Emerging Direction of U.S. National Higher Education Internationalization Policy Efforts between 2000 and 2019

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ABSTRACT

Novel trends in U.S. national higher education internationalization policy efforts emerged in the 2000s. Within the context of globalization, the purpose of this historical policy analysis study was to capture the emerging direction of national higher education internationalization policy in three policy-making sectors (voluntary, private, and public) between 2000 and 2019. Novel policy efforts in the three sectors were evident in four major areas: (a) international education at home (language and personnel training), (b) international student recruitment, (c) education abroad, and (d) international institutional partnerships. Within all three sectors, interest in policy strands wavered and policy efforts veered towards international institutional partnerships. Policy efforts tended to disregard the impact of globalization on the domestic front, focusing instead on international ties.

INTRODUCTION

Public policy is typically created and developed by governing institutions to address problems or issues that affect society (Anderson, 2003). Between 2000 and 2019, globalization impacted a variety of sectors within the U.S. economy (Axford, 2014; Friedman, 2009; Giddens, 2002). Higher education responded to the globalization process by developing internationalization policy (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Unlike other nations (e.g., the Australian federal government adopted the National Strategy for International Education 2025, to provide a framework for Australian higher education internationalization policy), the U.S. has not maintained a centrally articulated national higher education internationalization policy. Within the U.S. system of government, education policy is an issue which is left to the states (Tenth Amendment, U.S. Constitution) and the U.S. Department of Education does not direct national

standards and curricula in education. The role of the U.S. Department of Education instead is to oversee issues of access, equity, and quality of education. The federal government has maintained involvement in federal higher education policy since 1787, and since that time, higher education has been used as an *instrument* to develop various aspects of society, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and the economy in general (Parsons, 1997). At the national level, the U.S. policy-making process involves multiple policy-making sectors that influence higher education through a variety of frameworks. For example, Knight (2004) noted that "the national sector level has an important influence on the international dimension [in higher education] through policy, funding, programs, and regulatory frameworks" (p. 6). Between 2000 and 2019, the inclusion of internationalization policy in U.S. national policy was varied and inconsistent. This article traces the types of U.S. national international education policy efforts that grounded internationalization practices in higher education during the period under study.

Historically, internationalization policy efforts emerged in public higher education as a result of internationalization activities following WWII (President Truman's Report, 1947). These internationalization activities have been referred to by different names, including "international dimension, international education, [and] internationalization of education" (De Wit, 2002, p. xvii). In the 20-year span between 2000 and 2019, internationalization activities on campuses increased in response to the emerging globalization process. These activities included efforts to (a) recruit international students, (b) incorporate international components within course offerings and personnel training programs , (c) promote education abroad, (d) encourage cross-border transfer of education credentials, (e) engage in international scholar exchanges (Altbach & Knight, 2007), (f) build international institutional partnerships, (g) open campuses abroad (Thelin, 2011), and (h) offer courses online to students worldwide (Henry et al., 2014). Although these activities resulted from a variety of global forces, within the diverse and autonomous U.S. higher education landscape decisions to implement higher education internationalization policy on campuses have been left mostly to individual institutions.

Scholars have stated that research on higher education policy has been "acute[ly] underdeveloped" (McLendon, 2003, p. 165). Likewise, within the context of internationalization policy, the American Council on Education has outlined national higher education internationalization policy measures, yet research tracing policy evolution within the context of globalization has been absent from the literature (Helms, 2015). Researchers have examined the 30-year history of internationalization policy up to 1998 (Ruther, 2002); however, minimal research has been conducted on this topic between 2000 and 2019.

The purpose of this historical policy analysis study was to capture the emerging direction of national higher education internationalization policy between 2000 and 2019. In the absence of a national policy, several actors contribute to shape national higher education internationalization policy tracing policy efforts from multiple policy-making actors over a period of time provides a framework for policy analysis at the national level in a given context. This paper focuses on policy emergence between 2000 and 2019.

