

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STUDIES

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Master thesis

**Internationalization of Higher Education
in Kyrgyzstan**

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Subject:	IEPS
Academic Year:	2014/2015
Supervisor:	Mgr. Jan Kohoutek, Ph.D.
Date Submitted:	July 2015

THESIS PROJECT

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Master thesis is my own work based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography and it has not been submitted for any other academic purpose. Master Thesis submitted is 151,603 keystrokes long (including spaces), i.e. 73 manuscript pages.

Tolgonay Dogochieva

21July 2015

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Proposed Topic:

Internationalization of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan

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Topic Characteristics:

Globalization, internationalization became widely discussed topics. Internationalization in higher education is gaining more and more importance with the emergence of Bologna and initiatives to create single standards. The debate about including higher education into a tradable good of GAT is still going on. Higher education in Kyrgyzstan experiencing problems with quality assurance, corruption, lack of teachers and modernization. Internationalization can be seen as one of the ways to deal with problems in higher education. Research identifies different reasons for internationalization in higher education, pointing out political, economic, cultural and educational rationales. Some universities in Kyrgyzstan on the project level have adopted credit system, send professors and students to partner universities, but this is done on a very marginal level. The number of exchange programs is low. The topic of the thesis is “Internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan”. The main objective of the research is to analyze the development of internationalization process, identify main actors, and evaluate current situation and achievements. The research will contribute to the study of internationalization in higher education, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, and will be a use for policy developers, donors and general public interested in internationalization in higher education.

Working hypotheses:

- 1) Internationalization can solve problems experienced by universities like corruption, poor quality
- 2) Internationalization makes Kyrgyzstan attractive place to get education
- 3) Ministry of education is not actively promoting internationalization
- 4) Universities have to deal with internationalization on their own by joining different European projects

Methodology:

The concepts and theories that are going to be included in the research are globalization, internationalization, internationalization of higher education. The conceptual framework for this thesis will be rationales developed by Knight and de Wit, with Knights reviews in 2004.

Outline:

- 1) Theoretical part (globalization, internationalization, internationalization of higher education)
- 2) History of higher education in Kyrgyzstan
- 3) Current state of education (basic facts, universities, figures, numbers)
- 4) Internationalization
- 5) Discussion of the findings
- 6) Conclusion

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to find general trends and rationales for internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan. The conceptual framework for this work is based on concepts developed by Knight and de Wit, Knight (2004). It used qualitative research, including secondary data and interviews. Although not very widely but internationalization became part of Kyrgyzstan higher education. There are student and staff mobility programs; the country hosts branches of foreign universities. Kyrgyzstan universities are creating extensive networks with world universities. Bologna process played major role in incorporating Kyrgyzstan education system to the world educational community. Kyrgyzstan has acquired international standards in terms of two-level cycle and credit hours. Along with that higher education is still facing problems and challenges. Corruption and low quality are among them. The study found that the most important rationale for internationalization is educational rationale. It is believed that internationalization improves academic quality. Economic, political and cultural/social rationales are also important.

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Introduction

It is estimated that by 2025 the number of international students will be 7.2 million. It is a huge growth compared to 1.8 million mobile students in 2000¹(Bohm et al, 2002, 3).The influence of globalization on higher education is great and together with benefits it brings challenges. Globalization is defined by integrated economy, new ways of communication, an emergence of English as a lingua franca and international knowledge network that fall beyond the control of an academic institution² (Altbach, Reisberg, Rumbley, 2009, 7). The response of the academic institutions to the challenges of globalization is known as internationalization³(Altbach, Reisberg, Rumbley, 2009, 7). The aim of internationalization spans from income generation to building reputation of the higher education institution⁴ (IAU, 2012, 1). The benefits of internationalization range from quality improvement, access to variety of programs to preparation of global citizens⁵ (IAU, 2012, 2). Some countries help to intensify internationalization of higher education and welcome foreign students. Exporting education became a profitable activity. For example in Australia in 2013-2014 total contribution from international students was \$16.3 billion. Moreover, 130.000 jobs are maintained thanks to this, and tourism sector also profits from students and their visit friends and family. Australia also has 31 offshore university campuses. (Australian Government, 2015, 5).

