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David Cairns
Valentina Cuzzocrea
Daniel Briggs
Luísa Veloso

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Reflexivity, Social Inequality and the Reproduction of Precariousness in Highly Qualified Migration

David Cairns
Centre for Research and Studies
    in Sociology
ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon
Lisbon, Portugal

Valentina Cuzzocrea
Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural
    and Social Studies
University of Erfurt
Erfurt, Germany

Daniel Briggs
Department of Law and Social Sciences
European University of Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Luísa Veloso
Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology
ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon
Lisbon, Portugal

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The Mobility Dream and its Consequences

This book explores mobility among the highly qualified in Europe as practised by students, interns and professionals, and the consequences of this movement for mobile individuals and the societies they live in. It is our view that while the visibility of different forms of highly qualified circulation has grown considerably, an honest appreciation of the positive and negative ramifications of this development, and the difficulty of attaining success through mobility, has yet to take place. We are particularly concerned about apparent inconsistencies between the ways in which mobility is governed at a political level and how it is actually performed. There seems to have been no updating of perspectives on highly qualified mobility at a conceptual level, and because there is failure to acknowledge the complexity of these forms of circulation, its practice is more precarious than it need be due to the fact that individuals within the circuits of international education, training and work fail to receive the support and understanding they need.

Despite the fact that the freedom to move between different Member States is one of the definitional aspects of life in the European Union (EU), as we shall learn in the course of this book, highly qualified mobility is somewhat uneven in terms of take-up and quality of experience. There

are people who we might regard as the winners, for whom the freedom to move across borders has become an integral part of their social, economic, political and cultural lives. These individuals take advantage of the best opportunities that certain destinations have to offer and leave behind the worst aspects of other places. And through this means, the latent synergy that is thought to exist between social and geographical mobility is accessed, bringing to life the dream of making a better life through being elsewhere. However, for less fortunate individuals the capacity to circulate remains limited, restricted by personal and socio-structural circumstances, whether through a lack of social, economic and cultural capital or the inability to overcome legal and bureaucratic impediments.

The efficacy of mobility also relates to the time in the life course at which it is practised, as well as the length of time spent living in another country. A theme that will be elaborated in our discussion is that many foreign sojourns are of relatively short duration, although there may be a possibility of such stays having an impact that extends into later life through the development of transversal skills and the generation of inter-cultural understandings. This view contrasts markedly with the traditional view of moving abroad as an absolute event, corresponding to the norms of what we will come to discuss as 'neo-classical' migration. The fact that forms of circulation intrinsically limited in scope hold value helps explain why agencies such as the European Commission (EC) take an active interest in supporting highly qualified circulation between its Member States and affiliate countries. Student mobility and internships in particular are thought to be an effective means of spreading knowledge and expertise across borders and creating employability, and ultimately establishing a more prosperous EU, and the same principle applies to certain forms of highly specialist employment.

This realisation makes us aware that mobility happens not only due to personal interest but also because of the opening up of international opportunities at an institutional level; in other words, individual agency is mobilised within an external context of prospects and limitations. To understand highly qualified circulation, we therefore need to develop reflexive modes of understanding in relation to the mobility decision-making of individuals within the international circuits of tertiary education, training and skilled employment that take into account internal

and external dimensions. This means moving away from descriptive data-driven analytical approaches and instead focusing on the hopes and fears of incipient movers, while also outlining some of the key features of the regulation of institutionalised mobility systems. Being able to dream of a new and hopefully better life abroad, with an expanded range of life chances, becomes the key driver of movement, as opposed to retrospectively assuming that all those who have moved have done so on the basis of a rational cost–benefit analysis, but with choice mediated by structures over which the incipient mover may have no power to control or predict outcomes. As we will proceed to explain, it is the logic of seeking opportunities that ultimately motivates students, interns and professionals to go abroad, as well as the realisation that staying at home may result in falling behind in the global competition for jobs and career security.

In recognising these 'mobility dreams', we will also consider some of the costs arising from their pursuit. While there are some genuine success stories, attempts to live the mobility dream also involve much apparent failure in becoming and staying mobile, as well as exclusion from mobility systems, undermining the philosophy of linking transnational circulation to social and economic development at policy level. That there are contradictions beneath the cosmopolitan façade of institutional and free movement should not come as a great surprise, and we are by no means the only authors who have looked at the current practice of highly qualified migration in Europe only to find that reality does not necessarily match policy rhetoric.[1] However, we will attempt to move beyond existing perspectives on this issue through bringing together evidence from contrasting highly qualified mobility scenarios, and ultimately seek to understand what current developments mean for the future of intra-European circulation.

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[1] One of the most frequently cited books on this subject, Adrian Favell's *Eurostars and Eurocities* (2009), paints a decidedly downbeat picture of free circulating professionals in Amsterdam, London and Brussels.

Selling the Mobility Dream

These initial remarks inadvertently highlight some of the ambivalence we feel when confronted with official discourse on highly qualified mobility in the EU issued by organisations such as the EC; a practice that is assumed to be relatively unproblematic, meritocratic and fairly easy to access regardless of where one lives or one's socio-demographic background. This is an obfuscation not helped by the frequent misreading of instrumental mobility as a form of leisure travel, two very different phenomena that are not closely related to one another. As mobility veterans, all the authors of this book know that working, studying and interning abroad is not one big holiday but rather a series of intensely challenging experiences, and the belief that anyone can cope with this relatively easily is a misconception. Certainly, in a best-case scenario, moving abroad as a qualified person represents an exciting means of enabling personal and professional development. However, there is always a risk that in practising mobility you fall prey to cynical interests who wish to extract your liquid assets and the economic and social capital you have generated for yourself or inherited from your family, thus creating precariousness rather than moving towards professional security. When the demand for good quality and properly regulated mobility opportunities exceeds supply, and this is often the case to a massive degree, an imbalance in power relationships is formed between mobile individuals and the people who become mobility gatekeepers, establishing a breeding ground for exploitation.

This leads us to ask who these gatekeepers might be. After all, who would want to take advantage of ambitious people who are just following their mobility dreams? For those still in full-time education we have various tertiary education level institutions, for example, universities, for whom international students are a major source of revenue in terms of their tuition fees. They also benefit from acquiring an international profile through the participation of their learners in exchange platforms such as the Erasmus programme, which explains why universities have become deeply involved in what, on the surface, appears to be a non-profit-making activity. It should, however, be said that hosting short-duration migrants

is not necessarily a problem for student participants. On the contrary, there is much to be gained in terms of new skills and capacities for incomers, as well as the establishment of a culture of international conviviality in host institutions. It is only when student mobility systems are mismanaged or misaligned in relation to the needs of societies that this practice becomes dysfunctional: for example, in the exclusion of students from less well-off socio-economic backgrounds or imbalances between numbers incoming and outgoing. This happens when publicly funded mobility opportunities are not fairly distributed between and within countries, or when universities fail to deliver on their policy remit to deliver socially inclusive access to programmes. Later in this book, we will also argue that the same basic principle applies to those seeking international training opportunities, for example, internships in governments, international corporations and non-governmental organisations.

The international labour market for highly qualified individuals is perhaps more straightforward to understand, in that it is by definition a business environment, governed by market demands. The mobility dream in this respect is likely to be somewhat less idealistic, but it is also noticeable that a dichotomy exists between the level of skilled talent available, which is extremely high (due to factors such as the expansion of tertiary education systems across Europe), and demands from employers for fewer, perhaps less academically accomplished and therefore cheaper, workers. What we find is that, at a time when universities are expanding their output of national and international graduates, the range of qualified opportunities is dwindling and declining in quality. A scarcity of job openings places intense pressure on highly qualified candidates to accept what is available, irrespective of where these opportunities might be found, thus beginning what has been called a 'peripatetic career' (Ackers, 2004). New graduates in particular may have to involuntarily travel further and spend longer abroad without a realistic hope of establishing a stable career. This instability nevertheless explains why a requirement for mobility remains elevated, as highly qualified people know that they need to search ever harder for fewer opportunities.

The Origins of Highly Qualified Migration

In respect to terminology, the phrase 'highly qualified migration' is used in this book to describe the cross-national circulation of tertiary educated individuals, at undergraduate or post-graduate university degree levels, whether this be for study, professional training (including internships) or skilled employment.[2] This is a significant population with regard to scale. Recent statistics show that 31.7 per cent of the population of Europe aged between 25 and 54 have tertiary education-level qualifications (ISCED levels 5–8), albeit with major disparities across countries and between genders (Eurostat, 2015).

Europe is therefore potentially well stocked with 'academic capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), although this resource is not necessarily being put to good use due to regional imbalances in the distribution of graduate opportunities. The potential for academic capital wastage has also accelerated following the arrival of the global financial crisis in Europe, with massive increases in unemployment among graduate cohorts (Scarpetta et al., 2010; Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Aassve et al., 2013). This raises a curious dilemma for these individuals: should greater recourse be made to mobility strategies with the aim of securing better opportunities, or conversely, has the risk of mobility success decreased to such an extent, due to the spread of the crisis and other 'problem' issues which will be discussed later in this book, that moving abroad is too risky?

We do not as yet have the answer to this question but moving beyond the issue of economic motivation, we must appreciate that migration and other forms of mobility happen because certain people possess the capacity to engage in international circulation. In practice, this involves both the practical competences needed to move across national boundaries in pursuit of employment, education and training opportunities, and being skilled in the art of settling in a new country. This makes the study of how

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[2] There is, of course, an additional connotation with regard to applying the 'highly qualified' adjective to intra-European migration, which is the idea that this form of circulation often stops short of more or less permanent settlement and therefore needs to have a caveat. In this sense, and in keeping with previous remarks regarding its relationship to neo-classical migration theory, this is a less absolute form of circulation than might be commonly assumed, and without a guarantee of success in regard to outcomes.

people acquire a mobility capacity just as important as examining trends in circulation or noting the existence of external mobility imperatives, as not only are credentials and skills required but so too are softer skills relating to inter-cultural understandings.

In discussing the origins of highly qualified mobility in all its forms, we also have to consider the influence of place of origin and the likelihood of achieving one's ambitions close to home. As discussed in a previous book (see Cairns, 2014), due to shortages in opportunities, many highly qualified people in Europe today have basically no choice but to join the international queue for jobs, internships and educational opportunities. While this prior publication concentrated upon a small number of locations characterised by labour market marginality, principally Ireland and Portugal, in this book we will take into account the more general European picture and the fact that the number of tertiary educated individuals has dramatically increased in recent years and, correspondingly, so has their need to find appropriate opportunities in which to invest academic capital. Furthermore, with regard to labour market integration, there is a need to become culturally attuned to the values and expectations of an occupational field or a specific organisation; one basically has to become an insider through any means necessary. This helps explain why 'intelligent people' move abroad for what seem like economically illogical reasons, risking their own and their families' scarce resources for a long-distance shot at success.

The Logic of Opportunities and Mobility Competition

What we are moving towards is an identification of what drives the various forms of highly qualified mobility we will be exploring in later chapters. While there may be a small number of individuals who wish to travel out of little more than a sense of adventure, the inherently disruptive nature of moving with skills and credentials almost inevitably makes staying closer to home much more appealing. Individuals are more likely to feel a compulsion to move out of a sense of necessity to

complete their education, acquire valuable skills and become established within a chosen occupational field, and perhaps also to become part of a larger European community.

Locating what has been termed 'the mobility imperative' (Cairns, 2014, p. 46) at personal level is an important advance in developing an understanding of why highly qualified people circulate, although the 'reflexivity' theme explored in the course of this book also takes into account external parties, including the crucial role played by employers and educational gatekeepers. Forms of reflexivity such as 'employability' in fact rely upon the establishment of a mutually beneficial dynamic between both parties for their success (see Chap. 2). Visualising opportunities abroad is an important part of this process, but intra-European circulation must also be planned and accounted for so that these mobility dreams can be realised, with various policy developments facilitating a growth in its proliferation, for example, the opening-up of borders and the deregulation of labour markets, especially for younger workers.[3] This does not just entail the removal of bureaucratic barriers to circulation, but specific destinations and particular institutions acquiring a perception of value in relation to their capacity to aid labour market entry. Highly qualified mobility thus becomes market-driven, subject to the vagaries of neo-liberal capitalism, with mobility policy focused on maintaining market valuations rather than following egalitarian dynamics, since access to the most valuable opportunities must be restricted by a very high cost of entry.[4]

Arguing that there is a 'logic of opportunities' is not a particularly new idea. In fact, we are really only stating the obvious. People have always

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[3] European level mobility policy makes frequent reference to inclusion and diversity, particularly in the field of youth. However, the use of the idea of 'comparative disadvantage' means that interventions tend to be targeted at small groups facing multiple and complex situations of fewer opportunities (e.g., disability, chronic health problems or learning difficulties) within a specific society, as opposed to using programmes such as Erasmus+ to equalise socio-economic inequalities between countries (European Commission, 2014a, p. 4).

[4] In direct contrast to the idea of remittances prevalent within studies of migration that follow the neo-classical approach, or money sent home from abroad to support dependents, the more likely scenario in contemporary European highly qualified migration is one of financial transfers being made in the other direction. This implies that a certain level of home-based hardship may be taking place, as well as supporting various forms of economic and emotional dependency that may limit the development of personal and professional independence.

moved abroad knowing immediate success is not guaranteed and that their chances will always be skewed by lingering inequalities. Neither is the existence of this logic difficult to deduce from observing how tertiary education systems and skilled job markets operate. The problem seems to be that established academics and policymakers have been rather slow off the mark with regard to updating their knowledge about the field for which they have responsibility, preferring to believe that all is well irrespective of changes in labour markets, education systems and training arrangements. Employers and educators are, however, more perceptive in being aware of the logic of opportunities and its relationship to the mobility dreams of graduates in particular. In consequence, they learn how to use this dynamic for their own organisations' benefit. This explains why vacancies in desirable places can be imbued with parsimonious working conditions and still attract massive numbers of applicants, and how unscrupulous institutions are able to act without restriction as long as they demonstrate quantitative success.

Where the logic of opportunities breaks down is when the elusive life chance ceases to be valued. Erosion in the value of qualifications, the spreading of knowledge and skills outside restricted circles or evidence of excessive job churning within organisations removes the utility value of 'mobility capital', a term covering the skills, credentials and experience obtained while working, studying or training abroad (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). If it starts to become known that a degree from an elite university, time spent at a high-profile international agency or working in a world-renowned research facility is failing to lead to the desired career outcome, typically a stable and adequately rewarded job, this mobility capital is devalued. Such a situation may lead towards dissatisfaction and, ultimately, a loss of faith in the mobility dream and disenchantment with one's place in the European grand competition. Additionally, if following a Bourdieusian framework, we need to recognise the restricted nature of international opportunities, with access to institutional mobility platforms in particular being dependent on possessing the right combination of social and economic capital, as well as the cultural attributes that make one valuable to institutions. However, the hidden nature of gatekeeping mechanisms, sequestered behind a façade of fake inclusivity, means that those who fail to enter or prosper within the circuits of global education,

work and training mistakenly come to internalise the belief that they have simply not tried hard enough, leading to futile attempts to acquire more debt-ridden mobility capital, a process that will only further one's position of relative labour market disadvantage (see Chaps. 3 and 4). However, when the situation of personal indebtedness to gain qualifications and experience is prolonged for an excessive period, even the most resilient of movers must start to wonder about the efficacy of their actions.

What these initial reflections imply is that mobility has become part of the global competition for success among the highly qualified, and that the risk of failure must be kept hidden to a certain extent so as to ensure that the conveyor belt of talent keeps rolling, leading the same small number of lucky individuals to elite destinations and a greater number of less fortunate people nowhere, except into indebtedness. Such competition is therefore another illustration of how market principles have come to predominate in contemporary European societies through the integration of neo-liberal principles in mobility governance. Only the strongest will survive, with strength begetting strength and the exercise of mobility just another type of consumer spending. The fact that well-off movers have resources matters, as they are more appropriate for exploitation. One of the basic tenets of neo-liberal economics is that there is no point trying to extract wealth from those who have none. In consequence, at a geopolitical level, there is not only an exclusion of the 'weak' but also a fight to attract the most ripe-for-profit movers: those who bring with them the most economic capital for divestment and generate the greatest returns during their stay.

This explains why mobility opportunities are frequently accessed via highly competitive means, which is an effective way of identifying candidates who have much to contribute to their host institutions and host societies. Evaluations of candidates become based on predictions of future 'excellence' rather than being objective assessments of actual achievements, promoting the idea that he or she is 'promising' rather than accomplished, thus privileging prodigious early achievers who have enjoyed early life advantages at the expense of those who have worked harder for longer (see also Wagner, 2015). In other words, and as we shall explore in Chap. 5, the beauty contest principle prevails in highly qualified mobility, as the most attractive candidate in the opinion of the evaluators wins while everyone else loses, with a huge amount of waste generated

through thousands of people having spent their valuable time and resources on the preparation of futile applications.

Another basic failing of the mobility competition relates to the emphasis on a near-immediate and easily quantifiable return on investment for policymakers and corporate interests. Unlike candidates, the gratification of these external parties will not be deferred to an indefinite future point in time. Those who are selected justify their inclusion by being pre-loaded with value, since they can already fulfil the stated objectives of the 'programme' prior to their participation. This may be in terms of employability, a specific form of inter-cultural civic mindedness or demonstrable European values. Including individuals with nothing to gain from the mobility experience serves only to devalue the exercise and waste resources. In the case of student mobility programmes this also means the neglect of policy goals in relation to social inclusion, as well as explaining a lack of success in spreading European values (see Chap. 4). Unfortunately, a strange variant on the 'Matthew Effect' prevails throughout mobility stages, giving societies with the lowest skills deficits the opportunity to hoard the most talented individuals (Merton, 1968).

The Structure of this Book

Having outlined some key themes, it should be stated that this book has a central, unifying idea, which is that there has been an underappreciation of the full range of consequences emerging from the opening up of tertiary education, training systems and skilled labour markets to international market-led competition. In the process of exploring these consequences we aim to provide policymakers and stakeholders in the mobility field, and more enlightened members of the research community, with evidence-based accounts of what is happening within highly qualified circulation in the EU. In the chapters that follow, we will examine some aspects of the disruption, disappointment and disillusion experienced by many mobile individuals through the use of different but related case studies. By this means, we hope to start the process of providing an accurate account of the actual price of incorporating mobility into the

life course for individuals and societies, and to stimulate thought about how to address present and future challenges.

Before engaging in this discussion, in Chap. 2 we look at the theoretical foundation of highly qualified migration in the EU. This involves unpacking some of the problems associated with the uncritical use of over-simplistic concepts and analytical approaches from neo-classical migration theory at a time when the practice of highly qualified mobility has become differentiated in terms of its forms and the predictability of outcomes. We argue that there is a greater need to recognise liminal qualities in the process of gaining overseas experience, explained through utilising the idea of 'reflexive mobility' and manifest in practices such as the encouragement of employability through student exchange visits and internship. Also explored are the potential consequences of misaligned mobility systems, because when reflexive mobility goes wrong it turns into precariousness, contributing to the marginalisation of movers rather than helping them overcome social and economic disadvantages.

Chapter 3 questions European strategic ambitions to improve young peoples' mobility and access to education, and thus maximise the value of the 'educational experience', related to structural flaws in the governance of tertiary education. This is due to a growing preference for global competition at a time of shrinking job markets, thereby limiting the range of opportunities for the highly qualified. While a conservative view that individual resilience and hard work are sufficient continues to be promoted, the competitive nature of labour markets means that not all those who succeed in education will find work commensurate with their skill and qualification levels. That not everyone achieves individualised success leads us to ask if an expanded and more mobile education system is actually making society, as opposed to one specific sub-section of society, socially and economically better off.

This educational theme is continued in Chap. 4, which focuses on student mobility, using the example of the EC Erasmus undergraduate exchange platform as a means of explaining how this form of movement has come to be dominated by young people from well-off backgrounds, who tend to possess high levels of social and economic capital as well as being preattuned to the values of European institutions. For this reason, Erasmus inevitably fails to spread employability or to advance inter-cultural understanding and Europeanisation objectives, since movers are already in possession of these

attributes. For education professionals working for Erasmus in national contexts subject to austerity, long-standing challenges in mobility governance relating to bureaucratic and resource issues, and inequalities in the regional distribution of resources for the programme, are heightened by economic pressures on crisis-hit families. This situation greatly reduces the number of student candidates for outward mobility, explaining growing disparities in levels of circulation between different European countries.

Meanwhile, increasing competitiveness in the graduate labour market has made the likelihood of starting a career in precarious conditions inescapable for many highly qualified jobseekers. There is evidence that many young Europeans seem to be accepting this inevitability, perhaps in the hope that initial work experience, however fleeting, will initiate a dream career, which is a vision found by new recruits in many occupational fields but particularly by those who 'work' in non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Chapter 5 examines the governance of internships in corporations and NGOs, and a potentially duplicitous discourse that advances an idea of building societal equality through profiting from the personal hardships of the intern cohort.

Chapter 6 looks at science and some of the consequences arising from the need to be internationally mobile in professional careers, focusing on the example of research laboratories in Portugal. We discuss the increasingly precarious nature of working conditions and the high level of career instability experienced by scientists, namely, a gradual deterioration in the quality of the research career at a time of growing difficulties in maintaining professional stability. We also expose the contradiction within high-profile national and European discourses that stress the strategic importance of science and technology (S&T) to societal economic stability and international competitiveness, and the often grim reality of actually working on S&T projects, as well as contrasts in mobility outlook between senior and junior researchers within the same project environments.

While this book was fundamentally a collective enterprise, Chap. 3 was primarily authored by Daniel Briggs, while David Cairns was responsible for Chaps. 1, 2 and 4, Valentina Cuzzocrea for Chap. 5 and Luísa Veloso for Chap. 6, the order of these contributions in the book generally following the life course from tertiary education to the start of a professional career. All authors had substantial input into the concluding

Chap. 7, which identifies a number of key themes that may determine the future direction of highly qualified migration in Europe, including matters arising from the ongoing implementation of austerity policies, the recent refugee crisis and the potential exit of the United Kingdom from the EU.

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Mobility Contexts

When approaching the subject of highly qualified mobility, it soon becomes apparent that certain theoretical ideas and assumptions shape the ways in which those in positions of power and influence think about the forms of circulation they govern. For researchers, confronting embedded ideas within a field of investigation, particularly where canonical concepts have become outdated or misleading, is a generally unacknowledged challenge. In our research context, this involves coping with ways of imagining highly qualified circulation that are limited through being based on macro-level statistical analysis and place emphasis on the economic dimension of mobility decision-making, a position that seriously conflicts with what our evidence tells us about the significance of social, cultural and political considerations in this process. Managing mobility, and especially managing migration, nevertheless remains tied to numbers—numbers of people moving and amounts of money earned or spent—these being the key concerns of policymakers and scholars following neo-classical migration traditions. In this chapter we will, however, attempt to move beyond the somewhat staid norms of our research field and adopt a more reflexive view of highly qualified mobility, motivated by the need to take better account of

positive and negative consequences for the individuals who move and for societies.[1]

The Traditional View

Although migration scholars might not want to admit it, very little has changed over time in the study of population circulation within a European context in terms of theoretical ideas, whether in relation to highly educated cohorts or other socio-demographic groups. We are still basically led to believe that people are enticed abroad by the promise of more money or out of sheer economic desperation, with no serious engagement with other factors that influence mobility decision-making. Therefore, despite a much publicised 'mobility turn' in the social sciences, one that promised a more complex understanding of motivations for movement in various contexts (Sheller and Urry, 2006; see also Faist, 2013), political governance of incoming and outgoing mobility remains firmly rooted in crude economics and populist political concerns.[2]

The standard approach remains one of estimating or predicting levels of population circulation using travel survey evidence or proxy indicators as a base. Exploration of the subjective experience of migration is confined to anecdotal reporting of exceptional scenarios, such as the plight of

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[1] An example of outmoded thinking is the use of the 'brain drain' metaphor, referring to the more or less permanent exit of economically vital individuals, such as top scientists or eminent entrepreneurs, and is generally regarded as something to be guarded against by national governments. It is not a synonym for highly qualified migration per se, and should not be used as such. The term 'brain circulation' is also applied to the practice of students and graduates moving abroad for relatively short periods but returning to the sending society, bringing with them the skills and capacities they have acquired abroad. For this reason, brain circulation is regarded as something to be encouraged, and this helps explain why the circulation principle is built into many institutional mobility platforms, including the Erasmus undergraduate exchange programme (Jöns, 2015; see also Balmer et al., 2009).

[2] As Castles and Miller (2009, pp. 21–22) note in *The Age of Migration*, neo-classical theory is the foremost paradigm within the study of international migration, dominating thinking in areas such as controlling population flows in the name of global security, as well as economic development. Much data-driven work on highly qualified migration is also over-simplistic and inherently conservative, with a lack of imagination leading to making recourse to tired typologies and semi-metaphorical categories, for example, 'brain drain', often without understanding what these frames of reference actually mean (see Jons, 2009).

clandestine migrants or topical crisis situations that have no relation to more commonplace forms of movement. That such a curious method should be adopted is cause for concern, particularly where there is debate about 'migration' at political levels. The numbers game can be used to great effect by anti-European integration campaigners, for whom too great a number of outsiders represents too great a threat; for example, in the divisive 2016 referendum on EU membership in the United Kingdom. Debate over whether or not to remain in the EU was indeed fuelled by arguments about perceived excessive levels of incoming migration from other European nations, using notoriously unreliable national migration estimates as a source of evidence to justify wanting to shut borders and restrict incoming and outgoing movement.[3]

This is just one example of the negative consequences of data-driven mobility governance, spurious statistics providing a licence to misinform an electorate. While professional mobility researchers are not likely to make such basic mistakes, there are other problems arising from the neo-classical approach, such as the neglect of human agency in explaining population flows. This is due to the exclusion of motivations for movement from analysis, and a lack of appreciation for the diverse means through which different forms of mobility are practised. Instead, we find a utilitarian macro-level approach being taken, centred on the identification of push and pull factors through making numerical juxtapositions between societies. For this reason, it is assumed but not proven that people are attracted abroad by higher salary levels, better job opportunities or more favourable welfare conditions, and repelled from their present place of residence by low wages, unemployment and poor quality of life irrespective of the levels of risk and uncertainty involved in moving.

The idea that analysis of these variables can hope to capture the actual chaos and unpredictability of a wide range of mobility modalities is

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[3] The UK does not produce migration data on intra-European circulation; indeed, few countries do, owing to the methodological difficulties of studying such a fluid phenomenon. Instead, they use survey evidence and proxy indicators, with the British figures deduced from indicators including the International Passenger Survey and National Insurance registrations, none of which actually measure migration (Migration Watch UK, 2016). We therefore do not know if there are 'too many' EU migrants in Britain; the real number may be much lower than estimates suggest or far in excess.

extremely optimistic, and not an approach we can endorse. Migration statistics may have their uses for demographers, but, as sociologists, there is not much we can learn about mobility from spreadsheets. It is not that we are in denial about the fact that 'migrants' are concerned with determining how best to invest and multiply their human capital, or how to make the most money through moving, only that this is just one consideration among many, and not necessarily the most important one. And as we shall observe in subsequent chapters, this approach fails to explain why highly qualified people move abroad for what appear to be economically illogical reasons, at high cost to themselves and their families, and without guarantee of success in terms of financial remuneration.[4]

Towards a Reflexive View of Mobility

What we actually need are ideas to credibly explain how and why highly qualified people move, and not just in relation to 'permanent' migration, that also explain what their mobility means to societies. The focus needs to be less on how many are moving, which is basically an unknowable number, and more oriented towards studying what happens during the mobility experience in regard to personal and professional development. Just how is it that people improve their skills and capacities through working, studying or training abroad?

Our approach involves adopting the concept of 'reflexive mobility', also known as 'spatial reflexivity', terms that have been used in recent studies of highly qualified mobility to help take account of difficulties in mobility decision-making related to the economic crisis (Cairns et al., 2012; Krings et al., 2013; Moriarty et al., 2015), although similar terminology has previously been used in the context of transportation

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[4] The Hollywood treatment of the migratory experience is similarly neo-classical, typically portraying movement from hardship to prosperity, which is the basic plotline of countless movies, ranging from the pioneering work of Charlie Chaplin (*The Immigrant*, 1917) to perennial classics like Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* (1974). Even the recent box office hit, *Brooklyn* (dir. John Crowley, 2015), presents a fairy-tale account of moving from 1950s rural Ireland to modern America, illustrating the popularity and durability of economic migration stereotypes.

policy (see, e.g., Rammler, 2008, p. 70). This approach represents a significant advance on econometric ideas, acknowledging that mobility is not only diverse in its practice but also that it is self-directed, albeit taking into account societal influences.

This is a relatively straightforward sociological approach to the mobility 'problem'. 'Reflexivity' has attracted many exponents within the social sciences (see, e.g., Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Foucualt, 2001).[5] But in terms of our application, and developing a position outlined in a previous publication (Cairns, 2014, pp. 20–21), we are concerned with better appreciating why highly qualified movers are required to make decisions based on contemplation of the possible benefits of moving abroad: social, cultural and economic. And while there are some superficial similarities with the sound-alike concept of 'reflexive modernisation', popularised by authors such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck (see, e.g., Giddens, 1991; Beck et al., 1994), what we will be describing is a substantially different process. The crucial difference is that the previous generation of reflexivity scholars imagined a process of lifestyle creation made out of a range of exciting and attention-grabbing choices. We are examining a set of practices that relate to how people make a life for themselves out of a series of good, bad and frequently awful alternatives.

The practice of reflexivity itself involves recognising a cause and effect relationship within life planning, a process mediated by personal reflection: a choice is made by an actor, with the validity of that choice contingent upon a positive societal reception. This extends beyond financial considerations and into the personal realm, considering how living in a different place will shape one's being in terms of social relationships and professional development. It is only through a successful evaluation from one's peers, colleagues and superiors that mobility pays off, whether this be the completion of an educational course, integration within an institution or establishing oneself in an occupational field. The success of a mobility decision is therefore mediated by individual agency—the capacity to move through mobilising one's own social and economic capital, and use one's own capabilities—and in terms of how one is received by the host.

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[5] At a deeper level, we can describe reflexivity as an internal conversation, a term associated with the work of Margaret Archer (see, e.g., Archer, 2012).

This brings into play issues such as acceptance within the foreign university, workplace or laboratory, not to mention feeling at home within the cultural and civic sphere of a new society. Also crucial to appreciate is that there is a degree of self-rationalisation taking place. Events that are perceived as ostensible failures at the time may be retrospectively re-evaluated as successes, for instance, in terms of lessons being learnt through hardship as part of a trial and error philosophy. From this point of view, we can perceive that the value of reflexive mobility may only become clear at a later point in the life course. This is an important realisation when examining the lives of young people, who may only perceive the wisdom of apparent missteps in life retrospectively (see Briggs and Ellis, 2016).

While in theory having the capacity to move and to be able to locate suitable mobility opportunities should be sufficient to ensure success, there is an ever-present possibility that the balance between the individual and his or her circumstances will be upset by unforeseen events or external parties who do not wish to see the new arrival settling in. They may have recognised that there is profit is to be made from having an endless stream of talented individuals rather than more permanently grounded incomers. This means that limits need to be set on integration, bringing into the equation the governance of mobility systems at national, European and corporate levels.

