right place, and there is a lot of opportunity for me, I'll go for it.

This young student is already in a 'border-line' National Champion/World Class unit, is very competitive and would be perfectly at ease in a World Class unit. The key to their trajectory is in their career aspirations – and a unit that can meet those aspirations by providing a challenging and meaningful environment. The larger, open policy question is: *Will they find this kind of match in a Finnish higher education institution?*

COMMONALITIES ACROSS UNITS

Like the strong differences within different types of basic units, commonalities across units, are much more structural than a strict focus on individuals will reveal. 'Structural' should not be confused with 'purposeful', rather sometimes the opposite, specifically gradual patterns of durable social relationships that emerge over time in specific geographic, economic, cultural, historical, political contexts. While some structural change can be regarded as quite deliberate, for example the formation of the European Union or the implementation of the Bologna Process, other structural features emerge so gradually that they are only revealed by historical or comparative analysis, or by using conceptually-driven inquiry – focused on existing relationships – in a way that has not been carried out before (See for example Välimaa & Hoffman 2007).

Quality of life and Finnish higher education as a 'best kept secret'

The quality of life in Finland, especially concerning the families of university personnel, the personnel themselves, combined with the professional climate affects mobility in many ways. This **Native-born Senior Researcher**, working at the *global competitive horizon*, in the *hard-applied sciences* acknowledges the difficulties inherent in balancing one's career, family and mobility.

One thing that is usually brought up is whether scientists can have a family life. Which is really an issue, if one thinks about the highest level at which research is done. I think that it's still a dilemma that exists for all top level scientists that I know. I mean, they somehow have a family, but in one way or another, on one level or another they have to sacrifice this, because it's a very competitive area. So I think being a researcher is a little bit similar as, as being a professional athlete. You always have to compete for funding in this case, so you try to get your publications where you compete that who is the first one or the fastest one and, in that way, obviously going abroad with the family is already a part of the process. But I mean, then trying to also BE with the family, and to all this work, I mean that's a big, big issue.

The researcher quoted immediately above was speaking as to the advantages of remaining in Finland at the peak of their career, in order to have any semblance of a family life, which, to them was quite important. The quoted scientist's mobility – which was considerable – had consisted of doing part of their PhD and a post-doc *outside* Finland, in order to enhance their career trajectory *inside* Finland. This is consistent with the larger scale studies conducted by Musselin and her colleagues (2004) in which they found that longer term mobility, especially post-docs, used experience abroad mainly to enhance career prospects in the country of origin. In this way, the desire to eventually return to one's home country following a longer stay abroad is by no means a 'Finnish' phenomenon.

While it is understandable why native-born scientists from several societies undertake scientific mobility in order to later return, the characteristics of Finnish society and solid university system are seen as very positive by foreign-born university personnel – to the extent that they may make up their mind – together with their families – to make Finland their new home – but only if their professional aspirations are met.

Across all the cases in this study, in all types of units, the actual quality of life in Finland bears little resemblance to the tired myths of Finnish folk psychology that dwell on *the difficult Finnish language, long, dark winters, high taxes and shy, reserved colleagues that don't know how to make small talk*. The only people who take these stereotypes seriously are firstly, Finnish people themselves and secondly visitors who have not been in Finland long enough to appreciate the fact that the same climatic conditions are found in many interesting, attractive places, that taxes are spent in ways that make the Nordic social democracies amongst the world's best places to live (Sachs 2004). Additionally, the demonstrated ability to achieve competitiveness alongside a superior general education system, comprehensive social welfare system, safe streets, excellent public infrastructure and gender equity will produce a short list of countries. These conditions often explain why university personnel Finnish or foreign-born, may take the decision to settle here.