¹Bohm, A., Davis, T., Meares, D., & D. Pearce. 2002. Global student mobility 2025: Forecasts of the global demand for international higher education. Media briefing. IDP Education Australia. 20 Jan. 2015 <<http://www.foresightfordevelopment.org/sobipro/55/333-global-student-mobility-2025-forecasts-of-the-global-demand-for-international-higher-education>>

²Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, I., Rumbley L.E. 2009. Trends in Global Higher Education:Tracking an Academic Revolution. A Report Prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education 20 Jan. 2015 <<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/trends-global-higher-education-2009-world-conference-en.pdf>>

³ibid

⁴International Association of Universities. April 2012. Affirming Academic Values in Internationalization of Higher Education: A Call for Action. 20 Jan. 2015 <http://www.iau-aiu.net/sites/all/files/Affirming_Academic_Values_in_Internationalization_of_Higher_Education.pdf>

⁵ibid

International students in UK bring over 3 billion pounds each year to the UK economy. Furthermore, there are there are 190,000 students studying in UK based institutions in their home countries (Bohm et al, 2004)⁶. In addition, there is a growing number of Transnational Education by UK universities through overseas campuses or distant learning. There are 26 Branch Campuses of UK universities in different countries (Worton, 2012)⁷. However, visa requirement tightening that UK faces recently can impact on the number of students coming to study (Choudaha, 2012)⁸. Finland also chose to promote internationalization of higher education. Finland chose to internationalize because it sees international cooperation as means to improve quality, expand research and joint projects, receive information and internationalize economy and society. It also helps to promote Finnish culture globally, bring know-how and new skills, solve international problems and endorse global responsibility. Thus the Finnish government developed strategies to promote internationalization such as establishing mobility fund program, introduce modules supporting internationalization in all degrees, unionize the recognition of foreign degrees, encourage and fund Research and Development, help to market Finnish universities abroad(Finland, 2009, 15)⁹. Germany has also taken up the promotion of internationalizing science and research. The Strategy of the Federal Government for the Internationalization of Science and Research aims to strengthen collaboration with research leaders and make Germany a place for best researchers and students, develop innovation potentials, cooperate with developing

⁶Bohm, A. et al. 2004. Forecasting International Student Mobility. A UK Perspective. Vision 2020. 1 May 2015 <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/vision-2020.pdf>>

⁷Worton, M.. UK Higher Education Today and the Place of Internationalization. Reperes 2012. 1 May 2015 <http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/agence_cf/reperes/en/reperes_15_en.pdf>

⁸Choudaha, R., Chang, L., 2012. Trends in International Student Mobility. WES Research and Advisory Services. May 5 2015 < <http://www.wes.org/ras/TrendsInInternationalStudentMobility.pdf>>

⁹Finland. Ministry of Education of Finland. Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015. 2009. 6 May 2015 <<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2009/liitteet/opm23.pdf>>

countries in education and research and take international responsibility for global challenges and help to solve them (Germany, 2008)¹⁰.

Along with the leader countries like the USA, the UK and Australia, there are new emerging popular destinations for international students. China, Singapore and Malaysia hold 12% of the student market. These countries put great attention to international education, allocating human and financial resources. Changing the instruction language to English and having lower tuition fees and living expenses, these countries are becoming a favorable destination for people seeking knowledge (Verbik, Lasanowski, 2007)¹¹. For example Malaysia has set an ambitious goal to intensify higher education. In the National Higher Education Strategic Plan it separately puts internationalization as a goal. Main objectives are to create network foreign HE, increase the enrolment of foreign students to 10%, have 5% of international students in competitive courses, send PhD students to prominent international universities, have 15% of foreign staff in universities, allow student mobility with credit transfer and create Malaysia International Scholarship (Malaysia 2012)¹².

Kyrgyzstan became independent from USSR in 1991. The transition to democracy and liberal market that the country chose to pursue has been slow and painful. The country experienced two revolutions in 2005 and 2010, violent interethnic conflict, following the last coup. The state of education has been in decline since independence. In 2010 Kyrgyzstan high school children showed the worst results in

¹⁰Germany. Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Feb. 2008. Strengthening Germany's role in the Global Knowledge Society. Strategy of the Federal Government for the Internationalization and Research. May 7 2015 <<http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/Internationalisierungsstrategie-English.pdf>>

¹¹Verbik, L. Lasanowski, V. Sept 2007. International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends. International Strategic Information Service. June 1 2015 <www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/2007/Reports/International_Student_Mobility_Patterns_and_Trends>

