

Internationalization of Higher Education: Case Studies of Indonesia and US

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Abstract

Internationalization of higher education has been significantly expanded into a common practice globally in the past two decades. While conceptual definitions are contested in the scholarly literature, the process can be characterized as comprising policies and practices universities adopt to ensure their institutions connect and integrate with the increasingly global system of higher education. Higher education is full with strategies, policies, and programs that reflect different ways of understanding internationalization and its outcomes. These ideological conceptions and rational principles influencing internationalization policy and practice are connected to global rankings. Various indicators such as the uneven geopolitical distribution of publications, citations, translations, prestigious academic awards, awarded academic positions, and high global university rankings assessed by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Top Universities (QSTU) and Times Higher Education (THE) support the notion of a stratified global academic system. Therein, global ranking bears on how internationalization is conceptualized and implemented by higher education actors and institutions.

For example, ranking systems assess institutions' academic excellence through measures like frequency of international publication and overall university internationalization. In the age of higher education internationalization, the quality of internationalism itself has become a source of symbolic capital for institutions and actors, and it is commonly taken as a marker of academic excellence (Bassaran and Olson 2017; Knight 2010). As a result, within the context of the global knowledge economy and the push for internationalization, these ranking systems act as mechanisms of academia classification that reproduce the notion of "The West and the Rest" discourse (Kostyrykina et al. 2017; Jiang 2008; Yang 2002; Hall 1996). Consequently, non-Western institutions and actors of higher education are pressured to integrate into the modern global academic system through international instruments—a way to climb the rankings and compete on par with Western institutions in the uneven global market of higher education. In contrast, Western institutions may focus on internationalization of education—a means of infusing higher education with a diversity of perspectives. In this way, the internationalized academic periphery and semi-periphery are out of necessity while the internationalized academic core is to enrich higher education. Due to the consolidation of power and various forms of capital in the academic core, semi-periphery, and periphery are disadvantaged in this project (Gerhards et al. 2018; Munch 2014).

This paper will provide explanations of the variation in internationalization educational policy, ideology, rationale, and practice between a private US liberal arts college and a public and a high-ranking Indonesian university. Using theories on discourse (Hall 1996), world systems (Wallerstein 2004, 2011), the academic field and forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1988) to focus on the intersections of macro- and micro-level factors, this paper will critically analyse the complexities and differences between the two institutions' ideological, rational, and practical dimensions of internationalization. Using purposive sampling, the data were collected through in-depth interviews with administrators and faculty members from both institutions.

Keywords: higher education, internationalization