

The Analysis of International Students Migration Towards Turkey Türkiye'ye Uluslararası Öğrenci Göçünün Analizi

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Abstract

The paper analyses Turkey's changing position in attracting international students. Internationalization of Higher Education has an increasing importance for Turkish universities. Not only it helps to establish political and social cooperation for Turkey, but also provides important financial benefits. The paper tries to put the student mobility under the theoretical framework and describe the international student mobility trends towards Turkey. The fieldwork composed of questionnaire and interviews gives an overview of the life and study conditions of international students. The results show that international students choose Turkish universities for regional, cultural or financial reasons. The recommendations and concluding remarks sum up the difficulties of international students and underlines the necessity of governmental policies towards them.

Keywords: *Turkey, International Students, Migration, Higher Education*

Öz

Çalışma Türkiye'nin uluslararası öğrencileri çekme durumundaki değişimi analiz etmektedir. Yükseköğretimdeki Uluslararasılaşma Türkiyedeki üniversiteler için önem taşıyan konulardan biridir. Uluslararasılaşma sadece Türkiyenin siyasi ve sosyal işbirliği başarısıyla sınırlanmadan, önemli finansal katkıda da bulunur. Makale öğrenci hareketliliğinin teorik boyutlarını inceleyerek Türkiye'ye yönelik uluslararası öğrenci hareketliliğini açıklamaktadır. Anket ve mülakatlardan oluşan saha çalışması öğrencilerin yaşam ve eğitim durumlarını hedeflemektedir. Veriler uluslararası öğrencilerin Türk üniversitelerini bölgesel, kültürel ve finansal açıdan tercih ettiklerini göstermektedir. Öneriler ve sonuçlar uluslararası öğrencilerin sıkıntılarını açıklayarak onlara yönelik devlet politikası öneminin altını çizmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye, Uluslararası Öğrenciler, Göç, Yüksek Eğitim*

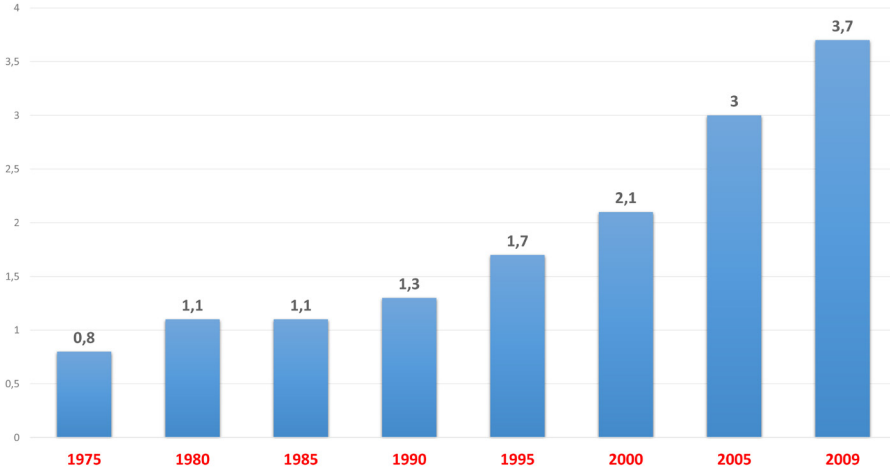
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INTRODUCTION

Global student mobility is an important phenomenon that includes several aspects such as “brain drain”, attracting qualified working force or also increasing revenues due to the fees and expenditures of foreign students while their studies. Besides clear economic advantages, there are may be also political and social impacts of having international students.

Today the students are more mobile than before and studying abroad became the usual phenomena especially within the European continent due to different programs such as Erasmus.

Figure 1. Growth in internationalisation of tertiary education.(1975-2009, in mil.)¹



Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Meantime, Turkey is still one of the main student sending countries. According to the statistics provided by OECD in 2010 Turkey was ranked as 5th having the highest number of students studying abroad after China, India, South Korea and Germany.² Interestingly, there are more Turkish students in USA than any other European country.³ Parallely to that, Turkey tries to be one of the actors in hosting international students since 1990-s. Unfortunately, the country was not very successful in attracting international students as between 2000 to 2009 the number of international students has risen only from 17,654 to 21,898.⁴ The main growth comes to post 2010 period as today the number of international students is more than 40,000.⁵

¹ OECD, *Education at glance*, (Paris: 2011), 320.

