CARIM-India – Developing a knowledge base for policymaking on India-EU migration

Co-financed by the European Union

Indian Student Mobility in the UK: Opportunities and Challenges

Leonard Williams

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Research Report
Thematic Report

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This project is co-financed by the European Union and carried out by the EUI in partnership with the Indian Council of Overseas Employment, (ICOE), the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore Association, (IIMB), and Maastricht University (Faculty of Law).

The proposed action is aimed at consolidating a constructive dialogue between the EU and India on migration covering all migration-related aspects. The objectives of the proposed action are aimed at:

- Assembling high-level Indian-EU expertise in major disciplines that deal with migration (demography, economics, law, sociology and politics) with a view to building up migration studies in India. This is an inherently international exercise in which experts will use standardised concepts and instruments that allow for aggregation and comparison. These experts will belong to all major disciplines that deal with migration, ranging from demography to law and from economics to sociology and political science.

- Providing the Government of India as well as the European Union, its Member States, the academia and civil society, with:

    1. Reliable, updated and comparative information on migration

    2. In-depth analyses on India-EU highly-skilled and circular migration, but also on low-skilled and irregular migration.

- Making research serve action by connecting experts with both policy-makers and the wider public through respectively policy-oriented research, training courses, and outreach programmes.

These three objectives will be pursued with a view to developing a knowledge base addressed to policy-makers and migration stakeholders in both the EU and India.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: http://www.india-eu-migration.eu/

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an astronomical growth in the numbers of Indian students studying at UK universities. This paper situates this increase in relation to global and historical developments: the development of internationalization in education, liberalization in the economies of India and the UK as well as the centuries-old relationship between the two countries. Statistical data is examined in order to develop a picture of this group, followed by the results of a qualitative study which examined the motivations and experiences of Indian students currently studying, or who have recently finished their studies in the UK. The results speak to Bourdieu's (1984) theories of cultural capital and illustrate that student migrants do not go to the UK just for study, but that they often have larger expectations from the trip, entwined with their own personal long term strategies. Finally, the data is used to critique current UK policy with regards to the student visa system.

1. Introduction

Migration for study has in recent years come to the fore as one of the most important reasons people cross borders. The USA is the principal destination, but close behind comes the UK, where a huge growth in the last two decades of full-fee paying foreign students has turned higher education (HE) into a massive export industry. However, despite being an ethnically diverse society, the UK public continues to reserve a strong anti-immigration sentiment; a sensitive issue successive governments have had to juggle with (Page 2009, Somerville et al 2009). Consequently, the UK has responded ambivalently to the growth in international students in an often paradoxical manner.

In concert with a recession and a related growth in anti-immigration sentiment, the last two or three years have witnessed a real tightening of the student visa application process in a drive to reduce immigration statistics and appease certain voters. However, this has led to fears in some quarters that students may go elsewhere.

This ambivalence is perhaps best illustrated by the paradoxical approaches of the current government. Having implemented a raft of student visa clampdowns, the immigration minister voiced concern in June 2012 that the UK's competitors were "snapping at our heals" (Kelly 2012). As a result, the UK would now launch a "global charm offensive" (ibid.) to show it was still welcoming students and wanted them to keep coming (Churm 2012, Coughlan 2012, Kelly 2012).

Setting the scene for student immigration

As an island, Great Britain has received waves of immigration throughout its history. Following the rapid decline of its empire, it opened the door to all citizens of the commonwealth to fill work shortages in the booming post-war economy and saw a leap in arrivals, particularly from India, Pakistan and the West Indies. However, as industry declined and racial tensions grew, the UK began closing the door and a policy of zero immigration was in place by the Thatcher era of the 1980's (Ballard 1994, Boswell 2008).

Soon after coming to power in 1997 the Labour government adopted a much more liberal immigration policy than its predecessors, leading to a rapid growth of inward migration (Boswell 2008). Concerns about immigration grew in parallel and consequently Labour introduced the *Points Based System*, by which would-be migrants build up points to acquire a visa, while permitting the UK to prioritize those with the required skills or profile (UKBA 2012).

Tier 4 visas, the student route, proved most popular, and by 2007, replaced migration for work as the predominant form of migration to the UK as the following graph indicates.

Entry clearance visas issued to the UK, including dependents, by reason (excluding visitors and transit), 2005 - 2012
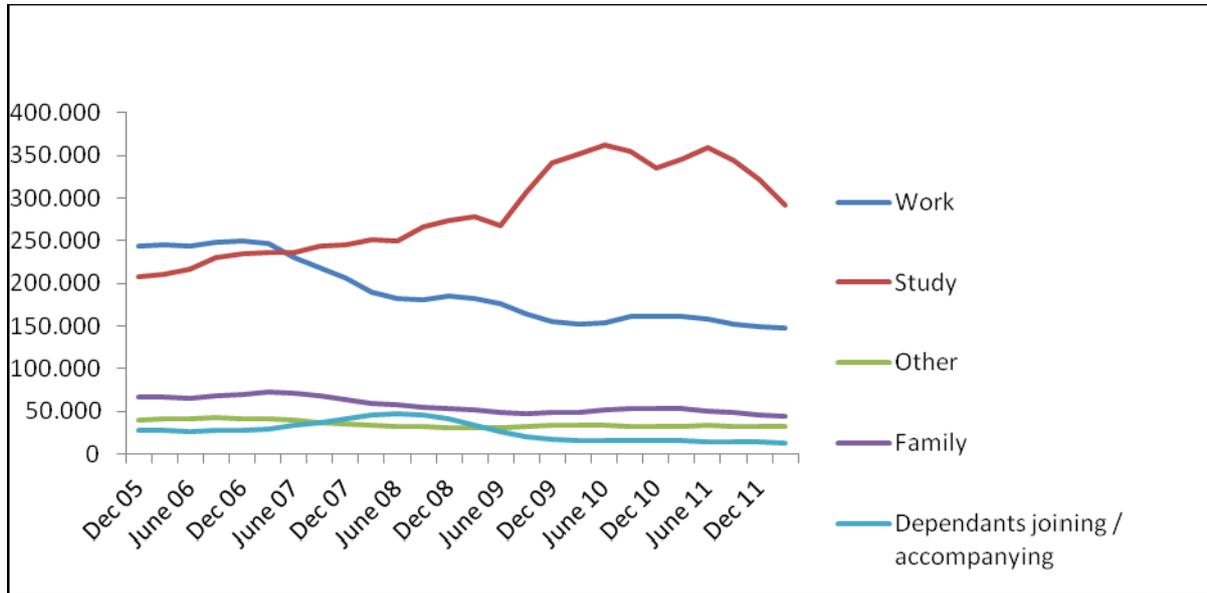
Source: ONS 2012

This was a significant group who paid premium fees for their courses. The following table illustrates just how much more international students pay than British and EU residents:

UK universities and HE Colleges: 2010/11 £ Median Fees

Level and domicile	Under grad EU	Undergrad Overseas: Arts/Classroom	Undergrad Overseas: Science/Lab	Postgra d EU	Post grad Overseas: Arts/Classroo m	Postgrad Overseas: Science/Lab
£ Median Fees	3323	10463	11435	5214	10938	12487

Source: Reddin 2011

Non-European students have paid significantly more than locals for the courses they attend. It should be noted however that for the academic year 2012/13 English universities will now be able to charge UK and EU students up to £9000, although Welsh, Northern Irish and Scottish students will continue to attend universities in their own countries at reduced tariffs.

Despite the large sums of money these students bought to the UK, estimated to be £14.1billion in 2009/10 (British Council 2011), concerns grew about 'bogus' colleges and fake students using Tier 4 as a route to permanent settlement. The combination of these interests (funding) and worries (immigrants) led to the UK's increasing border restrictions yet paradoxical concern to remain welcoming to international students.

The long term effects of these ever shifting policies are yet to be felt but following restrictions in 2012, the UK saw a dip in student visa applications for the academic year 2012/13 from India and Brazil, both important source countries (Kelly 2012).

2. Imagining the international (non-European) student: origin, gender, where (s)he goes in the UK and what (s)he does – focus on India

Particularly detailed and reliable statistics on international students are not currently available in the UK due to certain issues pertaining to data collection methods (Binder 2011). Nonetheless, a combination of sources provides a general picture of this population.

