

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PATTERNS OF ACADEMIC INFLOW INTO THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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As globalisation of the world economy continues unabated, a parallel growth of globalization of knowledge is also taking place. This latter trend is little affected by the boundaries between developed and less developed countries and is having a particular impact on the trends of education, in particular on higher education (Moloi et al., 2009). An increasing number of professionals are taking the opportunity to explore the landscape of an international career rather than waiting to be sent by an employer as part of an overseas assignment (Inkson et al., 1997; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). The new careers literature suggests that this trend reflects the increasing flexibility of many contemporary careers where they are now increasingly likely to evolve across international boundaries. Having the flexibility to pursue such a career move which might involve exploring diverse cultures and landscapes presents an inviting prospect. This paper looks at the impact of globalization on higher education within the context of South Africa. It focuses on one particular manifestation of this phenomenon namely the inflow of foreign academics into the higher education institutions of South Africa. It forms the first part of a larger study being undertaken at doctoral level, in which the researcher attempts to investigate the experiences of expatriate academics at South African universities. This first phase of the research is crucial, in order to establish the existence of this particular phenomenon, thereby establishing the importance of this trend as a manifestation of globalization and to determine whether there is a significant inflow of expatriate academics in order to warrant further research.

Key Words: *Globalisation, Universities, Expatriate Academics, Patterns of Inflow.*

Introduction

Higher Education and higher education systems are becoming increasingly international. This has led to a growing need for international activity and strategic alliances between universities and other educational institutions (Altbach, 2004). The paper first introduces the impact globalization has had on academia, which has resulted in the contemporary trend towards increasing international mobility in academia. It connects that trend with the expansion of higher education, the concomitant demand for suitably qualified faculty and the putative internationalization of higher education. The deteriorating working conditions in some countries are also identified as an impetus for some faculty to seek an overseas position. The new careers literature is then introduced as a useful framework within which to understand both international academic careers and academic careers more generally. Specific mention is made of the widely accepted view that flexibility is one of the defining features of an academic career (Altbach, 2002, Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). This view provides further explanation for the increasing international mobility in academia. In addition to well documented increase in travel by the student body, academics too are experiencing growing levels of international mobility. However, very little work has been done on the experiences of expatriate academics. As a result much of what we know about expatriates and expatriation is based on managers and corporate executives who have been sent

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on overseas assignments by their employers. Therefore, although they have a long history of travel and current trends indicate that a growing number are experiencing international mobility, expatriate academics remains an under researched group.

Background and Context

Globalisation and the University

Introduction

There has been much debate about the impact of globalization on higher education. Some have argued that globalization, the Internet and the scientific community will level the field in the new age of knowledge interdependence. Others claim that globalization means both worldwide inequality and the enfranchisement of the university. It is argued that all of the contemporary pressures on higher education, from the pressures of massification to the growth of the private sector, are the results of globalization. Both these viewpoints have some truth and a good deal of misinterpretation thrown in (Altbach; 2002, 2004).

Academia around the world is affected differently by global trends. Countries that use English as a medium of communication benefit from the widespread use of that language for science and scholarship. Today's globalization in higher education does not lack precedents. From the beginning, universities have incorporated tensions between national realities and international trends. While English now dominates as the language of research and scholarship, at one time German did, as did Latin. Both students and scholars have always worked outside their home country. Globalisation in the 20th century is truly worldwide in its reach – few places can escape contemporary trends and innovations and practices seem to spread faster due to modern technology (Altbach, 2004).

The Global Marketplace for Academics

Globalisation has fueled the widely accepted trend of temporarily travelling abroad for research and teaching amongst contemporary academics. As academic systems become more similar and academic degrees more widely accepted, as immigration rules are tailored to attract people with high skills levels and as universities themselves become more open to hiring the best talent available, the global market place will expand.

The flow of academic talent at all levels is largely directed from South to North- from developing countries to the developed academic systems of the UK, Europe, and America. Numerous visiting scholars travel across international borders to take up temporary teaching positions or to undertake research. In 2000, the USA hosted almost 80 000 visiting scholars. Most visiting scholars return home after their sabbaticals, although a certain number do use their assignments as opportunities to permanently emigrate (Altbach 2004: 12).

This phenomenon is common for many African countries, like Ethiopia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and South Africa. South Africa is losing many of its most talented academics to the North while at the same time it is recruiting from elsewhere in Africa. This “brain drain” has seriously weakened the academic institutions of many developing countries (Outward Bound, 2002:24).

Academic migration is not limited to developing countries as academics will take jobs in countries with more attractive opportunities, salaries, and working conditions. A significant exodus continues to take place from the UK to the US and Canada because of low salaries and deteriorating working conditions at home. Scholars from Denmark and Finland are sometimes enticed by the larger metropolises which offer the prospect of being the center of research activity and having access to the latest scientific equipment. Academic migration takes place at all levels of the academic system, especially in the sciences, engineering, information technology, and some management areas. Such migration may occur more at the top of the systems with some world famous academics being attracted abroad by high salaries at top universities and at the bottom where modest salaries are able to lure foreigners but are unappealing to local applicants.

