Students, Staff and Academic Mobility in Higher Education

Edited by

Mike Byram and Fred Dervin

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INTRODUCTION

MIKE BYRAM AND FRED DERVIN

Like many contemporary scholars, the editors of this book have found themselves in various contexts abroad, in conferences, research journeys or as visiting scholars, surrounded by other mobile academics, and they have daily experience of working with foreigners established in their host universities, be they students, researchers or teaching and administrative staff. For example, soon after the turn of the 21st century, one of the editors found himself sitting in the lounge of a hall of residence of a Japanese university among some twenty other people. Most were students but there was one other lecturer. All were 'foreigners', in Japan for the first time, about to study or teach for the next few months or more. They included a Lithuanian, several Chinese, two US Americans, several Thailanders, one British, several Koreans, one German, one Argentinean and so on. Student and staff mobility creates complex international groups who, in this case too, become a unique and temporary social group which has an impact on the host university. And then, months later, they return to their place of origin, changed in various ways, and bringing change to their own university. Changes of both kinds are both hidden and evident, some easy to measure and document but many also impossible to capture in their complexity.

Academic mobility in higher education, it is a commonplace to note, is an old, not a new phenomenon, as some articles in this book demonstrate too. It is an old phenomenon because the idea of a university is of a place of teaching and learning open to all, whatever their provenance, provided they can benefit themselves and others; and universities date back hundreds of years. In principle there is no limitation and universities are and have always been international institutions in their composition, but the fact that, despite their international character, universities today are *de facto* national institutions is mainly a function of the way they have been financed. Since what students can afford to pay is far less than the funds needed, in contemporary universities, for teaching, administration and, above all, for research, universities have had to be partially financed by the state, in the majority of cases and in most countries. The effect in the 20th

century was for universities to become national and the student body to be almost exclusively drawn from citizens of the state which was funding them. In the 21st century, when some states can no longer afford to finance universities for their full budget needs, students from other countries, and the fees they bring, are becoming a 'natural' part of the student body. In some countries increasing numbers of self-funding, 'private' universities are more than willing to take students from any country. In other countries, such as in Scandinavia, neither international nor home students as yet pay fees, and there are different reasons, as we shall see, for encouraging international students. Whether financially motivated or not, universities are, once again, places where students—and staff, but for different reasons—hail from many nationalities, and finance is almost everywhere a major factor in student mobility.

Another factor seems to be a general assumption that universities must engage with 'internationalisation', against an economic background of 'globalisation'. This is particularly evident in the Europe of the European Union and associated states such as Norway, where the mobility of students is an element of a policy to encourage all Europeans to be mobile—whether in employment or in study—and thus to create both a more flexible workforce, and a European society engaging citizens with an experience of a European identity. Perhaps internationalisation of this kind will affect students and staff beyond the European Union too, creating a flexible higher education employment sector, a sense of an international identity and, almost incidentally, a challenge to the assumptions about the national character and purpose of universities.

Chapters in this book demonstrate that student and staff mobility may well begin with financial needs: mobile students gain advantages in employment, motivations include financial gain, and the value of mobility can be estimated. There are, however, also chapters which show how the experience of mobility changes individuals and institutions in other, fundamental ways, chapters which consider the effects of mobility on host universities, on the university community of staff and students, on the ways in which staff and students understand the nature of university study, on the ways they may or may not integrate with a local community of students or the inhabitants of the university town. By experiencing something different—for institutions, an influx of students with different ideas about academic study, for students an interaction with 'locals' and with other 'internationals'—they both see themselves in a new light and are sometimes forced to change.

Although, as we said above, the phenomenon of mobility is not new, perhaps it is the increase in numbers involved which has led to a need for

research and publications. For there certainly seems, now, to be such a need. The conference which was at the beginning of the process leading to this book, in Turku, Finland, in 2006, attracted more people than might have been expected. The interest in publishing two books—this one and one in French, *Mobilités Académiques*—also reflects the need for a more focused attention on mobility. Previous work has been scattered through a range of books and journals, without the advantage of reading thematically related chapters together.

Our intention in editing the two books is precisely to develop further a focused field of study—explicitly concerned not only with students but also with staff, not only with the European context, but also with mobility into and from Europe, and mobility across other parts of the world. The interest in inner-European mobility has arisen from the deliberate policy of the European Union, whereas other mobilities are policies of individual countries, or of institutions, or the whims and personalities of individuals. These are different kinds of response to what has come to be called 'globalisation', the effect of economic forces, but also to what can be distinguished separately as 'internationalisation', the multitude of personal and institutional consequences of opportunities to cross frontiers and experience otherness.