HE qualifications by non-European domiciled students in UK by gender, level and location 2008/2009

	Higher Degree	Total first degree	Other degrees	Total HE
HE qualifications obtained in England				
Female	28740	14980	3765	47485
Male	32570	15250	4950	52770
Total England	61310	30230	8720	100255
HE qualifications obtained in Wales				
Female	1300	950	200	2450
Male	2125	1240	475	3840
Total Wales	3425	2190	675	6290
HE qualifications obtained in Scotland				
Female	3265	1240	485	4990
Male	4305	1190	690	6185
Total Scotland	7570	2430	1175	11175
HE qualifications obtained in Northern Ireland				
Female	165	95	20	280
Male	175	90	20	285
Total Northern Ireland	335	185	40	565

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited 2012

The vast majority of international students in the UK study in England, presumably due to the greater number of universities there, followed by Scotland, Wales and a handful in Northern Ireland. In 2008/09 the majority were male, although not by a particularly large margin. Furthermore, about two thirds of international students study at post-graduate level. This may be for a number of reasons, although a Masters degree in the UK only lasts one year compared to a three year Bachelor, making this a cheaper option overall.

We now have a picture of where international students go in the UK, their gender and level of study. However, what do they do once they are there?

Field of study of international students in UK by country 2009/2010:

Places of Origin (Top 5)	China	India	United States	Germany	France
Business and Management	27 155	15 235	2 230	5 285	4 715
Engineering	7 775	7 440	570	1 655	2 735
Physical and Life Sciences	2 060	2 335	1 840	2 160	1 625
Social Sciences	4 390	1 105	3 480	1 935	1 340
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	4 855	6 710	470	980	1 110
Fine and Applied Arts	2 135	700	1 595	925	900
Health Professions	860	3 735	890	955	505
Education	1 310	360	715	520	455
Humanities	250	135	2 995	705	415
Agriculture	240	210	80	70	135
Other/Unspecified Subject Areas	9 675	2 510	8 845	4 400	4 635

IIE 2012

This table shows that China is the principal source country, followed by India. The five most popular subjects for Indian students in 2009/10 were Business & Management, Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Health Professions and Physical and Life Sciences, illustrating that 'hard' sciences and courses with an industry focus were most popular. The Humanities, Fine and Applied Arts and Social Sciences were all much less popular with Indian students than with the other top five sending countries, showing that 'arts' subjects are the least popular for Indian students in the UK.

3. The historical, economic and political context of Indian students in the UK

The present, somewhat paradoxical position of the UK towards student migrants must be situated historically. I will argue that the period from the 1990's onwards shows distinctly different patterns to earlier student immigration.

Indian students began arriving to study in Great Britain from the mid-19th century onwards, since a degree from a British university was the sole route to the highest levels of public service in the British administration in India.

> "A few came on government scholarships, first established in 1868. But many more were private students, parents sending their sons, and sometimes their daughters, at great cost and hardship. A British education conferred economic benefits and status" (Visram 2002: 86).

Studying in Great Britain in this period entailed many of the same difficulties and benefits it does for Indians today; the high cost and risk of the move, problems with living arrangements and the status a foreign degree can confer on return.

In the 1830's some of the earliest Indian overseas students came to study shipbuilding, but the first to take a UK degree was Dhunjeebhoy Nowrojee in 1843, a Parsi convert to Christianity who studied theology in Edinburgh. Four Bengalis studied Medicine at Univesity College London in 1845 and Satyendranath Tagore and Manmohun Ghose were the first to study for the ICS (Indian Civil Service) in 1860. Many famous names from the sub-continent were educated in Britain: Gandhi and Jinnah both studied law, Nehru spent 7 years at various English universities and Indira Ghandi went to Oxford. Records show a slow but steady increase in numbers: 160 in 1887, 207 in 1890, and 308 in 1894. By 1910 the number was somewhere between seven and twelve hundred (Visram 2002).

Today's Indian students study abroad under quite different conditions to their predecessors – most obviously being that India is no longer a British colony. There are of course strong historical links between the two countries which may influence some students to study in the UK, nonetheless, the sheer number of students coming to Great Britain, as well as those studying elsewhere, suggests this is quite a different phenomenon to earlier Indian migrations to the UK. The following table illustrates the growth in the numbers of Indians at UK universities since 1998, reaching over 34,000 in 2009.

Quantity of Indian students in the UK: 1998 – 2009
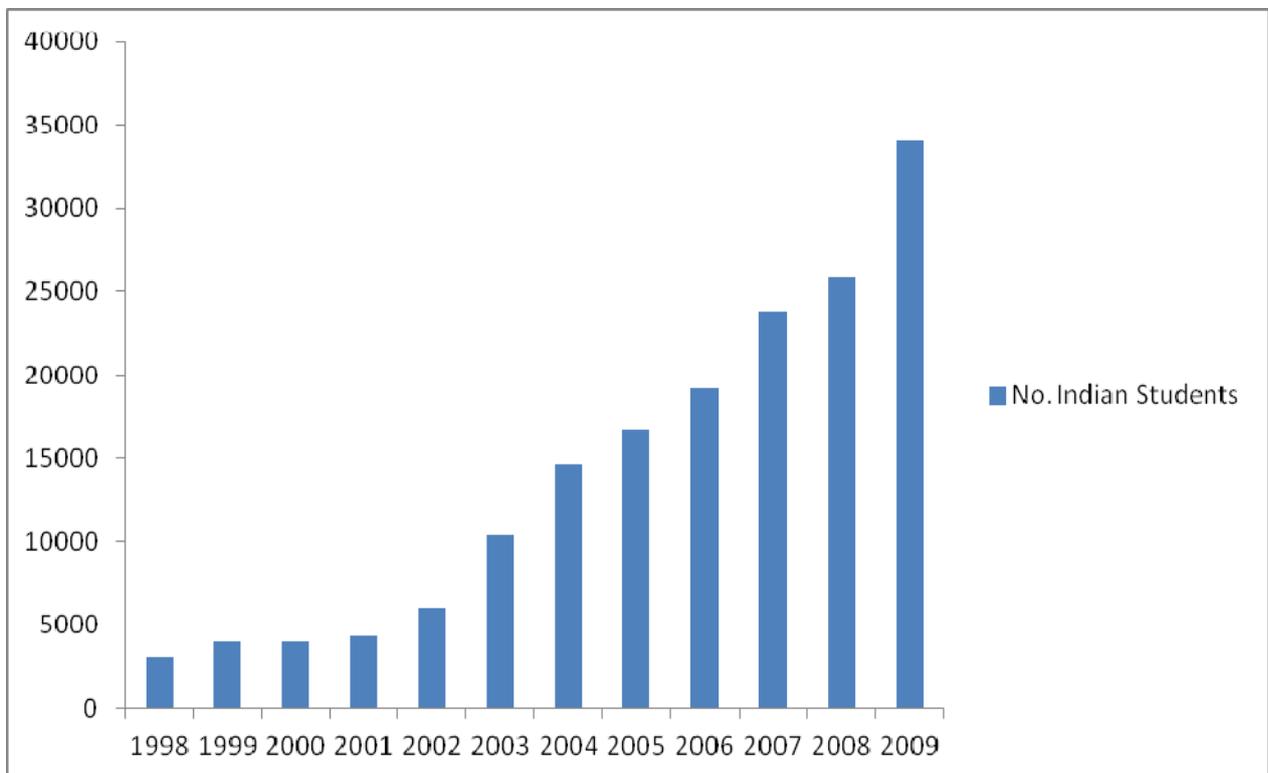
Source: UNESCO 2012
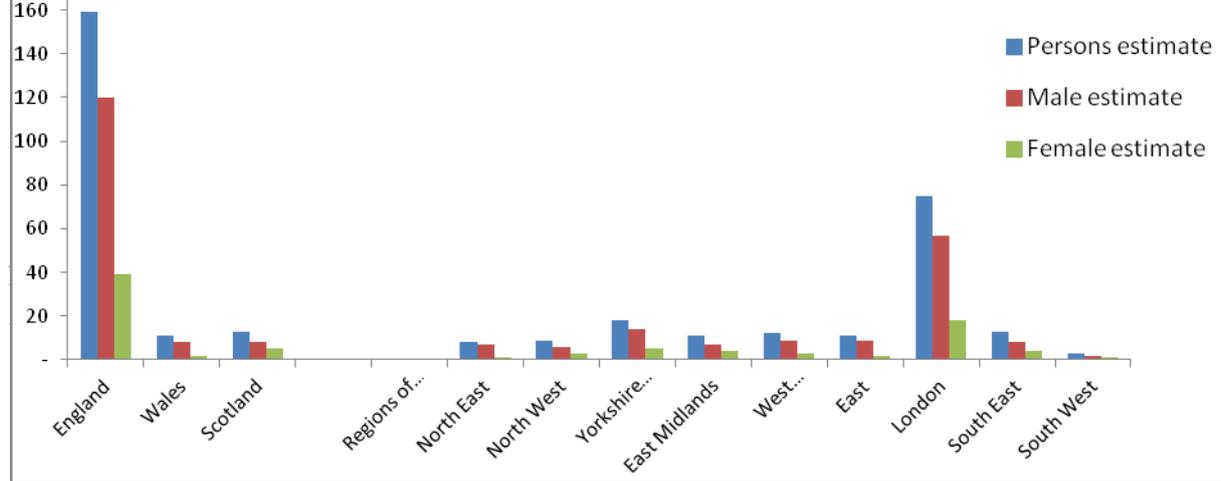
Source: ONS 2012

Over the last ten years there have been a significantly larger number of Indian males studying in the UK than females (although the table does not show how this percentage may have changed over time). The data reiterates that like other international students, most Indians studied in England, and of those most were based in London, followed by Yorkshire and the South-East. This should be viewed critically however, as the International Passenger Survey (IPS) asks respondents where they are planning to go on arrival – it is quite possible that initial destinations change.

