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Working Paper 2: Student cross-border mobility within the UK

A summary of research findings

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Introduction

This literature review focuses on summarising research findings in order to help inform our understanding of why students within the UK cross internal borders for the purpose of higher education study. As a working paper that is the first phase of a longer project, it is limited to summarising existing research. It complements the detailed analysis of 2011-12 and 2012-13 student data being carried out by David Raffe and Linda Croxford in the context of the ESRC Fellowship *Higher education in Scotland, the devolution settlement and the referendum on independence* held by the Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and Diversity (CREID) – the first of their companion working papers analyses 2011 entrants (Croxford and Raffe, 2014b). It also complements their earlier project within the Centre for Education Sociology on *Changing transitions to a differentiated higher education system* funded by the Nuffield Foundation, which included examination of cross-border flows for the period 1996 to 2010. Publications from this latter project can be found at: <http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/research/DIFFHE/publications.html>.

Scope

This summary includes findings from studies carried out since the mid-1990s which used secondary data analysis, research surveys, and qualitative research to explore the characteristics, motivations and destinations of students who cross borders to study within the UK.

Some of these studies provide findings and propositions for students from the whole of the UK or from more than one country, others in relation to specific domiciles. This summary includes findings from these studies specific to cross-border movement, but also incorporates findings on movement for the purpose of studying within the UK which are not specific to crossing borders. The information is organised in relation to the country of domicile of students, that is the country in the UK of which a student was habitually resident before entering higher education. A summary of key points is followed by the detailed overview, which focuses first on findings on UK-wide evidence, that is findings that are relevant to students from across all or more than one UK domicile; this is followed by sections summarising research evidence specific to students from each country domicile. A section on some evidence relevant to Republic of Ireland domiciled students is also included, as is a brief overview of research findings on UK students who study whole degrees overseas, for additional context.

Summary points

- There is robust analysis available on cross-border student mobility data up until 2011 entry. The border between England and Wales is relatively porous and movement between these countries is the most common, while there is limited movement of students between England and Scotland, and between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. More students apply to courses in another UK country than actually enter them and applications within the home country are more likely to result in entry, suggesting

that many applications to institutions in another country are aspirational or fall-back options.

- In general terms, mobile students are more likely to have higher tariff qualifications, be young, be from areas with high HE participation or from families with HE experience, be from families in the professional and managerial class, and move to study at higher tariff institutions. However this applies more to movement between England and Scotland, with a more mixed picture of mobility from Wales and Northern Ireland to England, and from Northern Ireland to Scotland.
- Students who cross borders to study are more likely to be white if they move from England to another UK country, but more likely to be from a visible ethnic minority group if they move from Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland to England. The religious affiliation of mobile students has only been studied for Northern Ireland, and has been shown to be associated with mobility, in relation also to social class.
- A range of information on destinations and characteristics of mobile students, alongside a more limited number of studies on motivation for cross-border movement, have identified a range of possible explanations for cross-border mobility and immobility. Identifying which are the most significant from the range of studies is however problematic, but based on the extent and quality of evidence the following may be the most important:
 - Seeking to study at a higher tariff institution, a lack of domestic HE supply overall (in the case of Northern Ireland), or seeking to study selective or specialist courses;
 - Geographical proximity and accessibility of institutions, including distribution of HEIs in the home country, and accessibility of cross-border institutions (for those living close to borders);
 - Fees and student support arrangements can have some impact on whether to stay in the home country or move, but not consistently so nor in all the ways that might be logically predicted;
 - A desire, more common among more traditional or advantaged students, to study some distance from home, and the financial and cultural resources to enable this.
- With regards to barriers to mobility, a range of studies have found that there is a greater likelihood of working class, first generation, and British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi students remaining at or close to the family home when studying, with a range of factors having been found to explain this, relating to costs of study and movement, the need for part-time work, family responsibilities, social ties, and family experience of HE, which are all therefore suggested factors in the broader issue of student immobility.
- In addition, there is some evidence that the extent of attachment to or identification with home or one's home country may be a factor in (im)mobility, as could perceptions of how well one might 'fit in' in another part of the UK, which may be based in part on information gained from one's social networks. Application processes and access to

information on options and support before and during the application process have also been found to play a role.

- Less well evidenced but proposed is that the actual or perceived greater comparability or ease of transition from the school system and its qualifications to the HE system in the home country discourages cross-border mobility.
- A wide range of factors – institutional, policy-related, socio-demographic, geographical, financial, cultural and psychological – have therefore been found to play a role in student cross-border mobility and immobility, as has the potential for complex interactions between these. Areas that may be of interest for future research are summarised in the conclusion.

UK-wide findings

The overall picture on cross-border flows

Raffe and Croxford (2013) analysed higher education participation and cross-border movement between 1996 and 2010. Full details can be found in the range of publications produced for their Nuffield Foundation funded research, so only a summary of some of the points are included throughout the paper. It should be noted that as their study was based on the analysis of UCAS data, their findings relate to entrants to higher education institutions, and for the most part do not include higher education students who entered colleges. They found that the total number of entrants between 1996 and 2010 rose by 56% in England, 37% in Wales, 50% in Northern Ireland and 33% in Scotland (based on the domicile of students). English-domiciled students were highly likely throughout this period to enter an institution in England (94% did so in 1996 rising to 96% in 2010). Scottish-domiciled students were also highly likely to enter an institution in their country of domicile (92% in 1996 rising to 94% in 2010). The picture is more varied over time for Welsh and Northern Irish-domiciled students. Between 1996 and 2008, the proportion of Welsh-domiciled students studying in Wales rose from 54% to 70%, but then dropped to 65% in 2010. The rise and the subsequent fall could be partly explained by changes in student support and fee arrangements, although that does not provide an explanation for the increases in the earlier years of this period. The proportion of Northern Irish domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland increased from 56% in 1996 to 67% in 2000 and reached a high of 68% in 2004, “encouraged by the expansion of places in Northern Irish institutions and a by a decline in the competition for places from applicants in the Republic” (p120). Between 2004 and 2010 the proportion of Northern Irish students entering Northern Irish institutions varied around the 65-67% mark.

In terms of where mobile students go within the UK, the proportion of English-domiciled students who went to study in Wales was around 3% during this period, and to Scotland decreased from 2% to 1%. Almost all Scottish-domiciled students who entered an institution in the rest of the UK (RUK) went to England, but this proportion declined from 8% in 1996 to 5% in 2010, a period during which fee and student support differences appeared between the two countries. Almost all Welsh-domiciled students who left Wales went to England, but clearly this varied in line with changes in the proportion of Welsh students staying in Wales. In Northern Ireland, when the proportion of Northern Irish students staying in Northern Ireland increased it was at the expense of both England and Scotland. However by 2010, the

proportion going to England (25%) was once again similar to 1996 levels, whereas the proportion going to Scotland continued to decline, from 18% in 1996 to 8% in 2010 (Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

Overall, between 1996 and 2010 there was a decline in the proportion of applications and entrants from other UK countries at institutions in England, Wales and Scotland, but this mostly affected entrants to Scottish institutions. In England and Scotland the cross-border decline was matched by an increase in applicants and entrants from outside the UK. In Scotland for example by 2010, “non-UK countries accounted for about as many applications to Scottish institutions as other UK countries and for a considerably larger share of entries” (Raffe and Croxford, 2013, p122). Meanwhile the application and entry rates of UK students increased within countries. The growth in participation during this period was therefore achieved mainly within countries rather than across countries.

