

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A BATTLEFIELD: INTERNALISATION AND GLOBALISATION AS A COLD WAR

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Abstract: This paper explores critical aspects of the development of movements in Higher Education (HE). It describes the impacts of trade rules in higher education. HE is viewed as an important economic asset. In fact, there is little discussion as to whether the anticipated economic and supply benefits are reasonable and probable. The main problem associated with economy in HE are the application of trade rules and the competition created by globalization. The challenge that is created is; whether the trend of trade rules helps to preserve the diversity of European higher education, or whether it leads to uniformity according to specific indicators. Contrary to its stated aim, GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) hasn't democratised higher education, yet the effects remain unclear. It doesn't provide any framework for the solution of these problems thus giving rise to the globalisation has added new dimensions to existing disparities in higher education. The rationale is sometimes couched in the ideological jargon of the Cold War but is often obscured by rhetoric about cooperation. 'Europeanisation' and 'colonisation' is used in reference to cooperation and mobility. It is called 'new neocolonialism'. The goals are political and economic and education is a key battlefield.

Keywords: Globalisation, diversity, Europeanisation and colonisation in HE

Özet: Bu çalışma yükseköğretim (YÖ) alanında meydana gelen gelişmelerin kritik özelliklerini incelemekte ve ticari kuralların yükseköğretim üzerindeki etkisini açıklamaktadır. Yükseköğretim önemli bir ekonomik değer olarak görülmektedir. Aslında öngörülen ekonomik ve kaynaklar faydaların mantıklı ve muhtemel olup olmadığı ile alakalı çok az tartışma mevcuttur. Ticari kuralların uygulanması ve küreselleşme ile ortaya çıkan rekabet; hızla artan karşılaştırma ve karşılaştırabilirlik trendinin Avrupa yükseköğretiminde çeşitliliğin korunmasına yardımcı olup olmadığı ya da belirli göstergelere göre bütünleşmeye önayak olup olmadığı yükseköğretimde ekonomiyle ilişkili ana problemi teşkil eden durumlardır.

Mevcut hedefinin aksine Hizmet Ticaret Genel Anlaşması henüz demokratikleştirilmemiş ve etkileri bilinmemektedir. Bu problemlere bir çözüm çerçevesi önermemesi küreselleşmenin yükseköğretimde var olan farklılıklara yeni boyutlar kazandırmasına yol açmıştır. Kimi zaman olayın mantığı ideolojik bir jargon olan Soğuk Savaş kavramının satır aralarında yer alsa da bu çoğunlukla işbirliği ile ilgili retorik yüzünden belirsiz bir hal almaktadır. “Avrupalaşma” ve “sömürü” kavramları işbirliği ve mobiliteye istinaden kullanılmaktadır ve bu “yeni sömürgecilik” olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Hedef siyasi ve ekonomik olmakla birlikte bunlara ulaşmak için verilen mücadele öğretim alanında gerçekleşmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yükseköğretimde küreselleşme, çeşitlilik, Avrupalılaşma ve sömürge.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this paper is to highlight some of the challenges that higher education has faced by new positioning of HE as a sector of industry. Higher education has been shown to have a beneficial effect on the economy, national prosperity and prestige as well as to provide skilled people for the knowledge society. UNESCO (1998: 1) stated: “On the eve of a new century, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an awareness of its vital importance for sociocultural and economic development, and for building the future”.

Some have argued that the higher education sector has not only been the key provider of education but also meets the social and economic needs of the country (Meek, 2000; Klein, 2003). With this respect the development of various movements in higher education has pushed higher education in a different direction. Indeed, according to Rowley (2003) within this change of HE as industry has also had influences such as; knowledge is viewed as an important economic asset. Similarly, Gumpert (2000) defined the position of higher education in terms of the idea that the needs of the community and professional environment for quality manpower have repositioned universities as a sector of the economy and higher education as industry. With this respect the transformation of higher education from being solely for elite to being for the mass and a universal system (Yorke, 2000; Meek, 2000). Taking a similar line, Morley (2001) stated that higher education is viewed as a sub-system of the economy. It has been argued that corporate interests play a powerful role in determining the purpose of higher education (Mızıkacı, 2003; Morley, 2001; Tam, 2001). In a similar line, Ramsden (1991) has identified the position of OECD countries as politically pressurised to link higher education to the goal of economic growth. Such motivation in higher

