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Transnational higher education by German universities: Main drivers and components

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Transnational Higher Education by German Universities – Main Drivers and Components

Nadin Fromm

No. 181

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Transnational Higher Education by German Universities – Main Drivers and Component

ABSTRACT

Transnational education plays a key role in the current debate on the internationalization of higher education, and represents one response to the burgeoning growth in worldwide demand for tertiary education. The main focus of the present paper is on provider and institutional mobility in tertiary education, concentrating on the case of German higher education institutions. This paper studies the existing federal program responsible for the development and organization of transnational study programs. Empirical data is presented along with *German-backed universities*, which are discussed as one possible means for Germany to provide transnational higher education abroad. This paper introduces various political dimensions that may be included in the development of bi-national universities and presents them as a preliminary result of the burgeoning diffusion of tertiary education.

Keywords: transnational higher education, definitions and approaches, provider and institutional mobility by German universities, implementation settings

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Transnational Higher Education by German Universities – Main Drivers and Component

1. INTRODUCING TRANSNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper elaborates on the phenomenon of transnational higher education (TNE), which plays a predominant role in the current debate on the internationalization of higher education. Its main focus is program and institutional mobility of tertiary education, one aspect of TNE. This includes not only the delivery of study programs, but also different funding models and types of provisions by institutions, either in their entirety or in their branches (Academic Cooperation Association, ACA 2008: 17–21). It is not surprising that higher education institutions (HEI) are at the center of transnationalization activities. As universities carry out the central role in the education of skilled workers for the international job market, they are relevant locations for research and innovation. For national universities, internationalization and globalization are means to meet the challenge and competition originating from a global-scale knowledge-based society (Marginson and Wende 2009). Transnational Education seems to be an appropriate response to the burgeoning demand for tertiary education, which is clearly evident in data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Countries that are among the most active in TNE, such as Australia[1], the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US)[2] and Germany,[3] are the “chief foreign providers” (McBurnie and Ziguras 2009: 92) in this area. Statistical data provided by national

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1 “Providing education to students from more than 100 nations around the world is Australia’s fourth largest export industry, behind iron, coal and gold but ahead of tourism, natural gas and crude oil, according to a new report. It says education as an export has played a key role in Australia’s economic prosperity, doubling in value every five years from 1990 to 2010” (Retrieved 31.01.2013 from: http://www.universityworldnews.com/ article.php?story=20121128163603470).

2 Here, data for the US is somewhat out-dated. The OECD points out that American institutions developed study abroad programs in at least 115 countries, for which students could receive American diplomas (OECD 2004: 22). The reason for this lack of information regarding current activities is related to the fact that here “[c]ross-border higher education is institutionally, not policy, motivated,” as Lane et al. point out (Lane, Kinser, and Knox 2012: 166). As such, nationwide statistics are seldom available. Jane Knight emphasizes (2007) that a few countries, such as Australia and the UK “[…] have gathered statistics from the recognized HEIs on the extent of their cross-border education provision.” Otherwise this research area is characterized by a “paucity of information” (both citations: Knight 2007: 135); please see also footnote 11 (p. 14).

3 (Please see: Academic Cooperation Association 2008, McBurnie and Ziguras 2009, Vincent-Lancrin 2004, 2009)

agencies highlight this trend: “The number of people studying entirely outside of the UK on a program delivered at least in part by a UK institution was over half a million in 2010-11” (British Council 2012: 21); the statistical figures, published by the International Development Program (IDP), the Australian Agency for Internationalization, further highlights this trend: “Offshore enrolments in Australian universities have grown around 20,000 in 1996 to 66,363 in 2008, representing nearly one-third of the international enrolments in Australian universities” (cit. in McBurnie and Ziguras 2009: 90). These numbers indicate that over the last decade TNE appears to have been a fast growing and active field. Altbach states that: “[…] the expansion of academic offerings […] worldwide has created a new market for programs and professional mobility. The global higher education marketplace is large, growing, and basically unregulated” (Altbach 2008: 2).

In presenting this research in a more descriptive manner, I aim to give an example of how tertiary education can be distributed across national borders. I focus on the German federally funded program Study Courses Offered by German Universities Abroad *(“Studienangebote deutscher Hochschulen im Ausland”)*, henceforth referred to as German Study Programs Abroad. This program is part of the national government’s framework dedicated to the internationalization of the national science and innovation sector. This program aims to develop transnational study programs and international HEIs. As this program has developed over time, this paper explores the establishment of bi-national universities, which have recently appeared as a third mode of delivery within this German program. Research on these bi-national universities has provided evidence that some German provisions abroad are the sole result of top-down regulations. I will therefore discuss how these German-affiliated transnational tertiary education projects are implemented, assuming that German activities reveal specific national characteristics that differ from those of other provider countries.

The paper is made up of two parts. The first provides descriptive information. I start with an overview of the existing definitions and approaches of TNE. I then discuss, from an institutional perspective, one of the three primary rationales explaining recent changes in TNE, presenting key statistical data to illustrate the increasing significance that TNE plays for international students. I discuss empirical data based on document analysis and my personal inquiries. In the second part of the article, I further elaborate on the significance of TNE while providing an overview of Germany’s transnational activities, giving a representational example of program and institutional mobility in the German context. I then introduce one of the three existing modes of delivery, the *foreign-backed university*, which German HEIs tend to establish abroad, and further discuss it from an analytical perspective.

