



2019

Immigration Policy reform: International Students and Higher Education

Anna M. Kwiatkowski
Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses>

 Part of the [International Relations Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kwiatkowski, Anna M., "Immigration Policy reform: International Students and Higher Education" (2019). *University Honors Program Theses*. 397.

<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses/397>

This thesis (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Honors Program Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Immigration Policy Reform: International Students and Higher Education

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Department of Political Science and International Studies.

By

Anna M. Kwiatkowski

Under the mentorship of Dr. Steven Engel

How has the rise in immigration around the world affected international students in obtaining student visas? Many states in the Global North are implementing restrictive immigration policies to combat the high influx of immigrants. Using the United Kingdom (UK) as a case study, I investigate how these policies have led to a decrease in the number of international students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout the UK. This has led to negative impacts on the higher education sector and economy, forcing politicians to reconsider and backtrack on immigration policies regarding international students in late 2017. Through the lens of the Liberal Paradox, I explain why a state is at odds between having restrictive and open policies towards immigrants. By studying the two policies and their effects in the UK and abroad, I look at why the UK government proposed new reforms to backtrack on the restrictive policies directed towards international students. I argue that public policy ideals, the policy's effect on the economy and the higher education sector, and public opinion on the issue are the main drivers of this policy reversal, not even ten years after its initial adoption.

Thesis Mentor: _____

Dr. Steven Engel

Honors Director: _____

Dr. Steven Engel

April 2019

Department of Political Science and International Studies

University Honors Program

Georgia Southern University

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Jamie Scalera for her advisement and teaching over the past three semesters. I also would like to thank her for giving me the opportunity to present my research at two different conferences this past year.

I would like to thank Dr. Steven Engel for agreeing to be my mentor, pushing me to continuously improve myself and my research, and for allowing me to be in the honors program. Without him, this paper would not be half as good or as long.

I would also like to thank Emily Krout, Grace Pittman, and Megan Prangle for many hours spent in the library, practicing presentations, editing papers, encouragement, and friendship.

I would like to thank my parents for encouraging me to apply to Georgia Southern University and the Honors Program, pushing me to do my best, supporting me through the past three years, and allowing me to travel and share my research with other scholars in my field.

Lastly, I would like to thank Georgia Southern and the Honors College for giving me the opportunity to grow as a scholar and as an individual, attend conferences, obtain funding, and conduct my own undergraduate research.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, globalization has led to a rapid increase in migration worldwide. The number of international migrants reached 244 million in 2015, a 41% increase from 173 million in 2000 (United Nations, 2016, 1). Consequently, states such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and the United States (US) have questioned their openness towards immigration. For example, in Switzerland the government has strict regulations on who is allowed to attain a visa, but once in, highly skilled immigrants, are treated the same as natural born citizens. Also, Spain and Portugal give priority to immigrants from ex-colonies because they have an advantage when it comes to assimilating into their new environment (Levatino et al., 2018). Through the state's need to be more selective, immigrants are now considered to be goods and services by economists, seeing as though they benefit the state in a competitive, global market.

Over the past decade, some in the US have seen immigrants as a national security risk. The Trump Administration is looking to take action in passing policies that will tighten the border, restrict the number of immigrants, and increase the requirements necessary for clearance based on their national origin. For example, President Trump advocates for building a wall to reduce the number of immigrants entering the US at the Mexican border and has issued a travel ban on immigrants from certain areas of the world unless they have family or connections to the US (Young, 2017). These statements have made many minorities living in the US uncomfortable. We must examine why states in the Global North are considering more restrictive immigration policies, especially

policies aimed at restricting international students given the competitiveness of the international student market. States may implement restrictive policies in response to economic factors, national security issues, party politics, immigration numbers, and public opinion.

International students are highly skilled migrants for states because they are economic boosters for the higher education sector and the local economies. The immigration policies being passed target not only legal immigrants and refugees, but also international students who are seeking attain visas. Many states from the Global North have imposed restrictive policies. A problem arises from these states having well-known Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that attract international students.

The UK government passed policies affecting international students' admission, in-country rights, and the process of applying for a work permit. The UK has become the first to implement restrictive policies in these areas in 2011 and 2012. This surprised many HEIs and states in the Global North, considering the UK is known for being a pioneer for establishing programs for international students (Levatino et al., 2018). Now, less than 10 years after implementing the first wave of policies, the UK is reverting to less restrictive policies toward highly skilled migrants, such as international students.

The initial move towards passing stricter legislation regarding immigrants in the Global North has led to the question of: Why did the UK change their immigration policies regarding international students in 2012 and 2017? Studying why the UK passed restrictive policies on immigrants only to reverse them is worth investigating to

understand how international students affect a state and to provide guidance to states considering restrictive immigration policies.

Through pressures to better regulate the amount of immigrants, the UK government passed restrictive immigration policies in 2011 and 2012 that led to a decrease the number of international students. These policies restricted HEIs' ability to admit international students, decreased how many years they were allowed to stay in the country, limited the amount of hours they could work, increase the level of English proficiency, and increased the amount of funds them and their dependents needed to have. I argue that the decrease in international students starting in the 2012-2013 school year caused several issues. The implementation of restrictive immigration policies resulted in less funding for HEIs, negative impacts on local economies, and international condemnation of the UK government. In late 2017, national and international backlash forced Prime Minister, Theresa May, to repeal restrictive immigration policies that targeted international students.

Immigration policies in the UK and around the globe should be studied to better understand the impacts these policies have on international students, immigrants, the public, and the state. For example, the UK is presently concerned with how the restrictive immigration policies passed in 2011 and 2012 have impacted prospective international students' views of studying in the UK compared to other places. This is why other states must consider the possible repercussions of restrictive immigration policies.

In this paper, I add to existing literature on immigration policies in the Global North. Using Hollifield's (1992) theory of the Liberal Paradox and David Easton's

(1957) Systems Model theory, I explore why states demonstrate indecisiveness when passing immigration policies. I use the UK as a case study to see how their policies function in the model. Lastly, I discuss the importance of these policies and what it means for the future of the UK and other states in the Global North.

Literature Review

To demonstrate how international students are affected by immigration policies, I review the history and research on immigration and how it has shaped policy today. Using this information, I discuss the politics behind the policies put in place. Lastly, I consider the ways in which the economy is affected by international students and the impact international students have on HEIs and the state.

Background and History

As the world becomes an increasingly globalized society, an individual's desire and ability to migrate increases with it. According to the United Nations (UN), roughly 244 million people lived outside their country of origin with a majority searching for better economic and social opportunities (Harrigan and Seo, 2016). The idea of the migration state, developed in the early 1900s, became a time where the regulation of migration was as important as providing national security and economic stability to its citizens (Hollifield, 2004, 885).

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 13, “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state and to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (UN General Assembly, 1948). This document gives every individual the right to movement. Also, it became a basis for all future migration documents and policies.

Since the end of World War II, states have contemplated restrictiveness and openness to address border control and the desire for immigrants (Hollifield, 2004; King and Raghuram, 2012; Levatino et al., 2018; Riaño et al., 2018, 284). Hollifield (1992a) coins this idea as the “Liberal Paradox” where international economic forces push states toward greater openness through the use of international organizations, while domestic political forces push states toward greater closure. This idea is evident in policymaking. For example, pressures from the UN (and in the UK’s case, the European Union (EU)) can lead to more open policies, while national governments tend to pass more restrictive legislation.

Smith (1776) argued that laissez-faire economics and free trade enhance the wealth, power, and security of a state. This idea supports open immigration policies which attract educated immigrants with specialized skills to contribute to the economy directly through goods and services. Furthermore, with the demographic decline in many industrial democracies, immigrants are given more economic opportunities (Hollifield, 2004, 901). On the other hand, it may become difficult to hold a single identity within a state if too many foreigners reside there. Many states in Europe hold these concerns

because of the high influx of immigrants as well as the predominance of nationalism in this area.

President Donald Trump's agenda pertaining to immigrants has been more restrictive in comparison to previous admin. The US government has moved to set impossible to-meet goals, harsh enforcement plans, massive cuts in legal migration, and possibly cut and permanently cap refugee resettlement numbers (Young, 2017). However, it is difficult for liberal states, such as the US, to sustain a large, illegal population, so politicians are encouraged to have these attitudes towards immigration (Hollifield, 2004).

Policy Politics

Immigration has become increasingly important for states in the past decade. This has given immigration the potential to further divide along partisan lines. While many among the public are concerned by the integrative impact immigration has on a society and its culture, some are in favor of the benefits highly skilled workers bring to the country (Partos and Bale, 2015, 170). Still, others may not be aware of immigrants' impact on the state. Additionally, many developed states are facing higher immigration not only due to globalization but also involuntary migration. The World Economic Forum's 2016 report on global risk found conflict, violence, water crises, climate change, and economic factors to be strongly associated with rising involuntary migration (WEF, 2016, 15).

Harbeson (2016) proposed the US and other developed states help to “lay the groundwork for building stronger, more durable states” (13). States should be able to help through correcting the issues that cause involuntary migration, or accepting the individuals migrating from these states. It is in developed countries’ interest to help developing countries because they will form a better relationship between them, while strengthening the world as a whole. Many of these migrants seek work, but some also seek better education as suggested by Beine (2001).

States that are part of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have seen the release of increasingly restrictive immigration policies. This has led to radical, right-wing parties gaining vote shares through strong anti-immigration platforms (Citi GPS, 2018). For example, Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, was forced by her political coalition to retreat on the issues of immigration, but the German government has made an effort to adjust opinions by showing the benefits of immigration to the national economy (Citi GPS, 2018).

It is also important to consider public opinion and how it may influence government decisions. Busemeyer (2012) looks at policy making decisions for education spending in OECD countries by analyzing how institutional contexts shape the micro-level association between income and support for education spending. According to Busemeyer (2012), when levels of general enrollment in HEIs are low (restricted access), members of the low-income classes enter a formal or informal “ends-against-the-middle” coalition with the rich against the middle classes because both oppose the expansion of public subsidies to HEIs. On the other hand, when levels of

enrollment in HEIs increase, more people from the lower-income classes gain access to higher education, and therefore they become more willing to support the expansion and public subsidization of higher education (Busemeyer, 2012).

Economic Impacts

Most economists and political analysts acknowledge immigration as being economically positive (Citi GPS, 2018). International students invest more money into the economy and pay more than they receive from the government (Bowman, 2014, 48-9; Riaño et al., 2018, 284). On the other hand, politicians see international students as positive and negative through the lens of the Liberal Paradox (Hollifield, 2004, 885). The Liberal Paradox argues that states with restrictive immigration policies risk losing access to the readily available global talent pool, while states with open immigration policies lose parts of their national sovereignty (Menz, 2016).

Most states in the Global North recognize these positives, and some facilitate education-to-work transitions for international students after they graduate, allowing them to join the workforce instead of returning to their home country (Riaño et al., 2018, 283). International students are viewed as skilled graduates who have acquired social and cultural experience in the host country, which allows for a better transition (Riaño et al., 2018, 283). Immigrants and specifically, international students, help boost the economy in several ways as well as help the higher education sector. Policymakers and international organizers seek a solution to the Liberal Paradox by looking to economics;

they hope for market-based, economic solutions to the problems of regulating international migration (Hollifield, 2004).

This drive for immigrants to boost a state's economy also has its downfalls. For example, many developing states lose talented citizens to developed states because they see better opportunities in the Global North. This phenomenon is described by Beine et al. (2001) as the "brain drain", and it is detrimental to the immigrants' countries of origin. As a result, developed states continue to prosper by gaining educated and willing workers, while the home country suffers from the lack of industrialization and educated citizens.

Higher education is described as a pivotal national strategy for securing an economic position in global markets, enhancing national competitiveness, and creating national wealth (Agnew, 2012, 476; Menz, 2016; Riaño et al., 2018, 283). Without a strong international student market, HEIs will struggle financially and will not be able to offer as many programs for their domestic students.

International Students

Agnew (2012) notes that students need contact with and understanding of other nations, languages, and cultures as globalization increases (474). HEIs are responding to globalization by infusing international perspectives into the core functions of teaching, research, and service. The presence of international students is a way to maintain programs and degrees otherwise at risk (Levatino et al., 2018). Without international

students, domestic students would lose the opportunity to study certain subjects that are predominantly taken by international students.

The UN has recognized the importance of higher education and international students as they relate to migration, and the UN has included it in the first ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration called the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, Regular Migration. Although the Global Compact is legally non-binding, it was proposed the summer of 2018 and was up for adoption in December 2018. The Global Compact proposed two objectives relevant to international students. Objective 5(j) discusses enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration by expanding available options for academic mobility, and Objective 12(a) aims to increase transparency and accessibility of migration procedures. This document is important because it gives international students more recognition and allows them to be better informed about procedures to keep them safe in foreign countries.

The literature discussed provides a greater understanding of the relation between higher education, immigration, politics, and economics. Using this, I study the effects of the Liberal Paradox and explore why the UK repealed restrictive immigration policies that targeted international students. This research is a continuation of the UK case study Levatino et al. (2018) conducted by picking up where their study stopped in 2014 and investigating the new policies developed in 2017 and 2018 affecting international students in the UK today.

Theory

I argue that the decrease in international students in the UK after 2011 had negative implications for HEIs' funding and local economies. These negative consequences resulted in the repeal of restrictive immigration policies regarding international students in 2017. I look at this policy change through the lens of the Liberal Paradox as states are in this constant struggle of going between restrictive and open policies in regards to immigration, which in turn affects international students (Hollifield, 1992a). These policies include international students because they are considered temporary migrants. While many states recognize the benefits of admitting international students, they view these students as an opportunity to reduce migrant numbers because they do not have a permanent residence.

The struggle the Liberal Paradox illustrates stems from the desire to have a successful economy, but it also demonstrates the state's desire to retain national sovereignty and security. This is common in states of the Global North who have a high influx of immigrants, a democracy, balanced economy, and a concern for national sovereignty. All of these must be present for the paradox to occur. I interpret a balanced economy as one that has many prospering industries such as manufacturing, agricultural, education, service, and energy sectors. I define a concern for national security as a state that has experienced direct or indirect terrorism and has openly declared a desire for safer borders.

I derive my theory from Hollifield's Liberal Paradox and David Easton's systems model. As shown in *Figure 1*, Easton's systems theory has international political systems

(extra-societal) and demographic systems (intra-societal) operating within the political system (Easton, 1957, 383-400). These are known as inputs. “Authorities” receive and respond to which become the outputs (Easton, 1957, 383-400). This theory is similar to the Liberal Paradox because they both include an international and domestic side inputting opinions on policy which lead to the government to create outputs or policies.

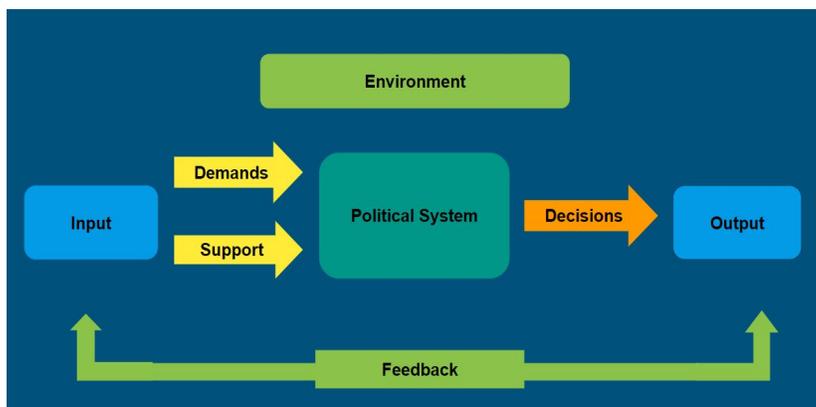


Figure 1: Easton's Political Systems Model

This diagram shows the basic model of David Easton's theory and explains the pieces (Easton, 1957).

This theory is a simple model illustrating how the demands or inputs of the environment result in the creation of a new policy through the political system. There are positive and negative effects of the policy on the state, and actors such as interest groups, the public, and supranational organizations, as shown in *Figure 2*, express their support or disapproval of the policy to the administration. This forces the administration to decide whether to maintain or repeal the policy. Therefore, Hollifield's model represents a continuous cycle of inputs originating from the environment and outputs generated by the political system. I believe this model is beneficial when examining policy areas, especially the immigration policy debate in the Global North.

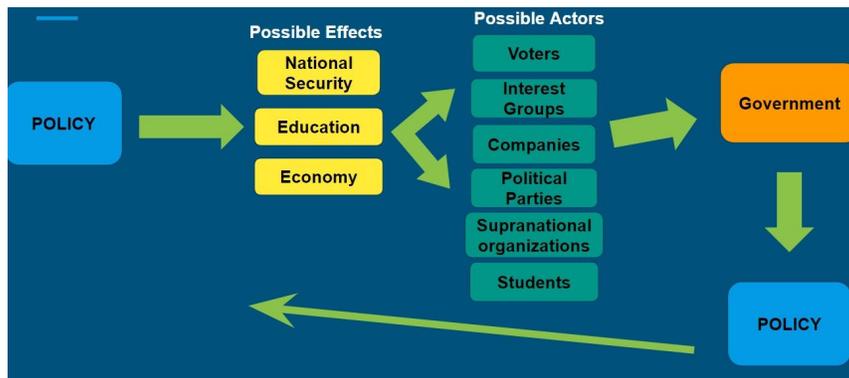


Figure 2: Policy

Theory Model

Shows the movement from policy, possible effects, possible actors, government interference, and new policy reform.

For this study, I look at a state’s transition from a restrictive to a more open policy. There are many reasons for a state to pass restrictive policies for immigrants: a high immigrant population, incidents of terrorism threatening national security, pressures from the public, and the current political power’s ideals. When restrictive immigration policies get put into action, the number of international students decreases as the government caps the number of visas issued and limits net migration numbers. Additionally, international students believe that states with restrictive policies are a risk for their education. This leads to my first hypothesis:

H1: Implementing stricter immigration policies will lead to a decrease in the number of international students.

International students are an essential part of the higher education sector, and in turn, also important to the local economies. Furthermore, they invest money directly into the economy by paying for their education, goods, services, and higher taxes. As

temporary migrants, the government does not have provide most international students the long-term benefits of being a citizen of their state such as healthcare, maternity leave, and access to social security due to many of them not having dependents and are most likely to be young (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018). Without international students, universities do not have the budget necessary to operate all their programs, and local businesses become more at risk of closing. Due to a decrease in the number of international students, the local and national economy are negatively affected over time.

H2: If the number of international students continuously decreases, then the economy will be negatively affected.

Over time, various groups notice the need for international students and look towards the national government to change and create new policies to help regain these individuals. Groups to consider are: the public, interest groups, HEIs, political parties, supranational organizations, and international students. All of these examples may play a role in pressuring the government to reform their restrictive immigration policies. Through these pressures, the state recognizes that to decrease immigration without the government facing internal backlash, they must focus on individuals entering the state that are not highly skilled migrants. For example, the government can review the different types of immigrants and see their positive and negative impacts on the state. Once these groups have demanded reform, the government will step in to work on creating policies that allow more openness for international students.

H3: If the decline in international students continues to negatively impact local economies and the higher education sector, then the government will react by returning to policies that are more open towards international students.

After the open policies are passed in a state, the cycle continues. This explains why states are constantly working to find a balance between being open to immigrants and, in this instance, international students. As mentioned before, this theory is focused on states in the Global North with prestigious HEIs, developed economies, and are democratic. Also, in some cases such as the UK, not all actors from *Figure 2* must be present, yet the cycle continues as long as there is some type of government interference. I use this theory to understand the immigration reforms that have occurred in the UK over the past ten years.

Research Design

This research is a single case study focusing on the UK during the David Cameron Coalition Government from 2010 to 2016 and Theresa May's time as Prime Minister from 2016 to 2018. I investigate how these immigration policies affected current and future international students in the UK, the higher education sector, and the state. I chose the UK as my case study because the political party of the Prime Minister has remained the same. Furthermore, the passing of the Higher Education and Research Act

was implemented months after the Brexit vote to leave the EU. Finally, the UK was the first to enact restrictive policies on international students, while others are implementing programs to attract international students across Europe.

This study employs a qualitative method approach using official government and international organization documents and reports while also referencing scholars. These sources are used to gather information on the UK's recent immigration policies, the implementation of the policies, and the effects of the policies on the state and abroad. I interpret official policy documents to identify the changes made between the two policies. I look at other scholarly articles to obtain expert opinions on the extent of effects the policies will bring from individuals in and around the UK. This is conducted by finding policy documents on the UK government's website and searching for key terms within the policy papers such as "higher education", "international students", and "immigration".

I reference existing surveys, graphs, tables, and statistics from the UK government and organization documents, reports, and databases from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the UN, the EU, the OECD, and Universities UK. These studies are used to show the quantitative effects of restrictive and open policies on the UK. I also reference studies conducted by government entities such as the Migration Advisory Committee. Controls in this research include the country selection, the political party, type of students, and time frame.

For my first hypothesis, my independent variable is the implementation of an immigration policy, and the dependent variable is the number of international students

studying in a given state. I calculate the number of international students by the amount of student visas awarded and the enrollment numbers of international students recorded by HEIs. I use data on international students numbers mentioned in the Migration Advisory Committee report (2018) and the Universities UK report (2014). Both of these reports have data from before and after the policies from 2011 to 2012 were implemented.

For my second hypothesis, my independent variable is the number of international students, and the dependent variable is economic indicators. Economic indicators include how much HEI's budget is sourced from international students, how many jobs are generated, how many jobs are held by international students, their export earnings, and their off-campus expenditure. I attain data on these economic indicators through the Migration Advisory report (2018).

For my third hypothesis, the economic indicators in the second hypothesis are the independent variable, and the dependent variable is the revision or creation of an immigration policy. In my case specifically, this includes noting new policies after the original policy and finding discrepancies between the new policy and the original policy. This is done through searching for the terms used in the first policy document. New policies were also found through email updates from the UK government in areas such as higher education and foreign policy.

Analysis

The UK has passed two immigration policies within the past 10 years that have greatly impacted international students, HEIs, and the state. I argue that the policies put forth by the government in 2011 and 2012 has lead to a decrease in the number of international students since their implementation. Consequently, the UK government passed new policies in 2017 to address the negative impacts of the original 2012 policies, but the state has yet to see a significant change as the international student market has increased its competitiveness around the world.

2012 Policy

In response to the UK's negative opinion of the EU opening borders between Member States, David Cameron passed restrictive immigration policies to combat the public sentiment pushing to leave the EU. The policies the UK enacted came in three waves from 2011 to 2012 at the beginning of the Cameron Coalition. Some of the major changes included: the inspection of sponsors, time limits, course and work placement, English language proficiency, and required funds for international students (UK, Home Office, 2012).

To recruit international students, all sponsors had to become "Highly Trusted" and pass an inspection of their educational provision by a designated independent body (UK, Home Office, 2012, 3). This policy set time limits on how many years an individual had to obtain their degree. This ensured student visas were not exploited as a means to

remain in the UK indefinitely without genuine academic intentions. For example, an international student coming to the UK for a bachelor's degree would be given 5 years. English language proficiency tests must be passed without assistance to combat language barriers in the classroom. Furthermore, international students are allowed to obtain a job in the UK, but their employment must not take up more than two-thirds of their time as the rest of their time must be put towards school. (UK, Home Office, 2012, 7). Lastly, international students and their dependents are required to show they have sufficient funds to live and sustain themselves in the UK due to these new employment restrictions.

Beech (2012) discusses other reforms the coalition planned concerning HEIs. Specifically, the plan to reduce funding for the higher education sector by 40% from 2011 to 2015 (Beech, 2012, 7). While the government cut overall funding, HEIs were also losing income from their own budgets because of the decrease of international students attending their institutions. These cuts placed HEIs in a difficult spot to continue having programs that are majority international students. The coalition wanted a more capitalistic approach for tuition costs by increasing the maximum threshold to £9000 per year (12,500 US dollars). However, this plan failed because all institutions raised their tuition to the maximum allowed instead of having a more diverse range of tuition costs (Beech, 2012, 8). This suggests that Cameron wanted reform for international students and the higher education sector as a whole.

International Student Impacts

Student visa numbers collapsed in the 2012-2013 school year from 341,305 Tier 4 visas issued in 2009 to just 218,773 in 2013; this is a 36% drop in response to the introduction of the net migration cap (Bowman, 2014, 50). Tier 4 visas are general student visas to study in the UK, and they are issued to students who are proficient in English, have been offered a course placement, meet the minimum monetary fund requirements, and are not part of the European Economic Area (EEA). Considering this decline in student visas issued, prospective international students must be better educated, accomplished, and endure more complicated bureaucratic procedures in order to obtain a visa (Partos and Bale, 2015, 174).

This could not have come at a worse time as both the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OECD data on mobility showed the UK in a strong position internationally with 12.6% of the share in 2012, and the United States was the only state that held a bigger share with 16.4% (See Figure 3 in Appendix) (Universities UK, 2014, 6). In 2016, the Institute of International Education (IIE) studied the global share of internationally mobile students and found that the UK's share had dropped to 11%, the same as Australia, and the US share rose to 22% (See Figure 4 in Appendix) (ICEF Monitor, 2019). Over the past 7 years, international students have increasingly chosen other states' HEIs to attend over the UK's HEIs because the immigration regulations in the UK have made it difficult and unattractive to reside.

The Further Education sector had the largest hit with a 78% drop in the number of student visas granted since 2010 (See Figure 5 in Appendix) (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 19-20). Further Education includes institutions such as language and technical schools that do not award undergraduate or graduate degrees (Government UK, 2015). Over 900 of these institutions lost their licenses, and the policy created more restrictions on the rights of students to work while studying. This was viewed as a major loss considering that further education allows many unskilled immigrants to study English or attend UK's technical schools to receive a higher paying job at a faster rate.

There has also been an increase in negative opinions on the process of studying in the UK from prospective international students. Due to the increase in competition for international students and the decrease in the amount of visas awarded, the UK is concerned that certain programs and institutions will take a hit. Programs such as engineering, IT, architecture, law, and business are at risk because the majority of students that study those subject areas are international students (See Figure 6 in Appendix) (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018). The chair of the Chartered Association of Business Schools said, "last year's business school student intake from outside the EU fell by almost nine percent. This, in turn, could have a detrimental effect on postgraduate taught programmes - such as the MBA - where 52 per cent of students are international" (Ali, 2016).

According to the Hobsons 2015 survey, out of 17,000 prospective international students who considered studying in the UK, a third of them decided to study elsewhere (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 36). 27% of the students chose to study in a

different country, and the remaining 5% decided to study in their home country (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 36). When asked why they did not ultimately choose the UK, international students argued: their ability to work while studying, secure job prospects, and ability to obtaining permanent residency (See Table 1 in Appendix). Two of the three reasons are related to these restrictive policies. In a competitive market, the UK needs to find additional ways to attract prospective students, not deter them.

There was also a significant drop in the total amount of student visa extensions from 100,000 in 2011 to just under 40,000 in 2017 (See Figure 7 in Appendix) (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 26). Also, the number of non-EEA students converting to a work-based visa fell 87% from 2012 to 2014 (See Figure 8 in Appendix) (Universities UK, 2014, 29). The 2012 policy not only deterred prospective students from studying in the UK as mentioned in the previous paragraph, but it also decreased the number of students that decided to extend their education or work in the UK after their Tier 4 visa expired.

The Higher Education Policy Institute (2014) conducted a survey among Conservative candidates in the 2015 general election to record their opinions on student migration. The survey found that 78% of the candidates believe international students should be excluded from any target to reduce migration, and 69% of the candidates feel the UK should aim to recruit all legitimate international students, not just the brightest and the best (HEPI, 2014, 1). These results indicate that politicians in the conservative party, Cameron and May's party, did not express a desire to include international students in future immigration policy, and they advocated for more successful recruitment

procedures. Furthermore, surveys conducted by YouGov polled the general public on their feelings of migration and international students (Universities UK, 2014, 9). Even though three-out-of-four people want immigration in the UK reduced, there was only minor support among the public for a reduction in the number of students wanting to study at UK universities (Universities UK, 2014, 9).

Giving UK students more opportunities to interact with international students fosters wider global and cultural awareness, and it brings different perspectives to class discussions. In a 2014 British Council report, 44% of UK students reported they had international students as their friends, but only 27% of them had international students in their classes (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 65). As a college student learning a foreign language and who has shared classes with international students, these students have positively impacted how I perceive their culture, and it has helped me to better understand the language. UK residents also have had positive impacts from international students. International students are hard to distinguish from the crowd, but 65% of colleges with international students have 'homestay' accommodations (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 72). Host families enjoy the benefits of international students. Host families and international students can exchange customs, allowing students and families to learn about different cultures, develop friendships, and develop their careers.

The policies passed in 2011 and 2012 had negative impacts on the higher education sector and the UK. The number of international students dramatically decreased due to restrictions placed on Tier 4 student visas, which affected who was

admitted into HEIs. As a result, prospective students looked elsewhere for their education. Politicians also observed these effects, and they saw the need to stop including international students in policies that desire restrict immigration. International students are essential for the success of HEIs, specifically programs within these institutions that are dominated by international students. With all of this in mind, my first hypothesis is supported as the policies ending in 2012 led to a considerable decrease in the total amount of international students attending UK HEIs.

2012 Economic Effects

International students maintain positive economic impacts across the UK through tuition, fees, living expenses, and expenditures by friends and family visiting them. In a 2014 report from Oxford Economics, it was found that international students generated £890 million gross value added to UK's economy (Migration Advisory Report, 2018, 55). This was estimated to support almost 23,000 jobs and generate £385 million in tax revenues. In a more recent study conducted by Universities UK in 2017, it was found that international students in HEIs contributed £13.1 billion to UK export earnings, while overseas visitors' spending generated an estimated £1 billion in gross output (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 58).

An increasing number of international students is important for the Department of Education because higher education accounts for the largest share of revenue from education-related exports at 67% (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 58-9). Additionally, international students have a positive impact through economic

contributions in every parliamentary constituency (see Table 2 in Appendix). An Oxford Economics study published in 2018 found that international students attending HEIs have a positive net fiscal impact (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 59). International Students contribute tax revenue through money spent in the local economy, and they make few demands on public services such as health because international students are relatively young and have few, if any, dependents. Also, EU and international students are far less likely to borrow loans from the UK government in comparison to UK students.

Many HEIs view international students vital to their finances. The fees of non-EU students make up 23% of all teaching income while only representing 14% of all students in the 2015-16 school year; in London, international students made up 39% of the total fee income and 19% of the total income for London HEIs (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 61). According to Russell Group, a higher education interest group, “Income from international students goes towards teaching costs for these students, education facilities, ensuring sustainability of certain courses for domestic students, and research” (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, 63).

International Students benefit the national economy and the local economy. Without the steady presence of international students, HEIs and local economies that depend on a high influx of students to work and participate in the market will suffer. Also, international students have few, if any, demands on public services, which do not place a strain on the government. Given the overwhelming impact international students have on the economy, a 36% drop in attendance immediately following the

implementation of the 2012 policy would inevitably have had a negative impact on the local and national economy in the UK. While I do not have economic data pre- or post-policy to demonstrate this effect, one can infer it due to the overall impact international students have.

The Political Environment

During this period between the two policies, May was criticized about the continuation of these restrictive immigration policies that were hurting the State. After experiencing the negative impacts of the 2012 policy, HEIs, politicians, student groups, and the public expected Prime Minister May to reverse the restrictive policies she helped create during Cameron's time as prime minister.

As explained before, the 2012 policy was spurred by Cameron's response to growing anti-EU sentiment (Kirkup, 2012). Cameron believed that the EU at the time was starting to move in a direction the UK would approve of, and he wanted conservative members of Parliament to reconsider. During this time, there was reason to suspect that HEIs were abusing the system through international students. These allegations pushed Parliament and the public to demand Cameron to enact a stricter immigration policy. Consequently, international students were included in the immigration policies because they represent a large percentage of migrants, and the government wanted to crack down on the alleged scandal occurring in the Higher Education sector.

HEIs were charged with cheating by passing international students on the English language tests allowing them to attain visas and attend their institutions (Merrick, 2019).

It was later discovered that the information pertaining to the scandal was false and found through a flawed investigation. To this day, more than 35,000 people have not been able to clear their names, and the department has refused to reveal how many students have been deported, detained and/or refused permission to stay in the UK (Merrick, 2019). As these investigations are still ongoing, they have yet to allow these students back into the UK or clear their names. The scandal was one of the major reasons for including international students in the restrictive immigration policies. Since the accusations of cheating were proven faulty, government officials under May criticized her decision to maintain the 2012 policies, which created a hostile environment for international students.

Groups in the Higher Education Sector such as *Universities UK* conducted annual reports on international student impacts on the state from the HEI perspective. The National Union of Students (NUS), comprised of 600 students' unions in the further and higher education sector of the UK, advocates for students' opinions (National Union of Students, 2019). *The Pie*, a platform for news and business analysis for professionals in International Education, published an interview they had with Yinbo Yu, an officer within NUS. Yu discussed how his education and personal development greatly benefited from the amount of cultural diversity present in UK compared to China (Kennedy, 2018). Furthermore, the article mentions how detrimental discontinuing the post-study work visa was to Yu and other international students; Yu acknowledges headlines from Chinese and Indian newspapers labeling Theresa May as the 'international student killer' (Kennedy, 2018). This is harmful to the future of the Higher Education Sector as many international

students originate from China or India, but their numbers have since declined after the 2012 policy.

Pressures from various groups, including May's own ministers, led to the beginning of a compromise detailed in the late 2017 policy, but May had many reservations about allowing more freedoms to international students and HEIs. May remains hesitant about altering her net migration target from 2010 due to the accusations of fiddling with the numbers that would follow. Although other major competitors for international students, such as the US and Australia, have reclassified students as temporary migrants, May considers international students long-term migrants based on the UN definition of a migrant. Furthermore, May has reservations about the risks of opening the doors to other exemptions that may qualify as a migrant (Warrell, 2017). Overtime, May did make compromises allowing for the creation of the 2017 policy.

Policy makers are continuously put on the spot to deal with issues such as immigration. In this case, May personally felt the 2012 policy was what the UK needed, but she dealt with backlash from interest groups, the public, and various government officials. The compromise made creating the 2017 policy allows for my third hypothesis to be proven. If a policy isn't desired, there will be backlash and action taken to revise the policy.

2017 Policy

The Higher Education and Research Act was released by the Department of Education in December 2017. This document laid out articles passed concerning HEIs as

a whole rather than the students themselves. Many hope this is the first installment of acts passed to ease tensions regarding international students. The Act places less restrictions on institutions, gives more time for students to stay in the UK, encourages an open and diverse environment, increases financial aid, and allows for less institution spending (UK, Department of Education, 2017, 30).

Article 42 of the Act anticipated the proposed reforms would lead to a larger number of institutions able to provide student loan funding for their students by increasing the provider's income (UK, Department of Education, 2017, 30). This allows institutions to improve the quality and quantity of their course offerings for all students. Furthermore, the UK government recognized the need to help international students feel welcomed at their HEIs due to the significant drop in prospective international students. The policy would remove duplicate checks in gaining a Tier 4 sponsor status, which would allow a greater number of institutions to recruit international students. In article 43, the OECD projects that the international student market is likely to reach 8 million students a year by 2025 (UK, Department of Education, 2017, 31). If the proposed measures allow the UK to maintain or even increase its share of the international student market, this could have a large positive impact on the UK economy.

Article 92 and 93 explain the changes leading to less restrictions and spending for HEIs. Furthermore, Article 92 suggests that if an institution has both specific course designation and a Tier 4 sponsor, this implies duplication in the review process, which imposes additional costs on the institution (UK, Department of Education, 2017, 45). Finally, Article 93 calculated the savings due to removed duplication between the Tier 4

sponsor application and the course designation as 900,000 pounds saved in the first year alone by institutions (UK, Department of Education, 2017, 45). The amount in savings from this Higher Education Act and increased income from a projected rise in international students will help HEIs introduce more campus programs to help international students and maintain options for areas of study.

2017 Policy Impacts

Morgan (2017) acknowledges the hope many HEIs have in the government committing to a strategy for growing international student numbers. With the 2017 policy creating almost a million pounds in savings each year, there is no doubt that HEIs will be able to have more successful programs to encourage students to return to the UK. This was seen as a positive move for prospective international students and HEIs after the Higher Education and Research Act was passed.

Currently, May has switched her focus towards immigration policies that regulate unskilled immigrants; she has also agreed not to include international students in future restrictions. These new policies are in response to Brexit negotiations to leave the EU. I see this as progress in the right direction for international students and HEIs. However, I still believe more action is necessary considering the overall morale towards international students and winning over more prospective students in a growing market after the effects of the 2011 and 2012 policies.

With the UK's post-Brexit treatment, the issue concerning EU researchers, workers, and students obtaining visas to stay in the UK remains to be a problem until the

government can forge a Brexit deal. For example, an interest group known as the Russell Group, is concerned about how universities in the UK will be able to participate and contribute to EU research after the UK leaves the EU. There are many questions as to how this will affect the number of international and EU students that will attend UK HEIs, the professors working there, and research being done at these universities. I have reason to suspect that there will be many grey areas in regards to higher education in the coming years as the UK government works towards an agreement for EU citizens while also utilizing new market strategies for attracting and retaining international students.

Conclusion

Cameron's restrictive immigration policies in 2011 and 2012 were detrimental to HEIs and the UK's stake in the international student market. Not only were HEIs hit hard by these policies, but also the local economy and the overall view of the UK. After Theresa May became the Prime Minister, she was hesitant to reverse Cameron's policy. Overtime, a compromise was agreed upon to strengthen the international student market and decreased regulations for HEIs.

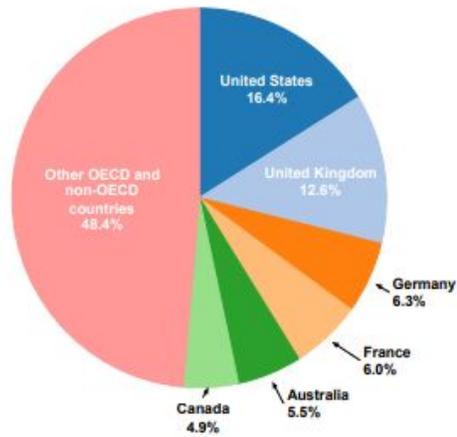
My third hypothesis predicting a policy reversal when a decrease in international students results in negative economic impacts has support. However, I do believe that more than economic indicators led to this reversal in policy such as the Brexit deal and pressures from various actors. The topic of immigration is and will continue to be contentious topic in the UK and the Global North in years to come.

This case is important for states that are considering enacting restrictive immigration policies. States need to be aware that international students can have a big impact on their economies and HEIs. Without them, leaders in the Global North may face serious backlash. There needs to be better recognition of how including international students in immigration policies can be detrimental to the state. There are two takeaways from this case study. First, international students positively impact the state economically, educationally, and culturally. Second, immigration restrictions on international students have consequences for political leadership and the economic and educational sectors.

Further research can be pursued by exploring and comparing immigration policies pertaining to and the alternative HEI choices made by international students from the UK's biggest international student contributors, China and India. Additionally, other countries' immigration policies in relation to international students can be investigated. Furthermore, a comparative case study of different States' policies in regards to international students. Finally, exploring HEIs' marketing strategies and states' immigration policies of the Global North to determine their ability to attract and retain international students.

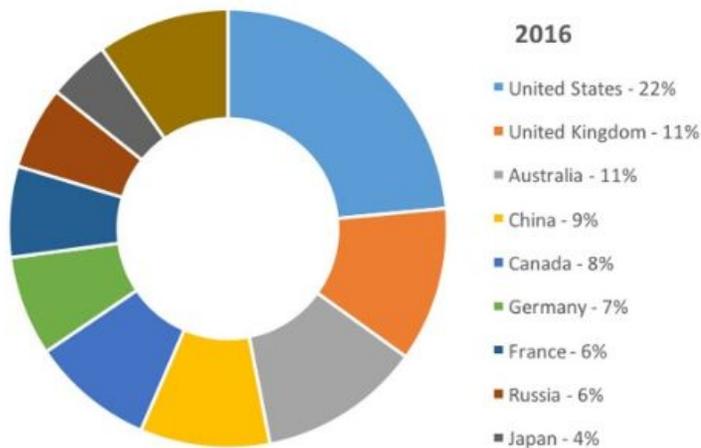
Appendix

Figure 3: Shares of the International Student Market, 2012



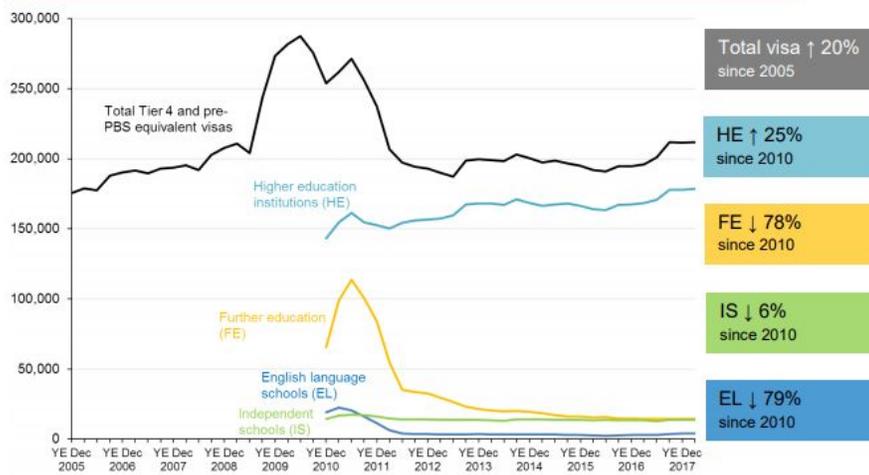
Source: OECD; Universities UK, 2014, pg. 4.

Figure 4: Global Market Share of Internationally Mobile Students for Leading Study Destinations 2016.



Source: IIE/Project Atlas (2016); ICEF Monitor, 2019)

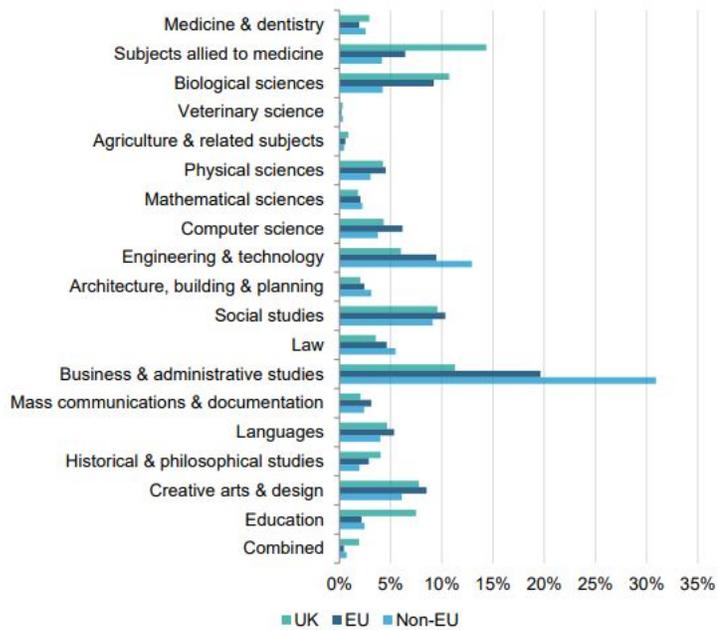
Figure 5: Tier 4 student visas granted, and student sponsorship applications by education sector.



Source: Home Office immigration statistics (sponsorship table cs 09 q²⁶ and visa table vi 04 q²⁷); Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, pg. 20.

Note: (1) Total Tier 4 and pre-points based system (PBS) equivalent visas is for the main applicant and excludes short-term study. (2) Figures are presented on a rolling four-quarter basis.

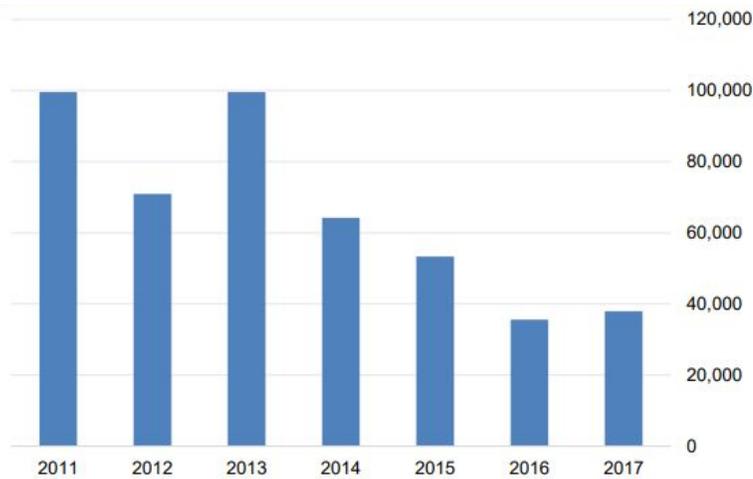
Figure 6: Higher Education Student Enrolments by subject of study and domicile



Source: HESA (DT051 Table 22) in 2016/2017; Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, pg. 30.

Note: This chart shows the distribution of each domicile between subjects; each domicile will sum to 100%.

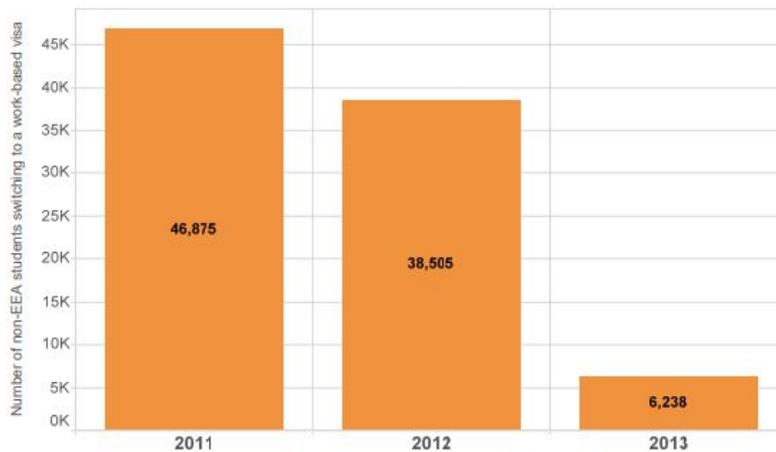
Figure 7: Total student visa extensions (in-country leave to remain) for study



Source: Home Office Migration Statistics - visa extensions (Table: expc_01); Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, pg. 26.

Note: These figures exclude dependents

Figure 8: Number of former non-EEA students granted an extension to stay in the UK to work.



Source: Home Office; Universities UK, 2014, pg. 29.

Table 1: Important Factors for Choosing a Country

Factors for choosing a country	Percentage of times each item was ranked most important, when ranking the five most important factors
It has universities with high quality teaching	26.7%
It is welcoming to international students	23.3%
I can get a visa to study there	21.0%
It has an affordable cost of living	20.0%
It has well ranked universities	19.6%
I have friends or family living there	19.2%
The lifestyle appeals to me	19.1%
It has a good reputation as a place to study	18.3%
I can get a visa to work after graduating	16.6%
It was recommended to me	13.2%
It has good graduate employment options	11.6%

Source: UK Hobson's International Students Survey 2017; Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, pg. 36.

Table 2: Net Economic Contribution from International Students by Region/Nation

Region/nation	Net economic contribution from international students (£ billion)
London	4.64
South East	2.44
West Midlands	1.95
North West	1.91
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.59
East of England	1.34
East Midlands	1.28
South West	1.21
North East	0.98
Scotland	1.94
Wales	0.90
Northern Ireland	0.17
Total	20.34

Source: The costs and benefits of international students by parliamentary constituency report for Higher Education Policy institute and Kaplan International Pathways; Migration Advisory Committee, 2018, pg. 57.

Bibliography

- Agnew, Melanie. 2012. "A False Dichotomy of Serving *either* the Local *or* the Global Community and its Impact on Internationalisation of the University." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (5): 473-489.
- Ali, Aftab. 2016. "Tory Visa Policies Are Having a Serious Impact on Student Numbers." *The Independent*. Accessed February 07, 2019.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/government-visa-rules-are-making-bbritain-a-difficult-and-unattractive-study-destination-for-a6925666.html>.
- Beech, Matt. 2012. "State of Discipline: British politics in a cold climate." *British Politics* 7 (1): 4-16.
- Beine, Michel, Frederic Docquier, and Hillel Rapoport. 2001. "Brain Drain and Economic Growth: Theory and Evidence." *Journal of Development Economics* 64: 275-89.
- Bowman, S. 2014. Small steps; immigration. In: R. Shorthouse, K. Maltby and J. Brenton (eds.) *The Modernisers' Manifesto*, pp. 47-53,
<http://brightblue.org.uk/bbmanifesto.pdf>,
accessed 5 March 2018.
- Busemeyer, Marius R. 2012. "Inequality and the Political Economy of Education: An Analysis of Individual Preferences in OECD Countries." *Journal of European Social Policy* 22 (3): 219-240. doi:10.1177/0958928712440200.
- Citi GPS: Global Perspectives and Solutions. 2018. *Migration and the Economy*. Report. University of Oxford. Accessed January 2019.
https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/reports/2018_OMS_Citi_Migration_GPS.pdf.
- Easton, David. 1957. "An approach to the analysis of political systems." *World Politics* 9 (3): 383-400.
- European Commission. 2016. "Schengen Area." Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings. Accessed November 14, 2018.

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en.

- Garceau, Oliver, and David Easton. 1953. "The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science." *Political Science Quarterly* 68 (3): 434. doi:10.2307/2145610.
- Government UK. 2015. "Further Education Courses and Funding." GOV.UK. Accessed February 07, 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/further-education-courses>.
- Harbeson, John W. 2016. "Mainstreaming Involuntary Migration in Development Policies." doi:10.14240/cmsesy120716
- Harrigan, Francyne, and Sok-Min Seo. 2016. "Number of International Migrants Reached 244 Million in 2015." United Nations. Accessed January 26, 2019. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/01/244-million-international-migrants-living-abroad-worldwide-new-un-statistics-reveal/>.
- Higher Education Policy Institute. 2014. "Survey of Conservative Election Candidates on Student Migration." Accessed March 5, 2018. <https://cmsny.org/publications/harbeson-mainstreaming-involuntary-migration/>
- Hollifield, James F. 1992a. "Immigrants, Markets, and States: The Political Economy of Postwar Europe." *International Migration Review* 27 (3) doi:10.2307/2547107.
- Hollifield, James F. 1992b. "Migration and International Relations: Cooperation and Control in the European Community." *International Migration Review* 26 (2): 568-95. doi:10.2307/2547072.
- Hollifield, James F. 2004. "The Emerging Migration State." *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 885-912. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00223.x.
- ICEF Monitor. 2019. "Measuring Up: Global Market Share and National Targets in International Education." ICEF Monitor - Market Intelligence for International Student Recruitment. Accessed February 20, 2019. <http://monitor.icef.com/2017/04/measuring-global-market-share-national-targets-international-education/>.

- Kennedy, Kerrie. 2018. "Yinbo Yu, International Students' Officer, NUS." *The PIE News*.
 Accessed March 23, 2019.
<https://thepienews.com/pie-chat/yinbo-yu-international-students-officer-nus/>.
- King, Russell, and Parvati Raghuram. 2012. "International Student Migration: Mapping the Field and New Research Agendas." *Population, Space and Place* 19 (2): 127-37. doi:10.1002/psp.1746.
- Kirkup, James. 2012. "David Cameron Rules out EU Referendum." *The Telegraph*.
 Accessed March 28, 2019.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/9365175/David-Cameron-rules-out-EU-referendum.html>.
- Levatino, A., T. Eremenko, Y. Molinero Gerbeau, E. Consterdine, L. Kabbanji, A. Gonzalez-Ferrer, M. Jolivet-Guetta, and C. Beauchemin. 2018. "Opening or Closing Borders to International Students? Convergent and Divergent Dynamics in France, Spain and the UK." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 16 (3): 366-80 doi:10.1080/14767724.2018.1457432.
- Meikle, James, and Shiv Malik. 2012. "London Met Crisis Will Damage UK's Brand, Says Vice-chancellor." *The Guardian*. Accessed March 5, 2018.
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/aug/30/london-metropolitan-university-international-students>.
- Menz, Georg. 2015. "Framing Competitiveness: The Advocacy of Migration as an Essential Human Resources Strategy in Europe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42 (4): 625-42. doi:10.1080/1369183x.2015.1102040.
- Merrick, Rob. 2019. "Students Wrongly Caught up in Theresa May's 'hostile Environment' Still 'living in Terror'." *The Independent*. Accessed March 24, 2019.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/students-theresa-may-hostile-environment-immigration-detention-deport-english-tests-a8781731.html>.
- Migration Advisory Committee. 2018. *Impact of International Students in the UK Report*. 1 (1) 1-117.

- Morgan, John. 2017. "UK to Loosen Visa Rules for Graduates and Researchers." *Times Higher Education*. Accessed October 30, 2018.
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-loosen-visa-rules-graduates-and-researchers>.
- National Union of Students. 2019. National Union of Students. Accessed March 23, 2019. <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/who-we-are/what-we-do/>.
- Natter, Katharina. 2018. "Rethinking Immigration Policy Theory beyond 'Western Liberal Democracies'." *Comparative Migration Studies* 6 (1).
doi:10.1186/s40878-018-0071-9.
- Partos, Rebecca, and Tim Bale. 2015. "Immigration and Asylum policy under Cameron's Conservatives ." *British Politics* 10 (2): 169-184.
- Riaño, Yvonne, Christof Van Mol, and Parvati Raghuram. 2018. "New Directions in Studying Policies of International Student Mobility and Migration." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 16 (3): 283-94.
doi:10.1080/14767724.2018.1478721.
- Smith, Adam. 1776. An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell.
- United Kingdom, Department for Education. 2017. "Higher Education and Research Act: Detailed Impact Assessments." Higher Education and Research Act: Detailed Impact Assessments, pp. 30–31, 45.
- United Kingdom, Home Office. 2012. "Statement of Intent: Changes Affecting Study, Post-Study Work and Maintenance Requirements For Students and Workers." Statement of Intent: Changes Affecting Study, Post-Study Work and Maintenance Requirements For Students and Workers, Home Office pp. 3–13.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Population Division. 2016. "International Migration Report 2015." International Migration Report 2015, p. 1.
- United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10

- December 1948, 217 A (III). Accessed November 11, 2018.
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- United Nations. 2018. "Global Compact for Migration | Refugees and Migrants."
Accessed January 26, 2019. <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>.
- Universities UK. 2014. "International Students in Higher Education: The UK and Its
Competition." Report. Accessed November 2018.
- Warrell, Helen. 2017. "Five Reasons Theresa May Wants Students in Migration
Statistics." *Financial Times* Accessed March 24, 2019.
<https://www.ft.com/content/1c61c180-0a43-11e7-ac5a-903b21361b43>.
- WEF (World Economic Forum). 2016. *The Global Risks Report 2016*, 11th ed.
Geneva: WEF.
- Young, Julia. 2017. "Making America 1920 Again?: Nativism and US Immigration, Past
and Present." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5(1): 217-35.