

Going East for Education: An Analysis of European Students' Motives to Study in Korea^{*}

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논문요약

타국에서 유학하는 학생들의 추세를 나타내는 국제학생이동(ISM)의 흐름은 주로 지구의 남쪽에서 북쪽으로, 동쪽에서 서쪽으로 그리고 대부분 영어권 국가 쪽으로 전개되는 것이 지배적이었다. 그러나 최근 동아시아 권내에서, 그리고 타 대륙에서 동아시아로 유입되는 학생들이 꾸준한 증가세에 있으며, 이와 같은 국제학생이동에 대한 새로운 추세에 대해 주목할 필요가 있다. 한국 내 유학생들은 주로 아시아지역에서의 유입이 많지만, 유럽에서 온 유학생들의 숫자도 급격히 증가하는 추세이다. 한국 내 유럽유학생들에 대한 기존 연구가 없어, 이에 대한 연구가 필요한 시점으로, 본 연구는 유럽 학생들의 한국에서의 유학을 결정하게 된 유학 동기에 대한 분석과 유학 형태를 분석함으로써 연구 간 격차를 해소하는 것을 목표로 한다. 이 연구는 추진요인과 유인요인분석(push and pull factor)을 기본으로 독일, 네덜란드, 러시아, 프랑스, 영국 출신 유학생들의 국제간이동성에 대한 몇 가지 주요 결과를 보여준다.

키워드 : 국제학생이동, 한국 내 유럽유학생, 한국유학동기, 학위과정외국인유학생, 교환학생

^{*}This work was supported by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund of 2018.

I. Introduction

The global expansion of internationalization of universities in recent times has caused a rapid growth in International Student Mobility(ISM) and a heightened interest by academia to better understand the complexities surrounding this topic. Old mobility patterns—from Newly-industrializing countries to countries with post-industrial economies of students, from non-English speaking countries to English-speaking countries, from East to the West—have remained the major form of ISM and also the focus of academic research. However, new spatial patterns of ISM continue to gain in importance. Some countries in East and Southeast Asia have been increasingly effective in attracting international students in particular from Asia but also from other parts of the world. Korea, a country with a declining freshman-age population and a fairly large group of domestic outbound students, has made and continues to make pronounced efforts to internationalize its university environment and to assist domestic Higher Education Institutions(HEI) in winning over international students. Many initiatives have been successful— a total of 123,850 international students undertaking studies in Korea in 2017. Whilst major groups of international students in Korea, especially from Asia, have received some academic attention, too little academic work has been done on minor groups. European students represent a minor group in Korea and their presence deserves more academic attention.

This study intends to contribute to a better understanding of European students in Korea, their mobility patterns, their motives to migrate and their decision-making processes with regards to choosing a university and courses. Applying theories of push and pull factors, in other words, the

desire of moving abroad and of wanting to leave one's country, this study demonstrates and analyses statistics of the five major European students sending countries: France, Russia, Germany, England and the Netherlands. Among all forty European countries used in statistics of 2017 merely the latter five countries sent a sufficient number of students to produce any meaningful analysis for the purpose of this study. Russia, of which only the western part belongs to Europe, was included because of students number and characteristics.

Of all European students in the five country sample, the bulk visits Korea through exchange programmes. Except for Russia, this can be traced back to the fact that some Korean universities have joined numerous partnerships programs with European universities. Russian students most often choose to pursue a degree at a Korean University as a result of fewer university partnerships, a closer geographical proximity, and potentially good job prospects stemming from strong economic ties between Russia and Korea. The popularity of Hallyu(Korean Wave) in France and also in Russia has increased interest in and knowledge of Korean culture and inspired many Russian and French students to attend Korean language courses. Whilst the latter groups of European students may have a somewhat clearer image of Korea, most European students, of which many are exchange students, appear to perceive Korea as an attractive study destination for adventurous students that want to explore an exotic and unknown country. Other motivations for most European students to study in Korea include quality higher education, safety and high living standard, relatively low living costs, good job prospects(especially for English students), and the possibility of using the study experience for an international career in Korea or elsewhere in Asia.

II. New Trends in ISM

The subsequent paragraph highlights well-established and new mobility patterns with regards to ISM. New trends have developed and East Asia continues to draw in a growing number of international students.

1. Old and New Mobility Patterns in International Student Mobility (ISM)

ISM can look back on a long and important history. Universities have always been international institutions, attracting students and staff from many countries and partnering with other institutions.¹⁾ International cooperation and exchange in higher education from its origin until now have focused on the promotion of global peace and mutual understanding and global engagement. The internationalization of universities of recent times—for example the initiation of the European Higher Education Area at the end of the 20th century—has facilitated a significant growth in the International Student Mobility(ISM) in higher education, which in turn is ‘changing the global landscape of higher education’.²⁾ This trend has been underpinned by the increase of individual’s educational investment and prolonged educational participation due to changes in job structures, labour market regulations, and economic recessions that could be witnessed in recent decades in advanced industrialised countries.³⁾ Between 2000 and

1) Altbach, P. G. and Hans de Wit, “Internationalization and Global Tension: Lessons from History.” *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 19, No.1, 2015, p. 5.

2) Wells, A., “International Student Mobility: Approaches, Challenges and Suggestions For Further Research.” *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 143, 2014, p. 19.

3) Buchmann, Marlis and Heike Solga, “School-to-work transitions across time and place—Introduction

2011, the number of international students has more than doubled with an estimated 4.5million tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship in 2013.⁴⁾ ISM has been dominated by various mobility patterns. On the one hand, there has been mobility from post-colonial states to former colonial powers and from Newly-industrializing countries to countries with post-industrial economies. On the other, the large bulk of global ISM has commonly involved a movement from East to West. The desire for fluency in the English language and the highly appreciated English-medium education from Western Universities continue to draw in large crowds of East Asian degree-seeking students mainly to English-speaking countries in North America, Europe, and Oceania. According to Moskal⁵⁾ developed OECD countries attracted 73 percent of all international students enrolled abroad in 2013, and among these countries, the United States hosted the largest number of all international students(19% in total), followed by the United Kingdom(10%), Australia and France(both 6%), Germany(5%) and Canada and Japan(both 3%). This suggests a very uneven pattern of international student mobility also discovered by Findlay.⁶⁾ As education is especially central to life in East Asia⁷⁾ the majority of all international students originate from Asia and most of these come from a relatively small number of countries—China,

and summary.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 46, 2016, pp. 1~2.

