Migration Trajectories of Uzbek Students in France and the UK

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ABSTRACT. *This paper offers a comprehensive overview of select findings extracted from a PhD dissertation, employing a comparative analysis to investigate the trajectories of Uzbek students in both France and the UK during the period from 2004 to 2009. The paper advocates for the integration of the trajectory element into existing theories on international student mobility and international migration, with a particular emphasis on the context of South-North mobility.*

Utilizing qualitative research methods, including interviews1, surveys, and participant observation, the study underscores the significance of tracking migrants' pathways over an extended period for a nuanced comprehension of migrant strategies and state policies with which they contend. The evidence suggests that stringent measures significantly influence the trajectories of migrants, not necessarily compelling a return to their countries of origin.

Migration for studies goes beyond financial considerations as it also addresses the demands of a new social hierarchy emerging within the home country. In essence, migration for studies exposes individuals to diverse perspectives, surpassing the simplistic notion of a linear journey from point A to point B.

KEYWORDS: *International student mobility, student migration, Uzbekistan, France, UK*

INTRODUCTION

Studies examining the mobility of international students often reference the concept of "brain drain," originally applied to British researchers who emigrated to the United States (Balmer et al., 2009). This piece, based on the field research conducted between 2004-2009, aims to explore the intersection of migration and education, with a specific focus on student migration, to better understand its impact on both individual experiences and broader educational systems. Initially supported by some Central Asian governments through public grants, such as Kazakhstan's Bolashak program and Uzbekistan's Umid program following the fall of the USSR, outward student mobility from the region continues today, now primarily relying on private funding. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, this mobility remains significant, exceeding 10% (UNESCO Data,

[1] Pseudonyms were employed in the study.

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2024).[2] The net migration ratio indicates that the Central Asian region has one of the highest outgoing mobility ratios globally.

Our primary hypothesis was based on the consideration that students enjoy a greater degree ofpersonal agency compared to migrant workers. Young students move intending to pursue their education, while also considering potential opportunities for professional integration in host countries. Their diploma, linguistic capacities, and preparedness can be regarded as assets in navigating different cultures, rendering them particularly intriguing subjects for research examining the outcomes of such cultural intersections.

This paper examines a distinct temporal phase marked by the termination of the official *Umid* scholarship initiative. During this period, alternatives were scarce, and individuals had limited recourse, with embassy-sponsored scholarships and those from the Open Society Institute (OSI) foundation[3] being notable exceptions. Concurrently, this epoch coincides with the pivotal events in Andijon, contributing significantly to alterations in diplomatic relationships and the issuance dynamics of study visas (Axyonova, 2015).

Young students also navigate the intricate landscape of migration opportunities presented by countries instituting frameworks to attract migrants. Notably, these opportunities often unfold under conditions characterized by precariousness. It is noteworthy that these host countries have officially transitioned away from the recruitment of migrant workers based on state agreements, as was the norm during the 1960s (Van Mol & de Valk, 2016).

Most of the young Uzbeks in London were enrolled in language schools[4], and not in universities. During my survey conducted in the United Kingdom in 2004, a significant portion of European migrants were also enrolled in these language schools (Home Office, 2003; MacLeod, 2004). The practice of enrolling in such a school and working simultaneously is not a recent innovation but rather a"politically correct" tool to access inexpensive labor. With the crisis, criticism has increasednot only towards these schools but also towards foreign students in general, also implicating the government (Lomer, 2018). With the economic crisis in 2008, public authorities became aware that aportion of private institutions was involved in the migration process, where students were working in various jobs, and their studies were merely a "cover" (Whitehead, 2009). The UK government begansearching for the "ideal culprit" to change its migration management policy and in 2009 targeted language schools, which it perceived as contributing to illegal immigration. The UK Border Agency believes that up to 85% of the schools inspected have used this system. In March 2010, the government decided that non-EU

[2] The discernible increase in Central Asian outbound student mobility, particularly evident since 2014, has surpassed a notable threshold, exceeding 10 percent, as reported by the UIS. This growth has now ascended to 15 percent. Notably, such a substantial growth ratio is not universally observed in other regions globally.
Other policy-relevant indicators: Outbound internationally mobile students by host region (unesco.org)
[3] https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/
[4] According to UK, an association of over four hundred language schools in the UK, over 500,000 students came tolearn English in 2008, which puts the UK well ahead of other countries, with 30% of the global market at that time. Their success is also based on the "agent" system, through which the various establishments abroad work and promote their language courses.

foreign students should have a minimum level of B1 (corresponding to intermediate level) before coming to study English, replacing the previous requirement of A1 (elementary) level. Furthermore, this decision led to other changes, such as the denial of the right to invite dependents for studies lasting less than six months, along with a reduction in the number of working hours allowed from twenty to ten per week. That also impacted our sample, among the forty-seven Uzbek students interviewedin London in 2004, only one remained after five years.