¹²Malaysia. Ministry of Education Malaysia. 2012. National Higher Education Strategic Plan. 10 May 2015 <<http://www.moe.gov.my/en/pelan-strategik-pengajian-tinggi-negara>>

international PISA testing among sixty five countries (Yefimov, 2010)¹³. Higher education is also facing problems. Low quality of education, lowering quality of teachers, mismatches between output specialties and labour needs, and ineffective administration are some problems that higher education in Kyrgyzstan is experiencing (Kyrgyzstan, 2012) With tough competition among HEIs, the increasing demand for skilled professionals and ever-growing demand for higher education where do small, developing countries like Kyrgyzstan find themselves at? This thesis attempts to identify, describe and analyse internationalisation of higher education in Kyrgyzstan. The thesis is framed by the question is: What are the major trends of internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan and what rationale are they based on? In answering this question, the thesis will also aim to identify factors that impact positively or negatively on developments of the respective internationalisation policies. The corresponding hypothesis of this thesis is that internationalization is advantageous for Kyrgyzstan and can help to solve problems that higher education is facing.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: the first chapter covers theories and scholarly work on internationalization. The rationales for internationalization developed by Knight and de Wit are discussed and van der Wende's Model of Rationales for the internationalization policy of a given country will be presented. The second chapter provides basic contextual overview of the higher education in Kyrgyzstan. The third chapter provides information on internationalization process in Kyrgyzstan. Chapter four provides the analysis and discussions of the findings and conclusion.

¹³ Yefimov, N. "Kyrgyzstan Ranks Last in Major Education Assessment" Eurasianet.org.13 Dec 2010. May 7 2015 <<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62558>>

1. Theoretical Background

This literature review starts with the brief discussion on the issues of globalization and internationalization. Following that there will be a deeper discussion of the internationalization of higher education. Rationales developed by Knight and de Wit and van der Wende's *Model of Rationales for the internationalization policy of a given country* will be discussed.

1.1 Globalization and internationalization

The concepts of globalization and internationalization are discussed widely in the scientific world. With the availability of internet, establishment of free market in most parts of the globe, the world is believed to be globalized and interconnected. Held and McGrew state that globalization indicate the “*increasing scale and magnitude, rapid and deep impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction*” (2000a, p.3)¹⁴. What happens in one part of the world effects other parts as well. Moreover international activities have a great influence on domestic level and domestic issues have international consequences. However, the authors note that this does not mean that global will replace local or national, on the contrary it means that geographical locations and time is no longer a barrier for interaction (Held and McGrew, 2000a). Opening borders for a free trade, free flow of goods and people lead to world being more interconnected. Furthermore, Maringe and Foskett contend that “opening up borders for business, trade and economic activities between countries leads to homogenization of political, social, ideological and cultural parts of different countries”.¹⁵ (2010, p.2) Furthermore Maringe defines globalization as a “*multidimensional concept that relates*

¹⁴Held, D., McGrew, A. 2000a. The great globalization debate: an introduction. The global transformations reader: an. Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹⁵Foskett, N. Maringe, F. 2010. Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives. London: Continuum International Publishing. eLibrary Czech Republic

to creating a world in which the social, cultural, technological, political and ideological aspects of life become increasingly homogeneous and in which economic interdependence and growth are driven by the principles of free market”(in Foskett, 2010, p.24) ¹⁶. Thus globalization became possible with the economic convergence and free trade. In the example of European Union it can lead to the political and social convergence as well. Thus globalization can be defined as *“flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy across borders resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world¹⁷”* (Knight, 2008, p. 4).

1.2 Internationalization

Internationalization, on the other hand, is a different concept. Daly (1999) points out that the difference between globalization and internationalization is that if in globalization we observe the erosion of national borders for economic purposes, internationalization means the increasing importance of international trade, relations, and alliances ¹⁸Scott (2000) in “Globalization and Higher Education: Challenges for the 21st Century” discusses in length the difference between globalization and internationalization. He elaborates that internationalization mirrors the world-order where nation states are main actors. Whereas globalization means intensified collaboration that challenges the status-quo of states and national boundaries are losing importance to Transnational Corporations and mass culture. He states that globalization should not be viewed as higher form of internationalization because in latter nation-

¹⁶ Maringe, F. 2010. The Meanings of Globalization and Internationalization in HE: Findings from World Survey in Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives. London: Continuum International Publishing. eLibrary Czech Republic

¹⁷ Knight, J. 2008. Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization. 4 April 2015 < <https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf>>

¹⁸ Daly. H.E. 1999. Globalization versus Internationalization. Global Policy Forum. Jan 8 2015 <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/162/27995.html>>

states are important. Moreover, globalization is about global capitalism and mass consumerism, where as internationalization is about diplomacy and culture. And lastly, since there are unequal nation-states there is hierarchy and hegemony, where as globalization can tackle world problems like pollution, climate change, sustainable development.¹⁹