'OFF THE RADAR'

While seeking analytically interesting basic units for inclusion in this study, no direct observation, documents or persons could be found that meaningfully connected the relationship between university personnel and the

demographic challenges facing Finnish population regarding *aging* and *migration*. Particularly interesting was the observation that students of immigrant background seem to fall outside the direct scope of 'international' operations in most basic units and the coordination of basic units, although they increasingly feature as prominent in the Ministry of Education's most recent strategic internationalization policies (Finnish Ministry of Education 2008). Because the majority of university personnel, originate within the student ranks of Finnish universities, it is easy to observe that potential linkages between students with an immigrant background and university personnel with an immigrant background falls completely out of the range of personnel practices, unlike the narrower and obvious focus on foreign-born students and personnel, which is associated with traditional view conceptions of internationalization (Trondal et al; 2003; Hoffman 2007). The uneasy tension between traditional conceptions of internationalization and quickly emerging student, staff and faculty composition is very different than many other countries which have moved beyond merely studying these linkages in favor of the development of management capacity that directly engages these issues. The three main explanatory dynamics, all of which appear unnoticed in so much as no leadership, staff unit or management capacity corresponds to these phenomena are as follows: Firstly, the structural nature, and associated challenges of the national career patterns in units we term National Champions or Local Heroes. Secondly, a linked inability to address groups in society – but not present in faculty ranks – via 'representative' committees composed of faculty and staff, which insures a lack of problematization of migration-related change. Thirdly, a lack of complex mobility patterns in connected to units composed of only Local Heroes, particularly in education, regarding innovation and application of new knowledge in the face of the highly situated demographic transformation which has already begun in Finland as the baby-boom generation retires.

The real 'Outsiders' in the Faculty: A Generational Challenge

From the beginning of this study, special emphasis was placed on locating individual university personnel from groups present in Finnish society, but absent, in general, from the ranks of university personnel (2007). As can be seen by statistical tables kept by *Statistics Finland*, the top 20 groups, in terms Finnish residents classified as *foreigners* is quite patterned, as well as small, specifically .026% of an overall population of 5326314 (Statistics Finland 19.11.2009). It was already observed that in the author's previous research (Hoffman 2007), that it is very easy to locate – as these statistics would suggest – university personnel from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, China, Germany, the UK, India, the USA, Poland, Ukraine and France. However, direct observation in the present study and the authors' previous research strongly indicates that university personnel, especially senior university, personnel from Somalia, Thailand, Turkey, Iraq, the former Serbia and Montenegro, Iran, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina are more difficult to locate in Finnish university faculty ranks. This type of emerging stratification is obscured by the fact that – at group level – the most important aspect of identity of many individuals in the above table is *not* national identity. Reliance on national origin alone, has already been established as insufficient in studies of mobility, especially comparative studies (Blumenthal et al.1996; Kelo, Teichler & Wächter 2006; Hoffman 2007). While important, the many critical forms of mobility are linked to sets or combinations of ascriptive characteristics, like gender, age, national/regional origin, ethnicity, mother-tongue, religion. These defining features of groups 'vanish' when reified in the types of statistical tables currently used by many higher education actors (Hoffman 2007). Hansen (2000) points out a 'cultural shortcut' that artificially conflates national and cultural identity. In the present study, the research team was able to locate two interview participants from groups not typically found in the ranks of university personnel, but both are in precarious positions compared to their colleagues from groups which fare better in recruitment, selection, promotion and retention.

I was hoping and expecting that my career would grow. I mean, you finish your PhD and get a good position and develop from there. But that development hasn't come, because there are no jobs. There are too many people who are looking for jobs…Finland is a small country, the job market is small and if you have a Finn competitor and an immigrant, then you most likely take the Finn, but it happens less in some big immigrant countries, because they have laws against that. They have laws that if an immigrant is more qualified on paper, you have to take them…The obstacles for my career have been not being a native, not speaking Finnish. (**Foreign- born Post-doc researcher**)