The way in which this field of study will be staked out, its cartography, will doubtless emerge and evolve with time. Our approach, in this book, makes a first distinction between students and staff; both are equally important and may share resemblances in experiences, even though staff are researched much less. We have then created divisions in terms of processes and effects in student mobility, but preceded these with a generic section on 'identifying issues' and 'historical dimensions'. The field might have been mapped differently. The companion volume, *Mobilités Académiques* (Dervin and Byram, 2008), has three broad designations: critical analyses of concepts and experiences, theories and practices; analyses of the accounts of experience provided by those involved; modes of preparing or training people for academic mobility. A third map is drawn in a volume edited by Byram and Feng (2006) *Living and Studying Abroad,* which first makes a broad distinction between sojourns in distant and in proximate countries, second suggests that short term sojourns are of a specific nature, third researches the long-term effects of a sojourn and finally raises the question of evaluation. This book also emphasises the importance of the range of research methodologies appropriate to the field of study and how they can be selected. Finally, Ehrenreich, Woodman and Perrefort (2008) in their edited collection of articles on residence abroad for students in schools and universities,

Auslandsaufenthalte in Schule und Studium, consider a number of categorisations: by target group (school pupils, university students, trainee teachers); by exchange format (group exchange, individual exchange, study sojourn, organised visit during a course of study in the home institution etc); by institution (school, higher education, national or international agency, non-governmental organisation); by chronology (preparation, residence period, return, effects and lasting impact). They eventually decide on yet another: chapters which focus on research, on discovering 'what is' happening, and others dealing with development and advocacy, what 'ought to be' happening—research which introduces change into the experience and evaluates its success.

These four different volumes thus demonstrate the breadth and complexity of the field of study, how it can be mapped by themes and topics, by disciplinary and interdisciplinary research methods, by populations and locations, by duration of sojourn or by impact and effect. The fact that four books have appeared within such a short period is indicative of the renewed interest which we noted at the beginning of this introduction. Other research will follow but we believe that the chapters of this book contribute to the essential foundation for the study of a significant phenomenon for the foreseeable future.

The first section of the book opens with two contributions that set the pace for the other sections. As many of the arguments put forward will be central in other chapters, this section allows readers to identify the main issues of academic mobility.

First of all, **Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune** challenges the unthinking celebration of mobility and proposes that multi-modal perspectives and voices be applied to research on student mobility. She clarifies what is meant by student mobility by exploring highly marked differences between privileged mobile individuals and what she calls 'underclass strangers', because of their treatment and their economic function in host countries. Murphy-Lejeune urges researchers to produce a more balanced vision of mobility, by paying attention to the significance of these aspects of the phenomenon.

In his chapter, **Michael Byram** explores another important issue in academic mobility: the multifaceted concept of 'value'. By referring to previous and in progress research on mobility, the author examines what is considered the 'importance' of mobility and thus its 'value' for all the people involved (society in general, students themselves, institutions, etc.). He deconstructs some of the associated phenomena: language proficiency,

identity building and monetary value, among others. As a second step in the discussion, the author tackles the assessing and measuring of value in academic mobility, and the ethical dimension of assessment and measurement. The chapter ends on a reflection on whether the assumed value of 'criticality' as a major educational purpose of higher education in western universities will stand the test of the internationalisation of university education through academic mobility, whether international students and staff will necessarily appreciate the value attached to criticality.

The next section is diachronic in nature, and reminds us of the historic significance of academic mobility which might be too easily assumed to be a contemporary phenomenon. **Pieter Dhondt** looks at the rhetoric of student mobility in Finland and other European countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. The author criticizes the fact that researchers and historians who have worked on historical perspectives have ignored the issue of the effects of student mobility in the countries of origin, while figures on student flow and their effects on receiving countries have been explored at length. In order to fill this gap, Dhondt proposes an analysis of the impact of outgoing Finnish students on the local context of the University of Helsinki.

Susanne Ehrenreich's contribution is based on her earlier study investigating the foreign language assistant experience (Ehrenreich 2004). The chapter blends two sets of data into an historical perspective: the results of her 2004 study and the results from an article written by P. Roosmann from 1896. Ehrenreich shows that there are similarities in both analyses and draws the same conclusions as Roosmann did over a century ago: study abroad is potentially highly significant in terms of learning opportunities.

The third section of the book is devoted to processes. It opens with **Ewa Krzaklewska**'s chapter, which addresses a crucial question as far as student mobility is concerned: Why study abroad? Through analysis of data from various studies of her own or of data that she draws from the extensive investigations of the Erasmus Student Network, the author describes Erasmus students' motivations in light of the current situation of young people in Europe. After presenting and criticising different ways of researching motivation in student mobility, both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to propose a theoretical model of motivation for study abroad.