Also of interest is where Indian students come from in India. The following table demonstrates in which cities Indian students apply for UK visas and also shows the number of application rejections:

Student & Tier 4 applications lodged in India by Visa Application Centre: Jan 2008 – June 2012

Application Location	Female Applications	Issued	Refused	Male Applications	Issued	Refused
Ahmedabad	9706	5588	3735	25852	14725	10058
Bangalore	2122	1828	276	4881	4219	605
Chandigarh	8466	4329	3329	16017	7971	6236
Chennai	3741	3147	528	17904	14707	2837
Cochin	6502	4634	1719	10957	8526	2265
Hyderabad	3470	2858	561	24417	19534	4386
Jalandhar	9470	4759	3859	18171	8501	7695
Kolkata	1499	1311	177	3507	2767	696
Mumbai	8124	6501	1523	22668	17273	5030
New Delhi	8847	6235	2077	23380	15676	6044
Pune	1137	974	149	3014	2398	589
Grand Total	**63084**	**42164**	**17933**	**170768**	**116297**	**46441**

Source: Freedom of information request 2012 (see Annex A)

This table illustrates a number of interesting trends. Broadly speaking, most applications are made in northern states, then cities towards the south and the west; fewest applications are made in eastern cities. The table also reiterates that there were more applications from males than females, though as before this data set does not tell us about trends over time. Ahmedabad is the city where most applications were made, followed by Hyderabad, New Delhi and Mumbai. Over the period 2008-2012, the most rejections occurred in Ahmedabad, Jalandhar, Chandigarh and New Delhi; all northern cities. This rejection rate is almost certainly linked to the suspension of all visa applications from India's northern states following a huge surge in 2010 (BBC 2010).

The preceding overview of data has illustrated a number of key points: the majority of international students in the UK are Asian, principally Chinese and Indian. Most study in England and there are more males than females. Focusing on Indians, they attend 'scientific' or business oriented courses, they are male, they are from the North or South-West of India and they study at post graduate level.

Changing conditions which led to the rapid expansion of student migration: an overview

I will argue that in the period between the late 1980s and early '90s a number of significant global developments set the stage for the huge growth in international students we have seen over the last decade. To begin with I will provide an overview of the changes in the UK's higher education system before relating these to other international trends.

For most of the 20th century, British universities were managed by the University Grants Committee; a small body of university professors which distributed public funds to universities while granting them virtual autonomy from the state. Meanwhile, local authorities managed their polytechnics (which provided less prestigious, practically oriented HE) with limited central government interference (Tapper & Salter 2012).

The development of what came to be called the 'new-right' ideology of accountability and managerealism in public services radically changed the system. Through the 1980's, and consolidated in 1992 under the *Further and Higher Education Act*, the state tore away the old polytechnics from local authorities, turning them into 'new' universities and gained greater control over the 'old' universities. The ideology of neo-liberalism was instilled into the education system: universities would be ranked on performance, research funding would be in line with government targets and a consumer (student) focused approach to study was adopted, meaning that career training and 'transferable' skills where emphasized (EUROPA 2011, Tapper & Salter 2012).

In 2010, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government began implementing further massive cuts to university teaching and research budgets (in a trend begun by the Conservatives in the 1980s and continued under the Labour government of the late 90s and 00s). The logic was that universities would be forced into a consumer oriented system; students would get what they paid for. A free market in education would be efficient, value for money and would streamline courses and improve quality (EUROPA 2011).

To understand how these changes in the UK's higher education system relate to the leap in numbers of Indian international students in its universities requires a broader view of both India's own recent history, as well as an interrogation of the phenomenon of internationalization in higher education on a global scale.

Setting the stage for student migration

Following the withdrawal of the British in 1947, Nehru developed a soviet-style planned economy. Although some have argued this was the only real option following colonialism, by the 1980's it was increasingly unpopular. Congress won the elections with Rao in 1992 and implemented a number of radical changes, 'liberalizing' and opening up India's economy. This proved economically successful and has seen a boom in India's GDP, one of its most spectacular growth areas being ICT. The rapid expansion of the economy has led to a growth in the middle class, yet some theorists have argued that this has shaken older certainties in the social order, increasing competition for social advancement. Consequently a leap in the demand for higher education and the acquisition of the skills needed for the new market has been entwined with increasing uncertainty around social reproduction. In a world where social status is no longer guaranteed, HE qualifications are seen as a reliable route to security (Mcleod 2002, Dumont 1980, Bayly 1999, Varma 2007, Holmström 1999).

However, India's higher education sector has been underfunded for decades and has simply been unable to respond to this massive leap in demand, especially at the most prestigious institutions. Although certain Indian universities are internationally respected, they are unable to accommodate the majority of applicants. This combination of factors has played an important role in propelling young Indian students abroad (Choudaha 2011, Baas 2010).

The internationalization of higher education

Internationalization is a term which refers to the various ways that HE institutes have responded to globalization; the increase in trade integration, movement of people, goods and culture. It includes a number of quintessentially modern activities: the massive growth in foreign students on campuses (particularly in Western countries), the spread of satellite campuses around the world, an increasingly 'international' focus in teaching, distance learning and the global recognition of degrees and diplomas.

In the post-colonial period, primarily Western universities began developing their international sectors, providing scholarships to citizens of former colonies. These were fairly limited, yet the goal was ostensibly to promote international friendship, peace and co-operation. This should be problematized however: it has been suggested that the growth in aid which went hand in hand with providing scholarships for overseas students was an attempt by certain global powers to foster goodwill in former colonies and combat communism (Baas 2010).

Various international bodies have contributed towards this phenomenon. The World Bank invests up to a quarter of its expenditure on education, and organizations such as OECD and UNESCO influence education systems globally. The European Erasmus program has increased co-operation among universities and the Bologna Process has led to an integrated education system in Europe. Publications such as The Times Higher Education guide have influenced institutions see themselves in competition internationally, and have resulted in students 'shopping around' for the best quality on a global scale (Van der Wende 2003, Brooks & Water 2011).

The emergence of the English language as an indispensable form of human capital in global business, science, education and culture has been a crucial factor of internationalization which has been accompanied by the proliferation of internationally recognized language certificates such as TOEIC and IELTS. The language benefits of studying in an English-speaking country are evident and this has certainly been a crucial factor in the UK's position as a destination country (Jackson 2010).

In a related development, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (1995) included international education as an exchangeable service commodity. Compared to other European countries where education has remained almost completely publicly funded, the UK's system was, by the mid 90's particularly well placed to take advantage of such openings. As universities faced funding cuts and developed a 'managerial' ideology, they began a concerted effort to attract foreign students to draw in profits. Meanwhile, India's newly liberalized economy, the explosion of industry, and especially ICT and services, resulted in rapid growth in demand that Indian universities could not accommodate. The Indian middle class looked to study abroad to improve their chances of in this new, 'liberalized' environment (Kreber 2009, Choudaha 2011).

Finding Indian students again

These pushes and pulls are deeply entwined with other global developments and can be seen as the essential macro influences on student migration. However, while individual actors play out their lives against this global backdrop, Massey et al. (1993) remind us that migrants do not simply respond to abstract global conditions, but negotiate local, familial and relational contexts. Therefore their behavior needs also to be understood on an individual scale.

Studies on international students have illustrated the importance of the family in study abroad, and have shown that in less economically developed countries, the urban middle class family plays a significant role in influencing the decision of students to migrate. Coming from an educated family, knowing people who have already lived abroad, and a belief in the essential value of overseas study and language learning influence the decision to migrate, illustrating that study abroad is not a decision taken in response to 'global forces', but is often attached to family and social expectations (Pimpa 2005).

