

IT'S A MATTER OF CULTURE

Investigating the Role of University Culture in the Internationalization of Higher Education

The world is growing smaller. Technological advancements have eased the flow of travel, communication, and commerce worldwide. These changes have blurred borders: individuals are able to travel more quickly and affordably, communicate instantly across wide distances, and collaborate with diverse groups. This has not only changed how we live and do business, but also how we engage in higher education: students are increasingly studying abroad, universities are actively internationalizing their curricula and international research partnerships are commonplace in academia. These activities exemplify a change process that is occurring around the world – the internationalization of higher education. Often positive outcomes are associated with this process, such as the fostering of global citizenship and intercultural competence. However, internationalization has also been found to present numerous implementation challenges and to spark critical responses from university stakeholders.

This dissertation explores the culture dimension of the internationalization process to capture how university stakeholders – students, scholars, and administrators – perceive and experience these changes to university life. These stakeholders become our cultural guides and through their stories, we travel to higher education institutions in the Asia Pacific, North America, and Western Europe, discovering the various ways university culture shapes the internationalization process and their experiences.



Illustration: Tanja Lozej



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Investigating the Role of University Culture
in the Internationalization
of Higher Education

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For

Grace Pauline Stanberry

&

Cathleen Ann Westcott

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List of Abbreviations

C-BERT – Cross-Border Education Research Team

BERA – British Educational Research Association

DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst or the German Academic Exchange Service

ECOOM – Expertisecentrum Onderzoek en Ontwikkelingsmonitoring or The Centre for Research & Development Monitoring

GL – Global Laboratory Project

HEIs – Higher Education Institutions

IDSs – International Doctoral Students

IoC – Internationalization of the Curriculum

IoH – Internationalization at Home

MOE – Ministry of Education (Taiwan)

NPM – New Public Management

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PRC – People’s Republic of China

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Preface

“What are you researching exactly?”

This was the most common question I heard throughout my PhD. It was asked during family dinners, coffees with friends and even once by a stranger in a train. I quickly learned that responding with “the internationalization of higher education” is not only a mouthful, but too academic sounding. I learned to sprinkle in concrete examples of what internationalization means for the individual, such as studying abroad, interacting with people from around the world and learning about different cultures. This was key in sparking the interest of my conversation partners: people would take a moment to reminisce about their experiences of ‘going on exchange’, meeting international students or learning a foreign language. People seemed to share a fascination in learning about different cultures and the interconnected world we live in. These conversations would remind me of the personal side of the internationalization process and how it may profoundly affect individuals, a sentiment mirrored in the work of internationalization scholars.

During the first year of my PhD, I spent a great deal of time reading experience-focused internationalization research and became intrigued

with exploring internationalization through the eyes of different university stakeholder groups. In this body of literature, scholars explore how international students, local students, administrators, and academics react and experience the change internationalization brings to university life. These explorations point to how internationalization spurs a cultural change at the university, introducing new ways of teaching, learning, researching, and organizing higher education. These changes sometimes produce positive outcomes, like fostering intercultural learning and sometimes shed light on negative practices, such as inequalities and discrimination. The findings of the literature resonated with my dinner table, café, and train conversations, highlighting that the internationalization process begins with the individual. It is the student who experiences learning in a foreign language, the instructor who adjusts to a different academic culture and the administrator who provides service to a culturally diverse student body. It is the experiences of individuals that spur a cultural change, as they both embody and create culture.

This dissertation is a conversation about culture. It takes us on a journey to different corners of the world and explores how university stakeholders make sense of internationalization, the changes it brings to their universities and how it shapes their experiences. Through their stories, we see how internationalization is experienced across different contexts, and the coping mechanisms that emerge when individuals are confronted with the different and unknown. Culture does not change overnight, but begins with the changing of one experience, one voice and one perception.

Melissa Laufer

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Part I: Introduction

Purpose & Contribution

The world is growing smaller. Technological advancements have eased the flow of travel, communication, and commerce worldwide. These changes have blurred borders: individuals are able to travel more quickly and affordably, communicate instantly across wide distances, and collaborate with diverse groups. This has not only changed how we live and do business, but also how we engage in higher education: students are increasingly studying abroad, universities are actively internationalizing their curricula and international research partnerships are commonplace in academia. These activities exemplify a change process that is occurring around the world – the internationalization of higher education. This process incorporates international elements into a university’s mission, teaching, and research practices and changes how university stakeholders – students, scholars, and administrators – experience university life. Despite the positive outcomes often associated with these changes, such as the fostering of global citizenship and intercultural competence (Boni & Calabuig, 2015; Williams, 2005), they present numerous implementation challenges and are not always positively experienced by university stakeholders (Cathcart, Dixon-Dawson, & Hall, 2006; Chou & Ching, 2015; Stohl, 2007).

In this dissertation, I explore the internationalization of higher education from the perspective of individuals who are involved and affected by this process. Specifically, I investigate the culture dimension, an under-researched element of this phenomenon, as means to understand these implementation challenges. In four stand-alone empirical studies, I examine how university culture shapes the internationalization process, and vice versa, and how this interplay affects the experiences of university

stakeholders. University culture is understood as a shared system of meaning. This system is created by university stakeholders through interaction and employed to make sense of university life. The study of university culture allows us to explore how and why stakeholders adopt and resist internationalization. This insight may aid in informing and shaping sustainable and widely valued internationalization practices at the university. Studies have shown that culture plays a role in change processes at the university (De Zilwa, 2007; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Tierney, 1988b), however it has rarely been explored in relation to internationalization despite the “internal cultural change” (Lumby & Foskett, 2015, p. 3) this process evokes. This inquiry contributes to a larger question posed in higher education research regarding the extent culture influences change at the university.

Culture and internationalization are equally large concepts that encompass various meanings and activities, respectively. In this dissertation, these concepts are broken down into smaller units of analysis in the four empirical studies. Culture plays an integral part in these studies, although it is not always placed on the center stage. Instead, specific cultural symbols are focused upon that provide windows into deciphering culture through the study of cultural practices, values, expectations, and larger (societal) narratives (Briody, Meerwarth Pester, & Trotter, 2012; Brown & McMillan, 1991; Jones, 1996). Investigating these symbols gives insight into the tangible, every-day issues that affect university stakeholders during the internationalization process.

In the four studies, I focus on two types of ‘cultural symbols’: (1) modes of communication (studies 1 & 2), and (2) internationalization practices (studies 3 & 4). Communicative symbols zoom in on how cultural members convey information: such as written text, stories, jokes, and

speeches, which represent shared understandings and systems of meaning. In the first study, I examine the communication strategies employed by a university taskforce to generate institutional support for an internationalization project (chapter 5). The second study focuses on how university and related stakeholders frame internationalization in Taiwan by drawing upon larger societal narratives (chapter 6). Whereas in studies 3 & 4, internationalization activities are interpreted as practices and actions universities and individuals participate in as part of the internationalization process, which are understood to be shaped by shared meaning systems. Specifically, I focused on two under-researched outcomes/elements of mobility practices: the dropout experiences of international doctoral students (chapter 7) and the hiring experiences of international and local academics in the United States and Belgium (chapter 8). The foci of the four studies were determined based on the limited empirical research conducted on these topics, their relevance in the literature, and contribution in furthering our theoretical understanding of the internationalization process.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of three parts.

Part I is comprised of four chapters which serve to position the objective of the dissertation in the broader literature. I begin by mapping the global phenomenon of internationalization with a discussion of the conditions that prompt this process, discourses driving it, global trends, and stakeholder experiences. In this overview, I often reflect on practices and examples from the United States, Europe, and the Asia Pacific, as these countries and regions were my data collection sites.

Subsequently, I discuss the culture dimension of this phenomenon by drawing on interpretations of culture from three theoretical perspectives: (1) organizational culture, (2) university culture and (3) small cultures & symbolic interactionism. In addition, I reflect on the culture-oriented research in the internationalization literature and detail the critical gap addressed by this dissertation. This is followed by an explanation of my approach to studying culture, which is further illustrated through a brief outline of the four empirical studies.

Part II organizes the four empirical studies in individual chapters. Each study breaks down the large concept of ‘culture’ through an investigation of select cultural symbols within a university case study/national context.

Study 1 (Chapter 5)

Spinning Stories: Communicating Internationalization through Organizational Storytelling

In this study, I track how a university taskforce communicates to university stakeholders about a large-scale internationalization project by employing different communication strategies (i.e., storytelling templates (Green 2004; Vaara et al. 2006)). These templates are informed and shaped by university cultural values.

Study 2 (Chapter 6)

Framing Internationalization: Culture, Politics, and the Local Community Meet Internationalization in Taiwan

In the second study, I explore how university stakeholders and governmental officials ‘frame’ (Goffman, 1974) internationalization and their experiences within Taiwanese higher education. These stakeholders assigned meaning to internationalization by linking it to existing societal narratives related to Taiwan’s Confucian culture, geopolitical situation, and local identity.

Study 3 (Chapter 7)

The Invisible Others: Stories of International Doctoral Student Dropout

In the third study, I investigate with my co-author Meta Gorup, the factors that contribute to international doctoral students discontinuing their studies. Employing the Othering concept (Said, 1978), this study illustrates how entering a new university culture may contribute to the disempowerment of international newcomers.

Study 4 (Chapter 8)

Crossing Academic Borders: Exploring the Role of Social Capital in Academic Hiring

In the fourth study, I question the role social capital plays among local and international hires at two university case studies in Belgium (Flanders) and the United States. This comparative design explores how university cultural values shape internationalization practices in explicit and implicit ways, which may favor academic insiders over outsiders.

Part III relates the empirical findings of the four studies to the research objective of the dissertation and discusses their contributions to the literature. Based on this discussion, I draw conclusions, outline policy implications, and discuss limitations and suggestions for future research.

1. The Internationalization of Higher Education

The internationalization of higher education (hereafter internationalization) encompasses a wide range of activities that collectively aim to infuse international and intercultural elements into a university's mission, education, and research practices (Knight, 2012). Internationalization is a contemporary change process: modern universities were designed to educate local populations, and until the 1980s international activities at universities were mostly unsystematic and minimal (Davies, 1995; Scott, 2000). Internationalization is viewed as a reaction to globalization – the inevitable and unavoidable interconnecting of the global economy and societies through technological advancements (Altbach, 2007; Davies, 1995; Hser, 2005; Kreber, 2009; Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007a; Van der Wende, 2001).

Globalization has blurred national boundaries as well as heightened global competition. These changes are also accompanied by the 'neoliberal turn' in higher education. Neoliberalism stresses the importance of a free market, the limited role of the state and transposes individuals as rational consumers (Kandiko, 2010; Saunders, 2010). The neoliberal turn in higher education has redefined higher education as a marketable good, available

for purchase as opposed to its traditional role as a public good financed by the state¹ (Mazzarol, 1998).

Another change process occurring within higher education is the adaption of New Public Management (NPM) practices. NPM refers to the transition of private market practices to higher education governance, such as responding to market demands through the usage of performance measurements and entrepreneurial management structures (Andresani & Ferlie, 2006; Ferlie, Musselin, & Andresani, 2008). For example, performance-based funding is an NPM-inspired practice. This mechanism ties state funding for higher education institutions (HEIs)² to their performance in various ‘success’ indicators, e.g. the number of degrees awarded by an institution, career success of their graduates as well as quantifiable research output such as number of publications and patents (Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001; Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007a).

Against this global reconfiguration, different internationalization rationales have emerged. Stier (2006) identifies three ideologies within the internationalization discourse: idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism. In idealism, internationalization is perceived as a good and positive force as it inspires awareness of social injustice, respect among nations and global citizenship in the globalized era. Stier argues, however despite these noble goals, the idealism ideology can also reinforce “ethnocentric worldviews” when not guided by egalitarian principles. In this sense, international cooperation can be warped into “they can learn from us” (and our superior way of doing things) and “we can learn little from them” (Stier, 2006, p. 4). Other scholars have also criticized the underlying ethnocentrism of internationalization. The core of their critique is that internationalization is implicitly intertwined with Western education values, which position Western universities and their ways of

doing things as superior to other systems thus perpetuating Othering, Westernization and Americanization (Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008; Larsen, 2015; Lumby & Foskett, 2015; Rhee & Danowitz Sagaria, 2004; Yang, 2002).

Stier also identifies the instrumentalism ideology in which internationalization is viewed as a “viable road to profit, economic growth” (p. 4). This perspective is arguably a response to the globalized economy and its need for global-ready graduates as well as decreased state funding for higher education. An economic focus is starkly visible in the international student recruitment strategies in Anglo-Saxon countries³. In these systems, international students generate considerable profit for universities as they are charged tuition fees double or threefold that of local students (OECD, 2018). This discrepancy has prompted a critical discussion in the literature regarding international students being used as ‘cash-cows’ in order to top-up depleting state coffers (Cantwell, 2015; Forbes-Mewett, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Sawir, 2009; Stein & de Andreotti, 2015).

Lastly, Stier discusses the educationalism ideology. Similar to idealism, in educationalism internationalization is viewed as a positive phenomenon. However, this ideology stresses the educational benefits internationalization brings for the individual, rather than its contribution to global understanding which drives idealism. Instead educationalism focuses on how internationalization enables individuals to gain intercultural competence, critical thinking skills and helps prepare them for their future career paths.

Other authors have cited political motivations for engaging in internationalization efforts. For example, Altbach and Knight (2007)

describe European internationalization as a tool for political integration by citing the ERASMUS program and Bologna process as methods to enhance regional collaboration. Similarly, the race for ‘world-class’ university status exhibits political undertones. International university rankings often include internationalization indicators in their calculations, e.g. the number of enrolled international students (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007b). Western universities in English-speaking countries overwhelmingly attract the majority of international students as well as lead university ranks (see for example, Academic Rankings of World Universities, 2018; The World University Rankings 2019; OECD, 2018). In reaction, developing and non-Western higher education systems engage in internationalization activities as means to participate in the global club of elites (Deem et al., 2008). Particularly East Asian countries have made significant efforts to achieve world-class university status and engage in internationalization activities as part of a political strategy (Burgess, Gibson, Klaphake, & Selzer, 2010; Mok, 2003; Mok, 2007; Shin, 2009; Song & Tai, 2007).

This overview of internationalization ideologies and rationales demonstrates the multiple forces at play in this process. Universities are usually driven to internationalize by a combination of factors, which may vary among national contexts and education systems (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Yang, 2002).

Global Trends

Internationalization includes a number of activities that institutions and education systems may prioritize and participate in to varying extents. Activities that illustrate global trends and reflect the central topics of scholarly debate within internationalization research are discussed in this

section. These activities include: (1) academic mobility (student and scholar), (2) the internationalization of the curriculum, and (3) cross-border education.

Student mobility is a core element of the internationalization process and often the first activity strategically pursued by HEIs. Students may study abroad to obtain a degree (degree-seeking mobility) or for a short-term exchange as part of their degree program at their home institution. In 2016, 5 million students were studying abroad with the top mobility destinations being the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada among OECD countries (OECD, 2018). The largest group of international students originated from Asian countries (55%), followed by students from European countries (24%) of which 80% were studying within another European country (a trend connected to the ERASMUS program) (OECD, 2018). On a global scale, mobility follows a south-north flow with students from the Southern hemisphere frequently selecting host institutions in the Northern hemisphere (OECD, 2018). This pattern has been linked to preexisting colonial relationships (Beine, Noël, & Ragot, 2014). Student flows also arguably reflect global inequalities, in the sense that ‘education centers’ located predominantly in Western countries host the majority of international students from developing countries (Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2006).

The notion of travelling for educational purposes is not a new practice. In the early 20th century, select modern universities organized exchange programs (Edwards, 2007), and a number of national exchange institutions and exchange programs were established: the Institute of International Education (1919) and Fulbright Program (1947) in the United States, the DAAD⁴ (1925) in Germany and later on, ERASMUS (1987) in the European Union (Altbach & Teichler, 2001). Early mobility

schemes were often politically motivated. For example, in the United States educational exchanges were set up during the Cold War for the purpose of ‘winning hearts and minds’ and spreading American values (Kramer, 2009). Similarly, in Taiwan, student exchange was initially used as a political strategy to gain international support for Taiwan’s political cause vis-à-vis Communist China (Ma, 2014). In contemporary times, studies have found that universities and education systems strategically recruit international students for a number of reasons. For example, international students may be recruited to generate revenue (Russell, 2005; Walker, 2014), facilitate cultural exchange at the university (Brown, 2009b; Ippolito, 2007; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Sawir, 2013; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014; Williams, 2005), contribute to profile-building (Delgado-Márquez, Escudero-Torres, & Hurtado-Torres, 2013; Maringe, 2006) and to serve as skilled migrants (Tremblay, 2005; Ziguras, 2006).

Students’ decision to seek education abroad is attributed to different factors in the literature (Baláž, Williams, & Chrančoková, 2018; Beerkens, Souto-Otero, de Wit, & Huisman, 2015; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; McMahon, 1992; Netz, 2015; Van Mol & Timmerman, 2014; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012; Zhou, 2015). An analytical tool frequently used in these studies is the push-pull framework. Scholars have found that students are ‘pushed’ to seek education abroad due to poor quality or lack of education opportunities and limited career prospects at home. At the same time, these students are ‘pulled’ to host countries by better employment opportunities, the high quality, and good reputations of HEIs as well as attractive legal conditions and services (e.g. visa and spousal support, pathways to permanent residency).

Scholars are also increasingly engaging in academic mobility due to comparable reasons, such as the lack of good employment opportunities

at home (Ackers 2008) and personal interest (Richardson & McKenna, 2003). In addition, mobility may be required or expected in specific academic fields (Ackers, 2008; Yonezawa, Horta, & Osawa, 2016) and scholars may partake in ‘accidental mobility’ by simply following available job openings (Cantwell, 2011). Over the last decades, universities have increasingly recruited academics from abroad as means to improve research output and international rankings, as well as bring international perspectives to the classroom (Hser, 2005; Kim, Wolf-Wendel, & Twombly, 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). Similar to student mobility flows, Western countries are top destinations for both graduate training and academic careers (OECD, 2018; Rostan & Höhle 2014). For example, the United States has long been a top mobility destination for scholars and in the academic year 2016/17, 134,379 international scholars were employed at American HEIs, a number that has increasingly risen over the years (Institute of International Education, 2017).

In response to demands for global-ready graduates and the need to cater to increasingly culturally diverse student bodies, the internationalization process has also prompted changes in the university curriculum in terms of its content, pedagogy, and language of instruction. These changes are referred to as the internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) and involve the “incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning processes and support services of a program of study” (Leask, 2009, p. 209). IoC is intertwined with another concept: Internationalization at Home (IaH). IaH⁵ was initially conceptualized to create an international learning experience for local students on their home campuses who were unable to study abroad (Nilsson, 2003). IaH activities typically focus on encouraging intercultural interactions in the classroom and appreciating diversity in the larger community through curricular changes (e.g.

interculturally/internationally focused electives) or collaborative community projects (Heather & Roy, 2018; Hoffman, 2003). The use of English as a medium of instruction is often a key element in the IoC and IaH movements. This trend, critically referred to as Englishization or Englishification, has been found to spark resistance among university stakeholders (Wilkinson, 2014), present capacity challenges for institutions (Lau & Lin, 2016), as well as undermine local languages (Phan & Barnawi, 2015).

In addition, internationalization efforts include various cross-border education activities. Many education models exist under this label with international degree structures and international branch campuses being the most common. The former includes for example - joint, double, consecutive degrees⁶ which typically involve completing different segments of an education program at institutions in different countries. International branch campuses on the other hand, are extensions of HEIs in other countries than the home campus and have their own facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and student services (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). In 2017, 310 international branch campuses were identified by the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT): Anglo-Saxon universities were the main providers with 206⁷ international branch campuses with the majority (56) being hosted by China and Hong Kong, followed by (42) in the United Arab Emirates and (28) in Singapore (C-BERT, 2017).

Multiple international branch campuses located in the same geographical area contribute to the emergence of a so-called, education hub, a condensed knowledge center intentionally designed to boost regional attractiveness, retain local students, and draw foreign investment (C-BERT, 2017). Kreber (2009) describes the motivation for universities to engage in cross-border education as two-fold: (1) to share resources and

enrich teaching and research, and (2) to enjoy a lucrative opportunity, especially among Western universities responding to market demands in developing countries. Some governments, however, have restricted the access of foreign education providers to their higher education markets in order to protect the interests of national institutions, such as in Taiwan and Japan (Chan, 2013).

Experiences of Internationalization

The internationalization process affects university life and the experiences of university stakeholders – students, scholars, and administrators. These individuals are an essential part of this change process as their engagement shapes a university's internationalization approach and the success of its activities. The majority of 'experience' research studies concentrate on international students (undergraduate and graduate), (see for example, Cadman, 2000; Hsieh, 2012; Soong, Thi Tran, & Hoa Hiep, 2015; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005), followed by international faculty (Antoniadou, 2015; Jepsen et al., 2014; Pherali, 2012). Far less attention is paid to the experiences of local students and staff members with the internationalization process (see for example, Barron, 2006; Dunne, 2009; Trice, 2003).

Although these studies often cite positive outcomes and personal gains that accompany internationalization such as global citizenry and increased cultural sensitivity (Boni & Calabuig, 2015; Williams, 2005), they also indicate that the change internationalization brings is not positively experienced by all university stakeholders. Discord among university stakeholders is most evident in studies detailing interactions between international students and local students, and international students and teaching staff. There are numerous reports that cite the isolation and

loneliness of international students (Bilecen, 2012; Bradley, 2000; Brown, 2009a; Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2007; Otten, 2003; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Sovic, 2009; Trice, 2004). A phenomenon attributed to the loss of social networks (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008; Schartner, 2015) as well as indifference and reluctance on the part of local students to engage with their international classmates (Barron, 2006; Brown, 2009b; Cathcart et al., 2006). Negative perceptions of international students held by local students and teaching staff have been linked to deficiency and Othering discourses (Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Montgomery & McDowell, 2009; Ryan, 2011; Straker, 2016). This refers to a set of beliefs which designates international students as inferior due to their different approaches to learning, classroom participation, and ability to speak the local language. In this sense, scholars describe how international students are pigeonholed as rote learners, speakers of poor English and plagiarizers (Abasi & Graves, 2008; Adrian-Taylor, Noels, & Tischler, 2007; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Ryan & Viete, 2009; Song & McCarthy, 2018).

Moreover, the literature demonstrates that faculty members are not always on board with internationalization efforts. Studies report their critical responses to the purpose of internationalization activities (Turner & Robson, 2007) and perceived additional tasks and demands internationalization adds to their workloads (Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013). Internationalization also has brought increased pressure to teach and publish in English, thereby transforming the professoriate (Altbach, 2015; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Chou (2014b) analyzes this issue in the Taiwanese academic context; she describes how English publications are tied to promotion schemes for professors, which has resulted in some

faculty members losing their positions due to failing to publish the required amount in English. In addition, Chou explains that this policy does not consider disciplinary differences in publication practices, thus automatically embedding inequalities.

These ‘experience’ studies highlight how internationalization change personally affects university stakeholders, whose engagement is crucial for its success (Dewey & Duff, 2009; Friesen, 2012; Stohl, 2007). The importance of stakeholder involvement is echoed in definitions of internationalization, in which scholars describe its all-encompassing nature: Knight (2004) speaks of “integrating” internationalization into all aspects of the university and similarly, Hudzik (2015) describes the necessity of “comprehensive internationalization”. Qiang (2003) also argues “internationalization must be *entrenched* in the culture, policy, planning and organizational process of the institution” (p. 258, italics in the original). These definitions highlight that internationalization involves a cultural change process and stakeholder involvement; however, the culture dimension of this process is discussed to a limited extent in the literature. In the next chapter, I explore the culture dimension of this phenomenon by drawing on different interpretations of culture from three theoretical perspectives as well as examine how culture has been studied in relation to the internationalization process.

¹ This is meant as a general statement with the acknowledgement that the role of the state in higher education may vary among countries and is shaped by a country's historical and political development.

² In Parts I & III, I use the terms 'university' and 'higher education institutions' interchangeably. They are both used to refer to institutions of higher learning collectively, including polytechnics and other non-research institutions, as a wide range of institutions engage in internationalization activities.

³ This includes the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

⁴⁴ This acronym refers to Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst or the German Academic Exchange Service.

⁵ IaH and IoC are often used interchangeably in the literature as they have the same core meaning; they both refer to embedding international elements into the curriculum and pedagogy. I use both terms here in acknowledgment of their origins in different academic systems (Sweden and Australia, respectively) and the specific regional scholarly discussions these terms represent.

⁶ A joint degree refers to one degree awarded from two or more institutions; a double degree refers to two equivalent qualifications awarded from two or more institutions (e.g. two Masters) and a consecutive degree refers to two successive qualifications awarded from two or more institutions (e.g. B.A. and M.A.).

⁷ U.S. universities were the providers of 109 international branch campuses, British universities had 54 international branch campuses, Canadian universities had 22 international branch campuses and Australian universities had 21 international branch campuses.

2. The Culture Dimension

Where does culture begin and where does it end? These questions pinpoint the problematic task of defining the “slippery and massive” nature of culture (Agar, 1994, p. 225). In academic and colloquial speech, culture is generally described as a system of meaning shared by a group of people; however, who is included in the ‘group’ varies considerably. For example, we speak of regional and national groups sharing a ‘culture’, e.g. the American culture, Western culture, Confucian culture, as well as small-scale cultures that exist within the confines of a workplace, family, classroom, and sports team. In this dissertation, three interpretations of culture are drawn upon: organizational culture, university culture and small culture formation & symbolic interactionism. These interpretations are discussed in this chapter and used as guideposts in unraveling the ambiguous nature of culture. In addition, this chapter serves to further articulate the research gap addressed in this dissertation by mapping how university culture is studied in relation to the internationalization process.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has been studied in different organizational contexts including HEIs (Burnett & Huisman, 2010; Keup, Astin, Lindholm, & Walker, 2001; Ramachandran & Ismail, 2011). Research indicates that organizational culture plays a pivotal role during change processes. For example, studies have found that cultural values influence how organizational members make sense of change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2007; Bean & Hamilton, 2006) as well as how organizational change is communicated (Briody et al., 2012; Ford, 1999; Langer & Thorup, 2006).

Within this field, researchers depart from various theoretical stances which shape their definition and methods for studying culture. Smircich (1983) categorizes organizational culture researchers into two schools: those who view culture as a 'variable' and those who view it as a 'metaphor'. The variable school embedded in the functionalist approach, views culture as something to be measured and managed in order to predict organizational behavior and improve efficiency (see for example, Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky, 2005; Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010). The metaphor school departs from the symbolic cultural perspective, where researchers view culture as the means to decipher and understand the intricacies of organizational life through the exploration of shared meaning systems and the experiences of organizational members (see for example, Fine & Hallett, 2014; Van Maanen, 1991).

The variable and metaphor schools are situated within different paradigms: the former is positioned in the functionalist paradigm and the latter is embedded in the interpretivist paradigm (Hassard, 1992; Schultz & Hatch, 1996). In this literature, these paradigms are often discussed as

contrasting; ‘functionalism’ in this perspective is positioned as a form of positivism. Among organizational scholars, functionalists view social reality as real and systematically organized, which they seek to objectively analyze, while interpretivists see social reality as being constantly constructed through interaction, which they seek to understand through the perspectives of participants and view themselves as immersed within the research process (Hassard, 1991; Martin, 2002; Schultz & Hatch, 1996). The functionalist and interpretivist paradigms inform how organizational culture is defined, how it is studied, what research objectives are deemed relevant, and what position the researcher has in the field (see Table 1). This paradigm divide is also mirrored in the culture-oriented research on internationalization, see section, *Culture & Internationalization*.

Table 1: Functionalist and Interpretivist Approaches to Studying Organizational Culture⁸

	Functionalist approach ("variable school")	Interpretivist approach ("metaphor school / symbolic cultural perspective")
Analytical framework	Predefined and universal The researcher sees culture as predefined and universal. Each organization has similar levels and functions of culture.	Emergent and specific The researcher sees culture as emergent and specific. Opportunities for culture creation are viewed as unique to each context.
Model of analysis	Categorical The researcher seeks to identify cultural elements and causal relations between them to explain culture and its impact.	Associative The researcher aims to understand meanings and associations or systems of meaning.
Analytical process	Convergent The researcher seeks to condense and bring together elements of cultural analysis to form generalizations.	Divergent The researcher expands and enriches cultural analysis by adding nuance, detail, and contextual understanding.
Researcher's position	Objectivity The researcher is removed from the research process and emphasis is placed on remaining objective.	Subjectivity The researcher's subjectivity is considered part of the research process. Objectivity is not the goal or thought to be possible, rather the focus is placed on discussing the researcher's positionality, subjectivity and engaging in the process of reflexivity.
Research situated in paradigm (organizational studies / higher education)	Schein (1990); Becher & Trowler (2001); (1996); Bartell (2003); Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky, (2005); Zheng, Yang, & McLean (2010); Heffernan & Poole, 2005	Gioia & Thomas (1996); Fine (2003); Young (1989); Hatch & Erlich (1993); Van Maanen (1992); Lumby and Foskett (2015)

Additionally, there is scholarly debate regarding an organizational culture's boundaries and membership. For example, Schein (2010) positioned in the functionalist paradigm, speaks of a "pattern of basic underlying assumptions" that is widely shared throughout an organization (p. 32). Whereas, other scholars argue that organizational members may interpret their organizational culture differently and these differences lead to the emergence of (sub) cultures (Adkins & Caldwell, 2004; Fine & Hallett, 2014; Hofstede, 1998; Martin, 2002; Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Young, 1989). Martin (2002) identifies two camps in the subculture discussion, those operating from the differentiation perspective and those aligned with the fragmentation perspective. In the differentiation perspective, it is acknowledged that culture is not uniform throughout an organization; rather there are subcultures that emerge among smaller groups. These subcultures may exist in harmony, independently or in conflict with each other, but they are viewed as contained and harmonious subunits umbrellaed under a larger organizational culture. On the other hand, the fragmentation perspective sees subcultures as being in constant flux as each individual adds and alters their interpretation of organizational values. In this perspective, subcultures are not linked to an overarching organizational culture; rather cultural manifestations such as rituals, stories and humor are studied within and across organizations (Martin, 2002). Using these perspectives on culture and structure as a starting point, I reflect on the structure of university culture in the section below.