- 4) UNESCO, *The International Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific*. Paris and Bangkok: UNESCO, 2013, pp. 1~89.
- 5) Moskal, Marta, “International Students Pathways Between Open and Closed Borders: Towards a Multi-scalar Approach to Educational Mobility and Labour Market Outcomes.” *International Migration*, Vol. 55, No. 3, 2017, p. 127.
- 6) Findlay, Allan M, “An Assessment of Supply and Demand-side Theorization of International Student Mobility: Theorizing international student mobility.” *International Migration*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2011, p. 171.
- 7) Marginson, Simon, “Higher education, economic inequality and social mobility: Implications for emerging East Asia.” *International Journal of Educational Development*, online March 20, 2016, pp. 1~8.

Malaysia, Hong Kong, Korea and Singapore.⁸⁾ Students from Asia represent 53 percent of international students enrolled worldwide, with China being the supply country, followed by India.⁹⁾ East Asia also represents a source region for educational migration which involves an entire household. Some wealthy families from East Asian countries tend to seek an overseas education for their children—as a strategy to avoid highly competitive, ‘life-or-death’ national examinations.¹⁰⁾ Education as a family ‘project’ happens in domestic situations, where the aim is to gain knowledge, as well as the symbolic and cultural capital imbued in academic credentials, is a strategy for social mobility.¹¹⁾

A relatively new trend in ISM, however, has also been emerging. New spatial patterns of ISM, degree mobility, have grown in significance—namely, East Asian countries’ and institutions’ increasing success in attracting some of the world’s international students. For example, Brooks and Waters¹²⁾ highlight that there is an emergent regional dynamic to international education—parts of East and Southeast Asia are themselves attracting large numbers of international students from the wider Asian region. As trade and investment between countries in the region have gone up, so has student mobility. More countries in the East Asia region seek to recruit international students. For instance, international students’ enrolment among higher education institutions in countries such as

8) Brooks, Rachel and Johanna Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 45.

9) Moskal, “International Students Pathways Between Open and Closed Borders: Towards a Multi-scalar Approach to Educational Mobility and Labour Market Outcomes,” p. 127.

10) Brooks and Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 118.

11) Bourdieu, P, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 1~291.

12) Brooks and Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 65.

Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, and Korea has gone up for reasons attributed to low tuition fee and living costs, closeness to home, increase in programmes taught in English language, improvements in ranking, direct targeting of international students as well as global perspective.¹³⁾ Adding to this Asian student can now attain a prestigious international degree without going abroad. Partnerships with foreign educational providers allow local students to obtain an international education without ever leaving home—degree programmes involving partnerships between local and foreign higher education institutions have sprung up in places as diverse as Japan, India, Hong Kong and Qatar.¹⁴⁾ Despite these new mobility patterns among international students in the wider region of East Asia research has tended to be one-sided. Whilst much academic attention has been given to international students move from East to West and from non-English-speaking to English-speaking countries, much less is known about ISM involving a West to East movements. For example, European students studying in East Asia, in this case in Korea, have not gained enough academic attention.

2. Internationalization and International Students in Korea

Among other countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia, Korea, the focus country of this study, has in recent decades made great efforts to internationalize its' university environment. Its' endeavor to internationalize

13) "Why Southeast and East Asia are increasingly popular among international students." *QS-Asia wonews*, March 28, 2018, <http://qswownews.com/popular-among-international-students>(검색일: 2018.6.23.).

14) Brooks and Waters, Student Mobilities, *Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 116.

its' higher education- i.e. expansion of the number of foreign faculty staff and courses taught in English, scholarships for foreign students, Korean language courses - has led to a strong increase in the influx of foreign students in the last decade and more. Since 2005 the number of inbound foreign students involved in Korean higher education has increased significantly.¹⁵⁾ In 2001 around 11,646 foreign students enrolled at universities in Korea, whilst in 2016 the number had jumped up to roughly 100,000.¹⁶⁾ Over the past two decades, many initiatives to attract international students(i.e. Brain Pool in 1994, Brain Korea 21 in 1999, Study Korea Project in 2004, World Class University in 2008 and recently Brain Scouting) have also been set up and a further rise in inward mobility is anticipated. The Ministry of Education announced in its Study Korea Project 2020 that it will attract more than 200,000 by 2023. Achieving such future goals appears to be a feasible mission. The National Institute for International Education of Korea(NIIED), which is affiliated with the education ministry, reported a total of 123,850 international students in the country as of April 2017.¹⁷⁾ To attract and retain especially talented international students recently formal conditions for extending a stay and seeking employment after graduation have been visibly liberalized for some fields of expertise. In order to retain top foreign talent, the ministry of justice has loosened naturalization laws for engineering,

15) Kwon, Ki-Seok, "Government Policy and Internationalisation of Universities: The Case of International Student Mobility in South Korea." *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2013, pp. 35~47.

16) "외국인 유학생 12.4만명... 10년새 39.8% 증가." 『파이낸셜뉴스』, 2017년 10월 3일, <http://www.fnnews.com/news/201710021113561279>(검색일:2018.6.10.).

17) "South Korea sees record international student numbers in 2017." *The Pie news*, February 13, 2018, <https://thepienews.com/data/south-korea-record-high-growth-in-intl-student-numbers>(검색일: 2018.6.13.).

technology, and natural science students.¹⁸⁾ Korea, a country with a constant high number of outbound students in higher education, 'increasingly plays a role in attracting and hosting the world's students'.¹⁹⁾

Especially the capital Seoul seems to have become a popular destination for international students seeking both quality education and lifestyle. Last year – based on criteria including affordability, student experience, job prospects and friendliness to international students – the Guardian, a well-known British newspaper, selected Seoul as the 4th international student-friendly city in the world.²⁰⁾ Undoubtedly, universities based in Seoul by far attract the majority of international students in Korea. Universities around the Seoul metropolitan area are home to almost 58% of the international students attending Korean universities, followed by Chungcheong province (13.8%), Busan, Ulsan and Gyeongsang province(9.7%), Gangwon province, Daegu, North Gyeongsang province(9.5%) and Jeju and Jeolla province(9.3%).²¹⁾ Korea has become a significant destination country for degree-seeking international students from various countries. The majority of students pursuing a degree in Korea come from China, Vietnam, Mongolia, Japan, and Uzbekistan; however, students also come from Latin America, Africa and the Western

18) "Korea revamps plans to attract foreign students." *The Pie News*, July 20, 2015, <https://thepienews.com/news/korea-revamps-plans-to-attract-foreign-students>(검색일:2018.6.13.).