Academic migration follows complex routes. Many Egyptian, Jordanian, and Palestinian academics work at Arabian Gulf universities, attracted by the higher salaries and better working conditions than are available at home. Indians and Pakistanis are similarly drawn to the Gulf as well as to South East Asia. Singapore and Hong Kong attract academics worldwide. Mexico and Brazil employ scholars from elsewhere in Latin America. South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana currently recruit Africans from elsewhere on the continent. Some of the best scholars and scientists from Russia and a number of Central European countries have taken positions in Western Europe and North America (Altbach, 1996).

The most significant motivators or “pull” factors include better salaries and working conditions and the opportunity to be at the centers of world science and scholarship. The discrepancies in salaries and conditions between North and South mean that in most developing countries academics cannot aspire to lead middle class lifestyle or to expect to have access to the latest tools of research and scholarship, this includes having the ability to connect with the international body of scholars (Altbach, 2004: 14).

The most significant “push” factors include the limited extent of academic freedom in many developing countries, academics are subjected to restrictions and even the threat of incarceration if they stray from politically acceptable diatribe. Favouritism or even corruption in academic appointments, promotions, and other areas can destabilize the academic environment. In other areas, job security and stability are often unattainable. Universities in Third World countries inevitably suffer from a scarcity of resources and the pressure of large student numbers on overburdened academic institutions and systems (Altbach, 2004:14).

Once, this movement of talent and skill was perceived as a “brain drain” because those who left never came back nor did they maintain any sort of academic links with the home country. According to Choi (1995) the situation has undergone a change. Many academics and highly skilled workers who have migrated maintain close contact with their countries of origin, often nurturing scientific and academic relationships with colleagues and institutions at home. Some have even returned after establishing careers abroad as academic conditions at home have improved—some academics from South Korea and Taiwan returned from the United States or other countries to accept senior academic posts once working conditions, salaries and respect for academic freedom had improved (Altbach, 2004:14).

More commonly, academics return home for lectures or consulting, to collaborate on research with colleagues in the home country, or to accept visiting professorships. Facilitated by technology and the advent of the Internet these links are becoming more appropriate and useful. Such trends are becoming especially strong in countries with well developed academic systems like China, India, and South Africa.

Industrialized countries have promoted the migration of academics and other highly skilled labour by creating immigration policies that encourage talented personnel to migrate and establish residency. In many countries academic institutions make it easy for foreigners to fit into the career structure. Countries that have barriers to foreign participation in academia suffer as a result. In general, the developing countries have helped the North maintain its overwhelming lead in science and scholarship. The renewal of links between academics who migrate and their home country mitigates the situation somewhat but developing countries still find themselves at a disadvantage in the global academic marketplace (Altbach, 2002).

Contemporary Academic Mobility

Introduction

The contemporary discourse about the increasing opportunities for international mobility suggests that a growing number of professionals are pursuing a career across international boundaries. In fact, according to Inkson and Myers (2003) people are spending more time away from their home

country than ever as a result of decisions they have made with respect to their careers. The widely acknowledged challenges of cross-cultural adjustment notwithstanding, one might assume that pursuing an international career, is for the most part an attractive one. Its appeal may lie in the putative benefits for career development. However, the decision to engage in international mobility has implications that extend beyond one's objective career success (Derr and Laurent, 1989), that is beyond "external markers" such as promotion and pay increases.

Career researchers have maintained a positive view of international mobility in this regard. Thomas et al. (2005), point out that some individuals might recognize the limitations of an overseas assignment for providing external career advancement but expatriate anyway in order to benefit from the advantages for personal development. Acknowledging personal interest as an impetus for international mobility, Inkson and Myers (2003:170) state that the "image of life abroad draws culture seekers like magnets" and Osland (1995) speaks of international mobility as an opportunity for a "heros's adventure".

Academic interest in expatriation and expatriate management issues have given rise to an extensive body of literature and research. However, the focus has been on expatriate managers and corporate executives who are sent overseas by their employer and has left a dearth of studies about expatriates operating outside the business arena. South African expatriate literature has also focused extensively on the expatriation of highly skilled workers and knowledge workers out of South Africa to countries such as the United States, UK, and UAE. From an extensive review of the related literature, it would seem that there is a gap in terms of studies have done on expatriate employees working in South African organizations as well as a dearth of studies on expatriates working outside the business environment. The current study seeks to address the gap found in the literature reviewed. In order to ensure that the study is properly contextualized the trend toward increasing expatriation amongst academics is discussed next.

