

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AS SOFT POWER BY THE REVISIONIST FORCES

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Abstract

This article covers the use of the internationalization of higher education as a soft power tool by revisionist countries in international relations. Whereas the common view of scholars is that revisionist forces tend to activate their hard power means as in the case of India about her dispute with Pakistan and Russia against Ukraine, their soft power engagement is tremendously important. While internationalization in higher education was the monopoly of the hegemonic and colonial powers previously, in recent years the progress of revisionist forces in this regard has been noted. Since soft power engagement forms vary with the stunning transformations after the millennium, internationalization of higher education is the latest trend. When examining the published data on international student mobility, we have determined that revisionist powers China, Türkiye, and Russia are among the top ten countries hosting the most international students.

Keywords: internationalization; internationalization in higher education; hard power; soft power; revisionist forces

Introduction

In the late 1980s, Joseph Nye introduced the term ‘soft power’ in international relations literature. He defined soft power as making others want the results you want rather than forcing them to do something (Nye, 2004, p. 68). Compared to hard power, he suggested that apart from the states, the main actor in international politics, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) or international institutions can also use soft power (Nye, 2004, p. 17). According to Nye, the basic soft power sources of a country are culture, political values, and foreign policies (Nye, 2011, p. 84). He mentioned that culture is a set of values and practices with many manifestations such as literature, art, and education (Nye, 2004, p. 11). Some scholars like Wojciuk et al. (2015, p. 298) claim that a high-quality education contributes to a country’s soft power. Since education is not adequately addressed in the current International Relations literature, they discussed the educational aspect of soft power, and its conceptual and functional dimensions (Wojciuk et al., 2015, p. 300). They claim that the concept of educational soft power in IR works through three mechanisms. First, higher education is a carrier of genuine values which may attract students from abroad. The values that attract more students are modernization, equality, good life, and competitiveness. Second, soft power is related to the most stunning resources a country owns such as the quality of education whose effect is observed by the products it manufactured and the level of its internationalization. The third mechanism of educational soft power is a country’s utilization of higher education as a tool for achieving certain foreign policy goals. This may happen in cases of successful domestic development or security policies or foreign development aid (Wojciuk et al., 2015, p. 314).

Kelkitli (2021, p. 41) regards the student exchange programs developed by Türkiye as a soft power tool in foreign policy. Based on the assumption that education may serve as a soft power tool in International Relations, we have analyzed the internationalization of tertiary education by the new

revisionist forces¹ by comparing them with the top ten countries hosting the most international students. In the first section of the article, we will define what internationalization in higher education means, trendy global higher education destinations for internationally mobile students, and some collocations related to international student mobility. In the second part, we will try to figure out internationalization of higher education by means of approaches and methods in international relations and some recent changes in student mobility and their reasons. The following part includes some statistics regarding in and outbound student flow. In the conclusion, I discuss the recent change in student mobility in and out of Türkiye and explain its reasons by means of its policy change in international relations demanding change.

Internationalization of Tertiary Education²

Internationalization in higher education, unlike the practices in the past, has ceased to be a goal only for prestigious universities in developed countries and is now important for higher education institutions at the global level in different ways (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 37). Many institutions usually internationalize for talented and qualified or wealthy foreign students (Lipsett, 2009; Matloff, 2013, p. 2). Some universities are internationalizing to allure the best quality faculty and professional researchers and research staff (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2011, p. 269; van der Wende, 2007, p. 277). The dominant trend is mainly towards economic justification, branding, and competition to obtain talented international students (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009, p. 2; Knight, 2011, p. 25). Internationalization of Tertiary Education might be described as “Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an

¹Revisionist is a term describing states whose objective is to change or put an end to the current international system. According to power transition theory countries stand as either a status quo or a revisionist state.

²As a concept, ‘the internationalization of tertiary education’ will be abbreviated as ITE hereafter.

international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2015, p. 2). International student mobility can be considered legitimizing international migration as a sub-branch. Especially Anglo-Saxon countries as historically popular international migration destinations have an extensive institutional structure with migration planning, organization mechanisms, competitive and interest-oriented policies (Türk, 2020, p. 353). The United Nations (UN) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) place special emphasis on the subject and collect and share statistical data. In a handbook prepared by the OECD, an international student is described as “an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin” (OECD, 2018a, p. 38).