19) Jon, Jae-Eun, Jenny Lee and Byun Kiyong, "The Emergence of a Regional Hub: Comparing International Student Choices and Experiences in South Korea." *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, Vol. 67, No. 5, 2014, p. 708.

20) "The ten best cities in the world to be a student in 2017." *The Guardian*, February 14, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/gallery/2017/feb/14/the-10-best-cities-in-the-world-to-be-a-student-2017-in-pictures>(검색일:2018.6.24.).

21) "South Korea sees record international student numbers in 2017." *The Pie news*, February 13, 2018, <https://thepienews.com/data/south-korea-record-high-growth-in-intl-student-numbers>(검색일:2018.6.13.).

World including Europe. These international students certainly can be valued for the financial contribution that they make through tuition fees and for their contribution to the intellectual life of their host countries. With structural pressure such as a declining freshman-age population and a continued large outbound group of Korean students, ‘the survival of many Korean HEIs is dependent on attracting more international students and stemming the flow of Korean students abroad.’²²⁾

III. Theories on Study Motives of International Students

The following section presents some major theories that have evolved amidst the sharp rise of international students worldwide. These theories are particularly useful in analyzing the factors that push and pull international students to study abroad.

1. Why Study Abroad? Push and Pull Factors of International Students

ISM is a fairly new field of study. Due to the rapid growth of ISM in scale and numbers during recent decades, academic fields—especially migration studies, education and sociology of higher educations—have been ambitious in researching the phenomenon of ISM. Among researchers, the focus has been not only been on the pull-push factor of international students related to the desire of moving abroad and the factors that make

22) Green, Christopher, “Internationalization, Deregulation and the Expansion of Higher Education in Korea: An Historical Overview.” *International Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2015, p. 10.

the students want to leave their countries but also on the experience during and outcomes after studying abroad. For the purpose of this study, theories regarding the drivers and motivations for international student mobility, which have been observed and theorized in multiple ways, are of most important value. According to Findlay et al²³⁾, many researchers present student migration as the outcome of individual decision-making that weighs the benefits of engagement in international study against a range of socio-economic costs while for some the educational sojourn abroad has a thrill-seeking appeal, most research present international education as motivated by a search for better future employment prospects and career development. Central to the latter argument is the theory that young people strive to attend a university abroad to acquire social and cultural capital that can be transformed into economic capital on their return home or potentially also in the country of study. It is assumed that foreign students have accumulated substantial 'capital', especially institutionalized cultural capital, and symbolic power, the latter through the rating of their attended university during their overseas study sojourn. The international ranking of the university here comes in to play an important role albeit at different levels according to the region in the world. Geddie²⁴⁾ argue that with increased focus on the international reputational ranking of institutions and with growing attention given to international educational experiences for personal and professional development, some studies indicate that the pursuit of an overseas education represents an

23) Findlay, Allan, Laura Prazeres, David Mccollum and Helen Packwood, "It was always the plan: international study as learning to migrate." *Area*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2017, p. 193.

24) Geddie, Kate, "The Transnational Ties that Bind: Relationship Considerations for Graduating International Science and Engineering Research Students." *Population, Space and Place*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2013, p. 199.

important strategic route for social mobility, prestige, and career development on a global scale especially to many Asian families. This differs somewhat from studies in the European context that suggests that the original motive of individuals study abroad range from more individualistic pursuit for personal experience, cultural enrichment or travel goals, to seeking specific skills acquisition such as language abilities.²⁵⁾ And yet other research highlights that European students also consider career development in their study decisions. Within the context of ISM in the European Union it is argued that part of young European students' motivation for seeking higher education abroad is a belief that the mobility capital they are likely to amass as a result of undertaking studies abroad will help them to secure a much-prized international position.²⁶⁾ Further studies also point to the possibility that European students may be motivated to migrate by the relative lack of suitable study opportunities within their own country and by previous experiences of travel.²⁷⁾ Regarding the latter the increase in international mobility among young people from wealthy nations may also have given rise to this phenomenon. For instance, a young person who has already lived in China for an internship might more readily accept an opportunity to study at a university in Korea.

In sum, European students are likely to possess different motives to study abroad ranging from personal reasons(such as self-development, learning from new cultures and gaining new experiences) to career-oriented motives(such as improving futures employment prospects, achieving higher

25) Geddie, *Ibid.*, p. 199.

26) Brooks and Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 84.

27) Brooks and Waters, *Ibid.*, p. 85.

marks on return home, and developing intercultural skills).

Generally speaking, whatever the motive behind, decisions taken to pursue an overseas study sojourn seem to be more of a family project in many Asian countries than it does in Europe, where differences in social structures and value systems enable young people to have more individual freedom to decide their own life journey and study path.

Nevertheless, even among European students final decisions taken to study abroad are unlikely to be made solely by themselves. Migrants, including international students, do not operate as footloose agents at the global scale, rather their actions and choices are shaped and constrained by the social relations as well as the cultural and political-economic context that frame their lives.²⁸⁾ There is a need for people-centered perspective on student mobility, ...due to the often highly personal and always social reasons why individuals migrate for education.²⁹⁾ International students, just as much as migrants, maintain transnational social networks and lifestyles, which may be more easily sustained in study locations proximate to the home country. Many international students maintain strong cross-border economic and social networks, and frequently communicate and travel back during the course of their studies abroad.³⁰⁾ In the Korean context, this presumably applies more to Asian as well as Russian students. Ahn³¹⁾ for instance, investigating the motivation to

28) Geddie, "The Transnational Ties that Bind: Relationship Considerations for Graduating International Science and Engineering Research Students," p. 198.

29) Brooks and Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 163.

30) Geddie, "The Transnational Ties that Bind: Relationship Considerations for Graduating International Science and Engineering Research Students," p. 198.

31) Ahn, Y. J, "A study on incoming international students' immigration process and backgrounds." *Journal of Economic Geographical Society of Korea*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2009. pp. 344 ~ 363.

choose Korea as a study destination, discovered that most students decided in favor of Korea for reasons including a positive image of Korea, geographical proximity, and more affordable living costs compared to other key study countries like the US, UK, and Japan. It could also be the case that some European students decide to study in Korea because they have relatives, friends or a significant diaspora on the Korean peninsula or in East Asia. The imagined possibility of someone familiar nearby –be it family or fellow countrymen–can reduce concerns before deciding to live in Korea for an extended period of time. Few European students possibly also meet their significant other abroad, follow her or him home, and attending a university may be the only viable option to sustain the relationship.

