



# Internationalization of Higher Education

## Professor Konstantinos Petridis, HMU, Greece

### New Ideas & Trends



# Outline

- Global Trends in Higher Education Internationalization
- About Student Mobility



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- Global Trends in Higher Education Internationalization
- About Student Mobility



# About Internationalization

- Globalization and Internationalization affect the higher education worldwide.
  - **Globalization** the trends in higher education that have cross-national implications; these include mass higher education – a global marketplace for students, staff and faculty.
  - **Internationalization** refers to specific policies and initiatives in countries and individual academic institutions or systems to deal with global trends. E.g. policies regarding recruitment foreign students, collaboration with academic institutions or systems in other countries and the establishment of branch campuses abroad.



# About Internationalization

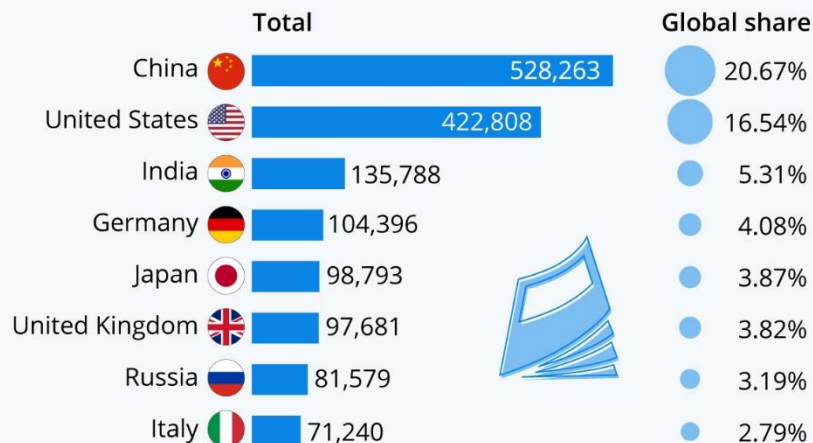
- **Challenges:**

- Few countries dominate (is not only based on volume but also on quality, impact, and networks) global scientific systems: USA, China, Germany, UK, Japan, France, South Korea, Canada, Australia, India.
- New Technologies (check the MOOC platforms) are owned by multinational or academic institutions in Western industrialized nations.
- Domination of English as the medium of instruction.
- Students' flow largely from the developing countries to the industrialized nations.

# Research Outcome: Publications

## The Countries Leading The World In Scientific Publications

Number of science & engineering articles published in peer-reviewed journals in 2018