Most interviewed students in France were currently enrolled in university programs. The diversification of countries in terms of hosting foreign students was also part of the discoursein France during the time of our research. The proportion of visas issued for third-party countries is notably low within the overall figures, ranging from 5,671 in 2003 to 6,223 in 2008. The consistent decrease in the issuance of "student" visas aligns with the accession of certain European nations (Romania, Bulgaria) to the European Union.

France perceived the presence of Uzbek students more as a cultural and, predominantly, academic connection supported via various types of scholarships. Established institutions suchas the Victor Hugo Center and the French Institute of Central Asian Studies (IFEAC) were recognized entities in the country. There are no other equivalent institutes to IFEAC, which has emerged as a leading contributor to social research in the Central Asian region. Furthermore, the Franco-Uzbek relations in higher education emerge as notably dynamic. According to French CNOUS data covering the period from 1995 to 2006, over 141 students arrived for degree programs, with an additional 330 participating in short-term courses. The institutions hosting students from Uzbekistan were in Paris (INALCO, Paris XI, and Paris I), Toulouse (Toulouse I), Marseille (Aix-Marseille II), Bordeaux (Bordeaux I), and Strasbourg. INALCO stands out as particularly familiar to Uzbek institutions, having established cooperation agreements with five higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. The sustained relevance of these agreements primarily relies on individual initiatives rather than institutionalstrategies.

This work is structured as follows, first, the article engages in a theoretical discussion, followed by an exploration of public policies that can redefine the role of intervening obstacles in the pathway. Finally, it delves into how students redefine their plans and the subsequent impact on their trajectories.

METHOD

Some of these students participated in scholarship programs, but the majority did not receive any grants and relied on personal funding. This section of the study is based on primary data collected through one-on-one and group interviews, participant observation, and questionnaires organized via snowball sampling conducted in England, Uzbekistan, and France. The sample includes 40 students from France enrolled in both degree and non-degree programs, and over 40 students from the UK, primarily

enrolled in non-degree studies. Key attributes analyzed include students' financial backgrounds, motivations for studying abroad, and the challenges they faced during their educational experiences. Secondary data were gathered from a variety of sources, including government websites such as the UK Home Office reports, prefectures in France, and the ministries of the interior in both the UK and France. Additionally, data were collected from embassies of the UK and France in Uzbekistan, as well as from international organizations like UNESCO and the OECD, and research centers specializing in migration and education. These data covered student mobility rates, visa policies, and scholarship programs, offering a comprehensive view of the trends and policies affecting Central Asian students abroad.

In France, the capital city of Paris was designated as the primary research location, while the city of Toulouse was specifically chosen due to its significant Uzbek population with whom we had prior acquaintance. Similarly, in England, London was selected as the research site, mirroring the choice of the French capital, owing to its logistical convenience and the substantial presence of Uzbeks within the city. The initial phase of fieldwork was conducted in London, where I resided for a duration of five months alongside Uzbek students in 2004 to pursue participant observation. Initially, my accommodations in London were situated in the Limehouse neighborhood, followed by a transition to White Hart Lane. I used my personal connections comprised individuals who were either friends or classmates that had been awarded scholarships to pursue studies in the UK. Notably, networks from both my secondary education at Turkish Lyceums and my tertiary education at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) played a pivotal role in facilitating contact with Uzbek students in London, as language learning within these rather elitist institutions was efficiently implemented. The composition of the snowball sample was determined after the stay in London. Various methods were available for contacting Uzbeks residing in London, including online platforms and through personal acquaintances. I opted for the latter approach in both countries, acknowledging the potential for errors (convenience bias) inherent in such a snowball sampling method. All the students participating in our study had student status at the time of our survey, either for language studies or for various academic levels. Gender parity could notbe achieved, especially in the case of English studies, where only 15 percent of the responses came from female students. The data concerning the experiences of students were gathered through two questionnaires, each completed by 40 students from France and the UK, respectively. Most of the participants in our study came from large cities, attended reputable schools and universities, and came from families where parents had cultural capital (diplomas). Most were unmarried at the beginning of our study, although some of them were married or already divorced, although this was rare.