education sector was due to the shortage of graduates and the labour market which was suffering from a shortage of skilled employees (Morley, 2001). This decision was also the strong phase of higher education expansion in the late 1980s and early 1990s was demand-led (Hodgson and Spours, 2000; Morley, 2001). Along with similar lines, Peters (2006: 279) reflects on the role of university as the 'industry of the future'. However, the vast increase in access to tertiary education, and the economic impact of the huge participation in higher education, has led to a diversified experience in higher education institutions. This experience has been different in industrially developed and developing countries. The complexity is best described by UNESCO (1998: 2): "The gap between industrially developed, the developing and in particular least developed countries with regard to access to and resources for higher learning and research, already enormous, is becoming even wider". Indeed, the expansion in higher education has initiated a number of interrelated factors, such as increased competition and student diversity.

2. MOBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: COMPETITION AND DIVERSITY

The above mentioned issue of widening participation in higher education has affected higher education in many aspects. Of the various issues that the statistics provided by international organisations show valid reasons why there has been an attempt to internationalise and/or globalise higher education activities. The main reasons for student mobility are either that there is simply insufficient access to local higher education institutions or that student seeks a better education in one of the European Union countries. Wende (2003) states that in a number of countries, such as the US, Australia, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, governments have identified higher education export as a promising economic activity and important source of additional income. The UK has one of the highest higher education participation rates in the OECD (Watson, 2002). In his research, Wende (2003) indicates that the UK has a 16% share of the global market for international students, and the UK government aims to increase this to 25%. While Tight (2006) argues that the interest participation in higher education is due to the perceived link between participation in higher education and economic productivity and growth.

It can be seen that there have been different critiques on the expansion and growth of higher education. Indeed, the impressive growth in the admissions rates of universities has raised the issues of diversification and heterogeneity. Transformation and expansion involves greater diversification, in terms of types of institutions, programmes and students, especially in the light of the greater heterogeneity of students (Brennan and Shah, 2000; Meek 2000). Meek (2000) gives the example of Australia, which has increased the emphasis on market-steering in higher education.

In his discussion he states that there is a complex relationship between higher education diversity and markets. In his further discussion he states that as there is growing interest in participating in higher education, it is inevitable that HE has become a more politicised issue. According to Meek (2000), in many post-industrial societies, universities have lost their social and cultural relevance but have shifted towards being an important source of wealth creation. Meek (2000) argues that the relationship between higher education and government is one of financial stringency. Furthermore, he states that higher education and its status as being internationally competitive requires accountability measures, performance evaluation and benchmarking to increase competition and ensure value for money and efficiency gains. In Torres and Schugurensky (2002) view, the higher education reforms aims at taking positions in the international economic agenda and to remain competitive in the global market (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002; Morley, 2003).

3. GATS AND TRADE RULES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The discussion above can be explained by the underlying assumption of globalizing and internationalization of higher education. There is also growing evidence that increasing student mobility in higher education raises the issue of who gets to study where. It is therefore, sensible to talk about the impact of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on higher education. The aim of the trade in education is described as follows (UNESCO, 1998: 2):

The demand for higher education, on the one side, is growing, while on the other side, trans-border education (private or for-profit higher foreign university campuses, IT Academies.....corporate universities, open universities, e-universities etc.) is increasing. The capacity of the public sector has not kept up with this demand.

Some countries (the US, the UK and Australia) are actively contesting trade restrictions and they are leading the debate regarding the WTO's attempts to eliminate the barriers to international trade in education (Wende and Weterheijden, 2001). In actual fact, there is a little discussion as to whether the anticipated economic and supply benefits are reasonable and probable (Knight, 2002). The growing number of exchanges in higher education, the impressive expansion of cross-border higher education initiatives and the internationalisation of education should be seen as an opportunity. However, a point often lost on critics is that conflict may arise in relation to the application of trade rules to higher education systems.

