
Internationalization in Higher Education - a Must for Individuals, Institutions and National Policy*

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This article looks back on two decades of globalization and elaborates the impact of globalization on the life of individuals, on the universities as institutions, and on national policies in Germany, Europe, and worldwide. It draws the conclusion that internationalization of institutions of higher education is an absolute must and that international exchange must be enhanced and promoted. The article offers various recommendations and strategies on how to promote international exchange on all of these three levels.

1. About the DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service

Before looking back on 20 years of globalization and sharing some ideas on its impact on the life of individuals, institutions, and national states, I would like to briefly introduce the organization to which I am affiliated as it is not only one of the major players in internationalizing higher education, but the largest funding organization in the world supporting the international exchange of students and scholars. The DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service - is a member organization of the institutions of higher education and student unions in Germany for promoting international academic exchange. It operates mainly on the basis of public funds and has a budget of 360 million € (50 billion ¥) per year. The budget money, used to enhance and enforce the international relations of its member universities, is mainly taxpayer's money coming from public sources including the European Union, as well as private companies.

The DAAD sponsors more than 60,000 academics, students, and staff every year to cross borders. The main aims of the DAAD are best described by its five fields of action: 1) scholarships for foreigners, 2) scholarships for Germans, 3) support of the internationalization efforts of member universities, 4) promoting German Studies and the German language abroad, and 5) aiding and helping developing countries in building up their own institutions of higher learning.

The DAAD has a worldwide network of representations and offices, one of which is located in Tokyo and currently headed by Dr. Holger Finken. Regarding cooperation with Japan, the DAAD annually sponsors around 370 Japanese students, faculty and staff going out to Germany and around 460 Germans coming to Japan. For that purpose, 6.1 million € are spent in a great variety of programs for shorter or longer stays.

2. Looking back on twenty years of globalization

Today, we look back on two decades of globalization since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The fall of the wall on November 9, 1989 did not only change the situation in Germany but in Europe and throughout the world. Immediately after the fall of the wall and the fall of the Iron Curtain that had divided Europe and the world, the Soviet Union fell apart into 15 new independent states, which again was a major change. At the same time, the European Union grew from a small set of countries, which had started in the 1950s for economic purposes only, into a wider union of currently 27 member states; and this is probably not the final number, as other countries in this vast region may join the European Union. Note that all these changes were achieved without any bloodshed.

During these two decades of globalization the European Union not only expanded, but also enlarged its competences from the merely economic sector into the sectors of education, professional training, and science promotion. Meanwhile, the European Union is a major new player in these fields.

Major changes also took place in Asia, especially in China, which grew economically and politically and is now changing the world. At the same time new media, especially the internet, cell phones, and the worldwide omnipresence of the TV changed world communication. Again, during the same time, new and cheap transport facilities made physical mobility around the globe feasible and affordable.

All these changes have produced globalization, a still ongoing process which also affects higher education. How deeply the higher education sector changed can be illustrated well by comparing two meetings of universities in Bologna in 1989 and in 1999. When the presidents of the universities of Europe met at the oldest European university in Bologna in 1989, they signed the Magna Charta Universitatum, which contained the heritage of the old European university. Ten years later, again in Bologna, the ministers of 27 states met and again signed a declaration; however, this Bologna Declaration of 1999 was different. Written no longer in Latin but in English, it set clear goals for the future development for the higher education area in all of its member states. The Bologna area of originally 27 member states meanwhile has grown to 46 countries and reaches from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

The idea behind the Bologna Declaration was to create an area of free mobility of students and staff with full recognition of their achievements. The measures to achieve this goal are the following: first, to organize a common degree system which is based on the cycles of Bachelor, Master, and PhD, a system which did not exist in this shape in Germany then; secondly, to create a free space of mobility and to enhance mobility within Europe; third, to promote quality, quality assessment, and quality assurance throughout Europe, and to coordinate policies for that. All that should finally lead to a greater attractiveness of the European higher education area for bright brains from all over the world.