The vast majority of studies in this area compare funding models or modes of provision by different countries (Hahn 2005, Schreiterer and Witte 2001) or explore distinctive market strategies to export tertiary education (Brockhoff 2004, Krauss 2006); however, very few examine the political dimension of TNE. By treating TNE as highly ideological, the main purpose of the following article is to descriptively investigate how national political actors and institutions translate their intention into policy actions. This article offers a further example of the loss of state control as new arenas of policy actions emerge.

1.1. Definitions and approaches

The generic term *transnational education* first emerged during the early 1990s when Australian HEIs intensified their international activities for offshore and onshore students in the tertiary education sector. Transnational education was first introduced in an empirical perspective “[…] to differentiate between international students recruited to Australian campuses and those who were studying for Australian degrees offshore” (Knight 2005: 5).[4] The differentiation between incoming and outgoing students dates back to former conceptualizations by higher education researchers, who wanted to be able to categorize all internationalization activities and cluster them into two different sets: home or campus-based internationalization and cross-border education.

Transnationalization can be regarded as an example of the second category. However, it is classified in conjunction with the meta-term *globalization*, which is interpreted here “[…] as a geo-spatial process of growing inter-dependence and convergence, in which worldwide or pan-regional (for example European) spheres of action are enhanced” (Marginson and Wende 2009: 19). The emphasis on such drivers is due to the necessary competitiveness by countries, which face an increasingly competitive global environment in the field of higher education.[5]

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[4] On- and offshore activities by Australian HEIs can be seen as unintended side effects of higher education reform. Accordingly, these HEIs were forced to find other ways of financing, such as tuition fees from international students. This explains why the number of international students increased from 21,116 in 1998 to 157,834 in 2000. (Schreiterer and Witte 2001: 38-39).

[5] In 1994, tertiary education was proclaimed as a general service and therefore registered in the General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) by the World Trade Organization (WTO). This included a commitment among member countries to view tertiary education as a common good can be traded across borders through different modes of provision (Academic Cooperation Association 2008: 20). As a policy framework, GATS sets rules for the progressive liberalization of the trade and supply of general services (for further information and discussion please see: Hahn, K. (2003): “The Changing ‘Zeitgeist’ in German Higher Education and the Role of GATS”. In: Higher Education in Europe, 28. Jg., H. 2, p. 199–215).

Earlier investigations of TNE gave different interpretations of transnational activities, and further distinguished between borderless education and cross-border education. The former is defined as “[…] educational provision that crosses conventional boundaries of time, space and geography. In crossing these boundaries, many of our current conceptions of education (and higher education in particular) are also transgressed with a number of consequences” (Middlehurst 2002: 2). The term *cross-border education* describes activities that are similar, but which cross jurisdictional borders; this term was further elaborated by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in their Code of Practice in 2001. In this code of practice, TNE comprises: “[a]ll types of higher education study programs, or set of courses of study, or educational services [...] in which learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programs may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system” (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001, p. 16).[6] Table 1, below, summarizes existing definitions (as of 2005), categorizing by stakeholders and key elements.

Table 1: Summary of definitions and key elements

Stakeholder and source	Date	Key Elements	Definition
GATE- Global Alliance for Transnational Education	1996	Location of learner and providing institution	Transnational education denotes any teaching or learning activity in which the students are in a different country (the host country) to that in which the institution providing the education is based (the home country).
Report on the “Business of Borderless Education” CVCP	2000	Blurring of borders	Borderless education refers to the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent to higher education
UNESCO and Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications: ‘Code of Practice for Transnational Education’	2001	Location of learner and awarding institution	All types and modes of delivery of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based.
UNESCO/OECD “Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education	2004	Crossing of national jurisdictional border	Higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders.
OBHE Report on Transnational Education and Regulations	2005	Between countries	Transnational education is used to designate higher education provision offered by one country in another and to exclude provision where solely the student travels abroad.
IAU, CHEA, ACE, AUCC Statement	2004	Role of borders	‘Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders’
GATS Agreement	1994	Service moves across border not the consumer	Cross-border supply focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer to physically move

Source: (Knight 2005: 11)

[6] The definition was revised in 2004 by UNESCO and the OECD in the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education (see Table 1).

As there are numerous activities on the global market that fall under the general category of TNE, policy-maker, researchers and even International Organization define various funding and provision types to classify these activities. Transnational higher education comprises three main types of mobility across national jurisdictional borders: personal mobility (i.e., incoming and outgoing students, professors and researchers), program mobility (i.e., franchising and licensing, distance learning), and institution and provider mobility (i.e., branch campuses, foreign-backed universities).[7]

The OECD has put some effort into investigating the dynamics that drive TNE. According to the OECD, TNE can be explained mainly by three types of rationales: institutionally oriented, policy-oriented, and student-oriented (OECD 2004: 25). I will discuss institutionally oriented rationales in the next subsection, narrowing my focus on this key driver to cover it more comprehensively. I will also focus strictly on policy-oriented rationales in the German context. Student-oriented rationales, which consider the effects that intense internationalization or transnationalization have on students, are beyond the scope of the present paper. Student-oriented rationales mostly refer to the benefits of further education and the professional careers of students following participation in an international program or a limited-duration study abroad program. Although “[...] it is difficult to assess personal, professional, and academic outcomes in any systematic or large-scale way, a preponderance of anecdotal evidence suggests that the benefits of international study for most students are quite positive-enjoyable, meaningful, and often life changing” (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley 2009: 107).

1.2. Institutional rationales: The global demand for tertiary education[8]

I will begin with presenting empirical evidence of the demand for tertiary education, along with presenting long-term trends in student mobility in tertiary education. This section offers descriptive statistical evidence for the assumed causality between the global demand for tertiary education and student mobility, and increased demands by students for tertiary education.