Internationalization of higher education is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2015, p. 2). The internationalization of higher education is becoming more and more widespread among countries day by day. To determine the reasons, it is necessary to consider the incident from a multidisciplinary point of view. Contrary to the common view that the most important reason for internationalization in higher education is the exchange of ideas and information, universities accept international students to increase student diversity and improve their global ranking in internationalization in higher education. However, their aim is sometimes to increase revenues for universities (UNESCO, 2019, p. 96). The phenomenon of international migration increasing day by day has been in the interest of many different disciplines in academia. In the face of increasing international immigration pressure, different policies determined by the countries that are exposed to receiving or sending immigrants attract the attention of political scientists. Negotiations and agreements among

states, and international institutions and organizations like the United Nations and its subordinate bodies, and their decisions have naturally made migration an important issue for the discipline of international relations. While the effects of immigration on immigrants and receiving and sending societies attract the attention of sociologists, the feelings and thoughts of immigrants, as well as individuals in receiving and sending societies attract the attention of experts in the field of psychology to deal with the subject. Therefore, although the phenomenon of migration may be domestic, which requires a multidisciplinary perspective with many different dimensions, it is an indispensable research topic in the field of international relations, as it has an international character.

The OECD defines three types of international student mobility. “International mobile students are individuals who physically cross an international border between two countries to participate in educational activities in the country of destination” (OECD, 2018b, p. 41). The students in this group are enrolled as regular students at any higher education program in the host country. They are to physically attend the courses given like other regular students of the program. So in its definition system distant learners are not accepted as internationally mobile. The second group is foreign students who are not citizens of the country in which they are studying and have not moved to this country for the sole purpose of studying; for instance, those who arrive as a result of other movements such as international migration or asylum like Syrian students with temporary protection status in Türkiye. The third group is exchange program students. Within the scope of Erasmus+ and Mevlana programs, students receive some of their education in an educational institution abroad. “Exchange programs are mobility programs that normally last between three months and less than a full academic year” (OECD, 2018b, p. 39).

Internationalization in Theory and Practice

International relations theories, such as realism, liberalism, and world system approaches, have developed different perspectives on the phenomenon of migration. Although the issue of migration, like many other international issues, cannot be fully explained with a single theory, the different theoretical approaches, while examining different aspects of the issue in detail, contribute to our examination of all the predictable or unpredictable elements of the migration phenomenon in terms of international relations. While other aspects of migration such as politics, sociology, and psychology are fixed, we will discuss its impact on international relations and especially the issue of internationalization in higher education as a sub-type of international migration using the *ceteris paribus* approach in social sciences and economics.

Students primarily pay attention to the availability of university opportunities in their own country, the costs, and the relative quality of education at home and abroad, when making decisions about where to pursue higher education (OECD, 2019, p. 233). Accommodation, transportation, education, and nutrition expenses in the country of destination are the most important reasons for choosing any country. Part-time work opportunities during education can also be a reason for students' preferences. More importantly, they pay attention to employment opportunities after graduation. This means the opportunity to reside and find a job in the country of study, or a feature that employers in the home country attach importance to in the CVs of the candidates. The opportunity to gain work experience is a growing driver of student mobility (OECD, 2019, p. 236). Learning a foreign language or gaining the ability to communicate in the target language can also affect student decisions. Getting to know different cultures can contribute to making friends from different countries. The desire to gain individual responsibility and act freely also influences this decision. Increasing scholarship opportunities, education, and internship mobility support offered by different institutions

provide this opportunity, especially to students with limited finance.

Governments often attribute student mobility as a way to develop closer cooperation with other countries (UNESCO, 2019, p. 96). Starting after the industrial revolution, students were sent to developed countries with the idea of transferring up-to-date technology idea. Today, students are mutually financed by states in higher education with the idea of contributing to international relations. Education abroad is supported with special funds, especially in highly demanded professional fields. Individuals who have studied abroad are seen as honorary goodwill ambassadors and are thought to play an important role in the advancement of international relations in many fields such as education, trade, finance, and military (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 48; Kelkitli, 2021, p. 44; Taskoh & Larsen, 2014, p. 43).

Universities that encourage international student mobility offer a different campus environment to their students. A campus with students of diverse nationalities prepares all students for life in the 21st century and a career in a global economy. For most students, a multicultural campus is the first chance to live, study, and work with people who are not from their home country and cultural background. Universities that bring foreign students and foster a culturally diverse campus environment offer students unique opportunities to learn about themselves and the world they live in. A multicultural campus offers a multicultural classroom environment. Bringing people from different cultures together in one classroom allows students with different perspectives to benefit from each other's experiences, cultures, and skills. In addition, international students also offer important income opportunities to the universities, cities, and countries where they study. In accordance with their economic conditions to afford to study abroad, more and more people are trying to provide the best possible education for themselves and their children. This increases the competition to attract international students between universities and countries for this high amount allocated for higher education. In the bipolar order of the Cold

War period, this movement from pro-capitalist countries towards the western prosperous core countries and the Americas; on the other hand, was towards the USSR, the centre country from the Warsaw Pact countries (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 257). In the multi-polar world after the Cold War, international student mobility has changed, with bipolar mobility shifting to different power centers.

