INWARD STUDENT MOBILITY IN HUNGARY AND IN WESTERN EUROPE – SOME IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

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One of the most important phenomena in today’s HE: the number of international students is approx. 5 Million worldwide and is constantly increasing.

Geographical unevenness at a global scale and within smaller regions as well.

There are some notable differences between Western Europe and the post-socialist countries regarding several aspects of inward mobility.
Differences between Western Europe and the former socialist countries, especially Hungary

- Our focus is not on the number of incoming students → Differences in determinants, motivations and effects of inward student mobility from the perspective of students, institutions, cities and countries.
- Analysis of international literature.
- Empirical research in Pécs, Hungary: questionnaire survey with more than 500 international students.
Since when?

**Western Europe**
- The process began to intensify in the 1960s, to counter the American domination

**Hungary**
- Internationalisation of HE has been going on basically since the regime change (1990)
**WHO COME TO STUDY?**

**Western Europe**
- The most talented students seek out the world class universities ("vertical mobility")
- In many cases, not the particular course and the acquired degree counts but the international experience itself ("horizontal mobility") – similar HE in the two countries
- Ethnic-based mobility: mainly post-colonial links or neighboring countries with same or similar language

**Hungary**
- *From developed countries:* A large number of those who did not gain access to a specific program at home, move to study abroad
- *From developing countries:* Students come here to a specific program, and after graduation they move on to Western / Northern Europe or North America ("springboard" role)
- Ethnic-based mobility: Hungarian nationalities from neighboring countries (mainly ROU, SVK, SRB, UKR)
** WHICH UNIVERSITIES AND COURSES DO THEY SEEK? **

**Western Europe**

- World class universities → importance of world university rankings (Shanghai; THE-QS)
- At the largest and best institutions there is a broad range of courses in English language → no linguistic barriers
- There are smaller institutions with strong international profile

**Hungary**

- *Mainly medical faculties*: there are four universities in Hungary which offer medical courses
- Yearly more and more courses start in English language at other faculties, but the popularity and quality of these have not reached the level of the medical faculties’ yet
What do they do after graduation?

Many students settle down in the destination country.
They study there in order to get a well-paid job on the local labor market in the first place → wider life-course aspirations.
The most qualified students seek international careers in top positions at multinational companies.
Further mobility.

Most students either go home or move on to another country, in most cases it depends on their country of origin.
Only a very few stay in Hungary after graduation.
## Benefits for Students

### Western Europe
- With degrees from world class universities they can quickly build international careers
- Multinational companies often apply these students even before they graduate
- They gain social and cultural capital through studying in an elite institution
- Advantage over those who have acquired their degrees at home

### Hungary
- Students from developed countries: They study and live cheaper than at home; they still get a good-quality EU degree
- Students from developing countries: They get a better education and degree than at home and still relatively cheap; after graduation they can move further west
- International experience
Benefits for institutions

- High tuition fees
- World class institutions already have strong international reputation and they have no real competition (excessive demand)
- They can select from the most talented students in order to maintain their leading position

Western Europe

- Establishing and maintaining international relationships
- Knowledge transfer
- Tuition fees
- Students with positive opinions recommend the university to their acquaintances at home → further enrolments
- Induction of investments (for example Pécs, 24 Billion HUF)

Hungary
## Benefits for Cities

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<tr>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic impact is not so significant, because in richer countries international students do not spend more than most of the domestic ones</td>
<td>Economic impact is very significant, because they spend much more than most of the domestic students</td>
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<td>Cultural impact: multicultural environment, especially in case of smaller towns</td>
<td>The economic impact is particularly important in smaller or middle-sized cities</td>
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<td>Many talented students and academics in one place → Spatial concentration of knowledge, innovation and human capital, „academic milieu”</td>
<td>Economic and cultural impact is only visible in certain parts of town which international students frequently use</td>
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Benefits for the Destination Country

- Income from tuition fees and living costs
- Graduated young people who settle down are bolstering the highly qualified domestic workforce: benefits on employment, taxation
- Domestic companies employ the best talents from elite universities
- *Long-term benefit*

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<td>Income from tuition fees and living costs</td>
<td>Incomes from tuition fees and living costs are the most important, but rather for individual cities than for the national economy</td>
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<td>Graduated young people who settle down are bolstering the highly qualified domestic workforce: benefits on employment, taxation</td>
<td>Graduated international students usually do not settle down, they leave the country instead</td>
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<td>Domestic companies employ the best talents from elite universities</td>
<td><em>Short-term benefit</em> → Long-term only if the students returning home recommend the country to others → positive country image can induce further demand for Hungarian HE</td>
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CONCLUSION

- Significant differences between the Western region and Hungary regarding most aspects of inward student mobility
- These are going back to long-term economic, social and political reasons → The process of ISM started much later in the post-socialist countries
- The region can not compete with the academic superiority of the main destination countries
- However, Hungary is in a good position within Central and Eastern Europe → The rate of non-ethnic mobility is one of the highest among the other post-socialist countries
REFERENCES

- OECD – Education at a Glance 2015
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
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