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**International mobility: personal and academic
perspectives of Early Career Researchers in
different fields of knowledge**

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What is it about

In this work I focus on the experience of the Early Career Researchers (ECR) when opting to do a postdoctoral or an international stay.

I want to demonstrate that there are different academic and personal conditions in deciding a posdoc and that their decision goes hand in hand with enthusiasm and uncertainty.

I assume the fact that when ECRs make their minds up, they take in account the changing situations as they consider opportunities, concerns, preferences and desires. In other words, they identify opportunities in the crucial interactions to come to a decision.

Mobility has been promoted as a must in young researcher's career, but how do they perceive its importance?, what costs and benefits mobility involves? Beyond the image internationalization policies promote about competition for top talent and what academic discourses say about achieving social independence, emotional and rational intelligence, commitment to research and flexibility achieved by whom performs academic mobility; vision and reasons don't always match up even though mexican ECR are predisposed to pay the personal cost involved in doing it.

Internationalization has become a strategy to find permanent work, it can be:

- a) a paid opportunity to stay on stand by while achieving a job at the time they keep stuck to the route of becoming a scientist;
- b) it can be the result of institutional arrangements for developing a specific tasks for limited time
- c) A chance for payment with the risk of losing the support of networks that could help them find work in their local area.

The decision is a way of meeting needs to personal and market demands in key moments of the early phase researcher's career and of the cognitive and social standards of their discipline.

Methodology

- Our study focuses in the ECRs when becoming scientist and the graduates from doctoral programs in Social Science (UAM-I), Biochemistry (UNAM), Physics (CINVESTAV) in public universities
- The way we contacted them was by e-mail. We asked to the coordinators of each program for the e-mail addresses of the doctoral graduate students of the last five years.
- The interviews were semi-structured, they were made from October to December of 2014 some were person to person and others by Skype, if they were doing mobility.

Questions of interest

In gathering information we had in mind two kinds of data: the ones concerning the decision and the ones resulting from the decision. In the next section we present the testimonies to explain our main findings. For this article we focused in three questions from the interview guide.

Question 6. Was your personal status a factor that favored or made difficult your decision to make a postdoc or an international stay (sex, dependent, marital status, age, etc.)?

Question 5. How was your stay or postdoctoral experience? What was your mobility purpose, at which moment, what conditions were offered by the program? How mobility affected your education?

Question 22. Why is it important to make a postdoc? What incentives did you find to make it? Who influenced your decision?

Some results:

Was your personal status a factor that favored or made difficult your decision to do a postdoc or an international stay?

I already had planned to start a family, and those are decisions that you make sometimes and combining them is not that simple. I have a daughter and it is true, it is no longer the same; it changes your life quite a bit, and you need to decide or to keep going. If I didn't have my daughter, I think I would be doing what I did before.[...] After having my daughter, it is entirely different because my time is reduced to the minimal expression; that is, it is my job and everything I give beyond that is in detriment of my daughter and my husband, so it cannot be done. My interest hasn't waned, as I said, perhaps when I am a bit more secure financially, I will dedicate all my time to research [...] I mean, it is very complicated; and one needs money to travel and move away as long as you don't have a program with a budget...]]

How was your stay or postdoctoral experience?

Now, one of the reasons why I did not make another postdoc, was because although I had the opportunity at a university in Switzerland, where they offered me a good pay, I had the chance to get a position as a research professor at the University of Michoacan, then I decided to get the job because at the end, doing a postdoc, means the same thing, then you have to find work. That was one of the things that made me say no, it is better to grab the job opportunity. I also believe that when you're married, you are looking for some stability, and my wife had withstood me for five years moving from one place to another and at some point I have to stop.

Why is it important to make a postdoc?

Well, It was of great richness, every week a Nobel Prize was giving a talk, I was in an international center, in the world's largest theoretical center on physics, so I wanted to be there and see how was that physical environment; where Nobel laureates as Pierre Gilles de Gennes, or Tsung Dao Lee work, I met several ... Tsao Peter, I met several renowned physicians at ICTP and as it was a very stimulating and small environment ... where there is a small bar and restaurant- then one could talk there with the Nobel Prizes and, you realize that they are as human as one is.

Reflections

- When organizing the plans to make possible their ideal situation actions involved are implicit; they have had decided to adjust personal conditions such as having the age, marital status, and the type of relations required for contending mobility. An example of it is that is increasingly more common to postpone or not consider maternity in their life`s project.
- The importance of international mobility among the interviewed ECRs of the different disciplines can be understand like this: for the postdoctoral physicist it means to cover a part of their way in research after education and it forms part of their Curriculum, its importance lies in combining theory and experimentation for the richness in their education, in being able to contribute producing knowledge in the field; for the biochemists it means the possibility of getting a job after the experience of working with research groups and, in long term, to learn to leader a group in their own laboratory. For the social scientists, it gives the opportunity to see the world, understand it, and act in it, knowing new ways of facing research problems.

Conclusions

- This research contributes to the analysis of international mobility penetrating in its meaning and the decision of doing it in relation with personal aspects, disciplines cognitive logics and the work patterns, institutional and economic support in ECRs perception in their early phase of their paths.
- We consider that this contribution can be enriched and complemented with studies that dwell in what it means to do the effort to be in the way of becoming a researcher in other disciplines and the uncertain bet that it involves, knowing how they assume the unexpected conditions, sometimes precarious positions in the experiences and how these affect their profile and their production

Thank you for your attention!

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