Further, specific regional developments must be taken into consideration – it may be hypothesized that the state of the local economy may influence a student's choices in where and what to study abroad. For instance, students coming from Indian cities with a big IT sector such as Bangalore may be influenced to study a Computer Science course, while students from a region with a developed tourism sector such as Goa may be more likely to study Hospitality. There is currently no research available to test this hypothesis, however.

The study of transnational networks (the ties and bonds between people which permit the transfer of people and capital) has only been very lightly applied to international students. Bass' (2010) study on Indian students in Australia does reflect on networks, but concludes that they are not of fundamental importance. Students often had acquaintances in Australia whom they would initially contact, perhaps to be picked up from the airport or find temporary housing. However, rather than forming a strong community of people and information flowing back and forth as traditionally described in network theory (Faist 2000), Indian students would often loose these initial contacts in what was a far more fluid and individual process.

Baas (2010) instead develops his own concepts of *end-points*, *in-betweeness* and *imagination* in the process of student migration. He argues that the Indian middle class has developed a culture of migration where it is normal, if not expected, for at least one member of the family to go abroad. This culture has evolved as a result of earlier migrations – most members of the Indian middle class already know someone who has lived abroad and made a success of themselves. The media also creates an idealized vision of 'abroad', thus young, middle class Indians have, through a variety of sources, developed the idea of an *imagined* life abroad as superior to that at home. Despite the massive growth in industry in India, which one might expect to hold these young people back, Baas found that they rarely even considered staying at home as a serious option.

This culture of migration has nurtured in many an idea of an *end-point* of transnationality. Although the Indian middle class now has the money to buy aeroplane tickets, the Indian passport continues to restrict their movement. Study abroad and the dream of eventually acquiring an Australian passport were steps on the road to their eventual goal as transnational individuals. He then further corroborates this by showing that becoming transnational is a process involving *in-betweeness*; not quite being where one wants. Students in his study had to readjust their expectations on arrival in Australia, on realizing it would not be as easy as originally planned. As they negotiate the new destination, with the constant goal in mind of becoming transnational, these individuals had to reevaluate their position in the world, as well as their tactics towards reaching the final goal.

Baas' work is significant as it illustrates the point that study abroad, at least for Indians in Australia, involves more than just a journey for the simple sake of studying, which the discourse around internationalization of education might suggest. Rather, at least for some Indian students, there is a much larger and more important goal than study: becoming a transnational individual who can gain access to advantages not only on return to India, nor just in Australia, but wherever in the world he or she wishes to be.

4. What the UK does to attract international students

The UK has developed its presence in the Indian education market in a number of innovative ways, perhaps the most pervasive being through the use of *consultancies*. These are agencies that work as middlemen between universities and students, which universities pay for providing a quota of students (including university admission). Examples of such agencies can be found widely on the internet (Altbach 2011).

UK universities also promote themselves through their own websites and most have an 'international' students section, often including country-specific details. These often include testimonials from former or current students, a guide to university life and country-relevant

information on application and requirements. These pages often include links to the university's in-country representatives (i.e. local consultancies).

The British Council (BC) has an important presence in India, and one of its central mandates is to promote UK higher education. Information can of course be found at BC offices, but perhaps the most important way it promotes UK universities is through numerous fairs held during the academic year in many Indian cities (The Hindu 2012, Education UK 2011). The BC is not the only organization that runs such fairs; different states have their own education fairs where individual universities and institutions from around the world provide details on their courses (see for instance www.lynchpinindia.com)

Taking this online, *www.edukvirtualexhibition.com* is an example of perhaps the newest development in this war for students. In these virtual fairs, participants can visit various 'stalls' from the comfort of their own home, speaking to university representatives in live chat.

The UK has also had to sell itself in relation to its main competitors, doing so by focusing on its longstanding reputation for quality and the age of its institutions compared to the 'young' universities of the US, Canada and Australia. Great Britain's place as the home of the English language is often stressed as were, until recently, the good options for post study work, a comparatively straightforward entry system, the strength of the pound and other cultural capital, such as a the UK's multicultural environment. Although student migration to the UK has always been sold as just a study option, while in Australia a student visa has sometimes been promoted as a means to settlement, the UK has in the past emphasised post-study work in England and Wales and the Fresh Talent scheme in Scotland with the implication of residency at the end (Baas 2010, Salt 2011).

Finally a number of scholarships are available for Indian students coming to the UK. It should be noted that although there are a handful of all-inclusive scholarships (fees, accommodation, flight tickets and living costs), and a few others offering reductions on fees, the vast majority of Indian students pay full fees. Notably, most scholarships in the UK are for post-graduate students.

Most recent are the comprehensive *Jubilee Scholarships 2012*, awarded to Indian Masters students in Management, Manufacturing, Science and Technology (British Council 2012). *Chevening Scholarships* are mainly for 1 year Masters Degrees and are intended for people who show they have the potential to be future world leaders (FCO 2012). Similarly, *Commonwealth Scholarships* are provided for up to 700, mainly Masters students from the Commonwealth, and also cover most costs (CSCUK 2012).

Many UK universities offer some sort of scholarship, mainly at Masters level, tailored specifically for certain countries. For instance, Kingston University offers £3300 for Indian Masters students and Cardiff University offers three full scholarships and some other less valuable grants. *The Gates Cambridge* scholarship provides highly competitive though full fee scholarships for post graduates at Cambridge, and *Rhodes Scholarships* at Oxford are also fairly comprehensive and are available for up to 83 post graduate international students annually. Finally, at Scottish universities, up to 200 international students receive an annual fund of £2000 (FCO 2012).

The UK is heavily involved in the Indian education market, with overseas campuses, exchange programs and the above mentioned study abroad fairs, it has developed many novel approaches to attracting Indian students. However, while British universities have in the last twenty years seen a huge increase of interaction with overseas students, very little research has so far been produced on this group and that which there is largely pertains to Chinese students. What follows is a small exploratory study which aims to shed light on Indian students' motivations for coming to the UK and their experiences of life and study here.

5. Methodology

The research was conducted over twelve days during August 2012 in Leeds and London. Data was collected through individual interviews with 11 participants: ten in person and one using Skype. Three of the interviews took place in London in cafés and over Skype, while those in Leeds were conducted in the respondents' homes. Most interviews took place in the afternoon or evening.

The research in Leeds took place while living with some of the participants for five days. While not producing standardized data, casual conversations and observations helped develop a richer picture of their experiences. The participants in London were introduced through a colleague and were contacted using Facebook. Those in Leeds were reached through snowball sampling from a 'gatekeeper' who had taken part in earlier research.

The interviews lasted between 12 minutes and one hour, averaging 25 minutes. An interview schedule was developed to produce a linear narrative of the migration process. The questions were fairly open and there was space for participants to elaborate their answers if they wished.

The interviews produced fairly rich data, although some problems arose. For one participant in particular, language limitations restricted expression (this participant was the only student from a rural background) and although confidentiality was assured, some were wary of discussing rule-breaking. There were issues relating to culture; since I am a white English middle class male it occasionally seemed that some participants were holding back more negative views out of politeness, or because they felt I would not understand. Finally there was some confusion relating to terminology, particularly around social class (see the section 'Caste' below).

About the participants

There were eleven participants, four female and seven male. They were aged between 22 and 33, with most being in their early twenties. Participants self-defined as between lower-middle and upper class. Most came from large cities (two from New Delhi, one from Lucknow, seven from Hyderabad) and had professional parents, often both of whom worked. One participant came from a village in Andhra Pradesh and his father was a wealthy agriculturalist. Most described themselves as Hindu, or Hindu but not practicing, and one as Muslim.

The students had arrived in the UK between September 2008 and March 2012, some had completed their studies, whilst others had only recently begun. All participants had completed a BA in India (and one in Cyprus) prior to coming to the UK and two had already completed Masters. Ten studied a Master's degree in England; two had also done some kind of diploma in addition. The only one who had not done a Masters had attended a 'bogus college' and quit after six months. Most participants studied 'technical' or economic subjects: Business Management, IT, Accounting etc.

Three studied at the London School of Economics (LSE); two attended Sunderland University's London campus then one went on to the University of Leeds; one went to the University of Bedfordshire and another at the 'bogus college' in London. Six went to Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU). LSE and the University of Leeds are regarded as prestigious institutes, the others less so.