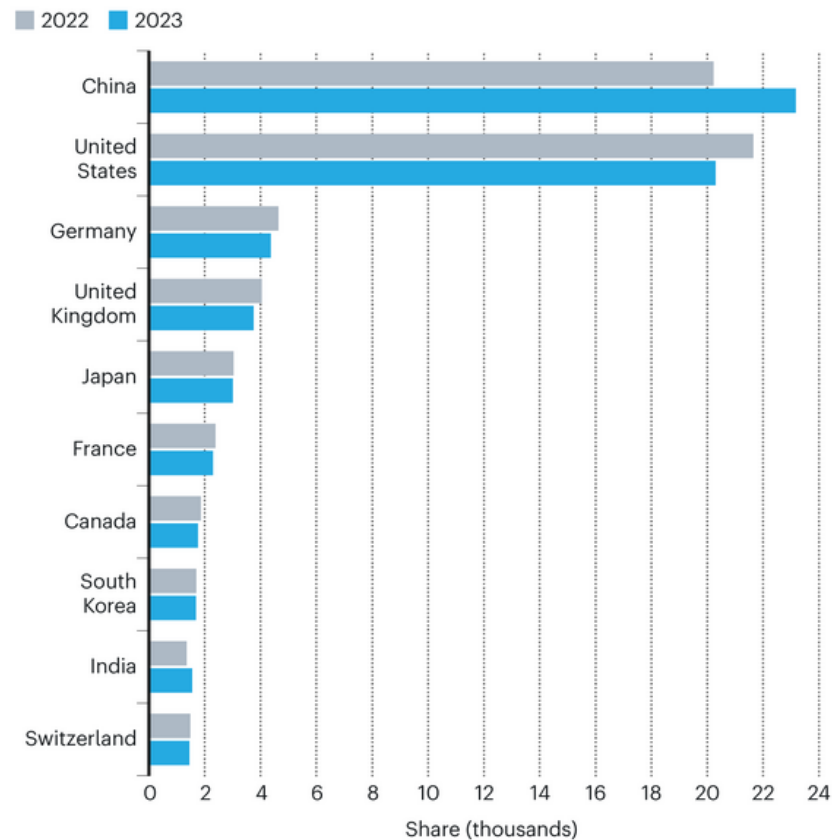
Source: National Science Foundation



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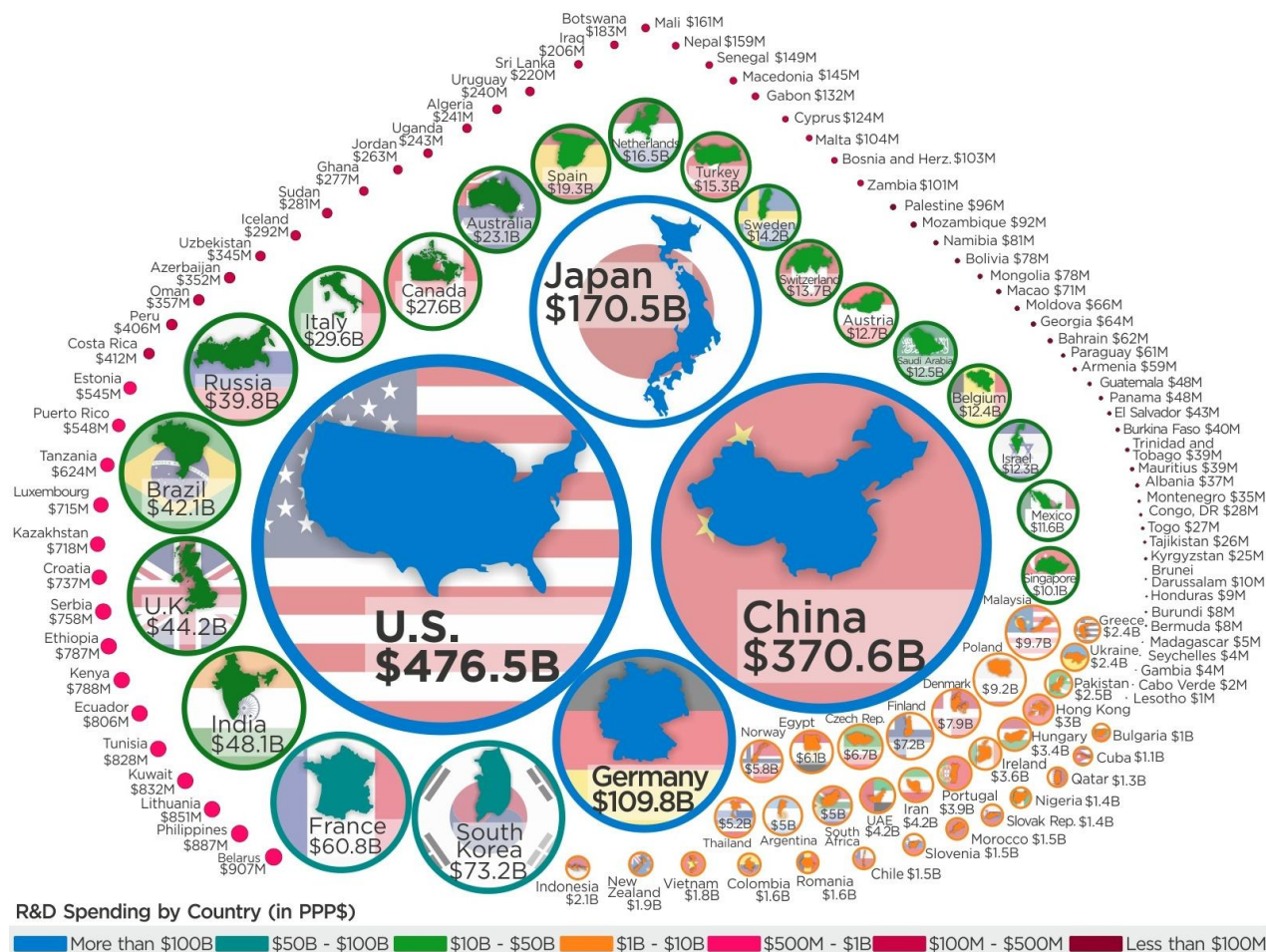
## FORWARD TRAJECTORY

In 2023, China took the lead for Share in the Nature Index overall, including health sciences. It had already gained the lead for natural-science journals in the database in 2022. India has moved up two places among the leading countries and territories and is now 9th overall.



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# R&D Investment



Article & Sources:

<https://howmuch.net/articles/research-development-spending-by-country>  
<http://uis.unesco.org>

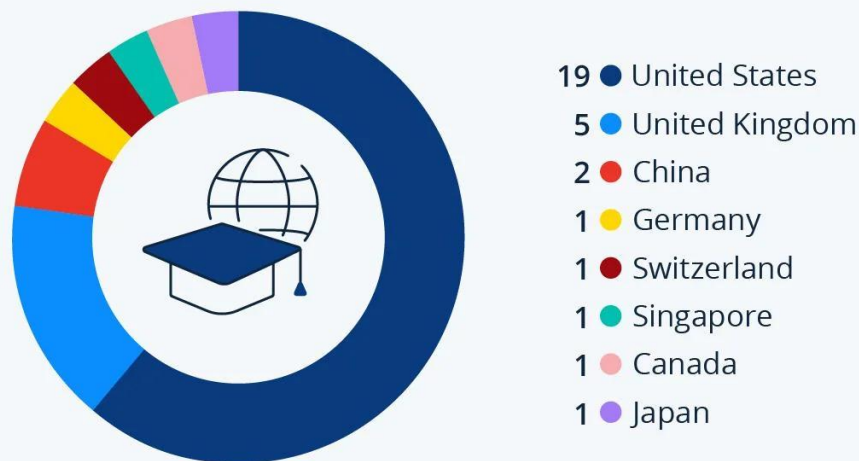
howmuch.net



# Home of Top Institutions

## The U.S. Dominates the World University Ranking

Distribution of universities in the top 30 of the 'World University Ranking 2024', by country