The next chapter takes us away from the focus on Europe which tends to dominate much work in this field, and to a different continent. **Catherine Doherty** and **Parlo Singh** studied the increasing flow of

international students in an Australian university over a period of seven years. Their chapter is based on data drawn from the preparatory programmes offered to students. They carried out interviews with teachers and international students (mostly from Asia), videotaped classes, and used stimulated recall interviews with teachers about selected incidents or practices in their classrooms. Their analysis shows how culture is being reified and used as an independent variable in preparing the students to enter this university world, and Doherty and Singh propose instead to consider culture from a discursive and 'outside in' process to grasp the place of the local university in increasingly mobile worlds.

Tim Caudery, Margrethe Petersen and **Philip Shaw** examine the motivations of non-language mobile students at Scandinavian universities, especially in terms of language learning. The context of Scandinavia is special as very few students know the local languages and live and study in English as a lingua franca. The chapter reports aspects of a large-scale interview study intended to identify various language/culture-specific, individual and institutional factors that intervene in the experiences of mobile students in Scandinavia. The results raise important questions about language learning motivation: why multilingualism seems not to operate in this context where students remain within "an English as a lingua franca bubble"; why students do not wish to learn local languages. The authors place these issues in the wider context of why governments at European and national level provide major financial support for this kind of mobility—with the hope of creating knowledge of other countries and peoples—when students themselves appear to have little interest in this dimension of their experience. The policy issues need attention.

Some of the points made by the previous authors are consolidated by **Ioannis Tsoukalas**' ethnographic study on exchange students in Stockholm. In this chapter, the author explores the socio-psychological ramifications of the experiences of exchange students. The originality of Tsoukalas' chapter is that he looks at the during and after of the experiences and shows how what he calls 'hot' and 'cold' periods in social experience seem to take place. The hot period is characterised by strong social cohesion among the exchange students themselves during stays abroad and the cold one comes thereafter with less intense—even inexistent—ties. Like the previous authors, Tsoukalas questions the usefulness of schemes such as the EU Erasmus programme with respect to intercultural encounters between exchange students and locals.

In a different context but with similar experiences, **Kathy Durkin** examines in the next chapter Russian immigrants' adaptation to academic expectations in Israeli universities. Looking at some of the academic

cultural differences experienced by Russian immigrants in two Israeli universities, the author explores how newcomers cope with the Sabra (native born Israeli) *dugri* speech in higher education, and the differences with regard to 'face', politeness norms, freedom of expression, critical thinking and argumentation. In-depth interviews with Russian Israeli and native-born Israeli lecturers and students reveal the problems and misunderstandings that Russian immigrants face in this context. Durkin refers to these problems as a sense of 'cultural dumbness' due to second language deficiency and initial uncertainty of academic expectations.

In a similar vein, but working on the theme of strangeness from a phenomenological perspective, **Michal Assa-Inbar, Tamar Rapoport** and **Gad Yair**, also analyse the Israeli context and show the difficulties faced by international students. The authors examine the manner in which international students decipher the academic culture of the Israeli university, and how they use their own academic experiences and habits in constructing and reviewing it. Based on interviews with the students, the authors reveal their tendency to confront and even disparage the perceived academic culture of the Israeli institution in harsh terms. The three authors provide evidence of how international students attribute certain cultural characteristics to Israelis and use these to explain the difficulties they encounter.

Moving from the processes of mobility, the next section focuses on the effects. **Mihai Paunescu** opens the section with results from a study of Romanian, Polish and Hungarian students' perspectives on the added educational value of mobility: the mobility experience, the mobility programme itself and its implementation in the home and host universities. The results suggest that student mobility is enriching from a personal, cultural and linguistic point of view while the academic gain is much less. The author shows that many practical aspects of mobility, which are not adequately dealt with by institutions, contribute to the disappointment expressed by the students about their academic learning.

Inmaculada Sanz-Sainz and **Inmaculada Roldán-Miranda**'s chapter also considers academic gain but with respect to the specific issue of the positive effects of mobility on language learners, in this case Spanish students of English. A validated test was used by the authors to assess students before and after their stay abroad. The results indicate a difference between the two measures and a significant improvement in students' language capacity after mobility. The authors also examined academic records and noted that average grades improved after mobility. On the basis of this analysis, it is particularly interesting that outgoing

students who have a lower level before the stay abroad made comparatively greater linguistic gains as a consequence of the experience.

The next two chapters examine two important aspects of the aftermath of study abroad: employment opportunities and the construction and perception of foreignness and intercultural understanding. The chapter by **Andrea Cammelli, Silvia Ghiselli** and **Gian Piero Mignoli** is based on an in-depth investigation of the study periods abroad experienced by Italian graduates during their university careers. The authors first describe the characteristics of mobile students in Italy, and then compare the performance of mobile graduates with that of those who have never studied abroad. In broad terms, the study shows that the two groups have the same opportunities in terms of job openings for up to five years after graduation, but thereafter, the data show that mobile students have more chances of finding a better-paid job than the non-mobile.