University Culture

The study of university culture traces back to the 1950s (Välilä, 1998). This topic received considerable attention in the 1980s (Clark, 1980, 1987; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988a; Välilä, 1998) and remains a relevant

topic of study (James & Derrick, 2019). Similar to organizational researchers, scholars in the field of higher education have explored the role university culture plays during change processes (Keup et al., 2001; Kezar, 2013; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Merton, Froyd, Clark, & Richardson, 2004), including internationalization to a limited extent (Lumby & Foskett, 2015). A dominant perspective in this field views university culture as a composition of subcultures (Becher & Trowler, 2001; De Zilwa, 2007; Frost & Jean, 2000; Ylijoki, 2000). In this sense, universities are defined as complex organizations consisting of multiple subcultures in which membership is determined by an individual's position (in the faculty, student body, and administration) and participation in knowledge communities (disciplines and departments). This view has parallels with the differentiation camp identified among organizational culture researchers (Martin, 2002), as there is an underlying understanding that these 'cultures' are subunits of a larger university culture.

Related to the university subculture discussion are studies examining socialization processes within academia (Tierney, 1997; Trowler & Knight, 1999). These studies share the understanding that newcomers undergo a socialization process in specific academic communities and traditions, in which they become accustomed to group norms, behaviors, and practices. Studies have focused on the socialization experiences of foreign students (Anderson, 2016), new faculty members (Austin, 2002), and graduate students (Boden, Borrego, & Newswander, 2011; Gardner, 2007, 2010; Suspitsyna, 2013). Socialization studies are built on the premise that academic traditions influence teaching, learning, and research practices. Along these lines, studies have for example investigated how the Confucian academic tradition impacts student learning, teaching style, and educational values (Chou & Spangler, 2016; Huang & Gove, 2012; Li, 2016) and how moving to a new academic environment involves a period

of adjustment or re-socialization (Anderson, 2016; Bøgelund & de Graaff, 2015).

Culture & Internationalization

The culture perspective has been applied to a limited extent in the internationalization literature; however, its application is often confined to the functionalist perspective, the employment of the ‘culture explanation’ or the ‘culture as background’ approach. In higher education literature, university culture is commonly studied from a functionalist perspective, in which culture is viewed as a possession a university has; each culture (or cultural unit – e.g. academic discipline) is understood to have similar levels and functions across contexts (Adams, Martin, & Boom, 2018; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Bystydzienski, Thomas, Howe, & Desai, 2017; Clark, 1998; De Zilwa, 2007; Fralinger & Olson, 2007; Hessels, Franssen, Scholten, & de Rijcke, 2019; Sporn, 1996; Ylijoki, 2000). The underlying goal of this type of research is often to develop typologies or generalizations that are applicable to different institutions and contexts. This perspective is also mirrored in the internationalization literature (Bartell, 2003; Burnett & Huisman, 2010; Clifford, 2009; Heffernan & Poole, 2005; Johnstone & Proctor, 2018). For example, Heffernan and Poole (2005) and Bartell (2003) use university culture as a variable: the former measured its effect on the formation of international partnerships between universities and the latter developed a culture typology, which plots a culture’s ‘strength’ in relation to internationalization efforts. Both these studies see culture as a possession and do not dwell on the role individuals play in culture creation.

Additionally, a group of internationalization studies employs the ‘culture explanation’. In this regard, differences arising from intercultural

encounters at the university are attributed to an individual's or group's 'culture,' that is international students behave or hold certain expectations due to 'their culture' (see for example, Liu, Liu, Lee, & Magjuka, 2010; Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2006; Sawir et al., 2008; Sun, Kang, Chang, & Lausch, 2019; Wang & Lin, 2018). Moreover, a few studies use the 'culture as background' approach, for example, Leask (2009) links successful interaction between international and domestic students to a supportive institutional "culture of internationalisation" (p. 207), a concept she does not fully define, but attaches positive attributes to, such as understanding and tolerance. These applications of the cultural lens fail to capture the depth of culture and how systems of meaning shape internationalization approaches and experiences.

Furthermore, there are only a handful of internationalization studies that interpret culture as a system of meaning – a perspective related to the 'metaphor school' in organizational culture research and rooted in the interpretivist paradigm (Hassard, 1991; Martin, 2002; Smircich, 1983; Schultz & Hatch, 1996). For instance, Lumby and Foskett (2015) and James and Derrick (2019) explain how university culture influences internationalization reactions and approaches. These two studies are rare examples of conceptual and empirical investigations of university culture and its influence on the internationalization process. However, these studies provide limited reflection on how culture is created and how shared meaning systems shape institutional and individual experiences with the internationalization process. This dissertation aims to broaden how culture is theoretically defined and studied, and thereby address the limited cultural perspective currently taken in the internationalization literature, with its employment of the symbolic cultural perspective. In the following sections, I elaborate on this perspective and approach to studying culture.

‘Small Cultures’ & Symbolic Interactionism

Research on organizational culture and university culture focuses on small-scale cultures confined within a specific space. In his ‘grammar of culture’, Holliday (1999, 2019) explains that ‘small cultures’ may be negotiated by small social groups in reference to ‘particular social and political structures’ and ‘personal trajectories’. According to Holliday, individuals encounter social and political structures through their socialization within larger society, which includes specific education traditions, governmental institutions, economic practices, and grand narratives of the nation. During small culture formation, individuals may draw upon these structures as resources or actively resist them (e.g. individuals may create small cultures that go against social norms). At the same time, Holliday explains that individuals bring their ‘personal trajectories’ to small culture formation, such as their family life, profession, and friendship circles. These elements shape a person’s individuality and actions. Consequently, small cultures may be formed in relation to larger structures as well as shaped by the personal histories of individuals. Additionally, Holliday emphasizes that small cultures are not necessarily nested within a larger national context as they may extend across national boundaries.

Holliday’s grammar of culture is rooted in symbolic interactionism, with its core focus on group interaction in culture creation. This theoretical perspective is embedded in the interpretivist paradigm, shares similarities with the metaphor school and is closely connected to the symbolic cultural perspective among organizational researchers (Boje, 1991; Fletcher, 1996; Hatch, 1993; Smircich, 1983; Van Maanen, 1991; Young, 1989). In the symbolic cultural perspective, culture is characterized as a socially constructed phenomenon created through human interaction (Dandridge,

Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980; Jones, 1996). In this sense, when individuals interact, they assign meaning to symbols. Organizational symbols may encompass physical objects (e.g. ‘products of culture’ - bulletin boards, newsletters, and company uniforms), activities and practices (e.g. meetings, coffee time, and other rituals) as well as modes of communication (e.g. storytelling, speeches, and jokes) (Jones, 1996). Deciphering the meaning behind symbols is a method of studying culture as it breaks down culture into smaller units of analysis, which contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural practices and behaviors (Frost, 1985; Jones, 1996).

Defining Culture

Building on these interpretations and literature, in this dissertation university culture is understood as a system of meaning constructed by university stakeholders to make sense of institutional life. In this sense, university stakeholders undergo a socialization process when entering a university culture and newcomers may experience a period of adjustment or resocialization. Thus, access to a culture – the shared meaning system – may not be equal among all members and dependent on an individual’s level of socialization and position as a cultural insider. Furthermore, university culture may be shaped by its multi-unit structure that naturally creates small cultures centered on similar epistemologies, methodologies, and structural social groupings (e.g. professors, administrators, and students). University cultures may draw upon existing social and political structures, which may in turn inform and influence their values and practices

This interpretation of culture is rooted in the symbolic cultural perspective and interpretivist paradigm, which positions university stakeholders as

creators of culture. This cultural perspective has received limited attention in the internationalization literature and may further our understanding of the implementation challenges associated with the internationalization process. In addition, this understanding of culture allows insight into how university stakeholders make sense of internationalization, why they adopt or resist it and to explore the extent national/regional structures influence their institutional context, perspectives, and experiences. This approach also provides an opportunity to examine the practical challenges universities and their stakeholders face during the internationalization process as well as to formulate applied recommendations to overcome them.

⁸ The table is based on a table developed by Schultz & Hatch (1996), entitled “Contrasts Between Functionalist and Interpretive Assumptions” located on p. 537. The table has been modified and expanded in consultation with the work of Bryman (2012); Hassard (1991); Martin (2002); Smircich (1983) and Walsham (1995).

3. Methods for Studying Culture

In the symbolic culture perspective, researchers are tasked with decoding, “‘themes’ of culture” (Smircich, 1983, p. 350). To accomplish this task, research methods often focus on exploring the experiences of involved individuals, as co-creators of culture, e.g. through interviews (Meyer, 1995), ethnographic fieldwork, and participant observation (Fine, 1979; Fine & Hallett, 2014). In this dissertation, the experiences and perceptions of individuals were the main subject of study. They became cultural guides for deciphering meaning systems through their reflections on cultural practices, values, expectations, grand narratives, and education traditions. Their experiences were collected through qualitative interviews and focus groups, with the aim of understanding personal perspectives and experiences (Kitzinger, 1994; Yeo, 2013). In each study, the data was collected using different approaches (e.g. narrative and semi-structured interviews) and interpreted through diverse theoretical and conceptual lenses. These different procedures are detailed in the four empirical studies (see Part II) and therefore not elaborated upon here.

The purpose of this methods chapter is to explore larger issues related to studying culture in a university setting and provide a broad overview of the study design and data collection strategy. In this chapter, I discuss the case study design and criteria for selecting case studies, which are addressed in a condensed manner in the four studies; in addition I further

elaborate upon overarching topics such as researcher positionality and research ethics.

Cultural Guides & Cultural Symbols

Cultural guides were selected from two groups of individuals. The first group included individuals who were directly involved with internationalization activities at their university or the ministry of education/related body. These individuals were comprised of administrators, teaching and professorial staff and university leadership that worked directly in international offices, served on internationalization committees, or were involved in other official capacities. The second group consisted of individuals who were not officially part of internationalization efforts but were affected by them through their involvement at the university. For example, this encompassed international and local students (undergraduate and graduate), and faculty members and administrators. In each study, different stakeholder groups were focused on: internationalization taskforce members (chapter 5), international doctoral students (chapter 7), recent professorial hires (chapter 8) or multiple stakeholder groups – governmental officials, university administrators, professors, and students (chapter 6). The selection of interviewees/focus group participants was determined by the scope of each study and its corresponding framework and methodology.

In total, 66 interviews and 2 focus groups (consisting of 6 participants each) were conducted resulting in the collective experiences of 78 individuals. All interactions with participants were recorded. Of these, 44 interviews and 1 focus group were transcribed, a decision determined by the methodology of each study (e.g. the design and research methods in chapter 8 did not require interview transcripts). The interviews/focus

groups took place in various formats and locations: online platforms (e.g. skype, google hangout) as well as in person (e.g. in the participant's office, a classroom, café, meeting room, and a nearby garden...).

The interviews and focus groups centered on exploring select 'symbols' in line with the study of organizational symbolism and the symbolic cultural perspective (Briody et al., 2012; Brown & McMillan, 1991; Fletcher, 1996; Huang, 2016; Jones, 1996; Rosen, 1985; Young, 1989). From this perspective, I focused on two types of symbols related to: (1) communication and (2) activities. Communication is understood as the various channels cultural members use to convey information (related to internationalization and their experiences with it) such as in written text, stories, jokes, and speech acts, which are representative of shared understandings and systems of meaning. In particular, I investigated how university stakeholders communicate about internationalization (chapter 5) and assign meaning to it in speech acts (chapter 6).

Moreover, internationalization activities are interpreted as practices and actions universities and individuals participate in as part of the internationalization process, which are understood to be shaped by shared meaning systems. Specifically, I focused on two under-researched outcomes/elements of mobility practices: the dropout experiences of international doctoral students (chapter 7) and the hiring experiences of international and local academics in the United States and Belgium (chapter 8). Activities and communication were selected for study as these symbols were directly connected to the personal experiences of university stakeholders, who in turn acted as cultural guides for understanding the interplay between university culture(s) and the internationalization process. Furthermore, the selected symbols corresponded to research gaps

and were chosen based on their relevance and significance in the field of internationalization and higher education research.

Selecting Cultural Contexts

In the four empirical studies, relevant cases were selected for investigation, depending on the respective research objective, theoretical framework, and methodology. The four empirical studies should be understood as standalone entities and were not designed with the intention of building a comparison across the selected cases, a strategic decision I discuss below. Three of the studies focused on a single university case study (chapters 5, 6 & 7) and one study concentrated on two comparative case studies (chapter 8). In some of the studies, the interplay between the small culture studied (within the university case) and national context is more pronounced. In chapters 6 & 8, the national context is discussed in relation to the university studied, e.g. chapter 6 situates the university case study within the Taiwanese context and in chapter 8 the U.S. and Flemish academic cultures are discussed in relation to the case studies. Particularly in chapter 6, this interplay is debated with a discussion on political and cultural narratives in Taiwan. Whereas in chapters 5 & 7, the national contexts mostly play minor roles in the analysis and were anonymized. The choice to anonymize these national contexts was due to participant request, a requirement of the university studied or to prevent internal recognition; for more details see section - *Research Ethics*.

Moreover, when features of the national context or higher education system were relevant for interpreting the findings, these aspects were described without listing the country name. For instance, in chapter 7, my coauthor Meta Gorup and I discuss that the university case is located in a

non-English speaking country and reflect upon how this contextual feature impacted the experiences of the international doctoral students.

In the following paragraphs, I elaborate on my approach to conducting interpretivist case study research, my overall case study design as well as detail the case study selection criteria followed in each of the empirical studies.

Interpretivist Approach to Case Study Research

Case study research is a common method in qualitative research and approached differently from the positivist and interpretive perspective (Andrade, 2009; Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Yin, 2018). This dissertation is firmly rooted in the interpretivist paradigm, in which social reality is understood to be constructed through social interaction. Thus, I employ an interpretivist approach to conducting case study research. The positivist and interpretivist approaches share an underlying rationale – to further our knowledge by studying relevant contexts. However, differences in these epistemologies become pronounced when analyzing case studies and evaluating their contributions; these implications are discussed below.

Langley & Adallah (2011) distinguish approaches to case study research through their analysis of two qualitative templates used in organizational research, they call the “Eisenhardt Method” and “Gioia Method” referencing the work of organizational scholars, Kathleen Eisenhardt and Dennis Gioia. The “Eisenhardt Method” is described as a positivist approach, which draws strongly on Yin’s case study methodology (Yin, 2018). The Eisenhardt Method focuses on developing propositions from case studies, ideally from multiple comparative case studies. This research

aims to provide explanations and construct generalizations that are replicable across different contexts, specifically by identifying causal relations about “objectively observable phenomena in the real world” (Langley & Abdallah, 2011, p. 116). In contrast, the “Gioia Method” is depicted as an interpretivist approach and draws closely on grounded theory methodology. This method focuses on investigating meaning making in in-depth single case studies; specifically, this approach emphasizes understanding the perspectives and experiences of research participants. This research aims to respond to critical gaps in the literature and add nuance to our understanding of a specific context as well as to challenge theoretical concepts or assumptions in the literature. Its legitimacy rests in collecting rich data, conducting a rigorous and transparent analysis, and displaying trustworthiness by reflecting on the researcher’s positionality and incorporating techniques such as member checking. The empirical basis of this dissertation has strong parallels with the Gioia Method and shares this case study approach. In this regard, the dissertation focuses on exploring the experiences of university stakeholders, how they make sense of the internationalization process and institutional life, with the aim of adding nuance, understanding and contextualization to critical gaps in the literature.

Although interpretivist research is often strongly rooted to the context it studies, its findings can also be extended beyond these contexts. Walsham (1995) argues that interpretivist research may extend upon the positivist emphasis on generalization and theoretical propositions and explores four approaches that may be taken. According to Walsham, interpretivist research may be used to (1) develop concepts; (2) generate theory (based on multiple concepts that collectively form a theoretical framework); (3) draw specific implications (or recommendations); and (4) contribute rich insight. Walsham’s approach resembles the idea of “moderatum

generalization”, a modest approach to forming generalizations based on qualitative sociological research (Payne & Williams, 2005). According to Payne and Williams, modest generalizations do “not attempt to produce sweeping sociological statements that hold good over long periods of time, or across ranges of cultures”, but involve constructing generalizations (that are malleable) and related to the studied context or group (Payne & Williams, 2005, p. 297). Reflecting on the conceptual work of the aforementioned authors and the research design of this dissertation, it is recognized when studying cultural symbols, the researcher may make more modest generalizations based on the empirical studies concerning the mechanisms and concepts that influence and shape culture at the university, such as the interplay between structure, power dynamics, and group membership (see Part III).

Case Study Designs

The case studies in the empirical chapters were carefully chosen based on criteria informed by each study’s respective theory, literature, and methodology, which corresponded to a research gap within the internationalization and higher education literature. However, each empirical study shares a common core - they operate under the same culture definition; in which culture is viewed as a product of human interaction. From this understanding, culture is *not* static, but *fluid* and happens wherever humans interact, which is sometimes centered around projects (e.g. chapter 5, the Global Laboratory project) or shared experiences (e.g. chapter 7, discontinued international doctoral students).

The intention behind selecting diverse case studies was driven by the main research objective, namely to broaden our understanding of how culture may be investigated through the symbolic cultural perspective and the

study of cultural symbols, which extends upon the more traditional operationalizations reflected on in chapter 2. To accomplish this, culture was intentionally studied via core aspects of the internationalization process – change communication & responses (chapter 5), the implementation process & sensemaking (chapter 6), and academic mobility (chapters 7 & 8). The goal of this approach was to illustrate and understand the fluid and interaction-based nature of culture as well as to build bridges and make contributions to different internationalization discussions, purposefully demonstrating how the symbolic lens may be applied to understand various phenomena within the higher education landscape. In this light, the case studies should be understood as explorative investigations of studying university culture from the symbolic perspective.

In the following sections, I detail the criteria that informed the selection of each case study (pseudonyms) and highlight how the cases respond to critical gaps in the literature, in line with the Gioia Method (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). I also draw upon the case study classifications, intense and critical (Flick, 2009; Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015), to situate the cases in the broader case study methodology. Choosing to study cases based on their intensity, assumes that the selected case exhibits more pronounced and visible “interesting features, processes [and] experiences” (Flick, 2009; p. 122). Critical cases on the other hand, focus on studying contexts which exhibit aspects that are considered especially significant or to have clear implications (in the judgement of experts) for the functioning or evaluation of a phenomenon (Flick, 2009). According to Etikan et al. (2016), a case is considered ‘critical’ when it addresses the following questions: “If it happens there, will it happen anywhere? or if that group

is having problems, then can we be sure all the groups are having [the same] problems?” (p. 3).

Further information concerning the specific research gaps addressed in the empirical studies, how the selected cases responded to them are detailed in the individual chapters as well as the limitations of these selections. I also conduct a general discussion on the data collection limitations of the dissertation in its entirety in Part III.

The Global Laboratory

In chapter 5, the main research objective was to explore how organizational storytelling was used as a method of change communication during internationalization change. This objective responded to a critical gap in the literature, namely that change communication is rarely discussed in the internationalization literature, despite universities presenting specific communication and change implementation challenges due to their (autonomous) subunit structures as well as documented stakeholder resistance to change (Clifford, 2009; Keup et al., 2001; Lane, 2007).

Based on my review of the literature, I decided to focus on an “intense” case (Flick, 2009) in order to collect more insight on diverse stakeholders’ reactions to change and forms of change communication. A case’s intensity was determined based on its display of features that were identified in the literature as theoretically relevant, this included: (1) large-scale internationalization change at; (2) a highly decentralized university and (3) change that had received recognition for its success. Research indicates that large-scale organizational change has a greater impact on the organization and its members, yields more (diverse) responses and may be more prone to resistance (Briody, Meerwarth Pester, & Trotter, 2012;

Currie & Brown, 2003; Langer & Thorup, 2006; Vaara & Tiernari, 2008; Vaara, Tienari, & Laurila, 2006). Additionally, the decentralized university structure has been found to present challenges for the implementation of large-scale change (Sporn, 1996; Yonezawa, 2017). Furthermore, external recognition in combination with the abovementioned criteria, suggests a university environment, in which to observe how large-scale internationalization change is successfully communicated and was effective in generating support among stakeholders in a potentially resistant prone setting.

The Global Laboratory (GL) was chosen as a case as it fit the selection criteria. The project had a large-scope – it coordinated a series of internationalization actions and measures between the central administration, faculties, and classrooms. It took place in a university with a decentralized structure, with a weak central administration and strong, autonomous faculties. The GL project had also received national and international praise for its successful implementation by several key agencies as well as scholars and practitioners. Furthermore, the GL project was well-developed: it had been running for several years and had an appointed long-term university-wide taskforce. This developmental stage suggested the best possibility for collecting rich data across the institution.

Pacific University

In chapter 6, the main research objective was to investigate how HEI stakeholders frame the internationalization process, specifically in order to examine concerns cited in the literature that internationalization has a negative impact on the local academic culture, particularly noted in East Asian countries. In reviewing the related body of literature, I identified several empirical gaps in the internationalization literature centered on

Taiwan. First, there are relatively few studies that take a comprehensive approach to exploring stakeholder reactions to internationalization, with the majority of studies focusing on the experiences of (international) students (Chang, Bai, & Wang, 2014; Chou, Roberts, & Ching, 2012). Second, there have been limited empirical investigations into the scholarly concerns (Chou, 2014; Lo, 2009; Yang, 2001) that internationalization has a negative impact on the local Taiwanese academic culture.

Based on my review of the literature, I chose to explore an “intense” case (Flick, 2009) in order to study a variety of stakeholder responses across a university. An intense case also suggested a setting in which critical responses regarding internationalization may emerge. The case’s intensity was based on its display of features that were identified as theoretically relevant in the literature. In the Taiwanese higher education landscape, these criteria included: (1) a university that had experienced wide-spread internationalization change; and (2) a university that was considered a top-tier institution. In Taiwan, the higher education landscape is hierarchically organized, meaning that top-tier (public) universities are generally the most internationalized as they received the most (state) funding; sometimes funding specifically earmarked for internationalization activities (Chou, 2014, 2015; Song & Tai, 2007).

Based on this selection criteria, Pacific University was chosen as a case. Pacific University is located in Taipei, Taiwan’s capital. It is considered a top-tier and highly internationalized university by scholars, a position reflected in its placement in university ranking schemes. The university has experienced large-scale, wide-spread internationalization change in recent years. In this regard, it was one of the first universities in Taiwan to introduce English-taught, internationally focused degree programs, for which it is nationally and internationally recognized. It also hosts a large

number of international students, employs many international staff members and is a partner in numerous international collaborations.

Stonewald University

In chapter 7, the main research objective was to investigate the attrition experiences of international doctoral students and the factors that contributed to their discontinuation. This objective responded to a critical gap in the literature, namely that existing research provides insight into the general challenges associated with the international doctoral experience (Ali & Kohun, 2006; Brown, 2009a; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Janta, Lugosi, & Brown, 2012; Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama, & Takeuchi, 2007), however we have limited understanding of how these challenges contribute to their dropout. Moreover, research on factors leading to doctoral attrition primarily focuses on doctoral students in general (or local students) (Bair & Haworth, 1999; Golde, 1998; Vassil & Solvak, 2012), without taking into account the specific challenges of international doctoral students.

After reviewing the literature, I decided to investigate a ‘critical’ case (Flick, 2009). Mirroring this methodology, I aimed to examine a case that exemplified international doctoral trends, in order to answer the question, “if it happens there, will it happen anywhere?” (Etikan et al., 2016, p.3). Based on this rationale, I purposefully sought a case that exhibited common characteristics related to: (1) international doctoral enrolment rates; and (2) attrition rates, as means to study a context that may resemble typical dropout experiences among international doctoral students.

Stonewald University was selected as a case as it fit the selection criteria. According to university data, Stonewald University experienced an influx of international doctoral students, from 10% in 2000 to over 30% in 2015,

a trend that corresponds to the average of 27% across OECD countries (OECD, 2016). The university also maintains comparable graduation rates to those cited in the literature (Jiranek, 2010; Spronken-Smith, et al., 2018), circa 50% of (international) doctoral students successfully complete their degrees and 50% discontinue.

Bridgeworth University & Universiteit Nieuwpoort

In chapter 8, the main research objective was to explore the role of social capital in academic hiring. This objective responded to a critical gap in the literature, namely despite academics becoming more mobile, research on academic hiring and careers primarily focus on local academics navigating their domestic job market, which limits the transferability of these findings to the international sphere (Clauzet et al., 2015; Cowan & Rossello, 2017; Godechot, 2014; Han, 2003; Roebken, 2010). In addition, the literature indicates that the role social capital plays varies between academic hiring contexts (Burriss, 2004; Clauzet et al., 2015; Han, 2003; Hsu, 2005; Michailova & Worm, 2003; Yi & Ellis, 2000).

Based on the reviewed literature, I chose to follow a ‘critical’ case study methodology (Flick, 2009). My choice to study critical cases was tied closely to the research aim, as critical cases address the question of transferability (Etikan et al., 2016). In particular, I was interested in comparing cases with contrasting system-level trends that were considered theoretically relevant in the literature for studying social capital and academic hiring (Altbach et al., 2018; Horta, Veloso, & Grediaga, 2010). These trends included: (1) academic mobility; and (2) academic inbreeding.

The two contrasting critical cases selected - Bridgeworth University located in the United States and Universiteit Nieuwpoort located in Flanders reflect system-level trends related to academic mobility and

inbreeding. Bridgeworth University exemplifies a university environment that promotes academic mobility; with international students making up 16% of its student population and international staff members making up 26% of its staff population. At the system-level, the United States is a context that encourages academic mobility, being a top destination for international students and scholars as well as a system that has historically rejected the practice of academic inbreeding (OECD, 2017; Institute for International Education, 2017; Eells & Cleveland, 1935; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010).

Universiteit Nieuwpoort on the other hand, characterizes an university environment that practices academic inbreeding: from 2009 – 2013 approximately 69% of the professorial body at the university, had spent their entire academic careers at Nieuwpoort with 15% making one switch within the Flemish system. At the system-level, Flanders (Belgium) is a context where academic inbreeding is still in force: 56% of academics have spent their entire education/professional careers at the same university, 17.8% have made one switch within the small system, 6.1% obtained a PhD outside of Flanders and 19.7% obtained a PhD and postdoc outside of Flanders (ECOOM – UGent, 2017).

Positionality of the Researcher

When conducting higher education research, the researcher often shifts between an emic and etic approach. The former refers to seeing a phenomenon from the standpoint of an insider and the latter as an external scientific observer (Harris, 1976), as higher education researchers are often both part of the environment they are studying as well as scientists conducting theoretically and methodologically rigorous investigations. A researcher's position in the field has been found to

influence data generation and analysis (Bourke, 2014). For these reasons, in this section I engage in a reflexivity exercise to gauge how my position in the field affected the data collection and analysis processes.

My experience in the field was characterized by a constant shifting of positions and identities. I conducted fieldwork in five institutions located in two Western European countries (anonymized) as well as in the United States, Belgium, and Taiwan. In the field, my position fluctuated between being an insider to an outsider depending on whom I was speaking to, where, and what assumptions I perceived were being made about my cultural background and nationality. At my home university in Belgium (Flanders), I am an international doctoral student from the United States. Being an international student, I am part of the internationalization process that I study and can personally relate to some of the issues that arise in the literature. This identity underlines the emic perspective in my research. My international status also automatically marks me as a cultural and linguistic outsider in the Flemish context. Yet, being an outsider in one social context sometimes made me an insider in other groups. For example, in chapter 7, my co-author Meta Gorup and I interviewed international doctoral students being both international doctoral students ourselves. Our commonality with our interviewees allowed us to quickly establish rapport in the interviews. This also held true in chapter 8, where I interviewed international scholars residing in Belgium and our shared positions led to a certain level of collegiality.

Interestingly, when I returned to my home country, the United States, to conduct fieldwork my outsider position persisted. I discovered in the field that many of my local interviewees assumed that I was a Belgian scholar based on my affiliation. This assumption became clear when the interviewees would explain to me “how things are done in the U.S.” and

asked me to describe the Belgian equivalent or give insight on the Belgian culture. I would explain that I was uncertain how to answer these questions being an U.S. American and not Belgian. This confused moment happened more than once in the field and I continued to find it surprising as I clearly saw myself as a cultural insider in the U.S. context. In some instances, I did address this issue with my interviewees when it was appropriate, fitting and did not distract from their narratives. This assumption did not negatively affect the data collection; rather it helped enrich it. These interviewees were more focused on explaining unwritten expectations and behaviors in U.S. academia, an approach they might not have done to the same extent for a cultural insider. I can only speculate that my local interviewees made this assumption based on commonly known trends, as it is common for foreign scholars to study in the U.S. and it is less common for U.S. Americans to participate in degree mobility.