The excerpt, from one of the two personnel we located from large ethnic groups that 'disappear' in the types of statistical tables used by higher education actors to make sense of their own institution, underlines our lack of capacity in this area. The main challenge for Finnish higher education – going forward – is obvious from the statistics chart above. Although there is some flux in some groups, the general trend is that these numbers, although small, are increasing. The real challenge is generational in nature. Just as the massification of Finnish higher education embraced students – and personnel – regardless of (domestic) geographic origin, socioeconomic status and gender in the 20th century, the open question in front of higher education actors has been articulated by Scott (1998, p. 109): *"Can we reach out to the disadvantaged and excluded in our own societies at the same time as reaching*

across national frontiers to other systems of higher education?" The answer to that question will lay in an analysis of the relationship between groups – by numbers and a complete set of ascriptive characteristics – and the possibility that any individual, from any group, has of a professional trajectory in the domain of their choice in the next few generations: including the ranks of university personnel.

DISCUSSION: IS INTERNATIONALIZATION WORTH IT?

This study underlines the conclusion that the latest internationalization policy of the Finnish Ministry of Education (2008), along with employers, unions, increasing numbers of politicians and gradually, the general population, is completely at odds with the *recruitment, selection promotion and retention* practices in some basic units with local, national, regional and sometimes even global competitive horizons (Hoffman & Välimaa 2008; Jaakola 2006; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007; Raunio & Forsander 2009; Söderqvist 2005). Personnel practices in other basic units are far more consistent with current policy discussion, legal practices and the underlying demographic and political forces driving changing personnel practices across the EU, along with trends in personnel mobility practices commonplace in globally and regionally competitive university basic units. While this could be read as bearing mainly on foreign-born personnel, our data indicates that many native-born university personnel see these inconsistencies with equal clarity.

The implications of this study are quite clear in this regard. The transition from *traditional (temporary) internationalization 'between'* countries, HEI's and basic units – to – *transformative internationalization 'within'* these same contexts is not uniform in Finnish universities. This should not be confused with the assertion that uniformity is desirable. This is because it is often the case that a high degree of internationalization is not needed in many basic units to meet societal-based demand. The title of the funding proposal that was originally obtained for this study was a question: *Is internationalization worth it?* Our results are quite clear on that question: *'It depends,'* or '*Only sometimes'.*

The degree of internationalization, in general and mobility patterns of personnel in particular depend on coherence with regard to mission that is often well articulated in World Class Units, not been fully considered by National Champions and occasionally, completely missed by Local Heroes.

The implications for policy makers and university leadership mainly concern cases in units where the 'fit' between demand-driven competitive horizon, the forms of internationalization appropriate at that horizon and the mobility patterns necessary to act is not meeting well-articulated stakeholder demand, in some important respect. In some cases this 'lack of fit' is seen by personnel within the unit. However, as this study clearly indicates, in many cases a 'fit' that is untenable cannot be detected from inside unit, precisely because of a low competitive horizon, compounded by a lack of successful experience with types of internationalization measures that could raise a basic unit's competitive horizon. This is especially the case regarding personnel mobility patterns required on some of the contentious topics and issues identified in this study, particularly issues implicating equity, ironically an issue in which Nordic countries currently enjoy a good reputation.

Where this 'fit' is at odds with demand, it can be questioned as to whether this is an issue for research, an issue of organizational development or a point of leverage for stronger intervention – from outside the unit itself.

These assertions need to be qualified with the assertion that the actual demand by stakeholders may not include a great deal of transformative internationalization. The optimal uptake and integration of internationalization practices – and associated mobility patterns – necessary for operations at any competitive horizon will be, by definition, different in every basic unit. This is consistent with recent Ministry of Education Policy (2008).

The 'Achilles heel' of the previous statement, for university leadership and management is that there appear to be many basic units in which incongruence between demand, competitive horizon, internationalization and associated mobility patterns is not 'seen' from within the unit. Where this is the case, this becomes a management and leadership issue – from outside the unit.