The questionnaire utilized in London was designed to be more concise, focusing predominantly on aspects related to work and living conditions. In contrast, the questionnaire employed in France provided a more nuanced examination of study conditions. One to one interview conducted with 32 students in France and 18 students

in the UK proved to be moresubstantive than the questionnaires. Two group interviews were conducted in London, Paris and Toulouse. They afforded a comprehensive understanding of students' pathways, while also offering critical insights into Uzbek migrants' integration projects, as perceived by both their compatriots and other migrant groups (Kazakh or Turkish communities). Additionally, participant observation of the daily lives of "migrant students" served as a valuable supplementary method. The criterion of a three-year residency in the respective countries wasemployed to assess the trajectories of students' experiences following an extended period within the host nation. Names provided in the research are pseudonyms, and to uphold anonymity, certain details regarding place of birth or educational background have beenslightly modified in the study.

NAVIGATING BORDERS: THEORETICAL EXPLORATIONS OF STUDENT MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

Student mobility and migration in Central Asia are frequently examined through the lens of internationalization of higher education. Hwami et al. (2024) offer a systematic review of internationalization across the region, drawing from an extensive body of literature to provide a thorough overview of trends and developments over the years. It completes the work of Huisman, Smolentseva, and Froumin (2021), discussing the transformations of higher education systems in post-Soviet countries. Sagintayeva and Kurakbayev (2013), Sabzalieva (2015), Ruziev and Burkhanov (2018), and Mukhitdinova (2015) provide a broader perspective on the challenges and reforms in higher education throughout Central Asia, highlighting efforts to integrate international standards while addressing local issues.

On a more specific level, Azimbayeva and Harford (2017) compare changes in higher education governance across Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. Moldashev & Tleuov (2022) investigate local academic responses to international research policies. In Kazakhstan, Akkari et al. (2023) focus on the implementation of internationalization policies, while Jonbekova et al. (2022) explore the contributions of graduates from international scholarship programs to their home country. Del Sordi (2017) examines the Bolashak program in Kazakhstan, emphasizing its impact on student mobility and domestic politics. In Uzbekistan, Uralov (2020) and Ubaydullaeva (2019) analyze the role of foreign university branches in the internationalization of higher education.

Student mobility and migration are defined within somewhat different theoretical frameworks.The literature on International Student Mobility (ISM) encompasses study abroad experiencesfor shorter durations or, at times, for the entire duration of a degree program. However, the concept of ISM aligns well with the concept of North-North mobility, while in the case of South-North and South-South mobility, using the term “mobility” may not be entirely appropriate. Students from the Global South encounter similar procedures and administrative challenges, and in practice, their mobility is not as pronounced as that of students from the Global North. Hence, I opt for the term

"student migration" in this context, a term previously employed by other scholars in similar contexts (Blaud & Célestin, 2001).

Among the notable frameworks related to Central Asian students' case, Chankseliani proposes Wallerstein's world-system theory to explain student migration in the post-Soviet space (Chankseliani, 2015). Chankseliani (2015; 305) also suggests that "outgoing mobility can be explained bythe availability of higher education and jobs in the students' home countries". However, world-system theory struggles to provide a comprehensive explanation for Kyrgyzstan's position as both a source and destination or it does not consider the complexities of migrationcategories. While the world-system theory positions the Russian Federation as a core for Uzbekistan, there are also practical reasons for an ad hoc situation.

Another theoretical explanation supported by Syed Zwick (2019) is called motivation-opportunity- capacity model. This model is based on the model initially developed by Carling J. (2002) and Haas H. (2010), which is grounded in the capabilities and aspirations of migrants, providing an interesting framework to apply in the context of Central Asian students.