My status as a cultural outsider also shaped my fieldwork experience in Taiwan. I went to Taiwan as part of an international research fellowship and was hosted by a local university. My interviewees automatically assumed that I was an outsider and would routinely add cultural explanations to their interviews to help me understand their experiences (e.g. “In Taiwan, there is a cultural practice of ...”). There was also another element influencing my position in the field – academic hierarchy. My local counterparts (local graduate students) explained to me that academic hierarchy plays a very significant role in shaping interaction within Taiwanese academia. In this sense, full professors are ranked higher and enjoy more privileges (e.g. related to decision-making and resource access) than associate and assistant professors, who are followed by postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students. Hierarchy also determines communication channels and lower ranked individuals rely on help from more senior academics to gain access to certain resources or individuals.

However, my local counterparts told me that as a cultural outsider, I was not really expected to know or follow these social rules. This significantly helped my access to interviewees. For example, I could have candid discussions with high-level administrators and professors as I was perceived more as an ‘international scholar’ than a student.

These experiences in the field made me reflect on how the fieldwork context and assumptions made by both participants and researchers shapes the dynamics of data collection. This exercise of reflexivity demonstrates that a researcher never enters the field with a blank slate, they bring with them expectations and cultural scripts. It is also important to remember that participants also enter the field with preconceived ideas. My shifting from insider to outsider in the field added depth to my data collection and I was able to balance my positionality and reflect on its influence in the data analysis procedure (for example, see chapter 6).

Research Ethics

This dissertation is empirically rooted in the individual experience of the internationalization process. Following ethical research practices is an essential part of collecting, storing, and using personal data. Therefore, I referenced established guidelines and procedures for conducting educational research (British Educational Research Association, BERA, 2018) before, during and after my fieldwork to ensure data confidentiality and anonymity. My goal in following the different steps explained below was to be transparent with my participants concerning the research project, interview procedure and data usage and storage. In addition, it was important for me that the participants feel comfortable with their decision to partake in an interview or focus group as well as empowered to ask questions and discuss concerns. These issues were essential for my data

collection strategy as it focused on individuals being ‘cultural guides’, a task that positions participants as the main narrators and relies on their collaboration in order to gather rich and authentic data.

Invitations to participate in an interview or focus group were mostly issued over email and sometimes in person. In both instances, I emailed the potential participants an information sheet, which detailed the research project, data usage and management and a consent form (see appendix), which outlined the conditions of their participation. I discussed these issues again prior to the interview/focus group either in person or using an online platform (e.g. skype). Participants were also encouraged to ask questions, discuss concerns and/or if desired establish additional terms of the anonymity agreement either before, during or after their participation. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary, and they may choose not to answer certain questions or withdraw at any time. After the interview/focus groups, the participants were also asked to contact me in the case of any additional questions. In some cases, the interviewees reviewed their transcripts and we discussed additional terms of anonymity or omitting certain details or passages.

Moreover, prior to entering the field, I reflected on my duty of care towards the research participants. I recognized that some of the research questions I was pursuing may yield sensitive data and involve participants discussing discomforting or distressing themes of a personal nature (for example, see chapter 7). With this realization, I employed different methods to ensure the well-being of the participants and encouraged them to exercise their rights as research subjects. For example, the interviewees were encouraged to select a familiar and quiet place for the interview to take place, such as their office or a meeting room at the university. However, for practical reasons I selected the locations for the focus

groups but chose quiet and (when possible) private locations such as a separate meeting room.

In addition, the interview guides were designed to facilitate a relaxed atmosphere by using open-ended questions, especially at the onset. Words and phrases with negative connotations or those considered to be emotionally triggering were also purposefully replaced with neutral alternatives (e.g. ‘dropout’ was replaced with ‘discontinuation’ in the interviews conducted in chapter 7). Furthermore, when sensitive topics were discussed, I reminded the participants that they may choose not to answer the question as well as asked at intervals if they would like to take a break to collect their thoughts. Lastly, as a final step at the end of our encounter, I would inquire how each participant felt about their interview/focus group experience and would again reiterate their rights as research participants (as discussed above).

To ensure the confidentiality of the data, it was stored on a password protected university computer and a university server. I discussed with participants how their data would be stored and used and who would have future access to it (such as co-authors and other collaborators who would be required to follow the same agreed upon terms). Regarding anonymity, in all cases the identity of the participants is anonymized. No real names of persons or the universities studied are used and other identifiable markers such as committee names, faculty names and exact job descriptions or titles have been removed or disguised. Additional layers of anonymization were employed depending on: (1) the sensitive nature of the studied topic, (2) personal request as well as used to (3) prevent internal recognition among a small group of interviewees. In most cases, this affected the ‘country of origin’ category. For example, in some studies the country of origin is specifically listed (upon agreement with the

interviewee), or a regional category used (e.g. Western Europe) and in some cases larger group identities are referred to instead (e.g. international students & local students). These personal characteristics were not the focal point of the research questions and I was able to find a balance between providing the necessary information about the participants and protecting their identities.

4. Four Approaches to Studying Culture

In this chapter, I situate the four studies within the larger research objective by highlighting the culture dimension in their research design and empirical investigations. The studies all explored empirical data that was collected through interactions with ‘cultural guides’ involved and/or affected by the internationalization process. However, the studies diverged in terms of the cultural aspects focused on and the theoretical and analytical frameworks applied. In studies 1 & 2, I similarly examine how stakeholders use a shared value system to make sense of the internationalization process and interpret their experiences whereas in studies 3 & 4, I focus on academic mobility and how academic culture shapes mobility experiences and university practices. In the following sections, I outline each study in regard to its research question, framework, and contribution to this dissertation’s larger research objective.

Summary Study 1

Chapter 5

Spinning Stories: Communicating Internationalization through Organizational Storytelling

In this study, I investigate how internationalization activities are communicated to university stakeholders. The literature indicates that university stakeholders do not always readily welcome internationalization and that resistance may arise during its implementation. Resistance to change is a noted reaction to other change processes within higher education (Clifford, 2009; Keup et al., 2001) and often linked to the specific nature of university culture, which is comprised of different subunits of independently minded individuals (Awbrey, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001). In reaction to this phenomenon, this study investigates how organizational storytelling may be used as an alternative method of change communication. Specifically, I track how a university taskforce communicates to university stakeholders about a large-scale internationalization project. I explore how taskforce members use three ‘story templates’ to speak about their project and employ different ‘spins’ of the same story based on the shared cultural values, perceptions, and practices of their audiences. In line with the overarching theme of this dissertation, this study demonstrates that cultural values frame and constrain communication channels at the university and influence how stakeholders make sense of change processes, such as internationalization.

Summary Study 2

Chapter 6

Framing Internationalization: Culture, Politics, and the Local Community Meet Internationalization in Taiwan

In the second study, I explore how stakeholders make sense of the internationalization process within a specific cultural context. This study builds on a discussion in the literature in which internationalization is linked to Western educational values and thus may arguably pose a threat to non-Western academic cultures and education traditions (Chen & Lo, 2013; Deem et al., 2008; Song & Tai, 2007). As a response to this concern, I conducted an in-depth case study at a highly internationalized university in the Republic of China (Taiwan). In the Taiwanese context, similar concerns have been voiced among scholars regarding the potential negative impacts of internationalization efforts on local scholarship and universities; however, these claims have yet to be fully empirically investigated – a research gap this study addresses.

Using frame analysis (Goffman, 1974), I analyze how university stakeholders (e.g. administrators, professors, and students) and governmental officials ‘frame’ internationalization and their experiences. The study identified how stakeholders frame internationalization in relation to their own personal experiences and larger societal narratives. This study explores how national context and personal experiences both contribute to shaping the meaning and purpose of internationalization, transforming it to fit the local context. This understanding of culture creation in relation to social and political structures and in reference to

personal trajectories corresponds with the culture definition guiding this dissertation.

Summary Study 3

Chapter 7

The Invisible Others: Stories of International Doctoral Student Dropout

In the third study, my co-author Meta Gorup and I focus on the micro-level of internationalization, which is how individuals experience internationalization practices. Universities are increasingly recruiting international doctoral students (IDSs), a group whose vulnerability in terms of being academic newcomers and cultural outsiders is duly noted in the literature (Adrian-Taylor et al., 2007; Ali & Kohun, 2006; Robinson-Pant, 2009). Doctoral students are collectively susceptible to high dropout rates with reports estimating that nearly 50% of doctoral students will discontinue their studies before completion (Groenvynck, Vandeveld, & Van Rossem, 2013; Vassil & Solvak, 2012). In light of this trend and the acknowledgement of IDSs' vulnerability, this study employs the *Othering* concept (Said, 1978) to understand what influences IDSs to discontinue their studies. Othering, a concept rooted in postcolonial theory, refers to a social hierarchy which elevates the privileged or dominant group above the 'Others' whose differences mark them as outsiders (Weis, 1995). The study revealed how the IDSs' positions of being 'Foreign Others' in terms of cultural outsiders, reinforced their vulnerability for financial hardship, social exclusion, and academic challenges.

The culture dimension of this study is less pronounced compared to the first and second studies, in which culture has a more central role in the discussion. This chapter underlines how (unwritten) academic values and socialization practices shape interaction at the university. Socialized in different academic and national contexts, the IDSs in this study experienced disempowerment due to their unfamiliarity with the local system when navigating academic, social, and financial challenges characteristic of the doctoral journey. As a result, the IDSs were at more risk to extreme challenges and had limited power to change their situations. In line with the general theme of this dissertation, this study provides insight into how mobility experiences are shaped by unwritten academic and cultural expectations.

Summary Study 4

Chapter 8

Crossing Academic Borders: Exploring the Role of Social Capital in Academic Hiring

In the fourth study, I continue my investigation of how mobility experiences are shaped by unwritten cultural and academic expectations. Internationalization has transformed the academic job market and blurred academic borders. Recruiting international academic talent is a growing trend among universities and seen as means to internationalize campuses, remain competitive and increase research output (Hser, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). However, at the same time, social capital (e.g. resources gained through academic training and professional experience) plays a significant role in academic hiring (Clauset, Arbesman, & Larremore, 2015; Godechot, 2014). In this study, I address these two

elements of academic hiring by questioning the role social capital plays among local and international hires at two university case studies in Belgium (Flanders) and the United States. The universities selected are located in education systems with contrasting approaches towards recruiting international talent: The United States has long been an attractive destination for international scholars while in Flanders academic inbreeding is practiced and outward recruitment is a recently adopted strategy.

Similar to chapter 7, the findings identified that a scholar's position as an academic insider or outsider played a decisive role in their hiring experience. An insider was privy to unwritten expectations and able to demonstrate to the hiring university a certain status and quality of their skill set. The study reflects on how internationalization affects university-hiring practices and how cultural values and expectations are embedded within this process.

Part II: Empirical Studies

5. Spinning Stories: Communicating Internationalization through Organizational Storytelling

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Abstract

Despite the positive outcomes often associated with internationalization, internal stakeholders do not always welcome the changes it brings. This reaction is echoed in the numerous studies highlighting the problematic relationships between international and local students and the critical to resistant reactions among faculty members. In response to these challenges, this study explores organizational storytelling as a method for communicating internationalization within universities. Organizational storytelling has been found to be a powerful tool for sensemaking, reducing resistance, and generating support during organizational change processes. This study follows how a university taskforce employed three story templates: The Principle Story, the Approval Story, and the Unexceptional Story, to communicate about and implement a large-scale internationalization project in a diverse and change resistant university environment. Although sharing similarities, these storylines were given different ‘spins’ by storytellers depending on their position and the intended audience as well as influenced by the university culture.

Introduction

Increasingly, higher education institutions (HEIs) and their stakeholders are encouraged, and to some extent pressured, to accept internationalization and the changes it brings to their institutions. Internationalization is best understood as a form of organizational change, which evokes a rethinking and restructuring of teaching, research practices and the organization of an institution (Hudzik, 2015; Schoorman, 2000). Despite the positive outcomes associated with internationalization such as cultural exchange (Urban & Palmer, 2014), global citizenship (Boni & Calabuig, 2015) and improved institutional reputation (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013), we can distill from the literature that the changes it brings are not always welcome by university stakeholders. Various studies have emphasized the less than harmonious and sometimes conflict-ridden relationships between international and local students (Hail, 2015; Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Lee & Rice, 2007; Otten, 2003) concerning interactions in the classroom (Cathcart et al., 2006) and social sphere (Brown, 2009a; Lee, Jon, & Byun, 2016). Additionally, critical responses have been identified among university staff regarding the purpose of internationalization activities (Turner & Robson, 2007), the perceived added workload (Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013) and in some instances a preference among staff members for local students over international ones (Trice, 2003). While support from internal stakeholders, especially staff members, is crucial for the success of internationalization activities (Dewey & Duff, 2009; Stohl, 2007), these varied responses in the literature indicate that this support is not always guaranteed.

Resistance to change among university stakeholders has been a noted challenge in other change processes within higher education (Clifford,

2009; Keup et al., 2001; Lane, 2007) and linked in many cases to the particular nature of the university. The university is a composition of cultures; these cultures are created around specific tasks (administration, academics) and practices (disciplines/departments) (Becher & Trowler, 2001). This diversity is reflected in the varied meaning systems across the university as well as in the production of independently-minded individuals with their own domains of responsibility and influence (Awbrey, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Musselin, 2007). Implementing change within this context requires communicating to different actors spanning across numerous communities. Despite the specific communication challenges involved in this context, change communication is rarely discussed and studies often focus on macro-level changes related to governmental policy and neoliberalism (By, Diefenbach, & Klarner, 2008; Gornitzka, 1999; Gumpert, 2000). More research is needed to understand the interplay between higher education change processes and individual agency, perceptions, and experiences of change.

Within organizational research, change communication is identified as a key element of the implementation process (Ford & Ford, 1995; Johansson & Heide, 2008) as it may legitimize change and reduce resistance among stakeholders (Currie & Brown, 2003; Elving, 2005; Vaara, Tienari, & Laurila, 2006). Organizational storytelling, the spoken and written art of conveying information and values to organizational members, has been found to play a decisive role in “predict[ing], empower[ing] and even fashion[ing] change” (Boje, 1991, p. 124). Building on this research, this study explores organizational storytelling as a method of change communication during an internationalization project. Specifically, I track how a university taskforce communicated to internal stakeholders about a university-wide internationalization project, the

Global Laboratory (GL), at a Western European research university. The GL project was a joint initiative between the central administration and faculties and launched in response to student complaints regarding the lack of integration between international and local students. The project consisted of activities aimed at improving student integration such as orientation events, social activities, staff training and guided classroom interactions and assignments.

Organizational Storytelling

Organizational change may evoke a variety of reactions from organizational members as it involves both changes at the organizational level as well as within the operational space of individuals (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Currie & Brown, 2003). Reactions to organizational change may be influenced by the method in which it is communicated to stakeholders (Fiss & Zajac, 2006). For this purpose, organizational storytelling is explored as a change communication method within the higher education context. Organizational storytelling refers to bundles of information used in spoken and written communication by organizational members to recall past events, illustrate a statement/argument with an example and express wishes for the future (Boje, 1994; Meyer, 1995; Rosile, Boje, Carlon, Downs, & Saylor, 2013). This definition focuses on storylines and argumentation in relation to meaning making, rather than “story grammar” such as plot lines (Brown, 1990). In the literature, stories and narratives are sometimes used interchangeably; however, in this study a distinction is made between these concepts. The former focuses on the agency of individuals as in, ‘an individual tells a story’ while the latter is comprised of multiple sources, that is, stories across an organization may collectively form a narrative. Storytelling also emphasizes polyvocality – the interweaving of multiple voices – and interpretations of organizational

life, which construct meaning systems for organizational members (Sole & Wilson, 2002; Sonenshein, 2010). The polyvocal focus provides a complimentary lens for investigating change within HEIs as it reflects its multi-culture composition. Furthermore, the focus on agency, namely how individuals engage with change, enables further understanding of the common difficulties that may arise during change implementation as depicted in the literature (Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Lee et al., 2016; Trice, 2003). Despite these parallels, the university is rarely studied as a storytelling organization (for exceptions see, Brown & Humphreys, 2003; Clark, 1972).

Stories serve different purposes within an organization; they may convey organizational values (Meyer, 1995), generate group bonding (Fletcher, 1996), and/or signal group identity (Helmer, 1993). During organizational change, storytelling aids organizational members in making sense of change (Brown & Humphreys, 2003) as well as channels support and reduces resistance (Currie & Brown, 2003; Elving, 2005). Within this literature, authors also outline strategies for effective change communication. For example, Ford and Ford (1995) suggest four types of conversations to have with organizational members during a change process: (1) initiating conversations, outlining the change to come; (2) understanding conversations, for developing comprehension; (3) action conversations, to push through activities; and (4) closure conversations in which the change is assessed and reflected upon. Whereas Ford and Ford (1995) emphasize sequential conversations, Buchanan and Dawson (2007) alternatively view organizational change as a “multi-story process” wherein multiple individuals co-create fluid change narratives⁹ that may vary due to the perspective of the narrator(s) or intended audience.

Within a university, stories surrounding organizational change will likely reflect the multi-story perspective as well as impose specific parameters or features due to its multi-culture composition. Therefore, this study focuses on change communication through the multi-story lens exploring the possibilities of multiple storytellers, storylines, and audiences. The storytelling approach offers an alternative perspective to studying organizational change within higher education as it focuses on the actions of individuals and how they, as members of the university, understand and react to change. The literature indicates that internationalization is perceived and experienced differently across the university (Jiang & Carpenter, 2013; Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Otten, 2003; Trice, 2003), yet internationalization, like other change processes within higher education, is seldom studied as a collaborative communication process.

Case Study

The GL project emerged in 2011¹⁰ after a group of students expressed dissatisfaction with classroom dynamics to the university leadership. Namely, there were complaints made regarding the lack of interaction between international and local students, which resulted in isolated student groups. International student well-being and integration was considered essential for the university's brand and curriculum. First, the university was externally recognized for its internationalization efforts, including having a large population of international students and staff members. In addition, the university's student-centered education approach required active student participation and collaboration. The GL project aimed to address the disconnection between students in the classroom as well as help facilitate the integration of international students in the university and the larger community. The project consisted of a range of social, cultural, and academic activities across the university.

The GL project presents a theoretically relevant case as it encompasses several contradictions and potential points of conflict. Although internationalization was viewed as a core part of the university, internationalization efforts were mostly carried out at the faculty level, an arrangement that likely stemmed from the decentralized university structure. In this sense, each faculty was equipped with their own international offices and independently organized internationalization activities such as student mobility, while the central level international office served more as a link between the internationalization agenda of the central leadership and its faculties. This created a situation in which the central administration was structurally weak and dependent on the faculties to push through the central level internationalization agenda. Moreover, the multi-level approach of the GL project also sparked some faculty resistance as it transgressed autonomy boundaries: It linked the central administration, the faculties, and the classroom – domains that under normal circumstances operate mostly independently and separately. The GL project was also organized on a volunteer basis meaning that faculties were not required to participate in it. The faculties had to be ‘won-over’ by a taskforce of motivated volunteers.

Research Methods

Engaging with organizational members in conversation has shown to prompt storytelling and in organizational research interviews have been used as a vehicle for story collection (Brown & McMillan, 1991; Meyer, 1995). Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals, who volunteered in the GL project leadership or associated internationalization committees that were tasked with carrying out the project (these individuals are collectively referred to as the ‘taskforce’ in the study). Interviewees were selected through purposeful and snowball

sampling: initially individuals were identified via the university website and later aided in identifying other interviewees¹¹. The interviewees held both academic and administrative positions within the university, with administrators stemming from both the central level and faculties (see Table 2).

Table 2: Interviewee Characteristics

Nationality		Position		Level		Employment (yrs.)	
int'l	local	academic	admin.	faculty	central level	average	span
7	7	11	3	10	4	12 yrs.	3 – 33 yrs.

The interview guide drew on examples from storytelling studies (for example, see Meyer, 1995) and consisted of a mixture of open-ended questions designed to incite spontaneous storytelling (i.e., Can you recall a time when...?) as well as direct questions (i.e., How was the project communicated? What reactions occurred?). The interviews lasted on average 53 minutes (ranging from 33 to 123 minutes) and were conducted in person (aside from one skype interview) in the interviewee’s office or a nearby meeting room. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Using the NVivo software, a thematic analysis was conducted inspired by the rhetorical approach to narrative analysis developed by Feldman, Sköldbberg, Brown, and Horner (2004). In this approach, stories are first identified within each interview account and later organized under larger themes. These thematic groups were inspired by story templates found in the literature: Vaara et al. (2006) describes the narrative templates - authorization, moralization, and normalization from Van Leeuwen’s model, in which organizational change is legitimized by appealing to collectively held notions of authority, moral correctness and normalcy.

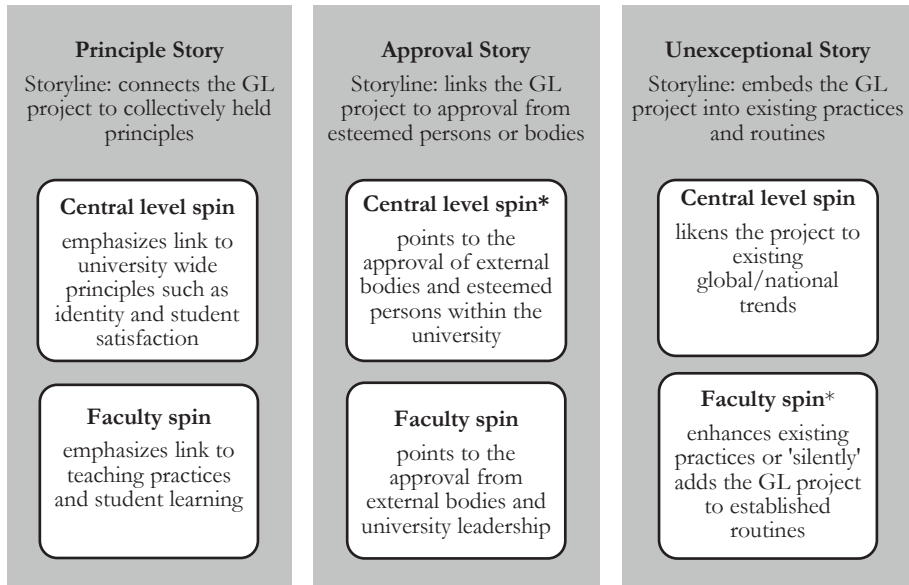
Green's (2004) templates consist of pathos, logos, and ethos, and reflect on rhetoric that appeals to emotions, efficient actions, and social norms. These templates were later modified based on codes that emerged from the data.

Findings

In the following sections, three story templates are identified: The Principle Story, the Approval Story, and the Unexceptional Story (see Figure 1). These story templates emerged through the reflections of the taskforce and were used during communication about the GL project to university stakeholders. The task of gaining support for the project was not without difficulties, as the resistance of the faculties and their denial or dismissal of student integration issues was a noted and shared obstacle among the interviewees. Additional complications emerged due to the fact that the GL project was centrally led. The interviewees explained that although university stakeholders generally accepted the premise of internationalization, change from outside the faculties was not always warmly received. The taskforce was charged with navigating this turbulent environment and channeling institutional support for their project.

Each of the three-story templates follows a basic storyline; however, stories were given different 'spins' depending on the storyteller and intended audience. These nuances are depicted in the organization of the findings, in which the main storyline of the template is first introduced followed by 'spins' employed by central level and faculty storytellers to their audiences of the university community and individual faculties respectively.

Figure 1: Story Templates



* A story template was more prominent among certain storytellers

The Principle Story

The **Principle Story** was a key story told by the taskforce members. In this story template, a connection was highlighted between the GL project and core university principles such as the university's identity, student satisfaction, and teaching approach. These principles were often historically rooted to the institution's origins as well as distinct to the university's identity and brand. By linking the GL project to collectively understood principles, this story served to validate the project to internal stakeholders, granting the project merit and in some cases underlining its urgency.

Central Level Spin

The position of central level taskforce members afforded them a bird's eye view of activities around the university. However, this position as the interviewees explained, also disconnected them from activities within the individual faculties such as teaching practices and classroom interactions. Therefore, their spin of the principle story seemed to compensate for this limitation. In their communication to the different faculties, they linked the GL project to collectively held university-wide principles such as identity and student satisfaction. Regarding identity, the university prided itself on its foundational connection to internationalization, as one interviewee explained, "It's built into our DNA". This deep, historical link was centrally exhibited in the university brand and often advertised as the unique selling point of its recruitment strategies. Central level storytellers framed the GL project in connection to this international identity, situating the project as a way of owning up to their reputation, or as one interviewee explained, "put[ing] our money where our mouth is and really add[ing] value and content and depth to those messages we are selling." Tying the university's international identity to student satisfaction was another storyline. As one central administrator explained:

/.../what's been a proven formula [is] using student satisfaction [as a] way of bringing certain topics to attention, like we did with the GL project. If we say 49% of students don't feel like they're in an inclusive climate /.../ that definitely gives us a sense of urgency and showing [the university community] that there's a need to improve services /.../ [and] student satisfaction is important to the faculties /.../

Additionally, central level storytellers underlined the importance the university placed on 'their responsibility' towards international students -

that is not just to recruit them but also to ensure that they have a positive experience. As a central administrator explained,

“it’s one thing to say, “let’s go to China and recruit 200 students /.../ and once they are here, you say, ok well, enjoy! I think it’s also our responsibility to take these people into [our] networks and to include them”.

This collectively felt responsibility towards international students was echoed in several accounts across the faculties and central administration.

Faculty Spin

Among the faculty taskforce members, the principle story was spun differently due to the insider status of these individuals. As insiders, their principle story emphasized a connection between the GL project and teaching and student learning. The main storyline centered on how the GL project supported the core teaching approach and desired student learning outcomes. The university curriculum is based on the cornerstones of group and interactive learning, a design which requires active student participation and group harmony. Thus, the storytellers connected these desired classroom conditions to the GL’s purpose of bringing culturally diverse perspectives into the classroom as well as improving student integration.

For instance, a few storytellers would give examples on how an engaged multicultural classroom had given life to abstract classroom discussions such as the economic crisis and electoral processes in different countries and cultural contexts. The principle story was also told in relation to deep learning among the students. Similar to the central administrators, the faculty storytellers were also aware of the value placed on student satisfaction; however, in their stories they did not emphasize student

evaluations and survey results, but rather highlighted successful learning experiences as a demonstration of the project's value.

The principle stories demonstrated to their audiences a common purpose or set of values and emphasized how the GL project contributes to or compliments these. Different spins of the principle story exhibit how although principles may have been shared across the university, stakeholders perceived and engaged with them differently depending on their own position in relation to others (faculty members vs. central administrators) and their level of interaction with students.

The Approval Story

The **Approval Story** centered on citing approval from high ranked individuals within the university or external bodies. Central administrators relied more heavily on this storyline than individuals situated in the faculties, as the former appeared to use this template to counter their weaker position in the decentralized university structure.

Central Level Spin

The decentralized structure of the university limited the ability of the central administration to demand that faculties adopt new practices such as the GL project. Additionally, the interviewees explained that there was a distrustful relationship between the faculties and central administration. Consequently, in the eyes of the faculties, centrally led internationalization activities were viewed as lacking in vision, consistency, and understanding of how the faculties operate. Contrarily, the faculties had a reputation among the central administration of being unreceptive to any outside internationalization efforts. To counter faculty resistance, the central administrators wove an approval story where the focus was redirected

from ‘we, central administrators say the GL project is important’ to ‘those we respect think this project is important’ by referring to support from high ranked individuals within the university or external organizations. For example, one version of this story focused on citing external support from the national accreditation agency and/or other external university networks in order to legitimize the project in the eyes of internal stakeholders. Although citing approval from external bodies was helpful, referring to internal support was crucial in order to channel further internal support. One administrator explained one had to build “a coalition of the willing”, that is first target faculties that were interested in the project and once positive results emerged, stories of their success could be told to the reluctant faculties. Another method for citing internal support was to enlist a colleague to serve as a messenger on behalf of the central administration. As a central administrator explained:

/.../ I have to be realistic. I'm just support staff. My highest degree is a master's degree and I know not every professor or associate professor in every faculty will take me seriously. It's not meant in a negative or derogatory way, but I know that is also how academics think and if there is an academic who has to make a decision, they may not accept the message from me but this may be a different story [if] a professor sells the message ... the better strategy as sad as it is, is to bring in a more senior academic to convince his peers at eye level /.../

These approval stories demonstrate the central administration’s reliance on other actors’ authority and approval to assert and strengthen their position in relation to the faculties.

Faculty Spin

The approval story was employed to a much lesser extent among the faculty storytellers and in most cases used to justify resources needed for

the project, such as additional paid working hours or personnel. For example, faculty storytellers highlighted how the support from external organizations was used to gain more tangible support for the project's implementation or how they harnessed the official praise from the university leadership to gain legitimacy for their work on the project. In one case, a faculty member describes how receiving an internationalization award from an external organization helped move the project forward:

/.../ [the external organization] really thought that [the GL project] was the winning formula because all the nationalities interact, they have to discuss with one another, it's student centered, it's small scale. So, in their view, this is the ideal breeding ground for a lot of competencies that future graduates will need. So, then this became all the more important that we really drive this GL concept forward /.../

This storyline was likely less prominent among the faculties as these storytellers were not faced with the same challenges as their administrative counterparts of asserting themselves in a somewhat distrustful and resistant environment. Also, there appeared to be a collectively held belief among the faculty storytellers that although approval from external bodies and the university leadership were helpful, these bodies had limited expertise on the internal activities of faculties, as they, as one interviewee put it “[they are] up somewhere far away ... [and] things happen in the faculty”.

The Unexceptional Story

The **Unexceptional Story** centered on packaging the GL project as a standard practice and linking it to existing practices at the university or within the university landscape in order to minimize resistance among stakeholders. This storytelling technique was more prominent among the

faculty storytellers than the central administrators, likely due to the former's closer connection to daily practices within their faculties, which enabled them to draw more links between established practices and the GL project.