International Mobility among Academics

The seminal work done in this field was commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation in America. Altbach (1996) conducted research on academics in fourteen different countries and has linked increasing international mobility with deteriorating working conditions in some countries. Focusing on England as the "home country" of some participants in this study, Altbach (1996) reported a general consensus that the working conditions for academics had deteriorated and respect for the profession and its influence are declining.

Given that it is one of the first international studies of academia (Altbach, 1996, xi) the Carnegie study is worth exploring in detail here. Using postal questionnaires, it surveyed academics in fifteen countries: Australia, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, England, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Egypt was not included in the final report as there were complications with the administration of the questionnaire. The results showed that over half of the respondents in ten of the target countries had travelled international for the purposes of research or study.

One of the main contributions of the Carnegie study is to provide evidence that academics with international experience are likely to be more privileged, occupy a higher status and/or be more "high flying" than their colleagues with little or no overseas experience (Altbach, 1996; Welch, 1997b). Even though no specific figures were cited, it did report that academics were independently seeking positions outside their country of origin. Although there was no exploration of individual drivers to or evaluations of international mobility and hence expatriation, the findings present a good foundation upon which to build research such as this.

Finkelstein et al. (2007) study conducted among 17 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, and the United States) was a fifteen year follow-up to the original Carnegie Foundation International faculty survey.

Its results do not present much progress of US faculty internationalization during the fifteen years (1992-2007) between surveys. One of the most interesting results of the study was that faculty who had spent time abroad were more likely to incorporate international issues in their teaching and have a research agenda with international scope than those who did not (LeBeau, 2010: 44).

International Mobility and Academia

To the extent that the overseas sabbatical has been a longstanding feature of many academic careers; Baruch and Hall (2004:254) suggest that faculty have “led the way on the now-popular business trend towards international assignment.” However, many academics are now engaging in international mobility beyond an overseas sabbatical.

This trend can be related to certain broader social movements. In particular, the rapid expansion of education after the Second World War led to a dramatic increase in the number of universities in many countries (Welch, 1997). Of particular significance was the move from “elite” to “mass” higher education in for example, Canada, UK, USA, and Australia. In addition, the more recent expansion of education throughout Asia, the Middle East, and South America, has given rise to an international demand for more faculty to fill the growing number of positions available. In supporting this expansion, successive governments have sought to make tertiary education accessible to an increasing student body. Yet, they have paid less attention to ensuring an appropriately qualified and experienced supply of faculty to fill the newly created positions.

Consequently, many institutions are recruiting internationally – a move which is also supported by the putative ‘internationalization’ of higher education. Indeed, where business education is concerned, institutions are challenged to manage and retain international faculty in order to enhance their status (Liblin, 2003). A study by the Carnegie Foundation for Education of academics in 14 different countries (Altbach, 1996) has also linked increasing international mobility with deteriorating working conditions in some countries. This is particularly the case where opportunities for tenure and promotion are concerned. Abolition of tenure in British universities, for example, has brought major changes. Some authors (e.g. Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1998; Fulton, 1996) assert that these changes have meant greater flexibility, individual independence, and freedom. However, other changes such as the growing number of academics on part-time and/or short term contracts has also meant uncertainty, which some studies suggest has had a detrimental effect on morale (e.g., Forster, 2001; Hailey, 1996; Husbands, 1998; Miller, 1995) and greater willingness to take a position outside Britain. Indeed, focusing specifically on England, the Carnegie study (Altbach, 1996) reported a general consensus that working conditions for academics have deteriorated and respect for the profession and its influence are declining. This finding is particularly pertinent given that the majority of the participants in this study had left faculty positions in England.

An Academic Career

There has been relatively little work done on academic careers and much of what has been written tends to focus on macro perspectives exploring institutional and structural changes, rather than academic careers at an individual level. When thinking of the “academic career” it is useful to locate it in the context of both traditional and new careers literature. Following on from the Arthur’s concept of the “boundaryless career” it appears that the academic career follows a pattern in which many academics experience mobility between institutions and quite often between countries (Altbach, 1996, Welch, 1997).

International Academic Careers as ‘New’ Careers

Inkson et al. (1997) suggest that the ‘new’ careers literature presents a potentially useful framework within which to understand international careers. In fact, whether international or otherwise, academic careers reflect several ‘new’ career themes (Baruch et al., 2004). First they “unfold across several employers” (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), even to the extent where movement between institutions is both expected and, to some extent, commonplace (Blaxter et al., 1998).