METHODOLOGY

According to Borg and Gall (1989) "by studying the past, the historian hopes to achieve a better understanding of present institutions, practices, and issues in education" (p. 806). This study employed

historical research design—a research method that requires locating, analyzing, and correlating information from the past to understand historical events and the ideas that influenced these events (Torou, Katifori, Vassilakis, Lepouras, & Halatsis, 2010). Scholars have categorized historical research methods within the framework of qualitative research design (Borg & Gall, 1989; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Data for the study were organized and interpreted using an approach based on horizontal and vertical historical analysis. First, in simple terms, horizontal policy analysis examines policy-making as it develops among individuals, departments, organizations, or sectors of similar standing and may be considered multilateral. Thelin (2010) has used the term "horizontal history" in higher education to analyze "the complex array of organizations that cut across the educational landscape both to provide services and impose constraints on colleges and universities" (as cited in Gasman, p. 71). Harcleroad and Eaton (2005) have regrouped this complex array of political and non-political organizations into three sectors: (a) the public sector, (b) the voluntary sector, and (c) the private sector.

According to Sreedharan (2007), historical events can be explored by examining a smaller group within a larger group in order to provide "an analysis of why [events took] a particular form" (p. 217). Therefore, using Thelin's (2010) horizontal alignment of higher education policy-making sectors, data were collected from a microcosm of organizations within the public sector, the voluntary sector, and the private sector. Secondly, in contrast to horizontal policy analysis, vertical policy analysis seeks to understand policy-making as it develops in a more hierarchical fashion. In general, vertical history refers to the "understanding [of] why events occur" and "what caused the events" (Silberzahn, 2011). In this study, (a) the public, voluntary, and private sectors were aligned horizontally, (b) policy efforts from each sector were organized vertically in chronological groupings between 2000 and 2019.

Data Collection

Data were collected through document analysis by browsing through websites and digital archives within all three sectors (voluntary, private, and public) in order to locate resources readily available in the public domain. The following keywords were used to conduct searches: "internationalization policy," "international education," and "globalization." First, materials focusing on internationalization policy efforts were collected from two public sector departments: (a) the Department of Education and (b) the Department of State. Scholars have stated that of the fifteen cabinet level government departments at the national level, the Department of Education and the Department of State are major providers of federal international education programs (Wiley, 2010; de Wit, 2002). Data from the public sector were collected from (a) general information on websites, (b) international education reports, (c) annual reports, (d) fact sheets, (e) policy briefs, (f) executive directives, (g) executive orders, memoranda, and (h) legislation.

Second, from within the voluntary sector, data were collected from Cook's (1998) "Big Six" presidentially based voluntary associations because through their lobbying efforts, the "Big Six" represent the voice of the higher education community at the federal level (p. 71). Cook's "Big Six" associations include (a) the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), (b) the American Council on Education (ACE), (c) the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU, formerly NASULGC-National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges), (d) the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), (e) the American Association of Universities (AAU), and (f) the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). Data from the voluntary

sector were collected from (a) general information on websites, (b) international education reports, (c) annual reports, (d) fact sheets, and (e) policy briefs.

Third, from within the private sector, data were collected from the Ford Foundation and the Lumina Foundation. Through philanthropy, foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the Lumina Foundation have grown to influence higher education policy in the U.S. (Thelin, 2011). The Ford foundation became involved in international education following the Second World War, and scholars have described the Ford Foundation as a "stakeholder in international education" (de Wit, 2002, p. 32; Merkx, 2010). The Lumina Foundation came into existence at the start of this study in 2000 and has been cited as one of a number of "national… large [and] well-known foundations" that is able to influence higher education through its "choice of area of support" (Harcelroad & Eaton, 2005, p. 256). Document analysis revealed that both foundations collaborated regularly with the voluntary sector for example the American Council on Education on international education during the period under study. Data from the private sector were collected from (a) general information on websites, (b) international education reports, (c) annual reports, (d) fact sheets, and (e) policy briefs. All documents selected for analysis reflected policy efforts between 2000 and 2019.