Detailed analysis of 2011-12 cross-border entrants can be found in Croxford and Raffe (2014b), and analysis on 2012-13 entrants will be published in due course.

Published UCAS data on applications and acceptances for 2012-13 and on applications and acceptances for 2013-14 provide an overview of cross-border movement following the introduction of the UK Government’s new fee regime, and the consequential fee regime changes in the devolved administrations, in 2012-13.

In 2012, the share of English applicants to courses in England was unchanged from 2011 (around 95%). Scottish applicants to Scottish institutions slightly increased (to around 96%), and slightly decreased to English institutions (to around 3%). Following year-on-year decreases, Northern Irish applicants to Northern Irish institutions increased by 5 percentage points in 2012. Applicants from Wales continued the recent trend of increasing applications to institutions outside Wales (mostly to England). Although not directly the same issue, but part of the wider picture on student movement, there was no increase in the proportion of young applicants who intended to live at home. This was unchanged for Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, but there was a slight decline for applicants from Wales continuing a recent trend for a greater proportion of applications to England (UCAS, 2012). However, when it came to acceptances for 18 and 19 year olds, there was a decline in those from England and Northern Ireland as well as Wales in intention to live at home, and a slight increase in Scotland, compared to 2011. Compared to 2010, there was a decline in all countries (Independent Commission on Fees, 2013a).

English applicants had no new financial incentives to study outside England in 2012, and there was a continued high rate choosing to study in England. The most likely new incentive to study in England may have been attempting to reduce living and travel costs by studying close to home. This does not appear to be the case although intention to live at home does not of course give the full picture on potential cost savings.

Scottish applicants had an additional incentive to study in Scotland, in terms of higher fees in 2012 compared to 2011 if they studied elsewhere in the UK. The already very high proportion of applicants to Scottish institutions did rise. A small proportion of applicants did however apply to study outside Scotland. Northern Irish applicants would have lower fees to

pay by studying in Northern Ireland compared to elsewhere in the UK than had been the case in 2011. The application rate for Northern Irish institutions from Northern Irish students did increase, against recent trend. Applicants from Wales, who would have been unaffected by fee changes, followed recent trends of an increased application rate to English institutions (UCAS, 2012).

These cross-border movements took place against the backdrop of changes in participation which arguably were due to the introduction effects of the fee and student support changes in 2012-13. In 2012-13 only English-domiciled entrants were unable to avoid paying an increased fee rate (albeit deferred payment in the form of a loan); while Northern Irish and Scottish entrants would only be subject to the increased fee rate if they studied outside their home country. The overall picture of applications and acceptances in 2012-13 was:

- English applications and acceptances both decreased, compared to 2011.
- Scottish and Northern Irish applications and acceptances both increased.
- Welsh applications slightly increased, but acceptances decreased.
- Fewer Northern Irish and Scottish applicants accepted places at English institutions.
- Welsh applications to, and acceptances to, English institutions increased.

The decrease in young full-time English-domiciled applicants did not continue in 2013-14. While the decrease in applications in 2012 has not been recovered, 2013 appears to show a return to the pre-2012 trends (UCAS, 2013a). While the acceptance *rate* did not increase in 2013, the number of acceptances across the UK reached record levels in 2013 due to the increased application rate, though this increased acceptance rate was not uniform across age groups, country of domicile or level of institutional tariff (UCAS, 2013b). In the year that previous fee changes have been introduced there were anticipatory increases in applications in the year before the change was introduced, then declines in applications in the year of introduction which bounced back to continue the previous trend the following year, which indicate an introduction effect of the policy change but not an effect of the fee levels themselves (Dearden et al, 2010; Thompson and Bekhradnia, 2012), and this appears to be the case again so far.

In terms of cross-border acceptances, the UCAS report on the 2013 Application Cycle (2013b) identifies that:

- While English institutions continued to be more likely to make offers to English-domiciled applicants than RUK applicants in 2013, that was not the case for Welsh and Scottish institutions which had similar offer rates for English and home country domiciled applicants.
- Welsh applicants continued to apply to English institutions at the same rate as 2012, which at the time had been the first increase since 2004.
- Northern Irish applicants have increased their entry rate to English institutions after the decrease in 2012, but the 2012 fall has not been reversed. There was a similar proportional increase of Northern Irish students to Northern Irish institutions as to English institutions.

- English applicants were more likely to be accepted to a Welsh institution in 2013 than 2012 - though this did not reverse the fall in acceptances in 2012 - but were slightly less likely to be accepted to a Scottish institution compared with 2012.

For more detailed analysis on participation following the recent fee changes, see the Independent Commission on Fees (2012, 2013a, 2013b).

It should be noted that there is an extensive research literature on higher education decision-making with regards to whether to apply to HE and if so what and where to study, but which does not directly address the issue of cross-border movement. Within that literature is evidence that suggests that while finance can be an area of concern for most potential HE students, and particularly so for those from lower income families, those from low HE participation areas or from families who do not have a history of HE participation, these concerns do not necessarily affect the decision whether or not to participate nor override all other considerations, at least at the point that HE is being considered as a realistic option. The impact of these concerns may though affect decisions about what and where to study (Callender and Jackson, 2008; Davies et al, 2008; Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; Holdsworth, 2009; Mangan et al, 2010; Moogan, 2011; Osborne, 2006). Financial issues are however only one of a range of factors in HE decision-making, which also include institutional, geographical, biographical and social factors, and the interactions between these.

Characteristics of mobile students

In terms of the socio-economic background of students, those from the middle class are the most likely, and those from the working class are the least likely, to apply to an institution in another country of the UK (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). Purcell et al (2006) also found that, based on graduates from five Scottish HEIs who graduated in 1999, non-Scottish graduates were much more likely to be from higher social class backgrounds, to have attended an independent school and a pre-1992/Russell Group university, than those who were Scottish-domiciled prior to studying (but they note that 3 of the 5 institutions fall within the pre-1992/Russell Group category and this may have affected this finding).

In all four countries, visible ethnic minority entrants increased as a proportion of all entrants, though there were variations between different groups. Most English-domiciled visible ethnic minority groups have been over-represented in HE once allowance is made for prior attainment. Ethnic inequalities intersect with class, as minority students are more strongly represented amongst intermediate and working class entrants. Against this background, minority students from England were much less likely than white students to study outside their home country. However, more minority applicants than comparable white applicants from Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland applied to and entered institutions outside their home country. This was particularly the case for Scottish-domiciled students, as 12% of minority entrants studied outside Scotland compared with only 5% of white entrants (Croxford and Raffe, 2014a; Raffe and Croxford, 2013). On a related point, it has previously been found that students from visible ethnic minority groups are less likely to move away from home to study (Belfield and Morris, 1999). This latter finding also masks differences underlying the overall data, in this case differences between ethnic groups. Pakistani and Bangladeshi students tend to attend an institution near home, however the average Black student chooses an institution relatively far from home and Indian students

travel far relative to the closeness of institutions (Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009). In addition, Finney (2011), exploring the mobility of young UK adults, identified them as a particularly mobile group; and Sage et al (2013) point out that young adults are the most mobile group in the UK largely because of the movement in order to enter HE and the movement that takes place on exiting HE. Finney (2011) found that White British and Chinese young adults were more likely to be mobile if students; but amongst Pakistani, Black African and Black Caribbean young adults being a student reduced the likelihood of mobility, particularly for Pakistani females, for which she offered the explanation of the different propensity for living in the family home while studying amongst different groups. There is a possible contradiction here in the average greater mobility distance of Black students found by Gibbons and Vignoles and the reduction in mobility amongst Black young people when they are students found by Finney, but this may be because the comparison groups are different in the two studies. Finally on ethnicity, it has been found that students from visible minority backgrounds were more concerned with studying in an institution in an ethnically mixed area than were white students (Connor et al, 2004; Purcell et al, 2008). This may help explain the differences in mobility of minority groups from the different countries of the UK.