In the end, the ongoing globalization and changes in the world in the last 20 years mean for us that internalization of our higher education is an absolute must. It is no longer at the

periphery of our institutions, it is at their very center. It is an integral part of all teaching and research, it is an integral part of the universities' strategies to ensure high quality in study, research, and management; to enhance reputation, attractiveness and competitiveness in a worldwide competition; and to access new and complementary international funding, for instance from the European Union, which is also a great funding machinery. Finally, internationalization also means to contribute to solving the global problems and challenges which we all face.

Internationalization, in brief, means exchange of students, faculty and staff, and it means internationalizing university faculty and staff. Most of our professorial staff is still national. In Japan as well as in Germany only 10% of the professors are international, we need many more of those international professors. Internationalization also means new curricula; we can no longer continue with the ancient traditional domestic subjects only, but we need to see the global aspects of the subjects. This also means to enhance global research and international networks.

As the title of this article suggests, internationalization has an impact on all three levels, the individual, the institutional, and the national level. I comment on these three aspects in the course of this paper, starting with the individual level.

3. The impact of internationalization on the life of individuals, institutions, and countries

3.1 Internationalization on the individual level

What does internationalization mean for the individual?

First, it means learning the international aspects of one's own field. Let me give a personal example to make this point clear. I am a lawyer, and when I went to university in the 1960s to study German law, we were completely convinced that learning German law is sufficient to know everything. Our attitude was that if others had no understanding of German law, then they should come to Germany and learn it. Unfortunately, they do not come any longer, and unfortunately, law in the world is meanwhile mainly Anglo-American law. Thus today in legal education in Germany, international aspects play a major role, and much of the curriculum is dedicated to that, including the newly emerging European law. The situation has changed so much that we can no longer continue with the old syllabus and the old curriculum.

Second, it means learning foreign languages. In my opinion - and hopefully not only in mine - any academic in the world should speak at least two foreign languages, one of which should be English. English should be a communication tool for everybody; however, people should speak at least one more language other than their mother tongue. Some people claim that this is too much. No, it is not. We have much evidence of many people in the world who from the very beginning speak two or more languages. If one starts early enough, learning two foreign languages is possible and should be adopted as a policy. Unfortunately, some countries, also in Europe, go the other way; they decrease their efforts to learn foreign

languages. They think that if they speak bad English that is enough; but it is not, neither for English nor for other languages. This, last but not least, is also a political issue, because it relates to the variety and plurality of our cultures.

Third, any university should offer an international campus for their home students by attracting international students and thus creating an international environment.

Fourth, internationalization means studying abroad or doing internships abroad. Let us have a look at the mobility of students. Today, the 2.8 million students who are mobile comprise no more than 2% of the world's student population of 150 million students. That is far too little. If we look where the international students go to, the USA is the number one single country in hosting foreign students. However, Europe hosts many more international students than North America, including students from other European countries. Asia is still sending their students out (not all of them voluntarily), but is not good enough in receiving international students, and that also applies to Japan.

How many students should be mobile? In their last conference in Leuven in April 2009, the ministers of the Bologna region set a benchmark of 20%, that means, at least one student in five should have had a substantial experience in a foreign country when he or she graduates. For us in Germany that is not ambitious enough. We are already at a rate of more than 30% of outgoing students and we do want to arrive at 50% in the years to come; that means that at least every other student should have been outside Germany four or five months or longer either on study or internship abroad. The US, which for a long time has mainly been a receiving country, is now setting a new policy of sending one million Americans abroad. That is quite a number to host, but I appreciate that young Americans are to go out and learn more about the world. Other countries should follow and set new political targets, including Japan. Germany experiences a constant rise in the number of students who go abroad, now reaching the number of 90,000 students abroad. This is more than double the number of Japanese outgoing students, although there are twice as many Japanese students in total numbers - but most of them stay in Japan.

In Europe, the numbers of German students participating in the Erasmus program of the European Union, which the DAAD administers for Germany as a national agency, grew to about 25,000 in 2007/2008. This year, roughly 160,000 Europeans are crossing borders within Europe on this scheme only. This is a real success story of ever growing numbers of students going abroad, and these numbers hopefully will be doubled. The European Commission has promised (and I hope the member states will subscribe to that) to almost double the budget and numbers in the years to come.