Central Level Spin

At the central level, the unexceptional story involved highlighting the commonness of the GL project by linking it to global or national trends in higher education. One administrator explained,

/.../We say, “hey look at what they are doing at Smiths University¹²,” it’s natural, people [at the university] will notice and think, “Oh, ok if they are already working on that [then] we shouldn't be left behind/.../

In this sense, the central administration pointed to the efforts among competing universities to normalize their own internationalization activities within existing developments of the landscape, as well as project the underlying message of keeping up with other internationalized universities. This link to competition is also related to a core university principle: its international legacy. In another version of this story, the GL project was connected to the university's historically rooted international identity as seen in the principle story; however, the emphasis in both these versions was placed on painting the GL project as a continuation of the university's legacy rather than a new development.

Faculty Spin

Storytellers at the faculty level approached the unexceptional story differently and sought openly or covertly to link the project to existing practices in their departments or faculties. For example, the storytellers

would openly discuss the project's enhancement of established practices, such as instructor training or course electives for students. In this way, the project was discussed as supplemental to existing structures rather than something that required extra work. Moreover, a few storytellers also recalled how they covertly embedded the GL project into established practices. For example, instead of communicating directly about the GL project, the storytellers remained silent and interwove elements of the GL project into the existing curriculum without labelling them as such. This strategy emerged after unexpected reactions from students in the classroom. One interviewee recalled,

/.../I think we initially made the mistake of labeling this extra material [in the courses] /... /as the GL project and it was put on a separate page in the course manual with a frame around it. We learned the lesson that students then perceive it as something that they don't need to pay attention to as it won't be in the exam for the course so it is something that they can safely ignore. Now we have sort of hidden it in the coursework/.../

The interviewee went on to explain that by removing the label, this enabled key elements of the project to become “really a normal part of the course”. A central administrator of the project also shared this interviewee's opinion, namely that sometimes silence is the best strategy,

/.../[the GL project is] a silent sort of activity - by creating programs to integrate international students a bit better in local society and the university /.../ these are sort of hidden silent measures that aim to have a better cooperation/.../ if we don't have these complaints anymore that students say; you are an international [university] but /.../ many people feel excluded/.../ [this] might be part of the result of the project/.../ if you would ask people here they would say well we never heard about the GL project and I think that is good/.../

Thus, the GL project was rolled out with the strategy ‘the less said, the better’ that is by not as one interviewee put, “shouting about this and that”, the project was woven into existing practices in order to minimize resistance among faculty members and students. This strategy enabled the purpose of improving student integration to be realized and later results of the project were communicated to university stakeholders.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, organizational storytelling was explored as a tool to communicate internationalization change to university stakeholders. The story templates employed by the taskforce were used to align the GL project with organizational values (principle story), strengthen its validity through external and internal support (approval story), and normalize it by framing it as routine (unexceptional story). These findings resonate with our understanding of organizational storytelling and its purposes (Fletcher, 1996; Meyer, 1995) as well as have distinct parallels to the templates from Green (2004) and Vaara et al. (2006) used to guide the analysis. For example, the principle story reflects both moralization identified by Vaara et al. (2006) and a fusion of pathos and ethos noted by Green (2004). These concepts similarly explore justification and legitimization through moral reasoning, social norms, and emotions. The approval story demonstrates strong links to the authorization concept from Vaara and colleagues which illustrates how change is legitimized through appeals to authority. Lastly, the unexceptional story reflects the concepts normalization (Vaara et al., 2006) and logos (Green, 2004) in terms of rationalizing change by highlighting its normalcy and efficiency.

The findings also indicate that aspects of the university culture framed and constrained the art of storytelling practiced. For example, the parameters

of the storylines appeared to be constrained by the decentralized university structure. This was visible in the different spins of the faculty and central level storytellers: for instance, the approval story was more prominent among the central level storytellers due to their structurally weak position in comparison to the independent faculties. Moreover, both groups of storytellers also acknowledged certain understandings within their faculty culture or the larger university culture. For example, the distrustful relationship between the faculties and central administration was repeatedly noted by both groups of interviewees. Sometimes this relationship was directly mentioned by the storytellers as a preliminary explanation to why and how they framed their communication about the GL project, while in other accounts it was less explicitly linked. Regardless, the storytellers were aware of this discord and their stories either openly played to it or were consciously or perhaps subconsciously adapted. For instance, in the case of the central administration the 'academic messenger' strategy was consciously used in their approval story to compensate for distrust among the faculties while in the faculty approval story, citing university leadership was deemed less helpful for generating internal support. Cultural understandings like the distrustful relationship as well as the values mentioned in the principle story played a role in dictating which stories could be told, to whom and by which storyteller. Therefore, from this conclusion, a univocal story of change will likely falter in such a setting as the university, which is comprised of many cultures, practices, and concerns (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Tierney, 1988a) and the art of storytelling employed should reflect and adapt to this diversity.

The study of organizational storytelling has yet to fully emerge in higher education research and change processes are primarily studied from the macro perspective (By et al., 2008; Gornitzka, 1999; Gumpert, 2000). Organizational storytelling, alternatively, is agency focused drawing on the

perceptions and interactions of individuals as they implement, experience, and make sense of change. This perspective furthers our understanding of the complexities involved in change processes such as internationalization as well as provides insight into strategies for communication.

Moreover, further research is needed to explore other elements that influence the storytelling process. For example, this study was not able to explore the chronological dimension of storytelling as it relied on retrospective data – the recollections of the interviewees – which did not allow for the analysis of stories as they were told in present time, that is, their frequency or if specific story templates were used in combination. The study was also limited to the perspectives of interviewees that collectively held positive views of the GL project, thus competing and contradictory storylines were not explored. Unpacking these elements and others in the storytelling process will further our understanding of the nuances involved in communicating change to university stakeholders.

⁹ The authors use ‘narrative’ as an overarching term to describe stories, scripts, anecdotes, legends, sagas, histories, myths, reports, and other discursive reports (p. 672).

¹⁰ The GL project is still ongoing at the university case study.

¹¹ Prior to their participation, the interviewees were sent information sheets and consent forms outlining the terms of their participation. Furthermore, given the small number of interviewees, identifiable markers such as position and departments have been removed and the university name is not revealed in accordance to anonymity agreements.

¹² Pseudonym.

6. Framing Internationalization: Culture, Politics & the Local Community Meet Internationalization in Taiwan

Based on:

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An earlier draft was presented at the annual conference (2018) of the European Educational Research Association (EERA) in Bolzano, Italy.

Abstract

Taiwan, like its neighbors, is actively internationalizing its higher education system. However, scholars caution that internationalization is not always aligned with the needs of local academics, students and communities as Western education values often dominate this process. In response, this study adds to the limited empirical research on stakeholders' perceptions of internationalization in Taiwan. It investigates how university and governmental stakeholders frame internationalization and the changes it brings to their institutions and higher education system. Using Goffman's frame analysis, three frames were identified – cultural, political, and localization. University stakeholders primarily employed the cultural frame to assign meaning to intercultural interactions at the university by referencing Taiwan's Confucian heritage. Governmental officials and Mainland Chinese students chiefly used the political frame to explain internationalization drivers and their mobility experiences by referencing Taiwan's geopolitical situation. Lastly, local professors and students mainly used the localization frame to explain their stance on the English language policy at their university, a policy they criticized for its implementation missteps. These findings demonstrate how internationalization is embedded in existing cultural, political, and local narratives, which shape its meaning and purpose.

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education is on the forefront of many institutional and national agendas. It refers to the process of engaging in international education and research activities with the goal of encouraging the mobility of people, ideas, and educational programs. For governments and higher education institutions (HEIs) alike, internationalization is an answer to depleting state coffers, national and international competition, and the need to produce a globally competent workforce. Ideally, internationalization encourages intercultural understanding and mutual respect (Stier, 2006), but scholars have voiced concern over how Western education values dominate this process (Breit, Obijiofor, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Chen, 2012; Chou, 2008; Laufer & Gorup, 2019; Palmer & Cho, 2012; Yang, 2001). Furthermore, it has been argued that internationalization enforces an institutional hierarchy where Western universities lead the ranks and are mimicked by developing and non-Western education systems (Chen & Lo, 2013; Deem et al., 2008; Joo & Halx, 2012; Mok, 2007; Song & Tai, 2007). This critique has prompted some scholars to discern that internationalization is in actuality another form of Westernization, Americanization, and even neo-colonialism (Collins, Castro, & Ryan, 2016; Lo, 2009; Zeleza, 2016).

In particular, there is a focus in this literature on how East Asian countries engage with internationalization (see for example Chan, 2013; Marginson, 2011; Mok, 2009; Wang & Lin, 2018). Some scholars warn that internationalization efforts in these systems may endanger local academic culture (Lo, 2009), contribute to the loss of local language in the classroom and research (Mok, 2007), and lead to harmful neoliberal promotion and publication practices at the university (Chou, 2008, 2014b). Another layer of this discussion is the related body of literature that compares Confucian

and Western education models, painting them as “binary opposites” (Ryan & Louie, 2007, p. 404). This categorization has been criticized for contributing to the perpetuation of cultural essentialism – the practice of reducing complex cultural contexts to simplistic stereotypes (Holliday, 2019). Often in this group of studies, the Confucian model is characterized by its emphasis on group harmony, the strong authority of educators, and the high value assigned to education for individual status and societal development (Huang & Gove, 2012; Li, 2016; Li, 2012; Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005; Spangler, 2016; Sun et al., 2019). On the other hand, the Western model is linked to the concepts of critical thinking and individualism (Jian, Sandnes, Huang, Huang, & Hagen, 2010; Ryan & Louie, 2007). In this light, internationalization is associated with Western education principles, which are depicted in the literature as contrary to Confucian values (Ryan & Louie, 2007).

Building on these discussions in the literature, this study investigates the internationalization process in the Republic of China (Taiwan). Internationalization in Taiwan is a relatively recent phenomenon that started gaining momentum in the early 2000s. Research on internationalization in Taiwan generally focuses on student mobility (recruitment, experiences, and trends) and the international classroom (Chan, 2014; Chang, Bai, & Wang, 2014; Chin & Ching, 2009; Ching, Wang, & Wen, 2016; Chou & Ching, 2015; Chou, Roberts, & Ching, 2012; Lau & Lin, 2016; Lee, 2014; Lewis, Ching, & Su, 2012; Ma, 2014; Roberts, Chou, & Ching, 2010), in addition to institutional strategies (Chang, 2015; Chin, Wu, & Ching, 2012; Ching & Chin, 2011), and system-level trends (Chan, 2012, 2013; Mok, 2000; Mok & Chan, 2008; Song & Tai, 2007). Empirical studies largely center on the voices and experiences of international students (Ching et al., 2016; Lau & Lin, 2016; Roberts et al., 2010), with fewer studies focusing on the perceptions of local or

international professors (see a few examples, Chou & Chan, 2016; Ho, Lin, & Yang, 2015) or a mixture of different university stakeholders (Chen & Lo, 2013). Moreover, more critically focused studies that reflect on the impact of neoliberal developments and internationalization efforts on the Taiwanese higher education system rarely draw on the perspectives of university stakeholders (Chou, 2014a; Deem et al., 2008; Lo, 2009; Mok, 2007; Yang, 2001).

In response to these research gaps, this study explores how different groups of HEI stakeholders use frames (Goffman, 1974) to make sense of the internationalization process in Taiwan by conducting an in-depth case study of a highly internationalized university in the capital city of Taipei. Through this investigation, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of different HEI voices as well as empirically explore the concerns voiced by some scholars regarding the negative impacts of internationalization on the local academic culture. These concerns are linked to a conceptual understanding of the Western/Confucian binary in the literature; a premise that is critically reflected upon in this study.

Frame Analysis

In 1974, Goffman published his seminal work *Frame Analysis*, which provided an analytical framework for studying social interaction. Goffman borrowed the term ‘frame’ from Bateson’s earlier work, *A Theory of Play and Fantasy*, in which he describes the “schemata of interpretation” individuals use to assign meaning to interaction (1974, p. 21). Goffman further detailed how individuals possess multiple ‘frameworks’ and may apply them simultaneously to “locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences” (p. 21), in turn

essentially answering the question, “What is it that’s going on here?” (p. 8). In this sense, individuals frame social interactions as humorous, serious, or playful by interpreting specific cues.

Goffman’s frame analysis has been applied and expanded upon in numerous disciplines. For instance, it is frequently used in communication studies to investigate how news events are framed in the media (Brantner, Geise, & Lobinger, 2012; Matthes, 2009; Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014), in policy research to explore policy problems and implementation (Koon, Hawkins, & Mayhew, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Fotiou, 1998) as well as in research on social movements and political issues ranging from women’s rights to European integration (Benford & Snow, 2000; Helbling, Hoeglinger, & Wüest, 2010; Levin, 2005; Tsetsura, 2013). In addition, frame analysis has been employed in higher education research to explore university practices and developments such as English language teaching and learning (Bell, 2000; Pennington & Hoekje, 2014), civic education (Ortloff, 2005), and the entrepreneurial university model (Reyes, 2017).

Culture or cultural dimensions have also been studied through frame analysis through the investigation of so-called ‘cultural frames’, a term that refers to “repertoires of cultural and ideological symbols and rhetoric that resonate with a mass audience” (Su, 2009, p. 3). There are different interpretations regarding the scope of a ‘mass audience’: for instance, Howard-Grenville and Hoffman (2003) describe cultural frames among organizational members, which emanate from their organizational culture while other scholars link cultural frames to national culture or larger society (Bloch, 2003; Su, 2009). Frames may also be adapted or be created in response to different cultural settings. For example, according to Agar (1994), engaging in intercultural contexts may require individuals to build new frames, or in Agar’s words, an ‘intercultural frame’ as intercultural

interactions cannot always be understood through preexisting “schemata of interpretation”.

In sum, frame analysis is used throughout the literature to investigate sensemaking processes. Framing is used by individuals (and groups) to make sense of situations and social interactions, as well as by actors seeking to influence and shape the content of discussions. Underlining these different interpretations of frame analysis is the common goal of understanding different viewpoints of a phenomenon, e.g. a news event, policy development, organizational interaction etc. This study applies frame analysis as an analytical lens in order to understand how groups of university and other involved stakeholders (e.g. governmental officials) make sense of internationalization within the Taiwanese context. Thus, the research questions posed in this study are:

- How do university and governmental stakeholder groups frame internationalization efforts in Taiwan and at their university?
- To what extent do stakeholder groups (e.g. administrators, professors, and students) employ similar frames?
- How are the concerns raised in the literature regarding the impacts of internationalization framed by university and governmental stakeholders?

The first two research questions aim to further our understanding of stakeholder perceptions of internationalization in Taiwan with a specific focus on the employment of ‘cultural frames’ (shared understanding across groups) while the third question seeks to examine the critical issues voiced in the literature, which require further empirical investigation.

Context: Internationalization in Taiwan

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is a de facto state meaning that it has an independent government; however, its sovereignty is not globally recognized. The international community largely adheres to the One China Policy under which Taiwan is considered an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This policy has historical roots: in 1949, the Kuomintang government fled to Taiwan after losing the Chinese civil war to the Communist Party of China and claimed the island for the Republic of China (Law, 2004). Today, cross-strait relations remain contentious, with China recognizing Taiwan as subordinate and the current Taiwanese administration, the Democratic Progressive Party calling for its independence (Chan, 2014). Due to this political situation, Taiwan seeks international ties through non-political channels, such as educational exchange and international cooperation in higher education (Ma, 2014).

Internationalization first drew the attention of the Taiwanese government in the early 2000s. In the decade prior, Taiwan's transition to a democracy had prompted tremendous changes in the higher education system in terms of growth, institutional autonomy, and a shift towards neoliberal practices. During this transition, the system became oversaturated expanding from 50 institutions in 1990 to 162 in 2012, which coincided with more budgetary autonomy for HEIs and less governmental funding available per institution (Chang, Nyeu, & Chang, 2015; Chou, 2008, 2015). Furthermore, declining birth rates across Taiwan have also shrunk the pool of prospective students (Song & Tai, 2007). These conditions have heightened competition among HEIs regarding securing students to fill their classrooms and funds to support their operations and have pressured

the Ministry of Education (MOE) to seek solutions abroad (Ma, 2014; Mizzi, 2017).

MOE efforts have largely focused on improving the international competitiveness of Taiwanese HEIs (through increasing their positions in international rankings), with such projects as “Plan to Develop First-class Universities and Top-level Research Centers”. This project was launched in 2006 with the aim of having at least one first-class university within ten years (ranked in the top 100 universities worldwide, or in the top 80 by U.S. standards) and at least ten top-level research centers or fields in Asia within 5 years (MOE, 2006). The MOE also concentrated on increasing international student recruitment, with the number of international students growing from 3,351 in 2001 to 117,960 in 2017 (MOE, 2008a, 2018). More recently, governmental recruitment strategies have focused on attracting students from Southeast and South Asian countries as part of the Southbound Policy (2016), a policy designed to promote Taiwan’s regional attractiveness (MOE, 2017). In addition to these efforts, the MOE has stressed the importance of “creat[ing] a friendly environment for international students” (MOE, 2015). This translates into providing the appropriate infrastructure for international students, such as English-taught programs, which has resulted in a capacity challenge for many institutions (Lau & Lin, 2016). Among HEIs, international student recruitment and their accommodation is the main internationalization activity (Chin et al., 2012).

However, international student recruitment is complicated by the political tensions between China and Taiwan. Until August 2010, the Taiwanese government banned the recruitment of degree-seeking Chinese students (Chou & Ching, 2015). In Taiwan, opposing parties argued that these students posed a threat to national security and their presence was a misuse

of public money and educational opportunities that should be reserved for Taiwanese students (Chan, 2014). The Taiwanese government responded with the “Three Limitations and Six Noes Principle” regarding the recruitment and residence of degree-seeking students from Mainland China. The three limitations narrow the recruitment scope by restricting the total number of students admitted, which qualifications are recognized, and students’ access to certain academic fields (MOE, 2008b). The six noes refers to restrictions placed on Mainland Chinese students including: (1) no off-campus employment, (2) no professional licenses, (3) no admittance to quotas reserved for local students, (4) no bonus points on university entrance exams, (5) no governmental scholarships and (6) no employment in Taiwan after graduation (MOE, 2008b).

Research Methods

An in-depth case study was conducted at Pacific University¹³, a highly internationalized institution located in Taiwan’s capital, Taipei. Pacific University is well-known for its internationalization efforts, including several English-taught, internationally focused degree programs, as well as its large number of international students and internationally trained academic staff. Data was collected through interviews and a focus group with involved stakeholders. Participant selection was based on two objectives: (1) targeting individuals that were directly involved with internationalization efforts at the MOE/university and (2) selecting a broad range of university stakeholders from the student body, faculty, and administration, who were not directly involved in institutional internationalization efforts. The aim of this sampling strategy was to maximize the variability of theoretically relevant experiences at a Taiwanese HEI (see Table 3).

At the same time, some participants shared similarities; for example, all the university staff members had previously studied abroad and those with doctorate degrees had earned their PhDs in Western countries (e.g. the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom). This is a common phenomenon in Taiwan, as Western countries were historically favored for graduate training due to the limited opportunities at home (Chang, 1992). Even today with graduate training structures in place, Taiwanese students are the 7th largest group of international students in the United States (Pei-ju, 2018). Thus, by applying a form of theoretical sampling that focused both on homogeneity and heterogeneity in terms of the theoretically important features, saturation was achieved for the specific context studied.

Table 3: Overview of Participants

Type of position	Number of Participants	Academic discipline¹⁴	Nationality¹⁵
Government	2	n/a	Taiwanese
University Administration	4	business & economics n/a	Taiwanese
Professors (assistant, associate & full)	7	social sciences & humanities sciences business & economics education	Taiwanese – 5 Internationals – 2
Students	12 6 – interviews 6 – focus group	social sciences & humanities sciences education	Taiwanese – 2 Mainland Chinese – 4 Internationals – 5 Overseas Chinese – 1

Participants were invited via email or in person. Information about the project and data management plan was provided to participants to

establish informed consent. Contact to participants was often facilitated through third parties: the author's contacts helped identify relevant participants, and in some cases sent emails of introduction. In total, nineteen interviews were conducted, seventeen with university stakeholders (e.g. university administrative staff, professors, and students) and two with governmental officials working at the ministry of education and a related agency. In addition, a focus group was carried out with six students. The interviews and focus group were conducted in English in either a private office, meeting room, classroom, or café. During the fieldwork, it became clear that using English in the interviews limited the pool of student participants, as not all students felt comfortable speaking one-on-one in English. Therefore, a focus group was used as an alternative, low-stakes format for students. Organized as an informal discussion, the focus group put less pressure on students to speak at length as they could freely choose to contribute to the conversation. This format helped the students feel at ease and all actively participated in the discussion.

All interactions were recorded, transcribed verbatim and based on open-ended questions related to internationalization policy and practices (e.g. drivers, experiences, challenges, and perceptions) as they pertained to the participants. For example, governmental officials naturally focused more on policy, and students reflected more on classroom interactions. This research design positioned the participants as the main narrators and allowed important topics to emerge. On average, the interviews lasted 64 minutes (ranging from 38 minutes to 1 h 50 minutes) and the focus group was conducted in 1 hour and 42 minutes.

The coding of the transcripts initially followed a more inductive 'open' approach as prescribed by Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990),

but as the analysis progressed a thematic analysis was applied, as it became increasingly evident that there were strong links made by the participants to Taiwan's Confucian culture. Confucian cultural values identified in the literature and by the participants were used as additional thematic codes (Maxwell, 2005). The codes were later grouped into larger categories and the prominent frames selected. I also acknowledge my position as a cultural outsider in the Taiwanese context with the realization that my cultural assumptions may influence the analysis. Therefore, I rely on the participants' perceptions and the literature when making connections between the data and the Confucian culture as a counter to cultural reductionism.

Findings

The findings revealed that three frames – cultural, political, and localization – were prominently used by stakeholders to make sense of internationalization in Taiwan and their experiences at Pacific University. The cultural frame drew upon a collective understanding of Taiwan's Confucian heritage while the political frame built upon shared knowledge of Taiwan's political climate. In addition, the localization frame illustrated a common interpretation among local participants concerning the use of English at the university. In the following sections, these frames and their role in the sense-making process are explored in further detail.

Cultural Frame

Like its neighbors - China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Korea - Taiwan shares a Confucian heritage (Biggs, 1998). Confucianism is based on the teachings of Confucius (551 – 479 BCE), a Chinese philosopher and educator, who contemplated that past society existed in a state of harmony

and in order to return to this state individuals must follow prescribed ethical and social/religious rules (Fingarette, 1972; Li, 2012). For example, there are the so-called *five bonds* which define a social hierarchy based on respect for elders and their care of subordinates: emperor over minister, father over son, husband over wife, elder brother over younger brother and, to varying degrees, friend over friend (Fingarette, 1972; Kutcher, 2000).

In sociological and education literature, Confucian values have been found to shape education norms and practice (Biggs, 1998; Chou & Spangler, 2016; Ho & Yu, 2016; Huang & Gove, 2012; Hwang, 2012; Marginson, 2011; Sun & Roumell, 2017) and traces of these values were identified by participants in the findings of this study. The *cultural frame* – referencing Taiwan’s Confucian heritage – was used by participants as a sensemaking mechanism. This frame was primarily employed by university stakeholders, particularly individuals from Western countries. Internationals (especially Westerners) mainly relied on this frame when confronted with perceived cultural differences at the university, while local participants used this frame to explain the normative positioning of internationalization in Taiwanese society.

Internationalization Reinforcing Confucian Education Values

Many of the local participants held overly positive views of the notion of internationalization, although they were also critical of some of its practices, such as the English language policy, which will be explored in a later section. These positive associations may be explained by how locals aligned internationalization with Confucian education values, which in turn underlined its normative authority. For instance, several participants used the cultural frame to describe the high societal value placed on

education in Taiwan, a cultural narrative that supported participation in higher education. A Taiwanese professor explained:

... I think it is embedded in Chinese culture, the more educated you are the more successful you will be considered... an education credential itself is considered a status, so a lot of people want to receive higher education ...

This culturally rooted idea that education conveys status was reflected in some participants' understanding of the rationale driving internationalization in Taiwan. For example, several remarked on how internationalization contributed to improving Taiwan's status, in terms of its internal development, participation in the global arena and regional and international competitiveness.

Moreover, a university administrator detailed how being part of the scholar class (*Sbi*) does not only convey personal status, but scholars are also traditionally tasked with modelling "virtuous" behavior:

... [In] Confucian tradition all the way down to the present, [scholars] have some kind of quality and that quality, many call it a virtue ... it essentially means that they are here for the social good... So, we keep on thinking this way that we want to have the traditional scholar and they are devoted to the society...

The administrator went on to describe how internationalization was seen as a continuation of scholarly devotion to society, as it, "contributed to the great harmony, to some peace in the world" by equipping students with the necessary tools to "resolve possible conflicts" and "contribute to human civilization." The idea that internationalization is a positive force in creating cultural understanding is a rationale identified in the literature (Stier, 2006), but among these local stakeholders this rationale was embedded in an existing value system.

Academic Hierarchy

Local and international university stakeholders also used the cultural frame to make sense of cultural differences in the professoriate and international classroom. A common theme discussed was the professorial role at Pacific University. In particular, academic hierarchy was a pivotal aspect of this discussion, as many participants viewed it as a characteristic feature of a Confucian heritage country, like Taiwan. In this regard, many respondents described the professor-student relationship as hierarchical; one Taiwanese professor likened it to a “teacher and disciple” dyad. Several individuals also referred to the different roles professors take on at the university: as imparters of academic knowledge as well as “life guides” or “parental figures” providing students with advice on academic and personal matters. This role duality resonates with research on Confucian education values, which highlight the respected position teachers hold in society and their dual-roles of being authoritative figures (e.g. academic expert and classroom manager) as well as models of virtuous behavior (Kim, 2005; Li, 2016; Spangler, 2016; Wang & Lin, 2018).

Among the Western respondents, the professor-student relationship was discussed in more detail and frequency with many recalling their personal struggles in framing this relationship. For example, an international professor from North America shared a puzzling encounter he had with a student:

... I met with a student after class ... I walked out with the student; I felt uncomfortable to just get into my car when she was walking [down the hill] and then drive past her. So, I said to the student, “Would you like a lift down the hill?” And the student looked very uncomfortable, got into the car, but sat in the backseat and I just didn't understand ... I interpreted that [the student] thought of me as a chauffeur ... and she didn't say anything to me on the way

down. And my wife [who's American Taiwanese] said no, by getting into the back [of the car] she was trying to create a hierarchical distinction between you in the front. A friend would sit in the front, an equal, but a person who is a student might sit in the back...

This professor reflected on how the hierarchical distance in Taiwanese academia differed greatly from his experiences at North American universities. He recalled as a student having largely informal interactions with professors (e.g. playing squash, getting drinks, and going out to dinner), such activities he stressed were “completely outlandish” for his Taiwanese students.

Hierarchy also played a prominent role in framing interactions amongst professors. International professors and some local participants, who had spent considerable time abroad, described their difficulties navigating the hierarchical rules within the professoriate. For instance, an international professor from Western Europe explained the layered complexities of this situation:

... here [in Taiwanese academia] people take care of each other, that is what you are supposed to do that is part of this age-based hierarchy as well ...so your superiors are supposed to be a bit like a father or mother figure towards you. So if you would break that system, you won't be taken care of anymore and this might be a bit of a problem if you need things to get done... it can be an administrative nightmare sometimes [in] a Taiwanese university so you sometimes need help to survive...so it's best not to antagonize [senior academics]... I wouldn't be able to overly criticize my colleagues in a very direct way. But I could probably get away with saying, maybe [you] should look at this from a different kind of angle...

This professor further described how faculty decisions are hierarchically controlled. He explained that senior professors lead the decision-making process, and if a foreigner wants to participate, they need to adhere to the prescribed social roles and norms. Otherwise, they risk being sidelined as the “English teacher” and decisions will be made without them or in the worst case, they will be labelled the “troublesome foreigner”, which could lead to additional problems.

Another element intertwined with the hierarchy issue is the concept of *face* or *mianzi*, which may be understood as one’s prestige or reputation (Ho, 1976). Several participants described how face or face culture shaped the meaning behind certain interactions. For example, a university administrator, a local who had lived abroad for several years, described how face-culture creates challenges for the administrative side of internationalization:

... in a meeting [about internationalization], if higher ranked people [professors] make some suggestions, then people from lower ranks [administrative staff] won't speak up...I feel people should still speak up in a very diplomatic or gentle way ...because I think that's the way people can accept[critique] in our culture.

This challenge noted by the administrator was also shared by a local professor, who had also lived abroad for several years before returning to Taiwan. This professor explained, “No’ is a tricky word” to say to senior academics and “if I’m being extremely honest...if you are a junior it would be difficult to turn down [tasks].”

However, such responses were rare occurrences among Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese participants. This discrepancy is likely linked to Taiwanese respondents and Mainland Chinese students sharing a

Confucian heritage and therefore for these cultural insiders, academic hierarchy was a cultural norm. In a few other instances, hierarchy or other cultural practices were explained by cultural insiders in order to illustrate cultural differences that emerged with the presence of international students and scholars. For example, a Mainland Chinese student explained to the author, a cultural outsider, about academic hierarchy in Taiwan:

... Taiwan and Mainland China all belong to the Confucian context so there is a certain type of hierarchy ... you should show respect and address your professor, dear professor, you never address your professor like [with] Tony, or something like that ...