Recent Changes in ITE

The world's most powerful nations and leaders today are all “politically modern and industrial” (Organski, 1958, p. 339). Scholars like Altbach & Knight (2007, p. 294) and Yeom (2019, pp. 17–18) try to explain the nature and trend of international student mobility by associating it with the development of states. Since universities in developed countries have a relatively comparative advantage in research and teaching capacity, ITE is directly related to the economic and social enhancement level of the country where a university is located. Applying development theories explaining the economic and social change processes could help us to determine the status of ITE since the flow of mobility is from the undeveloped or developing countries to the prosperous West. He states that there are several theories focusing on various social scientific approaches to determine the change in society. Modernization, Dependency and World Systems theories focus on social mobility effects of higher education, and they explain the existing unequal structure between bodies, structures, and even states (Yeom, 2019, p. 20).

However, after the Cold War period, the more recently industrialized nations challenging the prosperous ones for leadership have a say in attracting internationally mobile students. Some revisionist³ forces come to the fore

³ The countries have traditionally been divided by historians and political scientists; status quo countries that accept the existing international system as it is and revisionist powers that “reject the prevailing legitimacy of the international system and seek to alter it considerably or to overthrow it entirely” (Tenenbaum, 2012)

in their regions. Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and annexed some parts of Ukraine in 2014. Türkiye has declared by military and diplomatic means that it will not compromise its sovereign rights over the Eastern Mediterranean against countries such as Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel (van der Schalk, 2020). By directly intervening in the Libyan civil war, it supported the Government of National Accord headquartered in Tripoli and recognized by the United Nations and the European Union. After the successful Syrian intervention, it confirmed the successes of the unmanned aerial vehicles and drones it produced against the Tobruk-based Haftar forces, which provided support and weapons from Egypt, the USA, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, France, and Russia. The effectiveness of these weapons was also tested in the 40-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which resulted in the decisive victory of Azerbaijan. President Erdoğan's one-minute scolding and his address in the Justice Forum "the world is bigger than 5" are the most important instances that reveal that he wants to change the current distorted world order (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018).

Meanwhile, India stepped up aggression with its neighbor, Pakistan, which started the process of revoking the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir (van der Schalk, 2020). Brazil and Indonesia are in the category of revisionist countries (van der Schalk, 2020). In this study, the effects of the emerging powers in the international arena on international student mobility will be examined since it might be used as a massive soft power tool. The globalization process, which threatens the border separation, allows strategic power centers to be effective in the international arena by using different methods. This may be in the form of "Russia's interference in the US elections," "Türkiye's mobilization of Turkish communities in different countries" through the Yunus Emre Institute and the Maarif Foundation, and "Saudi Arabia's funding of mosques in Pakistan and some other countries" (van der Schalk, 2020).

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) data, which is the most comprehensive database on international student mobility, will be used to test whether the growing international impact of revisionist forces is affecting international student mobility. Within the category of new revisionists, the statistics of mobile students hosted and sent abroad by Russia, China and Türkiye will be examined. To decide on the impact of the revisionist powers, student mobility from and to these countries will be examined. The top ten most international student-attracting states will be determined and the statistics of the revisionists will be compared with the other countries in the top ten lists.

The provisions regarding the continuation of education in higher education institutions in Türkiye for foreign nationals and Turkish citizens who have completed their secondary education abroad are determined by the Higher Education Council as stated in Article 45 of the Higher Education Law No 2547 (Türkiye-Legal Gazette, 2013). Pursuant to this article and in accordance with the decision taken by the Higher Education Executive Board, universities send their quota requests to the Higher Education Council (YOK) within the determined calendar, limited to the programs included in the Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS) Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide. The requests submitted by universities are evaluated by YOK, the decisions taken are communicated to the universities, and the quotas of the programs, the language of instruction, and the preparatory class conditions are published on the website of YOK. While the quotas that universities can request for international students before 2019 were limited to 50% of the quotas announced in the YOK guide, this limitation was lifted in 2019 and much more internationalization of universities was targeted (YÖK). Starting in 2019, universities made great efforts to increase the number of international students. According to the current data published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the information of students who went abroad for higher education from Türkiye and students who came to

Türkiye for university education from abroad are given in the table below. Meanwhile, UIS statistics do not reveal data for the year 2019 and beyond. Thus, some other sources like the OECD and HEC are used to reveal some facts on inbound and outbound student flow.

