Chapter 7
Three Approaches to Competing for Global Talent: Role of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT
Although there is a growing awareness that international students are an important source of potential global talent, few studies have tried to relate the issue of student mobility to that of competition for global talent. This chapter is an effort to fill the gap. Particularly, it is aimed to conceptualize the major approaches to attracting and retaining global talents with respect to the role of higher education institutions. We have observed and characterized three models of attracting global talent, namely the Anglo-Saxon model, Emerging economies model and Continental Europe/Nordic model. The challenges and the good practices reflected in each model along with policy recommendations will help the policy makers and practitioners take a broader view on their higher education internationalization strategies.

INTRODUCTION
Recent observations show that the success of a global knowledge economy is, to a large extent, dependent on its attractiveness to global talent (Brown, 2008; Raunio & Forsander, 2009). For instance, the U.S., Canada and Australia have long been active in attracting skilled immigrants (Kuptsch & Pang, 2006), and international students are an important source of potential global talent there (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009; Shachar, 2006). Europe has been catching up – with its strategy to become the world’s most dynamic and globally competitive knowledge economy through attracting and developing global talent. While the developing and transition countries are considered as a source of global talent to advanced economic regions (Kuptsch, 2006), some of them, such as China, India and Singapore also tend to develop their policies to attract talent from the globe though with different approaches (Fong, 2006; Zweig, 2006). The DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9746-1.ch007

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emerging policies around the world imply that the competition for global talents is not merely a concern of the employers. Rather, a chain for such competition should already start at the higher education level, if not earlier, particularly with respect to international education (Hermans, 2007, p. 520).

Although there is a growing awareness that international students are an important source of potential highly educated workforce as being further discussed in the next section, there appears to be a lack of explicit policies of using the international education for attracting the potential global talent (Kuptsch & Pang, 2006). While the universities themselves are interested in internationalizing and reaping, among others, the economic benefits of educating international students, there is a perceived gap between the policies aimed at attraction and retention of talented international students (Cai, 2012; Douglass & Edelstein, 2009; EMN, 2012).

In the academic literature only scant studies, pointing in that direction can be observed. They are mainly dealing with such issues as the important role of international education in the context of shifting from “brain drain” to “brain circulation” discourse (Brown & Tannock, 2009; EMN, 2012; Saxenian, 2002; Stark, 2001); national policies of enhancing the quantity and quality of incoming international students (Shumilova, Cai, & Pekkola, 2012); the stay rates of international graduates in the host countries (OECD, 2011; Shumilova et al., 2012); and the links between the prospect to emigrate and the investment in one’s education in the home country (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011; Kangasniemi, Winters, & Commander, 2007).

To fill the gap in relating the issue of student mobility to that of competition for global talent, our study tries to conceptualise the role of higher education in attracting, cultivating, and retaining (potential) global talent by integrating and synthesizing two bodies of literature respectively on student mobility and competition for global talent. Our aim is to develop a typology of competing for global talent with respect to the role of higher education through looking into the policies and practices of some typical countries, and hence to derive further lessons on the role of HEIs in competition for global talent.

The global talent is generally defined as individuals with globally applicable skills and professional knowledge with potential to provide significant economic value (Raunio & Forsander, 2009). Talent does not necessarily hold official higher education degrees, although they often do, since highly skilled individuals are prone to move on the job markets before graduation, and further learning by doing may provide significant amount of expertise outside of official educational institutions. The global talent in this study refers to mobile or migrant highly skilled persons, often with higher education degrees including Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees or to the international students pursuing these degrees in countries other than their own.

By reviewing and analysing the literature in the field, we have identified and characterized three models of attracting global talent, namely the Anglo-Saxon model, emerging economies model and Continental Europe/Nordic model. The typical countries applying the Anglo-Saxon model are the USA, the UK, Australia and some European countries. While these countries can largely absorb foreign skilled workforce to directly participate in their economic development, their higher education institutions (HEIs) also play an important role in attracting international students and ultimately cultivating them into global talent. The Emerging economies model can be best demonstrated by China. Although many emerging economies have increasingly imported foreign experts, they mainly accredit their achievement in competing for global talent via supporting their returned overseas graduates. The Continental Europe/Nordic model can be observed in all Nordic countries and some continental European countries. In these countries, they primarily rely on their HEIs to attract and educate global talent.