² Özoğlu ve diğerleri, *Küresel Eğilimler Işığında Türkiye’de Uluslararası öğrenciler*, (Ankara: SETA, 2012) 18.

³ Sonja Sobota, “Turkey sends more students to U.S than other European countries”, *Alliance for International Education and Cultural Exchange*, (2013)

<http://www.alliance-exchange.org/policy-monitor/04/11/2013/turkey-sends-more-students-us-other-european-countries>

⁴ Özoğlu ve diğerleri, *Küresel Eğilimler Işığında Türkiye’de Uluslararası öğrenciler*, 20.

⁵ Kezban Karaboğa, “44 bin yabancı üniversiteliden 1.8 milyar dolar eğitim geliri”, *Sabah*, 17 Kasım

The objective of this paper is to understand the reasons of choosing Turkey for the tertiary education by international students. At the beginning it presents the theories of student mobility followed by the short literature review and methodology. We try to answer the question why international students choose Turkey as a country of destination for studies, but also take into account their difficulties through their recommendations. The paper also aims to highlight the institutional and social preparedness of Turkey in attracting international students.

1. BACKGROUND OF STUDENT MIGRATION TO TURKEY

Even though, Turkey cannot be classified as traditionally student receiving country, it is also important to underline the fact that attracting international students already started in 90s by the promotion of the program entitled “*Büyük Öğrenci Projesi*” (Grand Students’ Project). The project supervised by the Ministry of Education was focused on attracting mainly the students from Central Asian and neighbouring countries (Caucasus, Balkans). Turkey rapidly became one of the most important countries hosting Central Asian students along with Russian and European universities which positively affected relations between Turkey and Central Asian countries. This policy did not only helped only grant receivers - Central Asian students, but also provided Turkey an important political asset within the region. The “Grand Students Project” was officially terminated by 2010. However, in reality the newly established Prime Ministry of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities has taken the primary role in the continuity of attracting international students. That shows Turkey’s growing ambitions in foreign policy and willingness to take part in attracting the students from other parts of the world – being more active worldwide.

However, we should also note that Turkey’s attracting students from Central Asian and especially African students unlike many other student receiving countries strongly depends on the non-state actors. Turkish state is still unable to work solely in the area of attracting international students due to the non-preparedness of many universities, but also due to the Turkish society which is still unprepared in integrating the foreigners. Several researchers has already shown that the non-state actors contribute to Turkey’s *Soft Power* in different parts of Africa and attract lions’ share of international students in Turkey.⁶

2. LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a rising literature on international students in Turkey since 2000s. However, that literature includes mainly students coming from Central Asia and Tur-

2013

<http://www.dunya.com/44-bin-yabanci-universiteliden-1-8-milyar-dolar-egitim-geliri-212059h.htm>
(Erişim: 09.04.2014)

⁶ Gabrielle Angey, “L’ouverture turque à l’Afrique: une évolution de la politique étrangère turque ?”, Observatoire de la Vie Politique Turque, 11 Mart 2013 http://www.ifea-istanbul.net/images/stories/OVI-POT/memoiresovipot/2009_Gabrielle_Angey_ouverture_turque_Afrique.pdf; Mehmet Özkan, “Turkey’s ‘New’ Engagements in Africa and Asia: Scope, Content and Implications”, *Perceptions*, Vol. 16, No 3, (2011): 115-137. <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/MehmetOzkan.pdf>

tic speaking countries. The reason for that lies on the “Büyük Öğrenci Projesi” (Grand Student Project) financed by the Ministry of Education of Turkey.

The papers and dissertations discuss different topics and problems related to international students. For example, Gözde Ergin and Fahri Türk write about the Central Asian students in Turkey in the framework of Turkey Central Asia relations and stress the role of NGO’s Central Asian region.⁷ Mehmet Tok and Yiğın Musa discuss about the reasons and motivations of learning Turkish as a foreign language by international students.⁸ Alper Kesten, Kasım Kiroğlu and Cevat Elma coin the language and education problems of International students in Turkey. They found out that education problems of international students are not only based on language, but they also stress the problems related to the lecturer-student relations, as well as the absence of peer relations between international and domestic students in Turkey.⁹ Arzu Kılıçlar, Sarı Yaşar and Sarı and Cihan Seçilmiş also question academic achievements of international students at tourism departments coming from Turkic republics. They try to understand whether linguistic, economic, socio-cultural adaptation, orientation or personal problems influence academic results of 112 students participated in their research. They found out that only linguistic problems have direct impact on the academic achievements of the students.¹⁰