Some scholars state that the answer to growing forces of globalization adopted by the universities is known as internationalization (Maringe, 2010)²⁰. Furthermore internationalization and globalization have reinforcing effects on each other, for example with increasing student mobility globalization also enlarges²¹(Maringe (2010). Thus the concepts of globalization and internationalization are very complex. They include wide range of activities and can mean opposing or similar things depending on the perspectives. When it comes to higher education the term internationalization is widely used

One of the leading researchers and theorists in education Knight proposed a universal definition for internationalization of higher education. Taking into account political, social and technological changes in recent decades the more encompassing definition of globalization has been provided as follows: “*the internationalization at the national/sectoral/institutional levels is a process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education*”²²(2004, p.11). As the author puts it this definition does not limit itself in putting only objectives, rationales, because there are multiple reasons for

¹⁹Scott, P. 2000 Globalization and Higher Education: Challenges for the 21st Century. *Journal of Studies in International Education*

²⁰ Maringe, F. 2010. *The Meanings of Globalization and Internationalization in HE: Findings from World Survey in Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives*. London: Continuum International Publishing. eLibrary Czech Republic

²¹ibid

²²Knight, J. 2004. Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education* .19 Jan 2015 <<http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/8/1/5> >

internationalization across levels and across countries. Knight also points out that during 1960s international education meant development projects and agreements, foreign students and academics. In this decade internationalization of education means less of the development projects and more of academic mobility of students, professors, research, programs and creation of networks and partnerships ²³(Knight, 2004 p3).

Internationalization encompasses activities “like trans-national mobility of students and staff, internationalization of curricula and quality assurance, inter-institutional cooperation in education and research and establishment of international university consortia”²⁴(Vught, van der Wende, Westerheijden, p.104).Some authors like Teichler suggest that *re-internationalization* is more appropriate since universities are for a long time considered as most international institution. The knowledge generated and stored in universities are universal (Teichler)²⁵. He also suggests there are seven areas of international processes. Mobility of students and staff is the most noticeable activity. Secondly, the recognition of degrees across countries is very important and connected to the previous. New ways of knowledge transfer through on-line, opening trans-national education providers are also means of internationalization. Increasing ‘global understanding’ and creating favorable attitudes towards other cultures are major issue of internationalization. The following two aspects are also related to the internationalization process. Homogenization of educational systems, for example Bologna Declaration was designed to ease student mobility in Europe. Lastly,

²³Knight, J. 2004. Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. Journal of Studies in International Education. 19 Jan 2015 <<http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/8/1/5> >

²⁴ Van Vught, F. van der Wende, M. Westerheijden, D. Globalization and Internationalization: Policy Agendas Compared. Jan 13 2015 < http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/course/module6_3/18_vanvught02.pdf>

²⁵Teichler, U. Internationalization of Higher Education: European Experiences. Jan 12 2015 <http://www.utwente.nl/bms/cheps/summer_school/literature/internationalisation.pdf>

internationalization is highlighted as an argument in any educational reform, be it quality, management or efficiency issues²⁶. (Teichler)

Gornizka (in Gorntzka and Langfeldt, 2008) states that reasons behind internationalization of research and higher education are technological, economic, political-institutional and cultural changes that are happening. Information and Communication Technologies made students and professors, companies and ideas travel easily. Secondly, post-industrial economy with multilateral trade liberalization eased national borders of labor markets and industries, which also impacted higher education and research. Thirdly, if political control over the national borders lessens, educational cross-border activities can be boosted. Moreover, governments can make internationalization a state policy. Lastly, creation of “world society”, erosion of national borders, changes in values of students, academics and organizations can become a catalyst of internationalization (Gornizka in Gorntzka and Langfeldt, 2008)²⁷.

Taylor in the “Response of Government and Universities to Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education” looks at the role of internationalization, its impacts to governments and universities. The author reveals that having foreign students is very profitable for the universities and for the countries. For example in 2007-2008 academic year international students contributed about US\$15.54 billion to the US economy, through fees and living costs. The same year in Australia education services ranked as the third largest export earner. Thus in some countries education already plays a great role in the economy. Universities also benefit from fee-paying foreign students, thus diversifying their income. With the emerging importance of

²⁶Teichler, U. Internationalization of Higher Education: European Experiences. Jan 12 2015
<http://www.utwente.nl/bms/cheps/summer_school/literature/internationalisation.pdf>

²⁷Gornitzka, A. 2008. The Internationalization of Research and Higher Education. Changing Borders of Knowledge. In: Gornitzka, A. Langfeldt, L. *Borderless Knowledge. Understanding the “New” Internationalization of Research and Higher Education in Norway*. Dordrecht: Springer

knowledge society the role of education will further increase. Furthermore, the author note that foreign students can fill in the labor markets of those countries, contain links that could be useful for governments. In addition to that globalization and internationalization can have deeper impact on the society. For example through international experience the ideas of tolerance, multiculturalism can be promoted (Taylor, in Maringe and Fosket, 2010)²⁸. In addition to that internationalization can be adopted to improve academic quality, thus increasing economic performance in knowledge based society²⁹ (Frolich, 2008. p. 106).