Some Signs of Soft Power in ITE

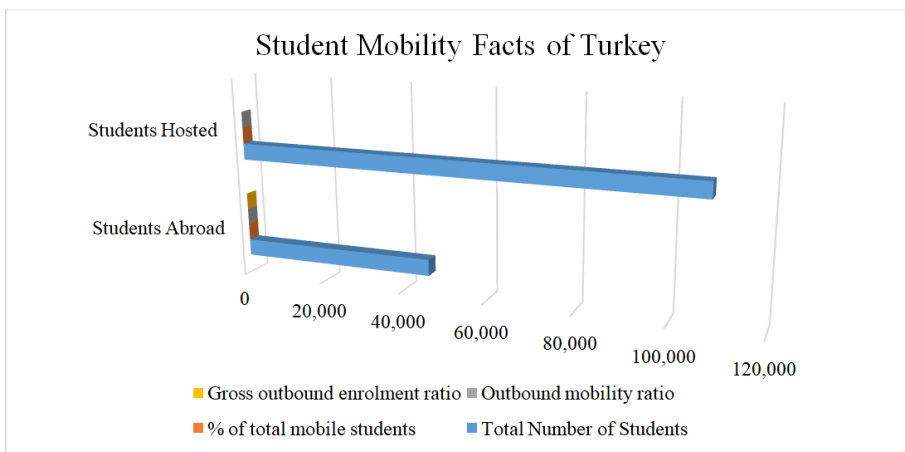
As Wojciuk et al. (2015, p. 314) state, higher education is a carrier of genuine values which may attract students from abroad. Among the most important genuine values, democracy, human rights, justice, modernization, equality, good life, and competitiveness are on top. Although it is controversial to regard a state as having or lacking these values, there are some strategies to convince the target country and its people. It is easy for Türkiye to win the African people's hearts because it was not once a colonial power, and it is a spectacular instance for them to stand as an alternative competitive power suffered from the colonials. The most important of all is that Türkiye's relationship with African countries is based on the principle of forging a win-win partnership to build a better future for them and help each other on the international scene (Idriss, 2020). Before the Covid-19 pandemic and recent economic crisis, Türkiye had relatively all of the abovementioned genuine values. This is the first evidence that shows its attractiveness in getting so many international students.

A second indicator of soft power use in tertiary education is that it is generated by the resources a country possesses. The one particularly visible in the Turkish case is the quality of education it offers. The industrial products manufactured in Türkiye by Turkish engineers are now globally demanded, which shows the quality of higher education in Türkiye. African countries which have been suffering from contradictory political discrepancy would like to have military equipment like TB-2 Bayraktar drones whose positive effect was tested in various cases. Ankara has now military bases and training centers as in the Somali capital Mogadishu and in Libya. "Turkey is now providing support to international peacekeeping missions ongoing in Africa" (Idriss, 2020).

The third soft power dimension is a country’s use of education to achieve specific policy goals. It might be in the form of successful domestic development policies, based on knowledge and education or foreign development aid (Wojciuk et al., 2015, p. 314). According to Idriss (2020), Turkish companies are now making infrastructure contracts, such as the Ethiopian Awash Weldiya Railway, which costs more than 1.000.000.000 US dollars. “Türkiye’s investments have helped to reduce unemployment by generating jobs throughout the continent” (Idriss, 2020). “Aid for development and humanitarian affairs is also a highly essential pillar of Türkiye’s presence in the continent” (Orakçi, 2022). Access to clean water and electricity is still a vital problem for most Africans. Turkey pays special attention to infrastructure projects and TIKA and other Turkish non-governmental civil society organizations (NGOs) are very active in the development and humanitarian issues in Africa. On the other hand, Türkiye supports African youth development by supplying scholarship opportunities for free higher education in Turkey (Idriss, 2020; Orakçi, 2022).