To sum up, internationalization on the individual level in the end is all about becoming a global citizen. Today, we need a new educational target and that is global citizenship.

3.2 Internationalization on the institutional level

What does internationalization mean for universities as institutions?

First and foremost it is necessary that institutions of higher education develop a concise strategy on internationalization. Internationalization partly has to grow bottom-up and there should be room and freedom for bottom-up approaches to internationalization; however, there should as well be a top-down idea and strategy on the future development. That is because internationalization needs time, efforts, and money, and that again requires to set priorities.

Second, universities should facilitate student exchange and help their students to take the important step of studying abroad. Universities should offer what we call “windows of mobility” in the curriculum. If the curricula are so tight that students cannot leave, then we cannot complain that they stay at home. There must be room for students to move.

Third, internationalization demands generous recognition of achievements abroad. Professors tend to think that it is only in their classroom that their students can learn anything and that it is risky to go out. No, it is not. We need to be more generous than we actually are concerning the recognition of achievements of students going abroad.

Needless to say in this context, foreign language courses should be offered as well as international curricula.

Fourth, on the institutional level we need international teaching staff or efforts to increasingly internationalize our own teaching staff, to give them opportunities to leave the country for a while to gather experience at institutions abroad.

Fifth, universities have to attract international students. The target number of receiving international students should be set at 10% at least, that means, 10% of a university’s student population should be international. In Germany, international students comprise around 10-12% of the student population at a normal university, but some universities host as many as 20% and musical colleges even almost 40% international students, among whom many students from Japan.

In order to reach that benchmark, universities should offer appropriate courses which are of international standard, interest, and contents. Universities need to improve hosting and living conditions for international students. Institutions need to promote their offers worldwide, that means worldwide marketing. Last but not least, universities need to enter into international networks with other universities which facilitate the exchange of students and staff.

Regarding inbound mobility, namely incoming students, the USA with their branding of “open doors” is, as I said before, still the world leader. They had a growth rate of more than 10% in recent years. However, Europe is also a major player; for instance, the United Kingdom has set ambitious targets and is increasing its number of foreign students to 350,000 at the moment. Australia even calls hosting international students its fastest growing industry. Other English speaking countries, such as Canada and New Zealand, are catching up because of the English language.

Germany, France, and other continental European countries do not charge tuition fees,

so it is not in their financial interest to have more international students; but it is very much in their interest to attract international talent. More than others, these countries are also involved in development cooperation and cultural diplomacy. Many German universities are meanwhile active in Iraq, Afghanistan, or in the Balkans and help to reconcile people and reconstruct higher education in these regions.

In order to attract students, marketing is a particularly necessary activity. Marketing is meanwhile done in Germany although Germany does not have any commercial interest as it charges hardly any tuition fees; our marketing is to attract bright brains. In Germany, we have created an organization of more than 100 German universities – the same, by the way, is true for other European countries – and we tour around the world and try to attract bright students through fairs, promotion tours, and testimonial campaigns. We also go beyond our national borders in marketing and join forces with some of our neighboring countries, in particular with the Netherlands and France. We do marketing in some parts of the world together, because we think that first people have to decide to come to Europe and then the second decision is to which country to go. Moreover, sometimes it makes sense to visit more than just one European university, because many of our universities meanwhile have joint programs with other European universities. Thus, why not experience more than just one European university when you come as a foreign student ?

In Germany, the number of international students has rapidly grown over the last decade. The number of foreign first-year students has reached 60,000 per year. The total number of international students in Germany is now about 230,000, the equivalent of 15 universities. Note that all this is mostly without tuition fees and most, if not all of the cost is met by the German taxpayer. In particular, Germany experiences a dynamic rise in the number of Chinese students, the biggest group of foreign students in Germany, from 5,000 in 1996/1997 to 25,000 in 2007/2008. The next largest groups come from three countries in Eastern Europe.

In order to attract foreign students, universities must have a language policy and offer courses taught in English, especially in Japan, because it is so difficult to learn the language. In Germany we offer by now more than 700 courses taught in English, and this number is rapidly growing, so that we will surely be at a 1000 courses in two more years. Needless to say, there is some risk, though, in teaching courses in English, because the English proficiency of both professors and students must be good enough. Otherwise, the quality of the content of the teaching suffers too much.