Mobility, Employability and Precariousness

In the following chapters, we will come across reflexivity within various contexts. While not recognised as such, one very prominent example is 'employability' within mobility programmes for undergraduate students and recent graduates, an attribute incorporated with a view to improving the labour market chances of participants. Employability is a form of labour market reflexivity. The idea is to make jobseekers think about the nature of work and become aware of the mechanisms that lead to employment, including the role played by social networks. Employers are also participants in this process, since without the prospect of a job employability does not exist. In order to link a jobseeker with a position,

employers must provide clues in regard to what they are looking for in new recruits, making sure that potential employees match their skills to correspond with institutional needs, learning how to mobilise their capacities. This explains why the possession of the correct educational credentials and vocational training needs to be complemented by softer skills related to job-searching, inter-cultural competence and, unlike reflexive modernisation, a certain amount of de-individualisation in being able to work as part of a team.

As a concept, employability ought to be relatively benign and even potentially beneficial, but it has its limits. Skills to integrate young people within a labour market can be useful, but they cease to have a purpose when the possibility of finding work commensurate to education and skill level is remote, as has happened in countries affected by the global financial crisis. This explains how at national policy level, employability policies lost their relevance in countries like Spain and Portugal, and by association, why mobility programmes and other forms of training oriented around this theme lack efficacy. In these places, employability policies are a poor substitute for employment creation, and in fact serve to further damage the prospects of many highly qualified young people through generating false hopes and frustration, as well as wasting time and resources.

This realisation leads us to ask more questions, this time about the consequences of misaligned employability. Taken to an extreme, we could argue that it is furthering disadvantage due to an inability to connect with positive outcomes: graduates cannot be 'pied-pipered' into mobility and training programmes where labour market prospects are minimal. This means that employability is highly place-dependent, as well as vulnerable to being rendered useless by socio-economic shifts. From a more optimistic point of view, should there be a recovery in the graduate labour market, those who have participated in employability programmes will be best placed to take advantage of the new opportunities. However, there are no signs of any such recuperation taking place, only further complications arising from global instability (see Chap. 7). The employability approach therefore depends upon anticipating the future health of the job market, but it should not be followed in situations of labour market collapse and congealment. Here, more employability will only create precariousness,

trapping groups such as recent graduates in uncertain positions between education and work.

Liminal Migration

Questions also need to be asked about 'migration' itself as a mobility modality, such as when does the practice of mobility become codified as migration. Neo-classical theory has traditionally suffered from difficulties in deciding at what point a mobile individual becomes a migrant, a problem extended into the policy sphere where there is insufficient recognition of the connections between different mobility stages. For example, Erasmus and other forms of student circulation are always discussed at European policy level as 'mobility', despite the possibility existing that exchanges will foreshadow subsequent, more substantial, movement abroad. There is also a reluctance to make reference to 'migration' and 'migrants' in national political discourse when referring to one's own population; these terms are usually reserved for incoming population flows, particularly where their movement has been involuntary and clandestine. And this situation has not been helped by the quasi-racist practice of defining certain problematised groups of mobile individuals pejoratively as 'immigrants', despite the fact that permanent settlement may not be their objective.

While separating short-term and long-term 'migration' is one solution, with a demarcation line defined by years and months spent abroad, this fails to recognise that mobility is by definition fluid and often circuitous. 'Migration' is not static: people come and go, often at will or according to someone else's will, meaning they unpredictably appear and easily disappear from official registers, making recording systems lack credibility. Mobile individuals also engage in different mobility stages, perhaps in a variety of places, that accumulate over time to constitute de facto migration. However, reflexive mobility, rather than viewing this liminality as a problem, views indeterminacy as definitional. The measurement problem is therefore inverted, with diversity of experience and uncertainty of

outcomes acknowledged as issues to be understood and accommodated rather than glossed over and shoehorned into ill-fitting categories. For highly qualified movers, we also begin to see how what we term the 'logic of opportunities' operates: prospective movers will not only weigh up the costs and benefits, personal and professional, of what is immediately available in each destination but also, in ideal circumstances, decide for how long to stay abroad according to an assessment of future possibilities (see Chap. 2). This makes appreciating exit strategies as crucial a consideration as charting the initial impulses that led to the outward movement. Just as certain countries fear losing strategically important individuals via mobility, other societies have concerns about being robbed of their 'migrants'.

Despite the preceding critical remarks, neo-classical and reflexive approaches are not necessarily in confrontation with one another, rather they explain different aspects of the migration experience or look at this phenomenon from different points of view, macro- and micro- or meso–levels, respectively. What is odd is that, while neo-classical theory is outwardly dominant in policymaking, it is in fact reflexive mobility that is being encouraged by agencies such as the European Commission and many global employers; for example, in the previously cited example of employability being integrated into mobility programmes. What national governments also wish for, particularly in countries with relatively undeveloped tertiary education and training systems, is less absolute and more circulatory mobility, that is, movers who are able to adapt to the changing needs of labour markets. This implies that there is latent recognition of reflexive mobility but, perhaps for populist reasons, politicians continue to follow neo-classical models of understanding since their jobs depend on maintaining a belief that migration can be magically managed by numbers.

Mobility in the Life Course

Mobility can take place at various stages in the life course of a highly qualified person. From this point of view, it is possible to see how mobility possibilities cut across biographical development throughout education,

training and work, not to mention other spheres such as leisure. People also migrate as young children, along with their parents or other family members, while the practice of moving towards warmer climes during retirement is also well documented (see, e.g., King et al., 2000). Although this does not mean that mobility phases follow one another in a neat linear sequence, or even that there is a relationship between different mobility exercises, the potential exists for international experiences to traverse the entire life course.[6]

A full-blown operationalisation of mobility in all life stages is unlikely to happen, given the sheer amount of effort and good fortune required on the part of the mover, and the repeated necessity of having favourable societal conditions in the receiving societies. Neither should we underestimate the difficulty of joining together different mobility phases. On the contrary, making use at a later stage of mobility capital accumulated at an earlier point in time is extremely difficult, not least due to the competitiveness of mobility systems in education, work and training. What is more attainable is having a series of piecemeal mobility episodes scattered throughout the duration of a life; for example, one or two relatively short stays abroad while studying and training and then a longer period of several years spent working abroad, particularly during the formative part of a career, with the rest of one's life lived out closer to home or in one particularly favoured destination.

As we cannot hope to cover all possible forms of mobility among the highly qualified in this book, our focus will be on movement at three of the most important junctures in the life course: undergraduate study, postgraduate internship and skilled employment (see Chaps. 4–6). These mobility stages are of significance due to the fact that they often take place at turning points in life, when decisions are made that will either open up or close off other possibilities. This once again emphasises the need to understand the reflexive nature of mobility choices, and to recognise that there is a vulnerability to precariousness. However, suffice to say, mobility at these strategically important times can alter the length and breadth of

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[6] While our use of the 'life course' concept in this book is relatively normative, there is a substantial body of theoretical and empirical work on this theme, from Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* onwards (see Elder et al., 2003).

an educational or occupational trajectory, and introduce new directions and new possibilities related to learning foreign languages and meeting a culturally diverse range of people, broadening one's networks of friends and looser acquaintances (i.e., bridging and bonding social capital à la Putnam [2000]), as well as extending one's range of skills, capacities and credentials.

Managing Mobility

Through adopting this multi-stage approach, we can illustrate how mobility modalities could complement one another with better policy alignment. That a disconnection exists implies that mobility policy within the EU is in need of improvement through recognising the complexities of intra-European circulation, although we should concede that massive progress was made in opening up Europe in the late twentieth century. For instance, as the number of EU Member States expanded, so too did the number of countries between which it was possible to engage in various forms of relatively free movement; basically, within the Schengen Zone and a few other countries such as the UK and the Republic of Ireland (that form the Common Travel Area). However, at present, the European mobility project appears to have stalled, having failed to cope with a succession of challenges: the economic crisis, the refugee crisis and the potential implications arising from the proposed British withdrawal from the EU. All these issues have the potential to disrupt the lives, and the mobility, of millions of people across Europe, making it harder to live between different countries (see Chap. 7).

We can also see that policymakers, and, by association, the various stakeholder organisations who manage and monitor intra-European population movement, face major challenges in keeping existing mobility platforms functioning and ensuring the continued cooperation of a broad range of parties, including national governments. Effective governance and regulation are crucial to the control of various forms of mobility, albeit frequently without success, as movers frequently slip through bureaucratic nets not to mention across national boundaries via legal and not so legal means. Well-managed institutional mobility is in

fact an important means of helping people avoid making mistakes in their life planning, and having the right level of movement is equally important. An oversupply or repetition of existing talent is thought to dilute or stagnate a nation's skills pool, and for student movers there is the risk of qualification inflation devaluing their credentials should too many people be educated to the same level. This explains why some governments resort to quotas and points systems to regulate skilled migration, as well as the close scrutiny under which student exchange programmes operate, lest they become platforms for creating unwelcome migrants.

Mobility Discourse

A related issue concerns the presentation of various forms of highly qualified mobility in policy discourse. Reading about how mobility *should* happen is an important aspect of policymaking, by engaging with the imaginations of stakeholders who are responsible for the roll out of various initiatives. This is also one means through which a more general audience becomes aware of what institutions such as the EC, national governments and corporate interests are up to; policy is always as much about being seen to be doing things as it is about actually intervening in society. Unfortunately, the outputs of European-funded research projects or policy briefs taken from the latest Eurobarometer are no match for popular media discourses grounded in the norms of neo-classical migration. This may explain why the public vision of mobility remains chained to old-fashioned notions of how people circulate rather than to the idea that people are engaging in more diverse and less definitive movements, much of which is politically unthreatening.

As a result of this situation, the European public lack a truthful impression of the complexity, difficulty and mundanity of mobility. And this vacuum becomes filled with misleading narratives about mobility extremities, effectively believing that all those who move are like refugees or distant elites. This means 'ordinary people' do not know what to expect should they decide to move abroad, and that what is needed is discursive reform and recognition that a particular way of thinking needs to be adopted in order to succeed in establishing oneself abroad. For

student mobility in particular, alongside the glossy images of inter-cultural learning presented in European policy discourse, there needs to be candour about the true costs.[7]

Ethical Mobility

Reflexive mobility needs to take place within a clear set of good practice guidelines, based on social inclusion considerations; 'free' movement does not exist when large sections of population are excluded due their socio-economic background, gender, physical ability, regional location or even level of inter-cultural competency. This latter issue, including foreign language proficiency, should not matter in gaining access to mobility programmes since one of the main purposes of international experience is the acquisition of previously latent or unpossessed skills. It is actually more efficacious to use mobility platforms to create new capacities among a demographically diverse range of participants than to follow a market-led approach which concentrates on re-enforcing the advantage of the advantaged at everyone else's expense.

For this reason, much institutionally mediated mobility as it stands is neither efficacious nor entirely ethical. This position also undermines the identity engineering raison d'être of student exchange programmes since people most in need of identity support are excluded in favour of those already favourably predisposed towards politically acceptable Europeanism. It is therefore not surprising that mobility programmes have singularly failed to realise the goal of establishing a new European demos. For slightly older movers, we can observe similar unethical traits,

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[7] The Erasmus+ initiative is perhaps the most prominent example of this process, but there are numerous other less high-profile instances of mobility being undertaken for this purpose. This may be in formal education, in the sense of enrolling in a course at a foreign tertiary level institution and receiving accreditation, or more tacitly in an informal learning environment, such as the short-duration exchange programmes of the former *Youth in Action* initiative (now integrated into Erasmus+) or in longer-term placements as part of the *European Voluntary Service* (EVS). Here, the focus may be more upon inter-cultural competencies, such as being able to meet with young people from a variety of different national backgrounds or addressing specific societal issues such as conflict resolution. The intention is thus to establish relatively subtle mobility-related skills, rather than the acquisition of qualifications.

for example, in regard to internships and early career scientists, who suffer from the re-enforcement of a skewed power relationship with their superiors. Consequences arising from this position are related to the logic of opportunities functioning of these forms of mobility. When a 'job' is taken in the hope of it leading to another opportunity, a chain of vulnerability is created that needs clear and enforceable ethical guidelines to avoid exploitation. In such situations, although the crucial task of finding a 'real job' is in fact being placed on hold, there is still a requirement to behave professionally and to fulfil one's duties in a manner that will lead to glowing references, in addition to gaining skills and making valuable contacts. That institutions know this means that they have the potential to take advantage of this vulnerability and use it as leverage, for example, in creating expanded workloads or loading on additional responsibilities.

Lest we sound too negative, we should remind ourselves that not all employers are horrific exploiters of their junior employees. On the contrary, there are many conscientious organisations who pride themselves on upholding a high standard of care. However, because many organisations rely upon a dualistic labour arrangement to maintain profitability, this creates a dynamic that requires a constant flow of new arrivals lest employment legislation dictate a revision of contractual situation in favour of the employee (see Chap. 5). This endless churning ultimately benefits no one, since newly created skills are neither fully developed nor re-invested in the institution and risk being lost by the individual if a new opportunity cannot be found.

Mobility and Inequality

One of the most depressing aspects of life in the early twenty-first century is the visible lack of social equity and equality, particularly for those of us who work in knowledge-based industries such as tertiary education. That is not to say that social inequality is more prevalent compared to previous eras, only that we are more aware of it. For anyone employed in what is sometimes referred to as the European Research Area, it can hardly have escaped their notice that in recent years their future job prospects have

grown more tenuous, with the quality of working conditions deteriorating for all but a small minority. This is not to mention the prospect of the next generation being faced with terms of employment inferior to those of their more senior peers, that is if they are offered terms at all.

In explaining why this is the case, since the arrival of the global financial crisis, or perhaps even before it, the main impetus has been towards contraction in the size of the scientific workforce, ironically at a time when third-level education institutions are urged to produce ever-increasing numbers of graduates (see Chap. 3). These developments follow a loose principle of oligarchy in which the idea is not to create a socio-demographically and regionally inclusive range of scientists or a broad base of scientific production but rather to shrink the size of the European science base. This is achieved through concentrating the highest possible level of funding in the hands of the smallest possible core of elite institutions and scientists (see Chap. 6), selecting the most promising newcomers to do the hard work, a privilege for which they will fight one another due the scarcity of openings. This is another example of a logic of opportunities enabling working conditions to be kept at the level of least protection which replicates itself through its own dynamics.

The oligarchy ideal is consistent with dominant modes of thought among political elites across the world, something that has received international recognition in studies such as Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013). For newly minted highly qualified individuals, their 'end destination' is within an ever-expanding pool of unemployed and underemployed highly skilled individuals, from which employers can pick and choose the most appealing new prospects. Importing talent via mobility therefore makes sense, creating a bigger and broader pool and purposefully lengthening the odds of employment success for those stuck in it. For European institutions, with a mandate to appear representative of an international constituency, there is additional value in creating a diversity façade using carefully chosen members of this multinational pool who are visibly different, with nationality added to the selection criteria.

This entire process leads to inverted meritocracy, following a perverse dynamic of making as few people as possible happy. In fields such as highly skilled and specialist employment, we risk being left with an

ageing, shrinking, neurotic core workforce, overwhelmed by the demands of their own bureaucracy, and relying on those who have somehow found themselves part of the machine but struggling to remain part of it. This is a quite vulgar picture of highly qualified employment but it is one that will feel strangely familiar to anyone working in contemporary academia or science, with security put into the hands of a select few and taken away from the many more who do the bulk of the work.

Conclusion: The Price of Mobility

Imagine for a moment that you are the parent of an ambitious child. You guide her from the beginning of pre-school to the end of compulsory education, relieved that each test has been passed and without any outward signs of trauma or falling foul of drug addiction, teenage pregnancy or acquiring a dubious dress sense, just some of the attributes that could limit your child's future career progress. While ostensibly free of charge until this point, you have still had to cover various miscellaneous expenses, including books, stationary, uniforms and school trips abroad. This state of affairs continues for many years, until the end of compulsory education. On your daughter entering tertiary level, you are faced with the inevitable tuition fees, not to mention meeting her ever-escalating costs of living.

Each year, there are costs for you to pay arising from her education, but this is not enough. Your child must be mobile. During an undergraduate degree, there is the cost of Erasmus, foisted upon you by the European Commission's systematic underfunding of its own flagship programme, a study visit abroad with a view to helping with second language acquisition and an occasional holiday. But it does not end there. A Master's degree is to be undertaken at a prestigious foreign university, so as to demonstrate a cosmopolitan disposition and acquire more academic capital. When it does not prove to be valued among employers, this leads to a PhD at another fee-paying institution, and the continued costs of upkeep for your dependant offspring. The first job, when it comes, is not a job at all. It is an internship at an NGO in Brussels. Concern with the environment and other humanitarian considerations have driven your child to work for a

'charitable' organisation, which you only wished took as much care of its workers as its clients, or at least paid them. After several short, and expensive, similar internships, your child finally finds a job in your home town, having decided that after all this mobility, comfort and familiarity are best.

The cost of Erasmus, of an internship and of supporting a child throughout the underpaid, or unpaid, early career stages is the accumulated price of mobility for those who can afford to pay. But we also create social exclusion for families who have no hope of keeping pace with these costs. This is the financial and societal consequence of not managing mobility: someone, not the employer, educator or trainer, is always left to pick up the bill without any guarantee of quality in what is being paid for. There are also the human consequences: your child not being able to maintain stable relationships, not having children or becoming an absent parent, being politically excluded due to voting registration regulations excluding 'foreigners', losing out on welfare coverage and pension contributions, and having constant worries about physical and mental health. The demographic threat to societal stability is obvious.

The point is that mobility, and perhaps even by extension, tertiary education, training and the early stages of a career, should not cost so much, monetarily or otherwise; that is, if it should cost anything at all. That terms such as 'free movement' are used so indiscriminately creates the misleading impression that all one needs is a relaxation of border controls to ensure a higher level of circulation. This is not so. There always seem to be the hidden and not so hidden costs in all this movement, and the consequences of moving or not moving to keep in balance. The challenge is therefore to recognise these consequences and to work towards a means of overcoming the difficulties before the grand European mobility project comes to a complete halt.

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3

New Dilemmas in Europe's Race for Global Talent: A Wrong Turn for Tertiary Education?

The desire to improve young peoples' access to education and to maximise the value of their 'educational experience' is prominent in policy discourse, with numerous initiatives and enterprises claiming to offer these possibilities at national, local and European levels. This objective is often related to the task of increasing human capital through raising the qualification level of the workforce, basically with skilled and qualified workers replacing or augmenting the existing employment pool. In principle, this is a laudable aim, with new graduates' entry to the labour market to be secured via demonstrating their superiority to the older generation via their credentials and acceptance of employability norms, so that they able to mould themselves to employers' needs. Following this logic, once education is completed, a successful career will rapidly follow an initial period of insecurity and searching—a temporary period of adjustment within the transition from full-time education to work—rather than a prolonged negative state of being for highly qualified youth. But in practice, there are a number of flaws in this plan. There is, for instance, the 'problem' of the labour market, not only a lack of new opportunities but the reluctance of established workers to relinquish their positions to make way for new arrivals who perceive themselves as

superior. When this happens, it is internal competitiveness for opportunities that arises, not the ability of countries or the EU to compete with one another.

Such problems mean that there is a danger of new graduates becoming indefinitely stuck in the adjustment period, being unable to invest their educational capital, and also of Europe falling behind its global competitors, because as individuals fail to develop educationally enhanced careers, societies lose out on the possibility of raising their levels of human capital. Despite this curious state of affairs, the belief persists that the path to European competitiveness is paved with university degrees, explaining why European institutions aim to have 40 per cent of young people completing tertiary education by 2020, with their employability strengthened through such means as participating in student exchange platforms.

With education becoming more competitive, we also need to consider what happens to those who do not succeed: for example, the people who fail to find their dream jobs waiting for them at the end of their degree courses, such as the young men and women unable to complete their education due to personal circumstances or financial constraints. Broadened access to tertiary education not only means more people inside the system but also an elevated level of dropping out among those who lack the social, economic and cultural capital required to succeed. In countries like Spain and Portugal, prospects of future employment for graduates are further jeopardised by the ongoing economic crisis, with job markets continuing to shrink as companies streamline their operations and nation states withdraw from investing in the public sector. However, rather than focus on job creation and career stabilisation, the policy response reflects mainstream European neo-liberal political ideas, coalescing around the development of 'resilience' and the belief that with hard work and individual achievement anything is still possible, despite elevated levels of unemployment and the declining quality of work.

This leads us to ask, at a time when there are rising levels of inequality and a heavy emphasis on individualised forms of success, whether Europe's internal competitiveness strategy is really the best means of securing global success. The risk is that our educational policymakers have taken a wrong turn, advertising routes to a better life that do not

necessarily lead to the desired destinations, since competition by its nature means that only the strongest survive. We will argue that future problems for individuals and society are being created by 'pied-pipering' too many young people into an already saturated education system rapidly losing its capacity to deliver credentials that assure entry into a shrunken and unwelcoming graduate labour market. In explaining how this has happened, our view is that what we are observing is a process of 'conveyor-belt education', referring to the open-ended process of young people equipping themselves with human capital that often fails to provide them with secure insertion into the labour market. And when this failure happens, the only recourse appears to be to go back to the beginning and start the cycle again through more education and training.

Education: The Promised Land for Europe

> Education is fundamental to development and growth. Access to education, which is a basic human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is also a strategic development investment. The human mind makes possible all other development achievements, from health advances and agricultural innovation to infrastructure construction and private sector growth. For developing countries to reap these benefits fully—both by learning from the stock of global ideas and through innovation—they need to unleash the potential of the human mind. And there is no better tool for doing so than education. (World Bank, 2011, p. 1)

This statement from the World Bank provides just one example of the technocratic discourse that urges us, in our work as educators, to seek to improve young peoples' access to education in order to foster societal development (see also European Commission, 2011; Council of Europe, 2013). As Meijer (2015) points out, this position revolves around the assumption that education is a public good, a means to sustain democratic societies (with equal access for vulnerable groups and individuals), change discriminatory attitudes and create welcoming communities. While there

is much that can be unpacked from this position, it is interesting to note the emphasis on education as a socially inclusive human right. This untapped human potential, when cultivated to its highest level from primary into tertiary education, will create personal value-laden competencies and skills, the qualifications that make an individual more 'employable' following an initial period of trial and error job searching (European Commission, 2012, 2015a; Riddell and Weedon, 2014).

Increasing the store of human capital will also tackle unemployment and help prepare Europe for economic recovery and restore its ability to compete economically with its global counterparts. This is imperative, as the EU has known for some time that it is 'no longer setting the pace in the global race for knowledge and talent' (European Commission, 2011, p. 2), trailing behind the 'knowledge economies' of the United States and Japan. If Europe is to play a part in this global race, it therefore needs to increase the number of people who have tertiary education-level qualifications, with various strategic commitments in place to ensure this happens, for example, the Europe 2020 strategy on 'education, research and innovation' (European Commission, 2011, p. 2).

This rhetoric stems from recognising that 'the time when competition came mainly from countries that could offer only low-skilled work has come to an end so the quality of education and supply of skills has increased worldwide and Europe must respond' (European Commission, 2012, p. 2). To avoid potential global humiliation, and falling behind its competitors, Europe needs to better educate itself:

> The USA and some Asian countries are investing in ICT-based strategies to reshape education and training. They are transforming, modernizing and internationalizing education systems with tangible effects in schools and universities on access to and cost of education, on teaching practices and their worldwide reputation or branding. (European Commission, 2013a, p. 3)

This is mirrored in recommendations made to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Europe:

> European HEIs want to continue to be the number one destination against a background of increasing competition from Asia, the Middle East

and Latin America, they must act strategically to capitalise on Europe's reputation for top quality higher education [...] so they must make a stronger contribution to economic growth by encouraging innovation and ensuring that higher education responds to labour market needs [...] because as world economies push for stronger competitiveness, creating and attracting top talent is no longer an objective of just a few countries. (European Commission, 2013b, p. 3)

This explains why European policymakers want to funnel as many young people into Member States' universities as possible, irrespective of who these students are, where they come from and how well equipped they are to capitalise on making an investment in higher education, a process dependent upon possessing the right combination of social, economic and cultural resources. They must, somehow, learn to compete in order to become tomorrow's graduates with a chance of joining this dynamic economic workforce, who will be technically and professionally superior to their counterparts in other continents.

This is one reason why policy commitments continually make reference to the idea of 'inclusivity' in education. Social inclusion goals become embedded in education policy so that groups currently underrepresented in tertiary education systems might also play their part in the competition process (Muskens, 2009; Galindo and Ramírez Rodríguez, 2015). It is this belief that explains why such high targets have been set for participation in higher education, with, for example, 40 per cent of European youth completing tertiary education by 2020 (European Commission, 2012), irrespective of the risk of raising the number of educational dropouts or lowering the chance of new graduates being able to enter and function within Europe's highly qualified labour markets.

Education and Work: A Troubled Relationship

Look, in Spain almost everyone is in a state of discontent. Many people are out of work, people are going to university for no reason. Before the crisis, unemployment was bad but now it is far, far worse. I am unemployed and can't get work. I know people who have left for the UK where there are

jobs. People I know are getting cash in hand jobs in shops but don't keep them long. Others just temporary work before they are practically begging off their families [...]. The problem is the banks and the political system. They got us in this mess and are asking us to pay for it. What they have done here is open businesses in places like China because it is cheaper, which makes for a surplus population of people who have no work and are not qualified to do anything else than what they know. But they have cut so much and what is next? Education and Health. They have sacked doctors, professionals, services. In education, teachers, specialists educational workers. All lost their jobs. (Alberto, 28, Seville, Spain)

This interview extract provides us with a rough idea about what many highly qualified European young people think about this situation of being herded into tertiary education, irrespective of the condition of the labour market. We can see that Alberto feels deceived, as he invested in his own university education to have a better chance of getting a job but the Spanish economy—still hurting from the 2008 crisis—has shrunk, with many businesses moving to destinations with lower overheads. There is nothing but temporary work for him in Spain. He is not alone as, quite conveniently, the European strategic objectives outlined in the previous section dovetail with the increasing prominence of millions of young people entering tertiary education and thereafter vying for a secure future in the job market. That European governments have been complicit, ensuring temporary jobs replace secure posts so that companies and corporations save money (Dolado et al., 2013), is perverse but indicative of policymaking that prioritises short-term cost-cutting over longer-term stability.

This leads us to ask just what it is that educators, and ultimately employers, are looking for in new recruits. Their ideal seems to be to have a large pool of people in competition with each other seeking work, a pressure that in turn drives increased participation in often expensive graduate and post-graduate degree programmes. Regardless of whether or not they respond to it, everyone with ambition feels the same pressure to have the edge over everyone else. So they enrol in a university course or training programme, and then another, in search of this elusory advantage. But this funnelling of young people into higher education and attempted auto-enhancement of human capital comes at a controversial

time, with the growing prevalence of global competition in a shrinking job market. In theory, that these national and geo-political economic dynamics are operating at the same time means that internal competition should ultimately drive external competition. However, while educators have an expanded market and employers the benefit of artificially lowered labour costs, potential graduates and employees may feel differently. And, as we shall see in Chap. 6, this dual competition dynamic creates a situation in which the most talented and highly qualified individuals end up fighting for the privilege to work in what are, objectively, quite terrible working conditions.

European idealists would say that the current youth generation has never had it so good, that they are spoilt for 'choice' and need to seize all the opportunities the world has to offer (Croll, 2008). Other more critical commentators, however, argue that the highly qualified are finding the working world increasingly precarious (Young, 2007; Standing, 2011). It is indeed a world of reduced opportunities, yet one which places an increased emphasis on success through individual achievement (Briggs, 2012; Hall and Winlow, 2012). This contradiction leads us to unpack these elements in more detail, focusing on the ideological calibration of business ethics in higher educational institutions and on how, in turn, this relates to the competitive conditioning of young people, persuading them that their own human capital will be their saviour in the labour market.

Academic Capitalism, the Commodification of Knowledge and the Global Quest for Quality

That higher education was becoming hybridised started to become obvious in the 1980s, as neo-liberalism began to take centre stage in global economic systems. The idea was that public services like education were inefficient for society and costly for governments, but if they could be brought into line with business ethics and run more like conventional corporations, this would result in increased performance (Fisher, 2009; Canaan, 2010). Before this point, academic scholars had been able to take advantage of a relatively high degree of autonomy in their research, funded as it was by the state and industry, and they in turn gave society the fruits

of their labour, guided by peer review and relatively unfettered by commercial principles. While a remnant of this old system survives among the older generation of scholars, who still enjoy relative security of tenure compared to their younger counterparts, today's universities are basically corporate outposts, replete with CEOs, media and marketing departments, business plans, fundraising and branding campaigns, product placement, partnerships with the private sector, cost–benefit analyses and regular metric-based key performance indicator evaluations (Bok, 2009).

This development coincided with dwindling state funding, meaning that tertiary education level institutions became reliant on conventional business modes as a form of self-funding. Having been labelled 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), the regime that governs the knowledge economy, the university's main function is now to capture knowledge and turn it into profitable outputs (Canaan and Shumar, 2008; Audretsch et al., 2012). This shift has filtered down to everyday academic practice in the form of increased administration, related in part to the need to process larger numbers of students and devote less time to research, unless it is externally funded, as well as the demand to create measurable outputs and pressure to 'promote' this work. While the practice of publishing in high-indexed peer reviewed journals and generating citations to keep institutions happy is relatively well established (Gruber, 2014), and at least had a certain logic as a means of sharing knowledge with one's peers, academics must now also engage in a bewildering range of knowledge transfer activities with stakeholder organisations, policymakers and the general public on top of already busy workloads. This activity is expected to unlock new revenue streams and contribute to an organisation's external profile through demonstrating its fiscal responsibility and civic mindedness.

Considering that, like government funding, these sources of finance are also limited, academics must also learn how to compete with one another, using whatever means necessary to gain an advantage, by forging alliances with dubious political organisations and unscrupulous NGOs or by engaging in ethically suspect but profitable research with enterprises who stand to benefit from academic legitimation of their work. The purpose of academic publishing has also been redefined as a means of contributing to external rankings via the quantifying of 'impact',

calculated through means such as citation indexes. Consequently, the focus is on getting papers published in journals with the highest impact so as to be able to demonstrate higher productivity compared to competitors, a practice that 'turns our thoughts and efforts away from scientific problems and solutions, and towards the process of submission, reviewing and publication' (Lawrence, 2007, p. 584).

Universities have thus had to reinvent themselves as 'quasi- or pseudo-marketised entities' competing for 'quasi-customers'—formerly known as students—and increasingly forced to demonstrate greater productivity and value for money for the customer, lest they take their custom elsewhere (Hall, 2015). As they are in competition with other institutions for students' money, a university must show how its 'quality' will be more beneficial for the client than that being offered by their rivals. This explains why they launch strategic recruitment campaigns, publish employability statistics of graduates and highlight how the average salaries of their graduates are higher than those of immediate competitors (Canaan, 2010). For this reason, 'a culture of entrepreneurialism and a discourse of competition that reframes the purpose of the University and its funding, regulation and governance, underwrites the explicit value of education to the wider economy' (Hall, 2015, p. 17).

Here, we come back to the theme of 'quality' and its commodification, with 'quality' students being the basically rich or prodigiously talented, whom tertiary education-level institutions are fighting to recruit so that they might be divested of their resources and rare talents, and 'quality' institutions being the universities who have the greatest quantity of these individuals. Additionally, European institutions must commit to this discovery of new knowledge, and to new ways to attractively package knowledge, if they want to measure up to their competitors in other continents. And their accumulation of 'quality' must be measured. This is why university league tables play an increasingly important part in the branding of higher education institutions. They are imagined as global businesses that integrate social research, marketing and public relations so that they might be seen to be making a readily measurable impact on social and economic development in the societies in which they happen to be situated.