The final chapter of this section looks at the experiences of different kinds of mobile populations within academia. **Fred Dervin** and **Māra Dirba** first examine the representations and the current *doxa* on what they consider to be two types of strangeness: 'liquid' and 'solid' strangers. Based on interviews with multiple-mover students from Russia and Latvia, the authors show what characteristics the two types share in terms of perceptions and representations of their experience as multiple-movers, a theme which needs more investigation. The chapter ends on a call to explore the topic of strangeness further in research on academic mobility.

The final part of the book is devoted to staff mobility, another theme which is under-explored in the literature**.** The first chapter is auto-ethnographic and presents the professional odysseys of three Australian academics who are brothers. **Patrick Danaher, Mike Danaher** and **Geoff Danaher** reflect on their respective and shared experiences of academic mobility. The chapter is framed and informed by the concept of 'ecologies of practice', which highlights the commonalities and divergences evident among system and institution-level policies, campus and faculty practices and academics' own subjectivities. They point out how the ways in which student mobility are perceived differ from views on staff mobility, not least because the former are seen as 'customers' whereas the latter are 'labour'.

The implications of the Danaher analysis include the need to pay more attention to mobility *within* an education system. **David M. Hoffman** does so by presenting an analysis of international academic mobility for foreign staff in the Finnish context. Based on data collected from Finns and non-Finns, Hoffman highlights the difficulties encountered by foreigners to integrate into Finnish academia and criticises the idea of the Finnish

system being open and transparent. There are unacknowledged contradictions in the claims that Finnish universities can and should become international and the lack of success of foreign staff in the university system.

Finally, **Anthony Welch**'s chapter, which brings us back to the general issues raised in the first section, lists a number of myths about mobility which he sets out to dispel. He shows for example that mobility is not a modern phenomenon, despite popular beliefs, that similarly it is not neutral with regard to the gender balance, nor with regard to the economic effects on the countries which people leave behind. In a categorisation of different motivations and effects of mobility at the end of the chapter, the author suggests that the reasons for mobility are changing and that researchers need to respond to the changes in their future work.

Welch's chapter thus reminds us that in this field of study as in many others there is still much to do. The different chapters have a multiplicity of research methods, from the historical to the contemporary, from the collection of quantifiable data in questionnaire surveys to the in-depth analysis of qualitative data collected in interviews and the auto-ethnographic analysis of academic careers. This book thus offers not only a survey and in-depth analysis of contemporary research, but also a rich source of methodological and thematic options for the future.

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STUDENT MOBILITY

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES

CHAPTER ONE

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF MOBILITY, A CONTRASTING SCORE

ELIZABETH MURPHY-LEJEUNE

Mobility is in spate (Marzloff 2005). The reservoir is full. Movements between locations are more and more distant while time remains stable. Forms of mobility multiply to the extent that the plural becomes the norm and we now talk of "mobilities". But how can we analyse these movements?

Similarly, student mobility has intensified, becoming a more richly diversified experience as post-modern societies develop transnational ways of being and doing (Bordes-Benayoun & Schnapper 2006) and as tertiary institutions open up to vital international exchanges:

- in 2004, 2.5 million students were studying in a country other than their own
- their number had grown by 41% between 1999 and 2004.

It would be logical to believe that to go and study abroad is becoming easier, even the "norm". However, mobile students represent but a minority among student populations. In most European countries, their number is considerably less than the 10% which the Brussels authorities were hoping for. Clearly, mobility is not available to everyone. While for some, it will be an obvious choice, for others, it will only be an impossible dream. For others still, it will be a necessity for which they will pay the heaviest price and, for a growing number of European students, it is becoming an uninteresting proposition. Thus in terms of student mobility, there are the chosen ones and there are the doomed.

In this paper, it will be argued that the student experience of mobility is a contrasting score in that it is a trans-disciplinary domain where diverse voices may be heard. The use of a musical metaphor highlights that the growing diversity in mobilities calls for multiple perspectives. In order to

observe student mobility, we need to take a multi-modal perspective. The perspectives suggested here are not particularly new[1], but they draw from different disciplinary sources—sociology, international politics, economics, social anthropology—to paint a broader picture of this expanding phenomenon. For example, there is a tendency in European research to focus on the Erasmus experience. However, it is but one case of student mobility, concerning a very small minority of mobile students worldwide, whose experience abroad has been depicted as disappointing by many researchers and indeed who are excluded from the major international statistics because their stay is less than a year.

This paper analyses the student experience of mobility from four perspectives. A first perspective relates to the kind of theoretical discourse which constructs mobility as an ideal in a "hyper-modern" world. A second perspective may be gained from examining socio-demographic data about student mobility worldwide and the kind of politics underpinning the international educational market. A third perspective indicates that there are considerable inequalities in the area of mobility, depending on the students' country of origin and their socio-economic status, particularly in the way they are "welcomed" in host countries. A further perspective arises when the students' voices manifest themselves and appear to create a "typical" storyline, from which different individual itineraries may be drawn, outlining the potential outcome of the experience.