Despite the fact that internationalization of higher education can bring economic benefit, promote cultural understanding, there are drawbacks that some scholars criticize internationalization for. For example van Vught, van der Wende, and Westerheijden believe that Globalization and WTO will negatively influence the higher education in small and poor nations. Western “world class” universities will dominate and universities in small countries will not be able to compete. However, some countries like Malaysia encourage foreign universities to open campuses. Moreover, the author argues that the pursuit of economic benefits and profit might be at the expense of academic values³⁰. Scott goes further stating that internationalization might cause the loss of “cultural heritage” that universities possess and that internationalist and

²⁸Taylor, J. 2010. The Response of Governments and Universities to Globalisation and Internationalisation in Higher Education. In: Maringe, F and Foskett, N, eds Globalisation in Higher Education: theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives. Continuum, London, pp. 83-96. eLibrary Czech Republic

²⁹ Frolich, N. 2008. Justification and Drivers. Higher Education Institutions' Strategies of internationalization. In: Gornitzka, A. Langfeldt, L. Borderless Knowledge. Understanding the “New” Internationalization of Research and Higher Education in Norway. Dordrecht: Springer

³⁰Van Vught, F. Van Der Wende, M. Westerheijden, D. Globalization and Internationalization: Policy Agendas Compared. Jan 13 2015 <http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/course/module6_3/18_vanvught02.pdf >

nationalist aims may come into conflict due to political, economic and cultural differences³¹.

Vught fears that globalization trends in higher education might negatively impact small and poor countries. These countries cannot compete with industrialized states and their universities and will have a very small voice in matters. With the commoditization of the education small and poor countries will be in a big disadvantage due to trade inequalities and access to market. Moreover, the author states that globalization might negatively affect traditional academic values, because some providers can be after a short-term profit. However, the author believes that universities are capable of dealing with such circumstances and will not diverge from initial academic goals (van Vught)³². Teichler also believes that in some cases internationalization can lower academic quality and that it could damage cultural heritage. Moreover, he states that vertical mobility that is students coming to developed countries contribute to brain drain and is available to rich people in poor countries (Teichler)³³. Taylor proposes that internationalization is good for small countries, because through international network of teaching and research they can participate in large-scale projects. Nevertheless, the author also notes that international providers of education might be danger to local providers and endanger the quality of education (Tylor, 2010)³⁴.

³¹John C. Scott, Mission of the University: Medieval to Postmodern Transformation. Jan 12 2015
<https://www.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/irwin.king.new/_media/teaching/gen1113/scn_20090202113238_001.pdf>

³²Van Vught, F. Internationalization and Globalization in European Higher Education Jan 11 2015
<http://www.humane.eu/fileadmin/wsadmin/ws2004/ws2004_Mon_VanVught_1_Internationalisation.pdf>

³³Teichler, U. Internationalization of Higher Education: European Experiences. Jan 14 2015
<http://www.utwente.nl/bms/cheps/summer_school/literature/internationalisation.pdf>

³⁴Taylor, J . 2010. The Response of Governments and Universities to Globalisation and Internationalisation in Higher Education. In: Maringe, F and Foskett, N, eds Globalisation in Higher Education: theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives. Continuum, London, pp. 83-96. eLibrary Czech Republic

1.3 Rationales for internationalization:

Knight and de Wit categorize rationales into economic and political, cultural and educational rationales (Knight, de Wit). Internationalization of education and research is believed to influence technological development, which leads to economic growth. Furthermore, education export can be very profitable. Moreover, having foreign students can create ties for future economic and political relations. Cultural and educational rationales include promotion of culture, diversity, interdependence. Adding international dimension into teaching can help to prepare individuals for the life in an international and diverse environment. Internationalization also supports strengthening of institutions and improving quality of education and research³⁵.

