Submissions Abstract Book - All Papers (Included Submissions)

0529

The Effects and Implications of Neo-Nationalism in UK Higher Education Policy

SeyedehGolafrooz A. Ramezani[1]

[1]*Finnish Institute for Educational Research, JYVASKYLA, Finland*

Research Domain: Higher education policy (HEP)

Abstract:

 As an ongoing study, this research aims to investigate the role of neo-nationalism in UK higher education policy, and analyses Brexit's implications for the UK Higher Education Area. Therefore, the research intends to answer the following questions: What are the effects and implications of Neo-Nationalism for UK Higher Education Policy? How British higher education is affected by Neo-nationalism? What consequences may Neo-nationalism have on the international reputation of British universities?

The data for this multiple method research will be gathered based on document analysis and interviews. The data sources will be the European Union and UK policy documents and processes, which will analyze by using text mining. The interviews will be conducted in two levels (government and local universities) by using the Interpretive Phenomenology Method and through purposeful sampling. The interview will be conducted in-depth interviews with four groups of relevant stakeholders: 1. Vice-chancellors, professors, and heads of departments and schools. 2. International students. 3. Union representatives. 4. HR managers. Participants will be identified through purposeful sampling whether as pros or cons of current practices.

Paper:

Universities are strong national institutions and have had significant roles in nation-building (Välimaa 2019). That is why, worldwide systems of higher education are experiencing intense and unprecedented transformation, both in its operation and in its relationship to governments (Chuing, 2008). In open HE systems, governments face an additional challenge; the "globalization trilemma," in that they cannot have national sovereignty, globalization, and democracy at the same time (Rodrik, 2017). Universities in such open systems may be well-positioned to contribute to and benefit from internationalization, but at the same time also faces a loss of control over their policies regarding admission, fees, and quality. Hence, Neo-nationalism tendencies seem now to be turning against such universities, including the EU and are therefore of concern for the HE sectors (Marijk, 2020).

Neo-nationalism is a branch of civil nationalism created in response to the globalization of capital and based on the theory of the world system (Lee, 2017). Neo-nationalist developments are a phenomenon brought partly by global migration flows and are often linked to anti-immigrant policies (Saarinen, 2020). With increasing internationalization, national identity is being reintroduced and reconceptualized as a form of global competition (Lee, 2016). Even so, neo-nationalism is a powerful challenge in this increasingly complex global society.

Neo-nationalism in HE appears to be about the construction of the hegemonic nation and language as being under threat from the outside. For the HE sector in the EU, the positive attitudes towards the EU are the free movement of EU citizens to live, work, and study anywhere in the EU is seen as the most positive result of the EU and receives the highest level of support as a policy priority. Such as the ERASMUS program. All this is crucial to sustaining the beneficial conditions created in the European Research and HE Area and for continued financial support for cross-border collaboration, exchange, and mobility. However, according to Marijk (2020), these trends or perspectives may be quite different in the countries in the periphery of the EU. Universities located their risk to be more in the fire zone. The UK is a clear example. In more moderate countries with non-authoritarian leaders, HE can also be caught in the political polarization discussed above and become a target of populist discourse, which sees HE as part of the welfare state arrangements. Consequently, these parties claim to protect as "for their citizens first" or even exclusively for them. The Netherlands and Denmark are, for instance, relatively high levels of trust in the EU. Yet governments in both countries are currently looking for measures to control or even reduce the number of international students studying at the national public universities, and campaigns against teaching in English have been launched over the last few years (Matthews, 2019). Another example concerns Switzerland, which is not in the EU, but is a member of the European Free Trade Agreement and a participant in ERA and EHEA. As a result of its 2014 referendum on immigration, Switzerland lost its access to Horizon2020 and ERASMUS grants. The same may happen following Brexit if the UK will indeed break with the EU's free movement principle. No signs that academics or students would escape these consequences are clear yet. Over the course of such a study, this matter will be identified and cleared.

 As an ongoing study, this research aims to investigate the role of neo-nationalism in UK higher education policy, and analyses Brexit's implications for the UK Higher Education Area. Therefore, the research intends to answer the following questions: What are the effects and implications of Neo-Nationalism for UK Higher Education Policy? What consequences may Neo-nationalism have on the international reputation of British universities?

Methodology

The data for this multiple method research will be gathered based on document analysis and interviews. **A** data source will be consisting of the European Union and UK policy documents and processes. In addition, the existing literature, databases will be analyzed by using text mining. **B.** The interviews will be conducted in two levels by using the Interpretive Phenomenology Method through purposeful sampling at the national government level (British Council, Academy, national bodies for HE, British universities union, departments of education, HE funding council, departments for the economy). At the local university level (British world-known public, moderate, low ranked universities). With four groups 1. Vice-chancellors, professors, and heads of departments and schools

(2) International students (3) union representatives (4) HR managers.

Expected Outcomes

Performing such studies about the effects of neo-nationalism on HE policy is vital more than ever before. Because an analysis of new nationalism may also give us a chance to dismantle this apparently self-evident (Western, Euro centrist, or Anglo-centrist) universalism (Díaz, 2018). After all, one of the greatest needs for the development of the poorer nations is assistance from the richer ones in establishing and maintaining higher education.

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