Altbach and Teichler (2001: 21) state that international mobility and targeted services for specific 'consumers' might give rise to certain dangers: 'the growth of for-profit enterprises delivering easily marketable educational programs, sometimes with little regard for standards or quality'. The most explicit critique is by Altbach (2004a, 2004b), who provides more background on the experience of higher education in formulating its strategy for opening up new dimensions under the GATS. The GATS, which is supposed to promote freedom in higher education activities, seems to have created some kind of pressure in this area. Altbach (2004b: 10) makes one of the most influential critiques:

There is a general feeling that higher education is not a commodity to be traded in international markets like steel or bananas. Some people in higher education also worry that GATS would jeopardize academic autonomy in the developing nations, in that they would no longer be able to control education imports to their own countries. The debate continues, the effect of gats remain unclear.

In the recent report of the Observatory's, Knight (2003) sparked debate on the issue that the growth in academic mobility provided by GATS has given rise to an urgent need to address quality assurance and accreditation issues. She raises the concern as to whether UNESCO conventions could be used to address these issues (Knight, 2003). Examined from another perspective, due to the Lisbon convention the GATS is free from external pressures. It should be noted that the WTO and UNESCO take different approaches. UNESCO 'has specific responsibility to guarantee HE as a human right and that it remains accessible while the WTO has responsibility for making it easier for companies to sell education' (www.aic.v/ace). Knight (2002) has also made similar critique on the negative side of the GATS. She says that the increased trade might threaten the role of government to regulate higher education, and meeting the national policy objectives might well jeopardise the 'public good' and quality of education.

An earlier Observatory's report on GATS (2002) illustrates the link between trade and the economy in higher education. The debate relates to developing countries concerned about their capacity in trade liberalisation and increased cross-border delivery of education. The gap between developed and developing countries in social and economic terms is getting wider, and poor countries are becoming poorer still (Knight, 2002; Altbach, 2004a). Knight (2002: 3) discusses the impact of trade liberalisation, and indicates that it is important to differentiate between for-profit and non-profit internationalisation activities in order to clarify whether various initiatives amount to 'trade in educational services'. This reminded us what Altbach (2004a) argues that globalisation has added new dimensions to existing disparities in higher education. He calls this 'new

neocolonialism' saying that, 'the goals were political and economic, and education was a key battlefield. The rationale was sometimes couched in the ideological jargon of the Cold War but was often obscured by rhetoric about cooperation' (Altbach, 2004: 6). In this instance, it is made clear that, contrary to its stated aim, GATS has not been democratising higher education, yet the effects of GATS remain unclear (Altbach, 2004b). However, one of the main problems associated with the trade of education relates to the issue of quality assurance, and GATS does not provide any framework for the solution of these problems (Wende, 2003).

4. REALITY OF GLOBALISATION AND INTERNALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

The above-discussed issues, including market-driven trends and consumerism in higher education, give rise to some further issues.

The debate on globalisation and internationalisation has been a major issue in higher education. Altbach and Teichler (2001) have provided a theoretical overview on the internationalisation of higher education. They point out that in the new millennium we face the inevitability of a globalised economy and of a globalised academic system. Their further claim was that higher education benefits from a number of elements that foster internationalisation, such as (Altbach and Teichler, 2001: 6):

- increasingly global academic marketplaces for both students and staff; and
- the use of English internationally, not only for the communication of research but also for teaching purposes.

Altbach and Teichler's (2001) claim on the impact of using English internationally for academic purposes is also a factor that motivates countries like the UK, USA and Australia, as well as some of the EU countries to play a significant role in leading educational activities, such as partnership, franchising and/or cooperation (UNESCO, OECD) mainly in developing or developed countries. Altbach (2004a) discusses some of the theoretical practices of globalisation in higher education institutions. Further argument by Altbach (2004 a) is the definition of globalisation as the broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable (Altbach, 2004a). As can be seen above arguments the politics and culture are also part of these global realities; indeed, it can be seen that academic systems and institutions may accommodate these developments in different ways. Rather than dogmatically observed, the conjuncture of globalization and internationalization entail economic and political concerns over the exchange and use values of HE. Looking at Teichler (2004: 7) he defines internationalisation and globalisation as follows:

- Internationalisation tends to address an increase of border-crossing activities amidst a more or less persistence of national systems of higher education.
- Globalisation tends to assume that borders and national systems as such get blurred or even might disappear.