In a similar fashion, a Taiwanese professor explained that it should not be expected that international students from Europe or the United States behave in the same fashion as local students in terms of “keeping a distance from teachers” and “not feeling comfortable chatting with teachers”.

Furthermore, hierarchy was also discussed in terms of its influence on classroom interactions. Again, international respondents, especially from Europe and North America, were more prone to point out perceived differences and link them to Taiwan’s culture. In the following quote, an international student reflects on interactions in the Taiwanese classroom:

... I go to a liberal arts school in the U.S. ...classes are small and its very discussion based ... where professors ask probing questions to get people to think...here professors are used to lecturing and students are used to taking notes and listening ... students don't really ask a lot of questions. I don't think that it is culturally appropriate for them to do. There were times at the beginning of the semester when I would have a point to say based on my experience [and] I would raise my hand. The teacher would

let me say what I had to say. But I felt like a lot of the time I couldn't express fully what I wanted to say and the teacher would say, "Well, you have a point" and then proceed to talk about their own views...and [they were] being polite by allowing me to talk...

As this quote illustrates, classroom interactions were often compared to Western educational practices, which were painted as the opposite of the Confucian model with the Western model emphasizing group discussion, critical thinking, and challenging authority.

The more teacher-centered approach at Pacific University was found to be both beneficial and disadvantageous to the learning experience as highlighted by an international professor:

... [It's] a good classroom experience in the way that the students aren't only very polite and nice, they're ambitious, they work hard, all those things are great. But it also crosses over to the fact that it takes blood as it were to get them to speak, to get them to challenge you, to get them to say what they really think...that has to be due to the culture. By large it is a culture that involves a lot of safety and a lot of harmony...I've never been challenged, and I don't even mean mildly...My word is law...

The professor continued to describe how this lack of discussion in the classroom was also detrimental in his opinion to the students' scholarly development in his taught subject, which relied heavily on individual interpretation of texts.

However, not all professors were in agreement that the local culture limited interaction in the classroom. For example, a senior Taiwanese professor shared the advantages different perspectives bring to the classroom:

...because of internationalization, I have so many students from overseas ... because of their presence our eyes are open and not only the lecturer, but also students can hear different voices from different parts of the world. I think that's the real beauty of it ...

The cultural frame was the most prominent among the stakeholders, specifically professors, students, and university administrators. In this sense, internationalization was culturally framed as part of the existing education narrative in Taiwan, which emphasized its importance and contribution to status and the social good. International interactions at the university were also culturally framed by both cultural insiders (Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese participants) and outsiders (international participants). Cultural insiders used the cultural frame to explain or acknowledge differences in the academic culture such as academic hierarchy, while cultural outsiders used this frame to decode interactions they perceived to be at odds with their expectations and experiences. Moreover, connecting educational practices to the Western or Confucian culture is a reoccurring phenomenon in the literature (Biggs, 1998; Chou & Spangler, 2016; Ho & Yu, 2016; Huang & Gove, 2012; Hwang, 2012; Marginson, 2011; Sun & Roumell, 2017) and stakeholders in this study, who were closest to university practices (professors and students), mirrored this sensemaking mechanism.

Political Frame

Taiwan has limited diplomatic relations with the majority of countries due to its political situation with the PRC. Due to its lack of official political channels, higher education has become an arena for political positioning (Ma, 2014), in which internationalization is used as a tool of diplomacy (Schucher, 2009). The political components associated with internationalization contributed to the employment of the *political frame*

when discussing topics such as the rationale driving internationalization and the politically controversial topic of Mainland Chinese students in Taiwan. The political frame was prominently used by governmental officials and Mainland Chinese students while other stakeholders employed it more sparingly. This is likely due to officials and Mainland Chinese students being engaged in politics or a subject of a political debate, respectively.

Internationalization as a Response to Geopolitics

Due to Taiwan's geopolitical situation, the majority of participants, especially locals, agreed that internationalization was a necessary path for gaining international recognition of Taiwan. In the following quote, a governmental official explains the political agenda driving internationalization:

In 1971, Taiwan seceded from the United Nations [and] afterwards its international status diminished... [the] internationalization [of higher education] is critical, especially for the situation in Taiwan ... we are a very small country, we need lots of international friends... international education is a kind of soft power. We can know more people through education ...

Establishing international relationships, as noted in the quote, was also connected to building rapport with Western countries as a form of political positioning. For example, a Taiwanese professor stressed that it was important to demonstrate that Taiwan is “on the same side” as Western countries and “shares the same values...freedom, civil liberty and the protection of human rights”.

In line with this reasoning, making Taiwanese HEIs more internationally competitive was also about gaining and maintaining relationships with

English-speaking Western countries. The desire to follow in the path of Western universities was clearly articulated in a quote from another governmental official:

...we happened to know internationalization is important because of the U.S. followed by other countries, like the U.K., Canada, and Australia. They have recruited many students from around the world, including Taiwan and their higher education has become more and more international. I think our government may think we have to do that [too] ... I think our government sees the competition, if we don't go global - how can we compete with other countries?

Mainland Chinese Students

Political framing of internationalization was also used to explain the recruitment of Mainland Chinese students and their experiences within and outside the university. As previously discussed, the recruitment of these students is highly political due to the cross-strait situation, however at the same time they also represent an attractive alternative to countering student shortages in Taiwan. Balancing these political and economic issues was further explained by a Taiwanese professor:

Whenever I think of the policy towards Mainland Chinese students, I just feel upset about the treatment they receive... the government was persuaded by private universities to relax the [recruitment] policy so that [they] could recruit Mainland Chinese students. But there were other groups of Taiwanese [citizens] that wanted to persuade the government not to ... [they think] education should be considered a right or a privilege and why should we pay for their [Mainland Chinese students'] education? ... the government was caught in-between and the policy [that] came out [was] very strange ... so there are a lot of restrictions¹⁶and I think it is very unfair ...

This polarized public discussion filtered into the classroom and heightened the sensitivity of certain topics. For example, an international student described how the China-Taiwan relationship impacted classroom dynamics and academic discussion:

...I'm very much aware of [the China-Taiwan situation]. It is a very sensitive topic. In my sociology class, we have two students from Mainland China. I think it must be a challenge for the professor; it's a challenge to talk about Taiwanese issues and the history with Mainland China when they are around... so, [the professor] has to be careful when she talks about it...

Mainland Chinese students also keenly understood the need to tread carefully around this topic. Several students explained that the terminology a person used to refer to *China* and *Taiwan* in English or Chinese signaled to others a political leaning and could spark a political debate. In the following quote, a Mainland Chinese student explains how answering the simple question, “Where are you from?” has political connotations:

...Whether your answer is Mainland China or China, [this indicates] different political ideas... if you say you come from China that shows that China and Taiwan are two different countries. If you say, I come from Mainland China that means there is only one China ... if you say a Chinese province that means Taiwan is a province of China... I used to say I come from Mainland China when I first came here but now, I say China... Because when I say Mainland China, they will ask you many political questions...

Students were also cautious about using the correct terminology abroad; a Mainland Chinese student recalled being publically corrected for accidentally using the phrase, “Chinese students in Taiwan” during a presentation instead of the official wording, “Mainland Chinese students in Taiwan.” Due to this heightened sensitivity, some Mainland Chinese

and international students described trying to avoid this issue entirely as illustrated in the following quote from a Mainland Chinese student:

... I will go to the hairdresser and they will ask - where are you from? I will say I am in my first year in college and I am from x or y. [I] just want to stop the conversation. If I say I come from China, they will ask ...why do you come to Taiwan, what are you doing? ... Sometimes I say I am from South Korea and can't speak any Chinese and the conversation just stops ...

The combination of the political climate and the *Three Limitations and Six Noes* policy led some Mainland Chinese students to feel unwelcomed in Taiwanese society. Although this affected their experiences, it is important to note that several students also spoke about how they enjoyed several aspects of studying in Taiwan. For example, a Mainland Chinese student explains her nuanced view of Taiwan:

I don't think I'm a part of this place. I cannot do a lot of things ... if you cannot work here, then how can you still belong here? If you say, even if you are an excellent student, you cannot get any scholarship, how can you say you belong here? ... I definitely feel good here; I accept these three limitations and six noes ... beside this, I like it here very much. The most important thing here is the professors... I never thought there could be such nice professors, so considerate, [someone who] cares so much about students and talks with me every week...[someone] to guide you in your academic field and in your life and treat you like a daughter...

Due to Taiwan's political situation, internationalization opens non-political channels for international cooperation, which heightens its political importance. For this reason, governmental officials and to a lesser extent, university stakeholders, likely associated political goals with internationalization. In addition, the experiences of Mainland Chinese students were directly impacted by the cross-strait situation, resulting in

these students pivoting between being an economic solution to student shortages and pawns in a political tug-a-war.

Localization Frame

The findings also revealed a prominent frame surrounding the English language policy at Pacific University. Increasing the number of English-taught courses and English publications were major goals at the university, as these actions were considered essential for internationalizing the curriculum, recruiting international students, and remaining internationally competitive. The focus on creating English-taught curriculum is a frequent component of governmental and university-level internationalization efforts in Taiwan (Chin et al., 2012; Lau & Lin, 2016; MOE, 2015). At Pacific University, the push for more English had become a point of conflict among local participants: university leadership were more in support of these efforts while the majority of local professors and students were more critical. Among other stakeholders, international professors and students, the English policy was rarely referenced and language issues played minor parts in their narratives (e.g. some discussed their experiences learning Mandarin and related challenges).

Local professors and students employed the localization frame to explain their critical stance on the English language policy. In the following quote, a Taiwanese professor explains how there are two camps at the university with differing opinions on the English issue:

...There is a division roughly of two groups: one emphasizes the importance of internationalization; they say if you want your research community to be really competitive and to be valued internationally, then you just have to further internationalize. But the other group basically emphasizes the importance of

localization; including proper attention to local issues and also to publish some important research articles or books in Chinese [and] not just have a focus on publications in English...

The idea that research should be published in a language that is accessible to the Taiwanese public was an opinion shared by both local students and staff and may be connected to the Confucian cultural frame, which emphasizes scholarly devotion to society. In this regard, a local student expressed how the focus on English publications affects students:

...Professors are pressured to publish their knowledge, but the bad thing is that they are forced to write in English because if you want to get into the international system, you have to write in English because English is the international language. But for local students and for some local people, it is hard for us to read English or it will reduce our willingness to read [something] because our mother tongue is Chinese...So, in this case, the local students they will have less of a chance to learn something new that is being published by our scholars...

The use of English in the classroom was also a point of disagreement. There were several reports of local students being dissatisfied with the emphasis on English taught courses, a local professor recalled:

...I heard a lot of complaints from local students because [they] say that some required courses are only offered in English so they cannot choose ... they have to learn in English, but the teacher who teaches this course his or her English is not good enough. They have to overcome the language barrier when they learn this subject and they [say that they] are not here to let the teacher practice his or her English or to learn English ...

Aside from the language barrier local students faced, similar challenges also confronted the teaching staff. An administrator explained that although many Taiwanese professors obtained their doctorates in English-

speaking countries, “that doesn’t mean that we are able to teach the course in English without having some major difficulties”. The administrator further described how this led to different interpretations of what is meant by “English-taught”:

...There are different parameters ... fully 100% English-taught courses or 50/50 or your slides or transparencies are written in English, but your lectures are in Chinese. Or you can mix sometimes, you speak English sometimes, [then] you switch back to Chinese. I don't think we have a complete agreement on what it should be...

Furthermore, there was critique voiced that the current focus on English at the university was another example of the government and university administration not taking the needs of the local community into account. For instance, a local professor explained how internationalization policy tends to be top-down and leaves little room for group consensus:

... [Internationalization is a] top-down policy the government wanted to do it and [they] somehow persuaded some universities to follow the policy but it did not originate ... from below. ... the local students had to accept the reform in the curriculum, they had no say in what they wanted, for example they cannot say, “I don't want this required class to be taught in English” ... and the local faculty members they are required, for example to publish in English otherwise you cannot be promoted ... or the local faculty has to teach in English... so there are a lot of complaints and even resentment [that]comes from the local communities because they do not see significant benefits of internationalization on campus for them ...

Although local participants were critical of the English language policy, this critique was not connected to larger concerns about Westernization or cultural imperialism and in some cases, individuals viewed the emphasis

on English as an expected outcome of globalization. Instead, these individuals were critical about how the policy was developed, namely without dialogue with the involved stakeholders as well as its mismatch with the capacity of professors and the needs of the local students and community.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study explored how university and governmental stakeholders frame internationalization as well as investigated the concerns voiced in the literature concerning the potentially negative effects of internationalization on non-western countries. In the Taiwanese context, few studies have empirically examined the perceptions of diverse stakeholders regarding internationalization (see for exception, Chen & Lo, 2013). At the same time, there have been some concerns raised about the Western domination of internationalization, harmful neoliberal practices, and the marginalization of local scholarship (Chou, 2014a; Deem et al., 2008; Lo, 2009; Mok, 2007; Yang, 2001). These critical studies, however, generally discuss system level trends and rarely have empirical research designs. In response, this study contributed to two empirical gaps by drawing on the perceptions of diverse stakeholders involved in internationalization in Taiwan as well as exploring potential overlaps in how internationalization is framed in critical studies and by the participants in this study.

The analysis revealed that stakeholders used three frames – cultural, political, and localization – to make sense of internationalization and their experiences. The cultural frame drew upon collective knowledge of Taiwan’s Confucian heritage. University stakeholders mainly employed this frame to make sense of cultural differences that arise in an

international university. In particular, participants from North America and Europe used the cultural frame when confronted with behaviors or interactions they considered different to Western values (e.g. age-based hierarchy and teacher-centered pedagogy), while individuals from Confucian heritage cultures did not turn to the 'culture explanation' to the same extent due to their position as cultural insiders. Among these individuals, this frame was used to explain cultural differences related to international students, compare Taiwanese academia with their experiences abroad and provide background information to the author (a non-local). Moreover, participants employing the cultural frame frequently drew upon the Western/Confucian binary to interpret interactions, a strategy routinely used in the literature (Jian et al., 2010; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Ryan & Louie, 2007). Although the participants acknowledged this binary, it served more as a starting point in unpacking different cultural expectations and reflecting on one's experiences. These findings demonstrate that cultural framing may initially draw on large categories such as 'Western' and 'Confucian', but these terms become abstract, background features for organizing detailed, personalized interactions.

The political frame on the other hand, was deeply rooted in Taiwan's geopolitical situation, which influenced the political goals associated with internationalization as well as the recruitment policy towards Mainland Chinese students. This frame was used more extensively among governmental officials and Mainland Chinese students to explain internationalization drivers and their mobility experiences, while other participants, although aware of the political situation were not directly involved or impacted, thus likely employed this frame to a lesser extent.

Furthermore, local professors and students prominently used the localization frame to situate their critical perceptions of the university's

English language policy. In this frame, there were some parallels with the concerns discussed by scholars regarding the effects of internationalization on non-Western countries. For example, individuals employing the localization frame found that the English language policy at Pacific University did not match the needs and ability of local students and staff, mismatches that were attributed to the perceived top-down approach of internationalization in Taiwan. However, this critique was not connected to larger movements like Westernization, but rather focused on missteps in the implementation process.

These findings indicate that concerns discussed in the literature (Chen & Lo, 2013; Deem et al., 2008; Joo & Halx, 2012; Mok, 2007; Song & Tai, 2007) are in part mirrored in the perceptions of stakeholders, but there was also more nuance in the framing process. For instance, participants who were critical of internationalization also shared positive experiences related to this process, such as engaging in the international classroom or participating in international research. In addition, Western participants reflected on how they adapted their frames to fit the Taiwanese context. This variance suggests that individuals may employ conflicting frames when making sense of the internationalization process, especially given that Western frames were refitted to align with local frameworks.

The findings also demonstrated that the framing process is influenced by group membership. Individuals sharing comparable backgrounds; cultural, academic, and professional, framed internationalization similarly. This was seen across stakeholder groups: Westerners, as cultural outsiders, turned more readily to the cultural frame to explain interactions while, Mainland Chinese students and locals, as political insiders, drew more frequently on the political frame. Additionally, locals who spend considerable time abroad appeared to be able to navigate in a third space – enabling them to

see cultural differences from the position of both an outsider and insider. The notion that frames are based on shared understanding resonates with previous research (Bloch, 2003; Goffman, 1974; Howard-Grenville & Hoffman, 2003; Su, 2009). The identified frames also signal that internationalization is linked to larger narratives within a society and in the case of Taiwan; connections were made to its Confucian heritage, political climate, and local context. This indicates that internationalization is transformed to fit contexts and the framing process (re)shapes its meaning and purpose.

As this article draws on a case study conducted at a single Taiwanese university, the research design did not allow for a comparison across the Taiwanese landscape. The higher education system in Taiwan is hierarchically organized with top-tier universities generally being the most internationalized and the best funded, while lower ranked universities struggle with more precarious financial situations and are subsequently more dependent on international students. Due to these discrepancies, internationalization may be framed differently across the system, e.g. in more economic terms. Further research is needed to compare these different framing processes across Taiwanese higher education as well as other Confucian heritage systems. Moreover, additional study of frames and framing processes may further our understanding of the political, cultural, and local layers involved in change processes within higher education

¹³ The university name is a pseudonym.

¹⁴ The university has a strong social science focus, thus other academic disciplines are absent.

¹⁵ The nationality column for students is categorized according to designated student groups in MOE policy: Mainland Chinese students and overseas Chinese students (students who live in Chinese communities abroad) are categorized separately from other international students.

¹⁶ Three Limitations & Six Noes Policy.

7. The Invisible Others: Stories of International Doctoral Student Dropout

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Abstract

A doctorate degree is characterized in the literature as a time of high stress and uncertainty for students as well as subject to worrisome attrition rates, with an estimated 50% of doctoral students discontinuing their degrees. International doctoral students (IDSs) specifically face the additional challenges of adapting to new academic environments and cultures upon embarking on their doctoral journey. While existing research provides us with insight into the general challenges associated with the international doctoral experience, we have limited understanding of how these challenges contribute to their dropout. Drawing on life story interviews, this study qualitatively investigates the attrition experiences of IDSs at a Western European university. To analyze IDSs' discontinuation stories, we employ the concept of Othering. This concept draws our attention to students' perceptions of being marked as different by those in positions of power or privilege. We identify four types of Othering, where students were cast as the Foreign, Academic, Financial, and/or Social Others and the role these experiences played in their discontinuation. The findings suggest that Foreign Othering shadowed and reinforced additional Othering experiences; the IDSs lacked familiarity with the academic system, culture, and language which made them more vulnerable to acute academic challenges, financial hardship, and social exclusion. Based on these findings, we provide recommendations for a more barrier-free and inclusive doctoral experience.

Introduction

A doctorate degree marks the transition from a student to a scholar – a journey filled with many professional and personal challenges. For many, this journey will not end in success. Reports of doctoral discontinuation, that is of individuals who prematurely withdraw from their doctoral studies, are strikingly high with estimates in various countries rounding at about 50% (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; Groenvynck et al., 2013; Vassil & Solvak, 2012). Within this vulnerable group are international doctoral students (IDSs), whom we understand as individuals who undertake their doctorate degrees outside their country of origin (excluding individuals who hold permanent residencies). IDSs are a quickly growing minority and in 2014 represented 27% of doctoral students across OECD countries (OECD, 2016). While the doctoral experience may be stressful for all students, IDSs are confronted with the additional challenges of finding their way in a new academic tradition and society. As newcomers to an academic community, these students are more susceptible to academic isolation (Deem & Brehony, 2000; Le & Gardner, 2010) and problems with doctoral supervisors (Adams & Cargill, 2003; Adrian-Taylor et al., 2007; Campbell, 2015) as well as may grapple with different academic and socialization expectations (Cotterall, 2015; Robinson-Pant, 2009).

Additionally, IDSs may experience the acculturative stress related to moving abroad (Smith & Khawaja, 2011) and building new social networks (Brown, 2009a). These challenges may contribute to IDSs experiencing crises of identity (Ingleton & Cadman, 2002), social isolation (Ali & Kohun, 2006; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004), loneliness (Janta, Lugosi, & Brown, 2012), and in some cases discrimination (Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama, & Takeuchi, 2007). Despite the growing number

of IDSs, current research fails to provide us with insight into how these specific challenges contribute to their attrition. Stories of discontinued IDSs remain unheard and the struggles of this particularly vulnerable group, invisible.

Traditionally, attrition studies have been dominated by a focus on undergraduates (Cooke, Sims, & Peyrefitte, 1995) and the far fewer studies that do explain doctoral attrition suggest a number of different factors, such as personal problems and (academic) mismatch (Gardner, 2009), a unsupportive department culture (Golde, 2005), poor advising (Leijen, Lepp, & Remmik, 2015), or lack of work-life balance (Castelló, Pardo, Sala-Bubaré, & Suñe-Soler, 2017). While importantly contributing to our understanding of doctoral attrition, most of these studies speak generally of all doctoral students (Bair & Haworth, 1999; Golde, 1998; Vassil & Solvak, 2012) and there is little attention paid to the experience of IDSs specifically, aside from some quantitative studies in which nationality is used as a variable to explain variation in completion rates (Jiranek, 2010; Rodwell & Neumann, 2008; Spronken-Smith, Cameron, & Quigg, 2018). These studies indicate that non-local doctoral students have a slight advantage in terms of completion time and rate than their local counterparts, an outcome that may be linked to immigration status limitations and visa-related pressure (Groenvynck et al., 2013). However, this quantifiable success of IDSs overshadows the specific challenges related to pursuing a doctorate abroad and the factors leading to discontinuation. Furthermore, the few qualitative studies that do investigate the experiences of discontinued doctoral students (Golde, 1998, 2005; Leijen et al., 2015) do not pay special consideration to internationals.

To address this knowledge gap, we conducted 11 life story interviews with IDSs who undertook and discontinued their doctorate at a Western

European university. This resulted in comprehensive accounts of IDSs' discontinuation experiences and their perceptions thereof, which enabled us to gain in-depth insights into the complexities of an individual's decision to discontinue a doctorate abroad. To analyze these stories, we drew on the concept of Othering (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985). Acknowledging IDSs' vulnerable position as academic and cultural outsiders (Campbell, 2015; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Robinson-Pant, 2009), Othering encouraged us to focus on IDSs' perceptions of being treated as different, that is as "Others," by those in possession of academic and/or social privilege and power (Weis, 1995). This led us to ask the research questions:

- How do international doctoral students experience Othering?
- How do these experiences influence the discontinuation of their studies?

Our investigation exposed multiple ways in which IDSs were made to feel inferior and experienced unequal treatment prior to their decision to discontinue their studies, complementing some of the existing insights into doctoral student attrition while challenging others. In doing so, our study provides a platform for the rarely heard stories of discontinued IDSs. Through these findings, we propose recommendations for administrators and supervisors to ensure a more positive and successful international doctoral experience.

Conceptual Framework

With roots in postcolonial theory, Othering has been used to understand the perceptions and interactions of Westerners towards individuals of the "Orient" or the East during the colonial period (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985).

Through his seminal publication *Orientalism* (1978), Said illustrated how Westerners performed Othering for the sake of self-identification and self-interest. In this sense, individuals who did not fit Western norms were designated *the Others* and their differences marked in a biased, reductionist and often discriminatory manner. For example, if the West identified itself as rational and moral, the East was painted in contrast as irrational and immoral, a distinction that underlined the superiority of sameness and inferiority of differentness as well as justified Western colonization (Loomba, 1998; Said, 1978).

Despite this geographical and historical focus, Othering has been broadened to explain phenomena in a variety of disciplines, such as education and social work. In the contemporary context, Othering is understood more broadly as a “process which serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself” (Weis, 1995). These interpretations of Othering direct our gaze to behaviors and interactions performed by majority and/or privileged groups towards minority and/or less privileged groups. The more powerful often set the tone of these interactions, determining perceptions, reproducing stereotypes, and assumptions (Jensen, 2011; Johnson et al., 2004; Krumer-Nevo, 2002; Weis, 1995). Similarly, within higher education literature, we find a pocket of studies that use Othering and related concepts to frame power imbalances between minority student groups and the more powerful and privileged members, such as professors or majority student groups (Bilecen, 2013; Bullen & Kenway, 2003; Mayuzumi et al., 2007). In these studies, Othering was not only performed based on nationality, but also related to gender, cultural (expected) behavior, and (different or lack of) academic training. This demonstrates the wide scope of the Othering framework as a lens to analyze diverse layers of the marginalized experience.

Othering is applicable for understanding IDSs' discontinuation experiences as they are often depicted in the literature as outsiders – academic novices and cultural Others (Campbell, 2015; Robinson-Pant, 2009). Our framework selection was also confirmed by the results of a preliminary focus group conducted during the early stages of this study. The focus group consisted of six IDSs, five current students, and one recent graduate from various cultural and academic backgrounds. Throughout the focus group, themes related to cultural differences, exclusion of internationals, and experiences of being made to feel inferior were commonly expressed – themes mirrored in the concept of Othering. Based on this framework, our study pays special attention to power imbalances within the IDS experience, such as in collegial relationships, interaction with supervisors, and access to resources and support, and how these perceived imbalances may potentially lead to discontinuation.

However, the underlining dichotomy in this framework in which the Others are separated from those performing the Othering can be limiting. First, the stark distinction between performers and victims of Othering may result in assigning blame to a mass of individuals and not take into account the diversity among individuals or accurately reflect on the structural or interpersonal power imbalances. These elements are essential in unpacking and employing this framework. Second, the intent behind Othering is not always clear as this behavior may be abstract or unintentional, and stem from a combination of institutionalized biases, personal unawareness, and perceptions. Finally, Othering is subject to individual interpretation. Being aware of these nuances and potential shortcomings in the Othering framework is essential for providing a balanced interpretation of Othering experiences.

Case Study

Our study was conducted at Stonewald University (pseudonym), a Western European research university located in a European Union (EU) country. The university experienced an influx of IDSs from 10% in 2000 to over 30% in 2015, reflecting the current average across OECD countries (OECD, 2016). According to university data, Stonewald University maintains success trends comparable to estimations cited in the literature (Jiranek, 2010; Spronken-Smith et al., 2018): Approximately 50% of all doctoral students successfully complete their degrees, among which students from other EU countries have a success rate of 47%, non-EU students 59%, and local students 56%. Stonewald University also has some distinguishing features. First, it is located in a non-English speaking country and while doctoral programs are conducted in English, the local language is frequently used in both formal and informal communication. Second, doctoral students are often treated as junior researchers (paid to work on their doctorates) rather than students required to take mandatory courses prior to or alongside developing a research project.

Research Methods

We conducted semi-structured life story interviews (Atkinson, 1998) with 11 IDSs who discontinued their studies at Stonewald University. Biographical methods such as life story interviews are closely related to political movements that have sought to champion underrepresented groups' voices, such as disadvantaged social classes, women, minority ethnic groups, and the colonized (Harrison, 2009). In line with this tradition and the conceptual framework of Othering, our study seeks to provide a platform for IDSs' stories of discontinuation, which often remain invisible to academically and socially privileged university members.

The interviewees were recruited through informal channels, namely through our contacts and social media groups. This resulted in a diverse group in terms of academic discipline, gender, country of origin, and time before discontinuation (see Table 4). Countries of origin were particularly diverse as each interviewee came from a different country. Moreover, all non-EU interviewees stemmed from non-Western countries while nearly all EU interviewees (aside from one individual) were from countries outside of Western Europe, thus suggesting the relevance of the Othering concept for our interviewees' experiences.

Furthermore, the variations in the interviewee characteristics assure a theoretically balanced perspective in that the participant set enabled us to explore different discontinuation experiences. However, we were not able to link specific Othering experiences to characteristics such as academic discipline or gender, due to the relatively small group of participants. Despite the limited participant set, we also acknowledge similarities among the interviewees. First, all the interviewees had prior international study and/or work experience. Second, despite different post-discontinuation choices, all interviewees considered their careers following discontinuation to be successful. This may be due to individuals in satisfying work and personal situations felt more comfortable speaking about their discontinuation than those who were still struggling.

Table 4: Interviewee Characteristics

Interviewee	Gender	Region of origin	Academic discipline	Time completed before discontinuation	Prior int'l experience	Post-discontinuation trajectory
I01	Male	Latin America	Social sciences & humanities	1-3 years	Yes	Started another PhD
I02	Male	Southern Europe	Sciences	> 3 years	Yes	Started another PhD
I03	Female	Non-EU growing power	Social sciences & humanities	> 3 years	Yes	Career outside academia
I04	Female	Southern Europe	Medical sciences	1-3 years	Yes	Career outside academia
I05	Female	Southern Europe	Engineering	1-3 years	Yes	Career outside academia
I06	Male	Post-Soviet space	Social sciences & humanities	1-3 years	Yes	Career outside academia
I07	Male	South Asia	Engineering	1-3 years	Yes	Started another PhD
I08	Female	Western Europe	Social sciences & humanities	< 1 year	Yes	Career outside academia
I09	Female	Southern Europe	Medical sciences	< 1 year	Yes	Started another PhD
I10	Female	Europe, non-EU	Engineering	1-3 years	Yes	Started another PhD
I11	Male	Latin America	Social sciences & humanities	> 3 years	Yes	Started another PhD

Depending on individual anonymization agreements, information is anonymized to different extents. For anonymization purposes, academic disciplines are represented in broader categories and times before discontinuation in spans.