Place 30 in the ranking is a tie between two universities.  
Universities ranked on five indicators: teaching, research environment, research quality, international outlook and industry.  
Source: Times Higher Education

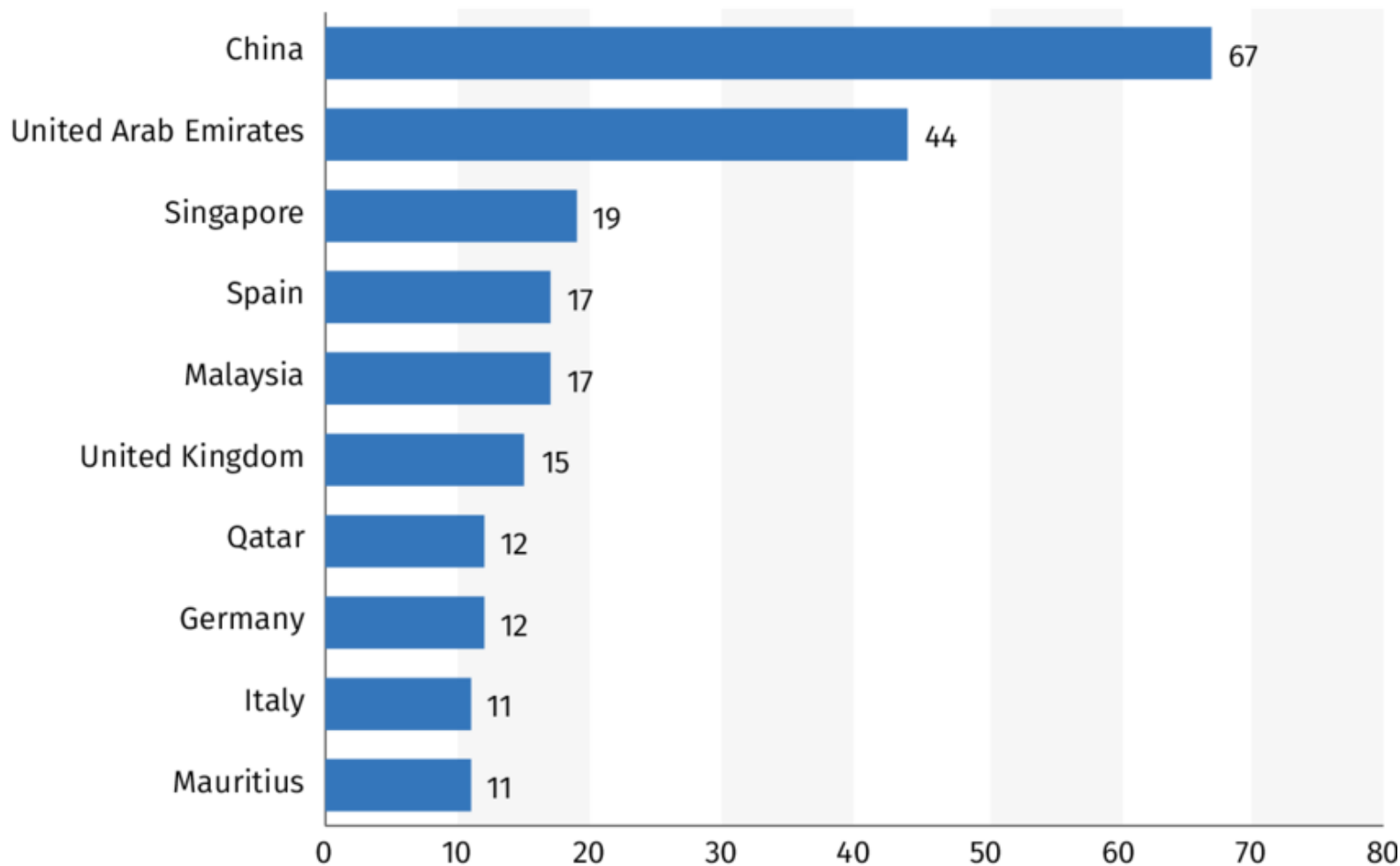


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# Host Countries of Offshore Campuses of other universities





# Universities with the most offshore campuses

**Webster University (USA):** 60 international campuses including Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Ghana and Thailand.