Within this pseudo-corporate culture, certain European countries are also making strategic efforts to attract and retain the best student talent other countries have to offer. For example, Scotland's most prestigious universities are increasingly accepting more foreign students than their domestic equivalents in an effort to boost their league table status (Johnson, 2015). Therefore, we can see that 'playing the rankings game' has become essential to institutional reputations in different national contexts. This is why academics are increasingly required to engage in teaching and research that can be measured as financially or symbolically profitable, in order to demonstrate loyalty to their university's 'brand' in its constitution as an educational product that can be a 'globally-traded commodity' (Amsler and Bolsmann, 2012).

This is a multifaceted situation. The neo-liberalisation of higher education means that : (1) institutions should compete to sell their services to a range of student customers; and (2) that these institutions should produce specialised and skilled workers with expert knowledge that will 'enable the nation to compete freely on a global economic stage' (Canaan and Shumar, 2008, p. 5). Therefore, its commercial expansion relates to the enabling of individuals to become economic actors equipped for the economy (Atbach and Knight, 2007), with graduate survival in the labour market dependent on taking on neo-liberal attributes such as 'resilience', 'flexibility' and 'adaptability'. However, in a globalised world the graduate labour market is contracting rapidly and growing progressively more precarious, with ever greater numbers struggling to find meaningful work (Standing, 2011). Thorpe (2008) calls this the 'opportunity trap', whereby the numbers in higher education grow as graduate jobs lessen, a situation that is neither sustainable nor, as will be argued in the next section, even functioning efficiently.

Mobility in Education and Mobility Out of Education

The massive expansion of tertiary education over the last two decades also made possible the expansion in scope of student mobility programmes, using the justification of better equipping students for an internationally

competitive labour market through integrating the learning of inter-cultural skills and employability. These activities range from traditional fixed-term study abroad platforms, such as the Erasmus undergraduate exchange programme (see Chap. 4), to opening up access to tertiary education in foreign countries should local institutions not be able to meet demand: in other words, student migration. The extent to which these opportunities are accessible (or successfully taken up) in terms of socio-demographic diversity is highly questionable, with numerous stud-ies recording an observable difference between the profile of students who become mobile and their sedentary counterparts in respect of their capac-ity to access social and economic capital, usually inherited from parents or other close family members (see, e.g., Cairns, 2014).

The Privileged: Mobility in Education

A theme that will be developed in the next chapter is that international student mobility systems favour elite institutions and socio-economically advantaged students, representing educational privilege for the privileged. While there is a pretence that mobility opportunities are socially inclusive (see, e.g., European Commission, 2014a), there are some quite obvious inequalities in the take-up of academic mobility, a situation that is reinforced due to the non-recognition of socio- and geo-demographic disparities in student mobility research and policy. This means that, for students, the chance of participating in this mobility continues to depend largely on where one lives and one's socio-economic background. In consequence, a dichotomy has emerged between countries that receive large numbers of student migrants and others that send tertiary-educated young people abroad for short exchange visits or longer duration stays (Cairns, 2015).

At this point, we should remind ourselves that many universities are located in countries in which governments have significantly cut public funding in tertiary education, prompting these institutions to engage in ambitious international ventures to generate funds. Common initiatives include having branch or even international campuses, franchised degree programmes and partnerships with local institutions (Bok, 2009). These

institutions are almost forced to go abroad to canvass new business, picking up new international students to thereafter earn higher profits by charging exorbitant fees, a practice common in the anglophone countries, including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, but spreading to many European nations.[1]

This fight for overseas students in turn becomes a race to secure the most lucrative new consumers, which explains why many international higher education services in these countries—which are highly profit-oriented—create access for students in countries lacking the domestic capacity to meet demand. It is still, however, a relatively privileged educational cohort who are able to take advantage of such mobility opportunities, as not only do they possess the resources needed to support moves abroad but they also have the cultural capital that enables them to use mobility as a platform from which to strengthen their already strong skills profiles. These are people able to engage in reflexive mobility processes and multiply their own human capital by doing so. As a result of this capability, they are perceived as societally useful and of considerable value to their institutions (Hall, 2015).

The 'Pied-Pipering' of the Not So Privileged: Mobility Out of Education

Thus far, we have seen how major contractions in the labour market over the last 40 years, combined with state cuts in higher education funding, have conveniently created a strong desire to study among millions of students. However, many talented individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are being priced out of tertiary education and, in consequence, are not part of the grand mobility exercise. They may even start courses and then drop out, unable to afford the high fees, thereby worsening their economic situations having made non-refundable investments upfront.

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[1] International students also spend significant amounts of money in host countries; for example, one study has estimated that foreign students contributed $12 billion to the US economy (Davis, 2003).

Other families in the same socio-economic position take advantage of government subsidy loans thinking, in a throwback to a somewhat more meritocratic age, that gambling on such an investment will mean a class upgrade, or at least an improvement in the chances of social mobility among their children, hence the strong preference for the academic route (Planas, 2005). Unfortunately, there would seem to be no effective monitoring of what universities are selling them, nor accountability related to whether the chosen course relates to labour market demand (Dolado et al., 2013). Success is simply defined as being dependent upon an individual's skill and guile, and their ability to 'seize opportunities'.

Considering that universities are under immense pressure to secure a set number of students in order to meet financial goals, there can be a degree of flexibility in allowing applicants onto a course just so that it can take place. Many of the people admitted to these courses in low-ranking institutions have low levels of cultural capital compared to their contemporaries with better grades, who will go on to attend higher-ranked institutions. This is evident in what Ball et al. (1999) argue: class divisions often determine learning attitudes, aspirations and motivations. Moreover, in the former, support mechanisms are minimal for such students, who often have higher needs (Reay, 2010). They face more structural barriers in moving from study to work (Dolado et al., 2013) and, in consequence, increasing stratification in the job market because of how their university's cachet reflects the gradations of the class system (Jenkins et al., 2011). These individuals become locked into their existing class position rather than being provided with a means of engaging in social mobility through their educational choices, which helps to explain why they drop out, fail their courses or become unable to securely enter the labour market should they finish.

In seeking advantage, mobility is not necessarily the answer. Foreign study programmes such as Erasmus tend to lack gravitas among employers because, in reality, they may be more about having fun and excitement than improving employability or encouraging professional development. This missing gravitas helps explain why certain countries, such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark, maintain their own mobility exchange platforms as part of their dual education and training systems, including apprenticeships, that enable trainees to gain specific knowledge

and preliminary job experience, rather than taking part in less-structured programmes.[2]

Conveyor-Belt Education

While we still see a general tendency for the middle-to-upper range of the social spectrum in Europe to secure jobs post-graduation relatively easily, there is a growing middle-lower and lower class cohort who struggle with the higher education experience. Large numbers may drop out and, when they leave education, precariousness awaits in the form of temporary or part-time work, or perhaps they enrol for another degree, then temporary or part-time work. Those who graduate also face a potential human capital mismatch within the labour market, with their academic capital deemed fairly useless in the current economic climate or not recognised as valuable in their respective occupational field, particularly if they have studied in the arts, humanities or social sciences. This means that many leave university and are forced to take jobs designed for people with a low skill level or no qualifications, and their hard-won academic capital gets wasted.[3]

How then to break this cycle? A common answer seems to be to further extend one's time spent in education and fall back on personal agency and trust in the employability principle. It is the job of educators to tell these individuals that all is not lost because they are motivated people who have credentials, perhaps against all expectation, and have debts that must be repaid. All that is required is more patience and/or experience. Yet even as they undertake Master's degrees, or other essentially purposeless educational qualifications, secure solutions are distant. Many young people in this position are left to drift from one fixed-term contract to another, often interspersed with voluntary work, with no real improvement in their job

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[2] However, and perhaps unsurprisingly, our ability to draw conclusions about this issue is limited due to the poor quality of the data and a lack of true international comparability with regard to estimating drop out rates in Europe, with few countries accurately reporting on retention, drop out and time-to-degree rates (European Commission, 2015b, p. 8).

[3] This is a process frequently referred to in pejorative terms, for example, as 'over-education' (Eichhorst and Neder, 2014).
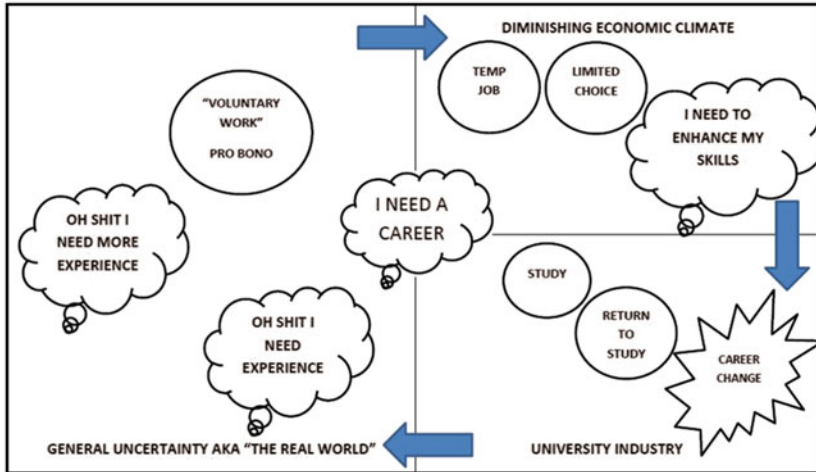
Fig. 3.1 Conveyor-belt education

situation (Standing, 2011). As argued in a previous book, engaging in precarious work as a means of labour market entry risks creating a foundation for a precarious life, as this is not a relatively brief preliminary period of exploration preceding more secure work, but rather the setting of a precedent, showing that you will work for nothing or next to nothing (Cairns et al., 2016).[4]

Switching careers is another approach. It may be only a matter of time before a lack of success in labour market entry leads to a rebooting of the cycle, with the university education system well set up to receive applications from people who will pay for their services one more time. This potentially endless cycle, which demands constant human capital investment, is defined here as 'conveyor-belt education' (Fig. 3.1).

This metaphor explains how a precarious life is sustained as a cycle driven by the dream of escaping from the cycle by gaining qualifications

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[4] Croll (2008) also argues that, in the UK, these initially disadvantaged young graduates pretty much continue to be disadvantaged and, despite the fact that the 'choice' of work on offer is real, they are heavily constrained from realising it.

that lose their value on graduation due to their ubiquity, and through faux work experience leading only to faux work. When it is finally realised that this is a trap, the process is repeated in another adjacent area thought to be offering more security. This is a perfect example of employability gone wrong, in creating precariousness at the expense of real security, leading to a profoundly negative impact on personal well-being.

The Story in Spain: The 'Lowering' of Higher Education

In Spain recent estimates suggest that 40 per cent of young people are unemployed. One of the main problems according to Dolado et al. (2013) is labour market bifurcation, namely the prioritisation and protection of employment for a small number of 'insiders'—the people with permanent contracts—at the expense of a larger number of people who are unemployed or in precarious jobs. In explaining why this situation has developed, Eichhorst and Neder (2014) point towards several problems endemic to the Spanish education system, where there are, at various points from secondary education to university level, high drop out rates. Even when Spanish students graduate, it seems that there is a massive skill mismatch, as more than 40 per cent work in occupations requiring only low or medium skill levels. However, the downsizing of the construction industry after the 2008 economic crisis has also reduced the demand for manual labour and/or unskilled jobs, which has prompted increases in participation in education among people who wanted to do 'something' rather than 'nothing'. Consequently, during and after the crisis, there has been a vast reduction of employment rates among the unskilled, yet, at the same time, a massive increase in participation in education (Dolado et al., 2013).

Furthermore, occupational skills training is limited to 'work experience' gleaned while at school, leaving many students with a limited understanding of working life in the eyes of prospective employers (Eichhorst and Neder, 2014). Instead, youth employment policies have tended to focus on offering training contracts, which only reduce the employer's costs of hiring young workers via subsidies. Taken together with changes to employment law making it not only easier to hire, but also

easier to fire, workers, this has resulted in a substantial increase in worker turnover. This government-sanctioned churning process explains how 'workers' end up stuck in cyclical precariousness, alternating between temporary employment, dependent on social security and joblessness, but shut out of the 'official unemployment statistics' (Briggs, 2012).

When such precarious circumstances prevail, the individual is persuaded back into education because it is assumed that self-investment in one's own future is the only possible way out of the predicament. However, students perceive the limitations of this philosophy, and it pains them to be part of the process:

> New study plans, degrees, combined degrees, Master's, attractive offers full of empty promises. The Spanish universities have lost their purpose for education and become large business companies, that paradoxically in the main forget the student. In the Spanish universities, we have been relegated to the function of customer in the purchase/sale of knowledge. (Silvia, 22, Salamanca, Spain)

This depressing situation is far from being unique to Spain, neither is it some kind of bizarre accident. It is, in fact, an inevitable consequence of inserting competitiveness into tertiary education (Bok, 2009) as part of the process of making the pedagogical function of the university subordinate to the profit motive. Customers have to come from somewhere, but the fact that education continues to be imagined as a not-for-profit sanctum does help to explain why so many fall for its charms, thus explaining why the cycle is able to continue.

The Consequence for Mobility: New Causes for Concern

> The objective is that the student body entering and graduating from higher education should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. (Council of Europe, 2013, pp. 2–3)

The happy rhetoric of European inclusivity policy indicates a commitment towards ensuring that the young people of Europe have relatively equal access to higher education so that they can all compete in the labour market, having sufficiently qualified themselves to do so. However, as we have seen, the more likely outcome is the creation of an enlarged pool of young people competing with each other for a shrunken range of opportunities. From this point of view, they are practically coerced into becoming part of the mighty commercial engine of twenty-first century university education to have any chance of success, but knowing that their hopes are tenuous.

Perhaps we can still call these young people the lucky ones, as there are other groups of aspirant young people, increasingly mobile within Europe, who do not even qualify for these educational opportunities. They include Europe's internal economic migrants, many of whom have left the Baltic states or eastern European countries, having grown tired of corruption and political mismanagement at home, which has plunged them into debt and unemployment. Another, even more politically significant, group is the growing population of young refugees flocking into Europe, some of whom have no prior education, while others are qualified or have abandoned study trajectories in war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. While their circumstances differ in terms of where they have come from—it is one thing to leave Romania or Lithuania to look for a job in another European country and quite another to flee a country in the middle of a war—motivations are often similar, namely, to improve their personal circumstances and find a safe place to live, where they can settle, complete their education and then find a stable job. European countries are construed as the place where this is imagined as being possible, or perhaps more accurately, was once possible, before large-scale public spending cuts in the name of austerity, rising unemployment and prolonged recessions.

All this uncertainty has resulted in increased motivation for migration within and into Europe at a time when concerns about the viability of economically driven movement between countries is gathering momentum. This has led in some cases to closed borders and strong anti-mobility rhetoric from populist politicians who are seeking to use the refugee crisis to advance their own personal agendas. Therefore, the current negative

focus on young migrants/immigrants/refugees should be contextualised against the way in which the politically powerful have failed to deal effectively with their economies, a crisis of legitimacy at national level for which they must find someone external to blame. Voters across Europe also demonstrate their anger at the failure of their 'democratic' governments, as unemployment rises and financial institutions fail, and buy into the political myth that their domestic problems can be magically solved through shutting down perfectly legal, as well as more clandestine, forms of circulation.[5]

As these two migrant groups float around different European countries, they share something else in common, namely a battle against rigid nation state systems that increasingly integrate anti-migrant feeling into aggressive social policies, discouraging their arrival and making it very awkward for them to settle when they do manage to enter. In consequence, their position is more marginal in these countries than it need be, as they fall between the formal and informal cracks of European countries' social support systems, putting them in an even more precarious position.

Young Romanian Migrants

Using ethnographic data, we will consider the experiences of two different groups of mobile young people: Romanian migrant workers in the UK (see also Briggs and Dobre, 2014); and young refugees from Syria and Iraq (Briggs, 2016). For Romanian migrants, the UK is perceived as a place

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[5] When taken to its political extreme, we find many calls for 'reform' of pan-European economics, integration, open-border immigration and multiculturalism, the principles that have shaped the development of Europe since World War II. Somewhat surprisingly, these calls tend to be most visible in some of the most economically comfortable and politically stable European countries, with far right political parties, such as the French National Front, Dutch Freedom Party, British National Party and Swiss Peoples Party, all enjoying some degree of success. The tide of this xenophobic treatment is mostly directed at other European or 'white' immigrants, particularly Albanians, Bosnians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Poles, Russians and Romanians, as well as newly arrived refugees from war-torn countries. Their support is thought be derived from citizens who feel threatened by rapid changes in post-industrial societies, the 'losers of modernity' (Betz, 1998), who feel threatened by rapid social change. Even Germany, Europe's economically most successful nation and a country that has admitted more refugees than any other EU region, now harbours the Alternative Für Deutschland, a far right party which has gathered swift support since its inception in 2013.

where their economic dreams can be made real, a land of opportunity where fairness and equality reign over social exclusion and structural unemployment. However, even though European work restrictions were lifted from Romania at the beginning of 2014, permitting them to work in Europe without serious bureaucratic obstacles, their labour market experience remains extremely precarious.

Many arrive in Britain with the idea that all they have to do is to study, and then they can get a job and work towards establishing a new life in this new country. The reality is that many end up denied access to university courses and so resort to working on construction sites or in the service sector. Moreover, the anti-migrant rhetoric that has increasingly taken hold of English politics (although not generally in other parts of the UK) has filtered down into discriminatory practices in companies who are often reluctant to employ migrant workers (Briggs and Dobre, 2014). Consider Marian, for example, a 21-year-old man who first came to the UK in 2013. At this time, he was under the impression that he could study for a university degree; however, he could not raise the necessary money to pay for his studies from temporary cash-in-hand jobs:

> Over the last year, Marian has moved out of his flat and moved in with a British woman and another Romanian. His English has improved as he has started a course at college, has more British friends and also friends of other nationalities. He therefore interacts more with people from different backgrounds and seems to be more confident. He met his new friends in different social situations such as 'more clubbing, more football, and a different job'. In the past year, he worked in the construction industry as well, as he used to before, but he has learnt more so he feels he has made progress as he does not labour any more. He got fed up with construction work because his subcontractor didn't pay him for a couple of months when the company stopped paying its employees for some reason. At the start of 2014, he still didn't qualify to study for a degree as the universities said that they didn't recognise his qualifications. After numerous job applications, he managed to get work in a removal company earning £240, although, as it doesn't cover all his expenses (rent, bills, debt he has back home, food, etc.), he will likely have to return to the construction site at some point. Marian also started an English course at college in order to get a qualification and improve his English. These days, he goes to college three days a week after

completing his work hours. He applied for a maintenance grant but, because all the funds (and he needs money to support himself while studying) were blocked for Romanians and Bulgarians, he has to study something that he does not want to, so again a limited choice. He said 'I provided all the documents [bank statements, national insurance] they need for me to prove that I am here for three years, as this is the legal requirement if you want to get a maintenance loan like any other student, but they still did not give me anything. I call them [student loans] and they say everything is fine with my application and I need to wait [...], but I've been waiting since September 2013.' [Field notes]

Similarly, Corina, who had initially applied for her UK National Insurance number in 2012, was required to produce a letter stating that, after the completion of her university degree, she would return to Romania. However, she has yet to access a course and to this day remains in London volunteering for various organisations, living from cash-in-hand cleaning jobs and money her family send from Romania. Indeed, once in the cycle of work, it is very difficult to realise the dream of studying. In many cases, the salaries are low, perhaps only half the minimum wage, and if they are sick, they can lose their job, while few receive holiday pay and many are refused days off. It is common to work 50–60, and in some cases over 70, hours per week. Take Marina, who worked 72 hours per week in a shop, earning just £3.50 an hour: 'I was working six days a week, 12 hours a day and studying at the same time; hard times, but I needed the money in order to pay for my bills and rent'.

Young Refugees from Syria and Iraq

At the time of writing, May 2016, perhaps the most pressing humanitarian problem facing Europe in the context of mobility is the much-discussed refugee crisis, with thousands of people arriving at the EU's external borders every day seeking entry. A high proportion of these individuals are young people sent as 'ambassadors' by their families, tasked with finding a new life in another country before sending for other family members. The most obvious routes are through Turkey, travelling over Greek waters on inflatable boats with a high risk of sinking,

and thereafter to countries with more stable economies. The political attitude towards them in the EU was at first a mix of sympathy, curiosity and caution, but has now degenerated into outright rejection and open hostility, with many European countries making overt attempts to deter further arrivals.

When the Syrian war and instability in the Gulf region heightened in seriousness, many fled to neighbouring countries, such as Lebanon and Turkey, perhaps as a temporary measure to work in the grey areas of their respective economies, with the hope that the war would soon end and they could go home. However, as time passed, many realised that they would have to go beyond improvised survival strategies and make some sort of future for themselves in these countries. Families like Mohammed's are typical in Turkey, as they work hard to try and give the best chance to the most gifted sibling.

> This is how I met them in the midst of the outskirts of Istanbul. We follow the busy streets of the city suburbs as they get narrower, in and out of the puddles, and on to the road to avoid confrontation with people on the pavement (there is only room for one person on the pavement). It starts to rain, and the water quickly fills the cracks in the roads. Everything gets more intimate as it feels like the buildings and streets are shrinking, either that or it got really busy all of a sudden. After about ten minutes, we are met by a smartly dressed man with a fresh haircut, who shakes my hand and leads us down through the mazy roads. We take a right and enter a quieter street. As we pass two women, they joke that we are Mohammed's relatives. We enter a small door and climb two flights of steps. Outside the door, as it is custom, we remove our shoes and are welcomed into his home, a small and half-dilapidated flat where he lives with his wife, two sons and daughter.
>
> While his wife busily hustles off to make tea, he waves me into the living room and we sit down. On the wall hangs a cheap TV which is somehow wired to a cheap box that allows them to receive various different Arab channels in countries as far away as Egypt and as near as Jordan. Above the wall where Mohammed sits is a copy of an old painting of Istanbul. Bet they never thought they'd be living there. His wife returns with the tea and they drag in a table for us to place it.
>
> Mohammed talks me through some pictures he has taken of Syria. He flicks through a sequence of pictures, all of which depict their home city as a

complete wreckage, a ghost town with nothing other than broken, empty buildings and rubble covering all the roads. One can even make out the bullet holes in the walls. As the tea comes in, on the Syrian TV there is a propaganda-like celebration of Syria's victory over Israel and they start laughing and waving their hands in criticism. The singing accompanies images of missiles and army and military movements as symbolisms of glory and victory. The 'actors' sing of Syria's glory and Mohammed recounts how in the lead up to that war, bombs were blessed. I am stunned.

We begin the interview. They are a family of five. The two sons work in local cafés for around $10 a day and the parents are retired, the mother in particular with disintegrating health. They live in a poorly maintained flat which is inflated in price because of the increased demand for rented accommodation. The onus on supporting the family is on the two sons who fund the rent, food and clothes for the family. The youngest daughter of 18 works in a sewing factory for $5 a day. They left their hometown of Aleppo because it was under daily attack and sold everything they had to be able to leave.

Throughout everything they say, no matter how hard it may seem, they remain calm about what has happened to them. We are offered coffee, and as his wife bustles off in the kitchen, Mukhles proceeds to try and sort out a problem with their daughter's identity papers so she can register for university; however, her qualifications aren't recognised by any of the institutions in Istanbul and there is no option for her to study or transfer her studies. Moreover, her income is necessary for the family so even if she were to get accepted, she would likely have to continue to work alongside her studies. [Field notes]

This situation illustrates the immediate problems refugees face as they attempt to settle in new countries, structural mechanisms that block access to training, education and dignified working conditions, and ultimately, the upward mobility and economic integration into society that would help them out of their predicament. In this case, it is the young daughter's access to the university system in Istanbul. The existence of these, and no doubt many other, exclusion mechanisms are never mentioned in the anti-refugee views spouted by the many populist politicians and their supporters, who continue to peddle mythical stories of

uncomplicated access to housing, jobs and welfare for migrants at the expense of more deserving natives.

Another dilemma faced by the hundreds of thousands who continue to flock into Europe is that they fear presenting for asylum where they first arrive as the Dublin convention states they must reside in the countries in which they present their applications. This would mean presenting in Greece, Italy and Spain where the economies are weak, discouraging many from presenting and, contrary to what the convention presumably intends, encouraging clandestine passage through these countries. This was the case for one young man encountered in North Africa in August 2015, who had left Syria halfway through his education:

> When I finally get to see Abbas three months later in Madrid in December 2015, after meeting him at the border between Morocco and Spain, we embrace and he immediately lights up a cigarette. Abbas is 24, from Palestine but Syrian-born, and before he fled his country was halfway through a business degree. Some of his family had been threatened by Islamic State and he had lived in an area in Syria which was bombed by the day. He travelled for months across North Africa, doing odd cash-in-hand jobs in Algeria and paying smugglers along the way. After having spent four months in an immigration centre awaiting a decision on his asylum application, he had finally got very basic accommodation, a hostel with forgotten others such as refugees, immigrants, mentally ill people and the elderly disabled in the south of Madrid. We sit and have coffee and discuss his next steps. He insists on trying to go to Germany, even though, when they process him, they will likely send him back to Spain. He makes several calls to some illegal taxi drivers and arranges to travel the next day to Malaga to then be taken across the increasingly well-policed French border (as a consequence of the recent Paris terrorist attacks).
>
> Between all this, he smoked about ten cigarettes and at the end of it he smiles at me and puts his arm around me, 'You don't know how it is good to be here, all the hard work is done. If I take another bus to France and they send me back [. . .], I can go to Barcelona and try it from there and they can send me back. But that is nothing compared to what I have been through. And the funny thing is that, when you send me back, I will always try again.'
>
> Three months on, after spending some time sleeping rough in Belgium because he could not get across the border to Germany, he is told that he

will be returned to Spain where his initial asylum application was registered. Though he has started to do German language courses, it is all for nothing. He is fearful, especially as he knows that some other Syrians and Iraqis he had met in North Africa who sought asylum in Spain have already spent six months there and who have made slow progress with the language, have no work and universities do not recognise their previous studies from their home countries. [Field notes]

Abbas' constant mobility across Europe is eventually his downfall, though it was, as he suggests, a risk worth taking knowing that he would have found it equally difficult in Spain (according to what he had heard from other young Syrians who had presented there). Once again, we see how institutional barriers continue to present problems with access to training and education. Similarly, as we have also observed throughout Europe, as the anti-refugee rhetoric is turned up, increasing numbers of people are ejected from countries. This has been particularly evident in countries including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, where, as we write, the race is on to send back thousands to Turkey after it had secured a €3 billion deal with European institutions to harbour refugees or, even worse, send them back to their country of origin.

The impending fear of having risked one's life to leave a war-torn country only to be sent back acts as motivation to continue to be mobile. Here, once again, Shazar—a 23-year-old university student in Oslo—faced this dilemma at the beginning of 2016:

As we conclude, at the door is another young man with a crutch in his hand. He asks if he can enter and I say of course, saying as he sits, 'I am a mess'. Shazar's English is flawless perhaps because his mum teaches the language as a civil servant, while his father also works for the Syrian government. Most of his family still remain there in a village in the government-controlled outskirts of Damascus but are reluctant to leave because of their job security as well as the care requirements for Shazar's brother who is blind.

Leaving Syria because of the conflict, he moved to south Russia because of his family roots. His sister had married and lived there as well as his grandfather who was from that area. There, he rented an apartment, taught himself Russian and attempted to get by. Even though he has a degree in civil engineering from Syria, he was refused permanent residence twice,

putting it down to the onset of multiple sclerosis. Though he was given some medicine, he had to keep working, taking on jobs making ceilings and in shisha cafes. However, the long hours and physical demand of the work massively took its toll on his body. His condition worsened and he lost the ability to walk, eventually having to be carried to hospital. When he was released, he was just about able to walk with a crutch but then decided to try to leave Russia as his period of temporary residence was ending.

He first tried to go through Estonia to Germany but was rejected at the border. Then, he took a flight from Moscow to Murmansk in the far north of the country, near the borders of both Norway and Finland, and took a taxi to the border with four friends. Because of an agreement between Russia and Norway, it is illegal to cross the border by foot, so he, like thousands of other recent Syrians and Iraqis, bought second- or third-hand bikes which had faulty brakes and cycled the 50 metres to Norway, not knowing that when he arrived in Oslo he would find out that they were to start sending people like him back to Russia. He sits back and sighs: 'I can only hope'.

As politicians announced they had started to send back refugees, Shazar's friend fled to Iceland, leaving his room in the middle of the night. Indeed, fearing being sent home, he caught a train through Sweden and Denmark to Germany, to seek asylum there. After staying silent for a few weeks, he made contact again from another camp where he tells me his application is in process. More waiting, more uncertainty. [Field notes]

A politics of further displacement of people who have already been displaced through no fault of their own only exacerbates the problem and destabilises people like Shazar, in his case to the detriment of his physical health. Collectively, these cases highlight how mobility in Europe has another dimension that requires pressing attention from European authorities. Quite how those who do manage to settle will cope with the demand to be mobile within education, training and work is another matter entirely, not to mention grasping the reality of demands for employability to have hope of a job. This is clearly a major challenge for our understanding of mobility within Europe, a theme that will be further explored in the concluding chapter to this book.

Discussion: A New Precariousness in Mobility

The main purpose of this chapter has been to put into context the unequal means of accessing tertiary education and thereafter achieving educational success by framing mobility against the strategic demands of the EU's race to become competitive with its perceived economic adversaries in other global regions. What we are bringing to light are some relatively middle-ground experiences that will be familiar to many readers, particularly those working or studying within neo-liberalised universities, along with examples of more exceptional forms of mobility, that may nevertheless become more prevalent as economic, social and political instability spreads and accelerates throughout the world in the form of a succession of seemingly inevitable crises.

In evaluating this situation, an aggressive agenda of educating as many young people as possible so that they might compete with each other disproportionately benefits those within a particular social class stratum, the strongest not the weakest, not to mention corporate interests. This means that tertiary education comes to have limited value for societies due to academic capital being imbued with inequalities. Its utility comes to be marked according to institution and disciplinary profile, as well as perceived potential to contribute to universities' own games of chance relating to ranking systems and impact factors. While there may be a few winners, who acquire valuable and still useful credentials, there are many more left with degrees that are not worth the paper they are printed on. For these individuals, a future built out of temporary contracts, reduced labour opportunities and increased prospects of intermittent unemployment awaits. None of these features constitute part of the European discourse of progress via education, suggesting that something has gone badly wrong with regard to the development of tertiary education.

The commercialisation of tertiary education-level institutions and the integration of ideologies of entrepreneurialism and innovation was perhaps never intended to be a means of working towards participation in knowledge economies for all, but rather a means to turn the process of imparting knowledge into profit, with students as client and commodity.

This process takes place under the guise of a false promise of overcoming social disadvantage, when one is really extracting resources from ever greater numbers of students, many of whom receive little in return for their investment. It is quite sad that tertiary education should have become so debased by the profit motive, making universities inefficacious for students seeking work, and academic staff charged with the production of knowledge, but this is what happens when marketing and branding take precedence over the pastoral care of students and responsible research activity.

Consequently, universities become outcome-focused institutions, losing quality in their teaching practices and rendering obsolete previous research freedoms in order to provide a service to a passive student body, lacking critical thinking and competitively conditioned to believe that 'hard work' will create access to opportunities regardless of the prevailing economic climate. It is increased participation in this process that is the very undoing of the highly qualified, when their degree status does little to advance, or even maintain, their socio-economic position, since in reality human capital alone cannot counter structural economic problems such as widespread unemployment and job precariousness. As Alberto remarked, people are going to university 'for no reason', or at least for no reason that leads to a positive outcome. The increased burden placed on universities, more students with varied needs and more courses, along with diversification of the student profile (home students from deprived backgrounds, increasing the market for foreign students, online degrees and qualifications which bolster the human capital of existing workforces, etc.) further complicates how institutions provide support. In many cases they cannot, which is why so many across Europe become mobile out of education, dropping out of their expensive courses or failing to invest their academic capital in the labour market. In this respect, this process to 'educate everyone' is only perpetuating and deepening inequality.