While these observations are most relevant to basic units, contextual data (direct observation, texts and document) collected during the purposeful selection of basic units and individuals has important implications for organizational practices linking individuals, basic units and HEIs, specifically, 'representative' committees, working groups and councils focusing on issues having to do with 'internationalization', 'multiculturalism' and 'equality', which have members from only one nation or culture.

Our data clearly indicate that the personnel practices connected to internationalization and competitiveness, particularly types of mobility that are off the radar – across system level – by definition will remain so as long as no organizational practice at the level of HEI links policy to operational issues at the level of basic unit. The implications of these findings spotlight the untenable assumption that representative committees composed of persons with no meaningful expertise in the issues under discussion or grounded experience of dealing with these issues in the Finnish context will come up with anything genuinely innovative, especially at highly competitive horizons.

The most important interlinked implications for policy and practice at this time are firstly that a great deal of caution needs to be used regarding claims – at any level of Finnish higher education – aimed at 'attracting' foreign-born personnel, or students thought of as potential personnel. This is because there are many basic units, locations and fields of study –as well as linked occupational sectors – in which 'attraction' does not correspond to personnel practices associated with *recruitment, selection, promotion and retention*. At this point in time, it is too easy to find basic units in which factors other than academic merit govern personnel practice, alongside no apparent interest in either investigating these types of practices or acting on them. This is not the same as saying there are no basic units which offer equal opportunities for foreign-born personnel, which is not the case. It is clear, however, that the differences between these types of units is neither systematically accounted for, nor acted on.

Secondly, our findings clearly highlight the de-linkage between an understanding of the relationships between the internationalization of higher education, the competitiveness of basic units, the mobility of university personnel and demographically-driven challenges to Finnish society in general and Finnish higher education in particular. Based on what is known about international comparative higher education, the implication is an obvious observation: ***The core issues highlighted by this study concerning the relationship between policy, leadership and basic unit operations are not conceptually contained under the 'umbrella' term of internationalization, nor practices associated with internationalization.*** This is important, as the current Finnish Ministry of Education internationalization strategy 'bundles' migration-related issues together with 'internationalization' per se. – which our analysis indicates is *at best* only partially understood – mainly in the basic units that need the least advice on internationalization, competitiveness and mobility. In addition, this 'bundling' assumes a comprehensive understanding of these relationships that ***does not exist***, even in many units who research and teach about these issues, which are far removed from persons administratively acting on them. Finally, the way in which the most problematic issues identified in our analysis are researched, taught about, operationalized in the service mission and administratively engaged by our most serious competitors, outside Finland, is far more convincing (Babila Sama, El Massri, Hoffman, Raunio & Korhonen *in press*). This is mainly due to the scale of migration in many other countries, which has led to a greater organizational capacity for both understanding the complexity involving key similarities and differences in issues rooted in the internationalization of higher education and international migration and ethnic relations. Simply put: When there are strong linkages between these issues and when there are none (Marginson & van der Wende 2007; Tremblay 2004). Based on the analysis of issues surfacing across basic units and contextual data and issues 'off the radar' it is a fair question to ask if present HEI capacity exists to engage many serious challenges highlighted in this analysis. In many HEIs the answer to that question is: *'No'.* The implication of that answer is that the means and methods of addressing these challenges can be engaged or ignored. There is no third option. Even if engaged, it needs to be underlined that very little conceptually-informed or experience-based knowledge now exists on this topic presently in Finland. If successful engagement with these challenges, on a significant scale, is a criteria, we are talking about only a handful of potential candidates presently in Finland. This is a challenging area – world-wide – and there are no uncontested 'success stories' with regard to the demographic challenges now faced within Finnish organizations.

UNIVERSITIES *VERSUS* UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

This study immediately introduces several points of departure concerning internationalization, mobility and competitiveness in a rapidly changing Finnish higher education system. The most important question that immediately springs to mind is: Are Finnish universities of applied sciences in a better or worse position to face some of the challenges that appear to be beyond some Finnish university basic units? Or are both types of HEIs having similar difficulties orientating to the demographic realities of internationalization, mobility dynamics that are far more complex than have been conceived in the past and an economic environment which can be characterized in one breath as ultra competitive and in severe crisis?

