

**U.S. National Higher Education Internationalization Policy:
An Historical Analysis of Policy Development between 2000 and 2019**

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Abstract

Situated within the context of globalization, the purpose of this historical policy analysis study is to identify and describe the ways in which multiple actors shape national higher education internationalization policy within the U.S., and to capture the emerging direction in higher education internationalization policy at the national level between 2000 and 2019. Data will be collected from multiple sources at the national level essentially from organizations within the public, private and voluntary policy-making sectors. The guiding theoretical framework for this study will rely on horizontal and vertical historical analysis. The study aims to describe (1) how policy is shaped in a pluralistic policy-making process, (2) identify factors that influenced policy trajectory, and (3) outline policy rationales between 2000 and 2019.

Keywords: higher education policy, U.S. internationalization policy, history, globalization

Introduction

During the 2000s, the globalization process increased connectivity and interdependency between nation states to influence socio-political and economic development in the U.S. (Friedman, 2009). The higher education sector responded to the globalization process with a variety of internationalization policy efforts that included international student recruitment, curriculum globalization, personnel training, education abroad, cross-border transfer of education credentials,

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international institutional partnerships, overseas campuses, and worldwide online course offerings (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Henry, et al., 2014; Thelin, 2011). Internationalization policy is not new to U.S. higher education; yet, in the 2000s, internationalization policy efforts increased to become “big business” in higher education (Altbach, 2016, p. 3).

Historically, internationalization policy efforts have existed on campuses under names such as “international dimension, international education, [and] internationalization of education” (De Wit, 2002, p. xvii). Over time, the policy has been contested, and, in the context of globalization, scholars have stated that “the decades old notion of internationalization favors an international education corporate agenda with a key focus on the corporatization of international education, specifically targeting the recruitment, retention, and assimilation of international learners” (Patel, 2017, p. 65). Due to globalization, the number of international students on U.S. campuses reached one million in 2017 (IIE, 2018). In the absence of a clearly stated internationalization policy, the shape of national higher education internationalization policy efforts and the rationales that underlie policies warrant attention.

Significance

In general, public policy arises to address problems that affect society, and policy analysis leads to a clearer assessment of policy. Policymaking at the U.S. national level occurs within a complex system that is comprised of political and non-political institutions (Lubell, 2013). A description of how one aspect of national higher education policy (internationalization policy) is shaped brings transparency to the policymaking process to help inform future policy design. At the national level, a multiplicity of actors is involved in national higher education policymaking, and scholars have categorized the prominent actors into three sectors: the public sector, the voluntary sector, and the private sector (Harclerod & Eaton, 2005).

In the public sector, the U.S. Constitution establishes distinct policymaking areas for the federal and state governments. Article I (8) of the U.S. Constitution expressly states that the federal government

has the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reserves general powers to the states, thus placing education policy under state authority. However, scholars have asserted that the federal government has been involved in higher education through various measures, which include legislation and funding mechanisms (Parsons, 1997; Thelin, 2011). After World War II, the Truman administration funded national higher education internationalization policy efforts on public university campuses with a view to build peace around the world. By 2000, President Clinton reinforced the value of international education and the need for culturally competent students in the context of economic globalization and American competitiveness. In the voluntary sector, citizens have regrouped under various associations to protect the interests and quality of higher education. Such institutions have been referred to as non-political policymaking institutions because they exist outside of federal government institutions. At the national level, voluntary higher education associations have represented specific higher education sector interests by lobbying the federal government, making the associations an influential policy advocate for the higher education sector (Cook, 1998; Harclerod & Eaton, 2005). In the private sector, an increasing number of private foundations (e.g., Ford, Lumina, and Kellogg) have also exerted influence on higher education policy through philanthropy and curriculum enhancement (Harclerod & Eaton, 2005; Thelin, 2011).

The level of internationalization on U.S. campuses has been compared among institutions based on institutional type and geographical location (Helms, 2017). Scholars have studied curriculum globalization (Runte, 2001), tensions surrounding the Fulbright program (Bettie, 2015), and the development of study-abroad programs (Bolen, 2001). Research has also examined the 30-year history of internationalization policy up to 1998 (Ruther, 2002). In sum, a variety of research studies have measured the effects of internationalization policies on higher education; however, researchers have failed to explore the following research question, which guides this study.

Research Questions

- How has national higher education internationalization policy been shaped?
- How has the policy evolved in novel ways since 2000?

Theoretical Framework

Using a combined framework of horizontal and vertical history, the three higher education policymaking sectors will be aligned horizontally for analysis (Thelin, 2010). Policy efforts from a microcosm of policymaking actors from the three sectors will be aligned vertically to trace policy evolution and to correlate factors that influenced the policy (Silberzahn, 2011; Sreedharan, 2007).

Research Methods

This study will use historical research methods to understand historical events, as well as the ideas that influenced these events, through the use of information from the past (Torou, et al., 2010). Scholars have categorized historical research methods within the qualitative research design (Creswell, 2013). Historical methods distinguish between narrative historical methods, which are descriptive, chronological, and concerned with individuals, and structural historical methods, which are analytical and thematic.

Data will be collected from primary, secondary, and auxiliary sources (Merriam, 2016). Using a constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes that knowledge is created, participants will provide in-depth perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 2016). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), “by studying the past, the historian hopes to achieve a better understanding of present institutions, practices, and issues in education” (p. 806).

In general, data from policy analysis will expose both the policymaking process and the nature of policy evolution. An historical approach to policy analysis paves the way to describe actors who shaped policy at the national level in the U.S. between 2000 and 2019 and to trace policy evolution within the stated period of time. In the absence of a clearly articulated U.S. national higher education

internationalization policy which emanates from one government institution, it is imperative to describe the multiplicity of actors who shape the policy at the national level. The study will also trace policy evolution to provide multifaceted data to lay the groundwork for evaluating policy outcomes and measuring policy efficacy. By examining national higher education internationalization policy within the context of globalization, this study will contribute to knowledge by providing data on policy evolution within a specific context. The study will highlight factors and rationales that influenced internationalization policy between 2000 and 2019. In practical terms, policy evolution can then be described and assessed in terms of (in pre-emption of, or in reaction to) influential societal factors identified between 2000 and 2019.

By clarifying the U.S. policymaking process, this research provides data to facilitate comparative international policy analysis. A concise understanding of the U.S. national policymaking process facilitates comparative policy analysis between federal systems of government. U.S. national policy between 2000 and 2019 can then be compared with other nations that have federal systems of government to measure policy outcomes, assess efficacy, and elucidate ways to improve policymaking processes. Data from the study will also support the comparative analysis of policy evolution between federal nation states between 2000 and 2019 in the novel context of globalization.

Author Note

Yovana P. Soobrayen Veerasamy is a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at the University of Toledo. She has worked in the community college sector for nearly 15 years both as a faculty member and in international student services. She is an English Barrister and has practiced and taught law abroad. She has been active in promoting curriculum globalization and campus internationalization

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