The interviews were conducted between December 2016 and May 2017. They focused on the interviewees' discontinuation paths from the first impressions to the last days of their doctorate, unveiling the reasons for their discontinuation. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 1 h and 43 min. The interviews were conducted individually by the authors (five by the first author and six by the second) and recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviewees were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and five decided to do so. The coding process was informed by (1) our choice of Othering as a conceptual framework, (2) the literature review, and (3) the focus group data. These were the sources of concept-driven codes (Gibbs, 2007), which led us to focus our analysis on discourses of Othering in the interviewees' accounts. Thus, we anticipated encountering certain forms of Othering, but we also employed open coding to identify additional types of Othering through the development of data-driven codes (Gibbs, 2007). Transcripts were analyzed collectively by both researchers through continuous discussions and the challenging of each other's assumptions until shared understanding was reached and the main types of Othering were identified and refined.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings draw on a limited set of individual experiences and perceptions. Consequently, the study does not lead us to conclude that the stories shared by the interviewees are representative of the case study university. Equally, we did not set out to "seek" negative experiences; however, given the nature of the research topic, we expected that such experiences would surface more so than neutral or positive ones. Still, this should not discount the experiences and struggles that these individuals did have, and the similarities found across their narratives. However, as no other actors aside from the listed IDSs, such as supervisors, were interviewed, a comparative perspective is lacking

in the present narrative. We also acknowledge our positionality as researchers; while we did not know our interviewees prior to interviewing them, our own position as IDSs and proximity to other individuals who experienced struggle and mistreatment during their doctoral studies initially drove our interest in this research topic and resulted in solidarity with our interviewees.

Findings

We identified four main types of Othering experienced by the IDSs in our study: Foreign, Academic, Financial, and Social. These Othering experiences demonstrate instances of power imbalance. In many cases, the IDSs' foreign statuses and less privileged positions of academic novices and cultural outsiders led to more acute barriers and challenges related to identity, academics, finances, and social integration. While the purpose of this typology is to understand the nuances of Othering, its diverse performances, and effects, in reality, these types frequently overlapped, varied in depth of impact and in most cases combinations of different types led an IDS to discontinue.

Foreign Othering

Closest to the traditional application of the concept of Othering as an attitude of the West towards the East (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985) is what we term Foreign Othering. We understand Foreign Othering as an individual experiencing (negative) assumptions or a precarious work situation due to their status as a foreigner. A few interviewees recognized that their foreign status often added additional pressure or negatively impacted their situations. Although cases of Foreign Othering we describe occurred within the academic space – given the inherently academic character of IDSs' endeavors – we have purposely separated these

experiences from core academic challenges found in the section below, *Academic Othering*. This analytical distinction was introduced due to the origins and intensity of Foreign Othering experiences being primarily linked (through the analysis and in some cases by the students themselves) to a student's foreign status rather than that of academic novice.

The majority of our interviewees had no prior experience in the country where they were pursuing their doctorate, which resulted in their unfamiliarity with the system. For example, one student explained it took him some time before he realized that some tasks, he had been assigned by his supervisor fell outside his job requirements:

/.../ I think about three or four months after beginning my PhD, I noticed that I started to do things that I wasn't like entirely sure if they were part of /.../ my job. So, for instance sometimes she [the supervisor] will tell me, hey, [you], why don't you go and get me some food? /.../ at that moment I didn't know if things were like this here in [this country]/.../ my experience was in [other countries], so I thought, well, maybe that's what a PhD student is supposed to do. /.../ I had to do lots of those kinds of menial type of work /.../ she made me scan hundreds of pages, like, can you scan this book for me?

This student suggests his supervisor may have taken advantage of him, constructing him as an "Other", due to his unfamiliarity with the system, as a result of his status as a foreigner. For several students, it took external validation such as colleagues informing them that their work situation or supervisor's behavior was not acceptable or for the students themselves to gain an understanding of the academic expectations after a longer sojourn. This vulnerability of IDSs was clearly expressed by one student who explained that to his knowledge his supervisor only recruited international students as they were "easy targets". He elaborated:

/.../ I think I was an easy target for her [the supervisor]. She thought it doesn't matter how bad she treats me or any other international students /.../ they will /.../ keep doing their PhD and not leave because it's hard for international people to leave and it is easy for local people to just quit and find something else. /.../ [that's] why she used to treat us [international students] in this way and if she had any [local] students she would have thought about this and that. What happens if he quits? Because that's the biggest fear that a supervisor has – what will happen if someone quits? And international people, they don't quit that easily, and local people, if they think, [if] I'm not really treated the correct way I will just leave.

This observation that IDSs were treated differently or would be treated differently from local students resonated in other stories. There were several reports of students observing preferential treatment being given to local students, in particular regarding support by supervisors. One student recalled how this differential treatment was shown in the amount of time her supervisor would allot to students; locals were able to ask the supervisor questions by dropping by his office and when internationals asked for similar time, he would reply he only had “10 seconds” for them.

Additionally, there was a specific type of Foreign Othering performed related to IDSs' legal statuses. Non-EU doctoral students normally receive a visa based on their status as a funded, full-time doctoral student. Therefore, without proof of funding, a student will encounter difficulties in staying legally within the country. Doctoral students are often given funding contracts directly by their supervisors; these contracts are limited and renewed periodically after a positive evaluation. This means a student may have several contract renewals over the course of their doctorate. Non-EU students were most vulnerable in this sense to the will of their supervisor. The following quote illustrates how the precariousness of a work situation is intertwined with a supervisor's will:

/.../ she [the supervisor] told me if I didn't meet /.../ all the deadlines that she had made for this project /.../ she wouldn't sign my contract and /.../ that would put my residence here in [this country] and in Europe at risk, if I didn't do exactly what she said. So that was openly like a threat. /.../ so, I think she used that [the fact that the student was not a local]. I mean /.../ like a point of power, like /.../ your stay here in [this country] relies on me.

For several students being “the Foreigner” or one of the few non-locals in largely local departments expressed that there was a lack of interest on the part of their supervisor and colleagues to learn about their country, culture or a general unawareness of the challenges involved in pursuing a doctorate abroad. Also, there seemed to be an understanding that IDSs were at the university to learn from the locals, as one student explained:

/.../ they [the locals] were not prepared for internationalization /.../ the software [is] not ready. The hardware [is] ready /.../ [but] it's [about] the approach, that you want them [IDSs] to do [things] your own [local] way or you wanna build a relationship together. So, I think a lot of professors think just, they [IDSs] come here to learn from us, that's it.

This idea that foreigners come to another country, especially a Western country, to gain skills and knowledge from the local people distinctly exhibits an undertone found in Said's work (1978) that is Western knowledge is perceived to be superior to that in other countries.

Academic Othering

We define Academic Othering as an individual being put in a disadvantageous situation due to their position as an academic novice and their perceived lack of knowledge regarding the academic norms and rules. Students experienced Academic Othering in regard to their academic work, work agreements, and academic advising. While experiences of

Academic Othering are in some cases intensified by the students' foreign statuses and thus unfamiliarity with the local academic tradition, these encounters largely stem from the student's academic novice status rather than their foreign identity. Thus, Academic Othering is analytically distinct from Foreign Othering, discussed above, despite potential overlaps between the two categories.

In several cases, IDSs described academic challenges as the main factor in their decision to discontinue. Among these, strained relationships with supervisors, a theme which spanned across various forms of Othering, represented one of the most prominent grievances. This parallels with the findings of numerous studies, which highlight the academic challenges associated with a doctorate (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Can & Walker, 2011; Devos et al., 2016; Lee, 2008). However, the Academic Othering experienced by the IDSs was often influenced and arguably more acute due to their status as foreigners.

Academic Work

Students in our study often encountered unspoken and unwritten rules and expectations concerning their academic work. Such rules were often distinct to the disciplinary culture and determined what research directions and practices were considered acceptable. For example, one student describes the struggles involved in pursuing interdisciplinary research that went against the “academic language” spoken by his local colleagues. Due to receiving his training from a different academic system, his interdisciplinary approach was devalued because of its marked differentness from his local colleagues' understanding of research. The student explained being made to feel different and inferior, which resulted in self-isolation:

It was not always easy because we were speaking different [academic] languages /.../ I got a lot of head scratching, like what is this guy talking about? /.../ the process was harsh in the sense [that] you begin to isolate yourself. First you go say whatever you have to say, but in time you restrict yourself more and more. You feel what you are saying is not welcome. You're not at home. So, I started to develop this [PhD] pretty much on my own.

Academic mismatch illustrated above was a recurring theme. There were cases of students being assigned research projects outside their – and their supervisors' – expertise, as one student explained:

I was offered a project that was outside my area of expertise. I wasn't really comfortable working on that project because I was kind of doubtful whether or not I would be able to handle it but I [went] ahead with it anyway and I accepted the project. /.../ because I was expecting some guidance from the supervisor /.../ [later] I came to know that there were a few people who discontinued their PhD working on the same project [and] /.../ there was nobody in that [research] group who was an expert in this area, not even my supervisor /.../

This student's experience was echoed in other accounts. In some cases, these perceived too “challenging” projects had a pattern of high doctoral discontinuation and assigning them to students was seen by the interviewees as an informed decision made by the supervisors to the students' detriment. In these situations, the students became the Others as their disempowered positions limited their capacity to challenge the assignment when they doubted its merit. Another source of frustration for students was the issue of research ownership. In some cases, students expressed how their supervisors encroached on their projects to the point of, as one student described, “feeling that my research doesn't belong to me”. In another instance, a student shared a story of a problematic authorship practice, explaining that his contribution was not

acknowledged to a sufficient extent and the supervisor's favoritism determined the author order in a research article.

Work Agreements

A disturbing commonality emerged in several students' stories in which explicit promises or insinuations made during the selection process by their future supervisors were either broken or misrepresented. In the following quote, a student describes how misleading information was given to her during the selection process regarding funding length:

/.../ [the supervisor] told me, you will sign a contract for a year then we will extend [it]. And I said, oh, I'm very sorry, I'm looking for a 4-year position, for a full PhD, so, I'm very sorry, I'm not gonna take it. And then he was very upset about it, [saying], no, but look, this is normal in [our country], you have /.../ a 1-year contract and then we extend [it]. This is normal. /.../ What he didn't tell me is that he actually didn't [really] have more funding for me than for a year. And they were expecting me to get an external scholarship.

This student went on to explain how she felt "kind of tricked" by her supervisor as he "lied to [her about] this very fundamental thing". In another story, a student told how promises made during the interview about the nature of her research project that was to be done in collaboration with industry were broken upon her arrival and the project "turned out not to be what was written on paper". In another case, the focus of the research project changed upon the student's arrival, addressing an issue of no research interest to the student.

Academic Advising

Among the students, there were several references made about the hierarchical power dynamic between their supervisors and themselves,

especially in regard to feedback experiences. In a reflection on feedback, one student recalled:

/.../ there would be hardly any comments on the strengths of what I was handing in. The evaluation would focus mostly on what was not there and what was missing, but hardly ever on real cracks in the arguments. In other words, there was little in the way of discussion and debate and much more on the side of indicators of [what is] lack[ing], coming from a clearly defined position of power.

Furthermore, there were several examples of students suffering consequences for challenging their supervisor's authority or not meeting expectations. For instance, when a student challenged a decision made by his supervisor concerning his research project, his supervisor reacted by threatening to make "troubles" for the student if the student made "trouble" for him. Sometimes, unprofessional behavior from supervisors was an open secret in the department while in one case this behavior took place behind closed doors, as one student recalled:

There were some cases when I had a clash with [the supervisor] and was crying for 20 minutes in her office. She was manipulative because if there was another person [in the room], she talked differently. So, nobody knows how she really talked to me... she was so evil. And normally a person would give you some tissue, you know. And she didn't give me anything and she said, you swallow it and move on.

Moreover, several students experienced the effects of the above mentioned "clearly defined position of power" of their supervisors in regard to control of their research projects and infringement on their personal lives. A student illustrates below invasive behaviors from his supervisor:

/.../ she [the supervisor] didn't have regard for my personal life. So for instance /.../ she told me once /.../ well, I think that you're very disorganized, so why don't you give me access to /.../ your personal Google calendar so I could see everything that you're doing and we can schedule meetings /.../ So I had to give her access to my personal Google calendar so she could see pretty much everything that I did, so if I had like a doctor appointment on Thursday at 10 a.m., she could see that.

While academic challenges are a common phenomenon during the doctorate (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Can & Walker, 2011; Devos et al., 2016; Lee, 2008), these students' foreign statuses often added to their disempowering experiences. This was sometimes made even more acute due to their precarious financial position, as discussed below.

Financial Othering

The marginalized status of the IDSs as Foreign and Academic Others also impacted their financial well-being. We define Financial Othering as an individual's precarious financial situation related to receiving short-term contracts, external funding, and financial dependency on their supervisor. Some IDSs reported enduring extended periods of time with uncertain or no funding. Others decided to discontinue their doctorate when faced with harsh financial situations although this decision was often based on a combination of Othering experiences.

At Stonewald University, professors serve as both academic advisors and employers in that in most cases they are responsible for allocating doctoral funding. Short-term contracts and supervisors threatening not to renew students' contracts were a common theme. The threat of no contract renewal as discussed in Foreign Othering was similarly employed by supervisors in an attempt to control student output. In several cases, students who initially signed 1- or 2-year contracts were later offered

short-term contracts, e.g. 2 – 6 months when their work was deemed unsatisfactory by their supervisors. For example, one student explained how his supervisor wanted to use a 3-month contract as a “testing time” and to “add pressure” on him. After the 3 months, his supervisor would evaluate his work and decide if he could have another short contract. In another situation, one student was routinely given 2, 3- and 4-months contracts with stints of unemployment when the student worked for his supervisor, with her knowledge, for free. In the following quote, the student illustrates how his supervisor constructed him as a Financial Other and how this treatment made him feel that his needs were inferior and of little consequence to his supervisor:

/.../ this lady [the supervisor] was not only stubborn, she was not only unprofessional, she was not bad – she was cruel. /.../ she behaved like I’m ... a piece of furniture or something. Like a chair, like a robot or something, like I don’t have any needs /.../ of sleeping somewhere, of eating something, of drinking something, of living, of sleeping, of my personal needs.

This student’s story is another illustration of the power imbalance between students and supervisors. The supervisor in their position of power and privilege dictated the financial well-being of the student in an action deemed intentional by the interviewee.

Financial Othering was not always found to be intentionally performed and also appeared to stem from institutional biases and unawareness. External funding from outside the university and state was more vulnerable and precarious in various aspects. For example, one of the largest external funding bodies for non-EU doctoral students provides a smaller monthly stipend for approximately 1 year less than local/state funding. IDSs funded through this agency are expected to deliver the same results as their counterparts with less financial security. One student

shared how after his external scholarship ended, he struggled to sustain himself. He first lived off savings, but eventually had to move abroad for work to finance his studies (his visa restricted the type of work he could do in the host country) and was later forced to live off loans from friends.

In another case, a student who received an external scholarship from his home country was put in a precarious funding situation due to political tensions and the nature of his work. He explained:

/.../ [the government] cut the scholarship. /.../ they gave me a scholarship but I'm /.../ researching sensitive issues. But it wasn't my problem, that my research findings /.../ kind of criticized the government. It wasn't my intention, but the result of my research. But they don't understand it.

This student learned that his scholarship had been cut after money no longer appeared in his account; no explanation was given by the granting government agency. These examples illustrate the complex and often precarious financial situation in which some IDSs found themselves as a result of their inferior position within the funding system and in relation to their supervisors.

Social Othering

As foreigners, and thus cultural outsiders, many IDSs experienced Social Othering, which we define as an individual's experience of exclusion from participation in formal and informal social interactions at the university or within the host society. While only one interviewee explicitly referred to social isolation as the main reason for her discontinuation, several students shared experiences of Social Othering. However, these experiences were either more background factors in their discontinuation or were a part of a combination of Othering experiences that contributed to their discontinuation. In some instances, IDSs implied that being Social Others

added to their negative experiences, sometimes by way of not having a support network that would moderate doctorate-related issues as would be the case were they to pursue doctorates in their home countries.

Social exclusion was attributed by several students to the closed nature of the local society. As one student explained, “you have to make an initiative” and start conversations with locals. The local language was observed to have a special status within the society and students sometimes encountered unawareness or unwillingness on the part of locals to use English when non-native speakers were present. Students reacted differently to this linguistic exclusion. Some rationalized it as normal behavior for people to speak their own language or blamed their own lack of language ability. Others pointed to how this practice was exclusive and unlike other international contexts they had experienced where English was commonly used as a lingua franca. Some students reported on being linguistically excluded from formal communication and work situations. In the following quote, one student shared an example of this workplace exclusion:

/.../ in many cases communications or just talk were done only and exclusively in [the local language]. So and then the professor would ask me, what about you? Or why didn't you do this? And I was like, how can I know you were talking about work if you were talking in [the local language] only?

Social isolation was also keenly felt by several students during informal moments such as lunchtimes and social activities such as departmental events or after work drinks, when colleagues would converse or issue invitations in the local language. One student described how she attempted to learn the local language and socialize with the locals, but became discouraged by the lack of social inclusion:

I know that I don't speak [the local language]; I mean I was going to classes and so on, but it doesn't mean you're going to start a conversation in two days. So, they [the local colleagues] already knew each other and there was no interest in really communicating with foreigners. /.../ there was a point when I decided just to eat at my desk, alone, I mean, it's strange to sit there [in the common dining area] and people are just not talking to you.

Linguistic exclusion had different effects on student well-being. Students in highly internationalized departments where English was frequently used described it as a nonissue while for others it had a profound effect on their happiness and well-being. In one example of extreme social isolation, a student describes her work situation as “torture”, adding:

/.../ I was really feeling very lonely, imagine you go to a place and, yeah, you have to be there all day and it's like you're invisible, you know?

Although several interviewees experienced social exclusion, some IDSs described warm relationships with their local colleagues. In one instance, an IDS's local colleagues encouraged him to officially report the mistreatment he experienced from his supervisor, as this individual had a problematic history with others in the department. This alerts us to the danger of generalizing Othering in terms of performers and victims. Whereas the division between “foreigners” as “Others” and “locals” as the “Other-ers” is important, it rarely sufficiently explains the nuances of this process.

Conclusions and Discussion

The aim of this study was to determine how IDSs experienced Othering and the influence these experiences had on the discontinuation of their doctoral studies. We understand Othering as the act of designating a hierarchy, which positions the privileged or dominant group above the

“Others” whose differences mark them as outsiders (Weis, 1995). In our study, Othering was often performed in the eyes of our interviewees by the dominant social/linguistic group in the university and/or by individuals or institutions in positions of power in contrast to the IDSs. We identified four types of Othering: Foreign, Academic, Financial, and Social.

Across their collective stories experiences of being the Foreign Other shadowed and reinforced additional Othering experiences. As cultural outsiders and academic novices, the IDSs lacked familiarity with the academic system, culture, and language where they were transplanted. This resulted, in many cases, in their disempowerment within the academic context as well as their vulnerability in experiencing financial hardship and social exclusion. These findings resonate with the literature on IDSs who have been found to encounter increased academic and social isolation (Ali & Kohun, 2006; Deem & Brehony, 2000) and discrimination based on the grounds of not being local (Mayuzumi et al., 2007). Additionally, the findings offer further insight into the financial challenges associated with the doctorate. Financial Othering was connected to biased funding schemes and supervisors’ simultaneous control over the students’ academic work and funds (a situation that may be specific to the studied country). Although financial hardship is a noted challenge of the doctorate (Bair & Haworth, 1999), it is not often linked to (intentional and biased) actions and practices of individuals or institutions.

Despite the shadow Foreign Othering casts on additional types of Othering, the interviewees themselves did not always clearly connect their discontinuation experiences to being international and specific academic, financial, and social challenges. They often considered issues related to Academic Othering to be the most prominent factors to their discontinuation, a result echoed in several doctoral attrition studies that

highlight the role academic challenges play in discontinuation (Gardner, 2009; Golde, 2005; Leijen et al., 2015). Moreover, it was also surprising that Social Othering and the task of navigating two foreign languages (as opposed to only English as in the majority of studied doctoral institutions, see Brown, 2008, 2009a; Campbell, 2015) were not more pronounced, although cultural and social adaption is frequently cited as a core challenge for international students (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). This contrast between the perceptions of the interviewees and literature may be explained by the strong identification the IDSs had with their academic work and position as scholars, a focus repeatedly found in the interviews. This marked difference in the IDS identity as a scholar rather than an international student may have served to heighten the focus on academic issues rather than cultural or social ones.

Furthermore, the types of Othering we identified, aside from Foreign Othering, are not necessarily exclusive to IDSs. The literature indicates that academic, social, and financial challenges are in some ways a staple of the doctoral journey (Bair & Haworth, 1999; Castelló et al., 2017; Golde, 2005). Thus, local students may also experience Othering. This further implies that neither the local nor the international “bloc” is homogenous and not all locals perform Othering, or all internationals experience it. Still, our findings identified a constant undertone of inequality in the IDS experience aggravated by several converging forms of Othering. Hence, even though non-local students have been known to consistently outperform their local counterparts in terms of completion time and rate (Groenvynck et al., 2013), this quantifiable success should not be confused as an indication of the quality of the IDS experience. Due to their international status, IDSs were more vulnerable to (extreme) turbulences in their doctoral experiences and had limited negotiation authority to positively change their situations. Yet, to see these interviewees as passive

recipients of their fate is a discredit to their spirit of determination; discontinuation was considered the right decision by every interviewee, but only after long deliberation and efforts for improvement were exhausted.

We acknowledge the limited size and potential biases of our participant set and hope future research may expand on the present study in terms of pool of research participants and geographical focus. We also suggest future research is needed to understand how IDSs manage incidents of Othering before their discontinuation and the role personal factors or academic disciplines may play in this as well as understand Othering from the perspectives of supervisors, local colleagues, and university administrators. Additional insight into these different actors' struggles and perspectives is necessary to generate mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Recommendations

Drawing on this study, we propose recommendations for administrators and doctoral supervisors to ensure a more positive and successful international doctoral experience. First, for many students in our study, problems stemmed from unclearly defined contract terms and working conditions discussed during the selection process. This often resulted in a mismatch of expertise or projects and in some cases false promises regarding funding. To counter these shortcomings, transparency during the selection process needs to be standardized with clearly defined doctorate conditions such as length of funding or project assignment. Second, struggling students often did not know where to turn to for help or the extent of their rights, which led to self-isolation or the normalization of mistreatment. Doctoral students should be empowered from the onset through student/employee associations and trainings with the aim of

informing them of appropriate conduct in academia, their rights, and resources for support. Relating to the latter, it is important to formalize a fair, safe, and anonymous complaint procedure in which junior staff members may file complaints against their supervisors without fear of retribution. Furthermore, consequences for inappropriate behavior from persons in positions of authority should be enforced at the institutional level, with the goal of preventing the persistence of the “untouchable” status of professors. In addition, given that not all instances of Othering are necessarily intentional, but rather occur due to lack of awareness of circumstances particular to IDss, universities could establish a mandatory supervisor training with a specific focus on providing support for minority groups of doctoral students.

8. Crossing Academic Borders: Exploring the Role of Social Capital in Academic Hiring

Based on:

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Abstract

Academics are increasingly seeking employment abroad. Despite their growing number, there is limited research on how academics secure positions at foreign universities. The literature does indicate however, that academic hiring is not a standardized meritocratic process, but influenced by academic tradition and social capital. Drawing on this perspective, this study explores the role social capital plays among international and local hires at two university case studies (located in the U.S. and Flanders) with contrasting practices towards recruiting foreign talent. At the U.S. university, social capital was used to *counterbalance* lacking elements in a candidate's curriculum vitae regarding their professional experience. At the Flemish university, social capital signaled a candidate's *compatibility* with the ethos of the hiring university or system. The study demonstrates that the role social capital plays is not exclusively determined by nationality, but linked to an academic's professional background, which signals their insider/outsider status in the system of their employment.

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has blurred nation-state borders and securing academic positions abroad has become more commonplace (Kim, 2009a, 2009b). Academic mobility is propelled by a number of reasons: academics may look for work abroad to counter poor or limited job opportunities at home, fulfill mobility requirements in their academic fields (Ackers, 2008; Yonezawa, Horta, & Osawa, 2016), follow personal preference (Richardson & McKenna, 2003) or engage in ‘accidental mobility’ through the chance and circumstances of job openings (Cantwell, 2011). For universities, recruiting international talent enables them to bring the ‘best and brightest’ to their campuses, improve scientific output and add international perspectives to the curriculum (Hser, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). Moreover, states are also keen to attract and retain academics and several governments have taken steps to liberalize their migration policies for these highly skilled workers (Tremblay, 2005).

It is clear that academics are becoming more mobile, yet we still know little of *how* they secure positions abroad. Research on academic hiring and careers primarily focuses on local academics navigating their domestic job market which limits the transferability of these findings to the international sphere (Clauzet et al., 2015; Cowan & Rossello, 2017; Godechot, 2014; Han, 2003; Roebken, 2010). Career issues for international academics are often intertwined with the personal challenges they face related to relocating, such as different academic expectations, cultural adjustment, and social isolation (Antoniadou, 2015; Foote, Li, Monk, & Theobald, 2008; Richardson & McKenna, 2003).

Furthermore, the literature available on academic hiring indicates that this process is complex, subjective, and influenced by numerous factors. For

example, expectations regarding a candidate's experience, qualifications and social connections are sometimes culturally specific and implicit only to insiders (Morano Foadi, 2006; Musselin, 2004). Second, external academics are not always the preferred candidates as institutions may for various reasons engage in 'academic inbreeding' – the practice of hiring and/or promoting institutional graduates or current employees rather than recruiting outside talent (Altbach, Yudkevich, & Rumbley, 2015; Horta, 2013). Third, a large body of literature has found that social capital or one's social ties play a significant role in hiring success. For instance, an academic's social ties to prestigious individuals or institutions may vouch for their academic rigor and quality and underline their reputation as well as serve practical purposes during the job search process, such as facilitating information and providing advice (Cowan & Rossello, 2017; Hadani, Coombes, Das, & Jalajas, 2012; Miller, Glick, & Cardinal, 2005; Qi et al. 2017).

The connection between social capital and career success in academia has been investigated across the global higher education landscape: for example, in Italy (Morano Foadi, 2006), the United States (Qi et al. 2017) and France (Godechot, 2014). Studies have found that the influence of social capital is shaped by the context in which it is accumulated; academics may gain social capital during graduate school, through mentorships, work experience, and engagement in professional associations (Burriss, 2004; Fogarty, 2009; Godechot, 2014; Morano Foadi, 2006). Departing from this literature, this study explores the role social capital plays among international and local professorial hires at two universities located in the United States and Belgium (Flanders). The aim of this investigation is to determine how social capital influences hiring and its transferability across academic borders.

Social Capital and Job Success

Social capital refers to the “resources accessible through one’s direct or indirect ties” (Lin, 1999b, p. 468). This definition stems from the social network perspective and focuses on an individual’s access and usage of resources (e.g. information, influence, and advice) via their social ties (e.g. colleagues, friends, and acquaintances) during situations such as job searches (Lin, 1999a, 1999b). Direct social ties refer to an individual’s personal connections while indirect social ties are their connections vis-à-vis others. According to Lin (1999a), social ties have four functions during the job search and hiring process: providing information, exerting influence, underlining social credentials and reinforcing group membership. For example, social ties can facilitate information about a job opening (that may have been otherwise unknown); they can exert influence over a hiring committee; they can vouch for an applicant’s credentials; signal to others an applicant’s access to resources and lastly, social ties may serve as public acknowledgement of an applicant’s membership to a certain group (Lin, 1999a).

The power and influence a social tie possess is linked to its position, that is persons of authority, “carry more valued resources and exercise greater power ...thus “putting in a word” carries a certain weight in the decision-making process”(Lin, 1999a, p. 3). While researchers agree that social capital plays an important role in job hiring and success (Burriss, 2004; Corcoran, Datcher, & Duncan, 1980; Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000; McGuire, 2007), its application has been found to vary between cultural contexts. For example, the Chinese and Russian concepts of *Guanxi* and *Blat* are specific forms of social capital that grew out of times of economic uncertainty and are based on resource-sharing and favor-trading through

social ties, such as kinship circles, business connections or friends of convenience (Hsu, 2005; Michailova & Worm, 2003; Yi & Ellis, 2000).

Research on academic careers highlights the varied ways social capital is employed during hiring. For example, in higher education systems with high rates of academic inbreeding, close social ties to senior academics in one's institution are essential and expected for career advancement, e.g. job candidates are likely to be personally or indirectly connected through their mentors to the hiring department/university (Altbach et al., 2015; Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Menéndez, 2010; Morano Foadi, 2006). In contexts that encourage academic mobility, social capital is not articulated in the form of personal relationships and instead has a more representative role in indicating a candidate's quality and prestige, e.g. job candidates with ivy league educations demonstrate to others a certain level of academic ability.

For example, several studies have found that academic hiring in the U.S. is hierarchically based and influenced by the so-called "prestige principle," that is prestigious departments often hire PhD graduates from similarly ranked departments or an applicant's quality is judged based on their (institutional) association (Burris, 2004; Clauset et al., 2015; Fogarty & Saftner, 1993; Han, 2003). In the same vein, Roebken (2010) explored the connection between social capital and hiring success in German academia with her investigation of the "similarity attracts principle" – the notion that individuals from similar backgrounds and education will likely interact. She found that business administration departments that were more similar in terms of their publishing outlets and geographical area were more likely to recruit applicants from each other.

These studies demonstrate the different ways social capital is interpreted and applied in the study of academic hiring and careers. In some instances, the focus is placed on the strength of social ties (Morano Foadi, 2006) or

concentrates on the representative role of social capital, e.g. an applicant's association with 'prestige' indicators (Fogarty & Saftner, 1993). These approaches both resonate in part with Lin's (1999a, 1999b) theorization of social capital as the resources accessible via social ties. However, they fail to fully articulate in their investigations the functions of social ties as outlined by Lin: to provide information, exert influence, underline social credentials and reinforce group membership. In response to this gap, these functions are specifically focused on in this study as means to unpack the role social capital plays during the academic hiring process. Furthermore, the reviewed literature indicates that social capital has an often intangible, yet readily present role in academic hiring and by its nature may present barriers for scholars crossing national borders for employment. Such practical implications further underline the importance of understanding the role social capital plays during academic hiring.