Key data from the OECD and UNECSO Institute for Statistics indicate that, based on statistical evidence, the mobility of international students has increased steadily over the few past decades, and will likely remain high in the future. Figure 1 illustrates the growth (1975–2010) in the overall number of international and foreign students.[9] Nota-

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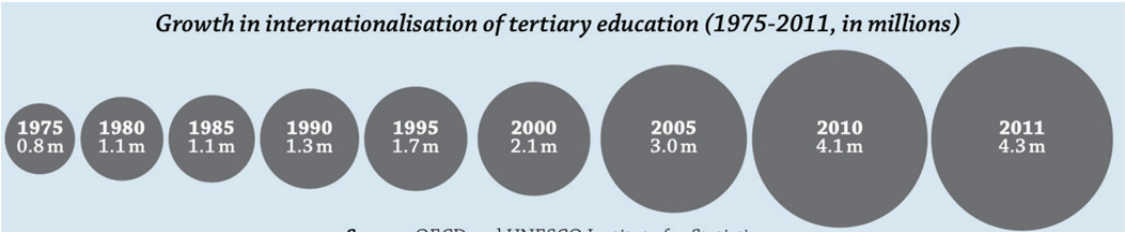
[7] (For further definition see: Academic Cooperation Association 2008: 19-21)

[8] The growing significance of TNE and the increase in demand of tertiary education worldwide, respectively, are statistically represented by well-documented data on student mobility (OECD 2004: 21).

[9] In their statistics, the UNESCO/OECD Institute for Statistics differentiates between *international* and *foreign* students in the following way: “Students are classified as foreign students if they are not citizens of the country in

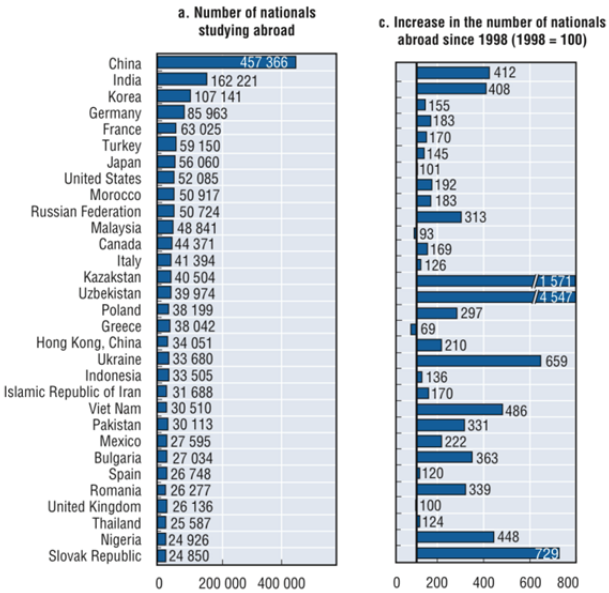
bly, the number of students enrolled outside their country of origin doubled between 2000 and 2010, while during the preceding years, growth remained relatively stable, and at a lower level. Since 2000, the mobility rate of international students has grown consistently; this population now amounts to 4.1 million students.

Figure 1: Long-term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship



Source: (OECD 2013: 306)

Table 2: Number of national students abroad (in 2007) and in absolute proportion (since 1998)



Source: (Vincent-Lancrin 2009: 67)

The table above (Table 2a) draws a distinction between the number of national students enrolled outside their country of origin in absolute terms for 2007, while the second chart (2c) maps the relative growth in the numbers of students from each country enrolled outside their country of origin (in terms of percentage)). According to this figure, the growth rate of students enrolled outside their country of origin coming from regions such as Asia (China and India in particular) has increased over 400 percentage points

which the data are collected. […] And] as international students if they left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study” (OECD 2012: 371).

from 1998 to 2007. Small-sized countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) show the largest proportional growth in the number of citizens from their country studying abroad. This is due to the fact that, before 1998, only a limited number of students chose to apply to tertiary education outside their country; since countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan began with such a low student count, a relatively small increase in students enrolled outside their home countries after 1998 created a huge relative increase; however, this is still modest compared to growth in emerging markets, such as Asia.

I will now focus on those countries with the highest mobility rates, along with the respective host countries. Table 3 compiles data from different countries to give the ten most important host countries and countries of origin for 2008.

Table 3: Global student mobility in institutions of higher education for 2008

Domestic students studying abroad	Foreign students hosted											Total domestic students abroad
	United States	United Kingdom	Germany	France	Australia	Canada	Russian Federation	Japan	Italy	Spain	other countries	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1. China	118,962	55,222	25,479	20,852	71,496	39,171	9,189	77,916	2,997	689	125,780	547,753
2. India	94,664	25,901	3,644	1,038	26,520	10,357	4,314	513	627	113	17,109	184,801
3. South Korea	69,198	4,031	5,138	2,292	6,270	383	661	23,290	-	92	4,109	115,464
4. Germany	8,917	13,625	-	6,918	1,934	1,190	196	445	1,591	1,830	57,762	94,408
5. Turkey	12,043	2,370	23,881	2,270	319	937	345	166	465	56	22,607	65,459
6. France	7,058	12,685	5,784	-	1,027	6,325	87	489	1,013	1,884	26,730	63,081
7. Russian Fed.	4,911	2,646	12,501	3,347	618	1,650	-	352	949	817	31,192	58,983
8. Japan	34,010	4,465	2,234	1,908	2,974	2,169	146	-	-	148	4,795	52,849
9. United States	-	13,895	3,304	3,228	3,055	9,941	98	1,955	368	651	15,833	52,328
10. Malaysia	5,434	11,727	900	593	18,576	813	2,516	2,012	17	5	8,840	51,434
11. other countries	269,276	189,303	162,657	200,099	97,846	112,464	125,751	19,430	60,246	58,621	759,947	2,056,533
Total no. hosted	624,474	33,587	245,522	243,436	230,635	185,399	143,303	126,568	68,273	64,906	1,074,705	3,343,092

Source: 19th Social Survey (*Deutsches Studentwerk*), 2012: 9 (Table 1.1.)