It is quite clear – in an analytical and empirical sense – that may university basic units are a decade or more away from developing the capacity to engage acute problems that demand focus now. And because of this fact, the authors cannot help but speculate if universities of applied sciences are doing better with regard to the relationship between higher education and society. Especially in areas where universities have been slow to realize the gravity of the situation of Finland's rapidly aging, relatively culturally homogenous population now faces.

Based on our earlier work, we would speculate a similar analysis of universities of applied sciences would most likely reveal areas in which there are world class units and programs, as well as very strong national-level (and European-regional level) programs. The question that springs to mind is whether or not those programs are addressing the critical types of challenges the universities seem to have missed. And is this because there are complex mobility patterns linked to the very real changes in Finnish culture: The patterns that traditional internationalization is blind too? Are career patterns merit-based and can all groups in society point to members of your faculty and staff with similar backgrounds? In universities, this is far from the case in many types of basic units. These kinds of questions and statements may seem provocative, yet there is good reason to ask them. The main

reason to ask these questions is the structural reality created by our higher education system and the faculty, staff and management of HEIs.

We will underpin our argument with an exaggerated example of the type purposeful selection we do in case studies of the type presented above. In universities, when our team wanted to locate a basic unit with a very low competitive horizon there is no easier – and ironic – choice than to first, find a faculty of education, then focus on teacher-training units. While 'Pisa tourists' come from all over the world to find out 'the secrets of Finnish teacher training', the one 'uncomfortable truth' they do not usually notice – and certainly are not normally told about – is our ill preparation for dealing with any other kind of pupil than our quickly shrinking body of ethnic Finnish pupils born of ethnic Finnish parents, along with Swedish-speaking Finns (Malin 2005; Hoffman 2007). In the communities where the authors live, we will have difficulty finding employed foreign-born teachers or teachers of recent migrant origin. We would argue that this is because in the faculties of education we visit, there is a similar lack of faculty and staff with recent migrant origin informing the *recruitment, selection promotion and retention* of students and faculty. In short, it is difficult to locate anyone in Finnish universities that really knows much about this acute need, beyond theoretical conjecture, especially in senior faculty ranks. There are a few very important exceptions to this generalization. However, the demand for addressing this problem far exceeds the supply.

For a similar look into the landscape of Universities of applied sciences, the natural choice would be the police and law enforcement HEIs. Like teachers, it is exceedingly difficult to locate foreign-born police officers, or officers of recent migrant origin in Finland. My guess is that this is for – structurally speaking – nearly identical reasons for the lack of teachers in our children's schools who could potentially play a part in a changing Finnish culture and society.

Does this lack of teachers and police officers with recent migrant backgrounds – mean there are not qualified individuals of migrant origin both able and willing to do the job, as is common in many other European countries? Or – structurally speaking – are the reasons elsewhere?

In most speeches and material concerning internationalization in Finnish higher education, the easiest areas to focus on are World Class Units and National Champions who are doing quite well: Lots of good statistics on traditional internationalization, even apparent cultural diversity. However, when critically reexamining discussions concerning internationalization and Finnish higher education, particularly in terms of mobility issues, past studies of higher education indicate that the areas in the shadows – the things we would rather not talk about – actually obscure the most fundamental issues faced by higher education and society (Hoffman & Välimaa 2008; Välimaa & Hoffman 2007).

Our selection of first the education system – universities – as objects of study, teachers, police is not at all accidental. It can be – and has been – termed polemic. These are amongst the most trusted institutions in Finnish Society. We respectfully point out that conceptually and empirically these kinds of focal points focus our attention on some of society's fundamental challenges with regard to re-thinking internationalization and mobility.

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