Along with visions of a borderless Europe, where free movement equates to equal opportunity, there continue to be significant barriers for some of society's most vulnerable to even accessing education, despite their increased mobility. While the fight between universities to sign up students gets more and more competitive each year for those who can pay, many are left in the margins unable to afford the fees associated with study

or are kept out by problems associated with transferring their course credits between countries. In particular—as we have seen in the examples of Marian and Corina, the Romanians in London, and in Shazar, Abbas and Mohammed's daughter—for refugees across Europe, successful educational mobility is jeopardised by quasi-racist rhetoric and politico-institutional obstructions which, more often than not, confines large numbers to an existence as an exploitable workforce beneath Europe's formal economies. And when this arrangement becomes institutionalised within labour markets, there will be even less chance of escape for the vulnerable.

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4

Working for Europe? Managing Erasmus+ in the Austerity Era

International exchange students are a familiar sight across Europe, their ranks including large numbers of young people participating in the European Commission's Erasmus+ exchange programmes. While by no means the only example of student mobility, Erasmus has become one of the most popular platforms. It covers more than 4000 institutions and it is estimated that since the inception of the initiative in 1987, over three million students, trainees and academic staff have gone abroad (European Commission, 2014b). Therefore, while the practice of student mobility is not without historical precursors, including the grand tours through the European centres of culture once undertaken by the children of the rich and powerful (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), the scale of intra-European student circulation today is unprecedented, to the point of having become an integral part of tertiary education systems and a symbol of incipient European unity (Feyen and Krzaklewska, 2013).

This outward success helps explain why Erasmus has achieved totemic status among European policymakers. However, the current phase of the initiative, entitled Erasmus+ and scheduled to run between 2014 and 2020 at a cost to the European taxpayer of €14.7 billion, faces major challenges. While the aim is to support four million more exchanges, concerns exist

with regard to the accessibility of the programme. Statistical evidence published by the EC during the lifetime of the previous Erasmus charter suggests that imbalanced levels of incoming and outgoing mobility between countries are the norm (European Commission, 2015a), and the extent to which students from non-elite academic backgrounds and less-privileged families are able to participate is also questioned in some studies (see, e.g., Heger, 2013). Therefore, despite clearly stated commitments to social inclusion in Erasmus+ discourse (see, e.g., European Commission, 2014a), this goal is not being realised. One reason relates to the fact that levels of support within the undergraduate exchange programme fail to adequately cover the true cost of mobility. Systematic underfunding restricts the horizons of many students to nearby and low-cost destinations, or means that they cannot afford to participate at all. An additional issue is the placing of the burden of paying for exchange visits on parents, which again risks generating exclusion among less well-off families who do not have money to spare.

While achieving an equilibrium between numbers of incoming and outgoing students and addressing social inclusion are concerns for all the countries participating in Erasmus, in the EU and elsewhere, there is an additional challenge in countries struggling to cope with the recent economic crisis. For example, in Portugal there are quite clear signs of declining participation with regard to outgoing movement, ironically at a time when numbers of incoming students from more economically comfortable countries continue to increase (European Commission, 2015a). This chapter acknowledges this imbalance as well as the aforementioned contradiction between policy goals that preach social inclusion and programme implementation that subsidises the mobility of the rich and powerful with European taxpayers' money. In consequence, it may be that Erasmus is becoming more geo-demographically exclusive as well as struggling to cope with social inclusion, becoming a symbol of inequality within the EU as opposed to being a beacon of hope.[1]

Approaching Erasmus

Within the broader field of youth mobility, the Erasmus undergraduate exchange programme has long been a very popular choice of research subject, and at first glance it would appear to be the case that the Erasmus bibliography has grown exponentially with the expansion of numbers participating in the programme. However, despite the large number of recent journal articles, books and reports, much of this work is repetitive and lacking depth, failing to address vital issues such as social inclusion and geo-demographic disparities in participation. In fact, the most influential work on international student mobility in Europe remains one of the first to be published, Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune's *Student Mobility and Narrative in Europe. The New Strangers* (2002). Regardless of its age, this book still provides the most insightful account of what it means to be an exchange visitor from the point of view of student movers and the impact this form of circulation has upon societies. What we learn is that while there are benefits for exchange programme participants in terms of enhanced inter-cultural capacities, their acquisition of this new form of cosmopolitanism comes at a price for social equality due to the over-representation of young people from privileged backgrounds in the circuits of mobile education who through their highly visible participation, establish the idea that student mobility is an exclusive or elitist practice. Such a situation creates a dynamic through which the strong become stronger and the weak are left outside, and the meaning of student mobility becomes devalued through its codification as just another form of 'conspicuous consumption' (Veblen, 1994).

To guard against this manifestation of the Matthew Effect (Merton, 1968), there is a need to effectively manage mobility platforms so that access is fair and equitable, within countries and across different regions, and to ensure that levels of support for students are, at the very least, adequate. These are the most fundamental considerations in understanding the potential for student mobility to contribute to social and economic development in the European Union, issues that need to be at the centre of the student mobility research agenda. However, studies that focus on Erasmus, often in conjunction with other student exchange platforms,

tend to be more pragmatic in their aims. Much work concentrates on numbers, especially gross participation levels, with results often taken from large-scale international projects (see, e.g., Altbach and Teichler, 2001; Kelo et al., 2006a; Teichler et al., 2011). The main aim behind this work seems to be one of estimating the prevalence of student mobility to provide funders, often the EC itself, with an idea of who is moving where within Europe. This task serves an important political function, with increasing numbers of circulating students providing an indication of the success of Erasmus and its system of governance for policymakers and stakeholders, and a justification for the continued existence of the programme in its current form.[2]

Alongside these macro-level studies are numerous micro-level investigations of specific aspects of Erasmus, a prominent theme being the consideration of how participation contributes to the emergence of a shared European identity (see, e.g., Sigalas, 2010; Oborune, 2013; Van Mol, 2013; see also Bruter, 2005; Fligstein, 2008). While the best of these studies elaborate upon important aspects of the Erasmus experience by emphasising issues such as international conviviality, there is a neglect of the basic point of Erasmus, namely its educational function. We really need to know more about the processes through which the international transference of skills, encouragement of independence and inter-cultural sensitivity and improvement of foreign language capacities can be assessed (Papatsiba, 2005, pp. 174–184; see also Wilson, 2011), as well as the social, economic and political consequences of student mobility for societies. This means that any credible study of Erasmus needs to engage with Erasmus as a process, entailing qualitative investigation, as opposed to making deductions from quantitative analysis.

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[2] A smaller number of data-driven works have sought to address more specific issues, such as the identification of barriers and drivers to circulation (González et al., 2011; Souto-Otero et al., 2013; Beerkens et al., 2016), the impact of Erasmus on employment prospects and employability (Teichler and Janson, 2007; European Commission, 2014c) and gender imbalances in participation (Böttcher et al., 2016). It should also be noted that much cited databases on student mobility collated by UNESCO and OECD do not include short-duration credit mobility. Kelo et al. (2006b, p. 196) also note that datasets compiled by organisations such as UNESCO, OECD and EUROSTAT contain hard to estimate margins of errors due to their dependence on unreliable national data sources.

Erasmus and Reflexive Mobility

At a conceptual level, in explaining why Erasmus exists and has become popular, there is limited scope for importing concepts from neo-classical migration theory due to the fact that short-term, fixed-duration exchanges are not, by definition, migratory (see Chap. 2). Neither can macro-level analyses of contrasting salary levels, differentials in welfare provisions or the prospect of remittances explain trends in student circulation, since participants are not in paid employment. These variables also fail to connect with the geo-political dimension of Erasmus, that is, the anticipated contribution to the social and economic development of the EU. As mentioned above, what we do need to acknowledge is the pedagogical function of international exchange visits by considering what actually happens to students when they participate in Erasmus in terms of their personal and professional development, alongside the impact they have on sending and receiving societies. This is needed because Erasmus, in theory, is a European policy tool for transforming societies and individual participants and, if it is not being used as such, as European citizens we should be concerned.

The anticipated outcome for the European institutions from Erasmus is a contribution to the establishment of an internationally convivial community of EU Member States, within which can be found tertiary educated young people performing a de facto ambassadorial function, by basically spreading EU values to populations. At an individual level, practising mobility within institutional frameworks involves the development of the capacity to be 'spatially reflexive' (Cairns, 2014). The idea is to learn how to think globally while studying abroad and, in the case of Erasmus, becoming more European-minded when making decisions about the future in relation to education and employment. Where Erasmus is functioning effectively, the outcome should be social mobility for participants and societal development, the two processes being intrinsically linked. Reflexive forms of mobility are therefore not confined to establishing geographical circulation in personal biography construction but extended to a more general field.

In sociological terms, it can be argued that Erasmus is a reflexive programme due to the focus on encouraging personal agency in a context

of formal learning in the classroom and among a more informal international peer group. However, in understanding reflexivity it is important to draw a distinction between European and anglophone theoretical precedents; for example, we are not concerned with studying issues such as the sedentary 'reflexive imperative' explored by authors such as Archer (2012).[3] As stated in the previous paragraph, what is novel about Erasmus is not so much the extension of reflexivity into the global field of education—that is stating the obvious—but rather the more covert attempt to engage the political imagination of the European tertiary educated youth population—and by extension the European population—in effect, making the programme a Trojan horse for integrating values treasured by European institutions into societies.

Realising this aim would potentially give the EC something back in return for investing billions of euros in Erasmus by using a pool of highly qualified talent to establish a 'European demos' (Klose, 2013, p. 41). What students are therefore required to do is not so much to learn how to become migrants in the classic sense of securing more or less permanent settlement in a foreign country, but to become aware of a spatially broader range of possibilities in life, with this process, when multiplied, establishing a new kind of European individual (see also Marginson, 2014). Therefore, alongside acquiring ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits during a stay abroad, Erasmus participants ought to be learning how to think in a certain way about their own identities to become more open-minded, flexible and adaptable to a geographically broader range of possibilities.[4]

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[3] To state that students are required to be reflexive in planning their lives is not particularly insightful. We are all required to be reflexive in our daily lives to the point that in the recent past an entire epoch was characterised as the age of 'reflexive modernisation', commonly linked to processes of individualisation (see, e.g., Giddens, 1991; Beck et al., 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2006).

[4] While the idea is simple, making reflexive mobility happen requires skill, coordination and dedication. In addition to advertising opportunities, and borrowing a term associated with Bourdieu (1990), mobility professionals are required to construct a mobility favouring habitus within their university institutions. This habitus illustrates how reflexive ways of organising one's life are advantageous to one's career while tacitly contributing to the building of a European gestalt, which is an equivalent to the smaller-scale family environment that generates mobility dispositions in certain circumstances (Cairns et al., 2013).

This leaves us to consider the geo-political implications of this form of reflexive mobility. That the Erasmus pedagogical process is collective, simultaneously taking place in different European countries and among disparate groups of tertiary educated young people, means that something significant might eventually take place within the EU, such as the establishment of this new European demos, defined by its relative statelessness. The capacity of Erasmus to actually fulfil this aspiration has, however, been greeted with heavy scepticism. For example, an article by Kuhn (2012, p. 995) argues that the programme is merely 'preaching to the converted' in encouraging mobility without first having enabled inclusive access. In other words, in targeting an extremely narrow socio-demographic range of students, including those who may already be in possession of a broad range of inter-cultural capacities, high levels of social and economic capital and a form of European-mindedness, Erasmus fails to extend Europeanisation beyond its existing limits. In fact, the risk is that existing identities and inequalities become reinforced, not broken down, due to the aforementioned Matthew Effect in the programme.

Managing Mobility

While the current Erasmus+ initiative covers various educational levels in its three 'Key Actions' (European Commission, 2016a, p. 13), in this discussion we will concentrate on what is sometimes known as 'traditional Erasmus', covering undergraduate exchanges made as part of Key Action 1, the 'Mobility of Individuals', and consisting of credit mobility in the form of fixed duration stays of between three months and a year at a foreign university.[5] Unlike other studies that focus on statistics and students, our research subjects are the academics and administrators who manage mobility programmes, with particular emphasis on the professors and department heads with responsibility

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[5] Credit mobility is a term used by the EC to denote the fact that student movers receive course accreditation for work undertaken while abroad on return to their sending institution (European Commission, 2015a, p. 8).

for international affairs.[6] These individuals play a crucial but largely undocumented role in managing student mobility, constituting a meso-level in Erasmus research, located between policymakers and students. With regard to methodological approach, to address the issue of managing Erasmus against the backdrop of austerity, we will concentrate on Portugal as a country subject to externally imposed austerity policies, a situation that poses a challenge to the viability of mobility programmes due to the high costs of participation. An initial shortlist of 20 institutions was drawn up, taking into account the need to engage with professionals in different academic scenarios, not only high-profile, conveniently located public universities in major metropolitan centres but also smaller private and regional institutions. Following initial contacts with representatives in these universities, participation was secured from eight institutions, with additional visits to student support organisations and the national Erasmus agency during the course of the research.[7]

Working for Erasmus

The job of the mobility professional is, in essence, one of internationalising national education systems, helping domestic students access foreign study opportunities and taking care of incoming learners. These two tasks form the bedrock of the Erasmus workload, with effective

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[6] Each institution that participates in Erasmus has its own international office managing incoming and outgoing mobility. If we take into account the fact that Erasmus traverses all 28 Member States plus affiliated countries (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey), in addition to staff employed by the EC in other partner countries, this amounts to a population of several thousand individuals, albeit with a much greater density in countries with a stronger Erasmus history, for example, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

[7] The number of interviews conducted in each institution varied considerably, considering Erasmus participation ranged from 2000 incoming students and 1000 outgoing to several hundred arrivals and only a handful of outgoers. In each case study, this included a senior member of staff to ensure that the views of each institution were appropriately represented. The bulk of this work was conducted between January and May 2016, with some additional follow-up during the production of this chapter. Due to the need to protect the anonymity of interviewees, neither they nor their institutions are identified in the subsequent discussion, and other details, such as place names or references to individuals, are also omitted from interview extracts. This research also involved ethnography, including observation of meetings and exchange student life, which is an approach influenced by the work of Garsten and Nyqvist (2013) on complex organisations.

management essential to its success. Information must be provided about opportunities and guidelines for teachers and students drawn up and implemented, and funding secured from the national Erasmus agency to cover the costs of staff and overheads. As might be imagined, all this work creates a substantial bureaucratic burden, the extent of which is detailed by the following interviewee:

> The programme, the European funds, the European mobility, it's hard because now the situation is that we have around 14 different documents. And at this moment, I have requested a development [grant]. I don't have it yet. So we have to deal with many, many documents. So it's hard. Then we have another thing which is that the students, they don't follow the deadlines. So we are always ringing, and sending emails. So it's very hard. [. . .] We have always, we are always with a huge volume of work, always, because we have received 600 students within mobility, this includes 400 Erasmus [. . .]. We have all these projects. We have these reports, and this platform, and so on. And we are just three people on the front desk, and three people in the back office. [. . .] So we are very hard workers and we like very much what we do. And we like very much [our university]. So we do lots of extra hours. (Head of International Office, large university institute)

This interview extract, from a departmental head responsible for the entirety of the Erasmus programme and other student mobility platforms in her institution, provides a useful introduction to the world of the mobility professional. In defining workloads we can see that bureaucracy is a major component, with the amount of work generated proportionate to the number of incoming students and applicants for outward mobility. Alongside managing undergraduate exchanges, there are also Master's courses to be organised, as well as entering into learning agreements and partnerships with foreign universities (Erasmus Key Action 2) and competing for infrastructure development funds (Key Action 3). But it is the competitive nature of Erasmus financing that creates the form filling-in culture, since institutions must apply for funding on an annual basis, a task that makes the work of mobility professionals expansive, expensive and repetitive.

At a more abstract level, there is a considerable degree of imaginative work involved in managing Erasmus. Those working in international offices of universities must take the basic principles that constitute the programme's ethos, set forth by the EC in its documentation, as part of the creation of a mobility favouring habitus. The Commission does not, however, interact directly with mobility professionals in institutions. Instructions are mediated to universities through the national Erasmus agency. The management of mobility does not, however, extend to the academic side of exchanges beyond ensuring incoming students are placed in appropriate classes with suitable teachers. This is significant, as not all lecturers are sympathetic to the programme or equipped with the skills and patience required to cope with the needs of international learners.

> [. . .] what we try to do is to put them with teachers that we know that are more prepared to deal with international students [. . .] this means that if I have three classes for the same subject, one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the night, I would choose the teacher where I want to put the student. Then we have several types of meetings with the directors of the departments. Then we have the teachers who will receive the students. So then, we try to do this. Then we have several meetings with the students. And also with teachers. We have a meeting at the end. (Head of International Office, large private university)

With regard to managing workloads, it should be noted that some external support is available. For example, while international offices may host welcome events, such as parties and dinners for students at their faculties, practical tasks, including the finding of suitable accommodation for students, are more likely to be undertaken by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), which is active throughout participating countries. This organisation is regarded as a vital element of support to Erasmus staff, who simply do not have the time to deal with the minute details of each exchange, as well as being a vital point of reference for incoming students.

Evaluations at the beginning and end of stays are also an important task, generating feedback to aid staff to assess success in improving foreign language fluency. A number of online tools exist, including a platform being developed by the Commission.

[. . .] we wait for this online language support that is provided. It's a newish tool, support tool, provided by the European Commission, which is then allocated to the national agencies. Which in turn allocate it to the institutions, which is an online course, free of charge to students, which they can use as much or as little as they want. The only thing which is mandatory is the self-evaluation test before they start their mobility. And then do another one after their mobility. (Head of International Office, medium-sized private metropolitan university)

We can therefore observe that the EC does provide practical support to mobility professionals, as well as illustrating another instance of the intermediary role played by the national agency. With regard to connecting with broader objectives of the programme, foreign language learning contributes to employability and is regarded as an important inter-cultural skill, fulfilling an important part of the Europeanisation via the Erasmus process. In this sense, we have a concrete example of the institutionalisation of processes that aid students' personal and professional development, and of cooperation between mobility professionals, national agencies and the EC in making Erasmus work.

Looking at other challenges in managing Erasmus, the international character of the programme creates complexity, as each country, each participating institution and each participating student has their own set of demands and expectations. A centralised approach to administration at national and European levels will inevitably create tensions, and this appears to be a growing concern. As the number of countries in the Erasmus fold expands, so too does the diversity of the student body and institutional profiles, with different cultural norms and expectations, particularly when it comes to making learning agreements with countries outside the EU.

Erasmus in Europe is one thing. Erasmus outside Europe is completely different. [. . .] We cannot expect, it's not fair for the partner universities, non-EU partner universities, to have certain rules that simply don't make sense in that particular place. They are fine in Europe, but they don't make sense outside the European framework. And I think that is something that the programme has room for improvement. I also think that [for] the European Commission, it could be a very good idea for it to invite some

staff that are working in the field, not the national agency. National agencies are amazing, they do wonderful work. But I think it would be very interesting for the Commission, I don't know if they do it already, maybe they do, I think it would be very interesting to get the feedback from the ones that are in the field doing it every single day. I think it would be very, very important. (Director of International Cooperation Office, large public metropolitan university)

We can hence see that the intermediary role of national agencies is an occasional source of frustration for frontline staff in universities, for while there is no suggestion that this national agency is doing a bad job, it may be that the EC would benefit from more direct input from those with direct experience of managing Erasmus. This would certainly make mobility workers feel more valued as stakeholders, and perhaps also provide policymakers with a more realistic idea of what is happening within the platforms they administer.

The Consequences of Erasmus Mobility

Having looked at some of the everyday challenges facing mobility professionals in Portugal, and also some general perspectives on the rationale behind student exchanges at European level, it is also worth considering some of the concerns our respondents have with regard to the meaning of their work. While there may be a certain degree of idealism that prompts these professionals to first get involved in the Erasmus programme—basically wanting to be good Europeans and encourage others to become the same—they are not oblivious to the consequences of their work, both positive and negative.

Academics are well aware of the in-built inequalities of tertiary education-level systems, and of how the rich and powerful like to reproduce their dominant societal positions through a strategic use of academic privileges (see Bourdieu, 1996). No matter how much they protest about seemingly endless cuts in funding, excessive bureaucracy and the march of neo-liberalism, there is little that they actually seem to do about the inequalities they knowingly replicate. With regard to student mobility, we know that a stock criticism of the Erasmus undergraduate exchange

programme is that it is dominated by elite groups, specifically students from privileged backgrounds and those studying STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. In consequence, rather than providing a means for students who are less well equipped in terms of social, economic and cultural capital, Erasmus exchanges are thought to strengthen the capacities of those already able to cope reasonably well with the demands of the global labour market.

That many of these relatively privileged individuals may already feel thoroughly Europeanised also brings into question the efficacy of their involvement in an activity that is meant to spread the values of the European institutions. This explains why certain students do not really need to participate in Erasmus, at least not at the European taxpayers, expense. We also have to consider that a substantial degree of Europeanisation and generation of employability takes place through other means, and it may be that Erasmus students have taken part in other mobility exchanges or have a personal and family history of intra-European circulation. Nevertheless, all the interviewees in Portugal confirmed that most of their incoming and outgoing students were from comfortable backgrounds, many of whom had prior international experience, and while not all were studying STEM subjects, these disciplines featured prominently.

While a few concerns were expressed that resources are being wasted, it was also pointed out that favouring the favoured has practical advantages for Erasmus-participating institutions. In fact, it was argued that those who already possess significant levels of social and economic capital make ideal programme participants *because* they consume fewer resources if they are prepared to travel without a grant. Socially capable and inter-culturally aware students are also less likely to generate administrative problems for their host universities and more able to fulfil an ambassadorial role for their sending institutions while abroad. Therefore, from a programme administrator's point of view, the participation of students from well-off backgrounds is extremely logical. However, there is a hidden problem in that, rather than being new to mobility, they may be inheritors of prior modes of circulation that place them closer to old style migration norms than the contemporary practice of reflexive mobility. For this reason,

there is a subtle risk of new mobility lessons not being learnt among this cohort due to their preference for pre-established mobility traditions.

The Erasmus Imbalance

It is difficult to ignore the fact that, in the recent past, a somewhat uncomfortable trend has emerged in Erasmus participation. Conspicuously large numbers of students from the European core countries are moving in great numbers to the more peripheral nations, but not vice versa. What this situation implies is that Erasmus participation is to some extent split between 'sending countries' such as Germany, France, Italy and Poland, and 'receiving countries', including Spain, Portugal and the English-speaking nations, with a large number of other participating countries having fairly low levels of incoming and outgoing mobility (see Cairns, 2015). This participation imbalance means that, in Portugal, the volume of arrivals massively outweighs the number of domestic students going abroad, thus increasing the workloads placed upon mobility professionals in Portuguese universities, all of which have endured difficulties followed by the arrival of the economic crisis in 2008 and the subsequent imposition of austerity policies.

There are various, social, cultural and economic explanations for this perverse situation, which is in contradiction to the EC's own views on social inclusion, which make explicit reference to geographically-based inequalities (European Commission, 2014a). As noted by Böttcher et al. (2016), Erasmus flows tend to reflect broader trends in human circulation of a strongly resourced core and weakly connected peripheries within Europe. And while some factors, such as not wanting to interrupt ongoing study programmes and the existence of home-based responsibilities, have some bearing on mobility decision-making, there is a unanimous feeling among Erasmus staff that the low level of Erasmus grants, relative to the high costs of living in most European countries, is to blame for this unfortunate situation. Curiously, these grants take into account host country expense levels but not household incomes in the sending society, meaning the parents living in the peripheral countries, which may have low wage levels relative to the richer core nations, actually have to contribute more in real

terms than their counterparts elsewhere. This is a hard to understand error in the Erasmus funding formula, implying as it does a basic misunderstanding of economic reality in the peripheries, and it is a mistake that needs to be corrected if there is to be any equitable balance established between incoming and outgoing mobility.

Whether by accident or design, an obvious lack of understanding of the realities of funding student mobility in more peripheral societies among Erasmus authorities in Brussels was repeatedly confirmed by interviewees as the main reason for imbalanced flows of incoming and outgoing students. This was seen as pivotal in explaining the lack of inclusion in the undergraduate exchange programme of students from less well-off backgrounds.

> OK. We are a private university as you know. And for the last years, the crisis, involving everyone in Portugal, of course this affects our families and students. So I think that this is the main reason. Because for instance when we make the applications for the advertisements, we receive a lot of enquiries about the programmes and scholarships and so on. But during the process, the people, a large number of them, they quit. And essentially the main reason, the first one is of course the financial conditions. Because you know the Erasmus scholarships, they are very low. No one lives with €250 per month. [. . .] the base of the Erasmus scholarship is the difference between the cost of living in the different countries. It's not enough. And you know, even for traineeships, we used to have an international internship programme, and yes, they used to have scholarships. Erasmus it's not a scholarship. It's not enough. (Head of International Office, large private university)

This is neither a healthy nor a sustainable situation. Not only are there very obvious social inequality consequences in effectively taxing families across Europe to participate in Erasmus at a uniform rate, irrespective of earnings differentials and levels of job security, but the independence of the mover is compromised through a reliance upon parental largess to fund their mobility (see also González et al., 2011, p. 421). This is a serious issue and another contradiction within the programme, since becoming independent is an absolutely pivotal part of becoming employable. However, 'independence' seems to be another casualty of poor

programme governance. Several interviewees even discussed how in some cases it was parents who took a pro-active role in managing their son or daughter's mobility to the extent of accompanying them on their stay in Portugal or, more frequently, taking advantage of their offspring's presence abroad as a cheap holiday opportunity.

> [. . .] for many students it is a challenge. They are out of home for the first time. I've had students here, they came with their parents. The parents wanted to make sure that he or she settled in. You know, wanted to know the office, wanted to see me. (Head of International Office, medium-sized private metropolitan university)

While this practice may seem harmless, that a publicly funded student exchange programme aiming to strengthen the professional profiles of its participants is being used to support the leisure mobility of students' parents is a minor scandal. It is certainly not in keeping with the idea of Erasmus as a dynamic means of supporting the European economy and contributing to the personal development of its young citizens. The presence of parents in Erasmus, who want something in return for *their investment* in the programme, is in fact a major symbolic own goal and a source of ammunition for those who wish to take cheap shots at Erasmus for lacking pedagogical credibility.

From a more cynical point of view, it can be argued that funding irregularities in its undergraduate exchange programme persist because the current situation suits Erasmus authorities. As explained in the interview extract reproduced below, in the early years of Erasmus, funding was pegged at considerably higher rates than it is now, constituting, in effect, a living wage for those moving abroad at a time when relatively few students participated. However, as Erasmus developed, it moved towards providing a greater number of low-budget, short-duration exchanges for undergraduates rather than a smaller number of relatively generous scholarships. The reasons for this situation are obvious:

> I think that the main concern in the Commission, at the moment, is to achieve big numbers in mobility. I think that they are not sending the money outside the door. What I think is that they should find some way in

order to support properly the mobility. I had one student [. . .] it was one of the first Socrates students, she was looking for a language certificate. And I went the archives, and the money paid at that time it was in escudos. So it was for one year, and it was [equivalent to] €25,000. It was fifteen years ago, for one year, in Germany. And this was the scholarship for her. So of course at that period, there were 1000 students in mobility per year, probably. In Europe. In Erasmus. The scholarships, they were really, really huge. And now we have only this. This is too short. This is much too short. (Head of International Office, large private university)

The EC solution seems to be to rely upon family contributions to make up the shortfall in its support to students. This is contemptuous, as 'mandatory' parental contributions to Erasmus means less spending by the EC on individual participants, so it can keep grant levels artificially low and provide these grants in greater numbers, creating the impression that Erasmus is a (quantitative) success story. Through this means, numerical logic defeats programme quality in the pursuit of policy goals. However, the consequences for social inclusion and the growth of geo-demographic disparities in mobility take-up suggest a serious rethink is in order, with greater effort needed to ensure that financial support reaches those who need it most. Looking at current trends in Erasmus participation, with dwindling numbers of outgoing undergraduates from countries like Portugal and Spain, without reform it is only a matter of time before the current system collapses altogether.

Overcoming Disadvantage

In the final section of this chapter, we hope to move on from illustrating the prominent structural faults in Erasmus economic governance and reflect upon the potential for student mobility to help overcome social disadvantage rather than deepen it. In explaining why the current problems have persisted for so long in mobility policy, at national and European levels, it is easy to detect a lack of commitment to addressing social inclusion, which has at its base socio-economic disadvantage within a relatively large cohort of young people, as opposed to much smaller niche groups of concentrated disadvantage.

Despite the scale of this problem, particularly in countries affected by the economic crisis, there is a reluctance to accept the actuality of social exclusion, with a tendency to fall back on interventions that relate to relatively small populations for which there are pre-existing and institutional response mechanisms already in place. This helps to explain why social inclusion policies have become tokenistic, piecemeal, repetitive and ineffective, responding to whoever lobbies the loudest or creates the most politically embarrassing media headlines rather than being reality based.[8] What we actually need is an understanding of social inclusion that reflects the needs of those affected by major societal upheavals. If we are looking to support tertiary educated youth in the indebted countries of the EU, we must acknowledge the generality of new economic disadvantage and the value of mobility as a means of escape, not so much in respect to migration strategies but more with regard to the acquisition of new skills through international circulation.[9]

Returning to Erasmus, it may be the case that even a short stay at a foreign university can still be of use in improving one's chances of finding work at a later date, especially for those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or families that have been affected by the recent crisis. Why then not use Erasmus as a form of 'brain circulation' for Portuguese students? The answers from our interviewees are, unfortunately, quite predictable and confirm that this is not likely to happen:

> We notice that in a way, Erasmus is for the better off. And this is my perception as well. Not so much, I don't know so much about the incoming students, but I can tell from our own students, is that the grant that is

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[8] A similar state of affairs exists with regard to youth employment policy, centring upon the misuse of the NEET (not in education, employment or training) signifier (see, e.g., Furlong, 2006), resulting in an over-concentration upon those with obvious education and skills deficits.

[9] Given the strong associations between employment and mobility in neo-classical migration theory, it is often assumed that extreme austerity is a driver of migration. However, as a more considered analysis in Portugal has revealed, the reality is more one of a return to previous twentieth-century norms of migration, with young people making recourse to outward movement and circulation due to exclusion from the local labour market, albeit with a greater concentration of skilled migrants alongside the more traditional low-skilled movers (Justino, 2016, pp. 1–2, 14). Therefore, while there has been outward migration among the highly qualified after the onset of the crisis, this is a continuation of an existing trend not the start of a new one, and there is not necessarily a causal relationship between these two simultaneous phenomena.

allocated according to country, is for most countries, not all, but for most countries like Spain, Italy, Norway it is insufficient. And I also know, that in Spain it is €250 per month. Whether it's Madrid, or whatever. (Head of International Office, medium-sized private metropolitan university)

€300 for just one month. In a country like Finland or Norway. It's not enough. Sometimes, it's not even enough for accommodation. So, students have other expenses. Like food, transportation, travel. So, it's not enough. [. . .] Most of the time they are supported by their families. Most of the time. And at the moment, it's very difficult for the families to support the mobility because of this crisis. Sometimes, students go on mobility. And we cannot figure out how the families can support this mobility, because the father is unemployed, the mother is unemployed. So we see that the relatives support the mobility. (Head of International Office, large university institute)

It is obvious that the minimal level of financial support offered to candidates, as low as €200 per month, is a major barrier to participation and reduces the potential for the programme to address the needs of austerity affected students, many of whom need to be socially included in European society. Erasmus is therefore missing another opportunity, in this instance to contribute to resolving the problem of joblessness among the highly qualified in countries such as Portugal, despite overcoming youth unemployment being a stated objective of the programme in its publicity materials (see, e.g., European Commission, 2014b, p. 4). Lest we appear too pessimistic, we should add that universities are addressing this issue through practices such as partially waiving tuition fees for their Erasmus participants.