The next table (Table 4) assumes Australia, Germany, the UK and the US to be the most active in the delivery of tertiary education and selects these countries to verify student preference for country to study in. The left-most column lists the geographical regions by student origin. The mobility rate of international students is given for the years 2004, 2009 and 2010. Table 4 indicates that, overall, there has been increasing demand to study abroad. Although this growth is not consistent across all regions of origin.[10]

[10] Reasons why students choose to study abroad vary. However, language skills and cultural and historical considerations may influence students' choices. Mobility preferences are emerge based on the attractiveness of certain educational systems and their associated programs and degrees (OECD 2004: 29-31).

Table 4: Distribution of international students in tertiary education, by country of origin

	OECD destination countries											
	International students											
	Australia			Germany			United Kingdom			United States		
Main geographic regions of origin	2004	2009	2010	2004	2009	2010	2004	2009	2010	2004	2009	2010
Africa	3,3	3,0	2,8	9,0	9,2	9,0	8,9	9,7	9,3	6,7	5,5	5,4
Asia	76,0	79,1	79,8	30,3	32,6	33,1	46,9	49,1	50,5	62,3	68,4	70,0
Europe	6,3	4,2	4,3	47,6	43,9	42,7	34,3	32,4	31,0	12,8	10,8	10,3
of which, EU 21 countries	3,4	3,1	3,1	16,8	23,0	23,3	29,6	26,8	25,1	7,5	7,7	7,4
North America	3,9	2,9	2,7	2,0	2,1	2,2	5,9	5,5	5,0	4,8	4,5	4,1
Oceania	3,8	1,8	1,7	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,7	0,6	0,6	0,8	0,8	0,7
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,1	1,3	1,4	3,6	4,3	4,6	2,9	2,2	2,0	12,2	10,1	9,5
Not specified	5,5	7,8	7,3	7,2	8,6	8,1	0,4	0,5	1,6	0,4	n	n

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of OECD data: (OECD 2006, 2011, 2012)

Based on the data presented in Table 4, these destination countries (Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, United States) aim to deliver their study programs, international institutions and branches of home institutions in areas where the demand for tertiary education degrees can be presumed to be very high, and where this demand is not yet met by the local HEIs.

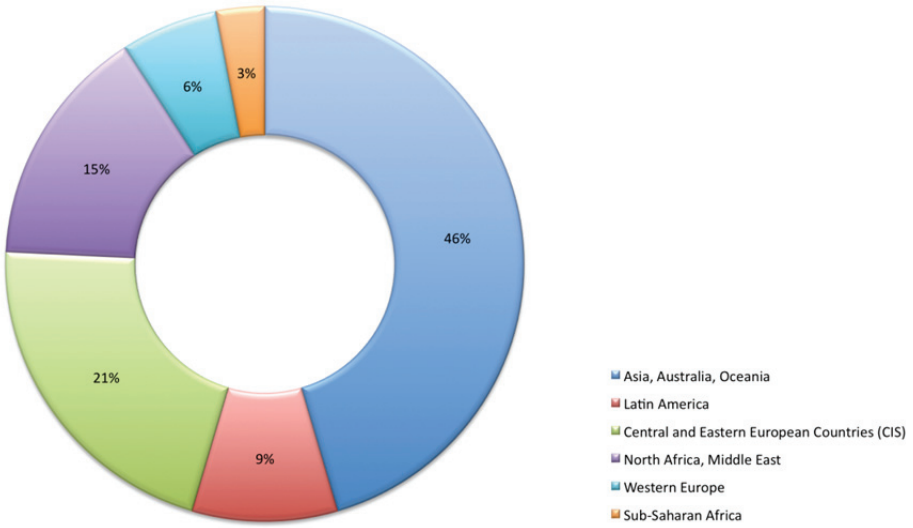
The slight decrease in hosting for Australia, the UK and the US may be attributed to the fact that institutions from these countries have had established international study programs for many years. This might have an effect on the rate of incoming students, which has dropped recently. For the case of Germany, recent data imply that in 2010 the rate of foreign students enrolled in German campuses has “[... fallen] by more than two percentage points” (OECD 2012: 363; especially p. 364 Chart C4.3.). This notable development could well become a stable trend in coming years. This decrease could be explained by student demand for tertiary education being supplied by German export educational projects.

2. Transnational Higher Education Activities by German Higher Education Institutions

More than ten years have passed since the start of the federal program German Study Programs Abroad. It is one component of the broader stream of TNE activities in Germany, which include three additional programs in the higher education sector: “(1) Centers of Excellence in Africa/African Excellence; (2) Centers of Excellence (excluding the research collaborations); and (3) Bicultural study program” (DAAD 2012a: 30).