An academic career also reflects 'new' career themes in that it draws validation and marketability from outside the present employer. Thus, in a study of faculty in two universities in Britain, Nixon (1996) reported that participants were less dependent on a single employer for their career development. It also reflects "new" career themes relating to the importance of networking, personal connections, and the primacy of personal and family life. Fries-Britt (2000) contends that establishing networks with colleagues both inside and outside the host institution are essential. Altbach (1996), for example, has reported growing evidence that some academics are rejecting career opportunities for personal reasons, particularly for themes related to family. In addition, the rhetoric of academic careers also reflects new career themes in that it is broadly understood as a profession that demands individual responsibility for one's own career development and is characterized by a great deal of flexibility. Thus an individual faculty member is widely seen as a "free agent and can move his or her career and research agenda fairly easily from one university to another" (Baruch et al., 2004 p, 249). Given this to be the case, the flexibility of an academic career facilitates international mobility. Thus, it is not surprising that, as Hall and Baruch (2004) suggest, international mobility is a regular occurrence in many if not most academic careers. In addition to these 'new' career themes, international academic careers like academic careers in general also reflect some of the 'old' career themes. They offer relative stability, with a hierarchical structure comprising a reasonably well structured path of upward mobility. Traversing the hierarchy depends on three main criteria: publication, teaching, and service. Thus, Baruch and Hall (2004) suggest that where security is concerned "There is nothing in the world today, in any institution, that approaches the level of security that is enjoyed by a tenured professor" (p.248). Yet, in contexts where tenure is either not available or as has not yet been achieved, a strong element of risk and uncertainty remains.

Secondly, academics are less dependent on a single employer for their career development (Richardson and McKenna, 2002:68). Third, academic careers depend to some extent on extra-organisational networks and finally there is growing evidence that some academics are rejecting career opportunities for personal, particularly family reasons (Stahl et al., 2002).

While the synergy between the academic career and the concept of the "boundaryless career" is evidently strong, a review of the literature also suggests the need for caution. In as much as contemporary academic careers reflect characteristics of a "boundaryless career" it also reflects the characteristics of more traditional career forms. This is illustrated by Weiner (1996) who contends that academic careers commonly commence from lowly beginnings through a well-structured path of upward mobility. Moreover there is widespread anecdotal and empirical evidence of specific criteria that have to be met in order to secure movement up a fairly rigid hierarchy (Weiner, 1996).

The link between globalization and increasing levels of expatriation amongst managers and corporate executives has been widely acknowledged. It is based on the assumption that as globalization increases, a growing number of businesses will need to operate in the international arena. However in addition to impacting on the business world, globalization has created a context where "as the world becomes increasingly interdependent and national boundaries become blurred, science and scholarships are becoming increasingly international" (Altbach, 1996).

Also as educational institutions seek to develop competitive advantage through strategic international alliances and joint ventures collaboration of institutions in different countries is also increasing both in research and teaching. An increasing number of universities are actively pursuing strategic international alliances and more faculty are travelling abroad substantiates this further (Altbach, 1996, 2002, 2004).

While there has been a general move to internationalise universities, budget cutbacks, job insecurity, increased competition for jobs mean that for many academics international mobility is not an option. Further the complexity of work and the growth of administrative duties limit networking to facilitate relocation (Welch, 1997). Also on a personal level, uprooting one's family and moving overseas may not be an attractive proposition so many choose to remain in their home country.

Despite the drawbacks, many academics are experiencing expatriation as part of their academic careers ((Welch, 1997; Altbach, 1996).

Expatriate academics are, therefore, a useful example of self-selecting expatriates and may offer insights into the motivations of other self-selecting expatriate professional that can be the subject of further research.

Rationale for the Study

After an intensive review of the literature on expatriate management and expatriate academics in particular, there seems to be a dearth of studies conducted in the South African context. Numerous studies have been conducted abroad both in terms of the management of expatriates in particular countries as well as studies that have focused on expatriate academics from certain countries and their experiences in their host countries. Many of the studies have used expatriate managers as their samples (Hutchings, 2003; McNulty, 2008; Anderson, 2005), while looking at solutions to the challenges they face, from a purely organizational perspective. There are a few, like Osland (1995) who have looked at the expatriate experience from the perspective of the individual and Richardson (2002), who have looked at the experience of the expatriate from the perspective of the individual.

Traditionally, expatriate management literature looks at the expatriate as someone who is sent on an overseas assignment by his or her company. Richardson (2002) looks at expatriates in a different perspective, that of a self-directed expatriate, in other words someone who chooses to go overseas of their own volition. Their choice could be based on either career development goals or personal development goals. Richardson (2002) uses expatriate academics as the group of self-directed expatriates she researches, and using a qualitative study, examines their personal experiences in a very in-depth manner. Altbach (1996) also examines expatriate academics in terms of the push-pull factors that motivate their move to overseas universities. Both Altbach (1996) and Richardson (2002) focused on self-directed expatriates from a particular country, the US and the UK respectively and their experiences in other countries.