[. . .] what we do here is, in order to foster mobility, and to try to somehow encourage them, even financially, is that we have a policy that each student that is out, only pays 50 per cent of the fees here while they are away. I don't know if you are aware, but students need to continue to pay fees [while participating in Erasmus]. So what we do here, and that has been a policy since the beginning, the percentage has varied but it's now 50 per cent, which means that on average, an extra €175 a month. Because our fees are €300 and something a month. So they have that much money. And also, this year, the university, because the amount of grant the university received

from the national agency was so small, was only for eight students. And we have 19 out. So what we did here was that we gave fewer months to each student, so that for instance, it was eight grants for an average of seven months mobility, which is a bit ridiculous because you don't have that. Either you have one semester or two. You don't have seven months. But anyway, giving four months instead of five, because four months in general is quite sufficient. (Head of International Office, medium-sized private metropolitan university)

For international readers, particularly those in countries where Erasmus has relatively low visibility, we should make clear that the funding 'crisis' in the programme is not a hidden issue. On the contrary, as with a similar situation in Spain several years previously, in Portugal this issue has created front page headlines in national newspapers (see, e.g., Silva, 2015). This bad publicity is stressful and occasionally embarrassing for mobility professionals, and damaging in sending the wrong message to a domestic audience with regard to Erasmus accessibility. However, it is to the credit of those within universities that they have been able to respond internally to external problems.

Yes, it was kind of national news at some point, I think some months ago, that Erasmus had cuts, budget cuts, severe budget cuts. The university, itself. If we are talking only about one project, the traditional [undergraduate exchange programme] one let's say for Europe, then I would say that our budget was cut. But then we submitted a project in consortia with other universities in Portugal, focused on employability. To get more traineeships, more scholarships for our students that want to go for placement. And also for teachers and for officers, that work in the international office or in other areas in the university. So then we immediately got the chance of the international credit mobility. So I think that we are doing our best [...] to take every opportunity to get all the funding that we can have. And then we can tell students, well, we don't have enough scholarships here but if you are interested you can go there. (Outgoing Mobility Officer, large public metropolitan university)

While official participation rates in Erasmus+ have not yet been made public, all interviewees confirm that there has been a decline in take-up

within Portugal, outside a small number of prestigious universities that have managed to maintain numbers, continuing the downward trend established during the previous Lifelong Learning phase of Erasmus (European Commission, 2016b). In fact, the norm is now to have more Erasmus places than Erasmus candidates. In one major institution visited, with a total of 900 places on offer in the last year, only 180 applications were received. This is a situation that has implications for the survival of the programme, since competitive funding is linked to past participation.

> The way they calculate is that they assess the last three years of our outgoing students, and as I said, the numbers were going up until the crisis. I think in 2010, I had 50 and after that, it just plummeted, in 2011, 2012 especially. So by assessing the last three years in order to calculate the number of grants, we ended up with eight, you see. So this year they will include this year, last year and the year before. So this is also a way, by sending extra students, this is a way of obtaining slowly, painfully, of forcing the national agency to give us more so that we can send more students out. (Head of International Office, medium-sized private metropolitan university)

Universities in Portugal must therefore redouble their efforts to increase numbers so that lost funding can be 'painfully' recovered from the national agency. That this form of governance is, in effect, punishing the institutions in which students have been hardest hit by austerity is another unfortunate relic of the current centralised administration. Rather than helping these people, they are punishing them, thereby continuing the cycle of exclusion, providing yet another example of poor mobility governance.

Conclusion: Managing Equality and Equity in Erasmus

Within Erasmus, there are clearly major challenges with regard to moving towards equality of access at national levels and achieving a semblance of equity in participation in terms of balance between levels of incoming and outgoing mobility. As we have noted, the current Erasmus+ initiative has experienced serious turbulence in Portugal due to poor central governance

at a time of austerity, and it is only through the diligent work of mobility professionals that the participation problem is not of greater proportions. This comes at a time when the EC is boasting in its literature that it is spending more money than ever on Erasmus and expects the programme to contribute towards the alleviation of social problems, including youth unemployment.

Such claims invite scepticism because, quite simply, as one of our interviewees highlighted, not enough money is reaching the students. Too much is spent on publicity and central administration, with this situation exacerbated by a failure to recognise disparities in family income levels across countries. That the decline in funding for students over a prolonged period has reached a point where present grant levels amount to little more than pocket money is simply ridiculous, with this European flagship programme becoming further sullied by parents taking advantage of this situation by using Erasmus as a vehicle for cheap family holidays. This is very poor political leadership.

In the race to use Erasmus as a quantitative indicator of European integration, as opposed to making it an actual means for supporting a diverse range of citizens to become better Europeans, a vital element of the programme has been lost, which is its potential to transform the lives of highly qualified young people for the better. The risk is that the programme will become a symbol of European inequality rather a means to create social inclusion, if it has not already done so. Instead of illustrating the freedom to work and study in order to have a chance of competing in the labour market and taking advantage of still relatively open borders, it becomes another source of frustration and disappointment.

Reflecting upon this situation, and bearing in mind ideas introduced in Chap. 2, Erasmus governance would seem to be based on neo-classical migration thinking, in that it is the numbers of participants and perhaps how much they spend while abroad that matters, not the quality of the mobility experience and its impact on later life and societies. This is unfortunate as the operationalisation of Erasmus mobility, as presented in an acreage of policy discourse, leads participants to think that an exchange visit will be an opportunity to become more reflexive about education, training and career decision-making, particularly when invoking employability imperatives. It is the fundamental incompatibility of

these two approaches, with old-fashioned bureaucratic management and evaluation of social development via carefully tended numbers on the one hand and more forward-thinking policy ideals that need to be properly targeted and implemented on the other. This ensures that programmatic failure is inevitable.

These reasons explain why Erasmus may be working for European policymakers but not for European citizens. Looking for a way forward, the people who must be listened to are the men and women who work within the programme, whose views have been represented in this chapter. These are the individuals most aware of the problems, and they are also the people with the solutions and who are in a position to enact them. For this reason these stakeholders need to be listened to by policymakers, and their advice heeded, to avert a major fail in student mobility and, by association, Erasmus becoming another part of Europe that has ceased to function effectively.

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5

Recruiting Interns and Keeping Them 'Externs': Mobility Paradoxes in Internship Governance

This chapter focuses on the consequences of following the mobility dream in relation to international work experience. Although education, training and work cannot be seen as entirely separate entities, especially in the case of the internships that provide this chapter's main focus, the process of gaining work experience has a number of distinct features that deserve to be discussed in their own right. As a research subject, the internship also has a certain added value for readers in terms of topicality and sociological concern with regard to the extent to which this form of 'work' constitutes an ethically sound way to begin a professional career due to the high degree of precariousness encountered. Increased competitiveness in the graduate labour market has nevertheless made the likelihood of starting a career in very precarious conditions inevitable for many highly qualified jobseekers, and there is evidence to suggest that certain young Europeans are accepting this inevitability. They follow the internship route in the hope that this initial labour market experience, however fleeting, may lead to a position that represents the actual start of a stable professional career.

Another important aspect of our work, and following on from the previous chapter on student mobility, is acknowledging that the advent of the international internship signals the spread of precariousness to another

array of mobility opportunities. However, while Chap. 4 concentrated upon the example of Erasmus in Portugal, a country synonymous with precarious working and studying conditions, what we will be observing here is an example of precariousness migrating to the European centre. It can therefore be said that job insecurity is not only to be found in its traditional heartland of southern Europe but also now in cities like London, Paris and Brussels. In addition, it is not confined to what we might describe as the classic situations of punitive working conditions and contractual feudalism within low-skilled jobs in the service industries (Cairns et al., 2016, pp. 49–64), but has now been extended into professional and qualified work in organisations of impeccable international standing (Armano and Murgia, 2014).

While we already know that early career precariousness is a widespread phenomenon in European societies and a popular topic of discussion for academics (see, e.g., Standing, 2011), regarded as the price to be paid for being able to climb the first rung on the ladder within a given organisation or occupational field, we need to consider the consequences of accepting this condition, however reluctantly, for new recruits when this involves mobility. Our specific focus will be on interns in international organisations (IO) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), where foreign postings are highly prevalent. As we will illustrate, starting a career with mobility can carry with it a heavy burden. Although this may be alleviated by internal corporate mechanisms for those in the middle or more advanced stages of a career, it is harder to sustain for those entering the labour market. In other words, there is hidden career stage inequality relating to unsupported mobility. Added to this imbalance is the challenge of meeting the basic costs of living and working in some of the most expensive cities of Europe, with those who become mobile interns risking failure unless they inherit social and economic capital. Recognising the significance of this issue to our understanding of early career stage mobility, this chapter examines internship governance in such working environments, and the potentially duplicitous discourse that advances the idea of building societal equality in Europe but which profits from the personal hardships of the intern cohort.

An Enterprising Culture of Work

Inside what has been described as a polarised debate (Kalleberg, 2011), there is a positive way of justifying flexibility within the labour market. This interpretation involves emphasising how the new world of work offers a fuller range of opportunities to individuals, who can choose from a huge spectrum of job possibilities but still retain the right to be free to select whatever suits them best. This perspective is also consistent with so-called discourses of excellence, according to which companies cultivate 'enterprising subjects' via a logic that codifies auto-entrepreneurialism as advantageous for themselves and their workers (Du Gay, 1996, pp. 59–60). Within this paradigm, the winners will be self-motivated people who are able to exercise control over their choices as, within a discourse of excellence, 'work is itself a means for self-fulfilment, and the road to company profit is also the path to individual self-development and growth. In this way, the worker is made "subject"' (Du Gay, 1996, p. 63). To be an entrepreneur of the self is to perceive individual biography construction as an ongoing do-it-yourself project (Kelly, 2013). While work is a major site for this construction, work experience also forms a part, with employees and trainees both presumed to be in search of 'meaning and fulfilment' (Du Gay, 1996, p. 65). For the millennial generation, this may mean searching for authenticity within a workplace and, when it is not found, there is a justification for leaving (Kelan, 2012).

These initial remarks lead us to ask just how is this magical state to be obtained? Perhaps workers can take pleasure in their labour, a process to be realised through the 'culturalisation' of the economic sphere. According to this logic, culture and economy are not to be regarded as distinct phenomena, being performed and enacted following a discourse which implies mutual re-enforcement (Du Gay and Pryke, 2002, p. 6). However, from this position, we can start to move towards the idea that graduates seeking jobs in the European labour market are expected to become culturalised entities, with their work the means of producing the self. This may well be a generational issue, implying that something has changed relatively recently with regard to how 'work' is approached. What is striking for researchers born before the 1980s is that there is no automatic rejection of the idea of

starting a career in an unpaid position, with this initial step valued for its orientation function within the entrepreneurial project of the self or seen as a continuance of an elongated educational trajectory. In other words, working for nothing is not viewed as an anathema.

To enable this process to function, the labour market needs to be regulated, or deregulated, to ensure that a large degree of contractual fluidity is possible. At a structural level, the governance of organisational life in 'an enterprising manner' involves recalibrating a wide range of institutions and activities following corporate dynamics, with an imagining of the employee as a kind of 'sovereign consumer' (Du Gay, 1994, p. 659). We can also see that this philosophy resonates with ideas codified by social scientists in terms of neo-liberalism (see, e.g., Harvey, 2005), and a continuance of the privatisation of tuition costs philosophy that has become prevalent in tertiary education (see Chap. 3), so that instead of paying to study, you are in effect paying for a chance to become employed. The process of self-financed self-improvement therefore becomes extended to another phase of the life course (see also Rose, 1990). However, significantly, we can see that someone who accepts this logic becomes able to imbue an unpaid traineeship with meaning, and a commercial value. This demonstrates how the market has come to define the sort of relationship an individual should have with himself or herself in yet another sphere (Du Gay, 1996, p. 56).

Creating the Enterprising Subject

In this new world of work, the language of management must rhetorically shift from a bureaucratic to an entrepreneurial discourse, with new workers needing to know that they simply have to be entrepreneurial, because excellent companies are seeking to cultivate only enterprising subjects, catching them in a cycle of self-construction through their involvement in a work institution. The individual capacities sought include self-motivation, enterprise, energy, initiative, self-reliance and personal responsibility, with work becoming all invasive, and the 'employee' transformed into a person looking to 'add value' to every sphere of their existence, with paid work and consumption 'just different playing grounds for the same

activity' (Du Gay, 1996, p. 65). This is, from a more sociological point of view, a call for more reflexivity in how a career is initiated and managed, with constant feedback on the value of personal choices required in terms of validation from the external project environment, including one's superiors and peers within the work institution.

This is not just a discursive shift. As mentioned previously, we need to ask questions about the structural conditions within organisations that permit the culturalisation of work to flourish. According to Atkinson (1984), the ideal model involves enabling each firm to employ staff under a variety of contractual conditions, letting two separate types of workforce emerge. The core is comprised of typical employees, who enjoy long-term, full-time contracts, fixed working hours and the prospect of a regular career within the organisation, while the periphery is populated by atypical workers with contractual conditions that engender labour market inferiority, with uncertainty of tenure, low income and limited access to welfare.[1] This division explains the use of the expression 'dual labour market', one in which employers work out how to create multifunctional teams that serve the interests of core employees through the use of various forms of disposability among peripheral workers.

Whatever way one looks at it, bifurcated workplace organisation very effectively institutionalises inequality by creating a dominant stratum of employees, who may still be contractually locked into bureaucratic ways of working but are dependent on maintaining a churning subaltern group to serve them, all of whom are subject to contingent working conditions. In more technical terms, Salmieri (2006) identifies a number of key dimensions of the precariousness of this subordinate group, including temporal, financial, functional, numerical and, last but not least and related to the scope of this book, territorial flexibility. This last item on the list involves workers being 'encouraged' to become aware that the geographical location in which they work will change according to the demands of the mother firm. In such a situation, workplace insecurity

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[1] These ideas are widely discussed in popular management literature. For example, Handy (1989) describes the flexible organisation as taking the shape of a shamrock with three leaves: the first leaf consists of a core staff of managers, technicians and professionals; the second of contractors, specialised people whose work is more expensive than that of internal members of the firms; and the third, a contingent labour force.

spreads along at least three dimensions: the work itself; the environment in which jobs exist; and the subjective experience of employment in terms of its cognitive and affective attitudes (Heery and Salomon, 1999; Doogan, 2001). The net result for those who do not, or cannot, buy into the self-entrepreneurial ethos is the generation and multiplication of anxiety and fear rather than a feeling of liberation. Some critics nevertheless argue that this view underestimates the creative power of personal agency, with certain continuities overlooked, for example, that the dual labour market perspective presupposes an overly nostalgic view of past employment practices (Fevre, 2007); or that changes in the employment sphere are only one part of an even more comprehensive 'social, cultural, geographical and historical' shift thereby eliciting a general tendency to indulge in a longing for a lost world that never actually existed for everyone (Strangleman, 2007, p. 92).

Before we go any further, we should point out that the process we are outlining can be accommodated within the existing corpus of knowledge relating to how we understand 'work'. According to what is known as the 'new career literature', graduates face both new opportunities and insecurity (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), with the expression 'protean career' used by Hall (1976) to describe how such people should act in such a labour market.[2] This process of labour market navigation is imagined as being managed by the individual rather than just by the organisation, integrating varied experiences across education, training and work (Hall, 1976). Through this means, 'work' becomes a sum of projects, although the constituent tasks do not generally congeal into a neat sequence, as the perception of different 'jobs' being part of the same continuous career is a retrospective evaluation, one that glosses over many discontinuities. Neither is each 'job' equally or progressively more difficult, complex, rewarding or better paid than the last one nor possessing equal levels of recognition. The idea is to develop a portfolio of skills, which implies having the flexibility to redeploy already possessed capacities in new situations as defined by company priorities, this being one of the central

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[2] Named after the Greek god Proteus who could change shape at will.

pillars of 'employability' (see Chap. 2), a process that is as much about staying in work as it is about finding a job in the first instance.

Another element in creating the enterprising subject is being able to engage in mobility between firms, which often means dislocation between towns, cities, countries and even continents. While in principle this should broaden a worker's range of experience, there is a risk of inhibited reflexivity related to excessive involuntary circulation, with, for example, new entrants to the labour market becoming trapped in the mechanism of moving between workgroups, companies or from one section of the periphery to another, never quite managing to enter the hallowed centre, always being confined to an external position. Building on ideas stated in Chap. 2 on employability, we can see that this self-entrepreneurship strategy cannot be fully realised without the end destination of secure employment, as the process simply becomes a generator of precarity. Again, using the 'conveyor belt' metaphor of Chap. 3, new capacities have to be constantly created, with former aptitudes becoming forgotten, leading to wastage of talent.

This can become a very hard position to escape from, particularly when an underemployment stratum becomes an institutionalised feature of a labour market, organisation or occupational sector, meaning that having a large number of people in occupancy of these liminal positions becomes an economic necessity. Given the proliferation of insecure job contracts and the low position of interns in the hierarchy of employees, this situation would seem to have come to pass. What we are left with is a situation where people are stuck at the preparatory point of a career, with the real beginning of the self-entrepreneurial project effectively stalled by constant restarts. This is why we argue that there is an actual possibility that interns will never become internal to an occupational field as they remain 'externs', who are more or less permanently shut out from the core.

The 'Boundaryless Career'

Another way to look at the contemporary career is to perceive it as 'boundaryless'. This term refers to the perception of there being 'a range of possible forms that defies traditional employment assumptions'

(Arthur and Rousseau, 1996, p. 3), including the idea that one does not have to develop his or her career confined within a single organisation. Rather, it takes shape through moving across the (geographical) boundaries that separate different employers, depending very much upon a key employ-ability component, social networking. The 'boundaryless career' thereby becomes integral to the emergence of the entrepreneurial self, despite making a professional trajectory outwardly appear somewhat 'disorderly' (Wilensky, 1964), at least in contrast to the comparatively linear traditional work trajectories within bureaucratic organisations. This is an outward- as opposed to an inward-looking philosophy, the emphasis in the 'new' approach being on having internationally open labour markets that allow individuals and firms to experiment and learn by continually reshuffling 'local knowledge, skills, and technology' (Saxenian, 1996, p. 36), with exponents of this system celebrating the, by now familiar, neo-liberal virtues of adaptation, negotiation, taking responsibility and resilience.

While this is a nice idea from the point of view of adaptable employees, as external conditions become increasingly hostile and work more fragmented, we have to wonder about what is happening to one's internal sense of self and continuity, and the risk of suffering from a form of what Sennett (1998) terms 'corrosion of character'. Assessing how long one can keeping packing his or her own 'parachute' (Hirsch, 1987) means taking into account the ontological damage inflicted by constant job churning and switches of institutional location, and the wearing down of a series of essential attributes, ranging from the capacity to support a family to being granted access to basic citizenship rights. This returns us to the idea of reflexive mobility having its limits, with people who spatially circulate always reaching a point at which they can circulate no more due to personal or familial demands for stability and predictability overcoming professional mobility imperatives (Cairns, 2014, pp. 28–29). The realisation that it is time to stop travelling may happen after a change in circumstances, perhaps having children or dependent relatives, wanting to settle in a place that one finds particularly appealing or just being tired of the endless cycle of airports, long-distance relationships and temporary accommodation.

We are also left wondering about the extent to which agency can be exercised in a peripatetic career, since the movements undertaken by trainees and workers appear suspiciously involuntary, dictated by corporate

interests rather than by workers' self-fulfilment. This leads us to ask questions about agency and how mobility decisions are actually made among those approaching the end of full-time education and beginning to look towards the international labour market. It is interesting that numerous studies confirm the popularity of the idea of moving abroad for work or further study at post-graduate level. For example, recent research on students' narratives of the future found that over 78 per cent of respondents mentioned that they might undertaking some form of mobility in the future (Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2016). This mobility is imagined in association with places where, presumably, a plan is capable of being realised, a process that implies accurate identification of the best place to move in order to fulfil one's ambitions and life plans rather than taking into account the demands of employers. The extent to which this positive orientation towards moving abroad is grounded in an understanding of international labour market reality is alas unclear, but the important point is that employers know there is a potentially large pool of tertiary-educated talent from which to pick and choose new recruits, such as those tempted by the thought of moving abroad by what may be an idealised view of global opportunities. With such a high level of interest, these very same employers can make demands, including the imposition of precarious working conditions that inhibit self-realisation, thus explaining how mobility decision-making becomes a collision between idealism and reality.

In understanding the functioning of this mobility imperative, we are not helped by ideas from neo-classical migration theory that would have us believe that people 'simply' move towards the most lucrative opportunities. This is not possible when there are no lucrative opportunities. The best one can hope for is a promise of relative stability following an initial period of precarity. This is certainly not 'migration' as codified by neo-classical migration scholars (see Chap. 2), which is one reason why the link between highly qualified mobility and precarity should receive more attention, as this would prevent a lot of career mistakes from being made, not to mention the fact that people might learn the truth about 'migration'. Rather than being distrustful of 'immigrants' taking their jobs and allowing this paranoia to lead them towards political populism (see Chap. 7), they should be more concerned about how they and their

children will cope with the need to become mobile without hope of settlement should they want to pursue an international career.

As professional mobility has ceased to be about immediate financial concerns, such as a higher salary or any salary at all, welfare conditions and tax considerations, this take us to our next realisation, which concerns the unknowability of the criteria for success and correct 'orientation to work' (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005). Contrary to what employability rhetoric suggests, for those in the early stages of a career it can be very difficult to hold onto a 'project', since it is hard to find a job they can see themselves doing for any significant length of time. In other words, it is hard to get started due to the lack of information provided by employers and the funders of mobility opportunities. Even when there is some idea of what to expect, there is still a struggle for stability in an unpredictable, and perhaps unfair, labour market.

In attempting to understand how the international job search process works, at a conceptual level we can distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic work orientations relative to current situations and the practical aspects of finding a position (Gallie, 2007), factors that are also tied to country context (Turunen, 2011). Authors on labour process theory following Braverman (1974) underline the significance of increased loss of control over labour, accompanied by a loss of earning power and prestige (see, e.g., Leicht and Fennell, 2001). Literature on 'mobility intentions', whereby students are asked to identify how and where they think they will move after completing their studies (Cairns and Smyth, 2011), also takes into consideration the encounter with the agent side (how, in fact, people think they are choosing), where the governance of mobility is to the advantage of corporations and stakeholders restricting or channeling choices into profitable formats (see Chap. 4). Practising reflexivity in mobility decision-making is therefore not simply a matter of having 'ambition' (Skrbis et al., 2014), it also involves considering the extent to which personal demands relate to the quantity and quality of mobility opportunities. Therefore, while we can endorse the critique of 'the amobile assumption of social science enquiry' (Holdsworth, 2015, p. 3), we also acknowledge the consequences created by the governance of mobility systems—in education, training and employment—designed to support core/periphery labour divisions rather than helping movers to

overcome their nationally bounded disadvantages, whether related to socio-demographic factors or difficult life situations. In other words, within the, so-called, 'boundaryless career', national borders are replaced by corporate- and technocratically-mediated limitations. These effectively constitute a new set of barriers to be overcome before mobility can be deemed a success.[3]

Turning to Mobility?

Academic scholarship on various forms of mobile life has provided visibility for different ways of thinking about a wide range of mobility modalities, from public transportation to lifestyle choices (see, e.g., Urry, 2000; Sheller and Urry, 2006). The influence of this work has meant that it is now relatively normal to consider mobility as a variable in life planning, acknowledging the apparent shrinking of physical distances in the management of daily lives. This is due to factors such as expanded air travel possibilities and digital technology, whether this is thinking about a new job or where to go on holiday, albeit while also taking into negative consequences, such as the environmental impact of this mass mobilisation.

Stating the existence of systems of circulation does not, however, explain how to successfully integrate mobility into one's life, for example, finding ways of coping with the micro-level frictions facing those about to embark on a graduate career. Some of these dilemmas are quite easy to identify. For instance, although early career movers are supposed to have no family constraints at this point in the life course, this is almost never the case. Family and friendship networks in fact bear heavily on mobility choices, with anticipated disruption to relationships with parents, children and even domestic pets providing effective deterrents to outward movement (Cairns and Smyth, 2011). This is not to mention that, for qualified movers, there is the need to invest academic capital wisely

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[3] There is a pressing need to discuss the in-built inequalities of mobility systems, and considering that the scope of our book is limited to a relatively small number of empirical contexts, we hope that newly launched journals, such as *Applied Mobilities* whose first issue appeared in 2016, will recognise these questions.

(Cairns, 2014, pp. 20–22). These are just two reasons why mobility is not necessarily the win–win situation for graduates that is often presented in academic discourse.[4]

We also need to be able to distinguish between discursive representations of mobility centring on the value of cosmopolitanism, which are often created by vested interests to serve their own need for security, and mobility as actually practised. The cosmopolitan persona is seen as idealistic, successful and open-minded (Cicchelli, 2013), in opposition to the negatively defined fixity and immobility of the non-cosmopolitan, but often without recognition of the costs of this success (Yoon, 2014).[5] This is a failure to account that helps explain the indiscriminate promotion of mobility as a positive value rather than acknowledging that it is a multifaceted practice (Skrbis et al., 2014), with local attachments recognised as having central importance in young people's life experiences in numerous studies from various national contexts (see, e.g., O'Connor, 2005; Wierenga, 2008, 2011; Marcu, 2012; Farrugia et al., 2014). Turning to mobility is neither easy nor the always welcome prospect certain academics would have us believe, which is yet another reason why we need to look for new perspectives on migration and other forms of movement. We also need to be aware that mobile individuals cannot expect to receive understanding from more sedentary members of society, who seem completely oblivious to the fact that the regionally situated advantages they enjoy in their careers are not available to younger workers. Neither do they appreciate how difficult the taking of mobility decisions can be in emotional terms. Instead, it is assumed that a mobility capacity has somehow been acquired at birth, and all one has to do is decide to move in order to launch a cosmopolitan career.

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[4] This is not to mention practical issues, such as losing out on welfare benefits, including pension contributions, in the course of a mobile career due the lack of harmonisation between national benefits systems, and complications arising from taxation systems favouring more sedentary workers.

[5] This dissonance between discursive representations of mobility and its actuality will be explored in a future publication with regard to misleading representations of the Erasmus programme.

Internships and Their Discursive Regulation

In the second half of this chapter, we will concentrate on unpacking the internship phenomenon. Currently, we lack robust large-scale survey evidence on the impact this popular form of 'work' is having on young Europeans' professional development and personal well-being, although some research is moving in this direction.[6] There are nevertheless many aspects of internship that we are able to explore. The first of these issues concerns the 'controversy' surrounding the status of internships as a form of work and/or training, after which we move on to consider how they have come to be viewed as an indispensable part of the European labour market. This will enable us to engage with the current debate on internships within which, according to Andrijasevic and Sacchetto (2016), prominent themes relate to how they, on the one hand, constitute, 'social dumping and hence a race to the bottom', but on the other are 'business opportunities and benefits for firms, states and mobile workers'. Fundamental to this debate is the discursive representation of internships. A belief has grown up, particularly in policy circles, that they have an excessively positive function in helping highly qualified young people to start a career, despite the contradiction of being seen to be fundamentally working for nothing, which is something that is generally not a good attribute for someone who wants to be taken seriously within an occupational field.

Much critique centres upon the issue of financial remuneration, or rather the frequent lack of it. We will therefore start with reflections on studies that have explored the nature of unpaid (voluntary) work, and tackle similar epistemological problems. There is, for example, concern in regard to how various forms of paid and unpaid work are connected to class and gender identity, leading to a need to re-conceptualise 'work' in terms of the dichotomy between paid and unpaid labour. If we follow the position that 'what constitutes an activity as work, as opposed to something else such as leisure, is not whether it is paid but whether it involves

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[6] The issue of internship is receiving some academic attention. For example, the British Sociological Association (BSA) conference in 2016 featured a panel devoted to internships and the UK-based Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have funded a project called *Paths2Work* on this theme at the University of Warwick in the UK.

the provision of a service to others or the production of goods for the consumption of others' (Taylor, 2004, p. 38), it becomes evident that unpaid or poorly paid internships need to be codified as work. However, they are not generally defined as such by legal definitions but are conceived of as part of an educational trajectory, regardless of whether or not the placement is integrated into a university course or an element of a training programme. In other words, they are considered to be 'work experience' and not work itself.

This demarcation is far from inconsequential, as it allows interns to be treated differently from traditional workers, such as those defined as core employees within an organisation. This enables a distinction to be made that is similar to the division between work conducted in the private (domestic) and public (labour market) spheres:

> [. . .] private and public and formal and informal aspects of work relations can be situated along a continuum, rather than in mutually exclusive spheres, and divided by a vertical axis signifying paid and unpaid work. Leaving aside the paid or unpaid aspects of the work, this creates a series of zones moving from left to right, from formal work in the public sphere within institutions and organizations, through a central zone of informal but public work taking place in the community and neighbourhood structured by social network, through to the informal or private sphere on the right, the domain of the family. (Taylor, 2004, p. 39)

To say that the unpaid or underpaid intern is an equivalent figure to a spouse with extensive domestic responsibilities without remuneration or to a community worker may strike some readers as facetious, but there is a shared principle, which is that important, even essential, work is being carried out without full recognition or recompense in a workplace, not to mention a probable lack of respect for one's labours from society. However, while the status of unpaid work in the private sphere has been extensively contested, not least by several generations of influential feminist authors, the paternalistic working practices of governments, corporations and NGOs (including activist organisations that claim to be working for the public good) generally pass unchallenged. What is more, the cultural economy postulate mentioned at the beginning of

this chapter suggests that the exchange taking place is one between giving free labour (or underpaid work) and receiving first-hand experience, or in other words, they are on the same level and treated as a fair deal of two exchangeable goods.

The lack of open contestation about this transaction tells us much about the discursive success of institutions in glossing over the fact that their work depends upon maintaining a deep exploitation stratum. Furthermore, the actual value of the activity needs to questioned as no one seems to question that work experience is not equivalent to the experience of (paid) work in relation to the instrumental value of finding subsequent employment. That many internships take place in ostensibly charitable organisations should raise further concerns. The use of good causes acts as a driver to recruitment, with people thinking that working for next to nothing is acceptable in the name of fighting for world hunger, campaigning for human rights or protecting the environment, conveniently ignoring the fact that they are putting their own financial position in jeopardy.