Data Analysis

A sample of archival materials from digital archival repositories, public databases, scholarly articles, and books were retrieved, sifted, cataloged, coded, and analyzed. Basic descriptive categories of the documents were established early during the data retrieval process to facilitate content analysis of the collected data. Krippendorff (2013) has defined content analysis as "an unobtrusive technique that allows researchers to analyze relatively unstructured data in view of the meanings, symbolic qualities, and expressive contents they have and of the communicative roles they play in the lives of the data's sources" (p. 49). Validation was established through triangulation by using multiple sources of data collection to verify the facts within different sources. For example, facts in policy statements were verified against reports and fact sheets in relation to specific policies.

The data set was interpreted in a manner that allowed for a level of subjectivity because "the interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). Data from documents were reviewed, and categories of information were organized using lean codes supported by "text segments" from the data (Creswell 2013, p. 189). The codes were regrouped under four themes which reflected four policy strands: (a) internationalization at home, (b) international student recruitment, (c) education abroad, and (d) international institutional partnerships.

FINDINGS

One hundred and twelve internationalization policy efforts within the three sectors were aligned vertically in a chronological order under three presidential periods (see Table 1).

Table 1: Total Number of Identified Novel Internationalization Policy Efforts between 2000 and 2019

Presidential Periods	Number of Policies	Public Sector	Voluntary Sector	Private Sector
Clinton/Bush 2000-2008	48	20	17	11
Obama 2009 - 2016	31	19	9	3
Trump 2017-20019	33	16	12	5
Total	112	55	38	19

This vertical alignment revealed that policy efforts emerged in reaction to a variety of events (e.g., globalization, geopolitics) rather than in anticipation of these events, and interests in policy strands in the three sectors wavered over the years (see Figure 1). Specifically, novel policy efforts emerged within four predominant strands: (a) international education at home (language and personnel training), (b) international student recruitment, (c) education abroad, and (d) international institutional partnerships.

Figure 1: Number of Internationalization Policy Efforts that Emerged in Four Policy Strands During Three Presidential Periods
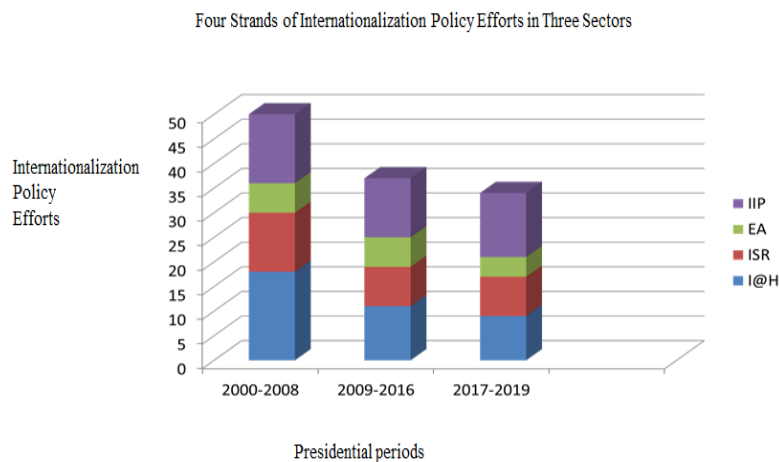
Note. The policy strands include (a) internationalization at home (I@H), (b) international student recruitment (ISR), (c) education abroad (EA), and (d) international institutional partnership (IIP).