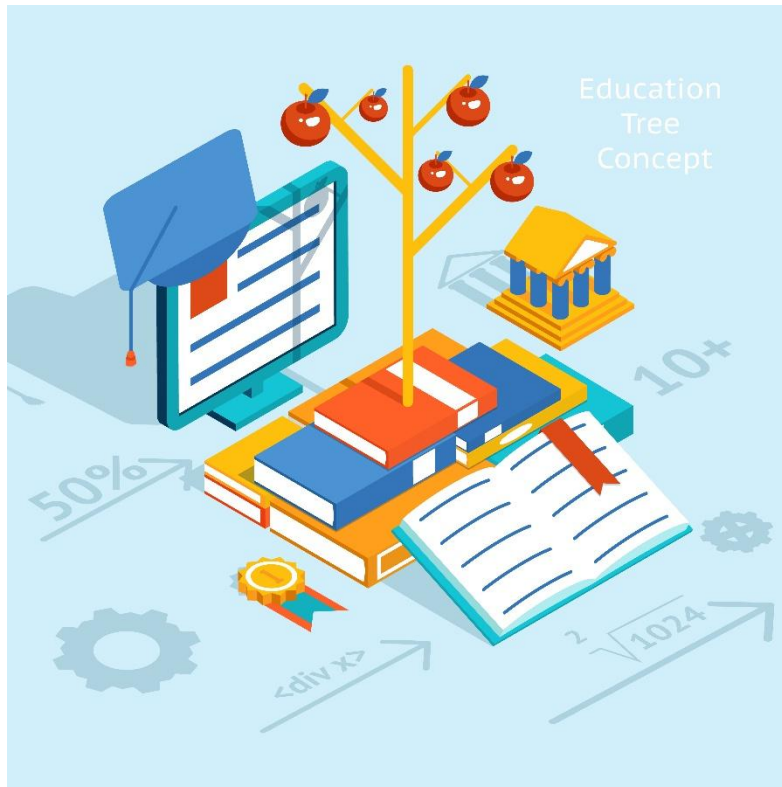
**Bahçeşehir University (Turkey):** in USA, Canada, Italy, Germany, Georgia and Hong Kong

**New York University (USA):** in Abu Dhabi, Shanghai

**RMIT University (Australia):** in Vietnam

**University of Nottingham (UK):** Malaysia, Ningbo (China)

# About Internationalization



- More **than 7 million students** study abroad
- Trends of Internationalization of HE are shaped by **geopolitical shifts, economic pressures, new governments & election cycles** and **rapid technological advancements**.



# About Internationalization

- **Trends in the Internationalization:**
  - **Transnational higher education:** offshore and branch campuses in other countries.
  - **Collaborative Degree Programs:** with universities and enterprises
  - **Distance learning technologies**
  - **Promotion of all types of student mobility:** physical, blended and virtual
  - **Creating linkages between Global South Institutions**



# About Internationalization

- **Trends in the Internationalization:**
  - **Build an Internationalization Culture within and around the Institutions**



# Outline

- Global Trends in Higher Education Internationalization
- About Student Mobility



# About Student Mobilities

**Going beyond the 20% student mobility  
benchmark**



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

- **At least 20%** of graduates in the EHEA should have experienced **an academic or work placement outside their home country**
- Decisive events/priorities to reconsider the viability of the benchmark: **COVID-19, Green & Digital Transitions, War in Ukraine and Brexit**





# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



- **Cross – border traineeships** should be included in the mobility statistics
- **Identify and remove** obstacles to cross – border mobility
- Consider students **in branch campuses and on franchised programs** as mobile
- **Enhance the mobility** among MSc and PhD students

To enlarge physically mobile students



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



- Mobility achieved in **non-formal** and **informal** should be recognized and counted in the benchmark

To enlarge physically mobile students



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



- Include **blended and virtual mobility** in ways which assure high quality and amenability to measurement
- Refine the metrics **for blended and virtual learnings** in particular
- A new edition of the ECTS User's Guide to **include the digital mobility**

To re-engineer the 20% benchmark



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

## Sorbonne Declaration

- @1998, Germany, France, Italy and UK agreed that:  
*‘at both undergraduate and postgraduate level students would be encouraged to spend at least one semester in a foreign HEI’*

## Meeting in London, 2007

- ‘to develop comparable and reliable indicators and data to measure progress towards the overall objective’



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

Leuven and Louvain —la-Neuve, 2009

- *‘in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should had a study or training period abroad’*

1<sup>st</sup> progress report results in 2017

- ‘The achieved mobility in 2013 had stood at a lowly 2.9%’ — in 2017 we have reached the 9%



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

## Statement at Rome (2020)

- *‘enabling all learners to acquire international and intercultural competencies through internationalization of the curricula or participation in innovative international environments in their home institutions, and to experience some form of mobility, whether physical, digitally enhanced or blended formats’*