Mobility as an ideal in a hyper-modern world

Since the 80s, mobility, and the experience of strangeness which it entails, has been construed as an essential trait of post-modernity, notably by Bauman (1992, 1993) who argued that the post-modern world is characterized by the permanent position of living with strangeness and that this condition has produced a pervasive uncertainty which is irrevocable.

The first generation of metaphors present in the post-modern debate are the now over-familiar ones.

-    nomadism (Deleuze & Guattari 1980; Braidotti 1994; Maffesoli 1997), travelling and wandering, migration
-    identity: nomadic and multiple, individuation
-    hybridity or "*métissages*" (Laplantine & Nouss 1997)

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[1] To some extent, some are based on what one could call the first generation of European student mobility, i.e. the 90s.

-   the relationship between times and spaces (Tarrius 2000), continuities and discontinuities
-   space, roots, dislocations and boundaries, borderlines, territories
-   centre, periphery, marginality and transgression
-   third space (Bhabha 1994) and cultural difference
-   social transformations

It may be argued that much post-modern discourse, which states for example that "we live in a world of flux, where mobility, experimentation, and transgression have turned into core signifiers" (Pels 1999: 63), has become a cliché and may be "a cognitive plaything of the educated elite" (ibid.: 64).

More recently, particularly with the digital revolution in the mid 1990s and the proliferation of the eponymous "mobile" as well as the increasing globalization of the world, mobility has progressively become dissociated from physical mobility, from the notion of domicile and territory, broadening its domain to include not just people and capital, but also social practices, objects, information, signs, ideas. As a result, mobility is now interpreted as a fashionable concept, even a myth, evoking above all fluidity, continuity, and seamlessness.

Urry (2000) contends that not only does mobility change our ways of being; it has become a whole way of life in itself. It makes the very notion of society obsolete. Mobility forces us to think "beyond societies". According to him, there is a change in paradigm in the social sciences in that the driving force is no longer territoriality, but mobility. The main metaphors which account for the new forms of social life blend the traditional with the new.

-   the traditional images of movement, travelling, the tourist, the nomad, are somewhat renewed by more specific analyses of the ship, the hotel lobby (Clifford 1997)), the motel (Morris 1988) and the transit lounge, as settings "of time and space based upon being away from home, movement and unexpected encounter in preference to those metaphors of home and dwelling which imply stasis and fixture" (Urry ibid.: 30) resulting in the idea of "nomadic deterritorialisation" as a way of "marginalizing the centre";
-   the metaphors of fluidity, flux and flows are used to show how liquid societies have become, just like blood running through the body: "blood is a fluid moving through the extraordinarily complex networks of blood vessels in the human body and as a result it gets

more or less everywhere in the body" (ibid: 30); similarly, social spaces are fluid, their borders are porous and change relationships;
- the metaphor of the regions "in which objects are clustered together and boundaries are drawn around each particular regional cluster" (ibid: 30) and its implications in terms of metaphors of the global;
- the socio-spatial metaphor of networks "in which relative distance is a function of the relations between the various components comprising the network" (ibid: 31)

As a result, Urry suggests new rules of sociological method, the first one being "to develop through appropriate metaphors of sociology which focus upon movement, mobility and contingent ordering, rather than upon stasis, structure and social order" (ibid: 18).

Marzloff (2005) also argues that mobility as a physical movement is too restricted to account for everything the word conveys today. After Urry, he analyses the new lexicon[2] in this fast expanding area:

- the word nomad, somewhat shallow from overuse since we can all be nomadic and/or sedentary depending on circumstances;
- the notion of "fluid itineraries", creating a choreography in which the city moves and makes people move;
- the notion of flux as a general metaphor for contemporary societies, to be seen as "*des sociétés de flux*" (Semprini 2003), and the idea that individual identity also fluctuates, producing "*zig-zagging*" identities between predictability and permanent recomposition;
- the image of the archipelago (geographical, temporal, spatial), with various islands for each of our daily activities, as opposed to the concentric circle of the domicile;
- the idea of multi-modal mobility, whereby one uses different modes to move resulting in the figure of the "hyper-mobiles" who move a lot in space, use the greatest variety of modes of access, surf on the net most, etc.;
- the neologism "infomobility", i.e. information + mobility, which implies that soon access to information will be more important than access to a car, information in itself becoming a means of transport or at least a necessary component of it[3].

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[2] He analyses other figures of mobility: the walker, evocative of the famous "flâneur", the skater, the walkman, the dolphin, archetypes of mobility taking its time.
[3] Digital mobility means continuity and fluidity of "seamless" information.

