SECTION A. INTRODUCTION.

chapter 1

Higher education cooperation between the EU and countries in four continents: from the perspective of internationalisation of higher education

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Introduction

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has made rapid development in higher education cooperation with countries outside the EU, facilitated by various programmes. International higher education cooperation is intertwined with the EU’s strategy concerning international relations, e.g. on the economic and political dimensions. Indeed, higher education’s link to other agendas of the EU has been reinforced by the Lisbon Agenda in 2000 and the Europe 2020 Strategy in 2010, which aimed to develop Europe as a more competitive knowledge economy and to attract global talent (Burquel & Ballesteros, Chapter 3 of this book).

Referring to the practice of the EU’s Internationalisation of higher education, however, Brandenburg et. al (2019) argue that ‘instead of considering internationalisation as one tool to support social engagement and responsibility – locally, nationally and globally – it is seen as a concept that draws resources, focus and infrastructure away from social engagement’. Accordingly, they call for ‘internationalisation of higher education for society’. A similar observation is made by Cai, Ferrer, & Lastra (2019) in the context of the EU’s international cooperation in science, technology and innovation, stating that ‘transnational university cooperation … is primarily concerned with the teaching and research missions of universities or with the mobility of knowledge from the human perspective’, and not aligning with societal priorities.

The present book is a timely response to the call for scholarly and practical efforts to explore the ‘underused potential’ (Brandenburg et. al, 2019) or ‘hidden links’ (Cai et al, 2019) for internationalisation of higher education, by examining higher education cooperation between the EU and some representative third countries. Although the focus of the book is on higher education cooperation itself, the book analyses and discusses the EU’s higher education cooperation with the third countries highlighting its challenges and opportunities associated with the internationalisation of higher education.

The four countries under consideration are Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa, representing four continents respectively South America, Asia, Europe and Africa. We chose them as important players in political and economic aspects in the EU’s international relations. These countries, listed together in alphabetical order, are a major student source for the European higher education market; in recent years all of them have become keen to welcome students from the EU member states and to enhance their internationalisation activities in partnership with European higher education institutions.

In particular, they have extensive higher education systems based on well-developed secondary education on the related continents and a long history of cooperation with their partners in Western Europe. The oldest universities there were established under the influence of European ideas and since then they have had continuing links with European universities. It is hoped that the lessons drawn from this book may help other countries in understanding the nature of higher education cooperation with the EU, and also support the EU’s strategies on higher education cooperation with other countries.

Alongside the growing opportunities to expand and deepen cooperation in higher education between each of the four countries and the EU, there are also challenges to be overcome, largely due to the lack of understanding of each other’s higher education systems, traditions, strategic goals, and various stakeholders’ interests concerning the internationalisation of higher education. While some available scholarly literature may provide useful empirical insights on the EU’s higher education cooperation with a single third country, such as China (Cai, 2019), and Russia (Deriglazova & Mäkinen, 2019), it is rare to see studies comparing and generalising the experience EU’s higher education cooperation with multiple countries, and using a consistent analytical framework.

The edited book we are proposing aims to fill the gaps by providing collected studies on higher education cooperation between the EU and the four countries from various perspectives. Following the discussions on the experience of each chosen country in cooperation with the EU or with higher education partners in the EU member states, we shall try, in the Conclusion, to categorise and discuss the tendencies, challenges, and opportunities. There, we shall also make recommendations on what and how the EU and these four countries, along with their stakeholders involved in higher education cooperation, can learn from each other and even make joint efforts in advancing the globalised knowledge society after the Corona crisis.

Specifically, we will explore the following questions: What are the main rationales guiding the EU, its national governments, agencies, higher education institutions, academics, and students in these four countries to collaborate internationally? What is the role of the EU in the strategies of internationalisation in the chosen countries’? What do governments, institutions, stakeholders and individuals expect to gain from collaborations? And how can the discourse of higher education cooperation and internationalisation be seen from the broad perspective of international relations/strategic partnerships between the EU and the four countries?

Apart from the Introduction and the Conclusion, the book is structured in three sections as follows. The following themes are considered in the volume:

* Section B provides a global and European overview of higher education cooperation and internationalisation;
* Section C highlights the national contexts of higher education cooperation and internationalisation with the EU in the chosen countries of the four continents;
* Section D reviews and discusses the lessons drawn from the case studies in terms of the experience at the institutional level. For each chosen country there is a case study focusing on examples of collaboration with the EU’s higher education institutions during the implementation of internationalisation policies.

We hope that our book will be helpful for those in the policy and academic communities concerned with the internationalisation of higher education and its activities implemented in cooperation. We address researchers and students of higher education studies; higher education policy-makers and civil servants; university leaders and administrators engaged in international cooperation; academics involved in internationalisation activities; students whose aim is to gain an international study experience, and their parents; and all the other readers interested to know more of higher education cooperation.