At the same time, universities should offer language courses for their international students. If we in Germany invite foreign students to attend courses that are taught in English, they do not need to have any command of German when they come. But when they leave us, they should know enough German - and most do, because we offer German language courses.

Also important, though I will not comment on that in detail, is the social dimension. With that I do not only refer to accommodation, which still is a problem in many countries, but also to the social and cultural integration of the foreign students.

3.3 Internationalization on the national level

What does internationalization mean for the nation states?

Beside the individual and institutional level, internationalization also needs a national strategy. That national strategy should first and above all contain a financial support scheme, in particular for student exchange. The minimum is that the normal grants, loans, or subsidies available to students for their domestic studies should be transportable to foreign countries. That is now the rule in all European countries. In addition to that, countries need special fellowship programs such as we offer at the DAAD. The establishment of professional agencies such as the DAAD, JSPS or JASSO is very helpful and needed, and more and more countries adopt that policy.

Furthermore, legal obstacles need to be removed. That applies for visa and immigration policies as well as for work permits. In many countries, it is still a dreadful experience to handle all the bureaucracy when trying to enter the country, and sometimes even when trying to leave it.

State policies should foster international cooperation agreements on a bilateral and multilateral level. What we now experience in the Bologna process is that higher education policy is no longer a national or domestic matter only, but that ministers coordinate at least their views and experiences on a multilateral level. This is such a useful approach that I can only recommend to adopt a similar form of cooperation in Asia and to bring the Asian regions into a supranational dialogue. The Bologna dialogue at least is open enough for this dialogue, because it is not specifically European. It may have emerged from Europe, but its main targets of mobility, attractiveness, and quality assurance are of interest to all countries, also to Japan.

German-Japanese relations and globalization

To end, let me have a brief look at the relations between our two countries, Germany and Japan. Our bilateral relations have a very long tradition and are good, but they are not dynamic enough. There should be many more efforts from both sides on the student and faculty level.

If you compare the general data for Japan and Germany on aspects like the gross national product, exports, economic relations, patents, world publication rankings, and so on, we have very much in common. We are not number one, but we are in the second row and are important economies and scientific players. And, we have a great potential for cooperation which should be better exploited.

It would be very helpful if there were more institutional links and linkages between our departments and institutions, from university to university, to facilitate student exchange.

We should multiply opportunities for shorter periods of study abroad. It is not necessary that people come for three or four years. One year, half a year or even four weeks may do for a start.

We should offer more courses taught in English on both sides and at the same time of course also offer training in the national languages.

We should try to get more interest from scientists and engineers, not only from people in the humanities.

We should include internships in our strategies as well. In my experience, a guided and integrated internship is as valuable as (and sometimes easier than) study abroad.

For those who are even more ambitious: why not try harder and organize a double degree program? We have double degrees not only within Europe, but increasingly so with China, with the US, and other non-European countries, but only a few with Japan. Building double degree programs does not only need time and attention and money, it also needs professional staff for implementation, and it needs a generally positive public attitude.

So do not hesitate to lobby the good cases internally and also in public, because steps towards internationalization are always in danger of being abandoned. Especially now in times of budgetary constraints as a consequence of the financial crisis - which we the academics have not produced, but which we are suffering from, also in Japan, as I heard, where budgetary cuts in higher education are now discussed - we should not hesitate to fight for our common cause, for better education, better science, and more exchanges.

We have lived too long in a prison of nationalist attitudes. We have seen that this has led to the bloodshed of the last century; and our two countries Japan and Germany have been deeply involved in that. This is the past. The future, the 21st century, is not about national states, it is about globalization, it is about how to play the right role in a new global world.

We are all facing new and universal challenges. It is not your climate or the European climate, it is our common climate; it is our common energy problem, it is our common water problem, it is our common infectious disease problem, and it is our common poverty problem which we have to solve jointly. That we can only do with people who are globally minded, who are open minded, and who do no longer think in those ancient misleading categories of narrow nationalist attitudes.

In the end, even more important than all these recommendations and even more important than money is the right spirit, the right mentality. That is what internationalization needs first: open minds!

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