However, it is important to underline that original contributions are provided by international and local students themselves. More interestingly, they found out different results and proved that academic results are not only based on linguistic problems. Fatma Açık defended her master thesis already in 1996 on Uzbek students in Turkey. She questioned 251 Uzbek students and underlined many difficulties faced by the students. Perman Annaberdiyev in 2007 completed Master thesis about the adaptation process of students from Turkic republics.¹¹ Interestingly, he showed that female students rather quickly adapt than their male counterparts to Turkey. He underlines that better economic and social conditions would have better impact on adaptation problems of the students.

More recently, Özoğlu, Gür and Coşkun from SETA contributed an important research summing up previous literature and increasing the awareness of research institutes on this topic.¹² They stress the importance International Students Offices, the need for in or out of campus working opportunities for international

⁷ Gözde Ergin ve Fahri Türk, “Türkiye’de öğrenim gören Orta Asyalı öğrenciler”, *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2010):35-41

⁸ Mehmet Tok ve Musa Yiğın, “Yabancı Uyruklu Öğrencilerin Türkçe Öğrenme Nedenlerine İlişkin Bir Durum Çalışması”, *Journal of Language and Literature Education*, Vol. 8 (2013): 132-147.

⁹ Alper Kesten, Kasım Kiroğlu, Cevat Elma, “Language and Education Problems of International Students in Turkey”, *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol.24, (2010): 68-85

¹⁰ Arzu Kılıçlar, Yaşar Sarı, Cihan Seçilmiş, “Türk Dünyasından Gelen Öğrencilerin Yaşadıkları Sorunların Akademik Başarılarına Etkisi: Turizm Öğrencileri Örneği”, *Bilig*, Vol. 61, (2012): 157-172

¹¹ Perman Allaberdiyev, *Türk Cumhuriyetlerinden Türkiye’ye Yüksek Öğrenim Görmeye Gelen Öğrencilerin Uyum Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 2007.

¹² Murat Özoğlu, Bekir Gür, ve İpek Coşgun, *Küresel Eğilimler Işığında Türkiye’de Uluslararası öğrenciler*, Ankara: SETA, 2012.

students but also follow-up of the students after the completion of their studies. A very important problem - the recognition of Turkish diploma in other countries is also underlined as a key for attracting international students.

There is, however, quite complex theoretical background related to the student mobility. It is studied under different angles such as politics, sociology or management of higher education, but very often usually considered under the framework of the “brain drain”. However, the studies show that the same phenomena was started as a “brain drain”, later moved to the “brain gain” and finished by being a “brain circulation”. Should we still connect student mobility as a “brain” or move towards other concepts and define it as a part of migration project?

Basak Bilecen illustrates three different visions of student mobility:¹³

1. as a potential of highly skilled migrant from the perspective of the receiving state, and having more focus on structural changes on economies;
2. as a product of internationalization of higher education where students become part economic policies of the receiving states
3. also a mobility under the youth mobility culture which includes modern consumption - education, where student become an actor rather than the follower.

Celestine Blaud puts student mobility under Lees “pull” and “push” paradigm and tries to explain all student mobilities under the same theoretical framework.¹⁴ The problem is that he considers *student mobility* as a *student migration*, and gives the examples of the African student in Canada. However, other theories of migration such as human capital accumulation and especially the theory of cumulative causation are also increasingly popular in explaining international student mobility.¹⁵

The difficulty of conceptualization is also related to the field(s), because student mobility and migration may have more than one facet and therefore every case or fieldwork may not suit to the same theory. We can easily define migration types such as refugees, economic, political and others indicating the reasons behind them, but we have more complex and changing picture regarding the students. The terms as *mobility* and *migration* are also used to define the action to study abroad. Here Borgogno identifies for example, international students in France as EU and non EU student and showing two difference paths related to their study perspectives.¹⁶ In our research we prefer employ the term student *migration* rather

¹³ Başak Bilecen, “Lost in Status? Temporary, Permanent, Potential, Highly Skilled: The International Student Mobility”, *COMCAD Working Paper*, No.63, (2010)

¹⁴ Blaud, Célestin. *La migration pour étude : la question de retour et de non-retour des étudiants africains dans le pays d'origine après la formation*. Paris: Harmattan, 2001.