Facts And Figures on Türkiye’s Inbound and Outbound Student Flow at Tertiary Level

Graphic 1: Türkiye’s key indicators for students abroad and students hosted (UNESCO UIS, 2021)



According to the data in the table above, Türkiye is among the countries preferred by international students for university education in the developing countries group. The number of students coming to Türkiye for tertiary level education is more than twice the number of students going abroad. The distribution of students going abroad from Türkiye to receive higher education is given by country in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of Students Who Went Abroad to Get Higher Education by Country (UNESCO UIS, 2021)

STUDENTS ABROAD					
	Country of Destination	Number		Country of Destination	Number
1	United States	9,692	38	Republic of Moldova	116
2	Germany	6,074	39	Lithuania	101
3	United Kingdom	3,101	40	United Arab Emirates	99
4	Austria	2,405	41	Portugal	96
5	France	2,384	42	Belarus	90
6	Bulgaria	2,018	43	Iran, Islamic Rep.	74
7	Azerbaijan	2,002	44	South Africa	66
8	Italy	1,804	45	Thailand	61
9	Bosnia/Herzegovina	1,500	46	Croatia	60
10	Ukraine	1,406	47	Qatar	55
11	Poland	1,232	48	Ireland	54
12	North Macedonia	1,183	49	Morocco	52
13	Canada	1,161	50	Norway	52
14	Hungary	967	51	Latvia	42
15	Netherlands	660	52	Slovakia	42
16	Switzerland	644	53	India	37
17	Kyrgyzstan	624	54	Slovenia	36
18	Australia	610	55	Serbia	34
19	Saudi Arabia	483	56	Niger	33
20	Russian Federation	442	57	Brazil	30
21	Egypt	397	58	Mongolia	28
22	Romania	311	59	Argentina	27
23	Spain	285	60	Tunisia	24
24	Kazakhstan	257	61	New Zealand	22
25	Sweden	252	62	Indonesia	15

26	Georgia	243	63	Luxembourg	15
27	Jordan	225	64	Vietnam	13
28	Finland	214	65	Bahrain	12
29	Japan	206	66	Dominican Republic	11
30	Belgium	176	67	Malta	11
31	Korea, Rep.	155	68	Colombia	10
32	Malaysia	141	69	Oman	8
33	Denmark	127	70	Chile	7
34	Czechia	126	71	Tajikistan	7
35	Estonia	124	72	Armenia	6
36	Albania	123	73	Iceland	6
37	Greece	116			

The distribution of students coming from abroad to receive higher education in Türkiye by country is also given in the table below. Especially Syrian students with temporary protection status in Türkiye take the lead in the table.

Table 2: Students' Countries of Origin Coming From Abroad to Get Higher Education in Türkiye (UNESCO UIS, 2021)

STUDENTS HOSTED					
	Country of Origin	Number		Country of Origin	Number
1	Syrian Arab Republic	15,042	72	Malawi	124
2	Azerbaijan	14,878	73	Central African Rep.	112
3	Turkmenistan	10,418	74	Benin	110
4	Iran, Islamic Rep.	6,099	75	Canada	108
5	Afghanistan	5,251	76	Colombia	105
6	Iraq	5,012	77	Belgium	104
7	Germany	3,755	78	Congo, DR	96
8	Greece	2,285	79	Mozambique	93
9	Kyrgyzstan	2,032	80	Madagascar	92
10	Bulgaria	2,030	81	Italy	86
11	Kazakhstan	2,015	82	Zimbabwe	79
12	Libya	1,943	83	Israel	79
13	Somalia	1,735	84	Myanmar	78
14	Pakistan	1,606	85	Guinea-Bissau	76

15	China	1,517	86	Australia	76
16	Palestine	1,472	87	Liberia	73
17	Yemen	1,380	88	Comoros	71
18	Russian Federation	1,376	89	Togo	71
19	Nigeria	1,287	90	Poland	68
20	Egypt	1,217	91	Gabon	62
21	Jordan	1,006	92	Rwanda	59
22	Albania	989	93	Haiti	57
23	North Macedonia	891	94	Sierra Leone	47
24	Mongolia	833	95	Sri Lanka	45
25	Georgia	753	96	Denmark	44
26	Uzbekistan	736	97	Eritrea	43
27	Indonesia	732	98	Japan	42
28	Serbia	709	99	Spain	42
29	Tajikistan	692	100	Qatar	41
30	Morocco	649	101	Sweden	38
31	Ukraine	579	102	Viet Nam	37
32	Ethiopia	477	103	Brazil	36
33	Bosnia/Herzegovina	477	104	Cambodia	36
34	United States	472	105	Nepal	36
35	Netherlands	446	106	Norway	31
36	Cameroon	444	107	Mauritius	28
37	Kenya	432	108	Belarus	28
38	Republic of Moldova	416	109	Lithuania	28
39	Bangladesh	410	110	Hungary	27
40	Tanzania	397	111	Slovakia	25
41	Austria	354	112	Croatia	24
42	Mali	353	113	Angola	22
43	Ghana	351	114	Mexico	22
44	Algeria	332	115	Maldives	22
45	Guinea	262	116	Eswatini	20
46	Lebanon	258	117	Venezuela	19
47	Saudi Arabia	257	118	United Arab Emirates	19
48	Tunisia	254	119	Armenia	18
49	Djibouti	243	120	Papua New Guinea	18
50	Chad	223	121	Bahrain	17
51	Thailand	221	122	Kuwait	15