In addition to the overall greater likelihood of working class, first generation, and Pakistani and possibly Black students, being more likely to stay in the family home as a student, McLelland and Gandy (2011) identified a growing trend between 2002 and 2008 for living at home while studying and that this was especially the case for women. Gender differences however do not come across strongly in the literature on internal student mobility, although Faggian et al (2007a) found that Scottish-domiciled students who left Scotland to study were more likely to be male (and young), and Purcell et al (2006) that RUK students studying in Scotland were more likely than Scottish-domiciled students studying in Scotland to be male.

Institutional and subject destination

More students apply to courses in another UK country than actually enter them and applications within the home country are more likely to result in entry, suggesting that many applications to institutions in another UK country are either aspirational or fall-back options (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). This suggestion is potentially supported by Purcell et al (2006) finding that RUK-domiciled students at Scottish HEIs were more likely to have preferred to study at a different institution to the one they entered than was the case for Scottish-domiciled students at Scottish HEIs. They also found that Scottish-domiciled students in Scottish HEIs were more likely than RUK students in Scottish HEIs to have been motivated to enter HE for employment reasons (Purcell et al, 2006). Overall, in terms of who does enter an RUK institution, students with higher qualification levels are more likely to move (Faggian et al, 2007a; Raffe and Croxford, 2013). As we will see in the country specific findings below this applies more strongly in the case of English and Scottish domiciled students, with a more mixed picture for students from Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition, and connected to this, cross-border students are more likely to attend higher tariff institutions (Faggian et al, 2007a; Raffe and Croxford, 2013), although the same country differences apply. Including interregional as well as cross-border movement, mobility was associated positively with attending a higher tariff institution, as those staying in their region of domicile were less likely than those who moved away to be studying at a Russell Group university (Purcell et al, 2008). This overall higher likelihood of movement to higher

tariff institutions suggests that the movement between all parts of the UK might be to the more elite institutions, but although there is some suggestion of that in relation to Scottish and particularly English students, the overall picture is much more varied. In fact a large proportion of those from Wales and Northern Ireland applying for and entering study in England are to post-1992 universities (Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

Movement to the Republic of Ireland is an issue of related interest, if not directly our focus, and it is discussed further in the section on Northern Irish students below, but here we can note that it has been found previously that more than two thirds of UK students in the Republic of Ireland were on first degree courses and Trinity College Dublin was by far the most popular destination for UK students (King et al, 2010), providing further support for the overall finding that higher tariff institutions are the most common destination for mobile students. More broadly, Raffe and Croxford (2013) found that the applicant rate from other UK countries was higher at Russell Group universities in England than other institutions. This suggests that institutional reputation is an important factor in the draw to England despite the debt it will incur (and despite the caveats above). A range of studies (Ball et al, 2002; Boliver, 2013; Connor et al, 2004; Sutton Trust and BIS, 2012) have though found that institutional reputation cannot be totally separated from financial resources, in so far as those from the most disadvantaged areas, some ethnic minority groups, and those from state schools are less likely to be both apply and to be accepted to the higher tariff institutions, compared to those from the most advantaged areas, white and Chinese people, and those from independent schools (Boliver, 2013).

Purcell et al (2008) meanwhile found that those who applied to institutions in Scotland, Northern Ireland, London and the South West were the least likely to have a successful application. They suggest that in the cases of Scotland and Northern Ireland this was due to lack of places (a push factor), and in London and the South West because they were attractive places to live (a pull factor).

There are also, at a very broad level, more common subject areas for mobile students, with cross border movement more likely for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and arts subjects (Raffe and Croxford, 2013), and lesser movement among those studying education and maths (Belfield and Morris, 1999). However, unlike students from the other countries, Scottish-domiciled students were not more likely to enter an RUK institution to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine and Scottish-domiciled students were also more likely to stay in their own country to study subjects allied to medicine, unlike their Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). In another study, RUK students studying at Scottish universities were found to be more likely to be studying languages, social sciences, humanities and 'other vocational subjects' than Scottish-domiciled students at Scottish HEIs (Purcell et al, 2006). Other differences have been found though in a study on Welsh and Scottish domiciled students, below (Faggian et al, 2007a).

Home country and area characteristics

Raffe and Croxford (2013) comment on the articulation between schooling and university systems in each country and how this might affect cross-border mobility. It is the Scottish school system and Scottish qualifications that can provide access to university that differ the most from the rest of the UK. Where there is a distinctiveness in qualifications in this

manner, it could steer students more towards institutions in their own country where those qualifications are recognised and understood, and may be thought to be more likely to be an appropriate preparation for HE courses in that country, however specific evidence on this point has not yet been identified for inclusion in this overview, although some evidence in relation to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland can be found below.

In terms of what data analysis tells us, the other key issue relates to the characteristics of the home area of mobile students. Faggian et al (2006) found evidence that movement away from the home area (though this would not necessarily entail crossing a border) was associated with high cost of living, high productivity, high levels of overall in-migration and high local crime rates in the home area. The role of home-university distance could also be assumed to have an impact on likelihood of studying within one's home country. For most applicants the closest institution to home will be in their own country. Those living near borders for whom distance to home is important may feel they have the option of staying within or moving across borders. In 2009/10, Scottish-domiciled students constituted 0.65% of students in England but because they tended to go to regions nearer to Scotland (and the same applies to the majority of Welsh and Northern Irish movers), 7% of full-time undergraduate enrolments in north-west HEIs were from other UK countries (Bruce, 2012). Ramsden (2010) found marginally higher rates of student migration in border regions in 2008/09 – into Scotland from North-East England and into Wales from South West England and the West Midlands, but these were tiny compared to migration from these areas into other English regions. Purcell et al (2008) found that Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish applicants to institutions across borders “had tended to apply regionally – to closer rather than more distant parts of England” (p133). However crossing a border to go to a nearby university could have an impact on the fees the student is exposed to – that would be the case from 2012 particularly for students from the south of Scotland studying in the north of England. For English/Welsh border students or north of England students moving to Scotland, this would not be such a concern. However, Raffe and Croxford (2013) concluded that “the tendency to apply to and enter higher education within the home country is stronger than the general preference for studying close to home” (p128). Given the small numbers, and the link with the home country being stronger than the link with home region, overall this does not appear to be a significant point in the analysis of cross-border movement in the UK.

