

Submissions Abstract Book - All Papers (Included Submissions)

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Cross-border expansion and the production of public outcomes of universities

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Research Domain: International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract:

Universities pursue cross-border expansion to tap into the market opportunity and the diverse socio-demographic context that foreign countries offer. We aim to investigate the factors that affect the mechanisms and measures of the cross-border expansion of universities. Further, we will examine how does the cross-border expansion shape the production of public outcomes of universities. Relying on publicness theory, we will explore how the mix of market and political authority in both home and foreign countries shape the cross-border expansion of universities. We propose developing in-depth case studies of up to ten universities that have expanded their activities in South Asian countries. We plan to carry out semi-structured interviews with academic and administrative staff of these universities involved in planning and implementing their cross-border expansion. The study's findings will add to the discourse on the publicness and factors beyond market motives considered by universities in cross-border expansion.

Paper:

Introduction

Universities expand their activities into cross-border areas to diversify their academic activities, enhance their competitiveness, and aid their strategic growth. Historically, many leading universities in the US and UK have had dedicated centres/departments/institutes to research and offer programmes on South Asia to cater to the increasing portion of students, alumni, and faculty from the region. In recent times, many countries in South Asia (e.g., China, Malaysia, Singapore and UAE) have emerged as popular destinations for universities to expand and enter into because of their huge population and diverse socio-demographic context, which makes these countries interesting sites for a potential increase in student mobility and academic research. Despite the varied motivation and approaches to the cross-border expansion of universities, it has hitherto been analysed from the perspective of the market logic faced by universities. Scholars argue that universities can gain access to new and unique resources, widen participation by initiating new research and teaching programs, and ultimately enhance their outcomes (Knight, 2012).

However, universities are also subjected to political authority and are expected to produce a range of public outcomes (Bozeman, 1987). The dimensional publicness theory suggests that each university can be characterised by three dimensions of publicness - regulation (extent of regulatory compliance), funding (grant received by the government) and ownership (control measures) (Bozeman & Moulton, 2011). These dimensions of publicness shape the public values and behaviours

of academic and administrative staff and the production of the public outcomes (Moulton, 2009; Feeney & Welch, 2012).

Research objectives and questions

Departing from extant approaches that focus on the market dynamics of the cross-border expansion of universities, we aim to conceptualise the expansion as being shaped by both political and market authorities experienced by universities in both "home" – countries universities are situated in – and "host" countries – countries that universities are expanding into. Moreover, instead of focussing on the marketised and tangible outcomes, our objective is to understand the various public outcomes that universities produce through their cross-border expansion and how they do so. We propose to examine two research questions.

First, we plan to investigate what are the considerations for universities to select the mechanisms and measures of engagement in host countries. The motives for cross-border expansion goes beyond the market opportunities and includes considerations for the convergence of academic intellect and decentralisation of knowledge across borders. Therefore, applying the construct of the political and market authority that universities face in home and host countries, we intend to explore their institutional strategies and operating patterns for cross-border expansion.

Second, we plan to examine how does the cross-border focus of universities shape their production of public outcomes. Apart from the market-driven impact, the socio-economic roles played by universities in cross-border expansion has been less explored. Through various activities/initiatives like academic research, exchange programmes, industry and government collaboration, universities produce various public outcomes in the host and home countries.

Methodology

Considering the home and host country factors and the complex strategies of universities for cross-border expansion, we propose to employ an in-depth comparative case study as our method of inquiry. Given the recent trend of universities for expanding into South Asian countries, we intend to keep our analysis limited to universities that have expanded into the South Asian countries, including but not limited to China, India, Hong Kong, UAE and Singapore. We would employ purposive sampling to select ten universities for inclusion in the study. The selected universities would represent a diverse sample of different geographies/continents, modes of operation (physical or remote presence in the host country) and different programmes/focus areas catering to various disciplines. We aim to conduct semi-structured interviews with the academic and non-academic staff of the university centres and also use secondary information through websites, archival data in the forms of annual reports, media articles for analysis. The data will be transcribed, coded and thematically analysed.

Potential results and significance of the study

We believe that the study would contribute to the higher education literature in the following areas. First, it would provide a novel perspective to the publicness of universities by combining dual political and market environments of the home and host country of the universities. Second, by going beyond the tangible measures of cross-border expansion, such as number of students and faculties movement, it will provide additional insights about factors that influence the production of realised

public outcomes. Our findings will thus expose factors beyond market motives considered by universities and the involvement of the various agents and stakeholders who facilitate cross-border expansion.

References: Table

Illustrative list of university centres in host country- India

S. No.	Name of the centre and university	Home country of the university	Operating model
1	The University of Chicago Center in Delhi- University of Chicago	United States of America	Physical presence in host country with a dedicated centre
2	Virginia Tech India Centre for Advanced Research and Education in Chennai- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	United States of America	Physical presence in host country with a dedicated centre
3	Columbia Global Centers (Mumbai)- Columbia University	United States of America	Physical presence in host country with a dedicated centre
4	India Research Center, Harvard Business School under The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute Harvard University - Harvard University	United States of America	Physical presence in host country with a dedicated centre
5	Center for the advanced study of India (CASI)- University of Pennsylvania	United States of America	Limited physical presence in host country with office
6	J-PAL South Asia- Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States of America	Limited physical presence in host country with office
7	Centre of South Asian Studies (India) and Cambridge India Research Foundation (CIRF)- University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	Limited physical presence in host country with office

8	Nordic Centre in India	Leading universities and research institutions in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden	Limited physical presence in host country with office
9	LSE south Asia centre (India)- The London School of Economics and Political Science	United Kingdom	Distance from host country
10	Institute of South Asian Studies, Centre on Asia and Globalization, and Asia Research Institute- National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore	Distance from host country

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