German Study Programs Abroad provides financial support for German HEIs to establish higher education opportunities abroad, mainly outside the EU. Financial resources are provided by the Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF) and are allocated by the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD), the national agency for the international exchange of students and scholars. In total, German Study Programs Abroad comprises approximately 70 external projects, some of which are made up of more than one study program (on bachelor / master level). At present, 20,000

Figure 2: Regional distribution of German educational projects (N = 66) for 2012



Source: Compiled by the author based on data by DAAD 2012

Table 5: Distribution of German educational programs in 2012, by country and region[11]

Region		Projects
Asia, Australia, Oceania	total	30
	China	13
	Vietnam	5
	India	2
	Indonesia	2
	Japan	2
	South Korea	2
	Thailand	2
	Malaysia	1
	Singapore	1
CEECs, CIS	total	14
	Russia	6
	Armenia	1
	Azerbaijan	1
	Baltic states	1
	Belarus	1
	Georgia	1
	Kazakhstan	1
	Kyrgyzstan	1
	Ukraine	1

Region		Projects
Latin America	total	6
	Brazil	3
	Chile	2
	Argentina	1
North Africa, Middle East	total	10
	Egypt	3
	Iran	1
	Jordan	1
	(Lebanon)	1
	Marocco	1
	Oman	1
	(Syria)	1
	UAE	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	total	2
	Ethiopia	1
	South Africa	1
Western Europe	total	4
	Turkey	4

N=66

Source: Compiled by the author based on data by DAAD 2012

students are enrolled in German degree programs, and 10,000 students have already gained degrees. The number of students per program can range from 25, for an individ-

[11] (Regional subdivisions of statistics provided by DAAD 2013: 108)

ual course, up to 12,000 or 15,000 people for an entire campus. The main fields of study are engineering (42%), economics (31%), the fine arts (8%), mathematics, computer sciences and physical sciences (7%), law and political sciences (5%), architecture (4%), and social sciences (3%) (Bode 2010). Figure 2 and Table 5 above depict the regional distribution of these German educational projects. Asia (China, Vietnam, and India), Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS; Russia) and the Middle East/North Africa (Egypt) are preferred destination countries. German universities seem to prioritize establishing programs in collaboration with local HEIs in emerging market countries. This is unsurprising when considering the political and socio-economic drivers of cross-border business.

2.1. Main Characteristics

Although German Study Programs Abroad was originally launched with a strong focus on exporting educational operations to other countries, it has its own characteristics, which have much less in common with either British or Australian provision or funding models than might generally be assumed. The main distinctive element is that “national level incentives to foster German education export are justified as a central element of a German ‘globalisation mainstreaming’ strategy in higher education” (ACA 2008: 65). This can be seen in comparison to other countries, where TNE takes place mostly on the institutional level; for example, in the US, TNE operations are solely realized by the HEI sector itself. In the UK, there is evidence for some limited influence from the political level: arrangements for a national campaign have created binding guidelines that include little governmental support, and only in select areas. In contrast, German cross-border educational activities are influenced by a number of national forces. One national force affecting German cross-border educational activities is rationales and strategic purposes represented by strategic embedding. German Study Programs Abroad is just one part of a larger governmental framework dedicated to the internationalization of science and innovation, which also includes the higher education sector (Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2008). This strategy comprises a number of key targets and rationales within a complex and multilevel field of action. The political intention of this larger government framework was to combine a wide variety of single policy actions into a single policy approach. In fact, HEIs and their stakeholders *require* the relevant political actors to define a national code of practice, which sets common policy goals and directions. The initial results of these policy actions, such as the establishment of German Study Programs Abroad, resulted in a strategic framework, which is roughly described below.

Within this strategy German Study Programs Abroad follows, in particular, the first of four main targets. These targets are:

(1) strengthening research cooperation with global leaders;
(2) international exploitation of innovation potentials;
(3) intensifying cooperation with developing countries in education, research and development on a long-term basis;
(4) assuming international responsibility and mastering global challenges (Ibid.: 4–5)

According to this definition, TNE is officially seen as an attempt to expand or enhance research orientations across national boundaries. However, German cooperative educational arrangements abroad do not cover research collaboration in the short run, but rather aim to deliver consistent educational standards worldwide. Investigation by the DAAD makes it clear that "[…] a PhD degree component is less widespread" within the program (Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 4). There are three possible explanations for this seemingly contradictory situation.

First, this situation could simply reflect the long-term orientation that the program is seeking, namely to implement PhD programs, which are one cornerstone for academic research. In fact, the portfolios of some study programs lay out plans for the introduction of PhD programs in the future. This prospective research orientation may assume that third-party research among fly-in faculty members and researchers of the local HEIs will evolve over time.

However, there are also good reasons to assume that the purpose was to define the legal obligations of the program. Within the German system, the *Länder* (federal states) hold the legal authority regarding higher education, meaning that administrative responsibilities in education lie almost exclusively within the 16 federal states. Nevertheless, according to Basic Law (Article 91b, Paragraph 1, Section 1) the Federation and the *Länder*: "[…] may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supraregional importance in the promotion of [...] research facilities and projects apart from institutions of higher education."