Based on this literature, this study investigates the following research questions:

- What role does social capital play among local and international academics hired at the same university?
- Does this role differ among universities with dissimilar approaches to recruiting foreign talent?

The first objective is to explore the international transferability of social capital and whether international academics possess the same social capital as their local counterparts. The comparison of international and local academics was selected based on insights from the literature, which indicate that these groups may have different experiences in academia (Antoniadou, 2015; Foote et al., 2008; Mamiseishvili, 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010; Richardson & McKenna, 2003). The second objective is to investigate the differences across university contexts through the

selection of university case studies exhibiting theoretically relevant characteristics related to social capital: e.g. academic inbred systems assign more importance to social ties within the hiring department than systems that encourage mobility (Altbach et al., 2015; Horta, Veloso, & Grediaga, 2010). Therefore, the cases selected represent mobile and academic inbred systems respectively: (1) Bridgewater University¹⁷, located in the United States and (2) Universiteit Nieuwpoort located in Belgium (Flanders).

The United States and Belgium (Flanders): Contrasting Hiring Practices and Attitudes

The United States and Belgium (Flanders)¹⁸ offer contrasting cases to investigate the hiring of international and local academics. The U.S. has long been a top mobility destination, attracting and recruiting global talent (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). For example, in 2016/17, U.S. higher education institutions employed 134,379 international scholars, a number that has increasingly risen over the years, as well as hosted 30% of international students in the OECD area with the largest proportion being enrolled in doctoral programs (37.8% of doctoral enrolments) (Institute of International Education, 2017; OECD, 2017). In Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, the population of employed international professors has slowly began to increase – from 5.2 % in 2003 to 9.33% in 2014 (ECCOOM - UGent, 2016).

Moreover, practices of academic inbreeding vary between the two systems. Academic inbreeding among U.S. institutions has been nearly abandoned as a practice, a change that was arguably sparked by the findings of early researchers such as Eells and Cleveland (1935) and Ogren (1949), who linked this practice to poor scientific output. Contrarily, in Flanders this practice is still in force: 56.4% of academics have spent their

entire education/professional careers at the same university, 17.8% have made one switch to another Flemish university (in a system of five universities), 6.1% obtained a PhD from outside of Flanders and 19.7% obtained a PhD and post-doc outside of Flanders (ECOOM - UGent, 2019). Lastly, the language of communication within the two systems affects the accessibility of international scholars. In Flanders, Dutch is extensively used as the language of instruction and communication; while English is the more widely used language in academia and makes U.S. universities more internationally attractive and accessible.

Based on these features, Bridgeworth University (U.S.) and the Universiteit Nieuwpoort (Flanders) were selected as contrasting case studies, which allows for an exploration of social capital within these two different, theoretically relevant contexts. These institutions are both top-tier research universities in the American and Flemish higher education systems. They also follow system-level trends regarding recruiting international talent: At Bridgeworth, international students make up 16% of the student population and international staff members make up 26% of the staff population, whereas at Nieuwpoort, international students and staff members make up 12% and 12% of their respective populations. Academic inbreeding rates at Nieuwpoort also reflect the Flemish trend: from 2009 – 2013, approximately 69% of the professorial body has spent their entire academic career at Nieuwpoort with 15% making one switch within the Flemish system (in a system of five universities).

Research Methods

To address the research objectives, interviews were conducted with 22 academics (local and international) regarding their most recent professorial hiring at the two universities (see Table 4). The local/international categories were derived from nationality and/or cultural identity, as an

individual may identify as ‘international’ but also be a naturalized/dual citizen. Initially, the online CVs of prospective interviewees were analyzed for cues to their identities such as location of their undergraduate degree or work experience. This categorization was later confirmed or amended upon contact with the interviewees, who also helped in identifying other prospective participants. At the time of the interviews, the participants were all employed as professors in the Arts and Humanities faculties at their respective universities. Academics in Arts and Humanities are often overlooked in mobility studies and an emphasis is placed on natural scientists in the literature, whose standardized and internationally oriented work is considered more transferable (Jöns, 2007, 2009). Arts and Humanities alternatively are characterized by linguistic specificities and geographical focus, such as in the language, literature, and history departments. These features make this discipline a relevant choice for studying the hiring of international and local scholars, as it is likely to have specific hiring cultures/norms.

Table 4: Interviewee Characteristics

Bridgeworth University (U.S.)		Universiteit Nieuwpoort (Flanders)	
<i>Status</i>	<i>Hiring Date</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Hiring Date</i>
International	2005	international	2002
International	2005	international	2008
international	2005	international	2009
International	2009	international	2013
international	2012	international	2013
local	2007	international	2014
local	2013	international	2016
local	2013	local	2011
local	2013	local	2016
local	2014	local	2016
local	2016	local	2016

The interviews at the two universities took place from December 2016 – January 2017 and in February 2018. Interview requests were sent via email

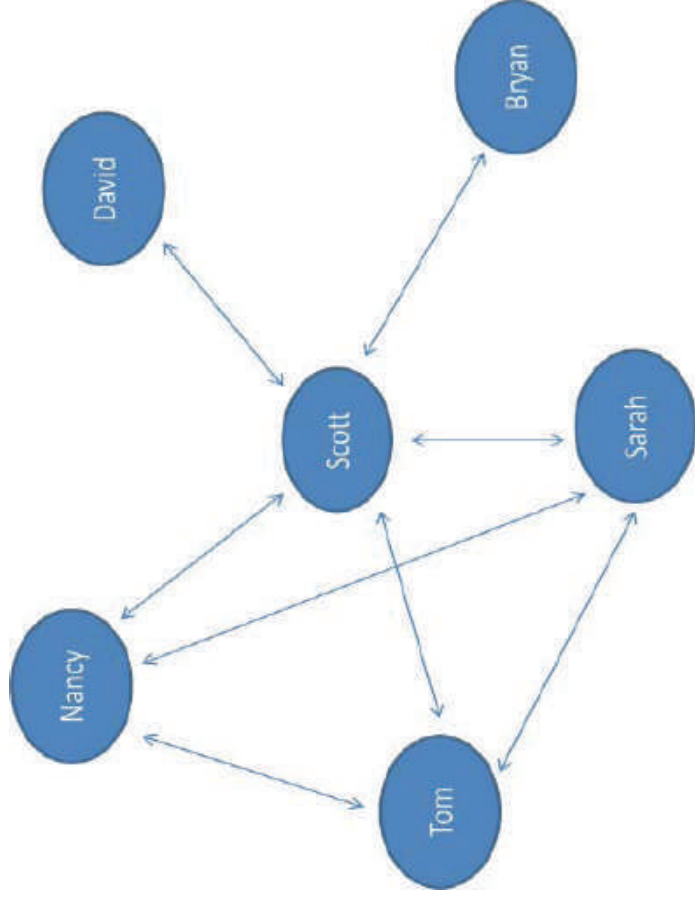
and accompanied with an information sheet and consent form. The interviews were recorded and lasted on average 51 minutes (ranging from 26 to 90 minutes). The majority took place in the interviewee's office or in a nearby meeting room; three were conducted over Skype. Interview questions were designed to gather information on the interviewee's entire hiring process as social capital may serve different purposes during hiring (Lin, 1999a). The hiring process was therefore unpacked into three parts: (1) pre-hiring e.g. hearing about the job; writing the application, getting advice; (2) the formal hiring process e.g. the interview, guest lecture, campus visit; and (3) post-hiring e.g. personal reflections on employment success. The interviews began in a narrative style (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), in which the interviewees were asked to recount their journey to their current position, including their educational training and work experience. In the second part of the interview, participants were asked about social ties they had to the university and to describe characteristics of these relationships, e.g. did you know anyone at the university before your hiring? Did you ask anyone (at the university) for advice? How would you describe your relationship with this person?

During the interviews, network mapping was also employed to better understand the role social ties played during the hiring process (see Figure 2). This method involved sketching a respondent's social ties through a visualization of their ego-centric network during the hiring process (Dobbie, Reith, & McConville, 2017; Ryan, Mulholland, & Agoston, 2014).

¹⁷ The names of the universities are pseudonyms.

¹⁸ In Belgium, higher education is independently organised along regional and linguistic borders: a system of French-speaking HEIs is located in the Walloon region, Dutch-speaking HEIs in the Flemish region and a mixture of French and Dutch HEIs in the capital, Brussels (Verhoeven & Beuselinck, 1999).

Figure 2: Scott's Network



Scott's social ties during hiring

Nancy – Scott

Nancy was Scott's doctoral supervisor and wrote him a letter of recommendation for his job application.

Nancy – Scott – Tom

Nancy was also Tom's doctoral supervisor. Tom was a member of Scott's hiring committee.

Sarah – Scott – Nancy – Tom

Sarah was a rising scholar in the field and known by Nancy, Tom, and Scott. Sarah informally vouched for Scott to Tom.

David – Scott

David was a more experienced colleague of Scott's, who gave him advice during his job application.

Bryan – Scott

Bryan was Scott's second doctoral supervisor and wrote him a letter of recommendation.

The sketches were shared with the interviewees to check for accuracy and missing information. The interviews were later summarized, and key quotes transcribed. The summaries were analyzed using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), which involved identifying factors found in the literature (e.g. prestige, social ties, merit) in the data that may have influenced hiring success. Using qualitative network analysis (Heath, Fuller, & Johnston, 2009), the network visualizations were analyzed to determine social ties patterns and their role during the hiring process. Lastly, the interview accounts or ‘hiring stories’ were condensed into vignettes, brief descriptions of relevant events, actors and personal reflections told in a ‘story-like’ fashion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the findings section, select vignettes are used to illustrate patterns that emerged in the data regarding how social capital was employed during the hiring process.

Findings

In line with the literature, this study was designed with the assumption that international and local academics are two distinct and comparable groups (Mamiseishvili, 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). However, the empirics presented in this paper indicate that this neat categorization is more nuanced and that the lines drawn between internationals and locals do not sufficiently explain the different patterns of social capital employed during the hiring process. This is illustrated through the ‘point of entry’ phenomenon identified in the data. Internationals that enter a foreign education system as graduate students have similar opportunities to accumulate social capital as local academics; their point of entry therefore sets them apart from other internationals that enter the foreign system as professors. To account for this diversity, the findings decouple social capital from the international/local division, focusing instead on the

purpose it served for the individual. The findings demonstrate that social capital served two purposes for job candidates: (1) to *counterbalance* perceived differences or lacking elements in a candidate's curriculum vitae and (2) to signal a candidate's *compatibility* with the ethos of the hiring university or higher education system. In the following sections, these purposes are further explored and when appropriate the international/local categories are used to explain these differences as well as highlight exceptions.

Bridgeworth University (United States)

Hiring at Bridgeworth University was described as 'standardized' by the majority of interviewees. It involved a number of stages that occurred during designated times of the academic year: (1) an application was submitted in response to an open job call, (2) a first interview was conducted (over the telephone or at the annual conference), (3) an invitation was issued to a campus visit for additional interviews and a presentation, and (3) lastly, a formal offer was made before the start of fall term. This standardized element of hiring was also reflected in how the profiles of academics were perceived and influenced the utility of social capital during hiring. Specifically, social ties rose in significance and functioned as a counterbalance mechanism for job candidates, whose profiles appeared to differ from the standard, meaning that their CV lacked the expected elements, such as local work experience or specific academic training. This mechanism should not be understood as an indication that a candidate's profile was of lesser quality, a judgement that cannot be gleaned from the available data, but rather that certain milestones, e.g. lack of faculty experience, were absent from their profiles when compared with other hires at the same university. These milestones were described by the majority of interviewees as the 'standard'

requirements for faculty positions. The counterbalancing role of social capital was present both among local and international academics.

The local academics that fell into this group were freshly minted PhDs – individuals who had recently graduated with their doctorates and who at the time of the interview were employed in their first faculty positions. These individuals had received their doctorates from well-known American institutions and similarly lacked faculty work experience prior to their current position. Strikingly across their stories were the strong social ties they had to the hiring department. For example, Scott’s vignette below illustrates his indirect social ties to the hiring department – via other influential persons – and the role they played in legitimizing his job application.

Scott¹⁹ was in the process of finishing his doctorate at a well-known American university when he applied to his current position at Bridgeworth University – his first faculty position. Scott had indirect social ties to the hiring department through Nancy, his doctoral supervisor. Nancy was closely connected to Tom, a member of the hiring committee as she had previously served as his dissertation supervisor. Nancy wrote a letter of recommendation for Scott, formally vouching for his qualifications. Furthermore, Tom and Scott both had a collegial relationship with Sarah, a rising figure in the field. Upon learning of Scott’s application, Sarah informally recommended him to Tom.

Scott’s indirect social ties via Nancy and Sarah similarly served to vouch for his credentials – formally through a letter of recommendation and informally through word of mouth. The weight of their recommendations was tied to their own social capital; Nancy was a professor at a well-known university and Sarah had a rising reputation in the field. These social ties served as a mechanism to counterbalance Scott’s professional

inexperience (he was applying for his first faculty position post-graduation), an action that did not appear relevant for more experienced local and international academics.

Academics that already possessed faculty experience and doctorates from well-known American institutions did not have any social ties to Bridgewater, regardless if they were international or local. These individuals' experiences functioned as their own social capital (in terms of their proven academic record) and may have diminished their reliance on the resources of social ties. For example, Alison's vignette depicts a hiring experience of a more established academic:

Alison earned her doctorate from a U.S. university. Previous to applying to her current position at Bridgewater University, she had held an assistant professorship at another similarly ranked American university. She came across the job opening at Bridgewater University online. Alison had no connections to the university and felt that her profile was just a "good fit" to the job call.

Unlike Scott, Alison had a proven work record in the U.S. higher education system, which may have legitimized her job application without validation from her social ties.

Similar to freshly minted PhDs were academics that migrated (or re-migrated) to the United States for professorships, as they too, had social ties to Bridgewater University. These individuals had foreign doctorates and work experience from abroad, which rendered their CVs different from their locally trained counterparts. Interestingly, these individuals also in contrast to the others, described their hiring as "atypical" – as it deviated from the standardized hiring process described above. This included being handpicked, given a two-year probation period to "adapt" to the American

system and getting hired directly with tenure. These atypical experiences were also earmarked by the social ties these academics had to the university as emphasised in Daniel's vignette below:

Daniel, an Austrian academic was finishing his PhD in his home country when he was approached by Harold about a professorship opening at Bridgeworth University. Harold was a well-known American academic and an informal mentor for Daniel. Bridgeworth University had asked Harold to assist in locating prospective candidates for the job opening as he was an expert in the particular field of the open professorship. He handpicked Daniel and wrote him a letter of recommendation. Daniel also asked Harold for advice during the application process, such as what to stress in his cover letter. Additionally, Daniel also had an indirect tie to Bridgeworth University through his Austrian dissertation supervisor, who had on previous occasions guest lectured at Bridgeworth University.

Like Scott, Daniel did not have the opportunity to accumulate social capital in the American system with his Austrian credentials. He too, drew on the social capital of an indirect tie (Harold) to formally vouch for his application through a letter of recommendation and informally advise him during the application process. This pattern of indirect social ties was also present among other academics that entered the American system as professors, regardless of their level of experience. For example, Beatrice, a Dutch professor with an established career abroad, had close ties to the hiring committee prior to her hiring. The same held true for Ted, an American academic who had received his doctorate abroad and worked for some time there before returning to the United States. He too, had close ties to the university and hiring committee prior to his hiring.

Moreover, this underlined importance of social ties for foreign-trained academics may be further explained by insight provided by several

interviewees. During the fieldwork, it proved challenging to locate foreign trained academics at Bridgeworth University, a fact that was surprising considering the reputation of the university, its international student body, curriculum, and cosmopolitan location. When questioned concerning this phenomenon, several interviewees remarked that non-American academic training and career trajectories were not considered compatible and transferable to the American context. They clarified that American academics are trained as generalists with an emphasis placed on teaching, while most European academics are trained as specialists and focus more on research. These different focuses in academic training later created significant differences in the CVs of American and foreign-trained academics and thus heightened the importance of social capital, albeit through social ties, to counterbalance these perceived differences.

Universiteit Nieuwpoort (Flanders)

Hiring at Universiteit Nieuwpoort in contrast to Bridgeworth University varied considerably among the interviewees: the participants reported submitting different application documents, in addition to dissimilar interview formats and timelines of the application process. This variation was linked by some interviewees to the date of their hiring as the hiring policy had recently undergone some changes, which they attributed to a critical remark made during an accreditation review regarding the immobility of the university's academic staff. This remark prompted a shift towards a more internationally focused recruitment strategy. This new strategy likely created the necessity for a more standardized hiring process, which was reflected in the accounts of more recent hires. However, the external applicant pools the university drew upon appeared to be determined by an academic's geographical and cultural proximity to the Flemish higher education system. An academic's proximity was also linked

to their social capital utility and the purpose it served. The function of social capital in this sense was about ensuring a candidate's compatibility with the ethos of the university or Flemish higher education system. Ethos refers to an applicant's knowledge of the academic tradition and/or language of instruction. This role of social capital was present in varying degrees among both local and international academics.

Hires that exhibited the closest social ties to the Universiteit Nieuwpoort were internal, or academic inbred job candidates. In most cases, these candidates had graduated from the Universiteit Nieuwpoort and spent the entirety of their academic careers at the university before being hired as professors. Due both to the length and intensity of their contact with the university, their social ties gave them considerable advantage in terms of getting insider advice about the application procedure as well as uniquely positioning them in relation to their hiring committee. Rachel's vignette illuminates these close ties, their helpful role during hiring and the rationale behind their importance:

Rachel, a Flemish academic, completed her higher education at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort. After receiving her doctorate, she held a post-doc position at the university. This post-doc, she explained, was designed to cultivate young talent for a planned professorship, which opened a couple of years later. Rachel competed for this position with an internal colleague. She was closely connected to several hiring committee members including her former doctoral supervisor. During the hiring process, Rachel asked several of her internal colleagues for advice on how to prepare her application and for details about the interview procedure. Rachel explained that she had a competitive edge over external candidates, as internal candidates are always preferred as they are considered "a safe choice" and the external candidate "really needs to be better to be chosen".

Through her time at the university, Rachel developed close social ties that enabled her to obtain helpful information about the hiring process. However, most importantly they signaled her insider status to the hiring committee, which she explained was not only important in showing the quality of her skills, but ensured that she would make a good, reliable colleague unlike the unknown personality of an external candidate.

Moreover, local academics were not exclusively inbred academics and vice versa and depending on their ‘insider’ status possessed different social capital. For example, Chloe, a Belgian national from Wallonia, the French-speaking region, did not consider herself ‘local’ in Flanders:

Chloe, a Walloon academic, obtained her PhD and gained post-doc work experience in Wallonia before getting hired for a professorship at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort. She had no connections to the Flemish higher education system or the university. She explained that although Flanders and Wallonia are regions of Belgium, they follow different academic traditions based on the French and German systems respectively.

Chloe went on to explain that despite being a Belgian national, Flanders was like, “nearly another country” for her due both to linguistic differences and dissimilar academic traditions. In this vein, Simon from the Netherlands had more in common with Rachel’s story of being an inbred candidate. He had come to the Universiteit Nieuwpoort originally for a post-doc position connected to a planned professorship, which he successfully competed for some years later. Like Rachel, Simon was an inbred hire, although not a so-called ‘pure inbred,’ an academic that has spent their entire career at the same university (Horta, 2013), and had understandably close ties to the hiring committee. These cases demonstrate that the role social capital plays is not necessarily linked to nationality, but rather an individual’s status of insider and hence their

compatibility with the ethos of the university: Rachel and Simon were internal hires and also Dutch-speakers in a Dutch-speaking university, while Chloe although a Belgian national, was a cultural and linguistic outsider.

This insider/outsider divide also influenced the role social capital played among other international scholars. For example, international academics who had built careers in nearby academic systems in terms of geography and academic tradition, behaved similarly to internal hires regarding their social ties to the university. Nearby academics had indirect social ties to the Universiteit Nieuwpoort usually vis-à-vis others, such as through their former doctoral supervisor or current/former colleagues. For example, Ana's vignette below describes an indirect social tie to the hiring committee:

Ana completed her PhD in her home country of Spain and worked for several years at German universities. The hiring committee at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort passed along information to Theresa, Ana's former doctoral supervisor, about a professorship opening. Theresa passed this information on to Ana. Theresa was a well-known name in the field and had previously worked with the hiring department on different projects.

Ana's connection to her supervisor underlined an indirect tie to the Universiteit Nieuwpoort and may have aided in diminishing her outsider status. Other academics from nearby education systems followed mostly in suit, possessing indirect social ties to the university. However, the closeness of these social ties varied. For example, Samuel, a German academic learned of the job opening at Nieuwpoort from a colleague in his own department in Luxembourg, who was connected to the hiring university. Samuel explained that his previous experience working in a neighbouring higher education system and successfully learning the local

language had demonstrated to the hiring committee that he could effectively adapt to the Flemish system. Although Samuel had a more distant tie to Nieuwpoort than Ana, his previous experience in a nearby system was indicative of his readiness to comply with the ethos of the university.

This pattern did not hold true for scholars with careers established in North America. These individuals described stumbling upon their job opening at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort online and had no ties to either the university or country. For example, Alice's vignette illustrates her unconnected hiring:

Alice had received her PhD from an elite North American university. After completing her degree, she worked at two top-tier North American universities. She found the position at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort simply by searching online for “academic jobs Europe” and had no connections to Nieuwpoort or Flanders.

Alice's doctorate and work experience at elite universities may have successfully demonstrated her ability and diminished the importance of informal or formal validation from social ties.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the role social capital played among international and local professorial hires. This involved two research objectives: first to investigate the international transferability of social capital by comparing international and local hires at the same university and second, to explore how social capital may vary in its purpose and significance in different university settings. The study revealed that the international/local dichotomy that is frequently referred to in the literature (Mamiseishvili, 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010) did not

provide an appropriate framework for this study to capture social capital patterns related to academic hiring. Rather, features related to personal career trajectories and the academic context shaped the purpose social capital served among certain sets of academics, sets that were often decoupled from nationality. Social capital was found to serve two purposes for academics: the first was to act as a counterbalance mechanism for perceived differences or lacking elements in an applicant's profile and the second to underline an applicant's compatibility with ethos of the university and system.

For example, at Bridgworth University social capital had a counterbalancing role and served as a vouching mechanism for newcomers to U.S. faculty positions. This set of academics included both freshly minted PhDs from American universities and academics (re)immigrating to the United States for professorships. These individuals had social ties to the university that assisted them in different ways, e.g. letters of recommendation and informal advice. This contrasted with academics that had previous work experience in the system and no social ties to the university. These findings highlight the importance of social ties for individuals with outsider statuses related to their inexperience in the American higher education system.

However, at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort social capital was about establishing an applicant's compatibility with the ethos of the university and higher education system. Ethos refers to the applicant's knowledge of practical issues such as the language of instruction as well as academic tradition, in other words, they were familiar with 'the way things are done'. This rationale was plainly detectable in the stories of academic inbred hires in which being closely connected to the department was considered advantageous, as they were clearly familiar with practices at the university. This stance was also reflected in the pool of international talent. External

recruits primarily consisted of academics with training or experience from geographically near and similar systems with indirect social ties to the university. Social ties in this sense conveyed an academic's insider status while outsider academics from dissimilar and far systems had no ties to the university.

The fact that social capital had different purposes in the two universities resonates with the literature, further exemplifying that the role of social capital in academic settings is contextually dependent, meaning that different rules apply in different contexts (Godechot, 2014; Morano Foadi, 2006). Specifically, the purposes identified are in line with the literature. First, in U.S.-centered literature social capital is described as an indication of an applicant's quality and serves as a vouching mechanism during the hiring process (Burris, 2004; Clauset et al., 2015; Fogarty & Saftner, 1993). This is reflected in the role social capital played among the job candidates at Bridgeworth University. Applications for candidates with profiles that differed from the perceived norm were counterbalanced by the resources available via their social ties. In inbred systems, social capital is more about personal connections to people in power (Altbach et al., 2015; Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Menéndez, 2010; Morano Foadi, 2006). This clearly echoes with the findings at the Universiteit Nieuwpoort where social capital signaled a candidate's relationships to insiders (often, individuals who were highly ranked).

This study also went one step further in identifying the applicants that followed these social capital patterns. Nationality did not adequately explain the patterns of social capital; rather across both cases the purpose of social capital was linked to an academic's position of insider or outsider in the higher education system of their employment. This finding has an underlying connection to the 'similarity attracts principle' (Roebken, 2010). In both case studies, insider academics were those most similar to

the hiring expectations and these individuals followed the prescribed social capital pattern; insiders at Bridgeworth did not need to rely on the resources of their social ties having established their own track-record, while social ties legitimized insiders at Nieuwpoort. These findings demonstrate that crossing academic borders is not straightforward as social capital does not transfer uniformly and its meaning and purpose is assigned by the context. It also indicates that international academic recruitment does not take place on an even playing field as there are inequalities embedded within hiring practices, which determine who is considered an 'insider' or 'outsider' and consequently the rules (or social capital pattern) they are required to follow in the hiring process.

Academic borders are becoming increasingly blurred as academics and universities are more prone to seek and select beyond the domestic market. Social capital plays an important and often invisible role in academic hiring. To this effect, its influence should be considered for the barriers it creates and gateways it opens. Due to the limited research on academics securing jobs abroad, this study took an explorative stance in its investigation of 22 academics employed at two universities. This small interviewee set did not allow for a comparison of different disciplines, higher education institutions in the same system or to explore more variance across systems. Further research is needed to address these aspects. In addition, scholarly attention should also be paid to the influence support from social ties has on the hiring process. For example, the study identified several ways candidates received support from their social ties such as through letters of recommendation, word of mouth, and advice during the application process etc., which may influence the hiring process to various extents. Quantitative investigations into the weight these different forms of support have on the hiring process, from both

the perspectives of applicants and hiring committees, would further our understanding of the barriers faced by external hires.

¹⁹ Scott's network can be found in the research methods section.

Part III: Discussion & Conclusions

The Culture Dimension of Internationalization

The internationalization of higher education is a global phenomenon. This change process directly affects university stakeholders – students, academics, and administrators. Numerous studies have demonstrated that stakeholders do not always readily welcome the changes internationalization brings to their universities (Barron, 2006; Brown, 2009b; Cathcart et al., 2006; Chou, 2014b; Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Montgomery & McDowell, 2009; Ryan, 2011; Stohl, 2007; Straker, 2016). This dissertation investigated the culture dimension of the internationalization process as means to understand the challenges that arise during its implementation. Specifically, the dissertation explored the role university culture plays in the internationalization process. This perspective has received limited attention in the internationalization literature, despite related studies highlighting the role culture plays in change processes in HEIs (Keup et al., 2001; Kezar, 2013; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Merton et al., 2004). In these culture-oriented internationalization studies, culture is often viewed from a functionalist theoretical perspective (Bartell, 2003; Clifford, 2009; Heffernan & Poole, 2005) and culture is also utilized as an explanation or positioned as a background feature. In this light, differences that arise during intercultural encounters at the university are explained by the fact that individuals belong to dissimilar national cultures or culture is painted as a background feature that receives little to no theoretical or conceptual reflection (Liu, Liu, Lee, & Magjuka, 2010; Leask, 2009; Sawir et al., 2008; Sun, Kang, Chang, & Lausch, 2019).

In response to the limited culture perspective taken in the internationalization literature, this dissertation employs the symbolic cultural perspective and the study of cultural symbols. Applying the symbolic cultural theoretical lens to study phenomena within higher

education furthers our understanding of how different types of constructed meaning can be observed across various settings. In this perspective, culture is understood as a system of meaning constructed by university stakeholders to make sense of institutional life. This definition is related to the metaphor school in organizational culture research and rooted in the interpretivist paradigm (Hassard, 1991; Hatch, 1993; Jones, 1996; Martin, 2002; Schultz & Hatch, 1996). In this theoretical understanding, the individual is positioned in the center, as a creator of culture. Viewing institutional life through stakeholders' experiences allows for the exploration of meaning construction, a critical component in understanding responses to change (Bean & Hamilton, 2006; Brown & Humphreys, 2003; Currie & Brown, 2003). In this regard, this approach sheds light on the fault lines in change implementation, such as internationalization efforts and projects.

Building on this definition, I investigated select 'cultural symbols' that corresponded to theoretical, conceptual, and empirical gaps in the literature. Cultural symbols provide a window into understanding the underpinnings of culture such as cultural practices, values and behaviors, aspects that are often implicit to cultural insiders and concealed from outsiders. Each of the four empirical studies were designed to explore select symbols in relevant contexts. In line with the symbolic perspective, the empirical studies share explorative research designs and used qualitative research methods (interviews and focus groups), which positioned university and involved stakeholders as cultural guides. The symbols selected for investigation focused on communication and activities, as they related to internationalization.

Communicative symbols zoomed in on how stakeholders convey information, such as written text, stories, jokes, and speech acts, which represent shared understandings and systems of meaning. From this

perspective, I focused on how internationalization was communicated about and assigned meaning to in the speech acts of university stakeholders and other involved individuals. For example, in chapter 5, I examined how members of a university taskforce used storytelling to generate institutional support for a university-wide internationalization project. Moreover, in chapter 6, I explored how different frames were employed by university stakeholders and governmental officials to make sense of internationalization and their experiences with it within the Taiwanese higher education context.

