

Book Review: International Students and Global Mobility in Higher Education: National Trends and New Directions

Edited by Rajika Bhandari and Peggy Blumenthal.
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This important new volume of Palgrave Macmillan's *International and Development Education Series* showcases the comparative dimension, complexity of collecting global data, and global trends of student mobility with perspectives and data from most world regions and key countries. The significance of this approach is that most data available on international student mobility tends to be collected by individual developed nations and generally focuses on trends at the national and institutional level rather than the global context. The book consists of 11 chapters with Chapter 1 written by the editors as an introduction. Chapters 2-9 interpret student mobility trends and initiatives regarding in- and outbound mobility in China, India, Europe (UK and Germany), the United States, Australia, Latin America, Africa, and Canada. Chapter 10 explores the influence of language on student mobility and Chapter 11 describes the emergence and trend of developing regional education hubs in countries seeking a share of the new knowledge economy and positioning themselves to leverage their economic and political potential. The book also contains a wide range of tables and figures presenting global student mobility data.

The book presents the changing landscape of global student mobility and forecasts future trends by authors who are recognized experts in understanding and interpreting student movement across the globe. Rajika Bandhari and Peggy Blumenthal (Chapter 1) explain that many work for organizations that are partners in *Project Atlas*, "a unique initiative that brings together a community of researchers from around the world to share more harmonized and current data on student mobility." The significance of *Project Atlas* also perfectly describes the importance of this book: "an unprecedented effort to engage leading non-governmental and governmental agencies involved in international educational exchange to examine the broader implications of their work within a global context rather than through a narrow national lens." Bandhari and Blumenthal explain the importance and significance of *Project Atlas* and key trends in global mobility that have emerged over the past 15

years. For example, there are only six countries hosting 64 percent of the world's postsecondary mobile students: the United States (21 percent), the United Kingdom (13 percent), France (9 percent), Germany (8 percent), Australia (7 percent), and China (6 percent). Canada is not included in this list, although the country also hosts 6 percent of mobile students as shown in Figure 1.1. Emerging host countries are primarily in Asia, especially China, where strategies and efforts to recruit international students have significantly increased. Twenty-nine percent of globally-mobile students come from East Asia and the Pacific Region. Africa has the highest outbound ratio in the world compared to its total higher education population. North America has the lowest percentage of its student population studying abroad. The editors pose the question whether the primary host countries can keep their competitive edge by recruiting the highest achieving international students. The chapter highlights new modes of mobility such as branch campuses, distance learning, joint- and dual-degree programs as well as "sandwich" programs and the implications for international education and student mobility. The end of the chapter examines projections for the future, including a shift from brain drain to brain circulation, current estimates on growth in mobility and shifting trends that may make the traditional host countries less competitive.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on China and India, the largest sending countries of internationally-mobile students. Demand for overseas education in both nations is driven by an emerging middle class and by the higher education systems in both countries unable to meet the demand for high-quality education. India, unlike China, does not have a long-standing government policy of funding its citizens to study abroad and for this and other reasons India has a smaller outbound mobility than China, although Pawan Agarwal (Chapter 3) states that the gap is closing. In India, the demand for outward mobility is almost entirely driven by a higher education sector that is unable to meet the growing demand and a lack of quality institutions. There is an increasing middle-class with the financial resources to send their children to universities abroad,



but much less so than compared to families in China. The United States is most popular as study destination for both Indians and Chinese; however, Indians are beginning to choose a greater variety of destinations, especially in emerging Asian nations. The UK and Australia continue to be popular destinations for Indian students, but Agarwal asserts that due to higher costs and stricter visa regulations in the UK and hostilities against Indian students in Australia, the two countries may host fewer Indian students in the future. China is emerging as a host destination for international students mostly from less developed countries in Asia, although the number of students from developed nations heading to China for short-term study is also increasing significantly. India hosts much smaller numbers of international degree students than China due to the lack of higher education capacity and quality. Students from developed nations tend to study in both China and India in short-term programs focused on language and culture.