Internationalisation of higher education

When it comes to the internationalisation of higher education, one most commonly cited definition is by de Wit, Hunter, and Coelen (2015) who define the internationalisation of higher educations as 'the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society' (de Wit et al., 2015, 281). This definition is based on Knight and de Wit (1995) and several rounds of refinement afterwards, but adding an emphasis on the relevance of internationalisation of higher education for society. Meanwhile, it should be noted that international cooperation is just one means among others to realise Internationalisation of higher education, but not the goal itself (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011).

While such a definition of the internationalisation of higher education is comprehensive and becoming popular, it has been noted by Yang (2014) that the definition based on Knight and de Wit (1995) ‘is only based on and thus suitable for Western experience’. As the four countries collaborating with the EU are out of the Western context, our book also extends de Wit et al.'s (2015) definition in two ways. First, we conceptualise the internationalisation of higher education to the level of operationalisation aligned with empirical studies. Second, we propose a typology of internationalisation based on comparison of the experiences of the four countries’ cooperation with the EU. These will be presented in the Conclusion.

 Through international cooperation in higher education, two or more academic entities establish connections and develop concrete collaboration initiatives. Among the most important cooperation activities that support the internationalisation of higher education are those of academic staff mobility, student mobility, degree and credit mobility, internationalisation of curricula, and collaborative degree programmes including joint and double degrees.

The internationalisation of higher education receives support from different sides of society. Depending on the perspectives of participants or stakeholders, the internationalisation of higher education may mean different things. In fact, one can argue that a successful initiative for university internationalisation answers the expectations of both the university’s internal and external stakeholders. However, it is not unusual that efforts to build a successful international partnership fall into disarray. One of the challenges to effective internationalisation that we shall be examining in this book is the lack of real understanding of the partners' perspective. Awareness of the differences in the rules shaping higher education around the world and of the diversity of goals and expectations each partner brings to the cooperation are the central issues that must be taken into consideration when building successful cooperation in higher education. Partners should be aware that higher education is a key factor historically linked with the process of state building and thus is an integral part of any country’s identity (Ordorika & Pusser, 2007). The complexity of the higher education system in any country should not be underestimated. By systematically studying the policies for the internationalisation of higher education in both the EU and some of its major partners in other continents and reviewing some concrete experiences, this book will further the understanding of the many challenges that stand in the way of building successful international cooperation in the higher education field.

From their inception in the 1980s, policies supporting the internationalisation of higher education focused mostly on expanding academic and student mobility. The central rationale behind the programmes for university internationalisation has been the exposure of local academic and student communities to diverse experience in research agenda and approaches enshrined in curriculum design and learning practices, brought about by the links with other academic communities abroad. For the students, this international experience has been supposed to support the development of the skills necessary for facing the challenges posed by globalisation and the competencies leading to the appreciation of the opportunities created by the diversity present in a closely interconnected world.

For society as a whole, a successful policy supporting the internationalisation of higher education creates opportunities for sharing technological assets present in other countries and preparing the country’s national system to face the challenges posed by trends and developments taking place in other countries. In this sense, some authors point out that, to some extent, the internationalisation of higher education is a national response to globalisation (Eggins, 2003) (Shenderova provides an overview of this approach in Chapter 6 of this book).

In the eyes of the academics, a successful policy for university internationalisation creates vast opportunities for expanding and reinforcing their links with the international networks of specialists, who share the disciplinary identity and develop cross-disciplinary research agenda (Balbachevsky & Kohtamäki, in press).

Furthermore, the global challenge posed by the 2020 pandemic caused by the global spread of the Corona virus raises societies’ awareness of the centrality of academic research cooperation as a public good. The global research networks linking academics from different continents forged in past years are now a strategic tool which can enable our societies to face and answer the global challenges.

Policies for the internationalisation of higher education in Europe

In recent years, European initiatives have achieved significant progress in developing the internationalisation of higher education based on higher education cooperation with countries on other continents. These initiatives were facilitated by several supranational programmes and opened up relevant policy dialogues with higher education institutions and authorities from outside the EU. In this book, we analyse some experiences in internationalisation between the higher education systems of the EU and the chosen countries. In doing this, in Section B, Chapters 2 and 3 provide the reader with the main framework of the policy context shaping the driver for the internationalisation of higher education in the EU.