There are basically two sides in this debate, one which reflects the views of the institution, while the other is more external, relating to applicants and interns. We can illustrate the former perspective with extracts from interviews conducted with representatives of a major NGO in Brussels. From an organisation's point of view, it is empowered by the high level of interest in their work, and they may receive over 700 applications for a single position related to human rights if the vacancy is advertised for two weeks. Yet, despite this massive imbalance between supply and demand, efforts are still made to make the internship experience palatable, with one employer providing its own unstructured solution to this difficult to solve dilemma. As one representative explained in the following exchange:

> [. . .] there are a lot of people who are looking for these possibilities [internships], because they know that [this organisation] is a good name; if they do [our] internship, they have the possibility afterwards to get a job. They have possibilities after they have finished inside of our confederation, because they, ah, have direct access to all our internal and external jobs, so they are the first ones who will look at [vacancies, and] they will see them, because they are in our intranet, so they can see ok, these are the new positions, they

have the possibility of course to [apply] and then through the work we have here, we work with many other organisations, we have many other [contacts with] NGOs also with the European Institutions [. . .]. So the interns here or the stagier, we don't call them the stagier, we call them 'policy assistants' or 'advocacy assistant', ok? [. . .] They have a job, which is they come to a meeting with our policy advisors where they call lobby meetings, they will go to conferences. They will have also [work to do] not immediately, but let's say after two, three months, they can find, 'Ok I'm very much interested in this topic', then we will try to give them a project which will be their own project, which during the rest of seven months they will be able to, to finalise themselves, where they are more owner of this project.

So it's not that they are our secretaries, [. . .] do you understand, no? That they will do what we want [them] to do. We'll try [to see what] they have learnt during the ten months what we are doing here. Not that always it is easy, because we have a lot of work and we don't have a lot of staff, [. . .] and we work also to supervise the work of the stagier, so it is always a strategy to find a good balance and we are not probably always doing the best work. But we have some of our interns who have found jobs inside of our organisation and [who] work in teams in consulates, in lobby organisations or [. . .] inside the European institution, so we'll try to give them enough background to prepare them for the job.

This excerpt is riddled with inconsistencies and raises many points of concern. Control of information about vacancies and its withholding from the public within NGOs and publicly funded bodies is unscrupulous. This kind of 'insider trading' in job opportunities would be regarded as ethically suspect if carried out in other business environments, but it seems standard practice in regard to interns. The perception of wrongdoing is mitigated by the fact that young graduates are recognised as needing experience and, in this framework, employers supposedly serve the need to 'offer this opportunity'. They are also given a title of 'assistant' in an attempt to create a semblance of status within the organisation, although this formal title is not actually used by the informant. Then the intern is charged with finding a 'project', constituting the platform for the performance of self-entrepreneurialism, the place where they can use their own agency. However, despite the protestation that they are not 'secretaries', with the pejorative use of this term raising

additional concerns, there is no guarantee being made of a place in the organisation, since only 'some of our interns' find work. Nevertheless, there is at least recognition that there is a need to take responsibility for interns, and some ideas regarding generating future directions after the placement is concluded.

What this interviewee is confirming is that their (understaffed) organisation uses the promise of a conscientious career as bait, with this promise acting as one means of internally governing the intern. This practice, from the point of view of the organisation and its human resources department, is not viewed as contentious, particularly as there is a code of conduct in place. Its obligation to the intern is codified in the basic principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR), a model of governance followed by companies in need of such regulation. However, the impression created by authors writing about this issue (see, e.g., Banerjee, 2008) is that this approach consists of little more than self-regulation and, in practice, is based more on ideals and intentions, or 'aspirational talk' (Christensen et al., 2013, p. 376). The model of discursive and actual regulation of internship observed here points towards a collision between social and corporate goals, leading to the emergence of a substantial critique on a number of grounds. This ranges from the ineffectiveness of CSR initiatives per se to the role of CSR in providing corporate access to policymakers, inviting investigation of the nexus of trust between firms and non-market stakeholders, particularly governments. Furthermore:

> Sociologically, a key issue is how formally non-binding agreements can gradually become politically, socially and morally binding for the actors involved. How can external expectations be perceived as valid norms and/or gradually be internalized and perceived as the 'reasonable' way to act? This kind of 'binding' is not absolute, and one can imagine courses of action where actors conform and adapt in some respects and preserve their interests and initial positions—refusing conformity—in others. (Jacobsson, 2004, p. 359)

A blunter way of looking at this situation would be to say that CSR means freedom from taking actual responsibility for 'employees' rather than organisations being totally accountable. Unfortunately, this issue is

not adequately treated in organisational trust literature, which tends to focus on the relationships between different actors within a firm and/or between economic environment actors. In other words, the emphasis is on trust in the market environment, involving firms and their employees, customers, suppliers, distributors and/or other companies.

Building on this position, we also need to address how corporations talk about mobility in their CSR strategies, or if indeed their needs are perceived and addressed at all. In other words, it is interesting to investigate how big employers account for, or fail to justify, their use of mobility-dependent internships at a time when this practice has become common in certain European destinations. More specifically, it is interesting to see if there is any reference to mobility constraints in the taking up of these internships, given that mobility may just heighten existing precariousness rather than lead towards a situation where the creation and multiplication of skills and abilities becomes optimal for individuals and local labour markets. This leads us to consider internships as a sociological issue as opposed to being a purely economic one.

Case Study Evidence of International Organisation and Non-Governmental Organisations

One obvious shortcoming of neo-classical migration theory relates to the assumption that potential movers have access to perfect information about issues such as salary levels, welfare arrangements, taxation systems and the cost of living in various destinations. A lack of such knowledge, however, inhibits the making of economically rational decisions. Micro-level assessments also confirm that the practice and theoretical explanation of mobility differs markedly, even within the EU and relatively similar populations (Recchi, 2015). For mobility driven by reflexive imperatives there are other concerns arising from non-monetary impulses, such as idealism and social conscientiousness, or deferred gratification in anticipation of a pay-off at a later stage in life.

This leads us to ask where young and ambitious graduates obtain their information about mobility opportunities, including internships: probably not from sociology textbooks or research reports. The internet is an obvious resource, with many websites now catering for those who aspire to have a career in IOs and NGOs. Building on the idea of a 'logic of opportunities' introduced in Chap. 1, that people move abroad to have a chance at success rather than an assured career, we look first at how engaging in internship is represented as a means of obtaining an initial workplace orientation, that is, the very much sought after first-hand experience. This position is developed in consideration of the internal and external strata within organisations, and of how unprotected workers unwittingly sacrifice their own security for the benefit of those in the core.[7]

UNESCO: An Example of the Internship Model

Before we discuss these three elements, a summary will be presented of how job opportunities for early career graduates are constructed, using the example of Paris-based UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).[8] In its online presentation, we learn that its Young Professionals Programme (YPP) is open to candidates of

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[7] This section is based on reflections from material on recruitment processes and publicity discourse of some major IOs and NGOs in Europe. Interestingly, and this is a major finding of this part of the web-based research, there seems to be no, or only very oblique, reference to the issues we have sought to investigate in this chapter on organisational websites. The fact that mobility is not addressed in CSR means, for us, that it is not elaborated as an issue and, in terms of shared responsibility, it remains a personal problem. This is striking as there exists an enormous amount of grey literature on the internet where the discomfort of interns is hotly debated. We also reckon that there may be references to such issues in internal documents, but we do not have access to private materials. What we have done in this section is explore the public face of internship, the corporate discourse that is readily available to any aspirant intern in a given field, rather than being restricted to specialists. Additionally, for the sake of reconstructing the issues in public debates, four additional interviews have been conducted in Brussels: one with a HR professional of a NGO with various branches throughout the world; two with people working for pressure groups and organisations in the field of youth mobility in Europe; and one with one of the founder of InternsGoPro, which provided interesting examples of innovative strategies that may help to counteract the worst excesses of intern exploitation. Although the interviews we conducted were very open and relaxed, it must be stressed that access was particularly difficult to secure and a great number of organisations who were contacted neither agreed to an interview nor replied to our invitation to contribute.

[8] For further details, see http://en.unesco.org/careers/

nationalities that are underrepresented or not represented in UNESCO. They must be under the age of 32, with an advanced university degree in a subject of interest to UNESCO. Languages required are English or French, with the specification that 'knowledge of both working languages is an asset. Knowledge of Spanish, Russian, Arabic or Chinese is an additional asset'. Similarly, for work experience, 'initial professional experience is an asset, but not mandatory'. From the UNESCO website, we learn that the selected 16 young professionals in the programme (11 women and 5 men) come from various regions of the world: '7 from non-represented Member States and 9 from under-represented Member States'. It also declares that:

> [...] the YPP selection process is highly competitive and attracts increasing numbers of candidates every year. The 2015 intake was chosen from an initial pool of 907 candidates submitted by 86 National Commissions; 277 candidates were pre-screened against the eligibility criteria and educational requirements. These candidates were invited for an interview responding to questions dealing with substantive and technical skills, curriculum and motivation. After a thorough review, 83 candidates from 44 Members States were selected for a final interview.

The national diversity mission of the UNESCO programme is clear, in that, 'YPP seeks to improve the geographical distribution of the Organization, contribute to rejuvenating the Secretariat, promote gender equality among staff and create an enhanced pool of young civil servants, enriching and diversifying the UNESCO family'. A clear goal is therefore to present UNESCO as a diverse organisation through the use of its interns, as opposed to, for example, constituting its core workforce in such a manner. Also note the repeated emphasis on meeting the organisation's perceived requirements, rather than taking into account the needs of those taking part in the competition. This extends to a neglect of the possible negative aspects of the integration of a 'beauty contest' dynamic into internship recruitment, not least for the huge number of losing candidates, who may simply have failed to fit the profile, with wrong gender, wrong nationality or having the wrong values. Neither is the negative side of this competition acknowledged in the programme's rationale:

> The purpose of the UNESCO Internship programme is to offer selected graduate and postgraduate students in a field related to the work of UNESCO the opportunity to supplement their academic knowledge with practical work assignments and to enable them to gain a better understanding of UNESCO's mandate and programmes. The duration of an internship generally ranges between 2 and 6 months.

This narrows the scope of the placement further as applicants must be enrolled in a university programme that is relevant to UNESCO so that their academic capital can be readily harvested, not to mention the stated linguistic restrictions. Suffice to say, despite the epic demands made upon candidates in terms of their skills and capacities, the internships are not remunerated other than partial support for travel, insurance, accommodation and visa costs, if applicable. Crucially, the YPP is also presented as a mobility opportunity, 'an integral part of career development', but one that will, in reality, only be accessible to those with pre-existing inheritances of social, economic and cultural capital, as well as valuable educational credentials.

UNESCO internship demands are far from unique among government bodies and NGOs. Similar arrangements can be found in relation to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) based in Geneva, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna, the Council of Europe (CoE) in Strasbourg and the European Commission (EC) in Brussels. In some instances, the recruitment offers seem quite tempting, as in the case of the CoE, where it is stated: 'Join us as a trainee and help defend human rights in Europe!' But not only are internships sold in terms of conscientiousness, they are also sold through the promise of 'becoming internal'. Even though it can be clearly stated that they will not result directly in employment, there is a strong emphasis on how internships lead to a job through offering the first rung on the career ladder. However, although this approach depends on the promise of getting first-hand experience, that internship is legally considered part of the educational project suggests an element of misdirection. For instance, according the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

The objective of the internship is to give you a *first-hand impression* of the day-to-day working environment of the United Nations. You will be given a *real* chance to work with our people. As part of our team, *working directly* with outstanding and inspiring career professionals and senior management, you will be exposed to high-profile conferences, participate in meetings, and contribute to analytical work as well as organizational policy of the United Nations. Initially you will take on the amount of responsibility you can shoulder; the potential for growth, however, is *yours* to develop. (emphasis added)

This excerpt directly refers to the accent on personal responsibility in an entrepreneurial career. However, as we are reminded even here, there is no track from internship to employment, so 'the potential growth' will happen elsewhere: in another organisation, another city or perhaps even another country. This is not to say that employers purposely disrespect their interns, after all, they may be facing resource shortages that necessitate maintaining a code of conduct to ensure that new arrivals keep coming. We only wish to rebalance a skewed discussion through acknowledging the uncertainty of outcomes and contribution of internships to a European culture of precariousness.

Recalling the image of the mobile workgroup mentioned in discussing boundaryless career construction, and also the theme of cosmopolitan learning within groups of student movers from the previous chapter, we can imagine that less work is put into building bridges with an internship cohort and more emphasis placed upon the performance of a specific intern task. As an approach, this focus on individual as opposed to collective activity may serve to limit the development of workplace competencies, at its worst consisting of little more than busy work, particularly where there is no significant sharing of knowledge and expertise across the boundaries of the internal workplace hierarchy. In other words, the capacity for employability to be generated is limited in such an arrangement since an individual's ability to gain and maintain employment involves being able to move between roles within the same organisation and to understand what is required for secure and fulfilling work, rather than the precarious kind (Hillage and Pollard, 1998).

A further dimension relates to the fact that multinational organisations are likely to have sites in different countries, with each locale having different contractual arrangements for its interns. For instance, interns may be remunerated in one country but not in another, as is the case in the following NGO, which has offices in Belgium and the UK:

> We don't have at the moment [. . .] a harmonised policy to treat interns, we don't have that, there is no policy, which I can tell you: 'Here is a piece of paper. It's on that where you can find it on our internet', or there is something transparent which you can then use. [This organisation] doesn't have it, because each country has another way of treating interns, [. . .] the UK is based a lot on voluntary work, voluntary which means they have people, students, or young people who have finished their studies and starting to look for a job and will do an internship in [place name], and then it's no problem to work [. . .] not receiving any reward, mainly allowances only covering the transport and the sandwiches. And this is the law in the UK [. . .]. Here in Belgium [the] non-profit movement is trying to regulate the work of interns and volunteers, so there is an organisation here in Belgium called Voluntariat.BE who really looks very much about and how people who are doing voluntary work are used in different organisations. And there are clear guidelines how to do it: a person who works every day in an NGO from morning to, let's say nine to five, it's not a voluntary, it's a stagier, an intern. In here [. . .] in this office we will register this person, with the social security and will sign a contract, which is called Contract de Immersion Professionel. This is the contract which we sign.

This international inconsistency therefore makes internships more arduous in some countries compared to others, adding another dimension to the decision-making process for candidates in relation to their choice of destination. The relative disadvantage of interning in countries like the UK may, for example, make more 'lucrative' destinations, such as Belgium, more appealing. Even taking into account these, probably quite small, financial differences, the cost of entry will still be rather steep, particularly if time and resources have to be allocated to activities such as learning a new language and settling into a new place.

The External's Response: InternsGoPro

The principle of international internship, it should be said, is not the problem. Spending time in a global or European level institution should be a relatively effective means of becoming acquainted with a cosmopolitan working environment, as well as an opportunity to test out one's skills and capacities, perhaps for the first time. The point of contention is that the number of talented and ambitious young people who recognise this potential benefit is enormous while the number of quality places is relatively small, and it is recognition of this imbalance that creates the freedom to exploit among organisations. They can cherry-pick the 'best' candidates and make full use of their talents for their own advantage, and follow selection criteria that suit them.

This is not, however, the whole story, and there has been a response of a sort to the kind of situations outlined in our discussion of UNESCO-type internship opportunities. A Brussels-based organisation, InternsGoPro, was founded by a small group of young people concerned about the working and living situations of many interns in the Belgian capital.[9] On its website the organisation defines itself as a social enterprise, 'with the mission to boost youth integration in the labour market & promote internships that truly help students & graduates develop skills and get a job'. Its initiatives include an online rating system through which interns can provide anonymous feedback on their experiences from across Europe, as well as being a more general advocate for youth rights. The idea is simple and market-oriented, designed to help prospective interns make informed choices through being provided with basic information about general working conditions, including possible payment.[10] Through this means, organisations that provide good quality internships can be rewarded for their efforts through receiving good publicity, partly meeting their corporate social responsibility duties and becoming more

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[9] For more information on InternsGoPro, see http://www.internsgopro.com/en/home/

[10] At the time of the interview in March 2016 with Pierre-Julien Bosser, an activist and lead organiser of the European Interns' Day in July 2014, InternsGoPro had just celebrated its second birthday. Despite Pierre-Julien saying in the interview that he has no clue where the adventure will lead, the idea has so far been very successful in its implementation, bringing him several awards and media attention from Forbes and the BBC.

likely to attract the most talented internship-seekers. InternsGoPro also provide a label for such organisations, who are seen as 'part of the solution', as explained by their representative:

> We don't have capacity and we don't want to make a big auditing process [. . .] young people find the criteria [. . .] and we transform that to commitment, or at the present I will publicly respect, I will publicly say that I will respect this criteria [. . .]. To make sure that they respect the commitment we have the rating system, so if they behave badly or don't respect the commitment for the rating chart, I mean they have like red cards and yellow cards.

The aim is to create transparency about internship conditions and measure their value, creating a European standard in fostering mobility and 'employing' young people. However, the approach is relatively open and wide and, while the founders are convinced that a simple action like a rating system can have a concrete impact, they have many other ideas. They are also aware of the mobility dimension of internship, and that it is 'always difficult to have to start a new period of life to go to another country'. For this reason, they aim to provide a 'label' that can signify that there is a minimum of level of 'security' in this movement: 'Maybe it's a bad example, but you know if you go to a country [. . .] in Africa or in Asia and you are a bit afraid of the food, because you don't know what to eat [you try] MacDonalds, ok, it's something that I can understand. I'm sure it will be ok, yeah'. While we are not suggesting that undertaking an internship is akin to eating fast food, and our interviewee admits that this is perhaps an exaggeration in order to make a point, there should be a certain level of predictability with regard to what to expect in terms of the quality of international work experience.

The most striking aspect of this particular social enterprise is that market logic is never rejected; on the contrary, as the above interviewee remarks, 'For the market this is quite serious'. For these reasons, we believe that such actions are forms of control from below rather than acts of resistance, or a more general means of defining boundaries between structure and agency for this group (see Coffey and Farrugia, 2014). The rating system also relies on customer logic, where a 'job' opportunity is a service like any another, that you may or may not wish to buy, or invest

your resources in, moving from one country to another in order to take that opportunity. Internships are therefore not problematised in terms of the nature of the opportunity or in the social contract entailed. In this respect, InternsGoPro can be seen as wanting to adjust the existing mechanisms that support internships, preventing abuses and misuses, rather than a means for wholesale reform.

Conclusions

Understanding internships involves taking into account the complexities of moving from education to work for graduates in a post-industrial Europe still struggling to cope with a prolonged economic crisis and facing new mobility-related challenges (see Chap. 7). The current internship system reflects broader disparities within labour markets, being heavily reliant upon a dual labour market division within organisations, mirroring a core and periphery dynamic that we have observed throughout this book. Furthermore, we can see that the spread of internship is enabled by information technology, as a means of publicising and, perhaps, providing an informal means of encouraging corporate responsibility. Ultimately, the need to undertake an internship can be understood through appreciating the logic of opportunities we identified earlier in this book, which is forming part of the search for the elusive opening that will lead to a position in the labour market.

There can be little doubt that this now well-established means of becoming acclimatised to the skilled job market is here to stay, despite internships not necessarily being value-laden for all participants or always a valuable stepping stone in the construction of a career. Some of those who become involved will improve their network integration and come to understand the mechanisms within an occupational field that help secure employment not previously evident. For others, their involvement risks becoming yet another form of precarious work, with no serious training or prospect of labour market integration taking place, and the question therefore arises whether this is work experience or exploitation. In response, pressure groups have started to advocate for better conditions for interns. There has been, for instance, a proposal made to the EC

(COM (2013) 857) to introduce a Quality Framework for Traineeships. However, until a solid framework is in place, there is a possibility that internships will remain a way of obtaining very cheap skilled labour for organisations, providing a means of replacing existing paid workers and, ultimately, eliminating jobs. That much debate on this issue has focused on contractual aspects rather than mobility consequences is one of our key concerns. Reflecting on InternsGoPro as a case study, we learn that, rather than rejecting internships as a mobility modality, there is a strong belief that better regulated placements will boost the prospect of having a real career. However, there will always be fear and anxiety tied to making such a risky investment of one's time and money and the realisation that sacrifices need to be made without a guaranteed return.

To return to Du Gay, who we quoted extensively at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that market logic has absorbed this aspect of life experience and, in this sense, we can argue that another part of the life course has become commodified and ripened for possible exploitation. On the other hand, the InternsGoPro case study shows that interns are aware of the contradiction in the logic of opportunities they are following. A desire to pursue personal career dreams may ultimately serve to limit their own development, due to being 'trapped' in positions where there is no opportunity to experience a full connection with the workplace or exercise their own agency in shaping a career. However, rather than seeking to overturn the system, we can see that the approach is to establish novel mechanisms to place boundaries on their exploitation using a market-led brand of thinking.

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6

Being a Researcher: Professional Stability and Career Trajectories in Science and Technology

This part of our discussion is based on an analysis of a crucial area of intra-European highly qualified migration: the mobile career trajectories of scientists.[1] While the preceding chapters have looked at education and training contexts, we will now move into the world of work, focusing on the research profession, in other words, what happens next to those who successfully complete tertiary education and training? In doing so, we consider some of the consequences that arise from the need to be internationally mobile in professional research careers, drawing on evidence from fieldwork conducted in a number of top laboratories in Portugal, including interviews with senior and junior research project partners that identify the crucial role of networking between different countries in sustaining a career trajectory.

While we have already identified precariousness as a concern in other mobility practices, most prominently in internship (see Chap. 5), moving now to a later point in the life course, we discover that some of those in employment face equally challenging circumstances with regard to coping with insecure working conditions. As we shall see, the current scientific mobility system also follows a Matthew Effect dynamic in repeatedly supporting the careers of a very small number of exceptionally fortunate individuals at the expense of a large sub-stratum of research team members, enabled via the use of network integration. This situation means that it is not uncommon for highly qualified scientists, people seemingly at the top of their professions, to be caught in a position of prolonged contractual liminality not dissimilar to the more highly publicised working situations of precarious workers in the service industries (see, e.g., Standing, 2011). The enforced precarity of the research career is one of the uncomfortable truths of professional life, in direct contradiction to high-profile national and European discourses that stress the strategic importance of science and technology (S&T) to societal development and international competitiveness.

The structure of scientific work, generally conducted on a project-by-project basis rather than following a predictable and continuous chronological pattern (that is, tenured employment in a fixed organisation with a bureaucratic structure that permits upward mobility), has influenced the research design of the fieldwork that provides evidence for this chapter. We focus on analysing material gathered by two research project teams. Legally speaking, both are located in Associate Laboratories (AL) in Portugal, a specific status created in 1999 (Decree-Law No. 125/99 of 4 April 1999) and designed to act as a mark of distinction for S&T institutions. Between 2000 and 2011, 26 scientific institutions achieved this recognition, based on evaluations of their research activities and strategic plans. These organisations have a central function in the Portuguese scientific research system due to their roles in the production of knowledge and as prestigious employers of highly qualified individuals.

The two laboratories we focus on are both situated in the Lisbon area. According to official guidelines from the Portuguese government funding agency, Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Associate Laboratory 1 (hereafter referred to as AL1) is classified in the field of Chemical

Engineering and Biotechnology, with what we will refer to as research Project A studying part of its vegetable science division (plant genomics).[2] Associate Laboratory 2 (AL2) has a wide disciplinary range, under the jurisdiction of molecular biosciences to make interventions at the molecular level of diseases.[3] In this second laboratory, particular emphasis has been given to the study of research Project B, which aims to develop scientific knowledge of morphogenesis and regeneration of tissues and other organs of living animals, although this project was closely articulated with other ongoing research activities.

Being a Scientist: Research Projects and the Professional Career

Analysis of the professional careers of scientists was made through focusing on various aspects of their work and adopting different theoretical and methodological approaches. Following Prpić et al. (2014), we decided to use a multiple national case study approach, selecting cases in scientific fields of broad international relevance. The analytical focus was on issues such as the nature of a career and the question of vocation or talent associated with an academic and professional trajectory (see also Cohen et al., 2004; Sommerlund and Boutaiba, 2007), concurrently considering the definition of the profession (Freidson, 1984, 1986).

Professional designation is one of the fundamental aspects of self-identification, in respect to receiving recognition from others (e.g., the

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[2] The work of AL1 takes place in the field of genetic engineering (plant branch), developing research on genes for the study of agronomic-relevant plants and genetic engineering triggers for crop improvement. This project aims to understand and describe the molecular processes of the effects of abiotic stress in plants through a genomic approach. The long-term aim is to obtain improved varieties of rice plants that can withstand extreme conditions of abiotic stress, which, in this project, corresponds to salinity.

[3] The research projects associated with this laboratory are particularly suited for creating links with the clinical component of research, and this is fostered at a strategic level by AL2 being integrated into an academic hospital. The empirical study carried out in this institution focused on a research group dedicated to studying tissue regeneration, integrated into a cellular and molecular biology research programme.

state, clients and other professionals) and in the definition of positions within the social division of labour. In other words, the awarding of titles is a crucial part of the giving or withholding of degrees of social prestige; as a process it enables the delimitation of a professional field of activities as well as denoting positions of power within the system of professions. Qualifications are also closely linked to value judgements on a particular work activity, explaining why we find assessments in which 'profession' designates an 'exclusively full-time and remunerated activity' (such as the distinction made between amateur sport and professional sport) or 'a task exercised with responsibility and competence' (Gonçalves, 1998, p. 85). Being appropriately qualified thus provides career gravitas.

This brings us to consider the nature of the research profession. In Portugal, the National Scientific and Technological Potential Survey (IPCTN), for which FCT has responsibility, defines 'researchers' as follows:

> [. . .] all personnel in research and development (R&D) activities that drive or perform work towards the creation of knowledge and/or the design of products, processes, methods or systems. Under the IPCTN all individuals that have higher education degrees allocated to R&D activities in a given unit/company are also considered researchers.[4]

With regard to governance, the EU has a European Charter for researchers and a code of conduct for their recruitment, indicating working conditions and career settings. In Portugal, the issue of professional designation for those who work in science (with researcher and scientist used interchangeably) has also been addressed in a number of prior studies. For example, Carapinheiro and Amâncio (1995) analyse what they call 'science as a profession'. Reflecting on the 'status of professional scientists', and following the work of Freidson (1984, 1986) and Larson (1977), this perspective implies taking a careful look at the process of the professionalisation of science in terms of expertise, credentialism and professional autonomy, all fundamental aspects in defining the 'scientist as a professional' in the eyes of other

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[4] For further details in regard to the definition of scientific career categories in Portugal, see http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/27/%7B$clientServletPath%7D/?newsId=25&fileName=ConceitosIPCTN.pdf

professionals.[5] The professional designation issue is hence related to a researcher's possible attributes, some of which we have already identified However, it is a long list: tertiary education-level qualifications (academic credentialism); a specific position within the division of labour of an organisation; understanding scientific and technical differentiation and the specialisation of professional practice; being able to cope with the complex nature of professional tasks based on a scientific knowledge matrix; performing problem elaboration and resolution (in which the format for doing so may come from an external funding entity); having respect for protocols regarding the development of scientific work (thus maintaining the conditions to ensure the development of scientific theory); the employment of ethical and deontological principles; and the assumption that science has a normative value.

Currently, in Portuguese society, there is greater social visibility of researchers as professionals than in the past. Contributing to this development is the increase in the number of research professionals, a development that is closely related to the (pre-economic crisis and prior to austerity) expansion of national scientific research activities, the national tertiary education system and the roll-out of public funding for R&D. Statistical data published by FCT show that, in recent years, there has been an increase in numbers employed in 'science' (from 8035 in 2003 to 14,436 in 2012), a rising level of funding (€17,582.745 in 2003 to €65,315.909 in 2013), and a greater number of scientific units being funded (289 in 2003 to 319 in 2013).[6]

Also notable is the role played by the 'Associate Laboratory', a category designating institutions of higher status, which offer workers relatively privileged conditions in terms of financing and provision of conditions of employment, although not stability and durability in the long term. Between 2003 and 2013, the number of AL institutions increased from 15 to 25, and funding from €7,722,609 to €38,350,590. A more telling indicator is, however, the proportion of FCT investment in ALs: from 43.9 per cent in 2003 to 58.7 per cent in 2013, confirming the fact that, of the 294 S&T organisations funded in Portugal during 2013, the 25 ALs

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[5] Ávila (1998) has also studied scientists/researchers employed in non-business organisations.
[6] These data have been sourced from FCT at: http://www.fct.pt/apoios/unidades/estisticas

received a disproportionately larger share. These figures nevertheless illustrate a general trend towards increased spending on science, albeit with a dramatic fall during the period of the "troika intervention" (see Chap. 7), characterised by a loss of internal economic sovereignty in return for emergency debt relief, and subsequent recovery in investment, albeit not reaching the peaks in spending of pre-crisis years. What is also interesting is that the number of scientists continuously increased, irrespective of the crisis, but the number of units invested in fell. The implication is that, with more personnel being recruited, resources are being spread thinner outside the ALs. In other words, there are signs that science in Portugal has become more oligarchical, with a potentially large subaltern stratum of investigation beneath the AL tier.

One of the keys to understanding this pattern of investment is to understand the role played by 'excellence' in the evaluation of research proposals, in line with 'research excellence initiatives' as presented by institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), since this dynamic helps define who and what gets funded (see, e.g., OECD, 2014). In an analysis of the practices of grant proposals or job applications panels, van Arensbergen et al. (2014) highlight the association between 'talent' and 'excellence', questioning the way in which 'scientific talent' is assessed differently, relative to the procedures adopted. The focus may be on institutions, decision-makers being more likely to fund R&D institutions that have an AL statute, or individual researchers regarded as outstanding in terms of their career profiles or project histories and promising in respect to the future. However, as has been noted with regard to 'excellence' in other contexts in this book (see Chaps. 4 and 5), this approach can be interpreted as a form of Matthew Effect (Merton, 1968, 1988) in systematically strengthening the already strong, with negative consequences for social equality and economic equity in the funding of scientific opportunities and, by association, the development of science itself.[7]

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[7] The work of Merton (1973) and Zuckerman (1977) in the sociology of science has been central to an appreciation of the careers of award-winning scientists. Other more recent work has looked at individual researchers, for example, Laudel (2005) and Wagner (2014) on the mobility of scientists, and Parker et al. (2010) on the characterisation of the most cited scientists and Nobel laureates (see also Chan et al., 2014).

Beyond the question of the profession and its legitimation processes, another central definitional axis is mobility. Seen as an intrinsic part of being a scientist, geographical circulation has long been an obligation, with various costs associated with instability and disruption to family life, among other factors, tolerated if not always welcomed as consequences of the choice of career pathway (Wagner, 2014). Due to the conditions associated with the professional practice of research, a culture has evolved in which people working in a specialist area are subject to the time limits and durations of the research projects in which they participate, a situation that can be difficult to manage when outside one's country of permanent residence. Upon completion of the project in hand, mobile scientists are frequently left without adequate welfare support and have to wait for another job opportunity to come along, perhaps in another place.

This is a problem, not only in terms of the confounding of personal agency but also in pointing towards a profound misunderstanding of the nature of contemporary joblessness at national and European policy levels. Unemployment is strongly associated with not having qualifications, training and experience (e.g., the semi-fictional NEET category), meaning that a jobless scientist will not fit into the criteria set for pre-existing policy interventions. These policies tend to be organised around the assumption that there are basic deficits in an individual's skills and qualifications profile rather than around the investment of pre-existing academic capital. Added to this mismatch is the mobility issue, with scientists often falling between the cracks of different nation states' eligibility criteria for support. This makes scientific unemployment an international issue, and one that requires rethinking the structure of the research career in conjunction with the teaching profession, as there are similar challenges relating to the idea that highly qualified migrants are sufficiently resilient to cope with multiple forms of labour market instability.