In other words, time, speed and distances are changing. New social requirements appear in terms of work practices, geographic dislocations and other social practices. Are we entering a new time era? Social demand is certainly becoming more eclectic in time and more scattered in space. The demand for fluidity and digital continuity is growing. The mobile phone as a personal system of mobility symbolizes, with its power to connect, the individualization of mobility practices. Continuity becomes a basic principle: physical, technological continuity with the facility offered by "roaming", time continuity, etc. More importantly, fluidity is understood not just as a material, physical characteristic, but as a mental aptitude, symbolized by the generation of pioneers who freely manage their time, embody "*la glisse attitude*", the "surf attitude", a hands-free generation, surfing on time and controlling its many opportunities.

The kind of vocabulary which proliferates in academic circles must not hide that there is a need for empirical specification registering differences between the privileged migratory elites and the underclass strangers or between the relatively settled and the marginal and hybrid: "social inequality also increasingly expresses itself in terms of mobility" (ibid.: 76). We hear a call for a new "right to mobility" which concerns everyone. But does it? What social realities lie beyond the sometimes trendy analysis and inflated representations of theoretical discourse?

The geopolitics of student mobility

Student mobility is commonly regarded as the most visible part of the internationalization of tertiary education. In the last two decades, the political context regarding student mobility has changed both regionally in Europe, with the development of Community programmes in the 80s, culminating with the Bologna agreement in 1999, and internationally, with the greater part played by competition in the international educational market, itself a reflection of the globalization of the labour market. But what exactly do we mean by student mobility? Who are the mobile students? By what criteria can we define them? The question of the duration of the stay abroad mentioned earlier is a key criterion to define mobile students. But there are others.

To start with, a mobile student is a double agent: s/he is considered as outgoing from her country of origin and as incoming in her chosen country of study. Therefore, mobility can be viewed from two different perspectives: outbound mobility from the perspective of the country of origin, which raises the question of the reasons for choosing to go abroad and that of a potential "brain-drain", but also a potential "brain-gain";

inbound mobility from the perspective of the chosen country of study, the favourite destinations, and the reasons these countries choose to receive international students[4].

Outbound Mobility

The geographic criterion of the "region" of origin in the world[5] provides a picture of the overall dynamics in terms of student numbers and flows from one region to another. Has student mobility increased? Global trends show an apparent dramatic rise in the number of mobile students: from 1.750 000 in 2000 and 2.500 000 in 2005 (Unesco Institute Statistics 2005). However, these figures may be misleading. When related to the general expansion of tertiary education in the regions, i.e. 40%, student mobility has only a marginal growth of 1.87% representing the "world average outbound ratio". In other words, outbound student mobility follows a steady pace of growth, only slightly above the growth in student numbers. This increase has nevertheless had a significant impact on receiving countries.

General outbound trends, which indicate how many students leave a region or country to study in another region, bring to the fore regional disparities. Whereas, in absolute terms, the most mobile students in the world seem to come from Asia with 29% of the total or 701 000 students and Europe with 17% or 407 000 students, in relative terms, the highest outbound mobility ratio is located in Sub-Saharan Africa with a ratio of 5.9% (1 out of 16 students), Central Asia with a ratio of 3.9% and the Arab States with 2.9%. Thus, the most dynamic flows originate from African, Chinese and Arab students "they are the driving force behind the internationalization of higher education" (Global Education Digest 2006). By contrast, the least mobile students are American students, North and South. In Western Europe, which still has the second-largest group of mobile students[6] in absolute terms, the growth in the number of mobile students has slowed down, even fallen. If in Europe, the decrease in interest should prompt investigations into the factors which pull back students, the "push" factors for other students may be perceived as equivocal, highlighting either a genuine personal interest for an

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[4] The figures quoted and discussed are based on the Global Education Digest (2006).
[5] The UIS report lists 8 regions: Western Europe; Central and Eastern Europe; South and West Asia; East Asia and the Pacific; Central Asia; North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; Sub-Saharan Africa; Arab States.
[6] Mostly from France, Germany, Greece and Italy.

international career or inadequate educational facilities in the region of origin, particularly limited access to domestic universities, a fact which could explain why China as a country sends the greatest number of students abroad (Merle & Sztanke 2006).

When the distance between regions of origin and destination is taken into account, significant regional disparities emerge. While the majority of students from Asia or Africa study in "another" region than theirs, American and European students are less adventurous and tend to stay in their own region, in a similar socio-economic environment. In other words, there are strong disparities between industrialised and emerging countries (Latreche 2001): the majority of mobile students come from developing countries, but the majority of students from industrialised countries stay in those countries.

Interestingly, outbound students are rarely counted in national statistics as if their sometimes forced mobility deprived them of their national status. They may well find themselves doubly dispossessed since in their new destination their international student status is not always enviable.

Inbound Mobility

A second criterion, the choice of destinations, (see Table 1) underlines not only the attraction which some countries hold for a variety of reasons, but also the politics in terms of access, recruitment and conditions of stay put into place by host countries.