Internationalization at Home (I@H)

Policy efforts focusing on internationalization at home seek to infuse an international education component into the curriculum on higher education campuses without travel abroad. These efforts include language training and personnel development (ACE, 2019; Knight, 2003). In early 2000, the majority of

internationalization policy efforts within the three sectors focused on internationalization at home. Novel internationalization policy efforts within the public sector focused on language training, which manifested in policies directed at less-commonly-taught languages under Title VI programs (Department of Education, 2019). On college campuses, these efforts focused primarily on two languages—Arabic and Chinese. Interest in the Arabic language increased during the post 9/11 era as wars in the Middle East escalated. Languages spoken in the Muslim world, such as Farsi, Tadjik, Urdu, and Uzbek, also gained attention for national security reasons. The military (namely, the Department of Defense) engaged increasingly to provide language training. As China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, Chinese language instruction increased simultaneously with the increased trading potential resulting from a highly populated China. Similarly, training in Japanese and Korean language skills gained attention for economic reasons.

The voluntary sector played an active role in designing professional development for campus personnel. In 2003, the American Council on Education developed a model for comprehensive campus internationalization (ACE, 2019). Several members from the voluntary sector (e.g., ACE, AACC, and ASCU) focused on developing curriculum, establishing rubrics for global educational outcomes, and developing language training for personnel involved with international institutional partnerships. The Association of State Colleges and Universities developed a toolkit focused on educating internationally competent students (ASCU, 2019), and most efforts emanating from the voluntary sector referenced the globalization process and soft diplomacy.

In the private sector collaborative research was funded with the voluntary sector to address the global world order. At the dawn of 2000, collaborative research by the voluntary and the private sectors concluded that funding for international education was on the decline (Hayward, 2000). In 2010, funding for Title VI programs was estimated at approximately $126 million; however, by 2015, the figures dropped to $65 million and have stagnated since (Association of American Universities, 2018).

International Student Recruitment (ISR)

International students are foreign nationals who enter the U.S. on restricted non-immigrant visas for the purposes of studying at an accredited U.S. institution. Many government agencies influence this body of students. Between 2000 and 2019, judicial bodies within the public sector redesigned laws relating to international students. During this period, SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor program, 2019) was adopted to help the Department of Homeland Security monitor international students and hold higher education institutions accountable for international student mobility. In the post-9/11 era, the focus of the public sector was on (a) redesigning the student visa processes, (b) restricting student visas for select nationals, and (c) extending visas for students enrolled in STEM fields (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Members of the voluntary sector reiterated the diplomatic value of international students on American campuses in the aftermath of 9/11. The voluntary sector also addressed international student services and advocated for reforms to immigration laws to allow international students enrolled in STEM courses to remain in the U.S. following graduation. Novel collaborative research between the voluntary and the private sector has been conducted to address the various facets of international student mobility on campuses. The private sector developed strategies to incorporate social responsibility into international

student scholarships, provided humanitarian assistance to international students impacted by climate-related disasters, and funded scholarships for refugee students in the face of wars.

The years between 2000 and 2019 experienced unprecedented growth in the number of international students on higher education campuses, resulting in \$45 billion in revenue (IIE, 2019). This increase in the number of international students was attributable to several factors, including demographic explosions in BRIC nations (i.e., Brazil, Russia, India, and China), a lack of educational infrastructural capacity in China, and a decrease in domestic student numbers due to an aging American population. By 2008, international student numbers increased and supplemented funding attritions in higher education that resulted from the U.S. economic downturn. By 2017, the Trump administration showed hostility to international students by both engaging in nationalist political rhetoric, as well as modifying immigration rules. Nationalist rhetoric contributed to a slowed growth in international student numbers. In addition, the Trump administration banned travel to and from certain Muslim countries, restricted visas for Chinese students, limited visas for skilled workers, and linked immigration to terrorism.

Education Abroad (EA)

Between 2000 and 2019, new ways surfaced to ensure that American students spent educational time abroad. The public sector provided minimal attention to out-bound education-abroad experiences focusing instead on in-bound study-abroad experiences. The voluntary sector continued to support outbound education abroad experiences and the private sector paid little attention to this policy strand.