Internationalization activities were interpreted as practices, actions or efforts universities and individuals participate in as part of the internationalization process. Specifically, I focused on two under-researched outcomes/elements pertaining to the internationalization practice of recruiting international students and scholars. In chapter 7, I explored the dropout experiences of international doctoral students and in chapter 8, I compared the hiring experiences of international scholars to their local counterparts. These chapters were designed to investigate how internationalization practices impact the individual as well as gain insight into how newcomers adjust to a new academic culture. Newcomers may be confronted with cultural values and practices that are explicit to insiders and therefore, their experience with the unknown generates insight into the hidden nature of culture.

In the following sections, the key findings, and their contribution to furthering research on the culture dimension of internationalization and higher education research are elaborated upon. Drawing on these findings, policy suggestions are formulated as well as the limitations of this dissertation and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of the four empirical studies demonstrated various ways university cultures shape the internationalization process. In this section, the main findings of each empirical study are reflected upon, overlaps between studies are discussed and situated within the literature reviewed in chapter 2, adding nuance, detail, and contextualization to how we understand the interplay between university culture and the internationalization process.

First, university cultural values influence the perceptions of and reactions to internationalization. The findings in chapter 5 demonstrate that different responses to internationalization at the university were tied to differing value systems embedded in the faculties and central administrative units. In this study, these differences are acknowledged by the taskforce members responsible for rolling out the GL project. Their acknowledgement informed how they communicated about the project and used different ‘spins’ of – the principle, approval and unexceptional stories – to generate institutional support. These spins often tied the internationalization project to shared values, perceptions, and practices of the intended audience. In this study, the interplay between structure and culture is more pronounced than in the other empirical studies; university culture specifically its decentralized structure, influenced the art of storytelling practiced. This resonates with research that stresses the structure and culture relationship at the university (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Hessels et. al. 2019; Ylijoki, 2000).

Second, university culture is related to larger societal narratives, which may assign cultural and political meaning to stakeholders’ experiences and their perceptions of internationalization. The findings in chapter 6 illustrated how university stakeholders and governmental officials ‘frame’

internationalization within the Taiwanese context by drawing upon a shared understanding of Taiwan's Confucian heritage, geopolitical situation, and local community. In this chapter, internationalization was not only framed by the stakeholders in relation to their university culture, but also connected to discourses surrounding cultural heritage, international politics, and local identity. These findings build upon research by Holliday (2019), in which he describes how large societal and political structures, e.g. education tradition, political institutions and grand narratives, may be used as resources when forming small cultures.

The findings in these two chapters also resonate with the literature regarding the prominent role small cultures at the university play in creating meaning systems for stakeholders (Becher & Trowler, 2001; De Zilwa, 2007; Frost & Jean, 2000; Ylijoki, 2000). There were several examples in both chapters 5 & 6 that illustrated how small cultures (and their shared meaning systems) were used as points of reference when stakeholders were confronted with the new and unknown, especially during times of change. For example, in chapter 5, the taskforce members recognized that different groups at the university, e.g. faculties and central administrative units, react differently to internationalization based on their shared values, experiences, and practices. They acknowledge the influence of the 'small culture' dimension by adapting their stories. Similarly, in chapter 6, the findings showed how stakeholders that shared commonalities, related to their cultural background, language and academic training, framed internationalization in a similar manner. For example, Mainland Chinese students frequently employed the *political frame* to make sense of internationalization based on their knowledge of and experience with navigating the political tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China.

Related to the small culture discussion is the socialization process that is described within higher education literature. Research indicates that newcomers entering a new academic environment undergo a socialization process in which they become well-versed in the practices and values of their new group, such as in the case of new students and faculty members (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2010). In particular, studies highlight how international newcomers are subject not only to a (re)socialization in their new academic environment, but also experience a period of personal adjustment as they adapt to a new society (Anderson, 2016; Bøgelund & de Graaff, 2015). In line with this literature, chapters 7 & 8 explored the experiences of (international) newcomers entering new academic environments and how their statuses as cultural outsiders impacted their experiences.

For instance, chapter 7 traced the experiences of international doctoral students who discontinued their studies. The findings revealed how these international newcomers experienced compounded challenges due to their statuses as academic novices and cultural outsiders. In particular, the study investigated how these students experienced Foreign, Academic, Financial and Social Othering, and how these experiences were reinforced by their unfamiliarity with the academic culture and norms which made them more susceptible to extreme challenges. These findings highlight the seemingly invisible ways university values and expectations are embedded in university life, which may inadvertently empower the dominant group and disempower newcomers, especially those socialized in a different academic tradition and society.

Moreover, in chapter 8, I investigated another group of newcomers – academics seeking positions abroad. In this chapter, I compared the hiring experiences of local and international hires at two university case studies located in the United States and Belgium (Flanders). These case studies

are representative of contrasting approaches to recruiting foreign talent; the United States has long been a popular destination for foreign scholars whereas in Flanders academic inbreeding is still practiced. In this study, an academic's status of outsider was not as clearly linked to their nationality (as in chapter 7), but rather where they had received their academic training and previously gained professional work experience. Whereas an insider academic was trained and/or worked in the system where they were applying. Insiders were privy to unwritten expectations and values embedded in the hiring procedures, which gave them in some cases a competitive advantage in the hiring process over outsiders. These findings resonate with those discussed in chapter 7, which point to how cultural values shape university practices often in invisible ways and create inequalities for those individuals considered outsiders.

Unravelling the Cultural Tapestry

The findings of the four empirical studies underline the complex role culture plays in university life and framing change processes. The empirical studies point to how university culture influences perceptions of organizational change as well as how culture serves as a reference point when stakeholders make sense of change. Stakeholders' access (or lack of) to a culture may also act as an invisible, dividing force that separates insiders from outsiders. In the following paragraphs, I identify and examine common patterns within this cultural tapestry with the aim of forming "moderatum generalizations" (Payne & Williams, 2005). This discussion of the integrated findings shed light on the interplay between culture, structure, power dynamics, and group membership

Underlying each empirical chapter is the study of organizational change, namely how university stakeholders respond to internationalization change. Sometimes stakeholders were responding to top-down change

(chapters 5 & 6) or navigating recently changed environments (chapters 7 & 8). Resistance is a common theme identified in their reactions or reactions they observed in others at the university. Resistance manifested differently, in some cases it was direct, stakeholders resisted policy changes (chapters 5 & 6). In other cases, outsiders experienced resistance in the form of negative responses from insiders or lack of open, transparent, and international friendly university practices. In the literature, resistance to change is a documented phenomenon in higher education (Anderson, 2008; Chandler, Barry & Clark, 2002; De Zilwa, 2007; Sapir & Oliver, 2017; Van den Brink, Benschop & Jansen, 2010). Resistance to change is also reported in internationalization studies and positioned as a catalyst for implementation challenges (Cathcart, Dixon-Dawson, & Hall, 2006; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013; Stohl, 2007; Taylor, 2004; Trice, 2003). In this regard, the findings of the dissertation validate existing research, but also provide rich insight into what drives stakeholders to resist internationalization change.

The findings in chapter 5 offer one explanation for resistance. They direct our gaze to the university structure, specifically the empirics allude to an accepted institutional reality, in which the decentralized structure has created a weak central administration and strong, autonomous faculties. Therefore, the centrally led GL project was viewed as an infringement on the rights of faculties and individual academics. Drawing on these findings, one interpretation may read that change is resisted when it goes against the cultural structure of the university. This explanation, as previously noted, resonates with research that emphasizes the intertwining relationship of structure & university culture (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Golde, 2005; Ylijoki, 2000). However, it passes over the crux of this dissertation and its empirical investigations, which position research participants as cultural guides. Reflecting once again on the findings of

chapter 5, the decentralized structure may have set the stage, but it was the taskforce members who navigated the terrain. They made sense of their environment, reacted to it and in turn tailored their story ‘spins’ in response.

In other words, there is an interplay between individual agency and structures at the university. This interplay is identified in the other empirical studies, in which stakeholders used power structures at the university to make sense of the internationalization process and their experiences. In chapter 6, international academics referenced the strict academic hierarchy in Taiwan to make sense of their experiences working with local professors and students. Similarly, in chapter 7, the international doctoral students alluded to an academic hierarchy in which they were positioned lower than their supervisors and local students, due to being novice researchers and foreigners. In chapter 8, power structures played more of an implicit role in designating insiders from outsiders. Essentially, these power structures result in the manifestation of dualisms in which an individual or group is positioned in the categories of ‘us’ in contrast to the ‘them’.

Within the studies, the most pronounced examples of resistance to internationalization occurred when power structures were disrupted. In chapter 7, there are several examples that illustrate how different interpretations of power structures at the university led to conflict between doctoral supervisors and their international doctoral students, such as in the case of work agreements, publication practices and advising interactions. Another example is found in chapter 6, where international academics and internationally trained locals acknowledge that they cannot upset power dynamics at the university by criticizing senior academics, a behavior they argue is acceptable in the West, without this negatively affecting their position.

When confronted with these disruptions, stakeholders throughout the studies turned to their core identity group to negotiate this uncertainty. In the previous section, I liken these groups to ‘small cultures’ (Holliday, 2019) and discussed how they become key references for individuals when making sense of change – e.g. exemplified in the experiences of taskforce members (chapter 5) and Mainland Chinese students (chapter 6). An individual’s instinct to refer to the known when confronted with the unknown (i.e. internationalization), such as referring back to the meaning systems of small cultures, is not categorically negative. In chapter 5, we witness how a mixture of flexibility and creativity allowed taskforce members to navigate the ‘small culture’ terrain of the university. Their story ‘spins’ are demonstrative of their ability to anticipate the needs and preferences of different groups at the university, essentially they learn how to talk about the GL project in a language that others could understand and appreciate. Whereas, chapter 7 paints a picture of how group membership can be taken to the extreme and enforce exclusion and Othering – e.g. designating those who are considered different as inferior. The difference between these two reactions links back to power – who is being empowered (e.g. faculties, chapter 5) and whose power is being threatened (e.g. supervisors, doctoral students, chapter 7). In this sense, empowerment opened gates for cooperation, while fear of disempowerment perpetuated gatekeeping and exclusion.

Drawing on these reflections, we can discern that resistance to change is embedded in other meaning making processes at the university. This insight shows that understanding the nuances of culture and peeling back cultural layers, provide us with tools to interpret the underpinnings of social realities in universities. Understanding this reality is the first step in the process. A follow-up question may be – how do we change culture, or make a university more receptive to internationalization? In the symbolic

cultural perspective, the individual is placed in the center, as a creator of culture. Based on this understanding, a culture can be changed by changing the individual and the expectations, cultural norms, and practices they bring to symbolic interaction. This is not a change that happens overnight, but begins with learning to listen to each other, articulating ‘unwritten’ expectations and reflecting on biases embedded in university practices. Internationalization brings uncharted territory to universities and their stakeholders, by understanding and reflecting on meaning systems, we may better steer the course.

Policy Suggestions

In the four empirical studies, I analyzed the internationalization experiences of university stakeholders through the study of different research questions. These investigations yielded rich data analysis, which provided a basis to formulate policy suggestions for practitioners engaging in internationalization efforts. These suggestions aim to provide insight for conceptualizing and implementing a more inclusive internationalization policy.

Facilitate Stakeholder-Involvement in Internationalization

In chapters 5 and 6, some research participants attributed internationalization challenges to the top-down approach of this policy. These individuals described how internationalization policy was being made without consensus from the affected parties (e.g. professors, students, and the local community) and this approach did not appreciate the diverse needs and practices across the university. Particularly, in chapter 5, the interviewees described how there was a distrustful relationship between the central administration and faculties. This distrust resulted in resistance to central-led internationalization policies. These

examples reflect how lack of community involvement negatively impacts change processes and decreases institutional support. Based on these findings, a key recommendation for universities moving forward with internationalization is facilitating and supporting stakeholder involvement during the conceptualization and implementation of this process. There are various ways stakeholder engagement can be organized at the university and should ideally be representative of the different voices on campus, especially those marginalized.

Awareness of Inequalities

The findings in chapters 7 and 8 provided several examples of how mobile academics can face compounded challenges due to their outsider statuses. In extreme cases, as illustrated in chapter 7, this led to international doctoral students experiencing disempowerment and discrimination. Drawing on these examples, universities engaging in internationalization should reflect on the explicit and implicit ways their practices favor and disadvantage certain groups. This involves creating an infrastructure to support the transition of international newcomers, making resources available to these groups, and exercising an institutional attitude of openness towards different ways of doing things. Furthermore, it is also important to involve international and local university stakeholders in discussion about internationalization and provide spaces (in training sessions and orientations) to discuss expectations and practices and establish a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

Limitations & Future Research

In the literature, the internationalization efforts of Western universities, particularly those located in Anglo-Saxon countries, receive the majority of scholarly attention. The overemphasis on the West is symptomatic of a

negative undercurrent associated with internationalization. That is that it inherently favors wealthier nations that have more resources to compete in the global arena and engage in international activities (Altbach, 2007; Deem et al., 2008; Gu & Lee, 2018). For example, Western universities attract the largest number of international students, the majority of which are from the Southern hemisphere (OECD, 2018), a pattern that has been linked to brain drain in developing countries (Ziguras, 2006). These inequalities in the global landscape transfer into embedded biases in case study selection in research.

In this dissertation, I attempted to paint a broad picture of internationalization by studying different institutional and cultural contexts. In the empirical studies, the selected university case studies were located in Taiwan, the United States, Belgium and two other Western European countries (anonymized). However, the geographical scope of the case studies was limited by practicalities such as language barriers, logistics, and funding. Therefore, the selection provides an incomplete representation of the diversity within the global higher education landscape. The findings do demonstrate that context matters: university culture may be embedded in larger structures which in turn inform and shape (to varying degrees) shared values, perceptions, and behaviors. Therefore, I recommend that future research emphasizes geographical diversity, especially conducting non-Western case studies, when studying internationalization and other change processes within higher education.

This dissertation is limited in regard to its selection of research participants. In the four studies, data was collected through qualitative interviews and focus groups with involved and affected university stakeholders and other connected actors. The studies shared explorative, qualitative research designs and thus relied on data collected through small sets of research participants, which generally translated to focusing on a

specific group of stakeholders (e.g. international doctoral students, taskforce members). The gathered data provided a rich analysis, however, was limited in some cases in its ability to capture a wide range of perceptions and experiences. For example, the empirics in chapter 5 explored the experiences of taskforce members who collectively held positive views of the internationalization project they were implementing, thus this focus did not fully incorporate neutral or negative views from university stakeholders. Similarly, the findings in chapter 7 drew upon the experiences of international doctoral students who discontinued their studies and did not include interviews from doctoral supervisors. Narrowing the scope of research participants was a necessary choice due to issues related to access, feasibility, and time-management. The criteria that guided the final selection of research participants was informed by the literature and the limitations of these choices are discussed in more detail in the individual studies.

Lastly, future research needs to investigate the culture dimension of the internationalization process more thoroughly by employing more diverse theoretical perspectives and conceptual framings of university culture. This dissertation takes a first step in broadening how culture is theoretically understood and studied with its exploration of the symbolic cultural perspective and the study of cultural symbols. Existing culture-oriented research on internationalization frequently utilizes the functionalist perspective and the ‘culture explanation’ model. The functionalist perspective and its focus on convergence and generalization provide valuable insight, however it is not able to capture the depth of detail distinctive to each context as in the symbolic perspective. These perspectives may complement each other, and knowledge generated from the study of symbols may inform how we map and measure phenomena occurring across contexts. For example, the findings in chapter 7 revealed

how discontinued international doctoral students experienced four types of Othering, specifically highlighted how different types were connected and reinforced each other. This insight challenged previously held assumptions in the literature and may inform how we measure barriers for international (doctoral) students via surveys and questionnaires. Additionally, the findings in chapter 8 identified barriers international academics encounter when applying for employment abroad, these findings unpacked how social capital influences the hiring process in seemingly invisible ways, such as via letters of recommendation and informal vouching, elements that may be explored in different contexts and conceptualized into survey items.

Furthermore, in the culture explanation model, culture becomes an all-encompassing explanation for any behavior, expectations, and values that are considered different from the mainstream – e.g. international students participate differently in the classroom compared to their local counterparts due to their ‘culture’. This application of the culture perspective can contribute to cultural essentialism – reducing cultural Others to stereotypes (Holliday, 1999, 2019). The symbolic cultural perspective offers a counter strategy against the tendency to attribute all perceived differences to ‘culture’, as it emphasizes understanding phenomena through the eyes of those who experience it. In this sense, when we do not seek to understand the nuances of culture, it becomes an empty concept that reflects our own biases.

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Appendix

Summary

It's a Matter of Culture: Investigating the Role of University Culture in the Internationalization of Higher Education

The world is growing smaller. Technological advancement has eased the flow of travel, communication, and commerce worldwide. These changes have blurred borders: individuals are able to travel more quickly and affordably, communicate instantly across wide distances and collaborate with diverse groups. This has changed not only how we live and do business, but also how we engage in higher education: students are increasingly studying abroad, universities are actively internationalizing their curricula and international research partnerships are commonplace in academia. These activities exemplify a change process that is occurring around the world – the internationalization of higher education. This process incorporates international elements into a university's mission, teaching and research practices and changes how university stakeholders – students, scholars, and administrators – experience university life. Despite the positive outcomes often associated with these changes, such as fostering global citizenship and intercultural competence, they present numerous implementation challenges and are not always positively received by university stakeholders.

In this dissertation, I explore the internationalization of higher education from the perspective of individuals who are involved and affected by this process. Specifically, I investigate the culture dimension, an under-researched element of this phenomenon, as means to understand these implementation challenges. I question in four stand-alone studies how university culture shapes the internationalization process, and vice versa, and how this interplay affects the experiences of stakeholders in

universities located in Belgium, the United States and Taiwan. This inquiry also contributes to a larger question posed in higher education research regarding the extent culture influences change processes at the university.

Drawing on three interpretations of culture from the literature: (1) organizational culture, (2) university culture and (3) small cultures & symbolic interactionism, the culture dimension is discussed and defined. Based on this literature, university culture is understood as a system of meaning constructed by stakeholders to make sense of institutional life. Universities are comprised of multiple ‘small cultures’ which are created by small groups of individuals that share values, practices and positions (e.g. students, scholars and administrators). In the four empirical studies, I investigate the culture dimension by studying two types of ‘cultural symbols’ (1) modes of communication & sensemaking (studies 1 & 2), and (2) internationalization practices (studies 3 & 4), in order to narrow the study of culture into smaller units of analysis. The studies employ explorative research designs and qualitative research methods (interviews and focus groups), which position university and involved stakeholders as cultural guides.

In study 1, I examine how internationalization is communicated to university stakeholders by analyzing different storytelling templates (the approval, principle, and unexceptional story) employed by taskforce members to gain institutional support for a university-wide internationalization project. The findings reveal how these templates were modified when taskforce members spoke to different groups at the university, a strategy that aligned the project with the audience’s shared values and reduced their resistance. **In study 2**, I explore how university stakeholders and governmental officials used different ‘frames’ to make sense of internationalization and their experiences at a Taiwanese university. The findings illustrate that actors frame internationalization by

relating it to shared understandings of Taiwan's Confucian heritage, geopolitical situation, and the local identity. **In study 3**, I identify how being a cultural outsider contributes to the marginalization of international students through an investigation of the factors that lead international doctoral students to discontinue their studies. **In study 4**, I focus on the experiences of academics seeking employment abroad. Specifically, I question the role social capital plays for local and international hires at two university case studies with contrasting approaches to recruiting foreign talent. The findings show the different ways unwritten expectations are embedded within the hiring procedure, which may implicitly favor insiders over external candidates.

The findings of this dissertation illustrate the significant role culture plays in shaping the internationalization process. The empirical studies point to various ways (university) culture influences how stakeholders make sense of change and formulate responses to it. The findings also demonstrate how stakeholders' access, or lack of access, to a culture acts as an invisible, dividing force that empowers academic insiders and marginalizes (international) newcomers.

Samenvatting

't Is een kwestie van cultuur:

Een onderzoek naar de rol van universitaire cultuur in de internationalisering van het hoger onderwijs

De wereld wordt kleiner. Technologische vooruitgang heeft reizen, communicatie en handel wereldwijd vergemakkelijkt. Deze veranderingen hebben grenzen vervaagd: individuen kunnen sneller en betaalbaar reizen, onmiddellijk communiceren over grote afstanden en samenwerken met verschillende groepen. Dit heeft niet alleen de manier veranderd waarop we leven en zaken doen, maar ook het hoger onderwijs: studenten studeren steeds meer in het buitenland, universiteiten internationaliseren hun curricula en internationale onderzoekspartnerschappen zijn gemeengoed in de academische wereld. Deze activiteiten illustreren een veranderingsproces dat zich wereldwijd afspeelt - de internationalisering van het hoger onderwijs. Internationale elementen maken deel uit van de missie en onderwijs- en onderzoekspraktijken van een universiteit en dit verandert hoe universitaire stakeholders - studenten, wetenschappers en managers - universitaire praktijken ervaren. Ondanks de positieve resultaten die vaak worden geassocieerd met deze veranderingen, zoals het bevorderen van wereldburgerschap en interculturele competenties, vormen ze tal van implementatie-uitdagingen en worden ze niet altijd positief ontvangen door universitaire belanghebbenden.

In dit proefschrift onderzoek ik de internationalisering van het hoger onderwijs vanuit het perspectief van individuen, die betrokken zijn bij en beïnvloed worden door dit proces. Specifiek onderzoek ik de cultuurdimensie, een in beperkte mate onderzochte component van dit fenomeen, om deze implementatie-uitdagingen te begrijpen. Ik bestudeer

in vier op zichzelf staande onderzoeken hoe de universitaire cultuur het internationaliseringsproces vormgeeft, en *vice versa*, en hoe dit samenspel de ervaringen van stakeholders in universiteiten in België, de Verenigde Staten en Taiwan beïnvloedt. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan inzicht in de mate waarin cultuur veranderingsprocessen op de universiteit beïnvloedt.

Aan de hand van drie interpretaties van cultuur uit de literatuur: (1) organisatiecultuur, (2) universiteitscultuur en (3) 'kleine culturen' en symbolisch interactionisme, wordt de culturele dimensie besproken en gedefinieerd. Op basis van deze literatuur wordt de universitaire cultuur opgevat als een betekenisstelsel dat door belanghebbenden is geconstrueerd om institutionele praktijken te begrijpen. Universiteiten bestaan uit verschillende 'kleine culturen' die worden geconstitueerd door kleine groepen individuen die waarden, praktijken en functies delen (bijv. studenten, wetenschappers en managers). In de vier empirische studies onderzoek ik de cultuurdimensie door twee soorten 'culturele symbolen' te bestuderen: (1) communicatie en *sensemaking* (studies 1 en 2) en (2) praktijken van internationalisering (studies 3 en 4). De studies maken gebruik van exploratieve onderzoeksontwerpen en kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethoden (interviews en focusgroepen), die universitaire en betrokken stakeholders positioneren als culturele gidsen.

In studie 1 onderzoek ik hoe internationalisering wordt gecommuniceerd naar universitaire belanghebbenden aan de hand van verschillende *storytelling templates* (het goedkeurings-, het principe- en het alledaagse template). Deze sjablonen worden door leden van een taskforce gebruikt om institutionele ondersteuning te krijgen voor een universiteitsbreed internationaliseringsproject. De bevindingen laten zien hoe deze sjablonen werden aangepast toen leden van de taskforce met verschillende groepen binnen de universiteit spraken; een strategie die het project in lijn bracht met de gedeelde waarden van die groepen en hun weerstand verminderde.

In studie 2 onderzoek ik hoe universitaire stakeholders en overheidsfunctionarissen verschillende *frames* gebruikten om internationalisering en hun ervaringen aan een Taiwanese universiteit te begrijpen. De bevindingen illustreren dat actoren internationalisering kaderen door het te relateren aan gedeelde opvattingen over het Confuciaanse erfgoed van Taiwan, de geopolitieke situatie en de lokale identiteit. **In studie 3** bestudeer ik hoe percepties van culturele buitenstaanders bijdragen aan de marginalisering van internationale studenten in een onderzoek naar de factoren die ertoe leiden dat internationale promovendi stoppen met hun studie. **In studie 4** richt ik me op de ervaringen van academici die werk zoeken in het buitenland. Concreet vraag ik me af welke rol sociaal kapitaal speelt voor lokale en internationale medewerkers aan twee universiteiten met een contrasterende aanpak voor het werven van buitenlands talent. De bevindingen tonen de verschillende manieren waarop ongeschreven verwachtingen zijn ingebed in de aanwervingsprocedures, die insiders impliciet kan bevoordelen ten opzichte van externe kandidaten.

De bevindingen van dit proefschrift toont de belangrijke rol aan die cultuur speelt bij het vormgeven van internationaliseringsprocessen. De empirische studies wijzen op verschillende manieren waarop (universitaire) cultuur van invloed is op hoe stakeholders verandering percipiëren en hierop reageren. De bevindingen tonen ook aan hoe de toegang van stakeholders of hun gebrek aan toegang tot een cultuur fungeert als een onzichtbare kracht die mogelijkheden creëert voor academische insiders en (internationale) nieuwkomers marginaliseert.

Statement regarding Co-authored Paper

Three of the four empirical studies were conducted solely by the author (chapters 5, 6 & 8). study 3 (chapter 7) was co-authored with Meta Gorup and in the section below, I detail our individual contributions.

Chapter 7: The Invisible Others: Stories of International Doctoral Student Dropout

This study was co-written with Meta Gorup (Ghent University). I was lead author in this study and responsible for researching and writing the introduction and conceptual framework. Meta was responsible for researching and writing the case study description and research methods section. The fieldwork was jointly conducted: I interviewed five participants, Meta interviewed six and together we conducted a focus group. Each author was responsible for transcribing their interviews and the initial coding and analysis. We commented in detail on each other's coding and analysis and collectively conceptualized the findings section. I took lead in writing up the findings and Meta supported this process by identifying relevant examples in our data as well as providing feedback on the section's organization. We jointly conceptualized the conclusion and discussion section, which I took lead in writing up with Meta supplementing, editing, and restructuring the text. The final article is the product of extensive discussions and editing by both authors.

Participant Information Sheet

Qualitative interview / Focus group participant*

Project working title: [title corresponded with empirical study]

Researcher/s:

Melissa Laufer [and co-authors]

PhD Candidate
Centre for Higher Education
Governance Ghent
Department of Sociology

Doctoral supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Jeroen Huisman

Centre for Higher Education
Governance Ghent
Department of Sociology
Ghent University

Participation in the research project:

You are invited to participate in this original research project. Your participation is voluntary. Before making your decision regarding participation, please take time to read the following information carefully about the project and the terms of your participation. Feel free to ask for further clarification or information.

Research purpose:

The research project focuses on [research aim/questions].

Project length & scope:

The research is expected to take place [time frame listed in months/years]. Approximately [x] individuals will be interviewed at your institution.

Data collection procedure:

Your participation in this research project will involve a qualitative in-depth interview/partaking in a focus group, during which questions will be asked regarding [research topic]. The interview/focus group will last approximately [x] minutes. The duration may be altered depending on your availability.

The main topics discussed during the interview/focus group will be related to [themes in the interview guide].

Data storage & usage:

The data generated will be stored on a secure, password-protected university server and university computer. At the point when the researcher/s is no longer affiliated with the university, they will seek an alternative, secure storage provider. The data will be analyzed according to the chosen theoretical framework and methodology. Research results will be presented in scientific journals, a doctoral dissertation, and other texts that may be publicly disseminated.

Ethics, confidentiality & anonymity:

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the research and will be discussed with each participant to ensure that no disadvantage occurs as a result of the research. Transcripts or raw data of any kind will be accessible to research collaborators if any other projects based on the data collected in this study are developed. The identities of individuals and organizations will be anonymized.

Agreeing to participate:

If you are interested in participating in this research project, please reply to the invitation e-mail.

Prior to your participation, you will be asked to sign a *Consent for Participation*. You will be given a copy of both the *Participant Information Sheet* and the *Consent for Participation* for your records. You are free to temporarily or fully withdraw from the research project at any time without giving a reason.

Researcher/s contact:

Melissa Laufer

E-mail:

melissa.laufer@ugent.be

Doctoral supervisor contact:

Jeroen Huisman

E-mail:

jeroen.huisman@ugent.be

* The *Participation Information Sheet* and *Consent for Participation* were developed with Meta Gorup and similar adapted versions of these documents were used during the other data collection procedures of this dissertation.

Consent for Participation

Qualitative interview/Focus group

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Melissa Laufer [and co-authors], PhD Candidate at the Centre for Higher Education Governance Ghent, Ghent University. I understand that the study is designed to explore ... [research aim].

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue my participation at any time without penalty.
2. Participation involves being interviewed by Melissa Laufer [and/or co-authors]. The interview/focus group will last approximately [x] minutes. The interview/focus group may be extended only with my express agreement. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio recording of the interview and a transcript will be made*.
3. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
4. I understand that the researcher/s will not identify me by name or institution in any reports using information obtained from the interview, and that my anonymity as a participant in this study will remain secure. The data may subsequently be used for publicly disseminated texts outside this specific study, but the anonymity of individuals and institutions will remain protected.
5. Transcripts or raw data of any kind will be accessible to research collaborators if any other projects based on the data collected in this study are developed.

6. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
7. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature

Printed Name

Researcher Signature

Date

Researcher's contact

Melissa Laufer

E-mail: melissa.laufer@ugent.be

*The research method in study 3 did not involve transcribing the audio recordings in full.