

# LEADING UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION

The future of Euro-Chinese Academic  
Cooperation

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Here is our research question: *How can we characterize the role expectations of European and Chinese academic leadership facing both their respective internationalization strategies, and their national and institutional cultural constraints?*

- China and Europe internationalize strategically their HE systems.
- There are cultural and institutional constraints in both territories.
- We analyze their impact in the profile of their academic leaderships.
- Focuses are on
  - Historical and current practice of internationalization in Europe and in China;
  - Strategic goals underlying these practices;
  - The implications to the internationalization strategies in constraining the choices and actions of academic leaders in China and in Europe.
- We contribute by analyzing the points of conflict and opportunities of growth, suggesting possible open pathways of sustainable collaboration between leaders of both regions.

# The praxis of internationalization in Europe

- Schengen and Bologna harmonizing the architecture of European HE.
- Leverage on reputation to establish attractive worldwide standards.
- Cooperation programs: Leonardo, Socrates and extended Erasmus.
- Research and cooperation programs within Europe and with the World: Marie-Curie Fellowships; the H2020 initiative, the new Horizon Europe program.
- Internationalization of HE: tool for cooperation and policy dialogue outside EU.
- Internationalization beyond mobility – the transformation of the system
- Generates global, conscientious professionals, ready for coopetition.

# The praxis of internationalization in China

- Strategy for Chinese HEI: financial and diplomatic advantages.
- Strengthening HEI global leadership & reinforce internal high reputation.
- Sequence of strategic Plans for internationalizing Chinese HEI
  - 1978-1997 (Deng Xiaoping): project 211 with important economic restructurings;
  - 1999-2010 (Jiang Zemin): project 985 international academic mobility of youth;
  - 2011 Plan (Hu Jintao).
- Asymmetries: poorest regions have degraded HEI, richer regions opposite.
- Economic distortions: corruption became an endemic problem
  - Academic institutions and local authorities compete to be included.

# The praxis of internationalization in China

- A new plan: 2015- (Xi Jinping ) World-Class 2.0 (Double World project )
- Goal: develop world-class universities and first-class disciplines
- Part of the Chinese strategy to revert its position as supplier in the HE market for international students by 2050.
  - HE system with socialist values based on core Chinese characteristics.
  - Improving the Party's leadership of HE institutions
  - Improving its structure of internal governance while developing an inclusion mechanism incorporating concerns of social participation.
  - selection of HEI through independent and fair panel, introducing competitive mechanism

# Internationalizing HE: Economic grounds

- International competition => provision of human capital
- EU interest in attracting foreign talent, regenerating the local workforce
- Conflict: traditional role vs. managerial and corporate-like structures.
- European concern with HE systems: state vs. market's role.
- HE as a major factor for national competitiveness: key to economic growth/social development.
- Chinese investment in HE became economically and politically significant, attracting European HE interest.

# Internationalizing HE: Economic grounds

- Chinese Drivers for Internationalizing Higher Education
  - Modernize industry, agriculture, science & technology through economic reform focused on technology.
  - Using globalization to integrate HE economically and politically;
  - Drain brain: China has been for years an important basis for talent recruitment by US and Europe.
  - An opportunity to establish the reputation of leading HEI to reverse the brain drain;
  - Allowing high-level universities to recruit foreign students (both economies of scale and of scope ) and balance the brain drain effect.
- Five pillars shape HE evolution in China, namely
  - financing mechanisms, structural reforms, continuous education, internal and international mobility, and quality assurance and assessment

# The Rankings Strategy

Rankings were originally developed in the West to establish US and European model as benchmark  
Chinese Universities ranking at the top brings international credibility for its

- Return on HE's strategic investment, making it competitive;
- Leading position in the globalization process, engaging its higher education system;
- Research capabilities and capacity to work with its natural partners along the New Silk Roads
- Capacity to attract valuable talent.
- Focus in shifting, widening, and diversifying the scope of its action, seeking a leading role with the concept of its New Silk Roads, particularly with its Asian neighbors, but aiming to reach out into Europe.

Given that China is both object and subject in the globalization of higher education, the question is to understand whether China is a leader or a follower in global higher education.



# The Rankings Strategy

2020

Ranking	Range	China	Europe	UK	USA
THE	Top 100	3	37	11	40
	Top 200	7	95	28	60
QS	Top 100	6	34	18	29
	Top 200	7	88	28	46
CWUR	Top 100	3	28	8	55
	Top 200	9	78	21	73

2016

Ranking	Range	China	Europe	UK	USA
THE	Top 100	2	42	16	39
	Top 200	2	95	34	63
QS	Top 100	4	39	18	30
	Top 200	7	90	30	49
CWUR	Top 100	2	28	7	55
	Top 200	5	77	16	82

- China: only region whose presence increased in all 3 rankings, (top 100 & 200).
- China is both object and subject in the globalization of higher education.
- Question is to understand whether China is a leader or a follower in global HE.

# Profiling Academic Leadership

Role expectations associated with academic leadership in China and in Europe.

Similarities and differences help mapping the challenges:

- Both systems becoming increasingly capitalistic, with important differences:
  - the liberal capitalism of the West versus the State capitalism of China.
- Both systems share a number of ideas namely around finalities, such as
  - merit,
  - innovation and progress through economic value creation
- But present differences on who should lead Universities and the internationalization:
  - the invisible hand of the market or
  - the visible arm of the State.

# Profiling Academic Leadership

Given these differences, academic leaders in EU and China face paradox on how to jointly

- compete for talent, prestige, and resources for their organizations;
- collaborate in the development of talent for the scholarly research pool;
- share prestige through collaboration with other institutions;
- expand resources for scientific projects.

The capacity to lead paradoxically

- Essential attribute of academic leaders for creating a space for coopeting;
- Hard choice in finding spaces for coopetition and to dynamically maintain them
- Challenging process given HE as paradoxical space rich in synergies and trade-offs
- Require constant balancing between competing and cooperating.
- Require HE leaders to develop “coopetitive” specific set of skills.

# Conclusions

- We discussed the role expectations toward academic leadership for university internationalization in Europe and China;
- understand what unites and what distinguishes the two systems such that both can learn and evolve together fruitfully and respecting differences.
- The university system offers a promising arena for scholars to study and compare the internationalization strategies in China and in Europe.
- It constitutes a privileged vantage point to analyze the evolution of state and liberal forms of capitalisms, as well as forms of cooperation between them.
- We concluded that the pursuit of opportunities implies a measure of coopetition and consequently a paradoxical mindset to navigate the tensions.