Home-university distance

However, home-university distance has been found to help explain the characteristics of student populations in the elite institutions (Dearden et al, 2011); and living at home while studying has been found to link to class, ethnicity, geography and qualifications (Briggs, 2006; Clayton et al, 2009; Connor et al, 2004; Davies et al, 2008; Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; Holdsworth, 2009; Moogan and Baron, 2003; Purcell et al, 2008). There is also evidence of a relationship between levels of advantage, concerns about cost and location of institution, in that young people from working class backgrounds have been found to have a greater fear of debt than more financially advantaged young people and that this can influence their decision-making about whether to attend university and/or on choice of subject and institution (Callender and Jackson 2005, 2008; Davies et al, 2008; Furlong and Forsyth, 2003). Students from low income families have been found to be more sensitive to distance (Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009). Conversely, others have found that middle class pupils with a

family history of HE were more likely to wish to study a long distance from home (Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009; Hinton, 2011) as were those applying to Russell Group universities (Purcell et al, 2008) and those from independent schools and those with higher GCSE scores (Davies et al, 2008). Belfield and Morris (1999) found that parental HE experience influences movement to study between English regions.

In 2012, around 20% of applications from young applicants in England, Northern Ireland and Wales were for courses for which they indicated they would live at home, compared to about 40% of applications from young Scottish applicants (UCAS, 2012). On the reasons for this difference, Purcell et al (2008) suggest that this could be due to Scottish students being more likely to be younger when they start HE than is the case in other parts of the UK, or due to the distribution of HEIs within Scotland. Generally, it may be that the factors common to staying in the family home as a student are also factors that can act as a barrier to studying in another country.

Overall, between 1996 and 2010, most characteristics of cross-border applicants and entrants were consistent, with only 3 significant changes: a stronger tendency for ethnic minority Scots than white Scots to apply outside Scotland; a stronger relationship between qualifications and applications to another UK country, especially in England; a stronger tendency for Welsh and Northern Irish entrants to institutions in another UK country to be highly qualified (Raffe and Croxford, 2013, p127).

English-domiciled students

There does not appear to be substantial research literature specifically on English-domiciled students who cross borders, which may be because they are proportionally a small group (though in absolute numbers they are the largest group of cross-border movers). However, research undertaken on UK students as a whole on this issue may be skewed by, and therefore most relevant to, students from England, simply because of the overall number of students.

In terms of the characteristics of mobile English-domiciled students, white students are more likely to apply for and enter institutions in another UK country than students from visible ethnic minority groups (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). Those from higher qualification quintiles are more likely to apply to another country, but the highest quintile qualification groups, along with the lowest, are least likely to enter an institution in another country (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). It has been found that high A level scores and private schooling are positively associated with moving region (Belfield and Morris, 1999), but this applies to a wider definition of mobility than just crossing country borders. These high achievers are likely to apply for high tariff institutions, and the fact that applicants are not translating into entry to the extent that might be expected from application rates, suggest that these applications are being used as a fall-back option for some if they are unable to enter a high tariff institution in England (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). Access to high tariff institutions provides one motivation. Bond et al's (2010) study on English-domiciled students who attended the University of Edinburgh provides some further suggestions applicable at least to one cohort of students who moved to attend a high tariff institution, which is that moving to Scotland appealed to some because it was far from home, and for some because they

wanted to attend that particular university or live in that city. In such cases, and they may well overlap for individuals, the crossing of the border does not seem to be the explicit aim. Indeed, the authors found that amongst the students interviewed for the study, only those with family connections to Scotland understood that by attending that university they were moving to a distinct national context (Bond et al, 2010). With regards to barriers to movement, Croot (1999) makes the suggestion that differences in educational systems may explain in part the limited movement between northern England and Scotland. He also suggests that aspects of the geography of the home area might help explain this, suggesting that physical remoteness and sparse population densities of both northern England and Scotland may limit movement between them (Croot, 1999).

While there will undoubtedly be individual differences, the overall picture this provides is of the more 'traditional' and advantaged young people from England being those who tend to cross borders within the UK, although nonetheless in proportionately small numbers, with the purpose of attending a high tariff institution. This broad type of student is more likely to want to move some distance from home, but moving to another country may not be a specific aim even for those that do so. Whether and how national borders act as a barrier does not appear to be well researched, although the Bond et al findings are very interesting in this regard. So, while the data analysis, certainly up to 2010, is robust, the understanding of motivations specific to cross-border movement is less well evidenced.

We should note also Raffe and Croxford's (2013) analysis of regional movement within England as compared to movement to other UK countries. In 1996, 80% of English domiciled applicants were to institutions in another English region; this was the case for about three quarters of English applicants in 2008, and over half in 2010, and Raffe and Croxford found that the "home-country effect is ... both stronger than, and qualitatively different from, the home-region effect" (p129).

Scottish-domiciled students

In terms of the characteristics of Scottish-domiciled students, one study which looked at mobility for two student cohorts in the UK found that Scottish-domiciled students were more likely to leave Scotland to study if they were male (Faggian et al, 2007a). Purcell et al (2006) also found amongst a relatively small sample of Scottish-domiciled students who had studied elsewhere in the UK that, compared to students from Scotland as a whole, they were more likely to be male. They further found that Scottish-domiciled students who studied in RUK were much more likely to be from managerial or professional occupational backgrounds than Scottish students as a whole and greatly more likely to be young (Purcell et al, 2006). Two studies have identified that Scottish-domiciled students were more likely to leave Scotland if they were from a minority ethnic group (Faggian et al, 2007a; Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

Scottish-domiciled students are more likely to live at home than students from other countries (UCAS, 2013), which by its nature (unless living on the edge of the border with England) precludes studying in another country – however the key question here is why Scottish-domiciled students are more likely to stay at home. The student choice literature makes some suggestions on this, related to cost, work, family experience of HE, a sense of

belonging, social ties, and family role (see references on home-university distance above). To add to that there is the suggestion (though not directly evidenced) that the different school and exam system compared to elsewhere in the UK encourages students to stay in Scotland (though not necessarily to live at home) (Belfield and Morris, 1999; Croot, 1999; Faggian et al, 2007a; Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

There may also be aspects of the home area which play a role in whether one leaves the home region or crosses borders. It has been found that the greater the number of HEIs locally, the less chance of leaving Scotland and that those from a higher rank urban area are less likely to leave Scotland (Faggian et al, 2007a) – findings which appear to complement each other. As mentioned above, those from sparsely populated areas are suggested to be less likely to cross the border to northern England (Croot, 1999). These findings together suggest that those both from densely populated and sparsely populated areas are unlikely to cross borders for study. It has also been found that those from affluent areas are a little more likely to leave Scotland (Faggian et al, 2007a), and although the effect was not found to be strong it does broadly fit with the finding elsewhere that those with qualifications in the top two quintiles are more likely to apply outside Scotland (Raffe and Croxford, 2013) and that most Scottish-domiciled students who leave Scotland go to Russell Group universities (Raffe and Croxford, 2013; Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). Amongst a sample of those who graduated in 1999, Purcell et al (2006) found that Scottish-domiciled students studying in RUK were much more likely to have attended a pre-1992 university than was the case for Scottish-domiciled students as a whole. However, we should also note that the relationship between qualifications and entry to RUK institutions was a U-curve and so not confined to the high achievers (Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

Students have been found to be more likely to leave Scotland to study medicine, social sciences and arts, and less likely if they are to study sciences (Faggian et al, 2007a) or subjects allied to medicine (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). On the other hand, Purcell et al's (2006) sample of students were more likely to have studied natural sciences and medicine related disciplines than Scottish students as a whole, and less likely to have studied social sciences, engineering and business studies – this is based on a smaller sample than the other studies however.