In the present study, the researcher intends to examine the expatriate academics from various countries currently working in South African higher education institutions. The value added to the existing body of literature is therefore, the sample used in the present study, which is different from the other studies previously done in this area.

Methodology

The Sample

The sample was selected from the Higher Education Management Information Systems Database, run by the Department of Higher Education in South Africa. The sample was selected using the following parameters set by the researcher:

1. Foreign born, in other words not of South African origin.
2. The nationality of the academic.
3. The institution at which they are employed.

Data Collection

The data was then collated according to the parameters set, and the results were then analysed. The data collection method used was a survey, which was done as the first phase of the larger study being undertaken at doctoral level. This survey was undertaken in order to establish the prevalence of the phenomenon, as at that stage the researcher needed to establish the population size of expatriate academics at South African institutions of Higher Education to justify the continuation of this as the area of focus for the doctorate. The results of the survey were then analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Overview

The most common term used to describe the globalization of the academic community is internationalization. The term is also used to refer to the effects of globalization on the academic community. The notion of internationalization can be based on many characteristics, mainly by taking into account the following:

- The proportion of overseas students in the higher education system.
- The international orientation of the curricula.
- The intensity of foreign exchange programmes.
- The extent of participation in overseas collaborative activities.
- The proportion of overseas persons among the academic staff in the higher education system.

The last point given here arguably is the most genuine indicator of internationalization of any given academic community (Mahroum, 1999).

Figure 1 presents data based on the number of work permits issued by the Department of Home Affairs for the period 2001-2005, to professionals of all groups. These work permits are issued to all non-South African citizens seeking temporary employment in South Africa. Every foreigner has to first apply for a work permit and temporary residence before he or she is considered for permanent employment and citizenship.

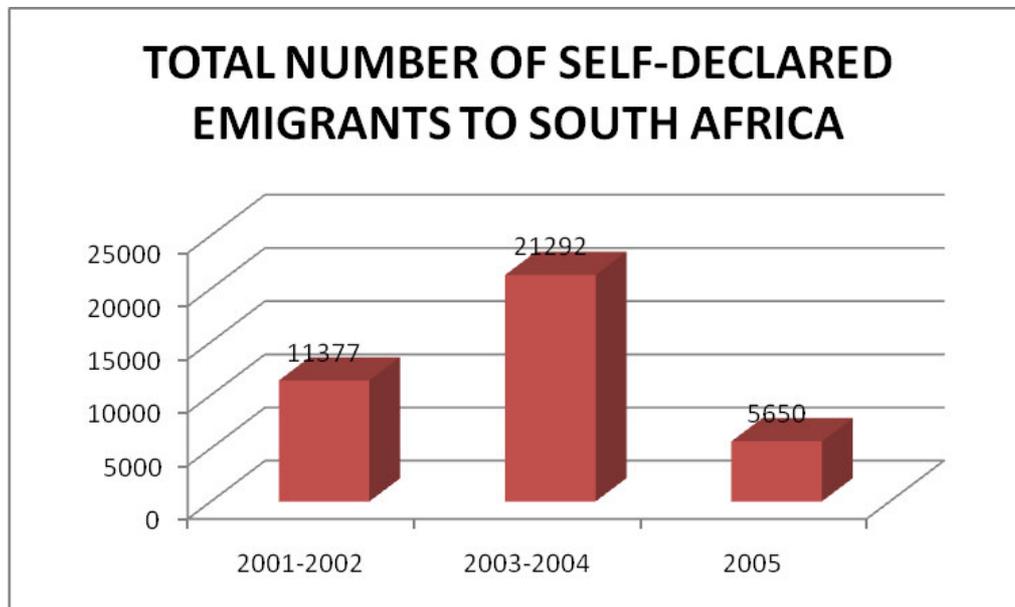


Figure 1: The Total number of Self-declared Emigrants to South Africa for the period 2001-2005.

Sources: Stats SA, (Report 03-51-03) and (Statistical release P0351).

However, it is interesting to note that the ratio of foreign academic staff for the period 2001-2005, to self-declared emigrants is almost 10% (9.79%). The reason for the statistics only being available for this period and not beyond is that, as from February 2004, statistics on self-declared emigrants were no longer collected due to the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002).

During the period 2000-2002, around 2546 foreign academics were employed by South African universities. This figure has increased to 3167 employees for the period, 2006-2008. The increase is indicative of a new trend, whereby universities are recruiting many overseas academics in order to meet the growing demand of internationalization of universities not only from a curriculum point of view but also from a staffing perspective in order to gain the required momentum in terms of global competitiveness for both top students and top academics.