Finally, the fact that German Study Programs Abroad is not embedded in the same way within the conceptual framework hints towards an interesting development that this program has taken. Its evolution reveals a qualitative shift, from being strongly academically driven to being motivated, and even conducted, politically. This change can be illustrated through how different policy settings of export educational projects were implemented abroad. The first export educational projects within the afore-mentioned program were based on an approach of mutual understanding, with long research collaborations among national and international professors institutionalized into study programs. Additionally, exchange relationships were transformed into cooperative education projects. From the perspective of the DAAD, the program was mainly constituted of *bottom-up* projects (cit. in Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 3) strongly driven by academic motivations. While the majority of the educational cooperation pro-

jects are still characterized by attempts to meet this ideal, there has recently been an increase in schemes that are driven more by political interests, and the DAAD sees growing evidence that governmental interest will increase in the coming years. Higher educational projects have been established that are solely the result of, as the DAAD calls them, *top-down* policy setting (cit.in. Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 4). This mainly results from the fact that cross-border initiatives have been the target of growing political interests. This process is not new; it started in the early 1990s, as internationalization and globalization mainstreaming were widely discussed and put on the German political agenda. This process became even more dynamic when the national campaign to internationalize the higher education and innovation sector was first conceptualized in 2008. This conceptualization has had fewer consequences for the yearly budget than other political assistance measures, and a steady level of support can be expected. However, some projects are based in political interests, and others were developed through this trend of growing politicization.

This process of politicization of TNE has been accompanied by an increase in the number of actors who are involved in the implementation of these projects. The DAAD expects the number of top-down projects to grow in the future (Bode 2010). For a complete understanding of German involvement in TNE, it is important that both types of implementation—bottom-up and top-down—coexist. This necessary for coexistence represents a large change from the original vision for German Study Programs Abroad, which was designed with a bottom-up approach.

In addition to the strategic embedding mentioned at the beginning of this section, there is another important feature that indicates strong national-level incentives. In contrast to other countries, the German approach is characterized by federal financing of programs, as well as by national HEI logistics to create transnational education projects: “Differently from all other core countries, where institutions do not receive systematic financial support for the specific purpose of establishing exported education projects, in Germany transnational education projects activities concentrate largely on projects that have received, or are receiving, start-up funding [...]” (ACA 2008: 5). Institutions receive support for a funding period of four to six years before they must take responsibility for their own financial sustainability. In 2011, the DAAD funding scheme included as many as 27 study programs (new as well as repeat applications), excluding projects for which the DAAD functions as a mediator for questions concerning their experience on transnationalization. Some exported education projects ask for support or advice just in cases of emergencies.[12] According to the DAAD, expenditures on systematic finan-

[12] Please note that data and information on TNE activities are very limited. If not otherwise stated, these data were gathered through standardized questionnaires and interviews with relevant actors (mostly at the national level),

cial support averaged nearly € 4 million for the 2012 fiscal year (DAAD 2013: 30). After six years, the majority of the projects finance themselves, mainly via tuition fees or additional federal grants. The tuition fees for study abroad programs range from € 400 to € 8,000 per term. Outside of the regular funding system, larger university projects have their own sources of financing. Here, bilateral agreements regulate the financial obligations of the respective countries. The BMBF or DAAD financial component of the higher education projects is not part of the initial funding, only part of the long-term funding. Furthermore, bi-national universities, such as the Turkish German University, are funded within the BMBF budget. This federal impacts such programs, as it strongly influences how different export education projects are realized abroad. There is evidence of conflicting regulations in the national political context, which has provoked ambiguities in terms of program governance.

2.2. Bi-national universities

According to the host organization, German HEIs have established the following transnational projects: “(1) cooperative study programs[13]; (2) branch campus[14] and (3) foreign- or German-backed universities” (DAAD 2012b). Following the definition of the latter “[…] foreign-backed institutions are legally independent local universities that are academically affiliated with one or several universities in another country.” “[L]ocal founders provide or organize the basic financial endowment for a new university but also delegate academic development to one or several ‘academic mentor’ or ‘patron’ universities abroad” (Lanzendorf 2008a).[15] This classification type can also be declared

we well as delivered by the DAAD upon request.

13 Defined by the DAAD as the German role model, it includes selected elements of various provisional and funding models. German HEIs often establish, in cooperation with at least one local HEI, more than one study program, including dual or joint degrees on the bachelors, masters or even PhD level (DAAD 2012b: 7).

14 “An institution establishes a campus (or a faculty) abroad that mirrors as far as possible its provision in the home country. Where an overseas institution is a partner, collaborative models may apply (e.g. joint award)” (ibd.).

15 In this context, it is worth noting that it is still disputed whether or not bi-national universities are TNEs. As the ACA points out, bi-national universities appear to be “[...] a particular form of transnational education [...]” and “[u]nder some definitions such operations do not belong to the category at all” (both citations: ACA 2008: 32). Lanzendorf affirms that bi-national universities might “[...] engender truly ’transnational’ higher education” (Lanzendorf 2008a). According to the definition given above (pp. 13), the predominant feature of bi-national universities is that the location of the degree-awarding institution is different from the one where TNE delivery is based. Accordingly, foreign-backed universities do not precisely fit this definition, as these institutions provide their own diploma. For reasons mainly referring to the significant role that bi-national universities play in the larger theoretical discussion, I assume that “Bi-national universities” belongs to TNE if the term *awarding institu-*

a “German-made model” (cit. in. Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 2) as a comparative study released by the ACA states: “German universities [...] rather opt for a particular mode, i.e. the establishment of German-backed and modeled independent universities abroad” (ACA 2008: 32). In addition to the main patterns described above, an additional feature defines the aforementioned type. In some cases, a bilateral agreement is a prior condition, or at least provides a regulatory framework for the establishment of this type of TNE.[16]

In the following (Table 6), German bi-national universities are listed, along with the existing agreements between Germany and the respective partner states. These data are sorted by founding year and year of bilateral agreement:[17]

Again, other provider countries (e.g., the US and the UK) have made similar efforts to establish foreign-backed universities. However, as investigations confirm (as for this discussion: Lanzendorf 2008b), Germany shows the strongest national-level interest, rendering bi-national universities even more interesting for further studies. However, the fact, that the reality of the impact of national interests on transnational education, remains underestimated: “However, cross-border education, by establishing locations outside of its native political and financial home, exists apart from its home environment” (Lane and Kinser 2008).