Caste

Unfortunately the subject of caste was not really explored in this research. Participants were asked to self-define their social position, a query which led to some confusion. In order to explain what I meant by this question I gave examples of different social classes (working class, middle class etc.), leading participants to attach themselves to an economic class, but not illustrating other forms of Indian social stratification. However, based on discussions outside of the interviews it would appear that the respondents largely belonged to 'higher' castes. All names of participants have been changed for

anonymity, but most of those from Andhra Pradesh shared a caste name which is traditionally associated with nobility in that region.

Two types

As the research progressed it became clear that while all participants shared may common experiences, two distinct groups were emerging. Those at LSE were distinguished by a number of factors: they had all studied at the University of New Delhi, they had applied for their courses online, had all lived in university accommodation and none had worked at a part time job.

Analysis: Pre-departure

The results will be analyzed following the linear narrative that the interviews themselves followed.

In Baas' study on Indian students in Australia he found that many explained studying abroad by describing how 'everyone was always talking about it'. Parallel results were found in this research. Most respondents said friends were constantly discussing study abroad, or that people who had come back told them all about it. This phenomenon is perhaps best explained by Arjun:

> "First I came for a craze of foreign countries, like a foreign life and everything …and like studies as well, but to be honest I can say we got lots of universities in India, lots better universities than in England if I'm honest, but it's just a craze of foreign" (Arjun 28, Leeds, University of Bedfordshire)

This 'craze' may result from a variety of sources. Consultancies were reported to have advertised study abroad in lectures back home, while the apparent success stories of people who had 'made it' inspired others as did the representation of the West in the media. For some it was the feeling that all their friends were doing it so they also wanted to and for others the lack of university places at good quality institutions made them look abroad.

> "A couple of friends have studied over here and they are working good in my country [on return] so that inspired obviously to me to go" Ajeeta 23, Leeds, LMU

> LW: "Where did you get those ideas from?"

> "Though like films, friends talks, media" Arjun, 28, Leeds studied Luton

> "Some of my friends went to foreign country, USA, Australia, UK, so I followed them" Ashwin 22 Leeds, LMU

This illustrates that international study was not a response to just to one factor, but was inspired by a mixed set of impulses and desires. Often there did not seem to be a very specific reason for the journey, rather, students got caught up in this 'craze'.

Some, however, did have more specific aims. A couple had worked in India following their bachelors, and complained that a starting salary there was small, and that business structures were unfair:

> "There were too many politics [in the company], people who were working close with, and kind of 'buttering' the manager and all this stuff, they been promoted" Reddy 33, Leeds, LMU

For Reddy and others, the hope was that their previous work experience in India would lead to a good job in the UK, with better pay and working standards. The student route was the simplest way to this goal.

Also emphasized was the importance of international exposure and its value attached to it by employers – studying in a cosmopolitan environment would provide them with this.

> "…to get global exposure. I mean there are lots of good institutes in India, but you can't get that foreign exposure" Ranjita, 23, London, LSE

Awareness of India's position in the global economy formed a basis for calculations; experience in an international environment may provide better opportunities than just having worked in India.

Family was also an important factor and a number of students' parents had encouraged them to study abroad. All but two participants came from well-educated families where often both parents had professional careers. The expectation of family members to study abroad that Pimpa found in educated upper-class urban Thai families also appears in their Indian counterparts. However, family was never stressed as the decisive factor.

Where to go, what to do?

Having decided to study abroad, there was also a decision about where to go. The majority of participants had been interested in the UK as a first choice for a number of reasons. Those who went to LSE had already pinpointed specific UK universities based on their international reputations. For the rest, the UK was popular due to its straightforward visa process, for being smaller, safer and more manageable, as well as culturally interesting. Two had originally intended to study in the US due to its bigger economy and better opportunities, but the difficulty of applying put them off (the process involves a tough interview).

The LSE group all applied for their courses online, on LSE's website. The others went through consultancies. Altbach (2011) complains that these consultancies are run by salespeople – not mere academic advisors; they expressly sell universities. Institutions trust these consultancies to admit students and academic standards may be undermined if they let less able students through. That said, these consultancies appear to provide a useful function. For those who were less sure about what or where to study, the consultancy could offer more information. Some did express reservations that it is only lower quality universities that make use of them and commented that some of the students who come though consultancies are indeed not up to the intellectual mark:

"I have seen people (Indians) *in my university who have a third class degree…I've seen a guy who writes 'Kerala' … 'C-R-L-A' and he is a student, he is my classmate"* Mohammed, 33, London and Leeds, The University of Sunderland/University of Leeds

Nonetheless, consultancies were not perceived to be the problem: rather it was universities that should really be held accountable for scrutinizing applicant quality.

Besides one student who received a scholarship, funding came from bank loans or family sponsors. Therefore many accrued massive debts which were a primary reason to get a part time job.

Regarding the overall aims for the journey, all respondents initially planned to come and study, perhaps gain some work experience or earn to pay off debts then return home. Some simply intended to study and go back as soon as the course was over, while others wanted a particular work experience and others just planned to come and see whether they liked it and see what happened. Apart from the student who had also been to Cyprus whose goal was to work in international hotels, the rest intended to return to India sooner or later, and none had planned to use the student visa route as a means to settle permanently.

Settling in

Most respondents had some kind of contact in the UK - a friend or a relation who collected them from the airport and put them up for the first few nights. These contacts sometimes also organized accommodation and helped finding jobs. The importance of a social network is essential for most migrants (Faist 2000). It was through contacts with other Indian students, often from their own cities, that they were able to find jobs and accommodation.

> "My friends used to be living over here [now returned to India] they used to be in London, Wood Green, and they given me shelter for like fifteen days" Dillip, 24, London, Sheffield, Leeds, Studied bogus college South London

Nonetheless, due to the highly fluid nature of these networks, the turnover of people reduces the chance of forming particularly strong bonds or something like a settled community.

University Experience

In most cases the students were fairly happy with their university experience. Common observations were that courses were well structured; the independent thinking in study was appreciated and was favorably compared to the 'spoon feeding' of Indian courses. The practical style of teaching was also appreciated compared to the overly-theoretical teaching received previously.

> "Compared to my undergrad … I think the courses here are more structured and stick to the schedule a lot more…I think it's extremely well structured which makes it quite intense as well" Saanjh, 22, London, LSE

> "The course is very organized, the lecturers are very helpful and the university is very good – I like, I love the place" Mahir, 27, Leeds, LMU

There were a number of criticisms: it was often stated that Indian degrees are harder and dispense more actual knowledge, while UK courses are easy and cover things studied earlier:

"It's not better than India; what they told [taught] me is like my very earlier stage of studies like studies in my XII standard and my degree – I just thought I [was being] reminded all of them" Arjun 29, Leeds, Studied Luton

Another complaint was the lack of contact time - often only a few hours of actual teaching each week which was felt to be too little.

With regards to the lecturers there were mixed feelings. One or two reported to be highly impressed by their mastery of their subjects; others were content and felt they received support when needed. There were some complaints of very slow responses or even none at all to queries, and that some lecturers treated international students as less capable than their British counterparts:

> "They don't respond when we need help…and (for some students) when we're mailing them for ten, fifteen days it's hard…They also always had a slight degrading to international students – I don't know whether it's only confined to Asians or anyone other than English, but yeah I have seen a kind of degrading" Parnal, 22, Leeds, LMU

In terms of university life, there was a general feeling that getting to know local students was hard. A study by Qing (2009) suggests Chinese students also often struggle to socialize with British students; language and cultural barriers often prohibit interaction. However, it does not appear that the students in this sample made great efforts to integrate into local student life either- none joined student societies, and apart from those at LSE (who mainly spent time with Indians outside of lectures) they all moved into private accommodation with students from their region of India.

Life as an international student

More broadly, life as an international student was generally enjoyed. Although some experienced inevitable bouts of homesickness, the positives mainly outweighed the negatives. Almost all respondents stressed that they had become more independent, in terms of money, lifestyle and ambition and that their views on life and the world had developed.

> "I think I take a more broader view of things now than I used to when I was back in my country, and, er, definitely LSE has made me more ambitious in terms of what I want and er, has made me realize there's a lot competition and you have to work hard" Sheetal 22, London, LSE

Others stressed the benefits of a cosmopolitan environment and the orderliness of the country was also appreciated. The locals were also generally regarded as friendly and open minded. Experiences of racism were mentioned by one respondent, although he qualified that this was a tiny minority. However, my profile as a white English male could mean other negative opinions were withheld.

It was also commented that it was very hard to find professional work – only one had actually found a job in a corporate environment and this was with a firm he had worked with previously in India. The difficulty of finding work could be attributed to various causes – the huge level of competition, the recession, national bias in recruitment and the fact that sponsoring visa renewals makes it less attractive for employers to take on international students.