In Chapter 2, Mary-Louise Kearney and Merle Jacob articulate a comprehensive review of the policy agenda pursued by the key international organisations in the field of internationalisation of higher education and other international actors. The chapter also discusses how these organisations support or hinder the development of real patterns of cooperation that could help countries and societies deal with some of the most pressing issues faced by the world, linked to environmental or developmental challenges. In Chapter 3, Nadine Burquel and Laura Ballesteros provide an in-depth overview of the evolving patterns of contemporary EU policies supporting the internationalisation of higher education, with a special emphasis on the policies targeting the partnership between the EU and emerging countries, underlining how these policies have helped to shape the patterns of cooperation between them.

There is a large literature discussing differences in the strategies and goals of internationalisation, as implemented by higher education institutions from different countries in Europe and how the country's policy framework helps to shape these differences (e.g. Huisman & van der Wende, 2005; Graf, 2009; Powell, Graf, Bernhard, Coutrot, & Kieffer, 2012; Curaj, Matei, Pricopie, Salmi, & Scott, 2015).

However, all the processes of internationalisation of higher education involve two or more partners: at least two countries or two institutions from different cultures, and institutional environments. The movement of senders and receivers between countries is well researched: what is less explored by the literature is how the features of domestic higher education systems, domestic rules, cultural practices of their interplay and expectations of both partners shape the design and the extent of success of any collaboration.

Internationalisation of higher education with the EU: Policy perspectives of building cooperation from four continents

From the point of view of countries outside the EU, their approach to the internationalisation of higher education with the EU carries its own particular challenges both at policy and at institutional level (Shenderova, 2018). For successful international cooperation, it is necessary that both partners are aware of the other's expectations and values, as well as a deep understanding of how the local rules and regulations condition the ways cooperation will unfold. A clear understanding of how the partner's higher education system works could also help to build trust, allowing for the exploration of different collaborative approaches. These dynamics are necessary ones to forge long-lasting partnerships.

Thus, Section B explores the differences in the external institutional environments outside higher education institutions in the chosen countries in four continents. In particular, the authors study the policy frameworks, motivations and obstacles for higher education cooperation when the internationalisation of higher education is implemented between the EU and the chosen countries.

In Chapter 4, Creso Sá and Magdalena Martinez review the experience of Brazil-EU cooperation in higher education, basing the discussion on the context of relevant stakeholders, and on long-term patterns of higher education institutions’ engagement in internationalisation. The chapter also addresses some relevant recent developments experienced by the Brazilian policy for higher education, exploring the opportunities and challenges these new policies posed to cooperation with the EU. In Chapter 5, Yuzhuo Cai and Gaoming Zheng review China's experience on collaborating with Europe and analyse how the new developments in higher education policies in China shape the design and goals of the country’s internationalisation of higher education with the EU. In Chapter 6 Svetlana Shenderova explores rationale, evolution, challenges and opportunities in higher education cooperation between Russia and the EU. The policy measures to support internationalisation of higher education are investigated in the context of coexistence the EU and Russia within the European Higher Education Area and their growing competition at the world stage. Finally, Chapter 7 addresses the experience of South Africa, analysing how the new post-apartheid agenda has opened opportunities and framed the country's expectations while deepening the cooperation with the EU and its member states.

Cooperation with the EU higher education institutions at the institutional level: Case studies

This book also provides a collection of case studies exploring particular examples of cooperation with the EU at the institutional level. Section C is dedicated to presenting and exploring particular cases of collaboration with EU partners implemented in higher education institutions in the chosen countries. The Section also highlights the challenges and opportunities made available to higher education institutions as a result of collaboration. In Chapter 8 Cintia Granja and Ana Carneiro present and review how the Brazilian programme *Science Without Borders* impacted the implementation of the internationalisation of higher education with the EU in the country. The authors compare the objectives of the programme announced by the Federal Government, the results achieved and the challenges faced by the higher education institutions whose students participated in the programme. In Chapter 9 Hanwei Li gives an overview of the experience of Chinese students when they integrate into the Finnish internal university environment. In Chapter 10, Olga Ustyuzhantseva, Olga Zvonareva, Klasien Hortsman and Evgenya Popova study the experience of a partnership between Dutch, Bulgarian, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian higher education institutions in building a double degree programme. The authors investigate the administrative barriers for internationalisation which emerged in establishing a double degree partnership within an external institutional environment, including Russian legislation and the constraints brought about by the differences between the internal institutional environments of the EU and non-EU partners. Chapter 11 examines the significance of the patterns of research collaboration between the EU and South African research institutions and universities. It illustrates the value of such collaboration for South African scholars and institutions in terms of the provision of regional and international frameworks and platforms to enhance strategic cooperation, and integration at both economic, geo-political, research and cultural levels.

The volume thus offers to readers a series of policy chapters which are interleaved with case studies of each country: the insights gained open up a new understanding of the complexity of the notion of internationalisation of higher education, particularly in its manifestation of countries from four continents interacting with the European Union.

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