52	Uganda	220	123	Finland	15
53	Korea, Rep.	216	124	Slovenia	14
54	Montenegro	214	125	Botswana	13
55	Niger	208	126	Namibia	13
56	India	206	127	Peru	13
57	France	204	128	Czechia	13
58	Congo	183	129	Singapore	12
59	Malaysia	182	130	Equatorial Guinea	10
60	South Africa	172	131	Suriname	10
61	Senegal	171	132	Ireland	10
62	Mauritania	168	133	Portugal	10
63	Zambia	163	134	Lesotho	8
64	Romania	157	135	Lao PDR	7
65	United Kingdom	154	136	Estonia	7
66	Burundi	153	137	Dominican Republic	6
67	Burkina Faso	144	138	Korea, DPR	6
68	Gambia	133	139	Latvia	6
69	Côte d'Ivoire	132	140	Chile	5
70	Switzerland	130	141	Oman	5
71	Philippines	129			

The total number of students who choose abroad to receive higher education and the number of countries they prefer an increase in direct proportion to the total number of students who come to Türkiye to receive higher education and their countries of origin. Argentina, New Zealand, Luxembourg, Malta, and Iceland are the countries where students go from Türkiye to study higher education, although no students are hosted. The total number of countries whose citizens study in higher education institutions in Türkiye, where no students from Türkiye go for higher education is 68. 47 of them are in Africa. This shows the great impact of Türkiye on the citizens of the African countries most of which were once colonized by the rich Westerns. To understand the interest of the students who are nationals of African countries in Türkiye, we shall here assess the current Turkish foreign policy with the African states. Türkiye's African policy is carried out in four dimensions: bilateral, regional, continental, and global,

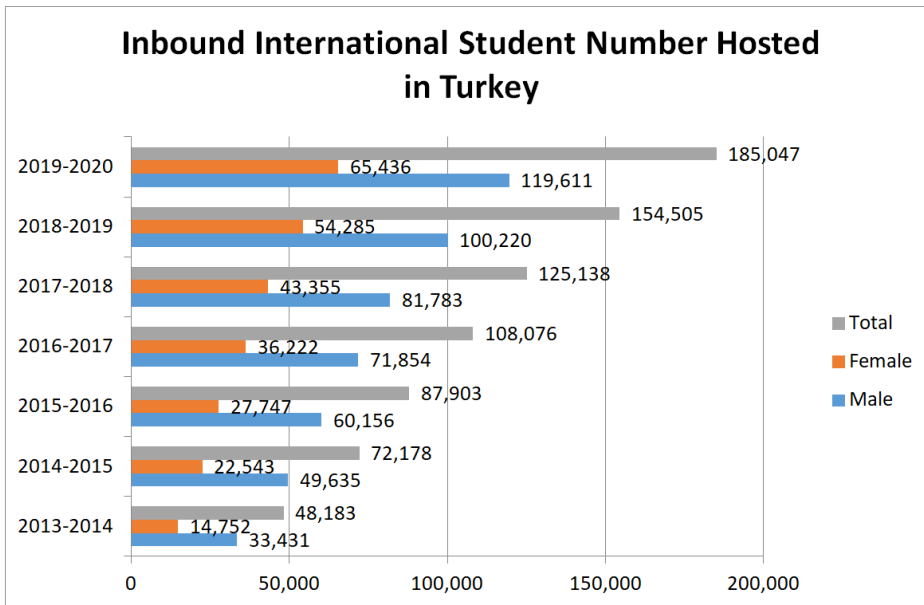
including political, humanitarian, economic, and cultural pillars (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The other 21 countries the nationals of which are tertiary level students hosted in Türkiye are located on varying continents. In the African-Turkish relations that started in 1998, Türkiye was accepted as an observer member of the African Union (AU) in 2005. In 2008, Türkiye was declared a strategic partner of the AU. Within the scope of the multidimensional African Initiative Policy, rapid progress has been made in the areas of political relations, trade, investment, cultural projects, security, and military cooperation and development with the countries of the region. The African Initiative Policy has been named the African Partnership Policy since 2013. In addition to embassies, “institutions such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), Yunus Emre Institute, Maarif Foundation, Turkish Religious Foundation, Anadolu Agency (AA), and Turkish Airlines (THY)” have played an active role in relations with continental countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The importance given to relations with the continent has also been reflected in the opening of diplomatic missions in these countries. The number of embassies operating in Africa was only 12 in 2002, but it increased to 42 by the end of 2019. Correspondingly, African countries have also shown interest in Türkiye, and the number of embassies in Ankara has increased up to 36 recently (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