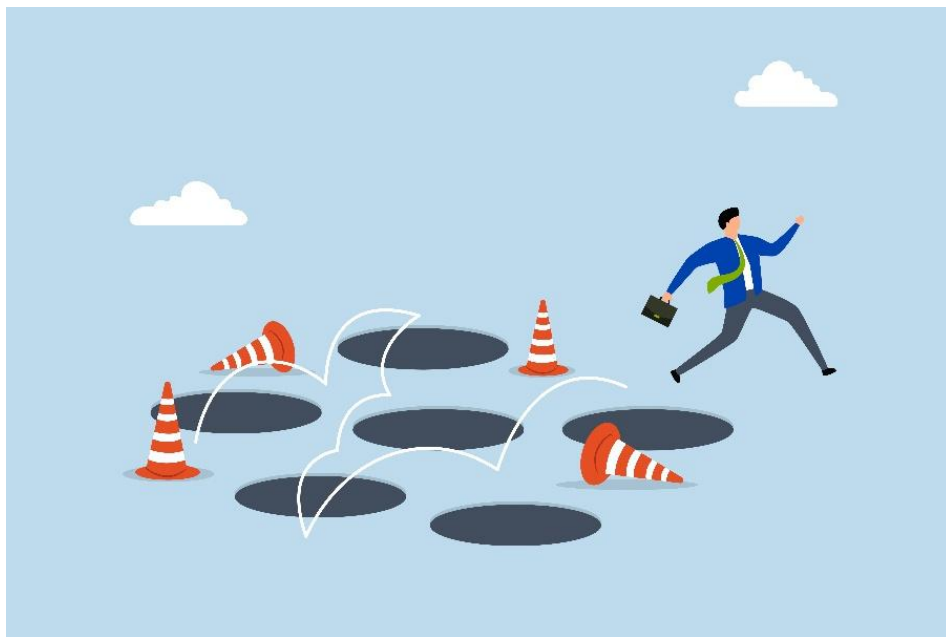
# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



## Identified Challenges

- Improve the quality and coverage of data on mobility (Berlin, 2003)
- Facilitation of the cross-border portability of grants and loans (Berlin, 2003)
- Easing VISA, work permit and residence requirements (Bergen, 2005)
- Recognition of studies (London, 2007)

# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

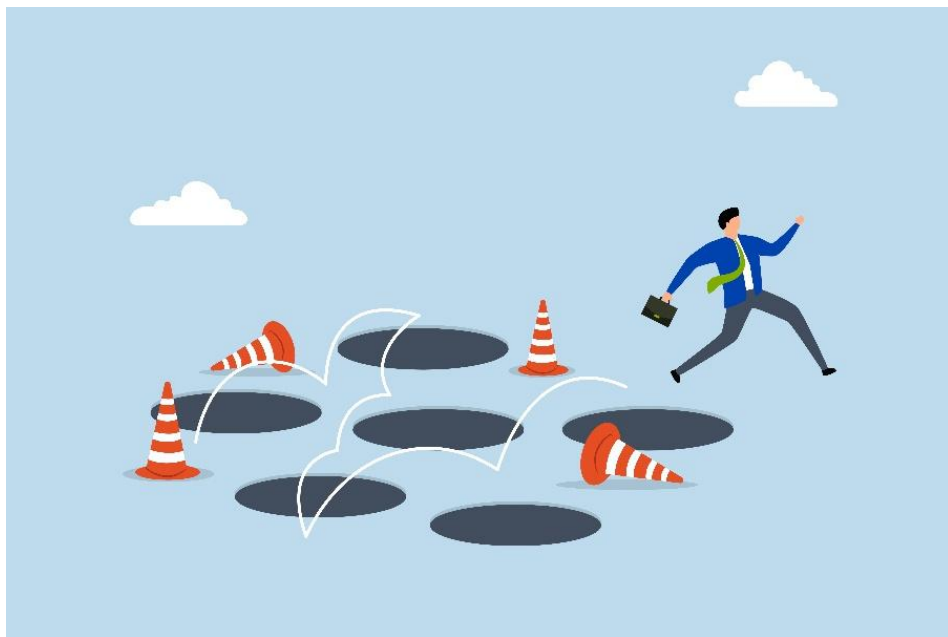


## Identified Challenges

- Joint programs, flexible curricula and mobility windows (London, 2007)
- Qualifications frameworks (London, 2007)
- Setting up the mobility benchmark (Leuven, 2009)
- Define common indicators for internationalization mobility (Bucharest, 2012)



# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



## Identified Challenges

- Links between mobility and competences – the importance of labor market (Yerevan, 2015)
- Promotion of mobility of disadvantaged students, including those in conflict areas (Yerevan, 2015)
- Digitalization of mobility instruments (Paris, 2015)
- Virtual and blended learning provision (Rome, 2020)

# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark



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## Virtual and Blended Mobility

- ‘ distance learning programs provided by institutions in the reporting country to students based in another country’
- Rome, 2020 statement: ‘**enabling all learners to acquire international and intercultural competences through internationalization of the curricula** or participation in **innovative international environments** in their home institutions and **to experience some form of mobility**, whether physical, digitally enhanced or blended formats’

# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

- **Seamless Mobility:** physical, virtual and blended
- **EUIs:** 50% seamless mobility
- **A BIP** is an accredited action: minimum 3 ECTS
- **What about Virtual Exchanges:** multicultural, market oriented skills, digital skills, student-centered





# Going Beyond The 20% Student Mobility Benchmark

## Looking to the future

- **Count students' on branch campuses and foreign francizes:** immobile students vs mobile programs
- **Consider the factorization** of the various types of mobility compared to physical mobility
- **Apply the benchmark discretely to each study circle:** e.g. the mobility is close to 17% for the MSc students



# Theories of Student International Mobilities



# About Student Mobility



ISSN: 2535-4051

Vol 9, No 2 (2025)

<https://doi.org/10.7577/njie.6304>

Forum

## Beyond Push and Pull: A New Theory of International Student Mobility

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There are three main questions regarding the students' mobility:

1. What is the current pattern of international student mobility?
2. How do we explain the current pattern?
3. Should we regard the current mobility pattern as a normal state of affairs or a cause of concern?
4. How we should steer the future direction of international mobility?



# About Student Mobility

**A new theory is proposed** to narrow the gap between the rich and poor countries in the world regarding students mobility's.

- Understanding the pattern of international student mobility has been a top concern of host countries and institutions.
- To grasp the future mobility trends is a key issue for internationalization plans and resource allocation.
- The current tendency for students mobility from poor to rich countries widens global inequality.



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #1: The Cultural Capital Theory

- People **from privileged backgrounds** have an access to high quality education leading to advantages in academic performance and future career opportunities.
- International education **is by nature an elite education**; only elite families in poor countries get to make it.
- **Key concepts:** the push and pull factors
  - **The push factors:** conditions in students' home countries that serve to push students out
  - **The pull factors:** conditions in destination countries that serve to pull students to go there





# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: Greece

- **Limited Graduate Programs** (especially in STEM)
- **Economic Instability;** prolonged financial uncertainty leads students to seek better prospects abroad
- **Academic Infrastructure;** limited research funding, laboratory facilities and academic support
- **Recognition and Prestige;** US degrees are widely recognized, enhancing career opportunities
- **Limited Internationalization**
- **Brain Drain Culture;** the Greeks in diaspora and alumni in US facilitate this academic mobility

## Pull Factors: USA

- **High Academic Reputation**
- **Funding Opportunities;** availability of scholarships, assistantships and grants
- **Diverse Program Offerings;** high number, interdisciplinary and emerging fields
- **Research Infrastructure;** access to well-funded labs, advanced facilities and collaborative research networks
- **Career Prospects;** strong links between university & industry, high offer of internships
- **Cultural Diversity and Networking;** multicultural environment and opportunity to build professional networks
- **Personal and Professional Freedom;** greater emphasis on academic freedom, critical thinking and innovation



# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: Balkans & Eastern Europe

**Countries:** Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine

- Limited Program diversity and research funding
- Political and economic instability
- High tuition costs abroad (e.g. UK and USA)
- Desire for EU – recognized degrees at lower costs

## Pull Factors: Greece

- **Affordable Cost of Living and Tuition**
- **Strategical Geopolitical Location;** cultural and academic bridge between Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East
- **English Taught Programs;** increased availability
- **EU Degree Recognition**
- **Safe and Welcoming Environment;** Safe, hospitable and culturally enriching country
- **Participation in the Erasmus+ and Mobility Program**
- **Research and Internship Opportunities**



# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

**Countries:** Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iran

- Limited Academic Freedom
- Political unrest or safety concerns
- High domestic competition for top university placements
- Desire for EU – recognized degrees at lower costs

## Pull Factors: Greece

- **Affordable Cost of Living and Tuition**
- **Strategical Geopolitical Location;** cultural and academic bridge between Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East
- **English Taught Programs;** increased availability
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- **Safe and Welcoming Environment;** Safe, hospitable and culturally enriching country
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# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: Sub-Saharan Africa

**Countries:** Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia

- Underfunded higher education systems
- Lack of international accreditation
- Expensive or limited local postgraduate options
- Interest in entering the European academic or job market

## Pull Factors: Greece

- **Affordable Cost of Living and Tuition**
- **Strategical Geopolitical Location;** cultural and academic bridge between Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East
- **English Taught Programs;** increased availability
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- **Safe and Welcoming Environment;** Safe, hospitable and culturally enriching country
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- **Research and Internship Opportunities**



# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: South Asia

**Countries:** India, Pakistan, Bangladesh

- Intense competition in domestic institutions
- High tuition and visa restrictions in Western Countries
- Desire for affordable access to EU academic space

## Pull Factors: Greece

- **Affordable Cost of Living and Tuition**
- **Strategical Geopolitical Location;** cultural and academic bridge between Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East
- **English Taught Programs;** increased availability
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# About Student Mobility

## Push Factors: EU Member States with Lower GDP

**Countries:** Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Portugal

- Economic constraints
- Limited Specialization in fields
- Interest in cultural/humanities in historical environments

## Pull Factors: Greece

- **Affordable Cost of Living and Tuition**
- **Strategical Geopolitical Location;** cultural and academic bridge between Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East
- **English Taught Programs;** increased availability
- **EU Degree Recognition**
- **Safe and Welcoming Environment;** Safe, hospitable and culturally enriching country
- **Participation in the Erasmus+ and Mobility Program**
- **Research and Internship Opportunities**



# About Student Mobility

Region	Typical Countries	Push Factors	Pull Factors to Greece
Balkans & Eastern Europe	Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bulg	Limited program diversity, economic in	Low-cost, EU-recognized degrees, geogr
Middle East & North Africa (MENA)	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iran	Political unrest, limited academic freed	Safety, cultural affinity, English-taught p
Sub-Saharan Africa	Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia	Underfunded education, limited interna	Affordable education, entry to EU job/edu
South Asia	India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	High competition, high cost of Angloph	Access to EU degrees at lower cost, Engl
EU Member States (Low GDP)	Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Portugal	Economic constraints, narrow specializ	Affordable living, specialized fields like a



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #2: The World-Systems Theory

- Student International mobility **as a macro level natural phenomenon** of a global capitalist system
- **Core, semi-peripheral** (e.g. China, India and Brazil) **and peripheral countries** (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Afganistan); with the latter two to be dependent on the core ones
- **Core countries:** highly industrialized (USA, Germany and Japan), economically advanced and politically dominant
- Students tend to migrate from periphery, and semi-periphery to core countries





# About Student Mobility

## Theory #2: The Word-Systems Theory

- **Brain Drain** in favor of core countries
- Student mobility is **influenced of the existing global economic order**
- **Conclusions:**
  - **Economic Disparities:** Students with lower GDP per capita are increasingly seeking education in wealthier nations
  - **Host Country Attractiveness:** Nations with higher GDP per capita not only offer quality education but also better infrastructure and post-study work opportunities
  - **Policy Impacts:** Changes in visa policies, tuition fees, and geopolitical issues, significantly influence student mobility patterns



## Top and Emerging Host Countries (incl. Greece)

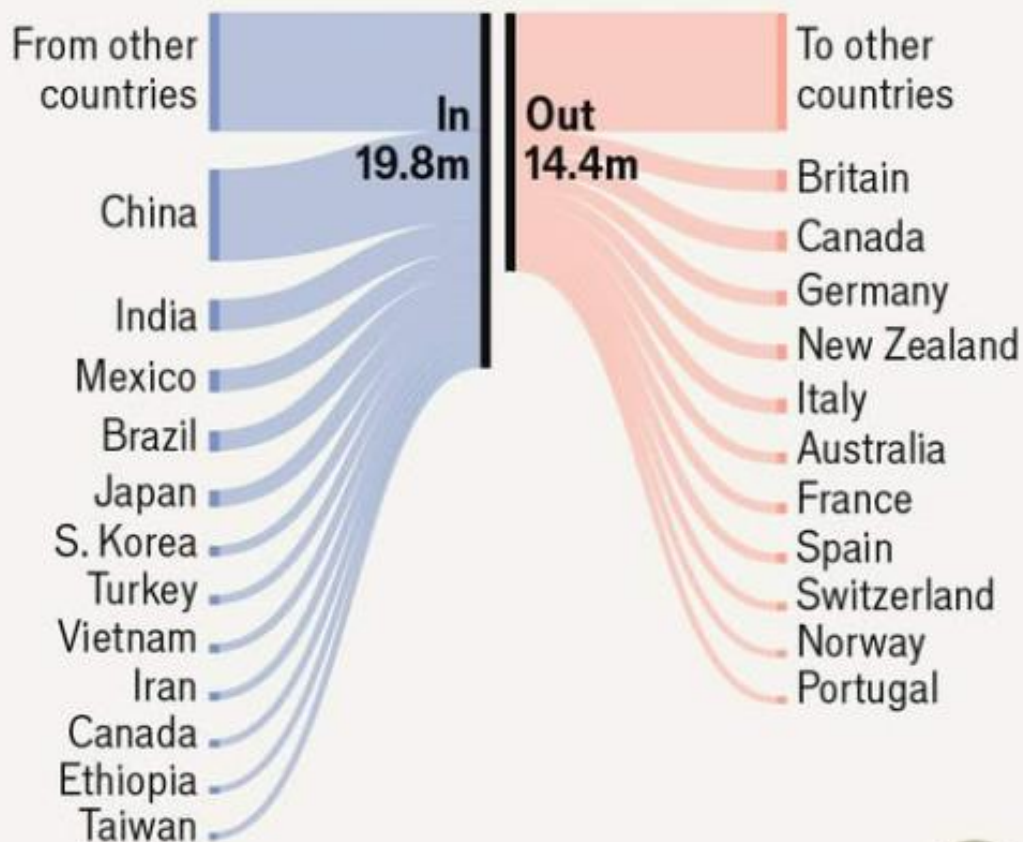
Country	International Students	GDP per Capita (USD, 2023)	Comments
United States	833,204	\$89,678	Largest global destination
United Kingdom	600,589	\$54,500	High concentration in postgraduate studies
Australia	378,439	\$59,600	Strong post-study work rights
Germany	376,359	\$63,600	Free tuition attracts EU and non-EU students
Canada	312,630	\$55,900	High intake from India, Nigeria
France	252,856	\$55,400	Major focus on Francophone Africa
Turkey	224,048	\$34,600	Regional hub for MENA and Central Asia
China	221,653	\$22,100	Hosting mainly Asian and African students
Netherlands	135,535	\$71,400	High ratio of international to domestic students
Greece	~40,000 (est.)	\$33,200	Growth via English-taught and Erasmus+ programs
South Korea	118,528	\$50,600	Focus on STEM and technical education

**TIME Association, CIA World Factbook**

Ελληνικό Μεσογειακό Πανεπιστήμιο  
<https://hmu.gr/>

# Which countries would graduates most like to move to?

United States, potential flows of graduates  
2022-24, if everyone who wanted to move abroad did





# About Student Mobility

## Theory #3: The Critical Internationalization Theory

- Since poorer nations have been locked into a cycle of dependency regarding and the international education, **what about the ethical dimension of global higher education practices?**
- **Critical Internationalization Theory:** examines the following factors power dynamics, inequality and the socio-economic consequences of global higher education practices, preservation of colonial legacies, reinforce global hierarchies



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #3: The Critical Internationalization Theory

- The dominance of **Western research paradigms** and **English as a global academic lingua franca** in global knowledge production today **are among the main reasons dictate the mobility of students**
- Actions like: **international tuition revenues** and **university global rankings** are a continuation of Western efforts to colonize and exploit the peripheral regions
- **Critical internationalization scholars call for dismantling of structural inequities by incorporating non-Western epistemic perspectives** in university curriculum: e.g. (a) by including SDGs as part of the universities' internationalization strategies; (b) from knowledge power toward knowledge diplomacy



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #4: The Brain Circulation Theory

- Should host universities and countries in the Global North to cease admitting international students?
- There **are three fundamental** ideologies in higher education internationalization: educationalism, instrumentalism, and idealism



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #4: The Brain Circulation Theory

- **Educationalism:** aims to equip students with intercultural competitiveness, enabling them to thrive in a globalized workforce (has prioritized until now)
- **Instrumentalism:** enhance a nation's competitiveness within a global knowledge economy (has prioritized until now)
- **Idealism:** International education as the vehicle to foster a more just and equitable world (**has been marginalized**)



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #4: The Brain Circulation Theory

- The **non equal balanced applied** internationalization of higher education ideologies, can be restored **by restricting the flow of international students from developing countries to developed countries?**
- **From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation:** the impact of international student returnees in fostering home country development, educational reform and economic growth: **their aspirations should match with the Country's Vision.**





# About Student Mobility

## Returnees from the US, UK and Germany

have played a key role in:

- **Economic Contribution:** Entrepreneurship & Innovation / Industrial Upgrading (30.9 million Euros starts up revenue from start-ups)
- **Educational Reform and Capacity Building:** Curriculum & Pedagogical Innovation / Research Leadership
- **Public Sector and Civil Society Impact:** application of evidence based policies



The impact of returnee students to  
Greece



Area	Impact
Startup Ecosystem	€350M invested in 137 companies via EquiFund; significant job creation and innovation
Employment	Tech sector accounts for 1.3% of employment; startups contribute to 20% of tech jobs
Educational Reforms	Introduction of digital strategies and international collaborations in higher education
Institutional Changes	Legal framework established for foreign university branches; promotion of joint degree programs



# About Student Mobility

## Theory #4: The Brain Circulation Theory

- **From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation:** To support the brain circulation national policies that will enhance the engagement with skilled diaspora communities overseas should be intensified: incentives to return, flexible visa policies and international collaboration programs



# About Student Mobility

## **Theory #5:** The Glo-Noble Theory

- The international education should be a win-win endeavor
- The Global North should be engaged in noble actions to help narrow the gap between rich and the poor of the world: e.g. to help and encourage the brain-circulation



# About Student Mobility

## **Theory #5:** The Glo-Noble Theory

- The international education should be a win-win endeavor
- The Global North should be engaged in noble actions to help narrow the gap between rich and the poor of the world: e.g. to help and encourage the brain-circulation



# Conclusions

**The students' mobility** in general is determined by:

- The geopolitics and disruptive events
- The universities' reputation
- The beyond graduation perspectives
- The cost of living



*Thank  
you!*