Part of the problem here is ignorance and a misrepresentation, or misunderstanding, of the reality of scientific careers among those in positions of power. For example, in a study of research teams comprised of people from different cultural backgrounds who work in American institutions, a belief repeatedly uncovered was that mobility and internationalisation are assumed to be voluntary and beneficial for researchers:

> Mobility is presented as a unique way to achieve excellence and master knowledge. For rich countries, mobility is tool for attracting the best research minds from poorer countries. [...] The ideology of research mobility and scientific flexibility (as an example of the world citizen) conceals the precarious situation of postdocs and the saturated market of tenured contracts. The rare positions held by senior scientists require 'soft money' (as scientists call the grant system)—short research contracts that may disappear if the next grant does. The transnational professional—affiliated with multiple institutions in two or more countries [...] and constantly travelling and working in international teams—is held up as an ideal. But the ecology of the scientific world imposes rude selection, and only a few scientists will achieve this exalted status. Others will fulfill several postdoc contracts, each time changing institutions and cities, until visa limits push them out of the country where they spent the best years of their scientific life, when they were young and passionate about research, when they worked every day for years without any break for summer travel, years without seeing family, far from aging parents, focused only on the research results, publications and the next contract. (Wagner, 2014, p. 167)

What Wagner's work is fundamentally telling us is that our understanding of job precariousness needs to be more inclusive, integrating a larger range of precarious work situations into flanking policies, including what basically amounts to involuntary mobility. We need to accept that individuals with strategically important skills are being somewhat taken for granted, or rather their willingness to undertake mobility is being taken for granted, without sufficient support mechanisms being in place to maintain their basic well-being. This position exposes the inconsistency of having a policy discourse that extolls the virtues of science and policymakers who disrespect the fundamental human needs of scientists. At a conceptual level, the intermittency of scientific work also needs more recognition. This is a category that should be extended to different sections of the working population, including recognition that unemployment is not the inverse of work but one of its key moments (Beaud et al., 2006, pp. 229, 241). With respect to deciding who gets to work, the competitive means through which scientists are governed needs to be appreciated for its negative, as well as allegedly positive, ramifications. Decision-making about project funding, penalties for failing to publish

articles in international journals and meeting the mobility requirement are just three of the most prominent concerns.

The Research Project: Configuring Institutions and Careers

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the project-based constitution of S&T helped define our units of analysis and methodological approach, although understanding life within a project is an integral element of scrutinising the careers of scientists in its own right, which needs in-depth consideration. That this project-based work organisation is integrated into a broader sense of a 'project society' (Lundin et al., 2015) adds further value to investigation, for example, in acknowledging the complexity of careers in which there is a high mobility requirement related to project locations. For this reason, we can provide insight into a more general philosophy of how people work and of life itself, as the work trajectories of scientists are made by a string of projects linked together, and sequenced according to an availability of financing principle, as is our actual existence.

Raising this issue provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the adoption and adequacy of new methodological approaches in the study of micro-practices (Hoholm, 2011), including the combination of ethnographic and historical analysis in the study of S&T projects. From this position, it is possible to discuss the nature of knowledge production processes, with the project as a unit of analysis, enabling the study of practices of knowledge production to take place. Thereafter, in the laboratories we observed, the task became one of identifying ongoing projects and problematising the practices of agents in the social construction of new and renewed knowledge, and then identifying the consequences for the scientists within this system.

The definition of what is understood by 'a project' is a complex theoretical and methodological issue. It is possible to choose a broad definition and without much variation in terms of time (see, e.g., Boutinet, 1990), or to follow a more restricted definition that refers to the project as a management tool, as is stressed, for instance, by Boltanski

and Chiapello (1999) discussing the 'New Spirit of Capitalism'. It should also be understood that projects are socio-historical forms specific to particular contexts and subject to historical developments:

> [...] ways of organizing collective action (in the sense that it involves multiple participants) involving at least one prior decision, or even several. Project will be mentioned when this organisation acquires certain regularity and when successive projects unfold similarly, according to certain ways. (Graber, 2011, p. 8)

The S&T projects studied in laboratories are generally long-duration ventures that are divided in various ways and structured into research groups to enable the reviewing and addition of knowledge that, eventually, may lead to scientific discoveries. Each project is also part of its respective research field, has an allocation of human and material resources, is characterised by a temporality and has a social framework. For these reasons, it is assumed that S&T projects will be framed within a long technical–scientific and social trajectory (Kopytoff, 1999) which involves socio-technical networks and heterogeneous processes (Callon, 1986; Callon and Law, 1995).[8]

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[8] The methodological approach adopted was ethnographic, following established traditions in the study of science (Latour and Woolgar, 1986; Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel, 1981; Lynch, 1985; Traweek, 1988; see also Marques, 2009). This extended to face-to-face observation of daily routines while workers performed administrative or technical tasks in support of daily activity whenever possible, interviews/informal conversations, work/business meetings, events promoted by the laboratories for the presentation of their results and training sessions. Diaries and field notes were produced during the observation period, augmented by the collection and analysis of documentation about activities, the members involved and the respective S&T projects. This extended to several sources: documents about the projects and laboratories; online information (inter- and intranet); press information; and organisational information. Among these materials were brochures, progress reports and final reports of projects, as well as websites, which can be seen as a tool for the establishment of socio-technical networks (Callon, 1989). In total, 16 interviews were conducted with various social actors within the framework of projects A and B and the respective network of projects associated with them. Underlying this theoretical–conceptual framework is Elias' (1993) concept of configuration, used as a methodological operator that allows an understanding of the interdependencies of networks among individuals and institutions in a relational logic of understanding the society.

Working in a Laboratory: Living Between Science and Work

In the study of research projects, a fundamental distinction exists between principal investigators (hereafter referred to as PIs) and the members of the team they coordinate. While sharing certain traits common to scientific careers, it is interesting to take into account what demarcates researcher profiles beyond their position within a career trajectory. Our main focus will be upon the distinction between senior and junior researchers, the former being PIs and the latter other members of their research teams, with emphasis upon contrasting experiences of mobility within their life courses. From this point of view, we are able to make an aggregated assessment of the dynamics within a research project team, including the extent of association between the practice of the profession and perceptions of having a vocation, the significance of international networking and the capacity to work across different institutional and geographical locations.

Leading Projects and Doing Research

Despite a major imbalance in numbers between senior and junior researchers, with the latter far outweighing the former, there remains the belief that passage from one to the other is possible within the research profession, with this conviction being essential to the social order of a project-based institution. Even though many aspire to such a position, the project leadership position is dependent upon more than talent. There is always an element of good fortune, whether in terms of timing, location, connections or levels of investment in science. The time of becoming a leader is not necessarily coincident with the moment at which one might want to assume this status. This nevertheless constitutes a moment that is expected to happen for those developing a career as a scientist. It is also contingent upon mobility, both territorial and organisational, and between projects in a particular line of research. Being able to follow a scientific vocation will therefore depend upon following what we previously referred to in this book as the 'peripatetic career', as well as

being able to repeatedly secure national and international funding via numerous competitions, and to remain integrated within formal and informal networks constituted by a wide range of other equally mobile scientists.

With regard to internal diversity within this career path, two basic types of PI trajectories were present within the projects we analysed: one was centred on an organisational logic (the case of Project A); and the other followed a more individually focused approach (Project B). These two types allow us to highlight divergences in the modes of scientific reproduction, with different ways of working influencing scientists' career trajectories. Project A was funded by FCT, comprised of a consortium of four institutions: two research centres and two public/state institutes. Its scientific purpose was to understand and describe the molecular processes of the effects of abiotic stress in plants through a genomic approach, with a long-term aim of obtaining improved varieties of rice plants that can withstand extreme conditions. As noted, the project articulates closely with three other interlinked projects, but its origin was in the doctoral thesis of the PI, which was related to studying the rice plant improvement process. Both the PhD and Project A inherited constituent elements from previously existing institutional networks, giving them a strong horizontal continuity, allowing the perpetuation of collaborative relationships and enabling circulation. For example, the doctorate of the PI, supervised by the laboratory director, was carried out in part in one of the project partner institutions of Project. The PI was there during certain periods in order to acquire knowledge and use equipment that was not available in the home laboratory. The PI comments on these various aspects:

> [. . .] and yet this project I was working on, where I had a scholarship and was in collaboration with X [Research Institution], which also involved Mozambique, because of bio-fortification, which was enriched with iron and I don't know what else. And my supervisor had to go to Mozambique with the [X] guys and do this trip. (...). And then, when they came to Portugal, the person with whom the supervisor had collaboration also came. [. . .] And so I went to that meeting. [. . .] Meanwhile, I went to the Philippines to spend three months there on this project. And so, in the

beginning, I was to gain some expertise, learn some things about the operations of [X]. [...] While I was there, I wrote my doctoral project. [...] I was developing the project and it was I who wrote it in full and so I applied for the grant. [...] Those three months in the Philippines for me were an important milestone in terms of career and even in personal terms. [...] I had the doctorate accepted in March and started the doctoral scholarship in October, which was when the project ended, so I was very lucky, I had incredible luck, I ended up never being there without receiving. [...] I went back several times to the Philippines [...] because there were certain things I was not able to do here. Because of lack of equipment, lack of knowledge, but essentially lack of equipment. And by the way, at the time I made the decision to do a doctorate here in Portugal, with part of it in [X]. (PI, Project A)

This is an excellent illustration of the value of mobility to a scientist's career at an early stage, although integrating into an international network is also a prerequisite for funding contests at later points in a career trajectory:

For example, this project [...] so much as that other where [Y] is, like the other post-doctoral project, which is now finished, were projects where there are team members who are from [X]. And this for evaluation purposes when you're submitting the project, carries weight with the jury, the fact that you have an international network and a team member who is a foreigner, and that will not charge you a cent, of course, but who is there to give scientific support and do some work written by email. (PI, Project A)

These networks have their origins in different circumstances. In addition to the collaboration on projects, scientific activity arising from meetings during conferences or at training courses, including internships, is common, with contacts made based on the discussion of themes in the work presented. This extends into shared meals and social activities, followed up by email exchanges that all contribute to the sedimentation and consolidation of networks:

From contacts made at conferences, for example. You meet someone at the conference who likes your work and you start talking with that person and then it becomes a contact. It may arise, for example, when you were placed in that internship and, for example, got to better know the person and so on, and then go deeper in the collaboration. Or it can be absolutely informal like dinner or a casual lunch that you start talking to the person and begin to exchange emails and become friends, in quotation marks, and then when an opportunity arises we communicate, collaborate on a project, European, let's say, some *call* where it makes sense. And like, 'Look, I know a person in Portugal *so and so*, who seems to be cool' or 'who seems to work well' or 'I've seen one of the presentations, it is very good'. That's it and so you have various ways, it can be informal or formal. (PI, Project A)

Thus, Project A is in continuity with the theme of the doctorate, which was only made possible because the PI had public funding and the work fitted into the laboratory director's research line, which in turn was included in a national and international research framework. This is how science is effectively made: through mutual reinforcement of pre-existing work relationships and the continuance of established ideas. With regard to how to work, the PI of Project A sees her doctoral supervisor as a role model to follow.

The success of a laboratory meanwhile is seen by the PI as a mirror of the success of its director and their leadership style. To refute and rebuke non-conforming researchers creates a relationship that is not seen as authoritarian by the PI but rather a way to pass on knowledge. Scientific criticism is cumulative and codified as pedagogical, based on an autonomous logic of the heuristic discovery at work, by learning from mistakes and sanctioning these erroneous acts retrospectively. The PI therefore sees the issue of leadership and organisational management in academia as one and the same, just as she positively evaluates the coordination style of her former advisor of studies, with the same logic of coordination when acting as a team coordinator, employed to gather respect and authority. In practice, this is an institutionalised trajectory through emulation of a role model, the doctoral advisor, who in turn takes on their approach to management functions in the institution.

The PI of Project B has a trajectory based on a more singular dynamic, although still broadly located within an institutional framework. This has been the common thread in the PI's relationships with his doctoral thesis supervisor, spouse and colleagues, as well as other doctoral students, directors of the research institutions and, later, his research team. To follow the career trajectory of the researcher, and later coordinator, is to trace the continuity in the line of research he has created. Therefore, Project B is shaped by the focus on the trajectory of its leader by virtue of its centrality to his career building via project work and his need to maintain a standing within scientific and institutional communities.

The origins of Project B can be narrated in four basic steps. The first was the doctoral thesis of the PI. Following an internship in a research centre, he attended a doctoral programme at that same institution. This programme opened the door to a trip abroad and the study of molecular genetics in London. Within the framework of this doctorate, he followed his supervisor, who changed institutional framework to another research centre. As he explains, the project had a duration of five years:

> During this period, there was also a major transformation because the research centre decided to reform. And they began a doctoral programme in biology and medicine, with the goal to give opportunities to young doctoral researchers, especially in going abroad, to do a doctorate abroad. So I found this the best because it was really what I wanted. So as I was there to do the internship, I had faster access to this type of information and I was constantly knocking on the director's door to find out when the inscriptions would be opened. [...] So I went to London to do a doctorate in genetics, to study molecular genetics, to use at the time the study model that was more used, *Drosophila*, the fruit fly, which is still widely used today. And what I was doing was studying a signalling pathway, that is, a cellular communication process that at the time was little known and that today is a well-characterised process that is very important during embryo development and also, when altered, can give rise to tumours. At the time, the time when I started, it was a relatively new subject, then it became a very hot topic, and now it is in books.

That was my route. [. . .] I got my doctorate there, but there is here a little bit more detail [. . .]. In the middle of my course, my supervisor moved from London to Sheffield, so I went from being at one of the best London research centres, probably one of the best in Europe [. . .] to a department of a university, which also had a lot of potential but was starting from scratch, that is, I went from a place that had everything to a place in Sheffield where there was almost nothing. Therefore, the second part was there in Sheffield that I did my doctorate.

I think that I, during my doctorate, I made a discovery that a particular protein has a function. It was highly predictable and there was even an article that was widely cited in the doctorate. It was a highly predictable discovery that several groups made at the same time, that is, I think it was an interesting finding but if I had not made that discovery [. . .] someone else would have. (PI, Project B)

After the doctorate, a post-doctoral fellowship followed as the second step of the trajectory. From this point on, we also see that knowledge production relationships may be both formal and informal, even marital. Professional life merges with private for many researchers, at inter- and intra-laboratory levels. The institutional and geographical trajectory of this researcher thereby became linked to the path of his spouse, who also did her doctorate in the UK. Both working in the same area, they wanted to work in the United States but failing to reach a consensus on the laboratory or city where they wished to work, they decided to return to Portugal, to the Institute where the PI had been previously situated.

I finished my doctorate and was completely convinced that I wanted to continue to do research, and what I wanted to do was go to the United States. [. . .] Then, there was a dilemma phase between going to the United States or returning to Portugal. And my wife also wanted to go to the United States but after we arrived in the United States, both of us, we visited more than one city and could not find a city that we both liked, that had the right laboratory in the right city. It was a period of great indecision. After, however, my mother got sick and I thought, now if I come to the United States, I will never see her again. Therefore, there was here a cauldron of factors that could easily have gone in another direction if my mother wasn't sick. Maybe that would have swung more the other way, if

we both had found the right laboratory in the right city, maybe we would have gone there, I do not know. (PI, Project B)

This initiated a two-year post-doctoral research period in London while his girlfriend finished her doctorate, and this time interval is presented as a holding pattern, based on a direct correlation between professional choices and his personal relationships. He continues:

However, she also found a laboratory of a colleague of mine who had also completed the institute's doctoral programme [. . .] so two opportunities combined here and we both went to [Institute Y] for a scholarship. I started with an extension of my post-doc scholarship. [. . .] As I decided to stay longer, I applied for a FCT scholarship and then began the FCT scholarship there for six months, so I could use this scholarship from FCT. Then I asked permission from FCT to return to Portugal, where they paid me less, so they were happy. And at first, I was being paid by this post-doctoral FCT scholarship. My wife applied for a scholarship from FCT as well and it was with this FCT scholarship that she started working [at Institute X]. (PI, Project B)

In Portugal, at the same institution he had attended for his doctoral programme, he began to lead a working group. His team initially had two doctoral students and represented, in part, the continuance of his line of research on tissue repair. One of his doctoral students found the position in response to a contact made in London. This second step lasted three years:

I was head of a small group. That is how [X Institute] works, it has no divisions, there is the director, and then there are groups. [. . .] My group [. . .] had to do with the way cells choose each other, whether they bind to each other or not. [. . .] At the time I was working on two things, one was healing, on tissue repair, and another aspect was the embryo movement, wherein there is a time when the cells come together and recognise they fit. There are several segments that when they join they recognise what is the segment in which they have to fit, there is a recognition phase that has to do with adhering, and I wanted to study, to find out what are the molecules responsible for this adhesion. [. . .] I initially had two doctoral students. One

was a young Spanish woman [. . .] I had met her in London and she wanted
to come do a doctorate, she was in Madrid and thought London was too far
from home, she had only gone for a summer job, and the supervisor, the
person with whom she had been working knew me and then recommended
her to come work with me and we ended up talking and she applied also for
a FCT scholarship and ended up having the FCT scholarship and had a
doctoral scholarship with me there at [Institute X]. The other was a young
man who had gone to the United States to do a doctorate, he had been upset
with the boss, he had been away, there came a day, when he slammed the
door and left and he had given up the scholarship and then we had to write
some letters to FCT to say that, after all, he still wanted the scholarship. And
then even after they cancelled the scholarship, he had already cancelled it,
they probably had the cancellation letter there in the pile, they had not
looked at it carefully, they said it was fine, he could continue with the
scholarship in Portugal. (PI, Project B)

In the third step of this narrative, the PI worked for another laboratory
with several partnerships in common with his previous institution, mak-
ing him an important element in the network that connects the two
institutions. In this new institution, he was able to have a contract rather
than being on a scholarship:

I was there [Institute X] for three years because, meanwhile, the AL2 started
running and I thought there would be an opportunity to go to the AL2,
which was something that was beginning and I knew some people there
who I greatly admired. [. . .] And I moved. [. . .] It was in 2002. It was at the
time when it became an Associated Laboratory. [. . .] What they did was,
they invited people who were interested or had expressed interest in going
there to give a lecture and were interviewed. [. . .] At [Institute X] I always
had FCT scholarships. At AL2, we had an associated laboratory contract.
[. . .] I was already a coordinator at [Institute X] and went there to coordi-
nate a group which, meanwhile, I had the opportunity, to grow more and I
started working in more projects. (PI, Project B)

Project B was developed in the framework of an application that the
researcher, at AL2, presented to the European Research Council (ERC).
This body is an independent scientific council responsible for scientific

strategy and an administrative arm of the European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA). Its mission is to encourage high quality research in Europe through competitive funding, and to support investigator-driven 'frontier research' across various fields, with the criteria for project selection based on 'scientific excellence'. In practice, this means that ERC projects are evaluated according to an institutionally defined logic of individual merit, related to the mission of the financing entity. As it is 'investigator-driven', the ERC approach allows researchers to identify new opportunities and directions in their field of research, rather than being led by priorities set by politicians. This ensures that funds are channelled into new and promising areas of research, with a greater degree of flexibility than would be the case in traditional policy research. ERC grants are awarded through open competition to projects headed by 'starting' and 'established' researchers, irrespective of their origins, who are working, or moving to work, in Europe.[9]

In the fourth step, in the course of Project B, the coordinator moved with his team to another research centre, following a network continuity logic but still representing an institutional rupture. His reasons for changing positions at the inter-laboratory level are mostly related to a lack of self-identification with the leadership profile of the AL2 director:

> On the one hand, I thought it was a great success, the goals were being met, but on the other hand, the means and the way things were run I did not always agree with. [...] I wanted to do things in a different way, wanted things done otherwise but in fact, the objectives were being met. (PI, Project B)

As part of this step, the respondent assumed management functions at the institution, helped by the relationship he had with the director; for example, they shared the same vision of organisational strategy and continuity of work. As noted, in changing to another institution he took his

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[9] The information is taken from the ERC website, accessed May 2016, which can be found at: http://erc.europa.eu/about-erc/mission. For more details, see https://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/funding-schemes/starting-grants

team members with him, with this transfer related to a power struggle and competition between different units of the academic consortium:

> It has to do [with] the competition. [. . .] Therefore, this set of circumstances, to have a new building, the will of the university to have a research centre of excellence in the field of biomedical research and the fact that [director Y] will be leading the way, who I already knew and had enough scientific respect for, attracted me a lot. So at this stage, and I felt that maybe coming in [. . .] I contributed a lot to the development of AL2 but I entered very junior, very low, in the day-to-day I did not contribute towards the definition of the institute's higher level decisions. And I felt like now I was at a different stage and could contribute also to this institute. But now in a more strategic way. [. . .] However, what I did was that I applied for a principal investigator position and I ended up entering through a tenure position. (PI, Project B)

Project B therefore provides a link between professional development and organisational frameworks in the research field as it articulates closely with other projects that the PI coordinates, and they are all part of a research line developed by the same group of researchers, led by the PI, although the group personnel undergo changes depending on issues such as decisions to leave Portugal.

In maintaining this structure, publishing and obtaining funding are two inseparable mechanisms, since to lead is to also financially support the research.

> People currently are evaluated by various parameters. One is the number of publications and the quality of publications. The quality is usually measured in terms of the number of citations [. . .] or through the journal's impact factor. [. . .] Then people are also evaluated in terms of the project's potential [. . .] when there is an external evaluation [. . .]. And the other part is the ability to raise funds. [. . .] Financing. [. . .] Public, private [. . .] the ability to raise funds [. . .] at international competitive levels depends on publications [. . .]. And the ideal is to have high impact articles and to have many. [. . .] My strategy is to make scientific discoveries. (PI, Project B)

The management function is related to internal technical preparation, based on a publishing strategy to maximise performance on external evaluations. The impact factor of publications, an indicator of a peer-reviewed journal's scientific potential, in effect helps determine the financial survival and success of the research centre, making scientists who can repeatedly place work in such outlets extremely valuable.

The taking over of organisational and scientific management functions is meanwhile structured into a network that the PI carried with him. As we have seen, this network was built throughout his professional and academic career while a doctoral student, post-doctoral researcher and then PI. The way such mobilisation is performed rests on the constitution of a research team made up basically of researchers he has met on previous projects or that come from trusted contacts. The PI's individual mobility between various institutions hence has a parallel in the consolidation of a team that accompanied his trajectory. However, fundamentally, Project B is sustained by the trajectory and leadership of this scientist, and is mobility-dependent, as it originated in his doctoral thesis, and involved moving between institutions in Portugal. The line of research also has a global dimension and, within its socio-technical network, there is a circulation of scientific papers, projects, researchers and even tissue samples, but with a definite point of origin from which everything springs. In his doctoral thesis, he made an important scientific discovery that then circulated in publications, and he continues a research team leadership approach dedicated to the study of the molecular regeneration.

Project B also serves to highlight the links between scientific policy, the agenda in a research field and the driving force a scientist finds in various institutional settings, and for the scientific careers of a team that undergoes change over time, these elements mean that the development and consolidation of various scientists and laboratory technicians are intermingled. The teams themselves are managed with an informal style and in close proximity to their coordinator, although there is also strong competition between researchers and a drive to accumulate indicators that

can enhance their career progress, something that fits into the dynamics and logic of the scientific system.

The scientific field mark is evident (Bourdieu, 1976), highlighted by the symbolic capital accumulated through financing obtained from internationally prestigious funding agencies and the array of institutional relationships established in this scientific field at national and international levels, the latter more nuanced than the former. This all helps ensure that material (equipment, fabrics, etc.) and human requirements (laboratory technicians and early-stage researchers) to develop research can be met. Mobility and scientific research career progress is thus anchored in a fixed logic, albeit with a degree of churning within the teams, while the consolidation of a position as PI has to be sustained through public support. While the two types of PI profile depicted here are substantially different, they share the common traits of mobility and a linear sequence of moving from researcher to PI, contrasting with the less successful career paths of the precarious interns we discussed in the previous chapter, who lacked institutional grounding or integration with external policy environments in their career trajectories.

Being a Member of a Research Project

Research is not an isolated activity. It is the work of a project team that develops the knowledge accumulation process, often in precarious conditions and marked by mobility. Rather than explain here the workings of each project, it is proposed to look at two pivotal axes that mark the trajectories of scientists: firstly, academic and professional socialisation, defined by the call to a vocation and the logic of inevitable continuity; and secondly, the dynamics of mobility and of working in a network. Since both dimensions are interlinked, they allow us to appreciate what is at stake in the researcher's career, and how, in its ideal operation, a form of synergy is produced between work within the project team and the mobility of its members, for example, in people moving to another

country or institution to join a team, thus enhancing it with new skills and capacities, which in turn lead to better outcomes.

Academic and Professional Socialisation: Scientific Trajectories and Vocation

The idea of science as a vocation was a theme addressed by the junior researchers interviewed as part of a research project in Portugal (see note 1). As stated by Borges and Delicado (2010), and drawing a parallel between science and art (see Weber, 1946 [1918]), it is the vocation that is the object of incorporation during the academic and professional socialisation process, as well as in programmes that support excellence. That was the case in the ERC scheme we have observed, whose discourse defines the 'sole evaluation criterion, which is scientific excellence of the researcher and research proposal' in relation to what it terms starting grants. This is a theme that has attracted academic attention (see, e.g., Wagner, 2014; Cohen et al., 2004), and our research team interviewees also helped to clarify the issue, talking about academic and professional development paths that often started while still in secondary school:

> I have always been interested in this area [biology] at a theoretical level, so the things that I liked most at school, I always liked science in general and when I got to that time when I had physics, chemistry and biology, I was always more interested in biology. But it was always science that interested me very early on, and I always thought I'd be a scientist. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

In addition to research area there is also, depending on the opportunities that present themselves, an orientation towards the practice of research:

> In the third year [of university] I had a research idea. I had a very good teacher of genetics that encouraged me to try the research, and she [person N] knew and proposed for me to make an internship, and from there I was able to be a part of the research. [...] It was always a pleasure. It was not

always, but at least since college I always liked research. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

Following this moment of initial inspiration researchers will join scientific research projects in succession, with teams developing over a period of time, as we can see in the case of Project A.

Here, in the academic track, it is me, like, my decisions are mostly determined by me and through discussions either with my colleagues or my boss. [. . .] Its another level of flexibility. It is you, it is your baby, your research project, as many people say, because you are totally dedicated to it, and just think about it, in general, and, and I do, I like to think about it. And I like to do experiments. [. . .] Then a lot depends on what you work on and such, but in my case, I like the model, I like the things I do [. . .] And then from a certain point of view, you actually understand how it works! This is very appealing. It is very stimulating. Intellectually. For me, at least. (Researcher, Project A and other projects in the network)

Hence, we can see that it is the motivation, already present in what may be the distant past but which has survived into the present, that ultimately justifies the identification with 'research' in an abstract sense, and perhaps more general scientific activity. However, despite regarding this 'dream' as an important point of origin in searching for and trying to establish one's own professional identity, the conditions for following this dream are not necessarily ideal, nor do they match expectations, implying a difficult journey.

Mobility

The bringing into being of the scientific vocation takes place in formal and informal networks and is predicated on the acceptance of a path marked by geographical and institutional mobility, sometimes one and the same thing, due to the international character of this career path. Among our interviewees, we find numerous accounts of how this process operates:

After graduation [...] I decided to get a master's degree [...] and that's when I came here and it went well, so I did the master's here, then went to the United States because I applied for a scholarship, the Fulbright, and I managed that, and went to a lab just to do research for one year because I didn't want to go directly to the doctorate, I wanted to make sure I wanted to do a doctorate. [...] I chose several laboratories. And when I applied I told them I was running for a Fulbright scholarship, that is, I'd have my own money, they did not have to pay me, and I was accepted in all the laboratories. And then I went to investigate better [...] I mean, I had already researched, but then I went to see in particular what they were doing at the time. One thing is the main publications, something else is what they are really doing. And I became more interested in that group, the one in Boston. And besides, the city was also [...] cool, it was appealing. So it was easy. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

In the first Master's year, we have classes, this is the 'curricular' year, and I did the second semester in Erasmus in Budapest. [...] But in January I won a scholarship to go abroad and I went to an internship in Stockholm. The scholarship is from college, but it is an EU scholarship, a programme called Leonardo Da Vinci, which is a kind of Erasmus. [...] And then I started really looking for and contacting research groups that were working there. And I saw that there were several groups in the area of biology of development, and even found some who worked in areas that I liked and I ended up having a positive response from a laboratory that also worked in regeneration and thought it would be interesting to continue in the regeneration area [...]. I thought it would be interesting to try to study the same thing, the same process, but in a different model. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

I did biology. [...] Then I did a doctorate in Germany. [...] One of the reasons was because I wanted to leave Portugal for a time, wanted to have an out, wanted to try a place with better conditions, which I assumed had better working conditions, more money, more variability in choice [...] because the choices we have here are quite limited to a certain number of institutions, when you enlarge your horizons abroad you have much more options to choose from [...]. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

The knowledge mode of production thus takes a network and project configuration. This activity is based on a mastery of knowledge in certain scientific areas, often with a high degree of specialisation, which promotes the part-repetition of research projects that enable the production of knowledge to follow a long-term logic that goes beyond an individual scientist's trajectory, with an internationalisation dimension in the form of integration into borderless networks, albeit within what may be a very restricted field of knowledge.

While seeming to create and advance knowledge, and this is a possibility, there are negative consequences in this approach since it fosters a sense of exclusivity and inevitably supports the practice of 'gatekeeping' (Freidson, 2001). At every step along the way, people and ideas can be excluded simply because they do not fit with the gatekeeper's views or because they pose a threat to the knowledge upon which core a network member's career has been constructed. Our interviews are, however, more positive in their views, stressing the collaborative nature of their research network activities:

> The important thing is to share knowledge and share from different areas from different people. It is not a given person that rules *no matter what*, everyone listens. I am able to speak to a doctorate student about my work and ask advice from a doctoral student and I am a post-doc. While, perhaps, in other areas this does not happen, a boss will not ask a subordinate employee what he is supposed to do. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

Beneath this system, we can also observe that there are informal networks in a permanent state of reconfiguration, but ultimately supportive of the project in a variety of ways:

> When they invited me to join this project it was a project that was already completed. In principle the person who stayed had to go out somewhere to learn this technique. And as [N] knew this gentleman, knew they had this technique there, but like as it was a known person, it was easier to talk to him [. . .] [Interviewer: Is it a totally informal network?] Yes. Basically 'Hello, can we send there [. . .]?' (Researcher, Project A and other projects in the network)

[Interviewer: How do you build these networks?] They range from contacts at conferences, for example. You know someone at a conference who likes your work and you start talking with that person and the connection happens. It can happen, for example, when you are at an internship and, for example, you get to know better the person and so on, and then the collaboration gets tighter. Or it can be quite informal, as in a dinner or a lunch where you start talking to the person and exchange emails and become friends, quotation marks, and then when the opportunity arises they communicate, collaborate on a project, European, say, some *call* where it makes sense. And like 'Look I know a person in Portugal, so and so, it seems that he/she is cool'. Or 'Looks like he/she works well'. Or 'I have seen a presentation he/she made, it is very good'. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

While these respondents may seem relatively upbeat in their assessments of how their occupation field operates, the serendipitous characteristics they are bringing to light actually help explain the high level of uncertainty in their career. This is linked to the absence of an institutional category of researcher as an established professional nomenclature and the maintenance of a definition of scientist as the complementary extension of a profession (e.g. university professor), regardless of attempts to create more inclusive characterisations (such as the official definition of a researcher from FCT that we cited previously). In holding onto a restricted view of research and an exclusive definition of the scientist label, precariousness is maintained for those outside the small core of cherished workers. This position also leads to the absence of independence in a research career, since the junior party is devoting his or her time and energy to supporting the elder's career at the expense of creating their own work identity. Through this means, precarity becomes effectively self-replicating, both within an individual's career and between different generations of aspirant research professionals. This exclusion process also socially isolates science itself, by making it a restricted professional activity.