Motivation to leave Scotland may therefore be explained by seeking to enter a high tariff institution, and/or a particular area of study (though nonetheless within a broad range). What these findings also suggest is that for those for whom there is a limited choice of easily accessible supply, movement away from the area may be required, and perhaps this opens up willingness to cross borders too; alternatively a sense of physical or perhaps mental disconnection, or travel difficulty, may limit long distance movement despite a limited local HE supply. Again however the evidence specific to why borders are crossed, perhaps in particular for those who in principle could have entered a similar type of institution and subject in Scotland as in England, appears limited.

Welsh-domiciled students

The Welsh higher education system has been described as “uniquely porous” by Rees and Taylor (2006) who examined the period 1995-96 to 2002-03, and found that in 2002-03 40%

of students chose to study outside Wales, but over the longer term there had been an increase in Welsh students studying in Wales, as we saw above in the overview on student movement. Analysing data from 2000 to 2010, Wakeling and Jeffries (2013) commented that “the absolute numbers of entrants to institutions in England and Wales has remained stable, whereas any growth in enrolments has been accommodated in Wales” (p505). Trench (2008) comments that as Assembly Learning Grants would not have had an effect on study location during the period in which home-country study increased, it is not clear why this rise took place. Bruce (2012) suggests though that Assembly Learning Grants, in the period when they were available (2007 to 2010), did make a difference to mobility by increasing the proportion of Welsh students in Welsh HEIs, and that when these were abolished in 2010, there was a 2.6% increase in applications for study outside Wales. (The Assembly Learning Grant was reintroduced in 2012 and extends to Welsh-domiciled students studying in a RUK institution, meaning that fees are capped at £3465 a year, repayable by a loan). The proportion of Welsh-domiciled students at Welsh HEIs has therefore historically been at a lower level than has been the case since the 2000s, that fluctuations since then have occurred which may be explained by student support arrangements, but these arrangements were not relevant to why the increase in home country study occurred in the first place.

In 2002-03, about half of the students at Welsh HEIs were not Welsh, as about 40% of Welsh students left Wales and there was a greater inflow of students from England. Meanwhile, amongst all students the proportion living at home had increased from 9% to 19% between 1995-96 and 2002-03, and amongst 18-20 year olds it increased from 14% to 23% (although some caution required due to incomplete data) (Rees and Taylor, 2006). The increase in students staying at home therefore forms part at least of the increase in Welsh-domiciled students at Welsh HEIs. Rees and Taylor (2005) suggest two possible explanations – that more students were choosing to live at home possibly to reduce costs, or that there were students entering HE who would not have done so previously and who for cultural, attitudinal or financial reasons preferred to live at home. They commented that if only Welsh-domiciled students studied in Wales the HE sector would be much smaller. Those who leave Wales and those who enter Wales were both more likely to be from a managerial or professional family background. As more students came from outside than left, this made the HE sector in Wales more middle-class than it would have been otherwise. Rees and Taylor (2006) speculated that working class students could be displaced from Welsh institutions if more middle class students stayed in Wales in response to fee and student support changes. Raffe and Croxford (2013) explored whether the concerns raised by Rees and Taylor had been realised and concluded that the proportion of working class students was higher in institutions both in and outside Wales between 2006 and 2010 and the changes that took place in applications and entries showed that “changing fee differentials had a clear impact on the choices and behaviours of Welsh domiciles but they did not increase educational inequalities” (p128).

In terms of the characteristics of mobile Welsh-domiciled students, white students have been found to be more likely to stay in Wales to study and those from visible ethnic minority groups more likely to leave Wales (Fitz et al, 2005; Raffe and Croxford, 2013). Fitz et al (2005) explored the distance that prospective students wanted to go for their studies, and found that a minority wanted to stay close to home but an equal minority wanted to go

far from home (though the reasons for these preferences were not given). Hinton (2011) comments that “Spatial mobility is a particularly pertinent issue for young Welsh people living in isolated rural areas with poor public transport provision, where travel from home to university would be both time-consuming and expensive” (p26). For these students continuing to live at home or studying near to the home area may not be possible even if desired. Welsh-domiciled students have been found to be more likely to stay in Wales if there are HEIs in the local area, but nonetheless more likely to study outside Wales if from an urban area (Faggian et al, 2007a). These findings appear to be potentially contradictory, as we might expect urban areas to have more HEIs. The local HEI effect seems to be evident in the finding that North Wales residents were more likely to move to England than those from other parts of Wales (Fitz et al, 2005), as there are fewer HEIs in North Wales than South Wales. This does also suggest that border proximity encourages mobility through the access it gives to a potentially wider range of institutions outside the country compared to within it. Once again we see a fairly complex picture below the high level aggregate data.

In terms of where students who leave Wales go to study, a large proportion go to post-92 institutions in England (Raffe and Croxford, 2013; Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). A supporting finding is that students have been found to be more likely to stay in Wales if they are entering a high RAE score university (Faggian et al, 2007a). However, a substantial proportion of those who leave Wales do enter a prestigious institution (Fitz et al, 2005), and overall the higher their qualification quintile the more likely they are to apply to study in another country (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). It has been found that school and family influence the decision to migrate to a high tariff institution (Fitz et al, 2005). On destination we should also note that if a Welsh-domiciled student was studying outside Wales they were more likely to be studying in an urban area (Faggian et al, 2007a). It has also been found that students were more likely to leave Wales if they were studying medicine and more likely to stay than leave for other subject areas (Faggian et al, 2007a). As with the other devolved administrations, it is hypothesised that the exam and school system can play a role, in this case that its similarity with that in England encourages cross-border movement (Faggian et al, 2007a) though it also suggested that for those who do not migrate than different progression and examination routes could be a factor (Croot, 1999).

In her qualitative research with prospective students, Hinton (2011) also found that for some: “Mobility was associated with certain advantages; offering young people the chance to pursue new opportunities in new locations while facilitating the transition to adulthood” (p27). It should be noted though that mobility would not necessarily entail crossing the border. Indeed, she also found that young people’s HE goals may be “mediated by their emotional connections to place, as young people aspire to encounter new experiences and develop independent lifestyles while also moving within spaces which are recognisable as ‘home’” (p32). These emotional connections encourage therefore staying in Wales to study and were strongest in those from families with little or no experience of HE, with middle class students more likely to consider options elsewhere in the UK.

The data on the characteristics of those who leave and where they go paints a mixed picture. Although there are similarities with England and Scotland in that middle class students and high achievers are the most likely to leave Wales, there are also complexities relating to the geography of Wales, the distribution of HEIs, and possible issues around

subject access. The role of student support and costs of study also appear to be relevant, but potentially types of qualification are less of an issue than for other countries. Belonging, a sense of home and identity issues have arisen in qualitative research, and finally there are issues raised around the profile of the student population within Wales due to cross-border flows with England.

Northern Irish domiciled students

Amongst Northern Irish domiciled students, as in the case of Scottish and Welsh students, it is those from visible ethnic minority groups who are more likely to leave Northern Ireland than white students (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). Osborne's (2001, 2006) research provides very useful detail on Northern Ireland movers. Those from Protestant communities were found to be more likely to want to leave Northern Ireland to study in RUK than those from Catholic communities. However for Northern Irish students who only reluctantly left Northern Ireland due to lack of places, the proportions of Protestants and Catholics were more evenly matched (Osborne, 2006). It was middle class students, that is those from higher and lower managerial and professional backgrounds, who were the most likely to actively choose to study elsewhere in the UK. These were also often Protestant students. The overall effect was for the majority of student leavers to be middle class and Protestant (Osborne, 2006). It was those with qualifications in the top two quintiles who were more likely to apply to an institution elsewhere in the UK, but the relationship between qualifications and entry was a U-curve (Raffe and Croxford, 2013).