Chapter 4 describes the European perspective from Germany and the United Kingdom, representing the fourth and the second biggest host countries, respectively. Both have a long tradition of serving as host countries to students from around the world. However, in Germany the growth in international students has been tremendous over the past 20 years due to geopolitical events and due to a proactive political decision to globally market German higher education. In the UK, the introduction of full-cost tuition fees for international students created a business-like and competitive culture among HEIs that prioritized the recruitment of international students as a revenue stream. Christian Bode and Martin Davidson (Chapter 4) explain that although international students remain critical to higher education in their countries, the international priorities have become much broader in scope and now focus on comprehensive internationalization with recruitment of international students focused more on quality than volume. Outward mobility has increased dramatically with the implementation of the Bologna Process across Europe. The focus in Europe is increasingly on multifaceted international partnerships and student mobility tends to be across several countries rather than the traditional short-term study experience in one other country. There is an emphasis on a holistic strategy to develop capacity not only domestically, but also in global higher education. In Europe transformative change is taking shape in higher education because comprehensive internationalization has become a priority for national governments and internationalization has evolved beyond the basic mobility of students in and out of a country. European nations appear to be most advanced in ushering in a new era of comprehensive and strategic internationalization.

There has been a similar development in the United States as described by Allan E. Goodman and Robert Gutierrez (Chapter 5). The United States hosts the largest percentage of internationally mobile students and the authors assert that this will most likely not change in the near future, despite increasing competition from other countries and capacity building in primary source countries. International students in the US still only comprise 3.7 percent of total enrollment in higher education in the United States with slightly over half of all international students studying at only 150 institutions. Goodman and Gutierrez make the case that due to the sheer number and diversity of HEIs in the US, the nation has a tremendous amount of capacity and could accommodate vastly greater numbers of international students. Unlike other authors in this volume, Goodman and Gutierrez assert that as the number of mobile students continues to grow, no one country will necessarily lose “market share.” Students are more likely to study in a wider variety of countries rather than a few as in the past and recruiting international students is not a “zero sum game” in which one country’s gain is another’s loss. Regarding US students studying abroad, the profile of outward mobility is quite different from international students in the United States. The US is ranked the lowest among many countries around the world in outbound mobility ratio. Although an increasing number of HEIs in the United States are engaged in comprehensive internationalization similar to European institutions, it is not mentioned in this chapter.

Melissa Adams, Tony Banks, and Alan Olsen (Chapter 6) explain that Australia has been actively recruiting international students since the mid-1980s with the primary driver being revenue, similar to the United Kingdom. International education provides 15 percent of the revenue to higher education in Australia and it is the country’s third largest export. International students in Australia constitute almost 20 percent of the higher education enrollment; most likely the largest percentage of any country in the world. International education is clearly a business venture in Australia with professional agents recruiting students, for-profit companies providing pathway programs, and the development of full campus degree issuing operations. Australia is competitive as a destination compared to Europe and the US due to its affordable, quality education and several other factors such as proximity to Asia, general security and safety, and warm climate. Also, the opportunities for employment during and after degree completion are good. As in the United States, outbound mobility is almost entirely short-term and increasingly becoming even shorter term.

Latin America represents a very different mobility landscape. Isabel Cristina Jaramillo and Hans de Wit (Chapter 7) explain that Latin America has a low higher education participation rate and

low access, especially at the graduate levels. More students study in private than public universities. Student mobility within the region is at only 5 percent of the world's mobility. Only 15 percent of Latin American students study in the region, 60 percent study in the US, and the remainder in Europe. Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia send the largest number of students to the US, Spain, and France, destinations which have increased in popularity due to linguistic and cultural ties. Intraregional mobility has increased significantly in recent years due to the emergence of a middle class and increasing connectivity for higher education in the region. However, Jaramillo and de Wit note that there is a strong need for developing a European style Bologna Process for the region as there are too many differences in higher education for students to easily move between the countries. The common language and culture in the region has not had much of an impact in the building of a common Latin American Higher Education Area, but the first steps are being taken.