Table 1. Where do mobile students choose to go?

1.	USA	23%
2.	UK	12%
3.	Germany	11%
4.	France	10%
5.	Australia	7%
6.	Japan	5%

About half of all mobile students (51% in 1999, 47% in 2001) go to European countries, two of which have a long tradition of third-level studies provision for their ex-colonies, a tradition substantiated by the fact that the large majority of African students go to Europe, half of them to France. By contrast, the majority of students from Asia go to the USA. But these traditional constituencies are being jeopardized by the new rules of the mobility game.

In general, "pull" factors show the interplay between distances and proximities, linguistic, geographic, cultural and historical, as well as academic considerations (choice of institution, courses of study on offer, etc.). But student mobility cannot be understood outside the wider geopolitical context. For example, the last 15 years saw two notable surges in the global number of mobile students, between 1989 and 1994 (34%) and between 1999 and 2004 (41%), the first of which benefited mostly Australia and the United Kingdom, the second France and Japan, while the US share fell from 28% to 23%. The presence of three English-speaking countries as major destinations highlights the weight of language as a crucial pull factor. Other factors are more volatile and include international events, such as the attacks in New York in September 2001, or national decisions, such as the number of visas granted.

The issue of visas begs the question, to what extent host countries can absorb mobile students. In a way, the answer depends on the relative mass mobile students represent as a percentage of the native student population. In relative terms, foreign students represent only 3% of the USA and Canada total student population and below 2% in Japan and the Russian Federation (as well as Finland). Their mass is more noticeable in the three major European countries (UK, Germany, France) where they represent about 10% of the student population. Those countries which have the highest number of mobile students as a percentage of their student population are usually "smaller" countries: Switzerland and Australia around 18% Austria and New Zealand with about 14%, possibly with a smaller local student population and good educational facilities.

A more relevant question is, to what extent host countries wish to receive mobile students. The relative increase in student mobility as well as political and economic circumstances have led the major host countries to review in downward their policy in relation to international student mobility. They have used a variety of instruments to do so, including *numerus clausus*, fee increases, administrative obstacles. The main reason for this is that student mobility is now increasingly regarded in these countries as a form of "hidden" immigration. As a result, the issue of numbers of students is fast being replaced by a "qualitative" concern, regarding the type of students host countries wish to receive. As a result, the politics of host countries is dangerously moving towards a commercial model which treats students as "customers" and universities as "factories", forgetting the traditional vocation of tertiary education. Furthermore, as the Unesco-led Global Education Digest (2006) points out, "the growing

demand for higher education has sparked a proliferation of cross-border providers" which constitute a multi-million business[7].

Equal access or selective "welcome"?

While the popular perception might be to classify mobile students as a homogeneous group, called "foreign" or "international" students, a more detailed classification of these students shows highly marked differences between them, particularly in the way they are treated or "welcomed" by the chosen country of study, depending on the category to which they belong, but also depending on the personal circumstances which motivate their project. The intrusion of economic priorities over educational ones forces us to ask questions. Who are the beneficiaries and who are the losers of student mobility? Where are the faultlines between the various groups? The major faultline originates from the definition and classification of students at the receiving end[8].

1. In the large group of "foreign" students, a first distinction must be made between **permanent residents** and **internationally mobile students**. The first category is defined by two main criteria, location of second-level qualification and permanent residence of the parents. For example, in France, permanent residents account for about 20% of "foreign" students. For these students, studying in France is a familiar exercise: most of them may have grown up and been educated in France, even if they may not have acquired French citizenship. Their difficulties in entering the tertiary system will be quite different from those of internationally mobile students. The second category of students are referred to as "*en mobilité réelle*" and defined as students who leave their country or territory of origin and move to another for the purpose of studying. This distinction demonstrates that the criterion of nationality is an inadequate tool to use, since the polysemic term "foreign" is misleading in that respect.

2. Among internationally mobile students in Europe, one may distinguish between **Europeans** and **non Europeans**, representing respectively, 10.8% and 79.4% of respondents in a recent study for the French Observatory of Student Life (Vourc'h & Paivandi 2005).

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[7] To help address legitimate concerns regarding quality, reliability, etc., the Unesco and OECD released in December 2005 new "Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education".

[8] French data will be used for this part of the discussion.

Comparisons of the demographics of these two groups with those of French students show some interesting differences. In terms of gender, there are more men among mobile students than among local students. Mobile students tend to be older (25 years old) than their French counterparts (22 years old), which may be explained by the fact that the majority come for Master and PhD programmes (44% against 23% French). More of their parents have a degree in higher education than among French students: 54.9% for European students, 41% for non-Europeans, while in France the figure is 31%. This draws attention to one of the characteristics of mobile students, the "cultural privilege" from which they seem to benefit (rather than a financial privilege *per se*). European mobile students tend to choose Arts and Social Sciences subjects while non-Europeans tend to choose scientific subjects. As a whole, like many French students, they are not satisfied with the conditions of their life and studies in France.