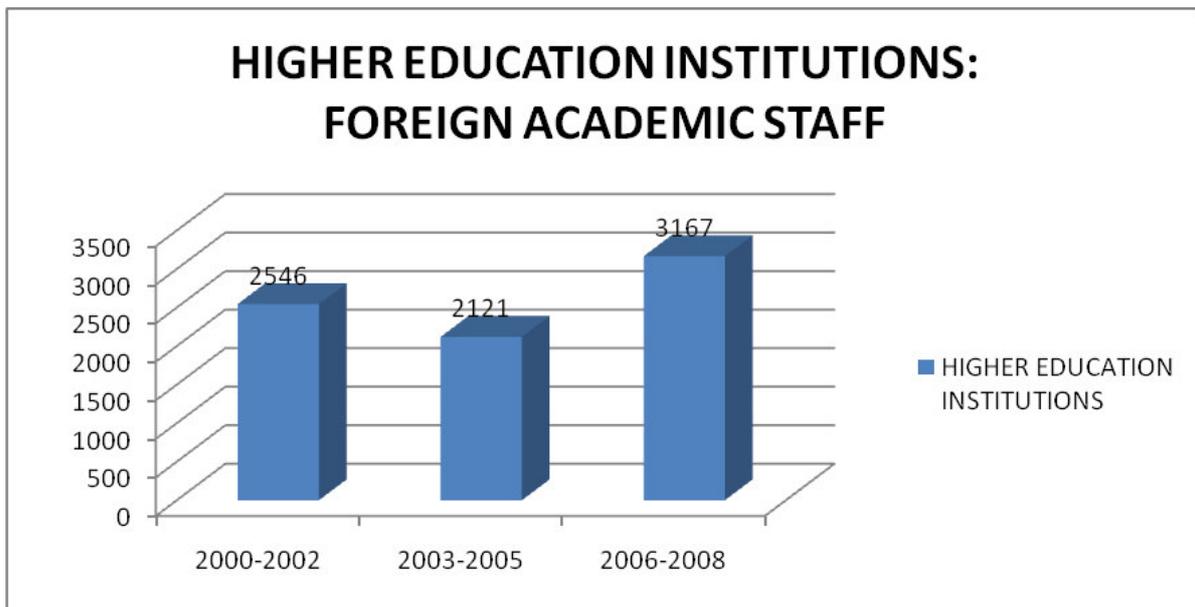


Figure 2: Inflow of foreign academics into South African Higher Education Institutions for period 2000-2008.

Source: Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) 2010.

Figure 2 portrays the flows of foreign academic staff into South Africa between 2000-2008. The figures represent the overall turnover of staff for this period and do not reflect the current situation. This situation has arisen as data for the period 2009- current is not available as the collection of this data by the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) is in the process of collecting data for the period starting in 2009.

It would seem that the inflow of professional emigrants is on the increase since 2000. The inflow of academics from abroad seem to be part of this general trend of increasing numbers of foreign professionals arriving in South Africa.

Supply Regions

It is obvious from the data obtained from the Higher Education Management System (HEMIS) of South Africa that the bulk of overseas academic inflows into South Africa have come from European countries. Europe is followed in turn by, other African countries, especially Zimbabwe, Asia, and Australia. Inflows from Europe represent almost 42% of the total percentage of inflows for the period 2005-2008. These results are in line with the findings of Altbach's (1996) study, which found that South African higher education institutions were recruiting from other African countries. It also suggests that academic migration patterns follow the traditional labour migration patterns where foreigners migrate to South Africa from other African countries because of its strong socio-economic reputation and position in the African continent.