Further, Knight (2008) revisited the rationales and divided them into national and institutional levels. . Rationales at the national level for internationalization are Human Resources Development. The author agrees with other authors that latest economic developments, knowledge economy, mobile labor market require skilled human capital. Having brain power enables the country to be more competitive in technological, scientific fields. By creating favorable conditions like immigration policies, motivations countries are being able to recruit bright students from overseas and attract teachers and researchers. Having international students, professors also contribute to mutual understanding for development. Another rationale is strategic alliances. Countries try to create, further and deepen economic and geopolitical ties with neighbors through international collaboration, mobile students and academics. Further, higher education is more and more seen as income-generating chance for public and private universities. Commercial Trade rationale drives countries to internationalize for economic gain. Opening foreign campuses, online learning, recruitment of fee-paying

³⁵Knight, J., de Wit, H. Strategies for Internationalization of Higher Education: Historical and Conceptual Overview. 25 Jan 2015 <http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/course/module6_3/10_knight95.pdf>

students is ways to generate income. Nation Building is another example that drives internationalization. Some developing countries cannot offer best higher education possibilities to their citizens. International academic programs come as an aid to these countries to build up skilled, knowledgeable, educated citizens for a nation-building. Social and cultural development rationales of internationalization can be very important in promoting cultural understanding. According to the author these dimensions do not get as much attention as they deserve.

At the Institutional Level rationales can be different. Establishing international profile and reputation are important for an academic institution that thrives for worldwide recognition. Attracting promising students and scholars is a way to achieve this prominence and be competitive inside the country and outside. The Development of Student and Staff is another rationale. In the face of increasing cases of cultural, international conflicts, it is imperative to teach students about global issues. Increased labor market movement requires people to be able to work in culturally diverse communities and internationalization can provide these skills. With the cutback in funding, universities are forced to find other sources of income. Thus Income Generation is another rationale for internationalization. Although universities are not for-profit, they can use the money on campus. On the other hand there is growing number of education providers that seek profit. Creating Strategic Alliances with other universities are gaining importance. Establishing networks with clear goals and objectives is becoming a trend. Lastly, knowledge production and research are the main purposes of the education institution. During growing global issues like climate change and conflicts institutions also seek to help to solve this problem by creating international and interdisciplinary collaboration. Knight states that the actors, be it institutions, government, any stakeholder, it is important to have clear motivations and rationales for

internationalization, because strategies, policies and outcomes depend on it³⁶. All four rationales provided by Knight and de Wit will be discussed in the analysis of internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan. The conceptual framework for this thesis will be rationales developed by Knight and de Wit, with Knight's reviews in 2004. The rationales of emerging importance on national and institutional level provided by Knight (2004) are also divided into economic, political, social/cultural and educational rationales and are given in italics.

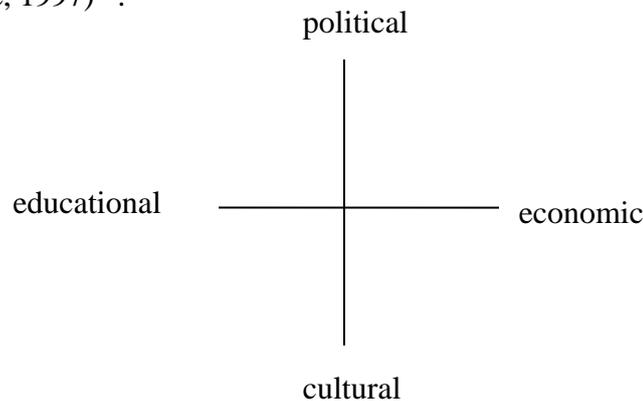
Table 1 Rationales for internationalization

Economic	Political	Educational	Social/Cultural
Economic growth and competitiveness	Foreign Policy	International dimension	National to cultural identity
Labor market	Technical assistance	research and teaching	and Intercultural understanding
Financial incentives	Peace and mutual understanding	Extension of academic horizon	of Citizenship development
<i>Commercial trade</i>	National Identity	Institution building	Social and community development
	<i>Region building</i>	Profile and status	<i>Social/cultural development</i>
	<i>Human resources development</i>	Enhancement of quality	
	<i>Strategic alliances</i>	International standards	
		<i>International branding and profile</i>	
		<i>Income generation</i>	
		<i>Student and staff development</i>	
		<i>Strategic alliances</i>	
		<i>Knowledge production</i>	

Source: Knight (2004)

³⁶Knight, J. Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. Journal of Studies in International Education 2004. 19 Jan 2015 <<http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/8/1/5>>

Using political, economic, cultural and educational, Kalvermak and van der Wende developed a model of Rationales for the internationalization policy of a given country. The authors note that each rationale is considered independently. The axes represent four separate lines, minimum in the middle and maximum towards exterior (Kalvermak T., van der Wende, 1997)³⁷.



