International Students and Mobility: Reconsidering the Challenges of Higher Education

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Internationalisation of Higher Education: A World-Wide Agenda

- We believe that internationalisation is a world-wide phenomenon
- We believe that there is world-wide growth in this respect
- But the foreign student rate, the single most frequently employed indicator, remained constant over five decades at 2%; there is only growth from our angle
- And the internationalisation discourse and policies remained strongly country-specific
Different Weights of Key Thematic Areas of Internationalisation?

- Physical mobility (students and scholars)
- Recognition of prior study in mobility context
- Other modes of knowledge transfer (collaborative research, publications, conferences, virtual transfer, transnational education)
- Internationality of teaching, learning and research and their results (e.g. knowledge and competences)
- International orientations and attitudes (e.g. “international understanding”)
- Additional theme: Similarity or heterogeneity of national systems of HE
- Additional theme: anything else viewed as contributing to fitness for world-wide competition
Different Inclinations of Employing Umbrella Terms Depicting the Trend

- Internationalisation as growing border-crossing activities amidst persistence of borders
- Globalisation as growing border-crossing activities along blurring of (the relevance of) borders
- Internationalisation associated to physical mobility, academic cooperation, academic knowledge transfer and international education
- Globalisation associated to competition and market-steering, transnational education and commercial knowledge transfer.
- Europeanisation: regional notion of internationalisation and/or globalisation?
## Different Proportions of Foreign/Mobile Students 2003

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CH</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Foreign mobile students</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Home country mobile students</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>All mobile students (a, b)</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Foreign non-mobile students</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All foreign students (a, c)</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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(Source: Kelo/Teichler/Wächter. EURODATA. 2006)
Varying Emphasis on Different Aspects of Mobility

- “Vertical” mobility vs. “horizontal” mobility
- “Import”, “reciprocity” or “export” orientation
- “Degree” mobility vs. “short-term”, “temporary” or “credit” mobility
Varying, Inter-related Rationales and Discourses of Student Mobility Policies

- The financial rationale/discourse
- The migration rationale/discourse
- The knowledge/competence discourse
- The quality discourse
Aim of this presentation

- Discussing primarily student-related matters of internationalisation
- Discussing primarily the role of internationalisation for one’s own country students (i.e. the key target of national teaching-related public funding of HE)
- Discussing the specific British experiences and notions as regards the value of internationalisation of British students in European comparison
The Presenter’s Comparative Background (I)

- Invited as foreign witness for the House of Lords Red Book “Student Mobility in the European Community” (1998)
- Involved in study on national policies and institutional strategies of globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation in HE in selected European countries (Huisman/van der Wende 2004, 2005)
The Presenter’s Comparative Background (II)

- Analyses of the international state of research literature on internationalisation of higher education
- Comparative studies on higher systems
- Involved in a comparative study on mobility and nationality statistics (EURODATA)
- Participating in comparative studies on higher education and employment and on the academic profession
- Involved in various evaluation activities as regards the Bologna Process
The Dominance of the Financial Discourse in UK and Its Specific Features (I)

- Financial matters shape the internationalisation discourse in British HE more strongly than in any other European countries.
- The British discourse of internationalisation of HE is not the result of “globalisation”, but rather of specifically British regulatory modes embedded in funding higher of HE: differentiation of fees according to nationality of students, differentiation of teaching-related support according to nationality of students (?), (low?) magnitude of financial schemes in support of cooperation with economically advanced countries and in support of intra-European cooperation and mobility.
The Dominance of the Financial Discourse in UK and Its Specific Features (II)

• Hypothesis: The British funding modes have a strong influence on the modes and the impact of student-related internationalisation of HE. The funding modes reinforce rather than counterbalance historically grown strengths and weaknesses of student-related internationality of UK HE

• Is there little concern about the weaknesses, or is there a belief that the weaknesses can be counterbalanced without a change of the financial logic?
Specific Features of Other Discourses

- **Migration discourse**: specific impact of lingua franca and colonial past, more attention paid to world-wide migration; more readiness to import policy of talents?

- **Knowledge/competence discourse**: little attention paid to internationalisation of home students and on “internationalisation at home”?

- **Quality discourse**: Hardly any expectation that outwards mobility and “internationalisation at home” could contribute to quality enhancement? Hardly any expectation that foreign language proficiency could be an element of the quality/level of competences? Substantial concern that high student import might undermine academic quality of teaching and learning? Very stratum-specific quality discourse?
Horizontal Mobility: The British Experience in ERASMUS (I)


- Flows: Few outbound mobile students from UK
- *If taught abroad in a foreign language:* British students were least prepared and were on lowest level afterwards
- Service, administration and communication with teachers: very positively assessed by ERASMUS students going to UK and Ireland; negatively by British students going abroad
Horizontal Mobility: The British Experience in ERASMUS (II)

- Less favourable view of incoming students of accommodation for students, communication among students and weather/food etc. in the UK
- Academic level of teaching and learning in UK viewed as average by incoming ERASMUS students
- Former British ERASMUS students report an above-average professional value of their temporary study abroad: more than average employment abroad and use of competences acquired during the period of study
ERASMUS within SOCRATES

- The UK government called for a strengthening of the value of ERASMUS for non-mobile students (this contributed to an increase of funds teaching staff mobility, curriculum development)

- Yet, little emphasis in UK on “internationalisation at home”

- Results of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study: More or less than same as those of the earlier study (Teichler 2002)
The Bologna Process

Changes in other European countries:

- Bachelor-Master structure might contribute to the attractiveness for students from outside Europe
- Increased number of study programmes in the English language
- Increasing visibility in indicators of research quality
- Improvements of foreign student-friendly administration, services and communication patterns
- Impact of changes of tuition fees in England?
The Potentials of Temporary Study Abroad and Internationalisation at Home for European Students (I)

- Not isolated improvement of foreign language proficiency but rather combined with understanding other modes of intellectual reasoning and other professional approaches

- Not isolated cultural impact but rather combined with academic impact: awareness of the plurality of paradigms and methods: “not trusting a single professor anymore”; academic enhancement through increased potentials of reflection and critical mind, increased ability to cope with unexpected challenges, indeterminate tasks and unknown persons.
The Potentials of Temporary Study Abroad and Internationalisation at Home for European Students (II)

- Obviously, “experiential learning” abroad is eye-opening, but “internationalisation at home” is rich of potentials of enhancing the value of not just learning from creatively challenges contrast but also and in a even more targeted manner of systematic confrontation of approaches prevailing in different European countries.

- Teaching staff mobility: a potential of overcoming superficial internationalisation among academics?
Conclusion (I)

- The British discourse and policies of internationalisation are preoccupied with the opportunities and dangers of import of persons and exports of knowledge
- The British funding system of higher education widely believed to be a response to “globalisation”, is a set of regulatory advice strongly reinforcing the these traditions of person-importing and knowledge-exporting approach to internationalisation
- The UK are likely to loose some of the advantage of its person-import and knowledge-export approach
Conclusion (II)

- Some European countries consider their international HE policies as a means of counteracting the “imperialistic” undercurrents of “globalisation” in HE.

- British HE underutilizes the potentials of temporary study abroad and “internationalisation at home” for the competences of their students, i.e. integrated cultural, linguistic, academic and professionally relevant competences.

- Can a shift of emphasis realized through recommendation, or would changes of the regulatory and financial conditions be necessary (cf. the House of Commons Report of 23 July 2007)?