Other students willing to pursue abroad might be driven by the good image of the country as well as the university that they intend to apply for. Alberts and Hazen³²⁾ interviewing international students enrolled at US universities about the motivation for overseas study discovered that two factors stood out as the most universal: the availability of funding for graduate education and the overall quality of US graduate programmes in comparison to their home countries.

In a similar manner to appealing scholarships, positively perceived stay conditions, for example, liberal immigration policies including opportunities to work part-time and the prospects to find employment in the host country after graduation, may consequently draw in more international students. As a result of considerable reductions in state funding for higher

32) Alberts, Heike C. and Helen D. Hazen, “There are always two voices...”: International Students' Intentions to Stay in the United States or Return to their Home Countries.” *International Migration*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2005, p. 137.

education around the world, some states have invested heavily in their own higher education systems and improved stay conditions in an explicit attempt to increase their attractiveness to the international student market. A country case that comes easily to mind in this regard is Australia. Australia is a country with a growing relationship of dependency between domestic and international higher education, ...and a country where fees from international students are no longer supplementing income from public sources, but have been replacing it.³³⁾ In order to compete with other English-speaking and European countries for Asian students, the Australian government relaxed its immigration policies for international students. For example, in the early 21st century Australia made it increasingly easy for international students to secure a permanent residency at the end of their studies.³⁴⁾

IV. European Students in Korea

This part introduces the magnitude of European students in Korea in comparison to students from Asia. It also aims to demonstrate the possible factors that not only make European students migrate for education to Korea but also select certain universities and courses.

1. The Extent of European Students in Korea

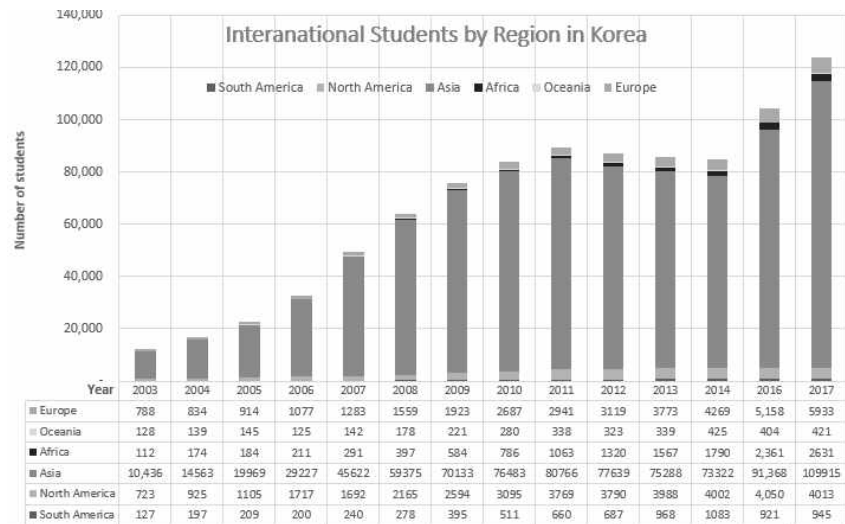
ISM in Korea is dominated by regional flows of international students.

33) Brooks and Waters, *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*, p. 161.

34) Brooks and Waters, *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Compared with other continents, Europe lags far behind in terms of foreign students in Korea. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2014, European students accounted for only some 4,400 of the 85,000 foreign students in Korea, while Asian students took the lion's share, accounting for some 73,000 students.³⁵⁾

<Figure 1>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

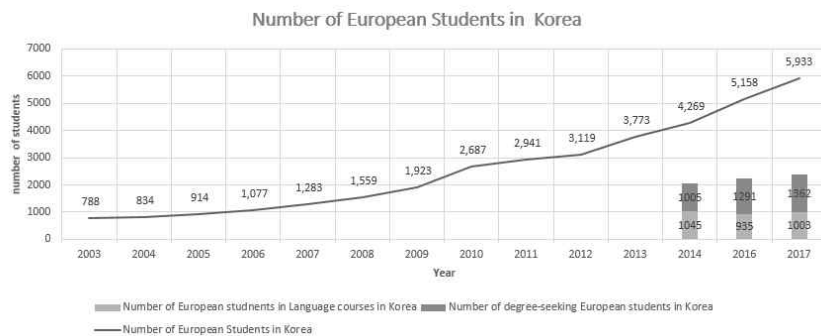
Looking at trends over time and recent figures in <Figure 1> one can get a clearer picture of numbers of students since 2003. In 2003 Asian students comprised of 10,436 in 2010 the number increased to 76,483 and by 2017 Asian students clearly dominated the overall group of international students reaching a figure of 109,915. This means that in 2017 the

35) "French students take less beaten track." *The Korea Times*, March 29, 2015, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/04/176_176116.html(검색일:2018.6.20.).

proportion of Asian students was approximately 88.7 percent of all international students in Korea. European students, the focus group of this study, have made up a much smaller but also growing percentage since 2003. Whilst the number of European students was just 788 in 2003, it had increased to 2,687 in 2010, and the highest level was achieved with 5,933 European students in 2017. In fact looking at the year of 2017 approximately 4.8 percent, 5,933 students from Europe arrived in Korea to attend higher education institutions.

〈Figure 2〉 demonstrates that of all European students 1,362 enrolled in Korea to pursue a degree whilst 1,003 students enrolled in Korean language courses. The remaining 3,568 European students have come to Korea on university exchange programmes for one or two semesters or alternatively have enrolled for some kind of short time educational programmes(i.e. summer schools).