¹⁵ Massey, Douglas, Arango Joaquin, Hugo Graeme, Kouaouchi Ali, Pellegrino Adela, Taylor J. Edward, “Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal”, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1993) 431-466.

¹⁶ Victor Borgogno and Streiff-Fenart, “L'accueil des étudiants étrangers en France: évolution des politiques et des représentations”, *Les cahiers du SOLIIS - NTS*, Vol. 2-3 (1997): 73-88.

than *mobility* and consider Turkey's increasingly attractive geographic, social and economic situation in explaining international students' choices.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data were collected during the academic year 2013-2014. For that we used mainly the anonymous questionnaire composed of 12 parts covering from personal characteristics to return projects. Besides that, we have also conducted some interviews with volunteer students. Another important contribution to the research is my personal implication as a supervisor for international students at the department of Political Science and International Relations that introduced me to the everyday life of international students in Ankara. The paper includes the results of the survey of 34 students from 8 different universities and coming from 19 countries. The majority of them (25) come from African continent. We cannot make any substantive conclusions due to the sampling method choice (snowball), but also due to the number of students who took part in our research (34). However, it is also important to state that this research led me to focus more on international students' life and also obtain financial support for the project focused on African students in Ankara. The limits of the research are also related to the way how the questionnaire was distributed (in person or via the students). The use of Survey-Monkey or even doodle could have a higher feedback, however, the risk of the answering several questionnaires by the same person could have an impact in the results too.

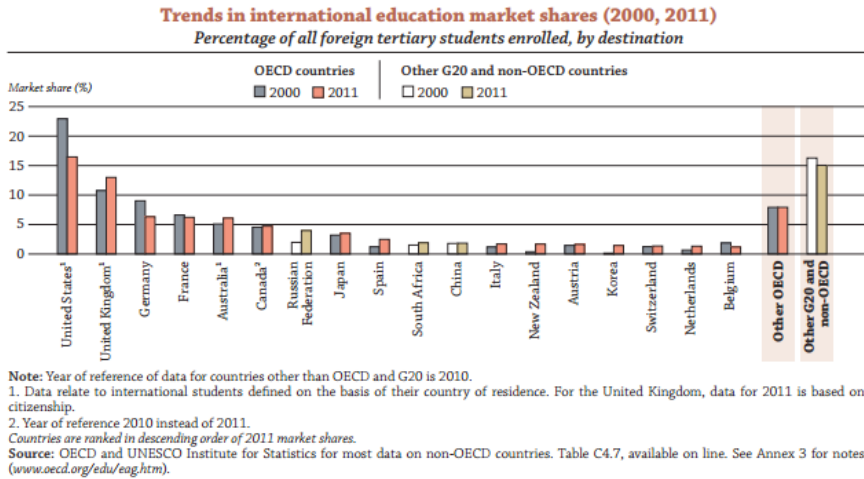
4. CHANGING PICTURE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

As we stated earlier USA is the leading country in attracting international students. However, other European countries such as UK, France or Germany and smaller countries such as Sweden or Denmark has shown an increase in receiving international students. In fact, international student mobility is in constant rise overall in the world. However, according to predictions an important share of the rise will come to Asian and African continent in the future.¹⁷ There is also the rise of "emerging student receiver countries" or "new players" along with "traditional student receiver countries".

We decided to define Turkey as a "second-choice country"¹⁸ for studies along with other countries (including European) not offering the all courses in English. We consider that language is one of the key factors in attracting international students. USA, UK, Australia and Canada will remain as key players in international higher education not only due to their academic offers, but also due to the English.

¹⁷ OECD, *Education at a glance - 2013*, (Paris: 2013), 213
[http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20\(eng\)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20(eng)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf)

¹⁸ IIE Briefing Paper, *Attitudes and Perceptions of Prospective International Students from Vietnam*, (New York: 2010) 4.