This situation creates a great deal of identity conflicts among early career stage researchers:

[Interviewer: How do you denominate yourself professionally?] Oh, that's a good question! I say I'm a doctoral student. I say I'm a biologist. I say I am researcher [...] I think I'm using [...] But sometimes I even discuss this with my girlfriend, 'But what are we supposed to say?' [Laughs]. Professionally, I am on a scholarship. Actually I'm doctoral student and a researcher. So, I do not know, honestly. (Researcher, Project B and other projects in the network)

What this interviewee is suggesting is that these workers are in a liminal professional situation, as they have finished education and entered the labour market but not progressed past what is essentially the first career stage. This can be attributed to contractual insecurity and 'subordination' to authority figures, even if the latter are not perceived as such due to the existence of relatively convivial working relationships. In observing this position, we can see how internal project relationships are a reflection of the dual labour market philosophy outlined in the previous chapter, with a collection of young researchers who constitute the members of the PI's research teams.

The job of these elders is to preserve their own position within science, and the ideas upon which their careers were founded must be protected, leading to a narrowing of the scope of scientific enquiry, which is ironic considering that much of this work is publicly funded. This ultimately reduces the value of science for society, in addition to reproducing social inequality, and it involves a denial of recognition for those outside the centre of the activity. It is therefore no surprise that scientists are confused about who they are. As stated by Heinich (cited in Caillé, 2007, pp. 123–124), artistic and scientific activities of the 'vocational' type are particularly sensitive to a kind of 'intangible' or 'immaterial' recognition, with the very mechanisms they rely upon for their legitimacy and public recognition biased by the structuring of 'reputational markets' (Menger, 2002, p. 51), a process to which they themselves contribute with their participation in projects.

Concluding Remarks

What we have observed in this chapter are two levels of job precariousness, not generally covered in prior studies of science, that arise as inevitable consequences of competition-based scientific governance. The first relates to an extremely small population of PIs who, through a combination of factors, including hard work and good timing, find themselves at the centre of knowledge production, enjoying a high degree of latitude and recognition within their research fields despite being on a treadmill of constantly searching for funding to support projects. While some readers may have little sympathy for these individuals, given their relatively strong positions within the labour market, we should also acknowledge the constant pressures they face to maintain the flow of revenue streams into research centres, as well as their genuine concerns for the individuals who constitute their research teams. Our second precariat consists of researchers whose positions are based upon a succession of temporary positions, linked tenuously via a form of continuity that ultimately rests upon supporting the career of the more senior colleague. The professional discomfort and status anxiety experienced by these people is obvious, but there are also negative consequences for society due to the wastage of academic capital that accompanies curtailed, repeatedly restarted and abandoned careers. We do, however, need to emphasise the massive gap in dimensions between these two groups, with the former being much smaller than the latter in terms of numbers, and also the difficulty of members of research teams in becoming PIs and leading their own projects.

These scientific careers are also marked by national and international mobility, an attribute that is not necessarily an option but rather a 'natural' property of this professional activity. Senior and junior researchers face the prospect of multiple geographical dislocations and collaborations with overseas institutions, as well as the prospect of moving between institutions within a national territory. This movement is driven by the market-led dynamic that underpins science, with the endless search for competitive project funding regarded as an inevitability in order to sustaining professional scientific activity. This means that success is always

fleeting and job security elusive. Between doctoral, post-doctoral and an array of fixed-term contracts, the best one can hope for is the temporary prestige of receiving a competitive grant from an institution like the ERC, with this prestige evaporating upon completion of the project.

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7

The Unsettled Future: Future Challenges in Highly Qualified Mobility

At this point, having almost reached the end of this book, some readers may complain that we have been too negative or excessively critical in our assessments of highly qualified mobility. It may also be the case that, in revealing some of the mechanisms that regulate circulation, and also limit access, a certain amount of disenchantment is generated, particularly where ostensible free choices are exposed as having a distinctly political bias, favouring certain individuals, countries or privileged ideas. While it is true that we have outlined some of the more dysfunctional aspects of mobility practice in a contemporary European context, that have consequences for individuals and for societies, this should act as a means to start resolving obvious problems rather than to continue to ignore them.

In looking at specific aspects of highly qualified mobility, part of our critique is directed against the incongruity of having tertiary education systems that produce large numbers of graduates without also creating realistic prospects of finding secure work for many of these people. This is due to reduced opportunities in highly competitive skilled labour markets, with too many people chasing too few places, creating a massive wastage of talent. Excessive amounts of time are also spent searching for opportunities and preparing applications, the majority of which will fail. The result

is a 'conveyor belt' experience, of people being told to become fit for employment and that they need to run furiously on the treadmill, while in real terms they are generally going nowhere. Moving to another country may be a potential way of circumnavigating this problem—that is, moving elsewhere to equip oneself with more human capital—but mobility systems following neo-liberal principles are also generically hyper-competitive, trapping too many in another, perhaps harder to control, cycle of disadvantage. The existence of this situation explains why we have argued that it is the logic of accessing potential opportunities that drives people abroad rather than the steadfast guarantee of a job and a career, with the idea of looking for a chance leading to the chance. The highly qualified are generally perceptive enough to know that job security is an unrealistic expectation, and therefore do not expect it. Therefore as social scientists writing about mobility, we need to acknowledge this reality. It is, we hope, a more honest way of understanding what drives highly skilled mobility in a European context rather than making deductions from descriptive statistics.

We have also acknowledged some of the problems with institutionalised mobility systems, including the examples of student mobility and internships, covered in Chaps. 4 and 5 respectively. The point is that these opportunities are either rendered inaccessible by unpublicised costs that hard-pressed families, including those affected by austerity, are unable to meet, or they provide a source of cheap labour for employers offering nothing concrete in return except knowledge of opportunities being withheld from the public. So here we find additional challenges relating to the reproduction of societal inequality and the spread of vulnerability to exploitation, and the somewhat bizarre attitudes some 'employers' have towards their international trainees, who seem to be fulfilling little more than an international diversity shop window function.

It is important to underline that such forms of circulation, which are becoming de rigueur if not formally mandatory within the process of professional formation, contribute in quite an unambiguous fashion to exacerbating the disparities between rich and relatively poor societies, and waste the scarce personal and familial resources of those who participate. The main benefit in fact seems to be advancing the case for capital and

profit. This may not be a problem for the well-to-do, who are basically doing what is expected of them and enhancing their cultural capital through what is for them a relatively modest outlay, but the less well-off are likely to pay more in real terms and profit less due to a lack of opportunities in which to capitalise upon their new cosmopolitanism. However, it is this logic that thereafter determines the order of things with respect to the reproduction of inequality across European societies, mobility having become totemic for organisations such as the European Commission. That the existence of a series of de facto Matthew Effects—which, given their overtness, policymakers cannot possibly be oblivious to—undermines the value of these forms of mobility to societies seems not to matter, as at every stage in the life course mobility chances appear skewed by the gravity of privilege. Neither does the constant degradation of European skilled labour markets help. Employers require a constant stream of compliant new recruits to support a small comfortable core of older workers, stuck in a competitive system which demands that companies and corporations engage in a relentless process of *operational streamlining* in the name of increased turnover. So, while it may still be possible to envisage fair and equitable institutional mobility, without effective regulation the way current systems operate only shows how to deliver inequality and exclusivity.

Moreover, as part of the European culture of unregulated and unmonitored free movement, geographical circulation among professionals such as highly qualified scientists has always been something of a lottery with respect to outcomes, as insecurity of tenure, dependency upon a small number of heavily resourced leaders and the constant pressure to perform at an optimal level within a job, irrespective of objective conditions, are taken as given. Companies and corporations then set up processes to continually assess and evaluate employee performance, essentially designed to forever point out their individual weaknesses as a mode of laying out objectives for correction. The employee is therefore locked into an abstract cycle of self-improvement, wherein their performance is likely to be fatally hindered by wider cultural and institutional pressures. Consistently poor performers risk losing their jobs, while others merely underperform or seek an exit due to the unpleasantness of their working conditions. However, the extent to which such

precariousness has become ingrained into the working lives of some of Europe's most talented people, upon whom the continent depends for its economic future, is sadly indicative of the values that characterise our times. From this point of view, it is not only fair but necessary to criticise the current highly qualified mobility regime as it relates to work, study and training, for it is neither working for Europe nor delivering a better society for its citizens.

A lack of discussion grounded in the reality of the mobility experience is a further problem. At an academic level, the root of the problem revolves around continued uncritical acceptance of ideas from neo-classical migration theory, particularly in mobility governance systems, which is a default orthodoxy revolving around the idea that a multiplicity of complex modalities of human circulation can be managed through playing around with a few unreliable numerical indices on a spreadsheet. This reductionism means that policymakers conveniently remain oblivious to the fact that the mobility systems they are trying to regulate actually hinge upon the continued operation of relatively fragile reflexive modes of circulation that cannot withstand endless attempts at expansion without adequate support being provided. It is simply not possible to have greater, or even the same, numbers of people circulating for less investment.

From the mobility researcher's point of view, it is disappointing that such limited thinking should distort the governance of mobility systems, and that evidence gathering is restricted to limited-in-scope quantitative surveys, online data trawls or small unrepresentative studies of exceptional scenarios. There is obviously a great deal to be learnt from those within the global circuits of education, work and training. These people neither construct their mobility on a whim nor follow blunt economic imperatives, and nor do they generally engage in absolute and definitive shifts from one country to another. Circulation can be a profoundly liminal experience, with success only measurable in terms of the quality of the mobility exercise and its potential for repeatability, rather than in relation to numbers taking part. The notion that people move only for immediate financial gain—which was never a particularly strong argument to begin with—needs to be firmly refuted and the bean counters treated with contempt, as does the idea that all mobile individuals seek to engage in more or less permanent migration.

This failure to update ideas has contributed to an inability to convey to the European public what highly qualified mobility means for them. For example, there is no serious recognition of how workers in public, private and third sector organisations rely upon the presence of an under-protected stratum of precarious workers within public services and charitable enterprises. However, in playing the numbers game and creating an easily quantifiable threat, problems are created by political interests following populist dynamics. This may derive from fears over excessive numbers of immigrants settling within a national territory (see below in the context of Brexit) or spreading stories in the media that an avoidable brain drain phenomenon is taking place, generating media hype and unnecessary paranoia, and contributing towards a misdirection of policy priorities away from supporting incomers and towards minimising their settlement prospects.

These reflections summarise what we know about the existing challenges facing those who wish to integrate an international dimension into their professional career trajectories. Successful mobility is clearly hard work and often risky, requiring an enormous amount of sustained effort, but it is always related to possessing a broad range of resources in the form of academic and cultural capital, access to finance and accurate information about destinations. It is never just a simple case of having a desire to leave. There is also an ever-present element of good fortune, particularly in aspects of mobility that are highly competitive, which in extreme circumstances degenerate into lotteries that make success more a matter of luck than good judgement. Nevertheless, we do not dispute the legitimacy of highly qualified mobility given that there are some individuals who manage to have considerable levels of success through knowing how to circulate, such as the small number of scientific leaders we met in Chap. 6. We should not be totally downbeat, just more circumspect with regard to how we frame the 'winners'' stories, as their path to success is exceptional compared to the larger number of less fortunate ones who 'lose' because of a failure to politically and economically manage their mobility.

When it comes to policy reform and the design of effective interventions, greater emphasis needs to be placed on supporting disadvantaged groups, many of whom need to be mobile to have any chance of career

success. Not only those in positions of serious hardship but also the large number of young men and women who simply lack the necessary knowledge and practical support due to their family backgrounds, where they live or their choice of occupational field. Such individuals need to receive levels of maintenance that at least cover basic subsistence while studying and interning, as opposed to the current 'pocket money' arrangement. These people also need real prospects in the labour market, even if this means radical changes to the current European political and economic framework. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that, much as we are critical about highly qualified mobility, we are concerned about its future, recognising that there will be no real improvement in its quality without substantial reform.

New Challenges in Highly Qualified Mobility

Having considered these challenges in the present, we now close with a discussion of some consequences for mobility with regard to emerging issues. What we have been able to do is to identify three specific dilemmas that may have a significant impact on the capacity of highly qualified individuals to practise various forms of intra-European circulation in the future. Firstly, we have to consider the possibility that, rather than being a brief interlude in European social and economic history, austerity politics in its various forms may be staying with us for some considerable time to come. This leads us to wonder about what will happen to the outward mobility chances of those living in the most affected countries, such as Spain and Portugal, as well as the implications for those responsible for managing incomers. As we have already outlined in Chap. 4, austerity has already drastically stretched the Erasmus programme, but this is just one example of a lost mobility opportunity as a consequence of the crisis, and others may start to emerge.

Secondly, we need to look at the impact of the arrival of thousands of people in Europe from outside the EU, many of them escaping conflict in Syria, Afghanistan and North Africa. As Chap. 3 illustrated, these people are often personally and physically distressed by their migration experience, as

well as reeling from the trauma experienced in their home countries, and they are unlikely to be prepared for what awaits them with regard to the fragile social and economic conditions in Europe. Therefore, while recognising the seriousness of the humanitarian disaster from which these people are attempting to escape, and a certain amount of predictable hostility from European political structures designed to minimise the possibility of their settlement, we need to consider how these individuals are likely to cope with our European mobility culture and with the competitive and inherently insecure nature of highly qualified employment.

Finally, we contemplate some of the possible consequences of the recently announced decision of the UK to leave the EU. While the last few decades have been characterised by expansion, we are now approaching a time where the EU seems to be in contraction and facing the prospect that (former) Member States will break up into smaller national entities. Regardless of the long-term consequences, which we cannot really address in this book given the volatility of current political and economic conditions, this lack of regional stability has major implications for the current generation of young Europeans, particularly UK citizens, as they start mobile lives and careers. We consider the prospect of growing insularity for UK citizens and the consequences for their mobility within the EU, as well as the possible removal from the European migration map of one of the most important destinations for highly qualified movers.

Mobility Under Austerity

The EU, as we know, is governed by competition. It is a market-led entity, and always has been in all its political formulations, its politicians driven by a desire to compete with other global economic regions.[1] To remain competitive, it retains internal selection of the fittest for education, jobs and mobility. In consequence, the EU is not a socially inclusive society but rather an exclusive one, characterised by a constant battle

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[1] It is worth recalling that the EU was formally known as the European Economic Community until the coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, and is still more informally referred to as the common market.

among citizens to participate in its opportunity structures, with access mediated by factors such as inheritances of social, economic and cultural capital, power and influence, crudely combined with talent and good luck.

Lest this honesty about Europe feel disconcerting, we should remind ourselves that there is at least a possibility of success with regard to becoming mobile within one's professional life, however unfair access to opportunities has become. Many countries, both inside and outside the EU, offer next to nothing to their citizens in terms of opportunities to develop an international career, with additional constraints of gerontocracy, political patronage and nepotism restraining development in internal labour markets. The EU therefore still offers hope to its ambitious citizens, at least when based on meritocratic principles, with the preservation of this hope vital to our collective sense of well-being. However, if the chance of success grows too small, or the belief in meritocracy is undermined by visible inequalities, we start to lose faith and the European community suddenly starts to feel like a much smaller and more parochial place.

This disenchantment is not related to the crude Europhobia promoted by populist politicians in regions such as the United Kingdom—as we will hereafter discuss—but forms part of a more substantial process of social disenfranchisement relating to the contentious role of European institutions in the management of the economic crisis. Through becoming associated with the troika bail-out programmes, administered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its partners, these organisations and certain political personages have become demonised for appearing to have profited from the situation for their country's own benefit, most prominently the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. However, unlike anglophone Euroscepticism, this is not an expression of consternation with European ideals but rather a feeling that politicians such as Chancellor Merkel and the EC have betrayed core European values of international solidarity and human compassion by punishing people from economically weak nations for their governments' fiscal mismanagement. There is also a suggestion that countries such as Germany may have used the crisis to strengthen their own positions at the centre of Europe, reinforcing the idea of the EU having a protected core supported by

precarious peripheries, including the countries subject to bail-outs, such as Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and the Republic of Ireland, and a similarly economically troubled Spain.[2]

This underreported crisis of European legitimacy has meant that recent graduates in particular risk becoming more distant from opportunities, creating a heightened mobility imperative, but the impact of austerity on their lives and household incomes means that their mobility capacity is threatened due to resource depletion. Having developed these two concepts in previous work in the context of student mobility decision-making in austerity-affected countries (see, e.g., Cairns, 2014, 2015), we know that when these two attributes become unbalanced a high level of frustration is produced because, basically, people feel that they desperately need to move abroad but lack the means to do so. There does not seem to have been any concerted response at European level to this situation. For example, as we learnt in Chap. 4, European programmes such as Erasmus do not really help austerity-affected students, with an internship also out of the question due to the high level of personal resources required. At the same time, prospects for free movement under austerity are jeopardised by the rising cost of mobility at a time when the number of viable destinations is declining in the economic fallout of the crisis.

In following an indiscriminate punishment dynamic, leading from the core to the periphery, externally imposed austerity has threatened, and will continue to threaten, the prospect of intra-European mobility for the highly qualified, including the socially and economically vulnerable.

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[2] The impact of austerity across Europe has been widespread but highly uneven, with two basic variants. The first can be found in the countries subject to bail-outs administered by the International Monetary Fund and its troika partners (including Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and the Republic of Ireland). Here, austerity is synonymous with major cuts in public services, reductions in salaries and widespread unemployment. The basic idea behind this debt crisis austerity is to extract wealth from those who are assumed to have it to spare, typically the middle class, and avoid creating new jobs that are meaningfully remunerated or secure with a view to using savings to repay the country's external debts to the troika creditors. A second variety relates to the popular practice of governments trimming public expenditure in the name of austerity, targeting socially disadvantaged groups, such as migrants, the long-term unemployed and the disabled. Given the small size of these groups and that they may possess little wealth, there is no possibility of significant economic benefits. Populist austerity can therefore be interpreted as a political strategy aimed at creating a visible underclass to act as a bogus sign of governmental fiscal responsibility (Cairns et al., 2016, pp. 14–19).

However tenuous for previous generations, mobility in education, training and work had come to represent a means of escape from the limitations of local labour markets for highly qualified European citizens. With no end in sight for the economic crisis, the challenge created is one of managing mobility under prolonged austerity for both the governance of mobility systems and those wishing to move abroad for work, study and training. For existing levels of highly qualified circulation to be maintained, never mind expanded, the costs of austerity therefore need to be built into mobility planning, with support directly aimed at those most affected.

Europe's 'Other Mobility Crisis'

In the closing section of Chap. 3, we introduced another perspective into our discussion of highly qualified mobility, namely, the impact of the influx of thousands of clandestine migrants from war-torn countries—including Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan—on the EU and, by extension, its existing mobility infrastructure. This consideration was intended to illustrate the challenge to Europe posed by what we might term Europe's 'other mobility crisis', the first crisis being the threat to intra-European circulation created by the failure to manage the economic crisis (see above). The current refugee crisis is not a unique event, with the flow of such individuals into Europe being a relatively familiar sight, particularly in southern European countries. However, the unfortunate timing of the 2015/2016 refugee crisis, with one crisis immediately following another, means that the task of addressing issues arising from the former is confounded by the need to address the latter due to its status as an immediate humanitarian tragedy of substantial proportions.

We cannot hope to disentangle these crises. The economic crisis that arrived in 2008 gave rise to a political crisis of legitimacy with the potential to exacerbate the refugee crisis, as immigrants from outside the EU and refugees may be less well equipped to cope with unanticipated economic and political turmoil. They may head for Europe's strongest economies under the impression that those countries will house them, having passed through other European countries who were supposed to

respect their human rights but instead starved, humiliated, abused, beat and exploited them through dubious social policies, impromptu fence constructions and abruptly closed borders, expanding the need for clandestine crossings that perpetuate illegality and risk. While they were being exploited by mafias, coastguards and various businesses, legal institutions such as the police, armed forces and governments were complicit in benefitting from their misery. And at no point has this quelled their motivation to come to Europe, because these people have no way back.

Unfortunately, they stumble almost broken into a fragile European society on the brink of its own political collapse, and face an immense battle against rigid nation state systems that increasingly emit anti-migrant/immigrant/refugee feeling. They are unaware that they have migrated to a crisis of western democracy caused by the political subservience to a market society that turned its back on millions of people in order to enrich a small minority of pirate capitalists, creating rampant inequality and a disorientation with mainstream politics. They are likely to know next to nothing about how this has led to the widespread disenfranchisement of millions of people, rendering them vulnerable to increasing far-right influence. The power of this impact is now felt even in mainstream political parties as they attempt to win back the very same group of people they have ruined over the last four decades of neo-liberal governance by regurgitating similar messages about 'others' such as refugees. As they wait in uncertainty, subject to drawn-out asylum application processes that hinder making commitments to a country, they must wonder what kind of European dream this is when they watch so-called Islamic State terrorists of western origin blow themselves up and murder people in Europe's small towns and capital cities. They must also be confused when they are labelled as those very same terrorists who have crept into our perfectly functioning and morally clean democratic societies, where the poor are never unjustly punished. They must wonder why there is so much potential social anger and frustration directed at their arrival and why the countries they reach doubt that they have left in genuine need and have arrived with nothing but their names.

While global corruption continues to impede social and economic development (as detailed in the release of the Panama Papers), and record

levels of displaced people pile pressure on the stuttering engine of global capitalism, we find that the myth of democratic societies supposedly serving everyday people is exposed as a lie, with inequality reproduced by those claiming to be concerned with its eradication. It is difficult to see how the flow of refugees will end, given the continued presence of international political and economic interests in the Middle East. Syria is one of many places subject to internal civil war as a consequence of an overdose of international military action and arms sales that have perpetuated the existence of various factions and their control of the country, despite initially stemming from protests by everyday people against a despotic leader. It should be no surprise then to learn that the refugee arrivals will continue—in wind, rain, sleet or snow, over the fence or across the sea. This is because there is no diplomatic political solution to the conflict and no amount of precision bombing, tactical ground assaults or highly trained soldiers will solve this civil war. The future crisis is already upon us because our politics cannot acknowledge humanity, only profit and growth. It cannot recognise how it duplicates poverty and magnifies the suffering of the marginalised through stupid policies; it can only blame people for their lack of compliance to rules, laws and boundaries not of their own making. All it can do is perpetuate war and violence, create desperate levels of people displacement and, when those people come crawling on their knees for help, send them back to their home countries.

However, despite this being an issue fundamental to refugee reception, it is not a perspective that is generally acknowledged in refugee crisis political discourse, which focuses on questions of illegal entry, asylum and repatriation. We should never forget that people are not only coming to Europe to escape immediate danger but also to have a life as new Europeans, including taking their place in our mobility systems and highly competitive labour markets. Another consequence relates to the reaction to the refugee crisis from governments, particularly those nations that are directly affected by the new influx, and from citizens at ground level. Risks include the closing of previously open borders due to concerns about excessive numbers of new arrivals and the shutting down of pathways between the EU and other global regions due to fears regarding national security among certain Member States. This may have the effect

of making 'regular' circulation more difficult, as well as restricting the capacity of tertiary education-level institutions to recruit students and staff from abroad, lowering the quality of this education for everyone.

Mobility in a Broken Union

Somewhere in the middle of revising the first draft of Chap. 5 of this book, a potentially momentous event in European history took place: the decision of the United Kingdom electorate to leave the EU, termed Brexit. This unexpected outcome, which almost no one in academia thought would happen, has also left the media and even 'vote leave' politicians stunned and unsure about what to do next. This upset has created a whole new set of mobility dilemmas and consequences, both for those with direct connections to the UK (including its citizens and incoming and outgoing migrants) and for other EU Member States in regard to the potential for creating a precedent for the withdrawal of other countries. In this final part of our discussion we want to consider what some of these consequences might be, although like most people, we are not quite sure why this decision was taken by so many people who, on the surface, appear to have nothing to gain and much to lose by leaving. Populist explanations of Brexit cite an alleged mass outbreak of racist hysteria directed against immigrants and the rather fanciful claim that less funding for Europe means more spending on the dilapidated UK National Health Service. Both these arguments are discomforting, as the former suggests the existence of significant racist sentiment, although this explanation is, in itself, a quasi-racist position in stereotyping 'leave' voters as a homogenous group of xenophobes, while the latter implies that a large rump of voters, perhaps including many elderly citizens, were more concerned about maximising their welfare entitlements during their declining years than with their younger compatriots' future life chances.

It is also possible that Brexit was a vote of anger, frustration and desperation, being a vote against economic inequality and populist austerity made on behalf of a large group of lower–middle and working class people. This cross-section of the population, concentrated in the post-industrial towns and cities of northern England, have been ruined during

the last four decades by the structural eradication of their livelihoods in the domestic economy, a development associated with the importation of neo-liberalism to Europe by Margaret Thatcher and continued by subsequent Conservative and Labour Party administrations (Cairns et al., 2016, pp. 20–22). Having become disenchanted with the main political parties in Britain, due to their acceptance of what amounts to the same basic economic principles, and seeing no intervention from Europe to remedy their economic disadvantage, they may have fallen prey to the persuasion of far-right influences. Certain politicians have conveniently constructed an ideology around the loss of national identity and economic stability as a consequence of uncontrolled migration, with intra-European migration from post-socialist Member States singled out for special attention. Although this is speculation, given that this legitimate crisis of politics is current in other countries where we see far-left gains, it would not be too great a leap to suggest that this may be the end of free movement and the beginning of the break-up of the EU on a grander scale.

Yet, to many Europeans outside Britain, connecting Brexit with incoming migration seems particularly strange. It is certainly not a place people consider moving to for easy money, given its notoriously competitive labour market, relatively low wages and very high cost of living. Neither is the UK generally perceived as a magnet for clandestine movers, with the current refugee crisis being firmly focused on Germany as the most significant destination. It is not even part of the Schengen Zone. The responsibility for controlling incoming movement in the EU lies for the most part with Member States, and this is even more the case in the UK than in other EU Member States and affiliate countries in Schengen. It is certainly not the responsibility of Brussels to patrol the UK's borders. The question we are asking is how can the UK people not know this? And how can withdrawing from the European political table help the UK influence European mobility policy?[3] What even makes the UK population think

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[3] One of the most immediate consequences for UK-based academics will be their inevitable exclusion from European-level research competitions, ranging from post-graduate and post-doctoral grants to large-scale projects as part of the Horizon 2020 initiative. While the status of the UK within these systems may take some time to be clarified, the uncertainty generated is almost certain to lead to the non-inclusion of UK researchers in consortia beyond a zero-finance situation or the

that incoming migration can be controlled? To the outsider, Brexit simply makes no sense and feels more like a resignation from European competition than an ordered exit.

If we are then facing the break-up of the EU as we know it, this creates obvious consequences, including how to maintain highly qualified mobility in a disintegrating Union. For the Britons, there is also the challenge of finding a way to cope with the complexity of carving out a career in a broken country, considering the possible exit of Scotland from the UK and the destabilisation of Northern Ireland, two regions that voted overwhelmingly to stay. Never mind deciding where to go, some people are not certain where they are in legal terms, with young voters leaning towards remain also feeling that older voters decision to leave has essentially jeopardised their future careers so that they might enjoy a quieter and less multicultural retirement. There is also the question of how UK citizens who still wish to become mobile will manage this aspect of their career trajectories without free entry to the rest of Europe, and the predicament facing Britons already living in other EU Member States.

The true costs of this decision will become apparent in time, but more immediate ramifications include the rendering of the UK as undesirable as a destination for the next generation of students, trainees and workers from abroad, due to social, political and economic instability that may last for decades. Early indications suggest that businesses have already started to remove their investments from the UK, and there is talk among some corporations of moving offices from London to other parts of Europe. This will reduce the range of jobs open to the highly qualified in the UK. Within academia, exclusion from European funding mechanisms will also mean heightened internal competition for internal funding, inevitably lowering the quality of research outputs due to the loss of international cooperation. This will happen as there is no possibility, for example, of the UK government securing a Norwegian-style deal with EC, since a refusal to accept the free movement of European citizens, or to

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non-invitation to join projects due to the risk of not being able to fulfil responsibilities or adequately address European policy concerns. UK participation in the Erasmus programme may also come to an end, although levels of outgoing mobility from the UK have been traditionally at very low levels.

contribute to the maintenance of the EU at present funding levels, constituted some of the basic reasons why 'leave' politicians wished to exit.

Closing Remarks: The Mobility Commodity

Just as education, and tertiary education in particular, became a commodity in the late twentieth century, so too has mobility in the early twenty-first. While it may no longer be the sole preserve of the rich and powerful, it is still something to be bought and paid for, not a gift indiscriminately proffered by society upon its less well-off citizens. When the commodity is valued and scarce it becomes fought over, hoarded, occasionally put to good use, but often squandered. Mobility among the highly qualified is therefore limited, restricted and expensive, with its outcomes highly uncertain. Yet this tantalising prospect seems to make it all the more desirable for thousands of ambitious individuals, who still see working, studying and training in different countries as their key to success.

What we have observed in this book are some of the consequences of this mobility philosophy and how they have taken root in education, training and certain employment sectors. However, we have now reached, and perhaps passed, a turning point. Current signs suggest that, rather than continuing to expand, we are witnessing a retreat in intra-European circulation among the highly qualified due to a reduced range of viable opportunities, the declining efficacy of mobility capital in the labour market, the advance of the oligarchical principle in science and a greater awareness of the risks posed to personal and financial well-being by moving abroad. This is why the near future is more likely to be characterised by a much reduced level of mobility within the EU, with this economic community itself coming under increasing strain to restrict circulation from its inward-looking and insecure Member States. Therefore, having looked at some of the factors that pose a threat to the existing mobility order, we have to conclude that the prognosis for the immediate future is very far from healthy.

Although we might be moving towards an era characterised by less, and perhaps less successful, mobility, it may be that leaner and more dedicated modes of circulation are what is actually required. We still need mobility within Europe as a means of generating and sharing talent, as well as forming an integral part of sustaining an international community, but supporting a smaller number of more dedicated movers with adequate resources may be a better approach than the current underfunded models. Having fewer people circulating does not necessarily mean that mobility is not working for Europe, on the contrary, this more-focused approach may pay higher dividends, but only if access becomes less socially exclusive.

While we will not be so presumptuous as to resort to making recommendations for changes in mobility policies, particularly since no one at national or European levels has asked us, there are a number of obvious remarks we can make to pinpoint the 'problem' with our chosen examples. With regard to student mobility, the current system appears to support inequality and neglect social inclusion, creating an image of success that is reassuring to policymakers rather than making a substantial contribution to the European economy. It is a lack of ambition, perhaps in fear of the 'wrong sort' of students being given access to mobility, that leads to this failure, as well as to the lingering suspicion that a more leisurely approach to circulation is what policymakers personally want, sending their children abroad for six months in the sun while they enjoy some much needed quiet at home. Meanwhile, the current model of internship is in need of serious re-evaluation, if not legal sanction, and the lack of protection for mobile scientists is a major concern, as is the lack of diversity and relevance in scientific outputs.

All these factors point towards a need for reform in the highly qualified labour market. Without the destination of a job and a stable career, mobility is ultimately futile for students, interns and scientists. As currently practised, the forms of mobility we have studied are inefficient for societies and inefficient for those people who wish to develop their careers and have meaningful lives. European institutions invite their own downfall if they believe that issuing publicity about its supposed values and those of its citizens is enough to counter wasted talent. Rather than mobility being a commodity to be bought and sold like a regular product,

it should be treated as a precious asset. Within the EU the freedom to circulate is a unique aspect of European life that needs to be protected, not used as a platform for exploitation. After all, we, the authors, are testament that it can work, and in writing this book we are canvassing for its future.

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