P12 / Bridging East and West through comparative analyses of the internationalization of higher education policies

Topic : COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Chair : Kai ZHAO (Lingnan University)

Second Chair : Everardo BLANCO LIVERA (Lingnan University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

With the rise to power of neoliberal governments in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (USA) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new world era began in higher education with the new public management practices and reforms on the agenda of most countries (Gruening 2001), positioning universities as responsive to the economy (Chan, 2016). In this context, the IHE idea emerged and has influenced countries worldwide as a capitalist approach intended to improve the quality of higher education. However, it is neither a natural nor neutral idea; it has been influenced and strengthened in world society by the core capitalist countries, the UK and the USA, and their understanding and management of higher education.

In the case of developing countries, the IHE is mostly seen to advance their transition to a capitalist economy (Yeom, 2019). The core of the capitalist world-economy directs the economic, labor, and educational trends to strengthen itself and keep the semi-peripheric and peripheric countries the same (Wallerstein, 1974, 2011). Even though the global capitalist structure permeates internationally by spreading ideas and restructuring national institutions, the timing and aims in each country must be considered to understand the social, political, and institutional contexts in which the development of policies to achieve IHE occurs.

In this regard, this panel addresses the need highlighted by IHE leading scholars for studying national policies concerning the IHE based on comparative analyses (Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Mittelmeier & Yang, 2022; Knight & De Wit, 2018) and critical reflections on power relations and dominance issues (Mittelmeier & Yang, 2022; Buckner, 2019). The world-systems analysis perspective (Wallerstein, 2012) emerges as a key framework for such analyses by providing the core-periphery schema to build better arguments in a “moment at which capitalism has become more totalizing than ever” (el-Ojeili, 2015: 695).

This panel aims to address and seek explanations of the differences and commonalities among semi-peripheral and peripheral countries and regions with emphasis on East-West comparisons, as an attempt to deepen our understanding and explain policies aimed at the IHE worldwide based on the world-systems analysis as a framing perspective.

The research questions guiding this panel are as follows:

1) What are the main similarities and differences between higher education policies developed in semi-peripheral and peripheral East and West to achieve IHE in the actual capitalist world-economy?

2) What institutional and political challenges arise and must be considered when developing IHE policies in those areas?

3) What academic and practical non-hegemonic lessons can be learned from such policies developed in both hemispheres?

CALL FOR PAPERS

To address these research questions this panel welcomes submissions of theoretical, methodological, or empirical papers to analyze and further understand the IHE process globally.

The paper proposals should be based on the world-systems analysis perspective to understand the international context in which national, regional, or local policies aimed at IHE in the East and the West are developed. The analysis of semi-peripheral and peripheral Western and Eastern areas or states is welcome, but priority will be given to analyses comparing East to West. Furthermore, although IHE is primarily an educational and educational sciences topic, the proposals must focus on policies aimed at IHE rather than

merely educational issues.

The panel encourages paper submissions exploring how the world systems analysis perspective can be applied to produce more powerful and meaningful discussions on the IHE in the world. Moreover, the emphasis on comparing East to West will allow us to embrace novel approaches to comparative studies in the field. The panel is open to authors interested in comparing national, regional, and local policies and strengthening their understanding of the complexities of contexts, times, and perspectives of countries and scholars in the actual capitalist world-economy with a non-hegemonic emphasis.

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 10:15 to 12:15 (SME-F4)

(Virtual) Influence of Higher Education Internationalization Policies on Mexican Women: A Feminist Approach

Ana Lucia Pesci Eguia (Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí)

Higher education internationalization policies in Mexico and the world are influenced by economic, political, and cultural guidelines based on hegemonic theoretical frameworks (Segato, 2018) set by core countries. In this regard, the new public management model is shaping higher education globally. As a result, students are now seen as clients even in public-funded universities where they are charged fees and asked to rate teachers and institutions, turning education into a service. Furthermore, higher education academia is increasingly seen as a producer of high-skilled workers and research papers, with quality measured based on quantitative productivity, the use of the English language in teaching and research, and the amount of student and staff mobility.

Moreover, higher education is also influenced by gender roles (Butler, 2006). Women face additional barriers due to patriarchal educational policy structures while being intersected by a diversity of exclusion factors such as age, ethnicity, and social class (Collins, 2012). The belief that better educational training, mastery of the English language, international experiences, and an enriched curriculum lead to improved labor market prospects, drives some women to invest in studying a postgraduate program for professional development while exercising their agency in such academic spaces for not being discriminated. However, examining such experiences at postgraduate education is still missing.

