“Competing for Talent. Country and University Effects in Human Resources Competition of Universities.”

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This paper analyzes competition for skilled human resources between European universities through a multi-level model of the ability of HEIs to attract foreign researchers, including both country-level and HEI specific factors. Predictions of the model are tested by exploiting a newly-developed dataset providing data on internationalization of individual HEIs in a large number of European countries. We show that (1) the model is able to explain a large share of the variance in the levels of internationalization of academic staff in our sample; (2) both country factors and HEIs’ characteristics drive internationalization; (3) highly reputed HEIs in attractive countries are able to increase their share of international staff, whereas this happens only to a limited extent in low attractive countries. Finally, the paper discusses the implications for HEI’s hiring strategies, as well as for national policies concerning careers and mobility of researchers. We suggest that policies should be tailored to specific structural conditions of HEIs and countries, whereas imitating the approaches of highly-reputed places might be even damaging. Less-attractive countries should rather focus on developing training and career opportunities for national young researchers, as well as on instruments to keep linkages with nationals expatriates.