Roshen Kishun (Chapter 8) describes the challenges related to data collection on student mobility for Africa as students who study overseas are often not counted in national statistics on higher education enrollment. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have more students abroad than enrolled in-country. Among sub-Saharan nations, South Africa hosts the largest number of international students. Students from outside of Africa generally study on the continent in short-term programs focused on language and culture. Outbound mobility from Africa tends to be aligned with past geopolitical struggles and colonial history as African nations tend to send the largest percentages of their mobile students to countries that colonized them. Chapter 8 highlights case studies of select sub-Saharan countries. The last section of the chapter looks critically at developments in higher education and economic policies of the developed world as representing severe challenges for higher education in Africa, such as recruiting the most talented students away from Africa and viewing Africans as a cheap source of skilled labor. The value of recruiting international students to Africa has not yet been formally researched and internationalization in general has not been established in a formal manner which makes it impossible for African institutions to market themselves and become key players in global higher education.

From the beginning of Chapter 9 on Canada, John McHale is critical of the hype surrounding the competition for the world's most talented students. In comparison to other developed nations, Canada attracts relatively small numbers of international students. McHale explains that Canada has been fairly reluctant to recruit students from overseas until recently, which is surprising for a country that was the first in the world to institute skill-based immigration policies. No explanation is offered regarding reasons

for Canada having just recently started to actively recruit talented students. McHale states that Canada may be positively affected by decreases in students going to the United States and that for this reason, Canada "can afford to be less aggressive in its efforts to attract top student prospects." However, he also offers that if Canada were to recruit more aggressively, talented students who had planned to study in the United States may go to Canada instead. The remainder of the chapter discusses the reasons for recruiting to Canada: revenue generation, knowledge production, student diversity, research output, and the need for skilled labor. McHale closes with an explanation of his criticism of the hype regarding the competition for talent: he believes Canada needs to carefully evaluate the impact of and goals for attracting talented international students rather than just wanting to be part of the global competition.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on mobility trends related to global languages and the emergence of regional education hubs. Veronica Lasanowski (Chapter 10) explains the historical "pull" of language and students' desire for fluency in English to be competitive globally upon entering the workforce. As English is the global economy language, the "pull" this creates to English-speaking countries is tremendous as demonstrated by the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand collectively sharing roughly 50 percent of the international student market. Several countries with primary languages other than English are developing large numbers of English-language degree programs to be attractive to international students and also to provide their own students with the skills to compete in the global economy. Lasanowski asserts that new global languages such as Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin and the languages of the BRIC countries may ultimately compete with English. Research has shown that opportunity for employment and migration tends to be the primary reason for students to choose to study in a particular country. The second reason is learning English. However, the rise of other global languages may make English-language degree offerings less competitive in the future.

The final chapter on regional education hubs is based on the premise that this relatively new concept of creating access to higher education for students across the world is based on the desire of nations to engage in the new knowledge economy. Higher education in this setting has become "an anchor for positioning a country's economic, technological, and innovation competitiveness in their region and beyond." These new hubs are sponsored, not by higher education authorities, but rather by economic development and tourism agencies, investment companies, and corporations. Jane Knight (Chapter 11) states that the most accurate terms for regional education hubs should be "education/knowledge marketplace." The chapter highlights the

development of regional education hubs in the Middle East (United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain) and in Asia (Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia). The end of the chapter presents an analysis of the motivations of and expectations for creating these hubs as they are being developed for economic and financial reasons rather than social, cultural, or academic reasons. The author also discusses the lack of transparency related to governance, quality assurance, selection and licensing criteria, enrollment data, employment contracts, and tuition fees which make comparative research with other education models difficult.

This volume provides an exceptional overview and comparative analysis of international student mobility trends in key nations and regions of the world. It also highlights the impact of language on student mobility as well as the new trend in Asia and the Middle East of developing regional education hubs for economic development purposes. The strongest asset of this volume is that it provides a truly global picture of current trends. Generally, data and literature on mobility tends to focus on national in- and outflows only. This book is a highly valuable resource for anyone engaged in higher education policy, international higher education issues, recruiting international students, and research on international mobility and skilled migration. A weakness of this volume is that a chapter was not dedicated to the Middle East since outbound mobility and also higher education capacity building in the region has a significant impact on global student mobility trends. Despite this omission, Bandhari and Blumenthal assembled a truly remarkable group of international student mobility and international higher education experts from around the world to focus in on the history, trends, and projections for the future for each nation and region reviewed producing a compelling addition to the international higher education literature for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners.

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