Source: Kalvermak T., van der Wende M. 1997. *National Policies for the Internationalization of Higher education in Europe*. Stockholm: National Agency for Higher Education

2. Methodology

This thesis used qualitative method using primary and secondary sources. To explore the driving forces of internationalization six interviews were conducted. The respondents come from different work background and include a teacher at the public university, a head of quality control department at the university, two representatives of international offices, a representative of the leadership development office at the university and former member of a joint faculty and current mobility program student. To preserve anonymity of the interviewees they are numbered as Respondent 1 through 6. The questions were open ended and included questions like “in your opinion why

³⁷ Kalvermak T., van der Wende M. 1997. *National Policies for the Internationalization of Higher education in Europe*. 15 May 2015 < <http://www.hsv.se/download/18.539a949110f3d5914ec800082193>>

Kyrgyzstan needs internationalization, what are the benefits, what is the rationale behind it”. The interviews were contacted by e-mail and by phone. In addition to this government laws, policies and strategies developed by government were analyzed. The documents include: Country Development Strategy for 2007-2010, Education Development Concept for 2012-2020. There are limitations to this study. First of all the answers of the respondents cannot be applied to all the higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan. Secondly, all the respondents come from academia and their views do not represent other stakeholder views such as the government and nongovernmental sector. Since there is little work done on the internationalization of higher education the data is not widely available.

3. Overview of the Higher Education System in Kyrgyzstan

There are four types of higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan. They are universities, academies, specialized HEIs and institutes. Universities deal with higher and post-graduate education with lots of different specializations. Academia deals mostly with scientific activities. An institute is also higher education institution or can be a branch of a university. Specialized higher education has a narrow range of specializations. Kyrgyzstan higher education has preserved two education systems. One type is the traditional Soviet system of specialists. To get a specialist degree one has to study five years, in some programs six years. After specialist there is aspirantura which brings to the Candidate of Science after defending the dissertation. Aspirantura usually lasts three years. The Doctorate of Science degree awarded after the Candidate of Science on the basis of a unique research. The second type is multi level type, or the European model. Bachelor degree is awarded usually after four years of studies. Master program lasts two years after completing Bachelor. PhD is usually two-three years long

after Master (EACEA , 2010)³⁸. In 2011 the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan signed a decree to establish two level system of higher education. That means that now officially in all universities there will be Bachelor and Master Degrees. The system started working from 2012-2013 academic year (Savelyeva)³⁹.

The first higher education institution the Kyrgyz State Pedagogical Institute was opened in 1933. By 1940-41 there were six higher and thirty four specialized institutions. By 1989 there were ten higher and forty eight specialized institutions with 94, 6 thousand students. In 1992 there were thirteen higher education institutions in 2000 the number grew to forty four with 130 thousand students (Osmonov, 2003)⁴⁰.

Today there are 55 higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan, 34 are public and 21 are private. Number of students enrolled in higher education institutions reached more than 220 thousand in 2015, including 196 232 students in public and 27 009 students in private higher education institutions⁴¹. Table 1 shows the growth in the number of higher education institutions and number of students since 2009.

Table 2
Number of Higher Education Institutions in Kyrgyzstan

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Number of HEIS	54	56	54	54	55
Number of students	233 605	230 379	239208	231562	223241
Full time (<i>ochnoe</i>)	130 912	128 236	131 804	125 747	124 748
Evening courses (<i>vechernee</i>)	1 904	2 557	3 552	1 473	1 762

³⁸Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA). Tempus. 2010. Review of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan. 25 Jan 2015
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/reviews/kyrgyzstan_review_of_higher_education.pdf>

³⁹Saveleva,A. Bologna process: Now we won't be different. Kyrgyzstan adopted two-level system of obtaining higher education (Bolonskii protses: teper' ne budem otlichatsya. V Kyrgyzstane prinyali dvuhurovnevuu sistemuu polucheniya vysshego obrazovaniya). KG Inform information portal. 29.08.2011. 10 April 2015 <<<http://www.kginform.com/ru/news/20110829/04351.html>>

⁴⁰Osmonov, O. 2003. History of Kyrgyzstan (Istoriya Kyrgyzstana). Bishkek: MOK Tekhnologiya

⁴¹Kyrgyzstan. National Statistics Committee. Education and Science in Kyrgyz Republic. (Obrazovanie I Nauke v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike). Bishkek, 2014. 25 Jan 2015
<http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf>