A federal bill to promote out-bound education abroad experiences for American students enrolled in higher education did not receive Congressional approval, leaving public sector support for American students to study abroad at a low point (Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act (S. 1198/H.R. 4555). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, a proliferation of exchange programs (e.g., Kennedy/Lugar/ FLEX, DOS, 2019) emerged from the Department of State to bring students from predominantly Muslim nations to the U.S. to (a) strengthen bicultural understanding, (b) showcase American culture and political values, and (c) share Muslim culture with American host families and their communities (Aguirre, 2002). Under the Obama administration, the programs extended to Muslim African nations (e.g., the YALI program, DOS, 2019). Under the Trump administration, the program has received minimal attention.

The voluntary sector rebranded the term "study abroad" to "education abroad"; the change in terminology encompasses the variety of opportunities which have become available to students and includes study-abroad programs, internships abroad, service opportunities abroad (i.e., service learning), and research abroad (ACE Report, 2017, p. 30). The voluntary sector continues to support out-bound education abroad opportunities for American students.

International Institutional Partnership (IIP)

The two decades between 2000 and 2019 saw a proliferation of international institutional partnership initiatives (IIPs) in the higher education sector. In general, support for international institutional partnerships was a growing trend in all three sectors during these two decades. Both the public sector and the voluntary sector actively sought to develop strategic and long-lasting international institutional partnerships. The public sector continued to fund IIP efforts and members of the voluntary sector extended IIP efforts and provided personnel training for its membership relating to IIP. The private sector funded research on African higher education institutions and has funded research on global institutional collaborations.

International institutional partnerships grew to include a range of novel internationalization policy efforts. Novel themes allowed U.S. institutions to enter into agreements with foreign institutions to collaborate on research, deliver courses, develop exchange programs, establish branch campuses overseas, offer dual degrees with institutions abroad, and enhance international accreditation efforts. In addition, American higher education institutions embraced advances in technology that enabled them to deliver education overseas from their home base in the U.S. Existing institutional partnerships with different countries continued to grow based on efforts established in the 1990s, and novel partnerships with new nations such as China emerged.

DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the emerging direction of U.S. national higher education internationalization policy efforts during three presidential periods between 2000 and 2019. From the plethora of policy efforts that emerged during this timeframe, four dominant policy efforts defined policy direction: (a) internationalization at home, (b) international student recruitment, (c) education abroad, and (d) international institutional partnerships. In 2019, all three sectors demonstrated a penchant for international institutional partnerships, a likely result of globalization.

Close analysis of two strands of internationalization at home policy showed that in the public sector an academic rationale for language instruction was absent from policy efforts. Language offerings were not global and lacked diversity; they were linked to geopolitics (ensuing wars following 9/11) and economics (Chinese accession to the WTO) and were offered by the military. Such an approach undermines the broad educational values that are foundational in language instruction. Personnel training was offered by the voluntary sector to its members. The *Big Six* maintained internationalization at home efforts on campuses through various efforts thus enhancing education quality in the "*flat world*" order. As international student numbers increased on U.S. campuses, the economic might of this student body has led to the assumption that internationalization of higher education is synonymous with international student recruitment, yet few efforts were made to tap into the cultural minefield that international students bring to American campuses, leaving an aspect of internationalization at home unexplored.

The proliferation of in-bound student exchanges at the expense of out-bound student exchange efforts reflected two nefarious effects: (a) cultural insularity and (b) American hegemony. A lack of support for Americans to study abroad has threatened to promote an insular mindset among U.S. students. At the same time, engaging in exclusively in-bound exchange programs with Muslim countries has displayed a sense of American cultural superiority. By inviting students to come learn about and (advertently or inadvertently) emulate the U.S. style of democracy and political structure, the exchange programs rested on implicit assumptions embedded in cultural superiority. This approach has also sidelined other geographical locations. Logically, it would be preferable to educate Americans about a multitude of cultures to diversify student perspectives on world cultures and politics. Such an approach would expose students to an interconnected world order, help improve American understanding of world cultures, help counteract American supremacy sentiments toward other cultures, and help improve American perspective on foreign policy and geopolitics.