Working in the grey area

None of the participants had worked illegally, but said they knew many people who had. Illegal work was found in Asian shops or Indian restaurants where long shifts below the minimum wage were the norm. The advantage of this kind of work is its unregulated nature - no one could know you were working over the limit of 20 hours per week. It is generally considered unfavorable and would only be taken as a last resort.

Besides illegal work, doing too many hours was seen as completely normal; it appears that most employers turn a blind eye to the 20 hour limit. Paying off debts and being able to live relatively comfortably were cited as the principal reasons for breaking the work rules.

> "It is 99.99%, they work over twenty…and they work because they want to get rid of the expenses, because if you only work twenty hours…we will not be saving up any money … it's really not possible … on twenty hours they get 500 to 550 quid, so they spend 250 for their living, their food, the remaining 100 for the transport, they need 20-30 for their telephone. Then how you pay for your loan?" Reddy 33, London, Leeds, University of Sunderland

Thus working over the legal limit was regarded as a necessary evil – students can live on 20 hours, but if they wish to settle their debts back home, it is only realistic to bend the rules.

UKBA

Despite the frequently changing rules, there was a surprisingly uncritical attitude towards the border system. Most had fairly positive, straightforward experiences with initial application. The general perception was that as long as you filled in the forms correctly and followed the rules on the website you would be fine. There were some criticisms that it is too strict: sometimes an application form is rejected because of the tiniest error.

The least satisfied were those who had attempted to renew their visas – just the process of applying is expensive and can take months to receive a response. It was argued that if you pay high costs for a service you should receive prompt replies, and the waiting means that one is in a state of limbo, not knowing if you can stay or go. The constant changes in rules were also seen as confusing:

> "People like me who studied, they should at least give us a time, I know they give us the two years time, but all of this and they changed the rules, you know (now) you have to get the £35K then only they can extend the visa; that's not fair – you know from starting off the job you can't get £35K straight away" Ajeeta, 22, Leeds, LMU

Almost no graduate jobs, especially outside of London, will offer such a huge salary, giving Indian graduates little option but to return once their visas terminate.

The student who had attended the bogus college was the most critical however, arguing that the UKBA appears to wait until a student has broken the rules before letting them know what the rules are. In his case this led to detention – they said they had sent him a warning letter by recorded delivery which he claimed he never received, thus was unaware until the day he was arrested.

Plans and change

Living in a new environment unsurprisingly affected most of the students. An experience shared by all was the feeling of becoming more independent:

> "It has changed me a lot…I was not like independent in my country; I was fully dependent on my father – if ever I needed something my father used to get me. Here, I learnt pretty well like things, like have to do everything myself, like cooking like things. I was very independent over here" Ajeeta 22, Leeds LMU

Some students said they had not really changed at all, while others regarded their core personality as the same, but had experienced changes in ambition (such as considering further study or further travel), world view and lifestyle. One student did experience a fundamental personality change:

> "Back India we have a big class system…and the way we see poorer people is completely different, but after coming here, what I personally think we are all human beings, everyone is same it doesn't matter about money rich or poor" Arjun 28, Leeds, studied Luton

For Arjun, coming from a high caste position but working in low skilled jobs in the UK was initially an unpleasant shock, but eventually led to a change in his views on equality.

Future

There were also mixed responses regarding their plans. Most had originally intended to come, study, work a bit then leave and for most these initial plans remained basically the same. One had a guaranteed job in the family business as soon as she returned home, so this had always been her goal and she stuck to it. Another had worked for a firm in India which also had a branch in London and he had eventually ended up working there as to plan.

Sometimes plans changed according to experience: Parnal found living abroad dull, so rather than working post-study as planned, she would now go home as soon as the course finished. In contrast, were those who really came to love life in the UK and wanted to stay much longer. This was the case with Ajeeta. However, the new visa rules meant she would have to return sooner than she would have liked. Arjun felt a sense of ambivalence: although he liked the UK, and was looking into ways of staying longer, he also worried that his job as a convenience store manager was not really enough, and wondered if he had he stayed in India he might be doing better in life.

Saanjh was also content, and did consider staying longer, nonetheless, despite having a good job, considered his plans only pushed back:

> "Having been international, I'm quite sure I wouldn't want to be completely grounded at home and I'd want to have the sort of flexibility to move around
>
> LW: So have you ever thought about the possibility of staying in the UK permanently?
>
> Um, the thought keeps coming up, but so far I'm quite sure I don't want to be here for a long time…so the 4-5 years might as well become 9-10 years but it won't be more than that" Saanjh, 22, London, LSE

Thus although for some, plans had changed or been pushed back, only one or two had really considered permanent residency in the UK and for various reasons this probably wouldn't happen anyway. The rest all intended to return to India at some point. This seems to corroborate the argument that students should not be considered as immigrants due to their more temporary status.

Summary of findings

A number of significant trends emerge from this research. First, the main reasons for study abroad revolve around what has been described as a 'craze'. This is undoubtedly linked to the internationalization of higher education. The role played by British universities in advertising is surely

significant, equally important is India's growing economy and its development as a major player on the world stage which has led employers to value internationally trained graduates. There is also the significant factor of limited places at high quality Indian institutions and the attraction of higher wages and standards of living which Indian students imagine abroad. Also, with its new wealth, the Indian middle class desires to travel.

This 'craze' may also be couched in relation to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of capital. According to Bourdieu, social structures are based upon access to forms of *capital* in a society, by which the most dominant social groups preserve and protect access to their capital in competition with less dominant classes. Capital may take on a variety of forms depending on the value system of a society, but most commonly is depicted as economic capital (simply stated, dominant groups usually have more money), human capital (skills, knowledge, education), social capital (relationships with people in dominant positions; *it's not what you know but who you know*) and cultural capital (knowledge and practice of different, 'desirable' cultural/art forms, such as appreciation of fine wine or classical music).

The application of Bourdieu's concepts may help throw a light on this 'craze'. As has been shown, following liberalization India's economy is much more open to change, thus older social certainties have been shaken. For the Indian middle class, study abroad can be seen as a way of acquiring certain forms of capital in a bid to reinvest this on return to India and maintain or improve their social status. Study abroad provides numerous types of capital: in terms of human capital, a degree from a well-respected foreign university will give the student an advantage in the job market over someone who has only studied in India, as will the fact of having improved their English language. Similarly, the cultural capital of having lived in a 'developed' country and of having international experience and *savoir-faire* gives the holder an edge. If the gamble pays off, the student will have gained various forms of capital and may well improve their life chances.

Other important trends also emerged. Although there are some scholarships available, most Indian students are forced to take out a loan of some sort, usually leaving them in huge debt. This is the principal reason that many get part-time jobs and why many feel they have no option but to flaunt the rules governing working hours.

Living abroad was generally felt to be a positive experience, though some experienced boredom or disappointment. Most said they would recommend study abroad in the UK and would do it again, but qualified that they would find out more about their universities in advance.

Universities were generally regarded as satisfactory, although the terrible experiences of the student at the 'bogus college' seem to reaffirm the government's choice to close them down. Apart from LSE, there seem to be some problems regarding student support, although different students at the same university reported contradictory experiences. Courses were generally regarded as too easy and little new knowledge was transmitted.

Finally, although some were very pleased with their experiences of the UK, it does not seem that any seriously considered staying in the UK permanently, preferring to return home sooner or later. These students were all from comfortable, middle class backgrounds and they come from a country with many exciting work opportunities. They are not poor migrant labourers with families dependent on remittances so treating them as such appears uninformed.

6. Recent changes in immigration policies in the UK

Immigration was a serious debate in the 2010 general elections in the UK, and the conservative party promised that if elected they would to reduce it. The Conservative-led Coalition did win power and in 2010 published a paper on the issue of student immigration. While stressing that overseas students were valuable for the economy, the report expressed concern that there were too many bogus colleges and fake students (UKBA 2010). As a solution it recommended, among other things, raising language

requirements, limiting family members and restricting the number of hours students can work. In April 2012 the government went another step by cutting the popular post-study work (PSW) option which let students stay in the UK for two years to gain work experience or pay off debts (IBN 2012).

Various bodies responded angrily to these proposals, criticizing, among other things, the data used and the consequences of their implementation. Universities UK (2011) argued that they would make the UK less attractive for international students in an increasingly competitive market. A crucial argument was that student migrants contributed massively to the UK economy in fees and living expenses – reducing their numbers in a time of recession was economically unsound.