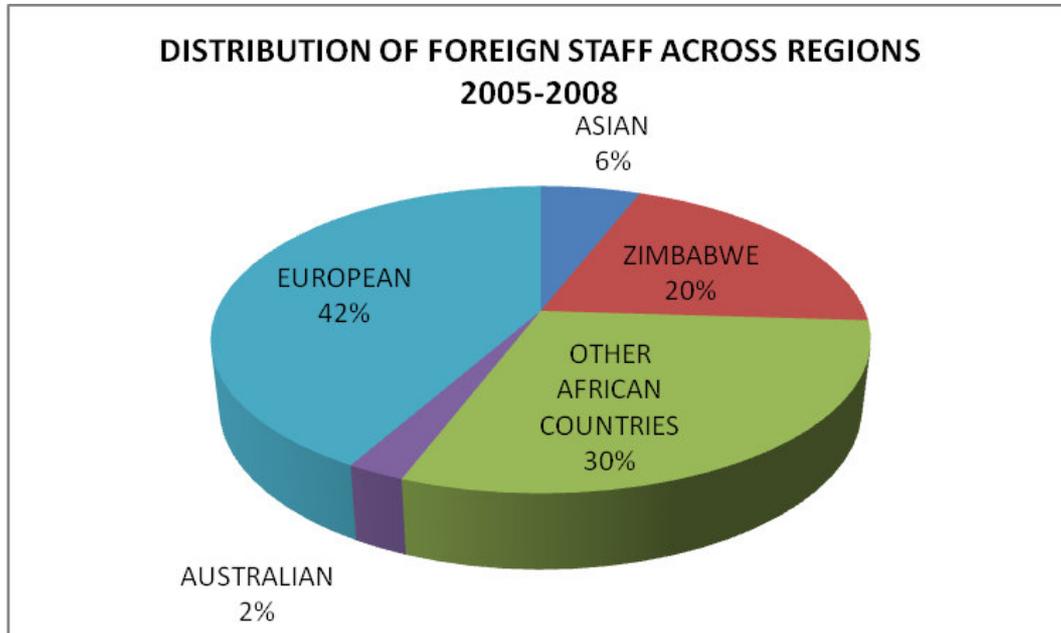


Figure 3: Distribution of Foreign Staff across Regions, 2005-2008.

Source: Higher Education Management Information System (South Africa) 2010.

Large proportions of academic staff turnover in several leading universities, such as the University of Cape Town, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, and University of the Witwatersrand are from overseas. The reason might be a steady increase of outward mobility of South African academics and the introduction of competitive elements like the awarding of research grants, contract research and funding, opportunities for international collaboration and funding from overseas might also act as an incentives for universities to hire more Europeans as well as other foreign academics. Furthermore, joint European projects and collaborations might have introduced the South African labour market to academics in other parts of the world and provided career opportunities for many of them.

Some anecdotal evidence points in this direction. The flexibility of short-term employment positions at South African universities appeals to foreign citizens, who are either at the start of their careers, or who are senior staff seeking further promotion. By taking on short-term but higher level positions in the flexible South African academic market, their careers get a boost back home. It is well known at South African universities that the higher level academic posts are on a contractual basis, positions such as Head of School, Dean, Deputy Dean, Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor are either 2-5 year terms of office. However, during contractual negotiations permanent positions in their respective faculties can be ensured. The other attractive feature of these higher academic positions is that that they all hold the title of “Professor” regardless of whether you have reached that level on the academic ladder or not. At some institutions, the title of “professor” has been conferred on academics who have excelled in their service to the institution, despite not holding a doctoral degree.

The Distribution of Inflows

Almost all universities have experienced an increase in the number of overseas academic staff members. There are various factors that can account for this situation. Firstly, there has been a

rapid expansion of the South African Higher Education system since 2003, when major re-structuring saw the merging of Higher Education institutions into Universities, Universities of Technology and Technikons. Universities of Technology were the result of mergers between technikons and universities in a particular region, for example, Tswane University of Technology, in Pretoria. Public institutions of Higher Education now had to compete against each other on equal footing in order to attract scholars, students and funding.

A second factor has been the rise of research assessment tools, in terms of productivity points for research output of academics and the numbers of postgraduate students an institution has. In terms of postgraduate students universities are awarded funding by government for the number of Masters and Doctoral students they produce.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that this process has seriously affected the management of resources for research. Designating staff as “research active”, and strategies for recruiting and retaining key research staff, has certainly given weight to the adage “publish or perish”. Academic staff are increasingly finding themselves under pressure to further their own academic qualification and also to publish research and produce articles. Most universities have made it abundantly clear to staff that they need to have the doctorates and pressure is certainly being put on staff in terms of time lines for the achievement of their doctorates and improving their qualifications.

Finally, the reputation of South African Higher Education Institutions of being flexible and open systems for both students and academics seeking promotion in their careers is a factor of importance.

The distribution of inflows amongst certain institutions does not seem to be random. The largest recipient (University of Cape Town) has received 833 foreign academics in the period 2005-2008. This implies that there are different sets of factors that account for the various types of inflows. For example, the strength of South Africa in the Science and Agriculture field might explain the attractiveness of South Africa in this field, whereas the attractiveness of one institution could be attributed to either its international reputation or the attraction of its location.

Thus one can argue that there are three dynamics at play,

- The attraction of the field
- The reputation of the institution, and
- The attraction of a location

At this level very little is known about the three dynamics and how they interact, therefore, further research is required to highlight the effects of each of these independently and in interaction with each other (Mahroum 1999). Nevertheless, the data have so far indicated the following:

Main Recipient Universities

As can be seen from Figure 4, the Universities of Cape Town, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pretoria, Rhodes and Witwatersrand top the list of recipient institutions. The majority of these institutions also host a significant proportion of overseas students. The proportion of foreign students is a good indication of the extent of internationalization of a university. The top recipients are all “old” universities that are well known for nationally and internationally for their excellence. Additionally all are located in large towns and cities, which may be one attraction factor for foreign academics. The five lowest ranked recipients of foreign academic staff are relatively new universities created through the restructuring process who have yet to establish a reputation in terms of attractiveness for foreign staff and students and technikons who have poorer reputations in terms of research output and funding opportunities than their well established counterparts.