This study focuses on the influence of higher education internationalization policies on Mexican women by understanding how structural aspects enable and constrain (Tadaki & Tremewan, 2013) women’s agency in a developing country. It adds to the panel’s aim by presenting another dimension to studying higher education internationalization from a non-hegemonic perspective.

Based on semi-structured interviews and narrative analysis, three Mexican women's life stories are examined based on the narrative-intersectional approach (Cole, 2009) focusing on their experiences in postgraduate education navigating through higher education internationalization policies with their agentic will. The research question guiding this study is how Mexican women exercise their agency over the hegemonic-patriarchal structure of higher education policies in Mexico and integrate themselves into the labor market.

A comparative analysis of the internationalization of higher education policies in China and Mexico: from similar beginnings to diverse results

Everardo BLANCO LIVERA (Lingnan University)

The internationalization of higher education (IHE) has been affecting countries, regions, and institutions worldwide, and it is being studied from diverse perspectives and theoretical backgrounds. However, a comparative analysis of the historical evolution of policies developed aimed at IHE in Chinese and Mexican educational systems from a macro-social perspective is still pending, and this study examines it. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the People’s Republic of China and the United Mexican States initiated both the reform of their economic model for a free market (Gallagher & Shafaeddin, 2010) and the process of internationalization of their higher education (Hu & Fan, 2020) for it to provide them with the high qualified personnel required for economic productivity and international competitiveness. Nevertheless, four and a half decades away the results are very different: China is the second largest economy in the world and has two universities in the top twenty worldwide and seven in the first hundred (THE, 2024), while Mexico is the

12th economy listed and is its best-ranked university in the distant 601-800 position.

This qualitative comparative study aims to understand the main similarities and differences in the IHE policies developed by China and Mexico in the 1970s – 2024 period, by analyzing scholarly publications and official documents and statements from both countries. The world-systems analysis perspective (Wallerstein, 1976, 2004) is used to understand better how the capitalist world- economy constrains and enables Eastern and Western countries. In this regard, the world-systems analysis helps to situate the phenomena under examination and produce a strengthened policy analysis. The research questions are as follows: what are the key similarities and differences between the historical development of IHE policies in both countries? How do their being semiperipheral states influence such development and results? What are the key national aspects to consider when analyzing IHE policies in semiperipheral states?

This paper will contribute to the panel by shedding light on how East and West advance IHE. It explains the foremost stages in the historical development of policies aimed at IHE in both countries, followed by a comparison highlighting the main similarities and differences. The findings highlight crucial political and economic factors when analyzing IHE policies, particularly the significance of the political regime type and the centralization in policy design and decision-making, as well as the country's position in the world global economy. Finally, the paper discusses on the challenges both countries will face in the upcoming years.

Lessons learned from educational policies between the West and the East

José Pánfilo García Ramírez (Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí)

Neoliberalism as a fashionable economic theory to achieve development has perhaps been the most widespread throughout the world, the truth is that although it has managed to expand at the expense of globalization, the free competition of all before the market has accentuated even more the differences and this is recognizable in all areas (Friedman, 1993). The wide diffusion that this theory has had does not make it escape the strong criticisms that question its functioning and makes many remember the validity of the Keynesian ideas on the Social Welfare State, which showed that the State regulating the economy managed to distribute wealth in a more equitable way than the market (Molina, 2010). In the case of education, the proposal of the False Paradigm is interesting, which explains a marked tendency of students from underdeveloped countries to study in developed countries, where they are logically taught the traditional theory to achieve development, as a way of provoking a certain feeling of contempt towards backwardness and identification with the most advanced of modern society. It is also a paradigm that only fits the conditions of a group of countries that have achieved development by complying with the traditional theory, which cannot be transferred to current underdeveloped countries (Todaro, 1984; Sweezy, 1985). In this way we can pose the following question: What are the main differences and similarities between the educational policies of central countries compared to peripheral countries? The hypothesis that motivates this work is that the differentiated contexts of nation states when applying a public policy of a Western model in a peripheral country, without adjusting it to local problems, results in its inefficiency. The methodology proposed to address the topic and answer the research question is the method of comparative case study between two public universities and two private universities between the West and the East, from an inductive perspective that aims to account for the differences in public policies regarding education between the West and the East. This proposal will contribute to the panel by highlighting that educational models applied in contexts that differ in time and culture produce different results.

Keywords: Educational policies, central and peripheral countries, neoliberalism.