〈Figure 2〉

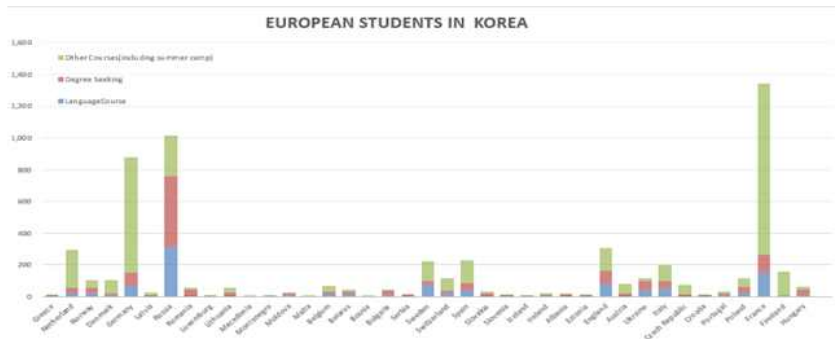


Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

Taking a closer look at 〈Figure 3〉 one can notice that only five out of forty European countries clearly sent more than two hundred students

in 2017. France topped the list with 1,344 students, followed by Russia with 1,016 students, Germany 877 students, England 309 and Netherlands with 292 students. Students of other European nations are too few in numbers to provide any conclusive analysis for the intention of this study. International students from France, Russia, Germany, England and the Netherlands are more plentiful and therefore the subsequent part will present the possible reasons as to why these five countries have a relatively high number of students undertaking studies in Korea.

<Figure 3>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

2. European Students' Motives to Study in Korea

Generally speaking, the East Asian economic development of the past decades, in particular, China's rise to become a global economic powerhouse and the socio-economic and geopolitical changes that have arisen out of this has drawn a lot of international and academic attention also from Europe. A mounting interest has simultaneously demanded a greater expertise on subjects related to East Asia within European scholars.

As in world affairs, the spotlight has been put on East Asia, Korea (including the North) has also benefited from this increased interest in the region. This expansion of academic interest in East Asia and in the Korean peninsula has given rise to more university programmes focusing on Asia and East Asia being offered at European universities.³⁶⁾ European students eager to expand their knowledge and understanding about East Asia and specifically the Korean peninsula can choose from the growing number of international graduate schools at Korean universities. An increasing number of international graduate schools at Korean universities (i.e. Seoul National University, Korea University) offer East Asia and Korea-related courses taught in English on issues such as area studies, development cooperation, international security, and international business. This has certainly inspired more international students to pursue studies in Korea.

<Table 1>

Major European student groups in 2017						
Country	Language course	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Exchange programmes	Total
France	152	50	44	17	1,081	1,344
Russia	311	276	147	28	254	1,016
Germany	66	37	39	12	723	877
England	79	32	40	12	146	309
Netherlands	18	15	22	1	236	292

Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

36) There are 174 Postgraduate courses for Asian studies in Europe(postgrad.com).

French Students in Korea

Representing more than a fifth of all European students in Korea, France was the number one European country that sent students to Korea in 2017(Table 1). In East Asia, Japan and China have historically been at the core of interest to Europeans and these two countries have been the usual travel destinations for Europeans. Consequently, unless enrolled in a Korean studies programme in their home countries, European students tend to know comparatively little about Korea. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Korea is disadvantaged with regards to attracting European students as the unknown aspect and lack of strong images of Korea simultaneously appears to make it interesting and attractive. The thrill-seeking and exotic appeal, for example, seems to be drawing in French students. ‘Sick and tired of China or Japan, two popular East Asian study abroad destinations, many French students have explored Korea as an alternative location.’³⁷⁾ Exotic appeal alone may not alone explain an increase in the number of French students in Korea. Perceived risk factors and changed circumstances in neighboring countries such as the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan may have influenced French students in their decision making for an East Asian study location. A lecturer at a renowned Korean university pointed at the Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown in 2010 as a crucial factor that could have affected the decisions of French youth to look toward Korea.³⁸⁾ The same could be held true for China with regards to human rights records, media censorship, and heavy air pollution. It is likely that French and other

37) “French students take less beaten track.” *The Korea Times*, March 29, 2015, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/04/176_176116.html(검색일:2018.6.20.).

38) Ibid.

European students have partly shifted their focus away from China due to the lower quality of life in China compared to that of Korea. On the other hand, what also seems to have been a pulling factor for French students is the Korean Wave(Hallyu), which in Europe had its biggest success in France. The K-pop phenomenon has slowly been spreading through the French Hallyu fan club with its 3,000 members, through Korean food, ... and the number of K-pop fans in France is predicted to 100,000 members.³⁹⁾

〈Table 1〉 shows that French degree-seeking students and students in language courses are underrepresented in contrast to exchange students. French students seem to prefer to complete a degree at home as higher education is largely free of charge, of high quality, and French university degrees are easily recognized in the French labor market. Geographical distance might discourage French students to seek a degree in Korea.

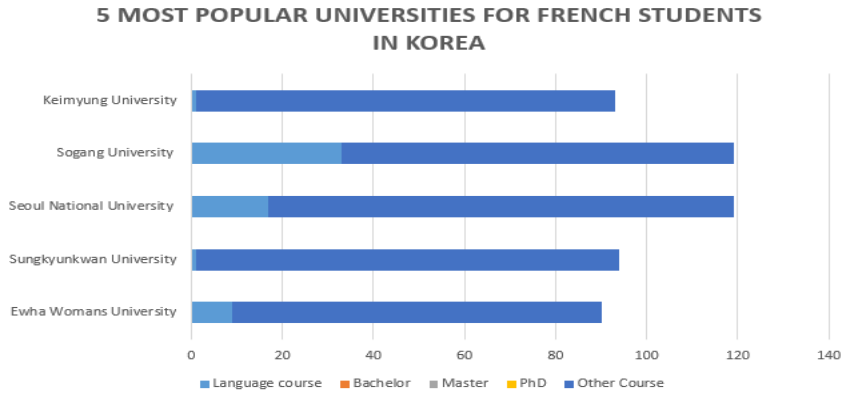
As 〈Table 1〉 shows most French students, 1081 in total, came to Korea as an exchange student for one or two semesters. French students may have benefited from the extended cooperation between Korean and French universities. 〈Figure 4〉 presents the five most attended Korean universities by French students. Except for Keimyung University that is located in Daegu, all four other preferred universities are based in Seoul. This might imply that French students prefer to study in Seoul, as mentioned before, a popular city among international students in Korea. In 2017 many French students also studied at Seoul National University(SNU) known among Koreans to be the top university in Korea. Besides ranking number 74 in The World University Ranking in 2018, SNU has made great efforts to

39) "Bonjour Korea, hallyu waves over France." *The Korea Herald*, June 13, 2011, [http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20110613000557\(검색일:2018.6.26.\)](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20110613000557(검색일:2018.6.26)).