In terms of which institutions in RUK Northern Irish domiciled students attend, there is evidence from Osborne's study that Protestant middle class students often attended older universities in northern England and Scotland which they perceived as better than the ones at home, would provide new experiences and better graduate job opportunities (Osborne, 2006). However, there has been a steady decline in the number of Northern Irish first degree students in Scotland since 2002-03 (SFC, 2013), so the view of Scotland as a positive option seems to be less the case now than at the time of this study. Between 2000 and 2010 there was an 80% increase in outflow to England, but in 2010 Northern Irish students had just under 1% of the students places held by UK and Irish students in England; in Scotland they had 5% of the places in the early 2000s but only 3.3% by 2010 (Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). As well as the students who went to older universities, up until 2010 a large proportion leaving Northern Ireland went to post-1992 institutions in England and to some extent Scotland (Osborne, 2006; Raffe and Croxford, 2013; Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013) again indicating the lack of supply in Northern Irish HEIs, and fitting with the fact it was those at the higher and lower ends of the qualification spectrum who most often studied in RUK.

To understand why these patterns of student movement from Northern Ireland exist, Osborne (2001) carried out qualitative research with prospective students and their parents. He found that determined leavers were mostly influenced by the high grade requirements in the Northern Irish universities - A level grade requirements at Queens University Belfast were on a par with other elite institutions in the UK, but the University of Ulster grades were significantly higher than equivalent institutions. The second most important reason was to get away from home, and to get to the places that attracted them – Scotland and the

north of England. There was widespread perception, amongst prospective students and their parents, that they would be more likely to come across anti-Irish feeling in the south of England than in the north of England or Scotland. Going to these latter places was considered 'unproblematic' and 'natural' by determined leavers. As we have seen students from Catholic backgrounds were more likely to stay in Northern Ireland to study. Osborne (2001) found that those from Protestant backgrounds saw studying in Britain, and particularly in Scotland, as a straightforward transition to a place with 'people like us'. For reluctant leavers, their reluctance was based on wanting to maintain networks in Northern Ireland, and on believing the higher education provision was the same quality in Northern Ireland as elsewhere, but that grades might force them away. We see therefore that is not just capacity, but also entry requirements, which can be a factor in student mobility decisions.

As we have noted, middle class students are more likely to study in RUK, and Osborne (2001) comments that Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of entrants from lower social classes than other parts of the UK, and that while this reflects the population balance in Northern Ireland, it also reflects the propensity of middle class students to migrate, which leaves 'space' for lower class entrants.

In terms of the role of fees and costs, interviews with parents and prospective students before the details of the first fees policy (introduced in 1998) were known, showed that most parents did not think financial concerns should have an impact on choice of study location. However, they did think that price would become more of an issue south of Liverpool/Manchester. However interviews carried out when the tuition fee policy was known, in 1997/98, identified that the cost of HE had become the most significant issue about where to study. This created in some cases reluctant stayers who had been convinced by parents to stay in Northern Ireland to reduce costs (Osborne, 2001).

Northern Ireland also of course shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland (ROI), and as such makes studying in another state a possibility at the very least because it is the most geographically accessible alternative to studying in Northern Ireland. Osborne (2001) examined this issue for the period 1985 to 1999, and found there was a shortage of places and high demand in the ROI during this period, and so there was a high level of competition and high grades were required. Accessing ROI institutions was difficult for Northern Irish domiciled students, but during the 1980s and until the late 1990s, Northern Irish students received financial support and payment of fees from the Northern Irish authorities to study in private institutions in the ROI. However when this practice ended it led to a drop in Northern Irish participation in ROI, as numbers to official Irish institutions had always been low and focused mostly in popular selective courses (such as medicine and veterinary medicine) in elite Dublin universities.

More recently, Republic of Ireland was found to be the second most popular international destination for UK students studying whole degrees overseas in 2006-07, at 2282 students or 11% of the total degree-mobile UK students, and around 40% of these were from Northern Ireland (King et al, 2011). More recent data shows that the total number of students in Irish tertiary institutions from the UK reached a high of 2313 in 2010-11, but then in 2012-13 had dropped back to 1981, which was around the number between 2001

and 2003. Just looking at Northern Irish domiciled students in ROI tertiary institutions, we see a high (over this period) of 1107 in 2000-01, and a fairly steady decline over subsequent years to the 788 students enrolled in 2012-13 (Pollak, 2012). Given that the number of Irish students in Irish tertiary institutions increased over the period 2000-2013 (from around 133k in 2000-01 to 154k in 2012-13), and also that the number of UK students at UK HEIs also increased during this period, the proportion of UK students going to Ireland to study, of which Northern Irish students have historically formed a substantial minority, has decreased.

Pollak (2012) explored the reasons for the relatively limited movement of Northern Irish domiciled undergraduate students to ROI, and through interviews with a sample of students found a number of factors. The common application process within the UK made applying for institutions elsewhere in the UK straightforward. It is a process for which there is more expertise and support available within their schools, and also ensures that it is relatively easy to access information about all HEIs in the UK. To also apply to institutions in ROI requires a second, rather different, application process and so works against encouraging movement south of the border. There was also limited recruitment effort by ROI institutions in Northern Ireland, and especially so when compared to the recruitment effort of a range of UK HEIs. Entry criteria also differ between RUK and ROI institutions, with entry to ROI HEIs based entirely on school leaving qualifications, and the equivalences applied between the Irish Leaving Certificate and Northern Irish school qualifications considered by respondents to be punitive for Northern Irish students. Furthermore, costs were a factor, as there was better maintenance support for Northern Irish students studying in RUK HEIs than in ROI HEIs. In addition, Dublin, as a key destination for UK students in Ireland, was considered to have high a cost of living. However, for some high achieving students, Trinity College Dublin was considered a fall-back option after Oxbridge. The final factor was the role of social networks, in that as the proportion of Northern Irish students in ROI has diminished, so there are fewer people in Northern Ireland who are able to encourage studying in ROI based on their own experience, so contributing to the further reduction in Northern Irish people gaining that experience (Pollak, 2012).

To add to the data analysis that has been carried out by various authors, which provides a good overview of the key characteristics of those who are most likely to leave Northern Ireland to study, the change in flows, and destinations, there has been some useful qualitative research helping to understand the factors in decision-making. As in all cross-border HE research, these are limited in number, but they provide a very helpful level of detail.