Both theories help to explain student migration from Central Asia but do not sufficiently account for the political dimension of regimes (de Haas & Natter, 2015). Beyond that, the less "opportunity availability" for students from Central Asia (scholarship, admission, recognition, visa-free regime) could explain the inequality of students based on their origins determining the vectors of student mobilities and migrations.

Finally, rather than the concept of a "migration project," this study privileges "migration trajectory" which "falls within a longitudinal approach, allowing the reconstruction of temporal successions of mobility, events, situations, and projects" (Odden, 2010). The starting point of atrajectory is not the date of arrival in the host country or the attainment of employment as its endpoint. A trajectory does not come to a halt but is constantly reconstructed, allowing for tailored measures at any given time. Indeed, "the dichotomy of success versus failure is a social construct directly linked to the context of its use" (Paivandi, 2018). My interest in this article lies in the impact of public policies on the construction of trajectories for international students. In future studies, the concept of "persistence" (Tinto, 1993) could also be used as individuals faced with a decline in support at a certain point in their trajectory may be compelled to reconsider their initial goals and diminish their persistence within migration trajectory.

OBSTACLES IN THE EDUCATIONAL TRAJECTORY: ENCOMPASSING VISA PROCESSES AND STAY PERMIT ACQUISITION

Despite the essential role of international students in the higher education system, both European countries adopt unfavorable conditions for students, particularly those coming fromoutside the European Union. While in the UK, an international student is viewed

as a source of income, in France, their role is discussed differently, serving political and economic considerations at different times (Ennafaa & Paivandi, 2008). I explore the existence of a "double barrier"[5] for Uzbekstudents, as they must overcome crucial steps to study in Europe. The significance of these barriers extends beyond economic costs, encompassing psychological challenges for some and legal hurdles for others. These students invest more effort, money, and work to pursue their studies. In return, they undergo scrutiny from embassies before departure and local authorities once on-site. These controls, deemed absurd by some and unjust by all, illustrate how students are reduced to mere foreigners, limiting not only their economic opportunities but, more importantly, their academic potential.

In the British case, the question of the visa often arises in the discussions of young Uzbeks. Itrepresents a barrier to overcome, the most challenging aspect for the majority. It is not uncommon to find inquiries on online forums regarding the means of obtaining a British visa. To obtain a student visa, the applicant is subject to certain obligations such as enrollment, proof of self-financing, and specifying the purpose of the stay in a questionnaire designed exclusively for students. While in the past, a candidate meeting the required conditions had the right to have an interview with the Consulate staff, later the application was sent by mail, and the questionnaire replaced the interview. For many students, the most difficult barrier has always been the interview with the Consul, as the assessment of the candidate's file depended on the personal decision of the official.

These barriers fuel an endless "game," as one side will try to create more and more obstacles,and the other will find solutions to circumvent them. For example, documents such as "evidence of support and accommodation," defining proof of finances, or "evidence of sponsor's finances," defining the employer's accounts, are subtle documents requested in the first stage. They can be a reason for rejection because official salaries may appear very low compared to the British currency, while presenting accurate figures may raise suspicions.

However, candidates quickly put together the necessary documents, triggering the interview. In these conditions, the interview becomes the decisive element because the presentation of the file remains routine. The certainty of the candidate who believes in their dossier disappears, as the decision is personal, with academic factors ranking second. In the case of Hamid, who submitted his enrollment documents like others, his high level of English, knownto the consulate, was an obstacle. The reasons for rejection are rarely explained but always assumed. In his case, the level of the school where he had enrolled was lower than his English proficiency. The formal way to obtain a British visa without taking risks, for most students, was to use intermediary agencies.

[5] The concept of the "double barrier" originates from Sayad's notion of "double absence" (1999) and Lee's concept of the "Intervening Obstacle" (Theory of Migration, 1966). According to Lee, obstacles may manifest in various forms such as legal, geographic, and political barriers. However, these impediments can be encountered from both the origin and destination sides, encompassing challenges like exit visas, visas, and residency permits. Thus, the term "double barrier" is employed to underscore the prevalence of the "double absence" phenomenon.