internationalize its university system and to increase its partnerships with foreign universities. In 2016 a total of 1318 course were taught in foreign languages of which 1245 were taught in English.⁴⁰⁾ SNU, which annually accepts about 600 international students for exchange programs, currently has partnerships with twelve French universities. In 2017 some French students also attended Korean language courses at SNU. SNU together with Sogang University has an excellent reputation for teaching Korean to foreigners. Hence many French students also visit Sogang University not only for the exchange programmes but also for Korean language courses. In contrast to students from other European countries, many French students also attended Ewha Woman University, which has 37 French partner universities. The third most popular university for French student is Sungkyunkwan University. This university has very extensive and varied partnership agreements with French universities. Sungkyunkwan University has students exchange programmes with 33 French universities and 26 Mou International agreements with French universities. Located in Daegu Keimyung University, the fourth most visited university by French students has a unique game mobile engineering faculty and it offers extra curricula for archery. Although preferring to reside in Seoul some French students with enthusiasm for unique study fields may wish to attend Keimyung University in Daegu.

40) SNU Diversity Council, *SNU Diversity Report 2016*, Seoul : Seoul National University, 2016, p. 210.

<Figure 4>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

Russian Students in Korea

Unlike students from France students from Russia are predominantly degree-seeking students (Table 1) that reside in Korea for several years. Out of a total of 1016 students in 2017, 451 Russian students enrolled in degree programmes whilst 311 students took part in a language course. As opposed to French students who seem to have more personal reasons such as look for an exotic experience in an unknown country, Russian students seem more determined to study for the betterment of their career prospects. Academic credentials, in this case, university degrees from Korea and hard skills such as Korean language abilities seem to represent cultural capital that can be transformed into economic capital in Korea or at home in Russia. Both job and career development prospects for Russian graduates from Korean universities may indeed be promising. Economic links between Korea and Russia are strong and recent political

developments signal a strengthening of these relations. In a recent meeting between president Moon and president Putin both showed their willingness to intensify cooperation: they aim to expand trade volume between Korea and Russia from \$19 billion in 2017 to \$30 billion by 2020 and double the number of people-to-people exchanges to 1 million.⁴¹⁾ Due to D-2 visa regulations, Russian students enrolled in degree-programmes are also allowed to work part-time, making the stay conditions more attractive. It is indeed not so rare to encounter Russians in Korea who work as models, actors or even language instructors. Moreover, it is assumed that geographical proximity matters especially for those Russian students originating from Eastern parts of Russia. Living relatively close to Korea and accessing the world's fastest internet may make maintaining transnational lifestyles easier. Like French students the popularity of Hallyu seems to have attracted a high proportion of Russian students to visit language courses. For instance, Smagin et al⁴²⁾ in a study on K-Pop in Russia observed a very rapidly increasing number of the fan clubs and internet communities for K-pop groups in Russia.

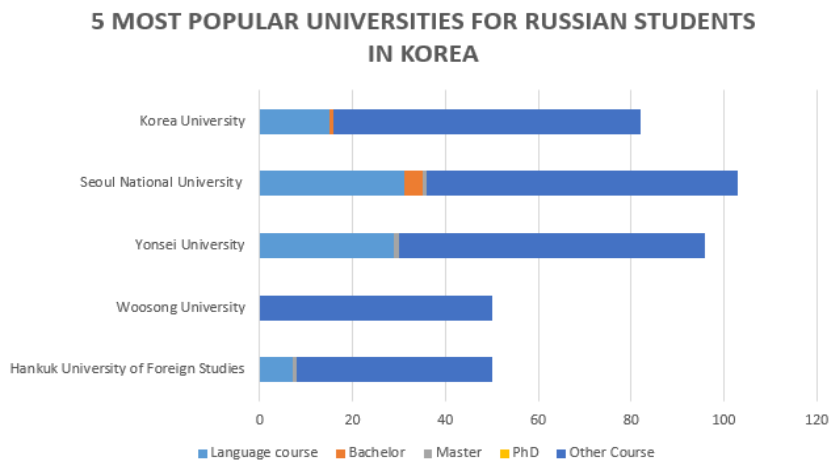
A fairly small proportion of Russian students, 254, also visited Korean universities through exchange programmes and summer schools. Compared to partnerships with other EU countries, Korean universities have much fewer partnerships with Russia universities. In 2017 the most frequently attended universities for Russian exchange students and Korean language courses were SNU, Yonsei University, and Korea University(Figure 5). SNU

41) "South Korea, Russia agree on free trade talks, economic cooperation with North Korea." *The Korea Times*, June 22, 2018, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/120_251121.html(검색일: 2018.6.28.).

42) Smagin, Evgenii, Ik Ki Kim and Wonho Jang "The Dynamics of the K-Pop Boom in Russia." 『지역사회학』 제16권 2호, 2015.

and Yonsei University each only have three partner universities in Russia. This clearly implies that fewer partnerships also attract fewer international exchange students from Russia.

<Figure 5>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

German Students in Korea

Germany represents the number three European student sending country. Similarly to the French students of this study, Germans tend to be little informed about Korea at the time they make their decision to study in Korea. Not much is known about Korea in Germany, most Germans know that the country is divided; they might even know what kimchi and taekwondo are but it does not usually go much further.⁴³⁾ This might be

43) "German students get to grips with Korean." *Deutsche Welle*, May 31, 2010, <http://www.dw.com/en/german-students-get-to-grips-with-korean/a-5635454>(검색일:2018.6.23).

related to restricted media coverage about Korea. Hwang et al⁴⁴⁾ in a study on the image of Korea portrayed in the UK, France and Germany discovered that media coverage in Germany is more limited and negative in comparison to media coverage in the UK and France. This may explain why the Korean Wave(Hallyu) in Germany has not reached the same levels of popularity as in France. Limited and negative media has possibly had the same effect in the Netherlands.

Nonetheless, some Germans studying Korean studies or German-Koreans, the offsprings of the Korean miners and nurses that arrived in West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s, certainly seem more aware of Korea and its culture. Germany hosts the oldest and second largest Korean diaspora in Europe after the UK. Assumably German-Koreans account for a fairly large proportion of German students in Korea. Their intention to study in Korea may not be so much linked to the exotic factor of an unknown country but has much more to do with the desire to experience the country and society of their parents.