For the case of Germany, as a result of the afore-mentioned federal initiative, these large-scale projects have dominated bottom-up study projects since 2008, as measured by the number of students and graduates. Bi-national universities particularly are characterized by the entanglement of their development with particular political constellations, apart from the strategic embedding which frames the German activities of TNE. Furthermore, these cross-border educational projects redetermined by the following two main dimensions:

- Rationales

  Stensaker et al. classify the framework of internationalization according to the known kinds of motivations: academic, social, cultural, political and economic (Stensaker et al. 2008: 4). They also make statements about these educational programs’ different characteristics. Within this context, academic, social and cultural rationales are linked to bottom-up activities, with authors associating

tion in the mentioned definition (pp. 13) is replaced by *supporting institution*. In this way, the function of the university in their cooperation is specified.

[16] For this reason the present paper refers to them as *bi-national* or *bilateral universities*, highlighting their special character and setting.

[17] For this reason the term *bi-national university* is a synonym for *foreign-backed university* in the following section.

Table 6: Bi-national universities

Founding year	Region	Name	Number of students	Year of bilateral agreement
1999	Central & Eastern Europe (Almaty, Kazakhstan)	Kazakh-German University (DKU)	~ 600	2008 / bilateral
2003	Middle East (Cairo, Egypt)	German University Cairo (GUC)	8500	no specific agreement but a wide range of general agreements concerning the cooperation among the states, i.e. cultural treaty 1959, science treaty 1979
2005	Middle East (Mushaqar/ Madaba, Jordan)	German Jordanian University (GJU)	~ 2800	2005 Memorandum of Understanding reached between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of the Federal Republic of Germany
2005	Middle East (Homs/ Tartus, Syria)	Wadi International University (former: Wadi German Syrian University)	unkown	no specific agreement but a wide range of general agreements concerning the cooperation among the states, i.e. cultural treaty 1959, including cooperations among HEI
2007	Middle East (Maskat, Oman)	German University of Technology (GUTech)	400	2006 / bilateral
2008	Asia (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)	Vietnamese-German University (VGU)	~ 500	2008 Cooperation treaty between the Hesse State Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts and the Ministry for Education and Training Vietnam
2008	Istanbul, Turkey	Turkish German University (TDU)	- starting winter term 2013/2014	2008 /bilateral

Source: Compiled by the author

them with older forms of internationalization. Over the past decade, political and economic interests—often associated with the mainstreaming of globalization—that drive actions in this field have became more significant than the social or cultural capacity-building aspects, and are thus performed in new forms of internationalization, such as program and institutional mobility. This assignment effects, for instance, how the implementation process is politically regulated (Table 7).

Table 7: Reasons for and manifestations of internationalization in higher education

Academic, social/cultural reasons often manifested in 'old' forms of internationalisation	Political and economic reasons often manifested in 'new' forms of internationalisation
Internationalisation as a responsibility for the individual student or teacher	Internationalisation as a responsibility for the department or institution
Internationalisation as a 'bottom-up' activity	Internationalisation as a 'top-down' activity
Internationalisation related to diversity	Internationalisation related to standardisation
Internationalisation as a physical activity (for example through mobility)	Internationalisation as a more technology enhanced activity (for example through ICT)
Internationalisation as an informal and ad-hoc activity	Internationalisation as a formal and routinised activity

Source: (Stensaker et al. 2008: 4, Table 1)[18]

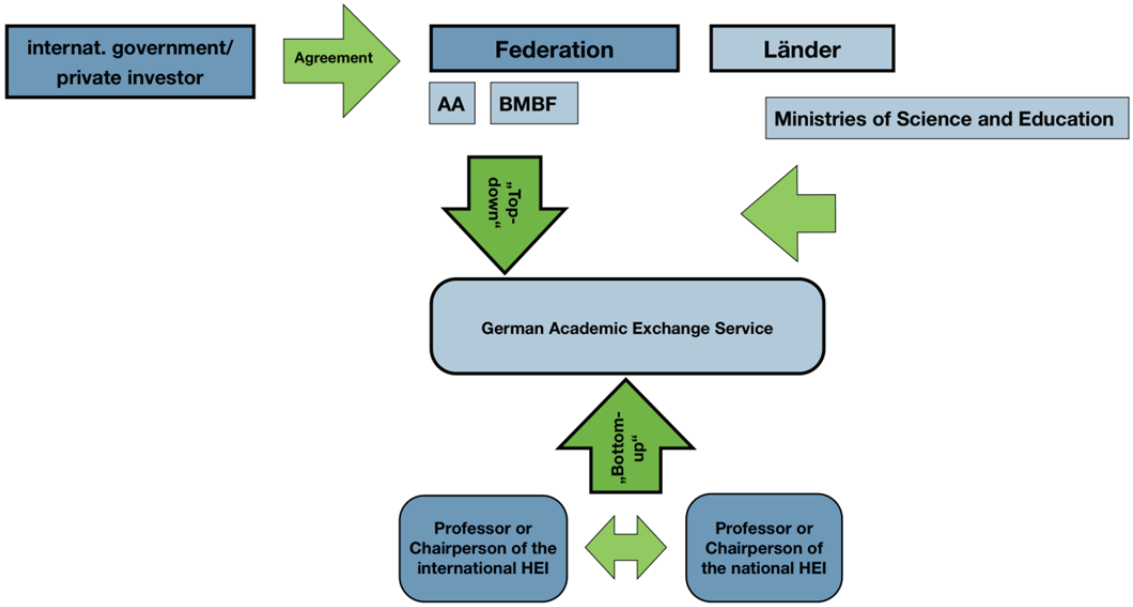
Stensaker et al. presume that, to understand internationalization processes, it is important to note that the new form does not substitute for the old one, but rather that they coexist without a clear distinction, and interfere with each other politically. Their difference is qualitative, and based on the direction that internationalization can take depending on the country and time of implementation. In the case of Germany, I presume that the majority of the transnational tertiary education projects within the federal initiative are evidence for the merging of the two aforementioned forms of internationalization (i.e. new and old forms). This merging mainly affects the cooperative study program type, which is centrally regulated or strategically framed as a bottom-up initiative by university scientific personnel. In contrast, the setting of the bi-national HEIs indicates a predominantly hierarchical management, with universities simultaneously involved as patron institutions (cit. in: Lanzendorf 2008b) in the implementation process, developing curricula and functioning and acting as political executives.