The Maarif Foundation, which manages the Turkish schools in foreign countries, helps them educate the Turkish minority there as well as a lot of native African nationals. Since 2005, Turkey has been offering scholarships granted by YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities), the Turkish agency responsible for its scholarship program, to young Africans at undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels. “This outstretched hand policy has earned Turkey a special image among Africans” (Idriss, 2020). Now it is not surprising that Africa has been one of the best and

most successful markets for Türkiye. Africa is expected to become Turkey's third-largest defense export market because Ankara has been making agreements with Uganda, Benin, Sudan, Tanzania, and the Ivory Coast, among others on the continent. Main export materials are industrial production, as well as the sale and maintenance of military equipment (Martín, 2021).

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) data only contains info up to 2018. The graphic below shows the number of international students hosted in Türkiye by academic years. The data in the graphic is based on the information provided by YOK. Since UNESCO gathers data from the official institutions, the number of mobile international students is defined by YOK and sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share with UNESCO. When Graphic 1 prepared by UIS is compared with Graphic 2 by YOK, the data in Graphic 1 intersects with the 2016-2017 academic year inbound international student number hosted in Türkiye in Graphic 2. So there is no inconsistency between the data shared by both UIS and YOK.

Graphic 2: Number of Students Hosted in Türkiye by Academic Years (YÖK)



In 2014, out of a total of 4.495.697 international students, 48.183 of them with a rate of 1.07 were educated in Türkiye, while in 2018, 125.138 students with a ratio of 2.24% out of a total of 5.571.402 international students received an education. In line with the strategy, decisions and targets followed by YOK in the context of target-oriented internationalization policy at the tertiary level, the number of international students increased by 110 % in 4 years. Although the data after 2018 is not disclosed by UIS, YOK data shows that Türkiye hosted 154.505 154 thousand 505 international students in 2019 and 185.047 in 2020. Despite the pandemic conditions, this figure is estimated to exceed 220.000 in 2021.

The success here lies in the fact that the centralist YÖK, which was established with the constitution after the 1980 military coup and was the sole decision-maker in higher education, has paved the way for the own decision processes of universities in many fields with the transfer of authority. Decentralization and wider authority have increased competition between universities. Project and academic study-based competition environment among universities has encouraged the various activities of universities to increase the number of international students. Despite the economic difficulties that started before and became more evident during the pandemic, universities in Türkiye continue their activities in the field of internationalization.

Facts And Figures on Inbound and Outbound Student Flow Globally at Tertiary Level

Türkiye has made significant progress towards becoming a center of attraction for international students in higher education and has succeeded in being among the top ten countries in the world in terms of the number of international students it has in 2018 (Enol Sezer et al., 2021). As of 2018 data published by UIS, it became the 10th country with the highest number

of international students in higher education in the world with 125.138 international students (Hürriyet Daily News, 2020). Meanwhile, 987.314 out of a total of 5.571.402 international students in the world are studying at higher education institutions in the United States. England followed with 452.079 students and Australia with 444.514 students, respectively (YÖK, Hürriyet Daily News). The list starts with the Anglo-Saxon countries which are very popular as academic mobility destinations. The top 10 countries attracting the most international students in the world in 2018 are as follows:

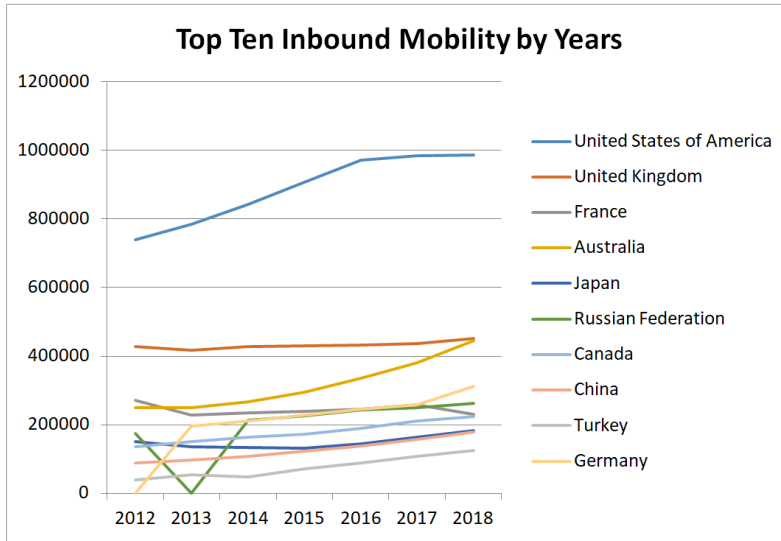
Table 3: The Top 10 Countries Attracting the Most International Students in the World in 2018 (UNESCO UIS, 2021)