Irish-domiciled students

If we now consider the other side of Pollak's (2012) study, regarding the mobility of ROI students to Northern Ireland, we can see that the issue about differing application processes applies both ways. For ROI students, the UCAS process can be off-putting because it requires evidence of achievement and interests that fall outwith the narrow issue of school leaving qualifications, including the requirement for a personal statement. It was also noted that there were barriers to where some ROI students felt they could study in Northern Ireland, due to their religious affiliation and the location on HEI campuses in

Northern Ireland. Pollak (2012) also inferred, based on the changes in participation data, that the UK was more attractive at a time when the fees in ROI were higher than those in the UK, but that when the fee differential changed, the number of Irish students going to the UK decreased. Osborne (2001) had made the same point some years earlier. He noted that in the 1980s students in ROI had to pay fees, while there were none in the UK, which would apply to Irish students studying in the UK as EU members. Combined with the competitiveness of entry to Irish institutions, there was a substantial increase in Irish applicants to UK institutions, and a concern that Northern Irish students were being squeezed out of the University of Ulster (although on this latter point the picture was not clear especially as there was varying likelihood of Northern Irish and ROI applicants to different campuses of University of Ulster). The fees situation reversed in the late 1990s. In 1996, fees were replaced with a student service charge which was lower than tuition fees had been, and despite increases since has remained lower than tuition fees at Northern Irish HEIs since 1998 (Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). Over the period 2004-2009, the low starting position of about 4 in every 25 students leaving in 2004 slowly decreased until 2009 (Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). England, Wales and Northern Ireland have all become less popular for Irish students, coinciding with increases in tuition fees in those countries, but Scotland has also become less popular despite no fee being applicable to Irish students. As Irish enrolments grew over this period, the increase in enrolments was therefore mainly provided within Ireland (Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013).

The issues identified by Pollak on mobility between Northern Ireland and ROI allow us to understand the barriers for some and what may be preventing a higher potential level of cross-border flow. Although they do not in themselves explain the reduction over time, they do allow the supposition that fee and student support policies may have played a role in this, as Wakeling and Jeffries (2013) also suggest. What it also identified is that the broad findings at a global level on cross-border movement do not necessarily apply in the UK and Ireland. In the research literature on international student mobility (ISM), it has been identified that when deciding where to study, geographical, trade or historical links between the home and destination country can be a factor in ISM to both neighbouring and further afield countries (Brooks and Waters, 2013; OECD, 2011). Students who cross borders to neighbouring countries consider language and culture, geographic closeness and similarity of education systems and differences in entry requirements in the two countries in reaching their decision, and because of the proximity to the country may also be more aware of issues like costs and quality of provision (Brooks and Waters, 2013; Dreher and Poutvaara, 2005; OECD, 2011). Ease of returning home can also be factor in choosing a neighbouring or otherwise accessible destination country (Guth, 2008). Globally around 20% of foreign students come from countries that share a land or maritime border with the destination country. Considering this overall evidence, this would suggest there should be a higher level than exists of cross-border movement between ROI and Northern Ireland/RUK due to geographical closeness and ease of movement between the countries, historical links, a shared language, and cultural similarity. However, there may be barriers in relation to school qualification equivalence, and/or cost factors, although these have not been found to be an issue in a consistent way (Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013). Pollak's findings suggest that application processes, entry requirements, access to information, social networks and cost can work against cross-border movement, even when the common criteria for encouraging cross-border movement are met, in terms of language, culture, quality of institutions,

geographical proximity, travel ease and transport links, and historical and trade links. While we would not wish to overstate this based on a single study, it does help point to a wider set of issues on cross-border movement.

UK student mobility overseas

This section provides a brief summary of research findings on internationally mobile students from the UK, which although clearly not within the bounds of internal UK mobility, may provide an additional perspective on the mobility of UK students (the movement of UK students overseas also sits within the research field of international student mobility, which is concerned with student movement globally, but this summary does not extend to that wider field of research).

There has been a limited volume of, but relatively detailed, research on the motivations and characteristics of UK students who choose to study overseas, particularly with regards to those who study whole degrees abroad (degree mobility) rather than a shorter mobility period as part of a UK-based degree (credit mobility), and is considered an under-researched area with limited attention only in the last decade or so (Brooks and Waters, 2013; King et al, 2010). This may be explained in part by the relatively small (though not inconsequential) population this concerns. In 2010, the UK Higher Education International Unit estimated that there were 33,000 UK students studying abroad including both degree-mobile and credit-mobile students, compared to 370,000 international students studying in UK institutions. UK students abroad were estimated to be 1.6% of the UK student population. Other recent estimates include: around 20,000 degree-mobile students in 2005-06 (1.7% of the UK HE student population) (Findlay and King, 2010); 11 international students for very UK citizen studying abroad in 2009 (this was the same as the US, but lower than Australia at 24 to 1 and New Zealand at 15 to 1) (OECD, 2011). We should note that the data on UK students overseas are problematic as they are not collected and defined systematically across countries, apart from for students on short term mobility periods as part of organised EU programmes (mainly Erasmus). In the Erasmus scheme, the UK and Ireland are outliers as much larger recipients than senders; and overall there is a net flow of students from southern countries to northern countries, with the UK, France and Germany receiving the most (Brooks and Waters, 2013). However our concern here is with degree mobility.

In terms of UK students' motivations for studying a degree overseas, a few fairly large scale qualitative studies provide useful evidence. This student route is an uncommon phenomenon for UK students. The most common case is of students studying in an institution with an international reputation, and seeking access to an elite education (Brooks and Waters, 2011, 2013; Findlay et al, 2011). While it is not always the case that for such students the move overseas is because access to elite institutions in the UK was not possible, that can be a motivation (Findlay et al, 2011). A second broad type of student uses overseas study as a fall-back option, for specialist courses with restricted access in the UK such as medicine, for which the subject matter is the key factor not the reputation or international standing of the institution (Findlay et al, 2011). A third key motivation is to have fun or adventure, though this can apply to those attending high reputation institutions – the advantages of attending the institution are not the main factor but an additional

bonus for these students; they are 'accidental achievers' (Brooks and Waters, 2011, 2013). This however is a sign of the more advantaged background of most overseas based UK undergraduates, as for advantaged UK students instrumental motivations for HE participation are overall less evident than for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Purcell et al, 2008). King et al (2013) argue however that the students in their study based in the US do not fit with the notion of 'accidental achievers' but instead appear to be career-focused and willing and required to work hard. Finally, for those for whom attending a world-class university was not the main aim, using overseas study as way of emphasising difference to others was important to some students, particularly in preparation for competing in the labour market (Findlay et al, 2011).

One study found that the vast majority of these students had attended independent schools (Brooks and Waters, 2011, 2013); in another study they were found to be twice as likely to have done so (Findlay et al, 2011). King et al (2013) suggest that, while a disproportionate number had an independent school background, the role of degree mobility can be both to reproduce privilege for these students, but also help students from less privileged backgrounds gain cultural capital.

The independent school pupils demonstrated more concern for attending an elite overseas institution, and were more likely to describe their study decision as the first step in an international career (Findlay et al, 2011). The schools themselves appear to play a role. Independent schools can see themselves as providing an international outlook, or for such an outlook to be common amongst their pupils, due to the presence of overseas pupils or the international practices and links of the school, including advice and help in finding out about overseas HE options and applying for them.

The more advantaged backgrounds of the majority of internationally mobile UK students is evidenced in part therefore by school background, which is itself socially embedded. They also commonly fall within the norms of traditional university students, that is students who have achieved high tariff qualifications, are young and usually white, from families with an HE background.

Attitudes to finance may indicate further the more privileged backgrounds of the majority. Brooks and Waters (2011, 2013) found that undergraduate students studying abroad did not view finance as a matter of concern. In most cases, their family had financed their study and they found this expected and largely unproblematic. For those who had attended independent schools, this was viewed as a simple continuation of parents paying for their education. Although a smaller group, those from less affluent backgrounds or had less conventional academic histories put more emphasis on financial concerns. In a few cases in their study the increased cost of study in the UK (after 2006) had made overseas HE seem less expensive in comparison (Brooks and Waters, 2013). However, King et al (2013) suggest that finance was an important issue for degree-mobile undergraduates, more than suggested by Brooks and Waters, especially for those who could access funding support that made the cost of an overseas degree less than a British one (at the time £3145 in tuition fees, although it is not clear the extent to which living and travel costs were a factor).