- Actors and institutions

  In general, bi-national universities are derived "from a declaration of intent by two heads of state or ministers" (Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 7), sometimes even by private investors (**Fehler! Hyperlink-Referenz ungültig.**). In Figure 3, I show the process that the German federal program has gone through in choosing actor-centered representation. Involved actors are listed, with the DAAD set as a central actor with regard to policy settings.

[18] Economic features driving actions to internationalize the tertiary sector became more significant over the years than intercultural aspects: "A recent study (Caille et al., 2002) indicates that in at least 40% of European countries internationalisation is partly driven by economic rationales related to the international competitiveness of the system and/or to the export of higher education programmes and services" (OECD 2004: 100).

Figure 3: Actor Taxonomy



Source: (Compiled by the author, based on Schindler-Kovats 2012: 6)

Originally, the two approaches (bottom-up and top-down) were introduced by implementation research (i.e., Sabatier 1979) to model the realization of political planning. These models implicitly assumed management by the central government. The validity of the models can be tested using empirical data. Furthermore, current governance theory supports the assertion that, according to the DAAD, the traditional actor constellation of “bottom-up and top-down approaches to the development of TNE exist and operate in parallel [...]” (Clausen, Schindler-Kovats, and Stalf 2011: 17), but do not comply with the requirements of multilevel program governance. For this reason the use of the terms *bottom-up* and *top-down* has been criticized as regression to the traditional pattern. As governance research has shown, taking a hierarchical perspective does not accurately represent the principles of action of the potentially opposing interests and preferences that exist between stakeholders, and this simplified description does not capture the complex development process present within the majority of HE projects. Furthermore, this simplified understanding hardly considers the interactions and the interdependencies of the participating actors, which become apparent in models describing the foundation of bi-national universities and the associated actor constellations. I can assume, in addition to the organizational structure of a future university, a control structure that can be depicted as a *shadow cabinet*, a managerial structure of the actors responsible for long-term cooperation. In addition, signs indicate the crucial role of influential stakeholder interactions in the overall set-up of transnational HEIs.

3. SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

Transnational higher education, more than any other actions in higher education policy, reflects the changing debate in the higher education sector, highlighting the controversial role played by tertiary institutions in the global educational environment. At the beginning of the present paper, I offered different definitions and approaches to understanding *transnational education*. This generic term merges two broader concepts, *internationalization* and *globalization*. The concept of globalization emphasizes the socio-economic challenges that HEIs face on the highly competitive global market. However, from an institutional perspective, TNE is understood as a side effect of internationalization, with increasing demand for tertiary education by international students.

The present paper then introduced the related German program, German Study Programs Abroad, as well as the provider and institutional mobility of German HEIs within the federal funding scheme. I discussed how the aim of the federal initiative is to attract international students while maintaining and improving the appeal of national universities. As the OECD points out: “[…] [it] may also reflect a skilled migration approach […] viewed […] as a means of attracting highly-skilled students who may remain in the host country after their studies […]” (OECD 2004: 27). Alternatively, students at least stay in contact with their host country, resulting in positive political, cultural and commercial consequences for Germany.

The German case of the export of higher education illustrates a challenging combination of bottom-up and top-down regulations relating to the provision higher education opportunities outside the country of affiliation. The parameters of the original program have changed significantly since a national strategy was introduced in 2008; the program is fragmented and torn between contradictory ideals, driven mostly by national interests. The strong influence of national-level politics arises from the main responsibilities held by the DAAD program, creating several challenges on the implementation side. Even the bottom-up approach developed cross-border provisions, for example, former studies indicate a concerted effort by political actors to regulate this activity. This is astonishing in view of the fact that HEIs are clearly headed towards more organizational and financial autonomy. This findings also indicates that, in contrast to other policies in the higher-education sector, German education export activities are generally more nation-bound: “Overall, strengthening the global presence of German higher education is indeed a political rather than an institutional objective” (ACA 2008: 65). After observing the formation of different policy settings and the assumed actor-interest constellations within German Study Programs Abroad, a number of areas remain for future investigations. For example, inquiry into how conflicting policies seek to balance each other in fostering TNE should be explored in further research. Open questions also re-

main concerning the different political instruments used to coordinate national educational export activities.

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