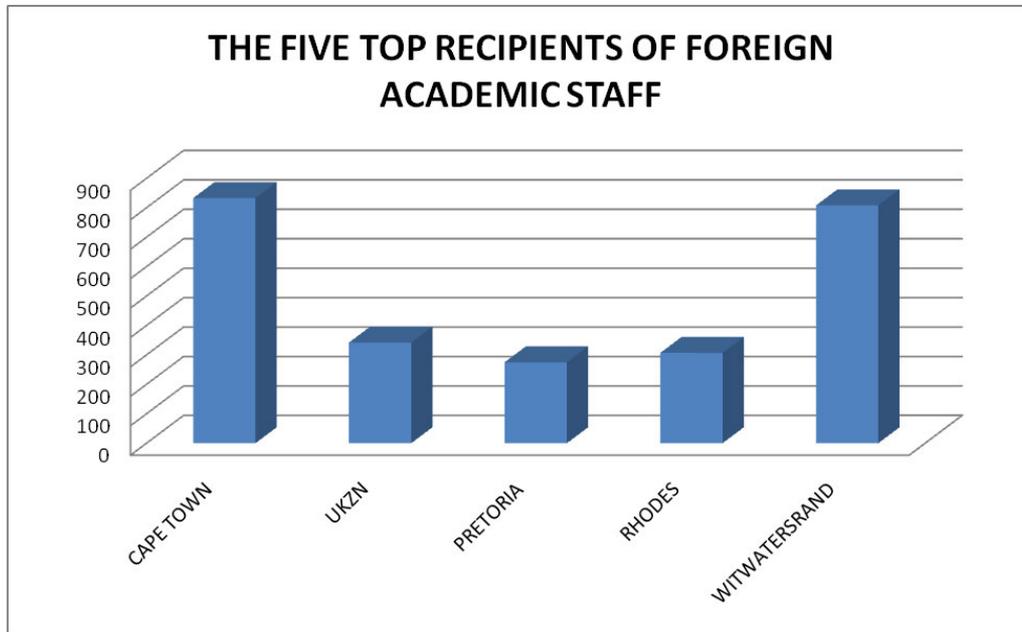


Figure 4: The Five Top recipients of overseas academic staff, 2005-2008.

Source: *Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) (South Africa) (2010)*.

A breakdown of foreign staff according to their field of study on a national scale was not available from HEMIS data base as their survey capabilities were restricted by the information furnished to them by the institutions themselves.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to broaden the scope of the analysis of the geographical mobility of foreign academics by examining the major recruiters of knowledge, namely academic institutions. It has focused on the South African academic labour market because this is the context within which the larger study is taking place. Despite much of the talk about the internationalization of the academic community in the developed world, the academic community of South Africa is still far away from being truly global. In fact, the foreign academic market seems to be markedly African, and European countries being the other top supply region. This perhaps is a reflection of the continued effects of colonialism on the African education system. Patterns of dominance regarding the outflow of highly skilled labour from African countries still persist today and this study reiterates this “brain drain” or “circulation” patterns reflected in almost all spheres of highly skilled labour migration.

Finally, the deregulation of the academic labour market and the restructuring of the academic system, which has made it easier to recruit have also made it difficult to find permanent positions. The salaries being paid for academic labour in South Africa is also below that being paid in other overseas countries. The increase in supply might make it less lucrative for local graduates to pursue an academic career, which will eventually affect the quality of applicants both foreign and domestic.

Policy Implications

Three levels of analysis for policy can be postulated, namely first, the institutional level, second, the disciplinary level and third, the labour and skills market.

At institutional level, since the disparity between high performance and lower performance academic institutions is expected, for the attractiveness of equals to each other, to increase, administrators of

academic exchange and mobility programmes can design certain schemes that provide incentives for high-low mobility. Academics from the lower and higher strata of the scholarly ladder can move up and down the rungs. Such movement can occur across all sorts of departments in order to distribute the skills flows more evenly in the research system. Such movement is particularly important in fields with very few high performers (Mahroum, 1999).

At field level, deliberate policies should be made to stimulate academic and skills exchanges in fields of weak performance. Such a policy would be justified to avoid being “locked-in” to a few and limited pockets of excellence. Certain incentives for international mobility for both inflows and outflows should be made to lift a large number of fields to levels of international excellence (Moloi et al. 2009).

Finally, at the level of analysis of labour and skills, the foreign inflows of skills and availability of access to international pools of highly skilled personnel should not serve as a substitute for training and investment in the local labour force and the improvement in the conditions of employment for its members. As the paper has stated, a deterioration in conditions of employment locally will affect the quality of inflow negatively and increase the likelihood of increased outflows of highly skilled personnel. The competition for the “best of the best” is very stiff, and is already very fierce amongst countries who want to secure only the very best for their employment.

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