No	Country	Inbound	Inbound Mobility Ratio	Outbound	Outbound Mobility Ratio	Total
1	USA	987.314	5,2	84.349	0,5	1.071.663
2	England	452.079	18,3	38,986	1,6	491.065
3	Australia	444.514	26,5	13,319	0,8	457.833
4	Germany	311.738	10,0	122,538	3,9	434.276
5	Russia	262.416	4,5	57,632	1,0	320.048
6	France	229.623	8,8	99,488	3,8	329.111
7	Canada	224.548	13,8	48,345	3,0	272.893
8	Japan	182.748	4,7	31,903	0,8	214.651
9	China	178.271	0,4	993,367	2,2	1.171.638
10	Türkiye	125.138	1,7	47,546	0,6	172.684

Within the class of revisionist forces, Russia, China, and Türkiye are the most striking countries in the top ten list. The countries are put in order according to the number of inbound students. Inbound and outbound ratios were calculated in comparison with the population of each country. The inbound mobility ratio in the above table shows the density of international students in the population of each country. According to the inbound mobility ratio, the top three countries are Australia, England, and Canada. Unfortunately, the statistics beyond the year 2018 have not been shared yet,

and although the Covid 19 pandemic has a negative effect on mobility, the results will be the same for all countries.

Graphic 3 : Top Ten Countries Concerning Inbound Student Mobility at Tertiary Level by Years (UNESCO UIS, 2021)



As can be seen in the graphic above, some of the top ten countries in the competition to attract international students have now reached the saturation point as Cheng (2021, p. 1) stated and the increase in the number of students is at a very low level. The USA recorded high growth rates in 2016, but in the following years, the chart shows a stagnating trend. Western European countries such as the United Kingdom and France are again stagnant in attracting international students. A decrease is observed in France after 2017. Australia, Germany, Russia, Canada, Japan, Türkiye, and China stand out as the countries that regularly increase the number of international students over the years.

Conclusion

Since IR has traditionally focused more on the international system and war, international migration has not had the necessary importance both in theory and in the literature. However, large-scale migration events have had a profound impact on Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, both in theory and in impact, and have been dealt with more as a security problem in the receiving countries. Despite all the harsh measures like strict border controls and deadly push-back practices, the deep political and economic crisis in the sending countries could not deter the immigrants from their goals. The concession granted to educational mobility for higher education legalized immigration in this way, and the race to attract international students triggered international mobility at the higher education level. The economic dimension of international learning mobility has started a competition for developed and developing countries to establish political, economic, and cultural ties with the countries of immigration. As a result, negotiations and agreements have been made between countries on different continents regarding the political, economic, and cultural migration agenda. New forces have come to the fore in attracting international students like China, Russia and Türkiye. As a result, international student mobility at the tertiary level has been a strong soft power tool between the destination and origin countries as it may clearly be seen in the relationship between Türkiye and Africa. Contrary to the common view regarding the revisionist forces' tendency to only actively use hard power to resist the ongoing universal system, their success in facilitating soft power is also significant.

In theory, the flow of international students is from poorer countries to the more prosperous ones. However, the statistics show that some new revisionists are now in the top ten attracting a big amount of internationally mobile students. Along with their power development in military, econ-

omy, and world politics, they try to make connections with other nations to find a market for the goods they produce, to make a social and cultural impact on the citizens. One of the best ways to reach a community and have a positive effect is to host students of that society at the tertiary level and send them back as honorary goodwill representatives. The students have some connections with the local people in the destination countries they studied and start cultural and economic transactions between both countries. In the past, just the colonizers had the opportunity of having a great impact on their colonies and up till soon they had been the hegemony in the field. Now the colonies have their independence – some may still have partially – and they do decide what to do, who to sign a treaty within their foreign policy. So the Chinese and Turkish effect on the states in Africa is increasing steadily. A lot of African students now prefer to study university in new emerging power states (Chegraoui et al., 2020, p. 19). International student mobility is regarded as a beneficial soft power tool and the states compete with each other to host more international students. This competition is not just limited to the African continent but continue all over the world.

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