The damage to the reputation of the UK as a study destination could be hard to undo, and the damage to universities, many of whose courses were heavily funded by international students could be colossal. The UK earned £14.1 billion from international students in 2008/09 (British Council 2011) and international education was one of its largest new export industries. The British Council report pointed to the examples of Australia and the USA who, after visa restrictions intended to curb or control 'fake' students lost billions of dollars of income. Sending out an anti-student message was bound to have the same effect, it was argued. Subsequent visa application statistics appear to suggest these predictions were correct (Kelly 2012, ONS 2012).

A second major criticism was that the data used to measure student immigration was flawed. The government used statistics from the International Passenger Survey which is designed to produce data on business and tourism. The data is questionable in terms of representativeness and there are doubts about whether the format of the survey produces valid data on students in particular (Binder 2011, Universities UK 2011). The Universities UK report further contended even counting students as migrants - their stay in the UK is relatively short and they come principally to study, not work or settle – an argument basically supported by the research in this report.

The Coalition has nonetheless continued on the route towards reducing student migration. However, they have recognized the importance of these students and have launched a 'global charm offensive' to demonstrate that the UK is still open for business for the 'best and brightest' students.

In a recent development, the UKBA has stated that it will begin interviewing student visa candidates in order to reduce the number of so-called bogus students. Following a trial period in 2011 which saw around one fifth of the interviewees rejected (largely based on inability to speak English at the required level), the UKBA now plans to interview up to 14,000 students in the coming year, particularly those whom they suspect of fraud in their applications (UKBA 2012). It is not clear how many of these students will be Indian, although due to the high number of Indian students coming to the UK it is likely many will be interviewed.

Despite the fears of UK universities, it looks likely that student migration will continue to rise and a 2012 report by the British Council suggests that:

> "The UK will take a bigger share of the growth in overseas students than the US with almost 30,000 more enrolments per year by 2020. One of the reasons for this is that the biggest growth in overseas students will come from India, which still has strong cultural connections with the UK. There are also significant opportunities to make money by creating campuses overseas like the University of Nottingham has done" (Sharma 2012).

The Indian middle class is expected to continue growing and the demand for higher education will continue to push Indian students abroad. UK institutions are continuously innovating and the creation of international campuses will continue to boost this sector of the economy. Furthermore there have also been reports that since the new rules have become clear there has been a resurgence of interest in UK universities in India (Sharma 2012).

The debate around student migration is a complicated one. The coalition government could be criticised for being anti-immigration with the notions of xenophobia this often entails. Statements by Damian Green MP, often represent a discourse whereby 'good' students, the "brightest and the best"

are solicited to keep coming to the UK. However, those students that have been deemed as 'bogus' are depicted in highly negative terms. The discourse speaks of "weeding out" with all the connotations this implies, and appears to depict certain students as maliciously setting out to "abuse" Britain: "if you lie on your application form or try to hide your true motivation for coming to the UK then you will be found out and refused a visa" (UKBA 2012).

Nonetheless, UK universities can also be charged with treating international students as 'cash cows'; their desire to promote this area of funding could be seen as morally questionable too. The complexity of this matter is also confounded by the lack of quantitative or qualitative data on this population.

7. Policy recommendations: attracting more students

The UK is particularly well placed to continue attracting Indian students to its educational market. The trouble is that it is currently giving out the message that it does not want them, or only wants them to study (and pay premium fees) for the duration of their course.

This research suggests the UK was right in closing certain educational institutions, the so called 'bogus colleges'; although the way this was done, leaving many student with nowhere to go was deeply problematic. Also, making sure it is only genuine students that come to the UK is another worthwhile policy – it does appear that there are a number of fake students who do not seriously come for study. This group often has an unpleasant experience anyway; often forced into illegal work and exploited by bogus colleges, it seems reasonable to prevent them from coming. Furthermore, the introduction of interviews to check students' English levels also appears to be a step in the right direction, not only for maintaining academic standards, but also for reducing the negative experiences and money wasted by those for whom study abroad may not be the best option.

A recent policy which seems much less appropriate is the closing of the Post Study Work (PSW) route in England and Wales and the Fresh Talent Scotland Scheme. If the UK seriously hopes to continue attracting students, while expecting them to pay premium up front rates, they will have to continue taking out astronomical loans in India. Permitting two years of work following graduation seems a reasonable way to allow students to pay off these loans, and a reasonable time to gain the international exposure so many desire. As this research suggests, few Indian students appear to consider staying in the UK long term, thus implementing policies intended to reduce international students seems an ill-informed means to reducing permanent settlers.

It is an unfortunate phenomenon that the UK seems to be so opposed to immigration. A small nation with an aging population and an economy in crisis should certainly not turn in on itself, and sending out the message that migrants are not welcome will do little to help attract new talent to invigorate its economy. Student migrants are skilled migrants and bring huge sums of money to the country, not only in fees but in spending in the places where they reside. Much has already been said on the benefits these students bring to the UK and I will not repeat it here (Universities UK 2011, British Council 2011).

A radical suggestion might be to actually promote the benefits of immigration to the British public – the NHS is built on foreign labour, as are millions of public and private services, the increase of trade and fulfillment of skills shortages, notwithstanding the cultural enrichment migrants bring, could be emphasized. Students are highly skilled, and although they may only be short term residents, could, if permitted, play an important role in the future economy. It goes without saying that historically the UK has played an important role in globalization and has for centuries been entwined with and catalyzed international migrations (to the Americas and Australasia, the slave trade, colonialism and indentured labour, partition of India and solicited post WWII migration to Britain to name a few examples). This state of affairs is likely to increase globally, and attempting to arrest it is probably pointless and potentially damaging.

Rather than attempting to cut down on all students (apart from the so-called 'brightest and best'), the UK could develop different policies which might reduce the fake students. Cutting out bogus colleges is a good start, but it has been argued that removing PSW is potentially a damaging course of action. Instead, this research supports the idea that PSW should be reopened, and that the rules should be more relaxed for visa renewals, reducing current annual wage requirements of graduates to something more reasonable like £20K. Although entering into wider debates around UK immigration and the current economic recession is not in the remit of this paper, it would not be hard to establish an argument illustrating the benefits student migrants bring in a time of recession, while not being the 'bad' sort of permanent, low skilled migrant the UK seems so opposed to.

This study has shown that the majority of British universities use consultancies in India to engage a quota of students. Altbach (2011) has been shown to be correct in his assessment that many of these consultancies are essentially salespeople, and entrusting them with admissions processes is unhelpful. This market could be better regulated by only entrusting admissions to specific, quality assured consultancies. An additional measure would be for an independent body, such as the BC to be the centre for all admissions from India. This would not mean cancelling out consultancies, but it would perhaps be wise to not leave profit seeking businesses with the complete responsibility of admitting students to universities.

While reducing fees in general would be a very obvious way the UK could attract more students, this seems an unlikely policy for any UK government at present. What could be done would be to increase the availability and awareness of scholarships, perhaps for more students of limited means.

Best practice and how Europe can gain from the internationalization

UK universities currently provide a generally good example of attracting students from India, and other European countries could perhaps follow some of the UK's methods if they wish to internationalize too.

Perhaps the major problem for European universities is 'brand awareness'. The students in this study only expressed any interest in the UK, Australia and the US, and one or two mentioned Canada and New Zealand. This suggests Indian students are fairly unaware of opportunities on the continent.

Language issues are probably the largest reason Indians do not consider mainland Europe. However, many European universities have courses exclusively in English and in a number of countries large swathes of the population, especially the young, speak a very good standard of English. For those countries where it is less prevalent in day to day life, such as France or Spain, yet where courses at some private universities are in English, the advantages of learning these countries' languages could also be emphasized.

European universities could reproduce many of the methods the UK and its primary competitors use: education fairs, advertising, consultancies etc., while also emphasizing their own cultural capital (safe, cosmopolitan, learn other international languages). Opening satellite schools in India might be another option. Finally, the relatively cheap costs of most European public universities compared to the UK and its competitors could be a strong selling point.

Broader policy recommendations drawn from the research

One problem the UK faces in general is having a good idea of exactly how many international students are actually in the country. This is obviously a complex issue and measuring it is highly problematic. That said, it is surprising that there is such disagreement in the statistics. It might be suggested that a new method of measurement be implemented, a survey of both in and out-going visitors. This would involve a large overhaul of the current system, but would provide better statistics on which to base policy, compared to the current data which is unreliable.

It might also be suggested that anyone on a student visa should receive some kind of 'welcome' booklet, explaining certain rules and laws for students. Although most information is displayed on the UKBA website, a short introduction to life in the UK as a student could be of benefit, especially for those who were less aware of the rules.