It is interesting to note what Teichler (2004: 13) says: the governments of major ‘knowledge exporting’ countries are enormously active in shaping the rules of border-crossing commercial knowledge transfer in order to maximise their national gains. Interestingly, Gumpert (2000: 71) says that if you perceive higher education as an industry, then the public colleges and universities can be viewed as ‘quasi-corporate entities producing a wide range of goods and services in a competitive marketplace’.

Ahola (2005) argues that there is that reality of competition created by globalisation. Further, Ahola (2005: 39) ponders whether the challenges presented by trend of increasing comparison and comparability will help to preserve the diversity of European higher education; or whether they will lead to competition according to certain indicators, thus giving rise to ‘spontaneous’ harmonization.

Evidently globalisation and internationalisation plays a dual role in the wide array of delivery in education.

5. INTERNALISATION AND GLOBALISATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

The ideology of having a more unified system of QA in higher worldwide there has been a great asset to the role of partnership in order to contribute to the development of proposals and to achieve a better-coordinated Europe-wide system for quality assurance (HEFCE, 2006). The initiative to bridge the gap between the well-developed countries (UK, USA) and developed countries has motivated the developing or least developed countries to establish peer review or partnership agreements regarding the transferring of the quality assessment methods used in developed countries. Morse (2006) discovered a noticeable implementation gap in the transportability of skills across national borders. Further argument by her was that there are differences between different nations and regions, and therefore it is not practicable to standardise learning goals internationally. Trying to promote the growth and cooperation of quality assurance agencies might well create a gap between management objectives and the implementation of quality assessment.

There are some examples of partnership, improvement-oriented evaluation or pilot projects in developing countries. Perhaps the intention of bridging the gap and the reconstruction projects of quality assurance can be interpreted and experienced differently: we may consider how and why the international agencies might influence a country's higher education system. As some would argue usually the objective of this kind of partnership is the development of an academic assessment mechanism and structure, which is ultimately leading to the establishment of a quality assurance system similar to other OECD and European Union (EU) countries (Billing and Thomas, 2000a). Following these introductory insights into the rising importance of such partnership and cooperation paradigm in HE; indeed, its complexities relative to that venue. Indeed, the rapidly changing environment of higher education in the world due to global economic forces and public policies and needs has also changed the culture of quality assurance and assessment in higher education. What really drove vertical differentiation in quality assurance in higher education is the cross-border expansion and growing competition and new forms of collaboration (Wende and Westerheijden, 2001; Knight, 2001; Harvey, 2004).

Quality in higher education has become widespread within national boundaries. Current concerns are about developing an international approach to quality. Internationalization has come about for the main reasons: globalization of higher education; the growth of transnational education; increasing pressure for international recognition of qualification” (Harvey, 2004: 65).

The inevitable growth in participation in higher education, there is also more concern about quality assurance. Morley (2003) argues that one of the arguments justifying the introduction of quality assurance is that the expansion of higher education across national boundaries demands more rigorous and robust quality assurance measures. In earlier argument Morley (2001: 131) has concluded the idea of higher education as; act like more business:

The rise of academic management, together with the rise of consumerism and political concerns with the exchange and use value of higher education, have produced new organisational cultures and professional priorities. Higher education institutions both mediate and manage government policy. Boundaries between the academy, government and business have loosened and been reformulated. Corporate interests play a more powerful role in determining the purpose of higher education.

The drive towards wider access to higher education has led to urgent questioning of quality and standards in the provision of higher education. This is an inevitable consequence of the increasing complexity of quality assurance and transferability of quality assessment in higher education. Unsurprisingly, reports written for the OECD, UNESCO and other funding organisations tend to reflect quantitative, substantive findings within a period that usually reflects improvements. Sometimes these organisations make national standards followed by national governments (Ahola, 2005). In fact, all over the world there have been many projects funded by the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO to assess quality assurance frameworks for higher education. Quality assurance, via the globalisation of accountability, is spreading rapidly across national boundaries. It represents a major form of ‘policy borrowing’ and ‘policy learning’ (Morley, 2003: 19).

Brennan and Shah (2000) and Morley (2003) argue that quality management and assessment either on a national or institutional basis is the key to power in higher education. Brennan and Shah (2000) discovered that external quality assessment put emphasis on the institutional level: looking at internal mechanisms, accountability, institutional policies and strategies of implementation.