The course or programs that German students chose in 2017 resemble those of French students. The large majority, 723 students, came to Korea on exchange programs(Table 1). Coming to Korea for a semester or two may provide enough cultural exposure and also time to travel in the wider region of East Asia. Frequently, European exchange students also try to explore other Asian countries whilst undertaking studies in Korea. Much fewer German students attended Korean language courses(66 students) and degree-programs(88 students). This may be due to the lack of popularity

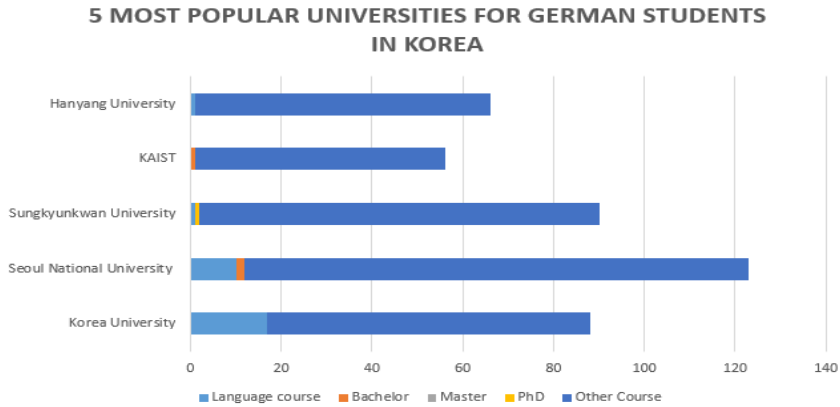
44) Hwang, Sang Jae, Jin Woo Choi and Cho Yong Hyun, "European media and Korea: Korea's image shown in France, Britain, Germany's media." *The Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2012, p. 141.

of Hallyu in Germany, the preference of improving English language skills, the geographical distance and the desire for a more secure degree from a German university.

Those Germans that do attend a degree-program are likely to have received a scholarship from the Korean government. NIIED annually opens the Global Korean Scholarship program for talented international students wishing to enter Korean graduate schools. The numbers have increased in the last decades and many Europeans, including the ones from the country cases, have benefited from those programs. Attracting students from Western countries has presumably also been a strategy to create an international atmosphere at some Korean universities.

In terms of university attended in 2017 German student chose SNU (111students), followed by Sungkyunkwan University(88students) and Korea University(71students) (Table 4). German students together with Dutch students are enrolled in fairly high numbers at Hanyang University. The numbers of German partner universities are as follows: SNU 13, Hanyang University 35, and Sungkyunkwan University 59. These again might be related to the good image and high global rank of SNU. For German students the symbolic power for career development –the rank and the image of the university– appears to be more important than the availability of student exchange partnerships. The fact that SNU offers many courses taught in English should also be considered.

<Figure 6>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

English Students in Korea

English students were the fourth largest group of European students at Korean universities. Whilst the point of departure may be similar to that of French and German students – a lack of understanding of Korea and an exotic image of an unknown country – English students may consider some advantages that they can encounter in the host country. Students from England are likely to perceive Korea as an attractive country to study and to live because of the huge job market for English language instructors. The strong study enthusiasm for the English language continuously drives the high demand for English teachers. English has long been a class marker in Korea: namely, knowledge of and comfort with English has been a sign of educational opportunity, and for some of the experience of travel or study abroad and of contact with foreigners in Korea.⁴⁵⁾ Hence, unlike English non-native speakers students from England

surely will not find any difficulties in finding a job during the study sojourn. Career-oriented motives to study in Korea appear thus stronger than personal reasons for English students.

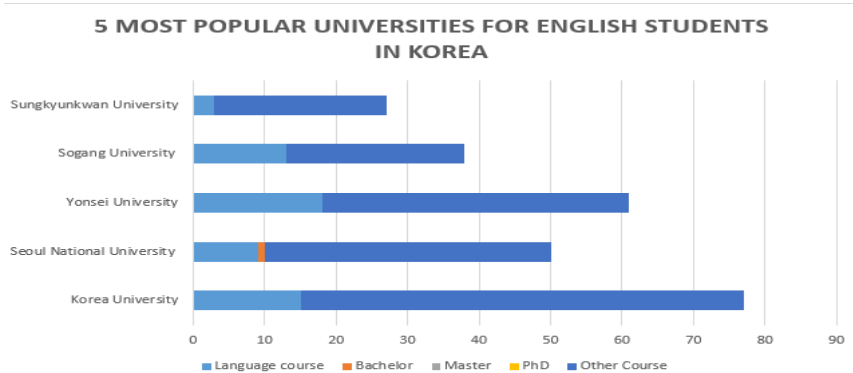
What stands out among students from England (Table 1) is that the percentage of Korean language learners is bigger than that of Germany. 79 students attended language courses whilst 84 students were students in degree programmes in 2017. Students joining exchange programs comprised almost half of all students in 2017. Degree-seeking students have almost identical figures with those of German students. This may be related to a fixed quota for certain groups of European students on Korean government scholarships. Moreover, English students coming from a country where tuition fees for tertiary education are high might consider studying in Korea very cost-effective, again also considering the superb job prospects. In this context, the prospect of an international career even in neighboring countries might appear very appealing to English students. The practice of engaging in international study in itself can trigger thoughts of an international career.⁴⁶⁾

〈Figure 7〉 displays that most English students were enrolled at Korea University, followed by Yonsei University and SNU. Korea University has a large foreign faculty and many Korean professors that studied in English-speaking countries. Among international students, Korea University is known for providing high-quality English programmes, a fact that might be also known to many English students.

45) Park, So Jin and Nancy Abelman, "Class and Cosmopolitan Striving: Mother's Management of English Education in South Korea." *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 4, 2004, p. 646.

46) Findlay, Prazeres, Mccollum and Packwood, "It was always the plan: international study as learning to migrate," p. 193.