It may be argued that the above is not the UKBA's mandate, in which case it should certainly be seen as the responsibility of universities to provide support for new students. Although many universities already do this, it should be made compulsory to provide induction lectures and perhaps to have international student support offices where information on work and living could be found. If universities were charged with finding these students jobs, they might be less likely to turn to illegal and exploitative work.

In a related suggestion, universities could probably do more to get international students involved in student life. Giving special encouragement to join societies may be worthwhile, as this group are probably most reticent to join, yet may also benefit greatly. Indian students in this research appeared to feel quite out of touch with local students and campus life, which seems to be a missed opportunity for all.

In terms of improving the study experience, depending on the dynamics of the course, international students could be encouraged further to share insights from their own countries in order to make courses more international for both local and foreign students (e.g. ask Indian students in Business classes to provide short talks on organization structures in their country). Making sure lecturers respond to emails in a timely manner is obviously essential across the board, yet perhaps training tutors to be more culturally aware of international students and their educational cultures would make them more sensitive to the needs of this group, and to treat them less as a group of foreigners and more individually.

8. Discussion of the brain drain and advantages for India

It will be argued that the phenomenon of brain drain is not really applicable to Indian students in the UK. Rather, the phenomenon of 'brain circulation', where skilled migrants spend shorter periods of time abroad, gaining human capital and experience which they apply in their country on return is more appropriate.

As has been said, all participants intended to return to India sooner or later, and the skills and training acquired during the time abroad would, for most, be implemented there. While some actually felt they had learnt very little new knowledge on their courses, most appreciated the way they were encouraged to think independently and creatively. As mere speculation, one might hypothesize that this could lead to them providing more innovative solutions to problems in the workplace than their Indian-trained colleagues.

More concretely, however, the international exposure will certainly help these students see the 'bigger picture' on return, and this may lead many to implement changes and new ideas. Furthermore, the links built with locals may lead to increased trade between India and the UK, and for scholars, the network of alumni which they join could provide many interesting opportunities for universities in India and elsewhere.

For the individuals themselves, studying abroad is a gamble – they pay huge sums of money and take big risks. The calculation being that the capital they acquire will pay off with a better job on return. Future studies could explore whether this works out in reality. Nonetheless, a study by Balá and Williams (2004) on returned Slovak students who had attended UK universities suggests the experience abroad does result in improved economic odds for the student. Nonetheless, some students in this study really were concerned that the trip may have been an expensive mistake and that they would be doing better had they stayed in India.

Further research is needed on how study abroad actually affects India's economy, but it may be hypothesized that it could potentially be beneficial to India to support students going abroad. It could do so by providing more scholarships and regulating consultancies as well as ensuring UK universities provide proper support for Indian students there. While local colleges and universities are underfunded and poor quality, this may for the short term be a beneficial move.

However, these students take a lot of money with them when they leave the country, and the emergence of private international universities on India's soil may undermine its own educational sovereignty and traditions. Investment and improving standards in its own education systems will be essential for India in the longer term, especially as its economy, service sector and middle class keep growing.

9. Concluding remarks

This report has provided an overview of the emergence of internationalization and an exploration of the reasons for the growth in numbers of Indian students in the UK. Having placed individual migrants in this larger frame, it has explored their experiences and attempted to relate these to wider events and theory. Finally it has attempted to produce a number of suggested policy recommendations inspired by the results of a small scale piece of anthropological research.

While further research would be necessary to truly understand the experiences of this significant migrant group, a number of key themes emerged:

Much has been written about how Indian students go abroad in response to macro factors, such as the lack of places at Indian universities, globalisation and the drive for funding in certain Western countries; however there is very little representation of their voices in the literature. This research has shown that while the above is certainly the backdrop for this form of migration, Indian middle class students go abroad for rather different, personal reasons. Above all, the emergence of a 'craze' of study abroad is one of the most important reasons for travel.

A second important theme is that while the experience of living in the UK was largely viewed positively, there remain some serious problems. First, there were mentions of racism and of tutors treating Indians with less respect than local students. Second, in most universities there was limited student support and a failure to integrate Indian students, both on the students' and the universities' parts. Third, while the work situation is naturally difficult during an economic downturn, there appeared to be remarkably few opportunities for Indian students post-study. It is surprising that highly skilled and educated polyglots with international exposure have such trouble finding work in the UK. This seems a wasted opportunity, and universities and employers could perhaps do more to help these students get jobs or internships post-study, taking more responsibility of them.

Finally, this research has produced data which provides both support and criticism for the government's stance towards international students. It has been shown that shutting down low quality colleges and only accepting 'better' applicants is probably beneficial for all. In contrast, the closure of the PSW schemes has been shown to be highly problematic. Not only is it unfair for students who wish to pay off debts and who come to the UK largely to gain international exposure, it has been shown to be based on unsound thinking. No student in this research seriously considered staying in the UK forever, which is what the closure of PSW was intended to stop. Thus there is little basis for doing so. As long as the UK makes sure students leave at the end of their PSW, there seems to be minimal problems with letting them stay for a certain period at least.

As the experiences of other countries have shown, students are put off by reports of increasingly strict rules and current policies are giving Indian students less and less reasons to come here. This may abate certain immigration fears in the UK, but the longer term effects may be less attractive.

Acknowledgements

Annex A: Response to Freedom of Information Request

Freedom of Information Act Policy Team
Customer Services and Improvement Directorate
United Kingdom Border Agency
Lunar House
40 Wellesley Road
12 Floor, Long Corridor
Croydon CR9 2BY
len_williams894@hotmail.co.uk
Web www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
Date 21 September 2012
Ref 24030

Dear Mr Williams,

Thank you for your request of the 28/08. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I have listed your request for reference.

1. Which regions of India applications for student visas come from, as well as gender of the applicants

2. How many applications are turned down and why, and how many are accepted

3. Where Indian students live in the UK, and what they study, as well as how long they stay in the country

4. am also interested in criminality in this group; how many visa overstays are there estimated to be, how many Indian students attend 'bogus' colleges, where these colleges are, is there an estimate of illegal work by this group?

Question 1 and 2

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) does not hold centrally the reason for refusal which can only be located by searching individual applications. Unfortunately due to the number of records that would need to be searched it is not possible to gather the information; moreover, it would exceed the current fee threshold to do so. I have provided further on the fee threshold in Annex a below. However, I have provided the remaining information you have requested in Annex b.

Questions 3 and 4

UKBA does not centrally record this information and any held information would be stored within individual records which would exceed the fee threshold to locate and collate.

I hope this is of help to you. If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference 24030. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor,
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
email: info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

As part of any internal review, our handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner, as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Feakins,

Freedom of Information Act Policy Team

Annex a

As part of the Home Office, the UK Border Agency is not obliged under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to comply with any information request where the estimated costs involved in supplying the information exceed the £600 cost limit. I regret that we cannot supply you with the information that you have asked for, as to comply with your request would exceed this cost limit. This limit applies to all central Government Departments and is based on work being carried out by one member of staff at a rate of £25 per hour, which equates to 3½ days work per request. The costs involved include locating and retrieving information you requested, and preparing our response to you. They do not include considering whether any information is exempt from disclosure, overheads such as heating or lighting, or disbursements such as photocopying or postage.

However, if you were to refine your request further so that it falls under the £600 cost limit, we will be pleased to consider it further. Although, on this occasion I am unable to suggest how you could refine your request.

Should you wish to refine your request, so that we can provide you with answers to your questions within the £600 cost limit, please write back to me at the above address.

I should also point out that if you were to break your original request down into a series of smaller applications, we might, depending on the circumstances of the case, decline to answer if the aggregated cost of complying would exceed £600.

Source: **TROJAN**
Run date: **05/09/2012**

This data is based on management information and is for internal use only. Any figures quoted are provisional.

Student & Tier 4 Main Applicants
Applications Lodged in India by Visa Application Centre
Applications Received between January 2008 and June 2012

Application _Location	Female			Male		
	Applications	Issued	Refused	Applications	Issued	Refused
Ahmedabad	9706	5588	3735	25852	14725	10058
Bangalore	2122	1828	276	4881	4219	605
Chandigarh	8466	4329	3329	16017	7971	6236
Chennai	3741	3147	528	17904	14707	2837
Cochin	6502	4634	1719	10957	8526	2265
Hyderabad	3470	2858	561	24417	19534	4386
Jalandhar	9470	4759	3859	18171	8501	7695
Kolkata	1499	1311	177	3507	2767	696
Mumbai	8124	6501	1523	22668	17273	5030
New Delhi	8847	6235	2077	23380	15676	6044
Pune	1137	974	149	3014	2398	589
Grand Total	63084	42164	17933	170768	116297	46441

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