Almost all internationally mobile students, whatever their socio-economic background or type of school attended, did however have access to cultural capital on which they could draw in deciding to study abroad, in the form of: “Family experiences of travel, relatives and friends overseas, and contacts provided by former teachers and schools” which “all helped to minimise the ‘identity risks’ of moving abroad to study” (Brooks and Waters, 2011). So for postgraduate students for whom, unlike the undergraduates, financial issues were a strong determinant of their decision to study abroad and who were less likely to be from a privileged background with high financial resources, the authors argue they did nonetheless have cultural resources. Past experience of travel or longer periods of earlier mobility appeared to be key, and indicates that these students were already on a mobility pathway of which their decisions about study location formed a part (Findlay et al, 2011; King et al, 2010). In their study, Findlay et al (2011) found for example that just under half of the students had previously lived abroad for 6 months or longer. Overall, for most of the students who had a view of their future, overseas study was part of a longer transition from a national to an international context (Findlay et al, 2011), though most of those studying in the US did intend to return to the UK after graduation (King et al, 2013).

The direct role of family and friends as suggested above also appears to be a key factor for many students, in the form of family encouragement (King et al, 2010), or having family members or friends who have studied or worked abroad.

The majority of internationally mobile UK students who undertake whole degrees study in Anglophone countries. This is the also case, but to a lesser degree, for students undertaking short-term mobility. There are indeed a number of differences between these groups of students – degree mobile students are less likely than credit mobile students to be focused on language development, more likely to be focused on employment prospects, and more likely to place importance on institutional reputation.

Conclusion

The research on cross-border student movement summarised in this paper includes robust data analysis of aggregate trends up until 2010 (and this work will be extended in the work of Raffe and Croxford in the coming months), and an interesting set of studies that, although overall relatively limited numerically speaking, throw light on some of the complexities underlying the overall picture, but also raise questions and leave gaps in our understanding of the relationship between the factors that can promote both mobility and immobility – the latter also of interest since overall the extent of internal mobility is relatively low considering how connected HE is at a UK level. Some of the issues raised which may be of particular interest in the continuation of research in this area include the following.

- One area is the perception of accessibility of HE elsewhere in the UK, in the sense of where one feels one does and could belong, and of what is possible. Wakeling and Jeffries (2013) proposed that student migrants follow ‘well-worn paths’. In such a case the immediate social networks of students, their sense of belonging and position in society and the norms which they understand (consciously or unconsciously) to apply to them could play a role in identifying and following those paths. When it comes to crossing borders, this may be shaped in part by the increasing tendency to identify oneself as a national of the local country rather than as British (Raffe and Croxford,

2013), or rather than being a matter of one's own self-identity, a willingness to move away could be shaped by being from a region with a traditionally stronger self-identity (Croot, 1999). Wakeling and Jeffries (2013) also propose the notion that 'mental borders' linked to broader cultural and political trends could be a factor in not crossing geographical borders. Further, on notions of identity and belonging, Raffe and Croxford (2013) suggest that a perception that RUK students are treated differently to Scottish-domiciled students may have contributed to the decline in applications to Scotland up until 2010.

- Another strand of thought relates to the role of policy and practice in cross-border movement. The evidence on the impact of fees policy on cross-border movement identifies some impact (Raffe and Croxford, 2013; Wakeling and Jeffries, 2013), though not consistently nor perhaps to the extent that could be hypothesised. However even when considering an earlier period when fee differentials (and indeed fees payable by the student) did not exist, such as Belfield and Morris' analysis of the 1985 and 1990 cohorts, it was proposed that higher costs of movement and differences in funding systems may have inhibited movement. Student support policy, on its own or in terms of how it mitigates fee effects, may also be relevant in mobility decisions. There are other possible areas of impact of policies though, as Raffe and Croxford (2013) suggest that policies designed to target recruitment of local students or support for local labour market needs, or manage supply and demand of places, may be factors in encouraging students to remain in the home country. As we have seen from Pollok's study the applications process and policies of the institutions themselves in terms of entry requirements and admissions, may also play a role.
- The findings confirm the need to analyse the situation for each UK country, as student mobility out of each country, and to some extent mobility within, have distinguishing features. The UK HE sector is argued to be in many ways a unified system (Gallacher and Raffe, 2012; Raffe and Croxford, 2013), but in the context of student mobility differentiation is to be found.
- Ethnicity is one of the issues on which there are differences at country level and also at the level of different ethnic groups. There are potential explanations for those differences provided in the literature, relating to ethnic diversity of regions, and also gender, which potentially link into issues of identity, belonging, social norms and social relationships.
- Social class is interesting from a few perspectives. One is the impact that student cross-border mobility has on the HE student population within each country – particularly in Wales and Northern Ireland, where the effect of mobility is suggested to make the Welsh HE sector more middle class, but to make the Northern Irish sector less middle class. In Northern Ireland, this nonetheless may make the student population still representative of the class distribution within the country, whereas it may distort the comparability of the student population with the overall class distribution in Wales. Whether changes in fees and support policy would further exacerbate this was a concern expressed by Rees and Taylor (2006), however analysis since has suggested this is not the case (Raffe and Croxford, 2013). It is also of course interesting from the perspective of how class relates to mobility itself, as there does appear to be evidence of an overall tendency for traditional or middle class students to be more mobile, but

nonetheless circumstances where this is not the case and the circumstances of those cases would be interesting to explore.

- Religion has only been explored as a factor in a few studies in Northern Ireland and ROI, as these data are not collected by UCAS and HESA and require alternative data collection. It will not be possible using HESA data to analyse this further for Northern Ireland nor for the other countries.
- The evidence on the characteristics of the home area as a factor in mobility does appear to be limited. We have seen some evidence of home location relating to the likelihood of moving from the area and/or crossing borders at the broad level of urbanity/rurality, proximity to other countries and regions, HEI presence in the local region, and in one study undesirable aspects of the home location which might act as push factors. It would be difficult to analyse at a detailed level the characteristics of the home area of those who cross borders using HESA data, but it does suggest that further analysis of the home and destination regions of those who do so would be of interest.
- Institutional destinations are also of interest, as are how these relate to qualifications. This matters because it may further support hypothesis development on the impact of supply of HE and the types of institutions available on cross-border movement. It also matters in the context of fair admissions and diversity particularly in the elite institutions. The data on this until 2010 are robust, and a broad level at least are being examined by other researchers and analysts (eg UCAS and the Independent Commission on Fees). The interest though is also in relating institution destination to a wider range of factors.
- At a broad level, the common characteristics of UK students who study overseas and the kinds of institution they attend have similarities with UK students who cross borders within the UK, particularly with regards to English and Scottish-domiciled students. The studies on international degree mobility provide a level of detail about motivations for movement which may help inform our understanding of internal mobility, though of course there will be limits to the comparison that can be made. For example, one of the motivations for international mobility is to achieve differentiation to the majority of other students, and crossing borders within the UK is arguably less likely to achieve that and therefore less likely to act as a significant factor in internal mobility. However the relationship between schooling, family background and mobility, including financial and cultural resources and availability of information and guidance, with regards to international mobility may have some comparable relevance to internal mobility.

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