<Figure 7>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

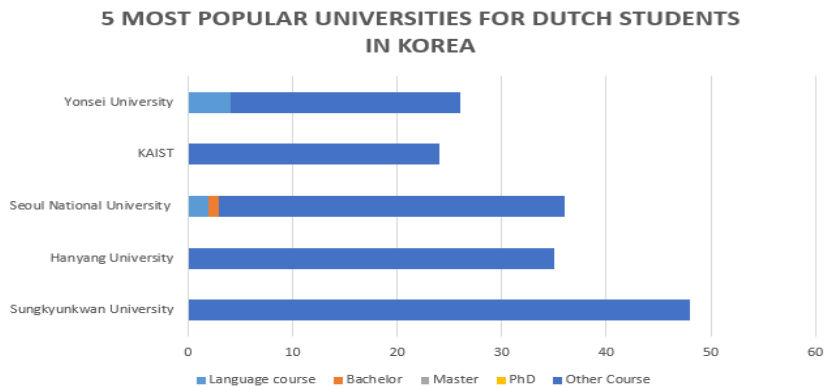
Dutch Students in Korea

Students from the Netherlands are the final group of the five largest European student sending countries. With a total number of 292 students in 2017, the number of students resembled that of England. However, only 18 language course students and 38 degree-seekers were registered in 2017. This is a substantially smaller number than that of students from England. Instead, and again similar to Germany and France, most Dutch students entered Korea via exchange programs. Driven by exotic images of Korea, a desire to travel the country and region, and other personal reasons, most Dutch students come to the peninsula for shorter periods of time. The three universities with the largest Dutch exchange students groups were in 2017 Sungkyunkwan University with 48 students, Hanyang University 35 students and SNU with 33 students. This also reflects the maturity of partnerships between these Korean and Dutch universities. Sungkyunkwan University has 48 Dutch partner universities, Hanyang University has 13

and SNU 7.

Dutch and German students were the largest group enrolled at Hanyang University in 2017. Hanyang University offers a wide range of natural science subjects. It is assumed that exchange students from these two countries come from universities with similar study fields. Regarding job prospects, Dutch students may be placed in a better position than Germans, French or Russians. Not more than a couple of hundred Dutch reside in Korea. Being able to speak Dutch and knowing Dutch culture can open up doors in the niche job market in Korea or the Netherlands. Dutch students, especially degree-seeking, may have this in mind before arriving on the Korean peninsula.

<Figure 8>



Source: Korean Ministry of Education, 2017

V. Conclusion and Remarks

Insufficient academic attention has been given to new developments in International Student Mobility(ISM). Whilst most students continue to migrate for education from South to North, from East to West and from non-English speaking countries to English-speaking countries, some have decided to move against the mainstream. European students, a minor group of international students in Korea, have been on the margins of academic focus. As a result of Korea's strong efforts to internationalize its higher education system large groups of Asian students have entered Korea. Whilst these Asian students have received some academic attention, European students, a minor group of international students in Korea, have been underrepresented in academic research.

This study represents an initial effort to fill this academic gap by analyzing the study motivations of the major groups of European students arriving in Korea. The number of European students in Korea has since 2003 constantly been growing reaching its peak at 5,933 in 2017. By making use of ISM theories related to the pull and push factors and decision-making processes of international students, this study was able to establish some first insights into the mobility patterns and study motives of European students in Korea. Looking at the five largest European sending countries altogether some clear patterns can be noticed. The overwhelming majority of European students visit Korea via university exchange programmes. An increased partnership between Korean and European universities has resulted in increased student mobility from Europe to Korea. This holds especially true for French, German, English and Dutch

students. Russian students, in contrast, most frequently intend to pursue a degree and language studies in Korea. Partnerships between Russian and Korean universities are rare and therefore the number of exchange students from Russia is limited. As Russian students usually reside in Korea for many years it also becomes essential to acquire good Korean skills, a good asset(or cultural capital) that can be easily converted into economic capital in the host country or at home. For Russian students, geographical closeness to Korea may encourage students to opt for a degree as transnational lives can more easily continue when living in geographical proximity.

Unless studying Korea-related studies or belonging to the wider Korean Diaspora in Europe, students from France, Germany, England and the Netherlands commonly move to Korea without much prior knowledge of the country. Probably also prepared with many travel plans for the region, to these students, many of whom probably are exchange students; Korea represents an exotic and adventurous country that has been overlooked thanks to the popularity of China and Japan. Although being less known, Korea has a good image in Europe also due to Hallyu(Korean wave) that might have especially stimulated a Korea visit between French and Russian students. As engaging in an international study can trigger thoughts of an international career, many students(especially degree-seeking) in this sample of European students may contemplate the idea of working in Korea or in the region after graduation. In particular students from England might have very good job prospects in mind before deciding to study in Korea. The massive demand for English language instructors in Korea does not seem to break up in the near future. Similar to Russian students the perception of possible good job prospects has perhaps also given rise to a high

percentage of degree-seeking English students to choose Korea as a study destination.

Theories on ISM focusing on West to East educational migration should consider that different international students may have varied motives in mind when deciding to study in East Asia not just depending on their nationality but also on the length and course of study. As this sample of all five countries has demonstrated international degree-seeking international students tend to have more career-oriented motives in mind than students who come to Korea for exchange programs.

Further research on international students in Korea is needed. In particular minor groups that have received insufficient academic interest should receive more academic attention. This would enhance the academic understanding of newly emerging educational migration trends as well as deepen academic insights into the motives and decision-making processes of international students moving from Western countries to East Asia.

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Abstract

Going East for Education: An Analysis of
European Students' Motives to Study in Korea

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International Student Mobility(ISM) has been dominated by flows from South to North, East to West and mostly towards English-speaking countries. ISM of this kind has been the focus of much academic research, however, much less is known about new mobility trends: student mobility within and towards East Asia. Korea has increasingly been attracting international students, primarily from Asia but also from Europe. Studies on Asian students are growing; however, research on the growing number of European students seems to be non-existent. This study aims to help to fill the gap by analyzing the study motives and decisions of European students to undertake studies in Korea. Using theories of push and pull factor on international students from France, Russia, Germany, England and the Netherlands this study demonstrates some major findings. Except students from Russia, the great majority of European students enter Korea as exchange students for a few semesters. This has been encouraged by numerous partnerships between Korea and European universities. Geographical proximity, scholarships, and better job prospects seem to inspire many Russian students to pursue a degree in Korea. Mostly as a result of Hallyu Korean language courses are particularly popular among Russian and French students. Prior to arrival, most European students tend to perceive Korea as an appealing exotic and unknown country, valued for quality higher education, travel adventures and good career prospects, the latter especially by students from England. To enhance the understanding of West to East educational migration more studies on Western students in Korea are needed.

Keywords : International Student Mobility, European Students in Korea,
Motives for Study Abroad, Degree-Seeking Students,
International Student Exchange

투고일: 2018년 7월 2일, 심사일: 2018년 7월 20일, 게재확정일: 2018년 8월 21일