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**Abstract**

Although Mainland China is commonly perceived as a major sending country of international students, it is often overlooked as an important receiving country of international students. In order to address this gap in the literature, this study seeks to explain why international students from the city of Beijing chose China as their study abroad destination. An updated push-pull model is proposed to explain their rationale to study in China. Findings reveal that the quality reputation of China's higher education (HE) is the major pulling force of international mobility to China, while the booming economy escalates its HE reputation and has become the driver of China's emerging regional hub appearance. However, China's contemporary culture does not function as a pulling force due to its vagueness and ambiguity. This research also deepens our understanding of the dynamic and complex relationship between the state, international relations, HE, and individuals in the context of globalization. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)