The conditions set by the French Embassy in Uzbekistan remain rooted in a reality imposed into the local context with many administrative documents that were difficult to produce, especially during the early 2000s. The Embassy easily issues visas for those who have obtained scholarships, the chances increase for candidates who have previously been to France and communicate in French before departure. None of the respondents in our study managed to enroll while still in Uzbekistan without assistance from someone already present in France. Typically, the application files were acquired in France and completed with the help of friends. These individuals translated and provided the necessary documents. Students use networks, which is why certain French faculties continue to include Uzbek students among their enrolled students. Financial commitments are frequently resolved similarly to secure the visa. For example, Davron used friends who opened an account for him in France and deposited the required sum. Similarly, Rustam sought assistance from his relatives living in France. Funds flow extensively within the network to aid those in need, as obtaining the bank statement that verifies the presence of a specific sum on a particular date is crucial. TheFrench Consulate is aware that its requirements do not apply to Uzbeks in Uzbekistan, and those meeting the necessary conditions certainly have connections in France[6].

Students adapt to the unfavorable conditions set in both countries upon their arrival that do not favor their academic success. In both countries, they often find ways to navigate administrative difficulties. Frequently, they have no choice but to falsify documents becausethey cannot meet the conditions set by administrative authorities.

In the British case, the reputation of the school ensures the extension of the stay, while a poorly reputed school or a fake school guarantees the opposite. Some believe that one should not economize on money for the school because it is the only element taken into consideration in their file. This logic prevails even after several years in the Uzbek students in London. For example, Tolibjon believes that having a lot of money in one's bank account does not guarantee success in extending the visa if the candidate pays a minimal amount for studies, as this can arouse suspicions among officials. A change in migration policy regarding international students emerged during our study. Some officials of the Home Office request the candidate's NI (Insurance Number), based on which they collected the exact number of hours worked by the students. This tactic allows employees to refuse visa extensions for students who work more than 20 hours per week as permitted by law. Moreover, the processing time for the applications went from three months up to a period of nine months to obtain a permit.

To renew their stay permit via Prefectures in France self-financed students overcome serious challenges. For instance, Suxrob explains: *"In order to present the resources for the academicyear, I had to find a solution. I did not have money in my account, and besides, I had debts. No one could lend me money because everyone needed it to get*

[6] Several students mentioned during the interviews that if they were able to come to France, it was only thanks to the students already there, as otherwise they could not fulfill the requirements in any way, and that the consulate was alsoaware of these practices, as the documents originated from France.

their papers. That is why I decided to do as Frenchmen do because in France the big volume of the dossier can make it appear ‘more serious.’ I prepared several letters with stamps made by myself in which, for example, my mother vouched to transfer a certain amount every month, even though my mother was unaware of such a letter, and that worked.”

Although the 2006 immigration law allowed master’s degree holders to seek employment during the six months following the completion of their studies, that was also followed by the circular from the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Solidarity Development dated October 7, 2008, focuses on assessing the real and serious nature of foreign students' studies. Another circular – Guéant, adopted in 2011, badly impacted many students doing graduate studies and some students from Uzbekistan, who were forced to returnto their home country.

Students understand that these measures aim to discourage foreigners through administrative delays or repeated requests for documents, sometimes the same ones, under the pretext of misplacement. In 2004, only 29% of interviewed Uzbek students in London believed that administrative issues could prevent them from staying, while the majority indicated cultural differences. In 2009, the Home Office managed to reverse the situation because for more than 50% administrative issues were the primary obstacle.

THE INTERPLAY OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND ESCALATING INEQUALITIES IN SHAPING MIGRATORY TRAJECTORIES

Public policies adopted by both countries to regulate non-EU international students indicated quite similar objectives. Beyond attracting the brightest and the best, both governments created channels for employment for non-EU students after their graduation but severely restricted traditional channels employed by students.

UK government focused on the HSMP program, which enabled holders of an MBA degree from selected universities to directly obtain a residency permit. In parallel, the government restricted visas issued for English language studies, as it perceives this avenue as evolving into a pathway for immigration. In September 2007, the government decided to implement two types of student visas: the student visitor visa (with a maximum stay duration of non-renewable 6 months) and the student visa for an academic year (renewable) which directly impacted the channel previously taken by Uzbek students. Since 2006 French government allowed graduate students to extend their stay to look for a job, but on the other hand, adopted a more severe position in renewing the stay permits of students and PhD candidates. Therefore, the network strategy is more pronounced within the United Kingdom, where individuals adhere toestablished paths charted by their compatriots which affords the advantage of ensuring employment and housing security. A more individual strategy is discernible among students in France as young students have prioritized educational pursuits as a trajectory. The diploma being more esteemed in the employment landscape, informs their proclivity towards

long-term migration plans. This strategic recalibration among the younger arrivals is notably grounded in the prevailing conditions within France, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan.

The pathways of Uzbek students are largely intertwined with the academic endeavors they undertake. Pursuing studies in reputable institutions and participating in internships not only augments their academic credentials but also broadens their prospects for employment within local companies. In addition to academic considerations, other factors such as gender, marital status, geographical origin, and migratory experience also appear to exert their influence.

In capitals, a higher prevalence of qualified employment opportunities is observed, extending beyond small, student jobs. This circumstance facilitates the transition from the status of a student to that of a professional worker, as for many students their plans were reconstructed during their migration trajectory. For example, the desire to change status from "student" to "salaried worker" seemed in 2004 discussions to be driven by financial considerations. Some Uzbek students in London have expressed a wish to change their status due to potentially more attractive income opportunities in jobs that are not accessible to students, such as paintingor in the construction sector. This suggests that the change in status is seen as a strategy to improve financial prospects after gaining experience and a deeper understanding of life and work in London. However, over time, and especially during the interviews in 2009, I noticed a stronger interest in changing status, not only to earn more money but especially because of stability. For example, in the case of Nodir, who has been living in London for 10 years, the change is necessary to secure his family's future.

Abdujabbor, who graduated in international relations from the University of Manchester, alsochanged his status through the HSMP (Highly Skilled Migrant Programme) in 2009. He worked within the university in the management of the development aid program in Anglophone African countries. However, he notes that the crisis has forced authorities to review the conditions for changing status. *"They simply increased the minimum salary to access the change of status. Now, with my old salary, I can no longer have a residence permit. Moreover, we depend on several organizations that make it impossible for me to increase my salary, and we are towards the end of the program,"* Abdujabbor.

The students' narratives in London also seem to crystallize distinct categories when it comes to their trajectories even from the beginning. There is an "Us," consisting of Uzbek students often enrolled in language courses and working, and then there is a "Them," comprising thosestudying at universities without doing small jobs, but later parachuting to important jobs either in Uzbekistan or in skilled jobs in the UK. According to Rasul, *"The wealthy don't come here to London; they go to reputable schools in the provinces. They mingle with the English, go to pubs."* But Hamid argues: *"There are some Uzbek students in British universities who are not coming from wealthy families. Some come with Soros scholarships or other programs.There are also children of officials who take*

advantage of their status to enroll their kids in the best universities and pay nothing out of their pockets, using state funds. But some Uzbeks arrive, work, and decide to study at universities, saving or changing their status."

This is exemplified by Kamoliddin, specializing in English language education. Initially, following a similar trajectory as the majority of compatriots, he decides to enroll in university studies and pay his savings for studies. Alongside his university studies, he decides to work at the Post Office and do night shifts, positively influencing colleagues who see that "the poor can also study." University education attracts many Uzbek students, but their financial conditions do not always allow them to fulfill their dreams. "*Can you imagine what we are missing? We are at the heart of the knowledge center, but we cannot take advantage of it. There is, for example, LSE (London School of Economics), SOAS (School of Oriental and Asian Studies), King's College, and we pass by these institutions every day,"* remarks Bahodir. He also plans to change his status and become a "Home Student" – the status allowing him to pay the same fees as local students. The outcome for the four interviewedUzbek students with a university background is mixed. Two returned to Uzbekistan due to contractual obligations with the state. One decided to stay and work in the private sector and moved to Scotland. Another one chose to work in the banking sector in London.

The desire for change was more significant among the students in France because they believed that their graduate studies could allow them to work after completing their education. Access to "salaried worker" status has several advantages compared to the student status in the eyes of the students. The beneficiary of this status can benefit from full-time employment, as well as unemployment benefits in case of dismissal or job loss. Beyond that, "salaried worker" status grants a 10-year stay permit after 2 years, while the students usually renew their stay every year.

Paris appears to present greater opportunities for Uzbek students, encompassing part-time employment and career trajectories aligned with their educational backgrounds. Every Uzbek student who successfully pursued a career matching their study profile has passed through Paris. The experiences of students in Paris suggest that, on average, five years are necessary to change their status, signifying successful employment in their chosen field. Notably, Parisian students who have transitioned to a different employment status have predominantlydone so after completing internships within the same company.

In provincial cities too, some students achieved to change their status, but not directly linked to their diploma. For instance, Botir in Grenoble decides to establish his own construction company, enabling him to change his status. Similarly, Jahongir in Bordeaux changed status due to family reasons and opened his construction company. However, one ofthe students received a refusal to change status when his application was based on a receptionist job. Therefore, while the strategies of "Parisian" students are more focused on Paris, those of students from provincial cities are much more uncertain.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It would be imprecise to narrowly characterize Uzbek migration in purely economic terms, as our sample has demonstrated structural changes within Uzbek society. Migration dynamics, as indicated, extend beyond economic indicators to encompass social factors. Students perceive a distinction between the Soviet era and their contemporary reality. Consequently, their decision to migrate aligns with a perspective wherein the younger generation hesitates to embrace their new societal roles. As inheritors of middle-class backgrounds, notably the offspring of professors, engineers, and doctors, they harbor concerns about occupying a socialstatus lower than that of their parents. Thus, migration for studies transcends financial considerations and investment; it represents a rejection of the new social hierarchy in their country of origin, where material deprivation increasingly parallels professional and familial setbacks.

Host countries, such as France and the United Kingdom, exhibit recurring contradictions in migration management. Unlike France or Germany, the United Kingdom has never officiallycalled for foreign labor. Nevertheless, economic booms have underscored the necessity of migration, fulfilled through student migration. Policies have leveraged this avenue while being cognizant of the consequences. Foreign students have not only brought financial benefits through their enrollments but have also contributed by working in service sectors ortemporary jobs. The British experience demonstrates how successive governments have managed the international students issue while linking it both to the economy and immigration. When the need for qualified or even unqualified migration arose, the government utilized the academic and university "label" to attract foreign students, also involving private entities. However, during the economic recession, the government easily closed the migratory flow it had created itself. In France, initiatives, and suggestions for optimizing the use of foreign students have often fallen on deaf ears. Under the Sarkozy government, despite a more restrictive migration policy, more attractive conditions were offered to the most talented foreign students.

The duration of young people's migration also indicates that their departure is predominantly voluntary and aligns with their plans long before entering university in their home country. Departure is an integral part of Uzbek youths' plans, irrespective of their socio-professional category. For the less privileged, it is an opportunity for success and a change in status for themselves and their families. This underscores that individuals now position themselves witha plural perspective, contemplating the possibility of living in various countries. While the ability to reside in multiple countries was once considered a "luxury" or an exception, this phenomenon now extends to almost all societal strata. The trajectory of many Uzbek students attests that migration is no longer a one-country journey; on the contrary, migration vectors multiply with individuals' increasing qualifications.

What does this work represent compared to other research on student mobility, particularly concerning mobility from Central Asia? Despite its somewhat dated

timeframe (2004-2009), it explains that specialists discuss different matters depending on their situations, as mobility or study exchanges are rare in Central Asia. This suggests a need to reconsider terms, including in other contexts and regions, as the term "migration" appears to be more fitting than "mobility." Given that a large portion of mobile students are not European or Western but predominantly Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, or from other non-mobile student groups, it seems necessary to reconsider the dominant terminologies as well. The work also calls for a reconsideration of the theoretical approaches utilized concerning student mobility, particularly the "pull" and "push" theory predominantly employed to explicate student mobilities and migrations across diverse geographical contexts. While Chankseliani and Syed Zwick contribute theoretically to elucidate situations at both macro and micro levels, this study complements previous research by incorporating aspects of migration policies frequently overlooked in the discourse on student mobility, which is highly significant in the Central Asian region. The paper also demonstrates that the implementation of barriers aimed at impeding migrations as designed by migration policies does not necessarily halt migrations, but rather may alter their directions. Additionally, such barriers contribute to a potentially significant increase in costs, making it challenging to quantify the consequences. A political ambiguity towards international students from host countries, caught between international competition and a desire to control foreigners, also reflects a lack of clear and coherent policy on this aspect, including in leading international student destination countries.

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