They concluded that customer satisfaction, value for money, relevance of economic growth – which they called extrinsic values – have been more important concerns as compared with intrinsic academic concerns and intellectual structures (Brennan and Shah, 2000; Meek, 2000). Although there is variation between countries, the general scenario is the same as the countries face massive growth in higher education. Gumpert (2000: 74) supports this, arguing that shifts in societal imperatives reshaped expectations of higher education and redefined what activities are or are not recognised as ‘higher education’. Regarding this, one of these challenges was to do with its political aspects.

Lemaitre (2002) and Harvey (2004) have both stated that quality assurance is a political action. Indeed, they have both made a critique of the processes of quality assurance. Both Lemaitre (2002) and Harvey (2004) have stated that quality assurance is ‘quality as imperialism’. The further discussion by Lemaitre (2002) is that the economic power of the developed countries dominates the culture, politics and economic priorities of the developing countries. He says we may call this phenomenon ‘globalisation’ (Lemaitre, 2002: 30). This Western-dominated international trend may reflect inadequately on national aspects issues, such as technical considerations, the political dimension, and the cultural dimension (Lemaitre, 2002; Billing, 2004; Temple and Billing 2003). On the other hand, Harvey (2004) has commented on quality assurance as politics for various reasons, but his main concern is that almost every attempt to achieve internationalisation of institutions such as the WQR (World Quality Register) is, in his view, a sort of ‘political gambit’ (Harvey, 2004: 70). Teichler (2004) mentions ‘Europeanisation’ in reference to

cooperation and mobility. Morley, in a similar vein, uses the term ‘colonization’ as UK consultants are involved in the development of quality systems across the globe (Morley, 2003: 21).

6. CONCLUSION

This paper illuminates ideas relating to the paradigm concerning the factors and trends of trade rules and industry in higher education. The aim was to establish a number of themes, which might be useful when considering a particular case or cases in the light of the impact of internationalisation and globalisation on the widening participation and mobility in higher education. However, the transfer of this into policy and practice lead to large variations in the degree of impact they have on higher education.

This paper concluded that higher education’s position is as a new industry in the knowledge economy; as well as widening participation and mobility in higher education (Wende, 2003; Watson, 2002; and Altbach, 2004a, 2004b). With respect to positioning higher education as industry, much literature suggests that achieving the appropriate market-driven policy in the educational context is particularly difficult (Altbach, 2004a; Altbach, 2004b; Knight, 2002; Knight 2003).

However, it is inevitable that higher education has experienced the challenges of the 21st century. As Altbach and Teichler (2004: 5) put it:

Internationalization in higher education is an inevitable result of the globalized and knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. Other trends affecting the universities, including diversification, expansion, privatization, and so on, also have implications for the international role of academic institutions.

This means that in the field of education, quality assurance and assessment has faced the challenge posed by these issues. There is wide recognition of the key elements involved in assessing quality assurance (Tam, 2001; Tight, 2006). The fact is that much of the literature reviewed is primarily on the management side of quality assessment. Then the question raised is as to how quality is achieved? The discussion of quality assurance has concluded that it is a question of power (Morley, 2001; Morley, 2003). Others, including Harvey (2004) and Lemaitre (2002), have argued internationalization and globalisation of higher education via quality assurance is a political action.

This paper also highlights some important issues and challenges of globalization and internationalization of HE. It is essential to recognize the significance of national societal and cultural effects, the distinction and importance of which have hardly been diminished by globalization. Indeed, the parameters of globalisation may alter the direction of state policies and practices of HE as market. Most countries have made an attempt to be part of this globalisation ethos, although there have been different, specific critiques made about the globalisation of education and knowledge. For instance, the manner in which QA is imported and interpreted in the adopting countries differs significantly. This paper points to dramatic differences in the level of globalisation and internationalization of HE; highlighting the underlying assumption of the homogenisation of HE depends entirely on the way that it is practiced through the trade rules. Yet, it has been argued that there is a noticeable implementation gap affecting the transportability of trade rules into HE sector. In addition to the significance of globalization of HE, the literature reveals additional complexities as; internationalization and globalization of HE has become as key battlefield. As compelling as this view may be, it is clear where the evidence for such conclusions comes from; as Morley (2003: 1) uses the term ‘colonisation’ for such developments in HE.

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