3. Another crucial distinction must be made between **institutional exchange students** and **free movers** ("*mobilité spontanée*"). Travel within the context of university exchange programmes such as those organised by the EU means that students have been selected, should be prepared for the experience, are helped financially by the Socrates grant and will be supervised during their stay abroad. By contrast, free movers are deprived of any of these benefits. The whole project depends on their sole initiative. They have to finance privately their travel and stay abroad without any institutional help or guidance. They may be prey to all sorts of doubtful intermediaries who will exploit their trust. When they arrive in the often distant country where they will spend a few years, their dream may be very far from the reality they encounter. Besides, in France, free movers have been regarded as a form of "imposed" mobility because institutions did not control their selection: they merely "accepted" them. Present policy is now seeking to move from "imposed" to "selective" mobility by favouring post-graduate students in targeted disciplines (economics, management and sciences) and drawing from more diversified geographic origins[9]. In other words, the traditional constituencies are no longer desirable. International competition drives major host countries to adopt highly selective methods of admission rather than equal and sometimes free access to all. The new recruits are those for whom developed countries are competing as a source of income for the institutions they now refuse to fund adequately. They have

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[9] French recruitment is perceived as being too "specific", i.e. African.

become an international commodity, but the treatment they receive from their host-institutions may often be crude, following the sink-or-swim approach, all of which explains the personal costs they have do endure. So, are they really "free" movers? Or just victims of economic and political forces beyond their scope?

4.   A last distinction must be drawn **within intra-European institutional mobility** where several types of agreements exist, three of which attracted this author's attention in the past (Murphy-Lejeune 2002, 2003). When comparing three case-studies of European mobility—the Socrates-Erasmus programme, international exchanges such as those which exist in the French *grandes écoles* and the Language assistantship—several differences surfaced which draw attention to the difficulty of generalizing from one case study. Before their stay, the students differed in terms of their language competence and their mobility capital. During their stay abroad, the main difference revolved around their social immersion context and, in particular, the quantity of relations between outsiders and insiders. This difference matters in the game of social seduction which the students might attempt to play.

Given these different categories of mobile students, who are the beneficiaries on the student side? European institutional exchange students seem to be the obvious answer. They are the "noisy" minority, the elite groomed by the EU, tiny in numbers, but over-researched, with the best support systems. Who are the losers? Two categories of students might be the unlucky contenders. First, the large majority of non-European mobile students, often compelled to mobility, whose voice is not heard. Secondly, the enormous silent majority of students who cannot or will never dream of mobility and remain stationary.

To sum up, it is clear that student mobility is now in many cases just another sphere of economic activity, in between international migrations and "human capital formation", to use Unesco parlance. As a result of this commercialization, national policies in this area question the very principles of our education systems, opposing countries with selective access against those with open access, countries with tuition fees against those practising free education, countries targeting elites against those facilitating underprivileged students. They also highlight different views of education: as an international commodity in a market, which some wish to see even more "liberalized" or as a source of national, cultural and social development to encourage social cohesion.

CONTRIBUTORS

Name	Address
Michal Assa-Inbar	Sociology of Education, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel
Michael Byram	School of Education, University of Durham, England
Andrea Cammelli	University of Bologna-ALMALAUREA Interuniversity Consortium, Italy
Tim Caudery	University of Aarhus, Denmark
Geoff Danaher	Division of Teaching and Learning Services, Central Queensland University, Australia
Mike Danaher	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education, Central Queensland University, Australia
Patrick A. Danaher	Faculty of Education and Centre for Research in Transformative Pedagogies, University of Southern Queensland, Australia
Fred Dervin	Department of French Studies, The University of Turku, Finland
Pieter Dhondt	Department of History, University of Helsinki, Finland
Catherine Doherty	Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Māra Dirba	The University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia
Kathy Durkin	Media School, Bournemouth University, England
Susanne Ehrenreich	Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany
Silvia Ghiselli	University of Bologna– ALMALAUREA Interuniversity Consortium, Italy
David M. Hoffman	Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Ewa Krzaklewska	Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków, Poland; Erasmus Student Network
Gian Piero Mignoli	University of Bologna– ALMALAUREA Interuniversity Consortium, Italy
Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune	French Department, Saint Patrick's College Dublin, Ireland
Mihai Paunescu	Sociology Department, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, Rumania
Margrethe Petersen	Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus
Tamar Rapoport	Sociology of Education, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel
Inmaculada Roldán-Miranda	University of Granada, Spain
Inmaculada Sanz-Sainz	University of Granada, Spain
Philip Shaw	University and Royal Institute of Technology, (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden, Stockholm
Parlo Singh	Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia
Ioannis Tsoukalas	Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden
Anthony Welch	Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia
Gad Yair	Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel