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A Comparative Perspective of Romanian and British International Students

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The aim of this article is to offer a comparative overview between the mobility of international students from Romania and the United Kingdom. Why are Romanian students choosing to study abroad, in new academic environments, whilst British students are apparently less willing to do so? By comparing educational policies and the number of Erasmus students from the two countries we are hoping to explain, beyond economic and cultural differences, why this dichotomy exists. Furthermore, we are interested in understanding if the destinations of choice for students are evolving. To do this we plan on using a social network approach to analysis so that we can locate students within evolving mobility networks. We will be utilizing data from the European Union and OECD for this facet of our study.

After studying the educational policies from the last five years for both Romania and the UK, as well as the official statistics for international students, we will then attempt to explore students' perceptions of mobility opportunities. How students are informed about the possibility of studying abroad is also very different. In Romania there is quite assertive publicity, through mass-media and social network websites, by contrast this is far less commonplace in Britain where policy-makers appear to place a greater emphasis on keeping "their brains". The method by which the two countries present international study is an important aspect of our article.

Between, "brain gain" and "brain drain", in the internationalization and globalization era, our article aims to present the differences between the students of these two countries, and offer tools as to how more students could be made aware of chances to study internationally.

Key words: Erasmus students, migration patterns, educational policies

In their Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights lists the right to education as a fundamental right of all humans. For the OHCHR, the role of education is not simply the acquisition of knowledge but it should facilitate understanding between people'

'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.' (Article 26, OHCHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Perhaps there is no better example of this promotion of friendship between nations through education than the international migration of students in higher education. International study is a part of human development through which an individual learns how to integrate in new surroundings, they also acquire skills and knowledge to become a more desirable member of the society in which he or she lives and the society in which they study. It is perhaps only natural then that we seek to understand the motivationsfor students to embark on the challenge of higher education abroad. In the context of studying internalization and globalization, student mobility can become a reference phenomenon forwider social research. From a European perspective, the promotion of mobility in higher education is 'clearly the most concrete, easily interpreted and uncontroversial' policy (Reichert and Tauch 2003). However, the direction of migration is likely to be from Eastern, transitional countries to Western, more developed education systems and in time it may be possible to talk about a systematic gain and loss of talents or 'brain gain' and 'brain drain' (Kwiek 2004).

Our study seeks to understand this process by focusing upon two countries, Romania and the United Kingdom which find themselves at the opposite poles in official statistics: Romania is a country of origin for migration and has a low rate of student immigration whereas the United Kingdom is one of the favorite destination countries for international students and a comparatively low outgoing population. As we are interested in European international students, we will be investigating the evolution of migration seen in the Erasmus programme. To do this we will briefly discuss the differences between the countries, and the modern history of student migration in Europe before we begin our investigation of the differing educational policies in Romania and the UK and the changing networks of student mobility. We will finish be examining how students in these countries are made aware of the opportunities available to them.

We believe that is an important area of research because, as Olsen points out, the process of Europeanisation has become a 'growing laboratory' for studying institutional and policy transformations (Olsen 2002). Furthermore, Olsen sees this a laboratory 'well-equipped' to analyze polity, politics and policy and as such we now have to understand to what extent European policies are affecting national policies and demographics. Although European integration started with and focused more on economic and legal processes, this is expanding into social, political, and cultural domains. It is natural that higher education policy plays an important role in the integration of a state into the European world, but equally it should be recognized that some nations already have mature, strong educational systems, while others are new to this challenging market. Step by step, European policies have tended to override national policies in states that do not have a tradition in higher education, as those states, particularly in Eastern Europe are still in a process of finding their identity, under the pressures of being European. The Erasmus programme might be a true vector of the evolution of educational systems, and of forming the next generation of European citizens who are ready and willing to live and work in another country(Altbach and Teichler 2001). By understanding the processes by which students choose where to study we can ensure 'brain circulation' rather thanrisk transitional systems losing out on talented students (Bologna Policy Forum, 2009).

Romania and the UK

The educational framework for the two countries is very different, as we are comparing a county with great tradition in forming elites (UK) that has in a certain economic, political, social and cultural context migrated from 'elite education' to mass education, to a country that has just begun to create a mass higher education system. Whilst in the UK, the evolution from an elite-dominated education was made gradually, in Romania after the collapse of the Communist regime the change was accelerated in order to fit its new European context. Being a country in transition, Romania has had to quickly learn how to manage public funds, redirecting them to higher education in order to obtain an educational system that fits European requests. Although both countries today relay on European educational policies to establish their own national polices, it is clear that the UK has a more developed system and is ahead of many other European countries. The UK has a significantly larger GDP than Romania, a smaller rural population and growth, but both nations have a similar percentage of their population aged fourteen and under.
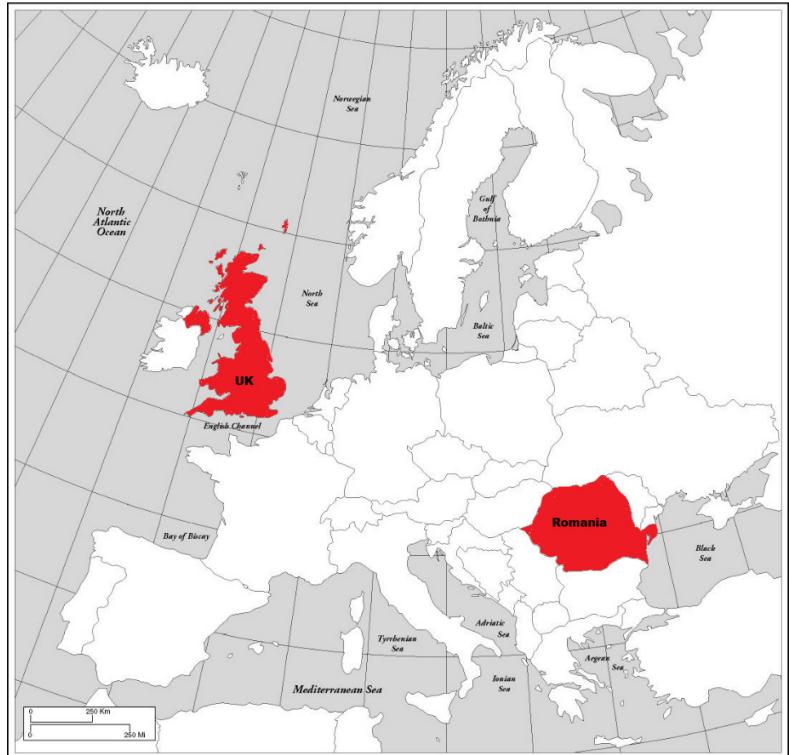
	Romania	United Kingdom
Area in km^2	238 391	242 900
Total population (in thousands)	21755	62783
Annual population growth	-0,3	0,8
Population aged 14 years and younger	3276	11079
Rural population (% of total population)	47	20
Life expectancy at birth (years)	75	81
GDP per capita - PPP$	17004	37456
Annual GDP growth (%)	3,1	0,1
GDP in billions _PPP$	363	2368

Table 1- General description of Romania and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Source: UNESCO statistics

The difference in the amount of money available to each country can also be seen in the tables overleaf, investment in education in the UK is noticeably higher and more consistent than in Romania. By contrast Romanian spending is not well documented and appears to be in decline. The role that these differences may have in student migration will be discussed later.
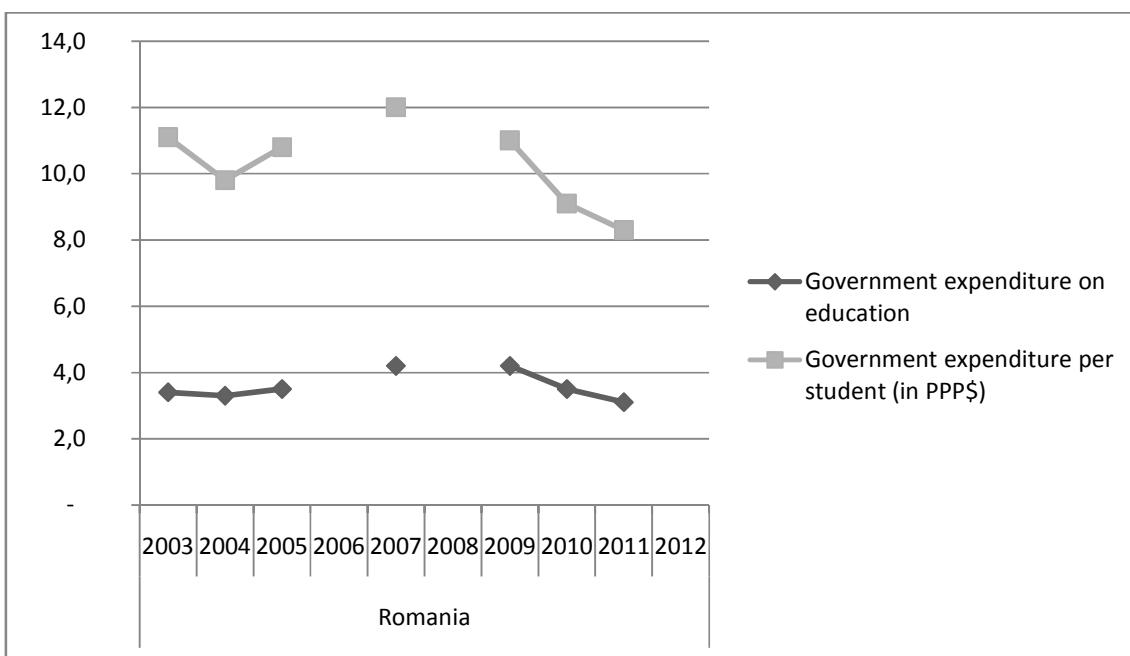
Table 2 - Government expenditure in education in Romania
Source: UNESCO statistics
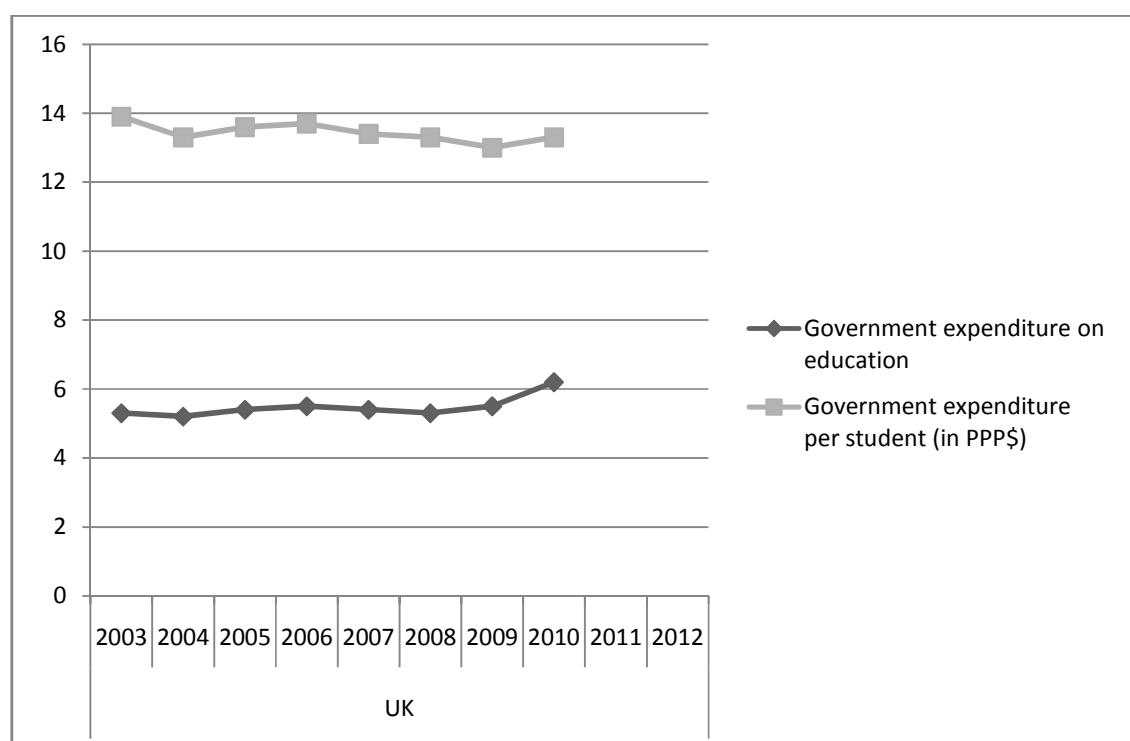
Table 3- Government expenditure in education in UK
Source: UNESCO statistics

Education in Europe

The formation of a European Higher Education Area began with the Sorbonne Declaration(Ravinet 2005)which was signed in 1998 by Ministers of education from France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The Ministers involved felt that the segmented educations systems in Europe were out-dated and harmful (EHEA, 2014). The dual aims of the declaration were to make European higher education more desirable and globally competitive and to improve the educative opportunities available to students by giving them a greater freedom to pursue their own pathways in learning,

> 'Europe is not only that of the Euro, of the banks and the economy: it must be a Europe of knowledge as well. We must strengthen and build upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent. These have to a large extent been shaped by its universities, which continue to play a pivotal role for their development'. (Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1998)

This was followed by the Bologna Declaration (Reinalda and Kulesza-Mietkowski 2005)of 1999 which was signed by ministers from a further 29 countries. The final step of this process to create a Higher Education Area was in 2003, when at the conference of Berlin(Communiqué 2003), Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were accepted.As of 2012 there are now 47 countries which are part of the EHEA, and at the same conference a target of 20% of graduates experiencing some education or training abroad by 2020 was agreed.

Alongside the European Higher Education Area was created a European Research Area to facilitate the free circulation of, 'researchers, knowledge and technology' (ERA Progress Report, 2013).Although the European Higher Education Area and the EuropeanResearch Area developed separately, we can identify a general tendency towards European convergence at different levels. At inter-institutional level the Magma Charta Universitatum sets the guidelines for future development for higher education institutions. It was developed in 2001 and 2003 by the conventions of Salamanca and Graz. At inter-governmental levels meetings from Sorbonne, Bologna, Prague, Berlin and biannually since thenhave set the pathways and established the main objectives for the signatory ministries. At the supranational level (EU), the European Communications and all official documents point to the realization of a common European Educational and Research Area. (De Elera 2006).

As our paper's main objective is in the evolution of international students' mobility, we will focus onErasmus as it is the most successful student programme of European Union. From the beginning of the programme in 1987-1988, the programme aimed to encourage mobility. This is at the core of the European Commission strategy for fighting youth unemployment. The Erasmus programme tries to developstudents' skills and to better prepare them to face the challenges of the global labour market. According to a study by the European Commission:

> 'Learning mobility contributes to student's personal development and equips them with a wide range of competences and skills that are increasingly valued by employers – from foreign languages and greater intercultural awareness, to quick adaptability to change and an entrepreneurial mindset. In this way mobility, boosts job prospects and encourages labor market mobility later in life.'[iii]

The same report highlights the remarkable evolution of the programme over the years. In the academic year 2011-2012, a 9% growth students participating in the Erasmus scheme wasrecorded and a high of 252,827 students took part. There has been a consistent growth in student participation since its inception. By 2003, a total of one million students had studied abroad, by 2009 the two million target was reached and, by 2013 the estimated number of international students who will have taken part is three million. For the two countries of interest, official statistics show a 13% increase of students' mobility, a 9% growth in study exchange and work placements and a 25% growth in teaching assignments and staff training for Romania, while there has been a more modest rise in the with a 6%

increase of students' mobility, 7% growth in study exchange and work placements and a 29% growth in teaching assignments and staff training.

When it comes to possible obstacles to mobility, the problem has to be seen from different perspectives. Academically speaking the curricula differs from country to country, the arrangements for language training are not perfectly organized in all the countries that participate in exchange programs, financial support is inadequate for students and institutions and the information does not always reach students, the public and employers very easily. According to a report published by Erasmus Council, higher education institutions must change their attitude regarding mobility programmes and additional changes must be made. Better promotion of Erasmus programme, databases should be up to date, web sites need to become more user-friendly, contacts must be kept with former students and the issues of academic recognition should be addressed in order to attain the objectives of the program. (Council 2005).

Research into the field of outbound student mobility is quite poor because of the relative paucity of data, although both UNESCO and OECD ask each country to send clear statistics regarding the numbers of mobile students. In papers attempts are madeto distinguish between international and foreign students. With respect to international students, the literature identifies them as individuals that move in another country with the purpose of study. Foreign students are those students that study for a long time in a country without being citizens of that country, they may have moved for education prior to university. Not every country makes this distinction and sometimes both categories are seen as mobile students, the difference in the period of time student spends in the destination country is ignored.

European Erasmus Migration

To investigate the factors that influence the migration of Erasmus students we decided to take a social network approach. We can liken student migration to a friendship bond, and the number of students involved as the strength of that relationship. We can use factors which are believed to influence migratory behaviour as aspects of the receiving countries that make them a desirable location in which to study. By looking at longitudinal data we can see these networks evolve, and the strengths of the ties change and thereby discern the most important factors driving the evolution. To conduct this analysis we will use the RSiena procedure, which has been designed to do this form of research and is available in R (Steglich, Snijders et al. 2010).

Two major theories support the international students' mobility phenomenon. Students' leave their countries because they do not have enough study opportunities and here we apply the theory of "constrained- domestic schooling". As the study of Mary M Kritz,"Globalization of Higher Education and International Students Mobility" presented in 2012 at United Nations Expert Group Meeting, shows there is no significant relationship between tertiary education supply or population size and the percent of abroad students, but there is a positive relationship between the country dimension, tertiary education demand and GDP per capita. The second theory faces challenges of migration for employment. Hoping to get jobs better remunerated and more chances on the labor market, students decide to study abroad and try their chances after graduation. As more and more European countries open their labour market for graduates, even allowing students to work part-time while studying, we might face in the nearby future, the whole complexity of the "the brain drain" phenomenon for the countries that are sending students, and the receiving countries will have all the benefits of "the brain gain".

To perform this analysis we used data from the European Commission's Report of the Erasmus programme from 2007 until 2013 which showed the number of students each country sent and received. This was then transformed to being in percentage terms so that countries with larger populations did not dominate the analysis. For example in absolute terms as many Estonian students choose to study in Belgium, as the total outgoing Erasmus student population in Liechtenstein; though this means that Belgium is the most desirable option for less than 3% of Estonians. In our matrix connections which accounted for 0 students were assigned a value of 0, below 5% was assigned 1, below 10% was valued as 2, below 20% was assigned 3 and above 20% was assigned 4. Based on the number of countries in our study, it was impossible for us to use more than four levels. As most of the ties only accounted for a small percentage of the total students, the differences between the boundaries were kept low.

We also hypothesized that students would prefer to study in countries which spend the greatest about per student on tertiary education and obtained recent adjusted expenditure figures from UNESCO. We also included variables of official and spoken languages in each country, as linguistic similarity or competency is likely to play a part in decision making. We calculated the distances between all the countries (measured from capital city to capital city) as we hypothesized that students may prefer to remain relatively close to their home nation. Our final variable of interest is a dummy variable to designate if the destination country can be considered part of Eastern European. This was chosen as it has been suggested that the 'brain drain' flows from Eastern to Western universities. As there are many definitions as to Eastern European nations, for fairness we selected those which make up the informal Eastern European Group in the UN. Romania is part of this group whereas the UK is not. We had to use data on the employment opportunities available to graduates, for example, the percent who were able to find graduate-level jobs but there was too much missing data for this to be a useful measure. The benefit of using RSiena for this form of analysis is that it also allows many other network effect to be considered. An example of this is reciprocity, it may perhaps be that students tend to travel to countries from which many incoming students come. Such network effects are often overlooked in studies but they can be an important driver for network change, and in the case of a process like reciprocity it may be uncovering a significant cultural factor not picked up by any of the other variables.

The results from our analysis can be seen below, for convenience we will only present the significant results. There were 72 effects found by RSiena but only 8 that were relevant for our analysis:-

Effect name	Direction of Coefficient	Significance (*** most significant)
EuropeAboveZero : Reciprocity	+	*
EuropeAboveOne : 3-cycles	-	**
EuropeAboveOne : Balance	+	***
EuropeAboveOne : East Europe ego	+	**
EuropeAboveOne : Expense alter	+	*
EuropeAboveTwo : transitive triples	-	*
EuropeAboveTwo : Balance	+	**
EuropeAboveTwo : Expense ego	+	*

We will now explain our findings. The first significant effect we found was EuropeAboveZero: Reciprocity, which had a positive coefficient. This means that for all non-zero ties between countries, regardless of the amount of students that travel between them, there is a tendency for countries to have reciprocal ties. The next four significant effects were all for EuropeAboveOne networks, that is to say for ties which accounted for at least 5% of the outgoing student population. It is unsurprising in the context of a 'brain gain' and 'brain drain' that we had a significant result for 3-cycle effects. In a 3-cycle, students from **country i** will travel to **country j1**; students from **country j1** travel to **country j2**, and finally students from **country j2** will travel to **country i**.
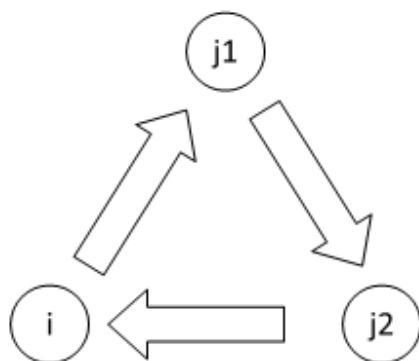
The diagram above is an example of a 3-cycle network. In our analysis we found that students were statistically less likely to form 3-cycle networks. This is understandable if we imagine that students in **country i** move to **country j1** as it is a more desirable country to study in. Meanwhile students in **country j1** are also moving to **country j2** as it is more desirable. The students in the most-desirable country in the 3-cycle are then unlikely to more to the least-desirable. As better students move onwards to better educative system, those at the highest systems are not moving downwards. The next significant effect we found was balance, this simply means that students from one country moved in the same directions as students from similar countries. People in 'balanced' nations tended to select the same destinations. East Europe ego also had a positive co-efficient. This refers to the East Europe dummy variable we included in the model. We interpret this mean that students in East European nations, went to a wider selection of countries, perhaps because as countries in East Europe tended to spend the least on education, their students had more options to move to more desirable systems. The better the system one lived in initially, the less options one has to move and improve. The final EuropeAboveOne effect we found to be significant was Expense alter. This again was not surprising. The positive coefficient of this effect shows that students tend to move to countries who spend more per student.

The three other additional effects we found were all EuropeAboveTwo, meaning that they were found for those connections which accounted for at 10% of the outgoing students. The first effect was EuropeAboveTwo: transitive triples. Transitive triples are one of the most consistently detected processes in social network analysis and found in most networks. Our networks are somewhat unusual in that the coefficient is negative, indicating that we were less likely to find transitive triples amongst our student migratory patterns.

Time 1   **Time 2**
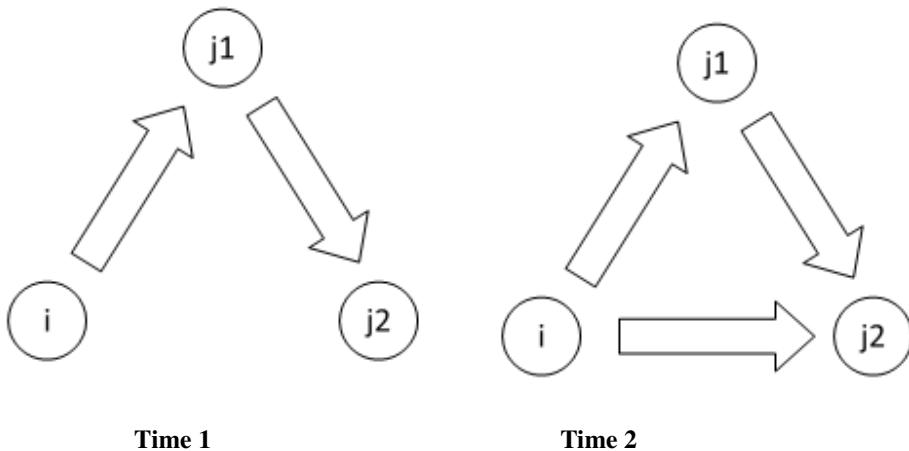
The diagram above shows the formation of a transitive triple. If a tie exists between **country i** and **country j1**, and **country j1** and **country j2**, we would expect a tie to form between **country i** and **country j2**. Again the lack of transitive triples forming is perhaps indicative of a hierarchy existing between education systems, students are moving up, but only to those slightly more desirable than their own. Balance was significant for these networks as seen for the other networks, as was the tendency for students to go to countries which spend more.

Education in Romania and the UK

Romania is a country in transition, and the education system has undergone many reforms since the 1990 Revolution. The higher education system is now influenced by the guidelines of the European Higher Education Area. The Ministry of Education and Research classifies the higher education institutions as universities, institutes, academies, and postgraduate schools of study. According to the Ministry, in Romania there are around 110 universities, both private and public, that incorporate around 650 faculties. The university system is far less centralized than in many other European countries, as individual institutions are responsible for their own admission

procedures, examinations and graduation. There are four Romanian universities in the worlds' top 700[1]. There has been a rapid rise in the number of students at Romanian higher education institutions, with just over 400,000 in 1998 to just over a million in 2008; this rise is greater than any other European country across the same time frame[2]. This rapid rise in student numbers has been followed by a similar rise in the number of HEIs particularly in the private sector. However despite the increases Romania still has a low, by Europe standards, tertiary education participation rate with around 25% of 18-24 year olds having received some form of higher education[3]. Interestingly in recent years there has been a dramatic change in Romanian student mobility. In 1998 there were more foreign students enrolled in Romanian universities (13,279) than Romanian students studying abroad (9,247). Since then the number of students coming to Romania has declined slightly before returning to 13,857 in 2008 but the number of students leaving Romania has increased to 24,597. Romania has become a sending country of international students[4]. Incoming Erasmus students make up a very small 0.1% of all students in Romania, significantly down on the 0.7% European average; incoming Europe 32 students of all types make up just 0.15% of the student population. By contrast, the outgoing rate of 2.7% of the total number of students is much closer to the European average[5].

In the United Kingdom tertiary education is offered by universities, higher education colleges, and university colleges. In England and Wales an institution may apply for the title of university if it offers taught courses to students and has a minimum number of students. In Scotland and Northern Ireland a HEI must also offer research degrees to be considered a university in those areas. Unlike Romania, which has a roughly 50:50 split, there are only a handful of private universities in the UK. To be allowed to offer a degree qualifications and institution in the UK must have permission from the Secretary of State, a Royal Charter, or an Act of Parliament. Universities are able to set their own syllabi, but again unlike the decentralized system in Romania, the application process is managed by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and overseen by the Office for Fair Access. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education is tasked with safeguarding standards in higher education in the UK. The most significant recent reform to the higher education system in the UK came with the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, which changed the funding structure of institutions and most importantly ended the so-called 'binary divide' between traditional universities and more vocationally-oriented polytechnic colleges. This has allowed many former polytechnic colleges to become independent universities and thereby award their own degrees, thus dramatically increasing the number of universities in the UK. Between 1998 and 2008 the number of students enrollments increased by 27.3%, to give a total higher education student population of 2,396,050. The post-1997 Labour governments set of a target higher education of rate of 50% and the most recent figures (2009) estimate that around 45% of young people under 30 have participated in higher education. The UK is the top destination for foreign students in Europe, and second only to the USA globally. An estimated 20% of the enrolled UK student population is made up of foreign students, and perhaps dramatically, the UK hosts around 30% of all foreign students in Europe. The number of foreign students has increased by 146%, to between 344,000 and 499,000 in 2008. By contrast, the most recent outgoing figures show that there has been a decline, and that now there are only 5 outgoing UK students for every 100 incoming foreign students. In the Erasmus programme, the UK receives twice as many students as it sends.

Using Gephi computer software we were able to visualize the networks of migration for Romanian and British students. These can be seen overleaf. The colours of the ties represent the number of students that moved between these countries, with red being the lowest and blue being the greatest. The data from Erasmus published by the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission and Erasmus' own statistics were used.(Teichler, Ferencz et al. 2011)(Consortium 2012)

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[1] QS World University Rankings 2012
[2] Mapping mobility in European Higher Education, volume 2, 2012
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid

Erasmus 2007-08

Erasmus 2008-09

Erasmus 2009-10

Erasmus 2010-11

Erasmus 2011-12

Erasmus 2012-13
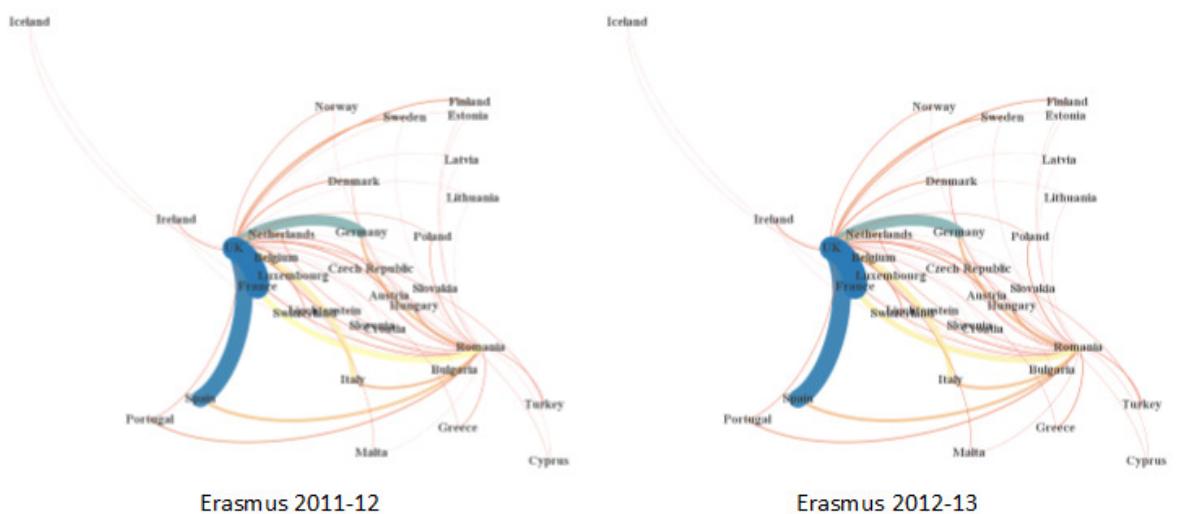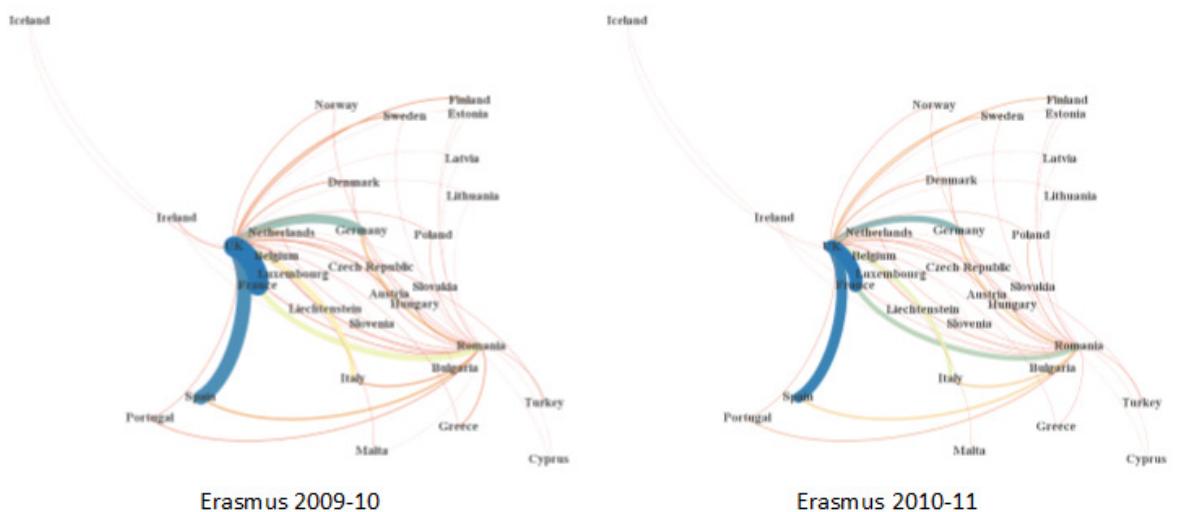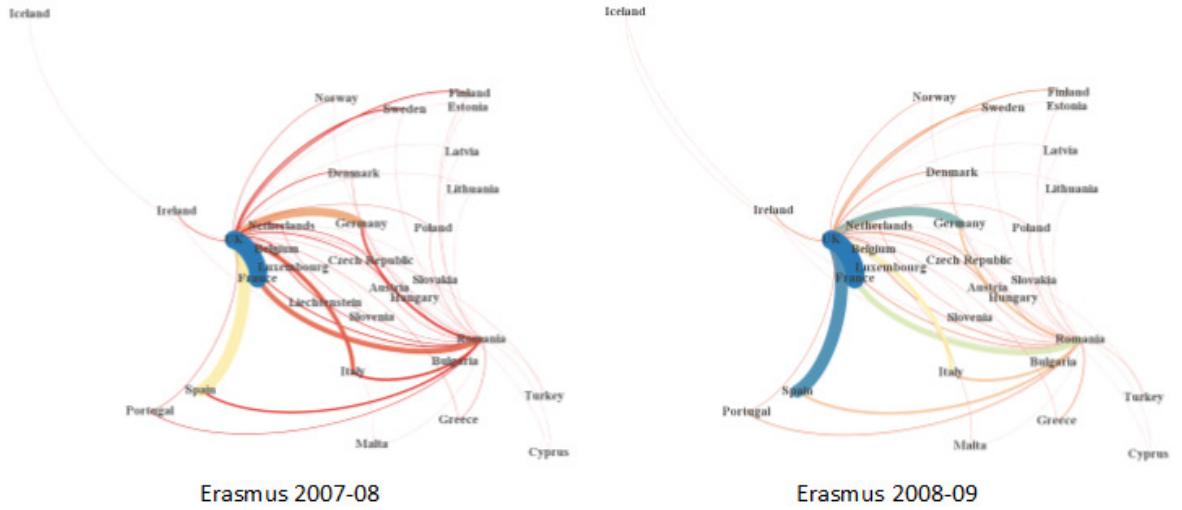
We can see from the network maps that there was a tendency for ties to become stronger as the number of students involved grew. The largest numbers of incoming students to Romania tend to be represented by students from countries that speak Romance languages: France, Portugal, Italy and Spain. An interesting case is Austria. According to European Commission, the number of Erasmus students that come from this country to Romania is continually growing. When we are searching for outgoing student's situation, there are a number of factors to take into account. In Romania there are a lot of people of German and Hungarian ethnicity, the large number of students going to Germany or Hungary is no surprise. Also, starting early in education, pupils are required to learn an international language (English, French, German) so the migration to countries where teaching is in one of these languages flows naturally. We can see that Romanian students tend to go to English speaking countries where there is a more efficient and mature educational system.

The amount of students going abroad from the UK is decreasing, though that does not appear to be significant for the Erasmus programme. Unsurprisingly, as with the general European trend, British students are tending to reciprocate ties, with Spain, France, and Germany all are both a significant destination for outgoing students and sources of incoming students. Spending per student is slightly above the European average, and so we see some migration towards the higher spending Scandinavian countries. There is a general avoidance of Eastern Europe nations. Due to the high international standing of universities in the UK, and that education is conducted in English which is desirable; the UK is key destination for students throughout Europe. Interesting there has been a substantial decreased in the number of Romanian students moving to the UK.

The dissemination of Erasmus programme in Romania and UK

In the framework of the promotion of European Higher Education three objectives attracted our attention: quality assurance, recognition of degrees/joint programmes development and services for international students and doctoral candidates. The European Commission finances projects that are aware that these objective must be accomplished. All over the world assuring the quality of higher education is an important concern for higher education institutions, authorities and all the other actors involved in the process. As the European Commission defines it, the objective refers to the process of evaluating and monitoring of academic programmes, but it is not restricted to it. Quality assurance also follows the recognition of degrees and diplomas as well as the time spent studying abroad. The recognition of degrees / joint programs has the primary role of assuring that students' transition from system to system are easy and dialogue is open between all the actors involved. The European Commission recommends actions to be taken in order to assure international students' or doctoral students integration. As individuals with different backgrounds, culture and religion might face challenges into a new academic environment; every higher education institution should provide them information and help over the integration process. Commission recommends the existence of international offices, academic counselling and logistic facilities over the period of studies.

Also, both in Romania and UK, the Erasmus program is well mediatized and students can find information quite easy though social networks, sites and official institutions, a strange situation appears on a simple Google search: when we put the question "How can I study through Erasmus in Europe?" on Google.rowe will get approximately 1,070,000 results, while the same question on Google.co.uk gets approximately 26,000,000 results. The difference is significant and maybe further research can be conducted to reveal information patterns in the ease at which students are able to access Erasmus information.

In Romania universities have the freedom to organize their programmes as they consider appropriate. In this framework it is not surprising that every individual university presents international study opportunities in a separate manner. Looking at the four Romanian universities ranked in world's top 700, we can see that they have understood the importance of international study migration and built strong departments that encourage both students and staff to study abroad using European programmes. The other universities tend to see international migration as an opportunity to develop collaboration networks with the partner universities, but do not necessarily make a priority the dissemination of international study opportunities. Although we could not find any studies regarding this, we believe that the information about study opportunities travels faster from student to student, either throughword-of-

mouth or social media. As mentioned previously, reports from the European Commission have criticized the official websites for international student exchange for being too complex, full of technical terms and in general difficult to understand for individuals that are not familiar with this kind of language. These criticisms are born out if one searches for such topics online, as the prominent results tend come from official sites. More accessible information seems to be provided by NGOs and social networks, etc. As Romania has a significant outgoing student population, we were expecting to find more detailed information on the authorities' official pages regarding international study opportunities, but universities decide how to attract partners in their own way which can be inefficient. In the UK students wishing to embark on the Erasmus programme can seek advice from the British Council. However, whilst students can get information about the countries they are able to go to, and hear from students that have taken part, students still have to contact their higher education institutions to apply. Each institution taking part as an Erasmus representative or study abroad officer, sometimes each department will have their own member of staff. These opportunities do appear, unfortunately, to be something a student has to seek rather than promoted towards them.

Each participant university in the Erasmus programme has to have a specific department to assist Erasmus students and both in Romania and UK, the higher educational institutions offer information through their web pages. More than this, as social media has expanded in usage, Erasmus groups have formed and developed in a way without precedent in the history of international study migration. It is important to note here, that these groups encourage students to interact, to voice opinions about their period abroad, offer support to find accommodation where mobility takes place and, even, help students integrate in the new academic environment by introducing them in the local Erasmus network or the local academic community. These groups can be a vital source of information, and can perhaps help guide students who are thinking of studying abroad. Individual experiences can be easily disseminated and add another layer to the ways in which a student today might be influenced in choosing where to study. We are planning future research to investigate the social media use of international students to ascertain if it is an important medium for encouraging Erasmus participation.

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I am a PhD. candidate at University of Oradea, Romania. My thesis, "The role of social media in Romanian students' mobility" investigates the role of social media in the study mobilities of Romanian students. I am interested in social representations, study migration, European and national educational policies, social network analysis and social media.

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