Although anchored in specific geographical locations, higher education institutions have not been immune to the influence of the globalization process. Globalization forces and processes facilitated

international institutional partnerships in higher education between 2000 and 2019. After corporate dominance in trade, conglomerates of international institutions (which most frequently originate in western nations) settled to profit from the education sector, large numbers of youths, and growing middle segments in emerging nations. Although international institutional partnerships benefit academic research and collaboration, it also raises the question of who will determine and influence the academic styles and standards in the growing international institutional partnerships space. More relevantly, innovative cross-border approaches must be developed and adopted to address challenges posed by an interconnected world order. Such an approach will better address local problems with global impact and global problems with local impact.

Because higher education institutions are developers of human capital and providers of skills and knowledge, their role in an interconnected global world is best assessed in terms of education policies that aim to prepare students for an increasingly "*flat world*". A lack of data-driven advanced policy planning for internationalization policy in the context of globalization disregards the pervasive nature of the new world order, and sidelining this reality is potentially perilous for nation states. In 2000 President Clinton placed international education in the context of globalization (Clinton, 2000) and the Spellings Report (2006) acknowledged the importance of international education for American competitiveness, yet deliberate measures from political institutions at the national level failed to surface in the 2000s. A framework to guide public higher education institutions in the context of globalization did not emerge. In contrast, in the 2000s Australia and China adopted national strategies for internationalization in response to globalization. Although Australia is a federal state and China is a unitary state, both Australia and China have a Minister for Education and a Department in the Ministry which promotes Internationalization Policy. Australian and Chinese national higher education internationalization policy is funded at the federal and at the central government level. Policy strategy and rationale is articulated at the national level to provide a framework for public higher education institutions in each nation. Historically, the two nations have maintained national internationalization policy for different reasons (Harman 2005; Huang 2003; Chen 2011), yet as globalization accelerated in the 1990s the two nations shaped their national internationalization policy in response to the globalization process. Following the Bradley Review of higher education in 2008, Australia revisited the contours of its internationalization policy and eventually adopted the National Strategy for International Education 2025 (Australian Government, 2016). As one example, Australia moved away from commercialization of internationalization to focus on improving international student experiences, a deliberate effort intended to make Australia more welcoming of international students (Australian Government, 2016). In China, the 1998 Plan for Revitalizing Education allowed China to open up to the world while keeping in mind China`s global role in the world (Yang, 2000; Yang, 2014; Neubauer & Zhang, 2015). As one example, China focused on English language acquisition to draw students into the global market. As a result of this deliberate effort Chinese students are better equipped to conduct research and publish internationally (Hu, 2005). In the 2000s, the U.S. did not adopt a well-outlined strategy for national internationalization policy Instead, U.S. national higher education internationalization policy efforts emerged in an *ad hoc* manner within multiple policy-making sectors, whereby each sector adopted policy efforts restricted to its own policy-making realm. Additionally, interest in policy strands wavered amongst the three sectors under study and lacked continued attention. For example, data from this study revealed that internationalization at home was more prevalent among the three sectors in the early part of the period between 2000 and

2019. By 2016 international institutional partnerships had become more prevalent in all three sectors and have declined within the public sector since 2017.

CONCLUSIONS

In the 2000s, novel U.S. national higher education internationalization policy efforts emerged from the three sectors to serve different policy strands and to serve select aspects of policy strands. At the national level, interest in policy strands among the three sectors under investigation wavered and varied. Interest in policy efforts in internationalization at home gave way to international institutional partnerships and all three sectors under study showed a growing interest in international institutional partnerships. Education abroad did not receive attention from all three sectors. Encased in economic might, the growing number of international students on U.S. campuses helped equate internationalization policy with international student recruitment. A well-defined vision and mission for national higher education internationalization policy in a globalized context failed to emerge at the national level. The different aspects of the globalization process received inconsistent attention in policy, and the effects of the process on the local space were sidelined in favor of international ties.

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