Figure 2. Trends in international education market shares (2000, 2011)¹⁹

The research conducted by IIP among Vietnamese and Indian students show that students choose mostly USA as a preferred (first-choice) destinations and UK, Australia, Canada follow them and other countries and continents remain less attractive (second-choice) country.²⁰

According to another research²¹, even though traditional student destination will remain in the recent future, two main criteries will affect the destination tudents within very increased competition environment for international students. One of them is the shift of the global economy towards the east, the second is the regionalization of the student mobility.²²

Turkey was qualified among the Top Four Emerging Markets for International Students Recruitment by World Education Services (WES) in 2012.²³ However, like China it is also becoming an important destination countries for international students. As a proof, it is important to state the establishment of TUPA (Turkish Universities Promotion Agency) which makes promotion of the “Study in Turkey” and gives information for the interested students.²⁴

¹⁹ OECD, *Education indicators in Focus*, (Paris: 2013), 3

²⁰ IIE Briefing Paper, *Attitudes and Perceptions of Prospective International Students from India*, (New York: 2010) 3.

²¹ Rosa Becker ve Renze Kolster, *International Student Recruitment: policies and developments in selected countries*, (Netherlands: NUFFIC, 2012),85.

<http://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/international-student-recruitment.pdf>

²² Rosa Becker ve Renze Kolster, *International Student Recruitment*, 86.

²³ Rahul Chodra ve Yoko Kono, “Beyond More of the Same: The Top Four Emerging Markets for International Student Recruitment”, World Education Services, 2012

²⁴ <http://www.studyinturkey.com>

5. WHO ARE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN TURKEY?

The number of international students reached 55,100 in 2014 according to the statistics of the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK).²⁵ However, the origin of the students shows clear advantage of the neighbouring or historically close countries. It worths to underline that there is also the stable growth of international students from almost all geographies showing that Turkey is not becoming attractive to some countries, but to all. TUPA distinguishes priority countries where besides neighbouring (Bulgaria, Romania, Iran, Iraq) or Turkic speaking countries, several African countries are underlined.²⁶

Figure 3. The share of international students comparing to local students in Turkey (1983-2013). Statistics of ÖSYM²⁷

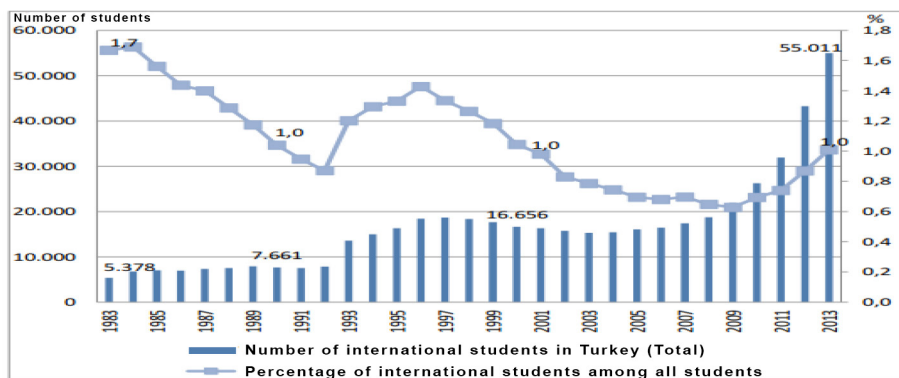


Table 1. Major student sending countries to Turkey (Decreasing order)²⁸

Nationality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Azerbaijan	1.299	1.394	1.506	1.673	1.953	2.307	2.739	3.540	4.257	7.379
Turkmenistan	1.109	1.083	1.176	1.342	1.507	1.703	2.129	2.929	4.110	6.136
TRNC	2.723	2.611	2.501	2.366	2.337	2.472	3.252	3.503	3.828	4.221
Germany	125	143	202	266	391	556	794	1.143	1.383	1.822
Greece	1.136	1.055	994	884	875	850	963	1.099	1.322	1.704
Iran	615	682	796	859	906	975	1.087	1.305	1.488	1.690
Afghanistan	181	220	321	362	472	581	737	812	1.047	1.679
Bulgaria	1.021	1.111	1.163	1.169	1.178	1.147	1.134	1.231	1.236	1.263
Syria	262	291	279	264	260	291	339	455	608	962
Kazakhstan	707	695	708	701	681	701	683	727	810	922
Kyrgyzstan	709	675	647	590	549	528	533	602	746	904
Monglia	329	388	519	692	815	899	915	956	932	901

²⁵ Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Büyüme, Kalite, Uluslararasılaşma: Türkiye Yükseköğretimi İçin Bir Yol Haritası*, (Ankara: YÖK, 2014), 152.

²⁶ TUPA, *Study in Turkey Turları*, (Istanbul: 2013), 8. http://www.studyinturkey.com/Study_in_Turkey_Turlari.pdf

²⁷ Çetinsaya, *Büyüme, Kalite, Uluslararasılaşma*, 152.

²⁸ A.g.e., 154

Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC), Germany, Greece, Iran, Afghanistan and Bulgaria have more than 1000 students enrolled in Turkish universities. Due to the crisis in Syria the number of Syrian students may grow very rapidly in the next coming years and overpass other countries. The countries such as Nigeria or Somalia started to provide more and more students to Turkey and overpassed the countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina or Uzbekistan.

6. DATA AND ANALYSIS

According to my questionnaire results, the average of international students is about 20,6 years old. It shows that unlike France²⁹ where the average of international students is 25,6 Turkey attracts much younger students for undergraduate studies and has a closer average to international students in USA, Canada³⁰ or Australia. During our research we could meet mainly male (27), but also 7 female students. That can be linked to the fact that we followed snowball sampling. However, we should say that unlike other traditional student receiver countries Turkey has predominantly male representation of international students. The portion of female students was around 0.4 at the beginning of 90-s and drop to 0.35 towards the end of 90-s and risen up to 0.54 in 2010.³¹ According to the researches conducted in 90 s concerning international students already showed that very small portion of female students chose Turkey for studies.³² Ozoglu, Gür and Coşgun showed that the origin of the countries play an important role by indicating that the ratio of female students from Balkans was higher but Alimukhamedov also showed that not only origin but destination has also an impact on the gender.³³

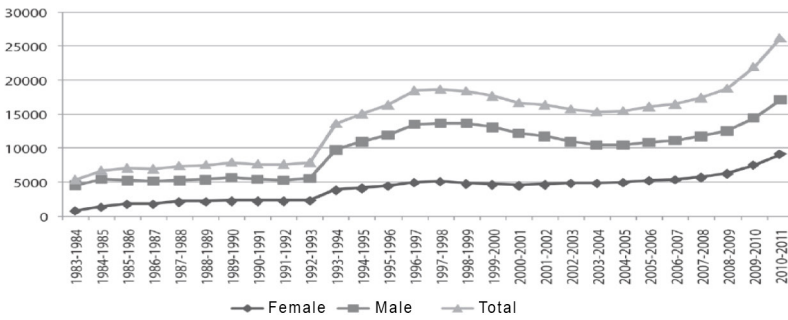


Figure 4. The number of male and female international students in Turkey.³⁴

²⁹ Saeed Paivandi ve Ronan Vourc'h, "Profils et conditions de vie des etudiants etrangers", *Observatoire de la vie Etudiante*, No 12, (2005), 3.

http://www.ove-national.education.fr/medias/files/ove-infos/oi12_oi_12_050705_basse_def.pdf

³⁰ Kathryn McMullen ve Angelo Elias, "A Changing Portrait of International Students in Canadian Universities", *Statistics Canada*, (2011)

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2010006/article/11405-eng.htm>

³¹ Özoglu ve diğerleri, *Küresel Eğilimler Işığında Türkiye'de Uluslararası öğrenciler*, 52

³² Fatma Açık, *Özbekistandan Eğitim ve Öğrenim Amacıyla Türkiye'ye gelen Öğrencilerin dil, kültür-uyum problemleri ve çözüm teklifleri*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 1996.

³³ Farkhad Alimukhamedov, *Des Migrations Pour Étude. Une Analyse Sociopolitique De Trajectoires D'étudiants Ouzbeks En France Et Au Royaume-Uni*, PhD Thesis, Paris: Université Dauphine, 2011.

³⁴ Özoglu ve diğerleri, *Küresel Eğilimler Işığında Türkiye'de Uluslararası öğrenciler*, 52

The student who participated at our survey come from very different social backgrounds. There are some coming from very poor families, as well as the children of Ambassadors and highly-ranked businessmen. However, what we found in common is that 20 parents out of 34 obtained university diploma showing that the majority of students come from educated families.

Another question refers to the choice of Turkey as a target country for graduate studies. An important contribution is provided by the so called “Turkish” schools operating in many countries, and especially in Africa. I found interesting that 16 students were informed by their schools before coming to Turkey especially from Nigeria, Niger, Brazil, Malawi, Ethiopia, Mali, Guinea Tanzania and Indonesia. For example, the student from Brazil has written “ Because my high school teacher offer to come in Turkey”, and another wrote “Nigerain-Turkish International College (NTIC)- they suggest to ...”. The student from Ethiopia wrote “I was in Turkish High School in my country”. From the other side, Turkish universities’ attractiveness is based on several factors but changing from one geography to another. It is sometimes difficult to understand whether the university is a key factor for choosing Turkey for studies. Surprisingly, only one student stated that the university was the most important element of the choice. Only 3 students evaluated that education system was the criteria for their choice. Other reasons such as family, friends, cultural or religious factors, and especially scholarship seem to play more important role. For one student education was the least attractive point.

“I did not choose Turkey for studies. I want to study abroad, but in francophone or English speaking countries. My brother advised me.” S.³⁵

Turkey has several internationally recognized top universities, but at the same the majority of Turkish universities are unfortunately not among top 1000 universities in the world. Therefore, Turkey will probably attract mainly undergraduate students from neighbouring geographies in short and mid terms.

An another important advantage of Turkey is related to less complex administrative issues such as visa obtention, stay permit comparing other countries. Many students do not face major administrative problems related to obtention of visas, and even some get the Turkish visa within 2 days. However, the time for obtention the visa changes from one country to another from 2 days in Nigeria to 3 months in Afghanistan. If we compare the period with other students receiving countries we may notice that obtaining Turkish visa seems much easier that that of France, UK, USA or other EU countries. In France, for example, students must be admitted to study programs very much in advance (deadline for application outside EU is the end of January) and visa procedures may take up to several months if not the refusal. In Australia the visa refusal for Nigerain student applicants was around 40% in 2011 and almost 70% in 2007.³⁶ Therefore, the majority of the students

³⁵ Interview with S, Ankara, 03.03.2014

³⁶ Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Student visa program trends, 2005-2006 to 2011-2012*, (Canberra: 2013) 40. https://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/study/_pdf/student-visa-program-trends-2011-12.pdf

26/34 think that Turkish government encourages international students to come to Turkey. However, if Turkish consulates start to refuse visas or postpone visa delivery, that will strongly harm Turkey's image and will have negative impact in attracting international students.

From the other side, the majority of students also answered that they think that it more difficult to renew their stay permits (17 out of 33). Even though nobody was refused to renew his/her stay permit, the main concern is about the preparedness of local institutions in dealing with international students.

“International students have to come at 2 o'clock in the morning in order to get their stay permit. Because they can receive only limited number of demands and if you do not come early, you cannot get the ticket to submit your documents. In Istanbul, you can take the appointment online, but in Ankara it is not possible. In October, it is cold during the nights, so it would be better if they could organize the same system such in Istanbul” M.³⁷

Another important aspect is linked to the expectation of the students regarding conditions where Turkish universities seem to meet their expectations. The majority consider that the universities they study at are “as they have expected” before arrival (17) and for 12 of them the university was better than they have expected. Only for 5 students the university did not respond to their expectations, and unfortunately quite negative results comes from the newly established state universities. We think that, it is rather linked to the recent establishment of the university and campus conditions which is still under construction.

The growing number of student having no scholarship is also an evidence in Turkey. In our research we encountered only 13 students having full or partial scholarships, and 21 having no scholarships. That reflects probably also the reality of international students in Turkey with the growing number of non-bursary students in the country. According to Sabah there are 5000 international students who obtained Turkish governments' scholarship for 2014.³⁸ However, if we take into consideration that there were roughly 44,000 international students³⁹ in 2013, we see that the number of bursaries remain low comparing to non-bursaries.

To the question whether they had the friends before coming to Turkey the majority (19/34) answered they did not have the friends before their arrival to Turkey. However, it is also the fact that especially, the students having no scholarship knew someone before their arrival. (13 students out of 16 who knew someone in Turkey before his/her arrival have no scholarship)

³⁷ Interview with M, Ankara, 26.02.2014

³⁸ “2014'te 5 bin yabancı öğrenci Türkiye'de burslu okuyacak”, *Sabah*, 05 Kasım 2013
<http://www.sabah.com.tr/Egitim/2013/11/05/2014te-5-bin-yabanci-ogrenci-turkiyede-burslu-okuyacak>
(Erişim: 04.05.2014)

³⁹ Kezban Karaboğa, “44 bin yabancı üniversiteliden 1.8 milyar dolar eğitim geliri”, *Sabah*, 17 Kasım 2013
<http://www.dunya.com/44-bin-yabanci-universiteliden-1-8-milyar-dolar-egitim-geliri-212059h.htm>
(Erişim: 09.04.2014)

The social life of the students is also an important element for international students. The time spent outside university, or among the friends is another important criteria for the length of the stay. The positive aspect of the stay in Turkey is that students meet their friends very often and almost everyday. Their friendship links are related to the university atmosphere. The share of Turkish friends is changing depending on different reasons (language, ethnic belonging, personal skills, etc), but all international students have Turkish friends. The share of the Turkish friends change depending on the language and ethnicity according to us because it is around 60 per cent according to Azeri students and fell to 2 per cent towards Nigerians. Almost all of the international students “best” friends are from the same country as theirs. Some students responded other nationalities than their as “best” friends but never “Turkish” ones. I think that, it is probably due to the length of the stay as the majority of them are in Turkey since 2013. However, we should also note that in Turkey international students have quite close contacts with Turkish society. For example, the majority of the students have been invited to Turkish families (23/34) and some of them (around 8) have been invited for more than 10 times. In terms of the invitations, we found out that, students living with their compatriots (such as Nigerians) are less likely to be invited and those living in dormitories and with Turkish ones are more likely to be invited. It seems that, there is no religious or ethnic difference and more about possibilities of meeting with families is important. Out of 10 student who could never visit Turkish families only two are Christians and others are Muslims.

The half of interviewed international students (17/34) think that Turkish people have good impressions about the countries they come from. Only 2 students answered that Turkish people have bad image of their country of origin and only 2 think also that they have a very good image of their country. We note also that 10 answered that Turks have neither good or bad image of their country showing that Turks in general have not enough information about other countries.

To the question whether the international students face discrimination or prejudice 26 answered positively and 9 negatively. Indeed, 19 students faced personally discrimination and 16 did not face it at all. Discrimination acts are based according to them mainly on race (21) national belonging (6) and religion (2). Students face discrimination from other students (14), sometimes from professors (5) but mainly at outside the university (16). We should note that, not only African students feel discriminated, but also Indonesian, Kyrgyz and Albanian students also feel discriminated according to them. However, not all discriminated students have the less favorable feeling about Turkey. Majority of the students (23/24) have the same attitude towards Turkish people since their arrival, and only 4 have less favorable attitude. More favorable attitude since their arrival (7/34) is seen among African students. Racial discrimination seems to be an important step to overcome at Turkish universities. Religious or ethnic belongings seem to have lesser impact on prejudice or discrimination in Turkey. This problem may have an important impact on international student choices. The general image of Africa and the growing social problems in the southeast parts of Turkey due to the crisis in Syria may deteriorate the interethnic relations. Turkish universities should try

to be vigilant on the problems related to the discrimination because that plays a key role in choosing a foreign university.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

International students concern has different dimensions. First of all, there is an increasing need for Turkish Language courses supported by the universities. It is also very important to propose these courses in different levels and possibly for lower prices. These courses should be easily arranged so that students could follow them from different levels. From the other side, more “English speaking atmosphere” at Turkish universities is a need. The Orientation Programs prepared in English are very important too. The information packages related to the university, English speaking personnel working at university administration, facilities at the accountancy or flexible and English speaking faculty secretariats are very important issues to resolve.

Another important point for the students is the absence of social and cultural activities at the universities for international students. They feel very excluded and seem to remain with other international students and do not sufficiently integrate Turkish society. The cultural days, or other similar activities could attract international students.

Moreover, international student would like to get more social advantages. These include primarily health service, and after that cheaper transportation and lodging facilities. Besides that, the possibilities of scholarships are one of the main suggestions. Turkish government may also propose the scholarship which includes partly scholarships (i.e. lodging, health insurance) which may play an important role in attracting international students.

Last, but not least, the procedures related to the student stay permits should be better organized. The personnel speaking at least some English would be able to serve and communicate correctly with international students. Even though, the changes related to the stay permit of international students have been introduced and the responsibility is transferred to the Directorate General of Migration Management, many problems and organizational issues have repeatedly been underlined by international students.

Turkey's EU Accession Negotiations have entirely positive impact for the internationalization of Higher Education in Turkey, but also opens great possibilities for Turkish universities (both public and private) and Turkey in general to get the concrete advantage of that. Parallely to its current advantages in the sector of tourism, Higher Education sector may also have the very similar advantages due to the flexibility and geographical situation. However, Turkey should understand that only strong EU commitment may have further positive development in attracting international students.

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