Part time (<i>zaochnoe</i>)	100 753	99 582	103 852	97 062	83 863
Distant learning	-	-	-	7 280	12 904
Accepted	47 375	45 112	51 809	33 101	35 414
Graduated	38 106	37 966	41 811	41 679	41 291

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

3.1 Administration of higher education institutions

The higher education in Kyrgyzstan is administered by the state and local government; it also has its own institutional administration. On the state level it is managed by the President of Kyrgyz Republic, the Parliament and the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry is the central organ in administering higher education. The Ministry approves the curriculum, defines policy, determines priorities and sets general guidelines of development (World Bank)⁴². It also allocates financial resources and monitors the quality of the institutions. The Heads of the public institutions are appointed by the decree from the state. The state determines how many students are going to receive scholarships and will study for free. The state defines the standards of education and institutions (OECD, 2010)⁴³. On the institutional level each HEI has a Governing Board, which bears responsibility for human resources. Academic Council runs academic and research programs. Institutions decide the number of fee-paying students (OECD, 2010)⁴⁴.

⁴²The World Bank, 68962. Brunner, J. J, Tillet, A. Higher Education in Central Asia the Challenges of Modernization. Case Studies from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, The Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. 14 Jan 2015 <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/28/000333038_20120528014424/Rendered/PDF/689260ESW0P0850rnization00200700eng.pdf >

⁴³OECD. 2010. Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from PISA, OECD Publishing.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264088757-en>

⁴⁴ibid

3.2 Public and Private higher education institutions

If during Soviet times universities were public, now there are also private universities. If in 2006/07 there were fifteen HEIs, in 2013/14 the number reached to twenty one. The number of students enrolling to private universities is also growing. If in 2006/07 there were 20.8 thousand students in private universities, in 2013/14 it amounted to 27 thousand students ⁴⁵.

Table 3
Number of Public and Private Higher Education Institutions

HEIs	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Public HEIs	32	33	33	33	34
Private HEIs	22	23	21	21	21
Number of students	233 605	230 379	239 208	231 562	223 241
Number of students in Public HEIs	207 281	202 531	209 400	204 037	196 232
Number of students in private HEIs	26 324	27 848	29 808	27 525	27 009

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

3.3 Financing of Higher Education

During Soviet times Higher Education Institutions were financed by the state. Paid educational services and the development of private schools have been introduced by the legislation in 1992, but the rapid development started from 1996. At first, tuition fees in public educational institutions were only courses beyond state standards and for

⁴⁵Kyrgyzstan. National Statistics Committee. Education and Science in Kyrgyz Republic. (Obrazovanie I Nauke v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike). Bishkek, 2014. 25 Jan 2015
<http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf>

receiving the second and more professional education. Starting from 2005 re-organization of the HEIs like decentralization (2006), corporatization (2008) and transition to self-financing (2012) took place. The provision of state educational grants to the most gifted students of universities transformed into the distribution of grants under the quotas for urban, rural and small town in 2002. Further, in 2009 the policy changed to distributing the grants on the basis of forecasting the needs of the labor market, to the state order for specialties that are demanded in 2011 and to employer demand training in 2012 (National Institute of Strategic Research, 2013) ⁴⁶.

Today due to low economic performance of the state and introduction of market economy, the finance of universities is split between the state and private support. Over the last few years state expenditure has risen. Comparing to 2009 the state expenditure on education doubled in 2014. The expenditure to higher education has also risen.

Table 4
Government Expenditure on Education

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Expenditure of government Budget on education, in mln soms	12541,6	12822,9	19420,4	22925,5	24089,7
In GDP percentage	6,2	5,8	6,8	7,4	6,9
In percentage in relations to total government expenditures	21,4	18,6	21,2	21,4	23,1
Expenditure on Higher Education	1959,2	1989,7	2442,4	2757,1	3078,1

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

Since 2002 the entrance to the university is based on the results of National Testing (The Education Assessment, 2014). ⁴⁷Since there is not a lot of support from the state universities have to rely on themselves. That is why many universities even though

⁴⁶National Institute of Strategic Research of Kyrgyz Republic, 2013. Ryskulueva, F. Hamzina, S. Problems of Reforming Education System in Kyrgyz Republic (Problemy Reformirovaniya Sistemy Obrazovaniya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki). 20 Jan 2015
<http://www.nisi.kg/uploads/research_ph/14_obrazov_report.pdf>

⁴⁷The Education Assessment and Teaching Methods Center. 2014. 5 May 2015<<http://testing.kg/ru/testing/ItmesExampleI/>>

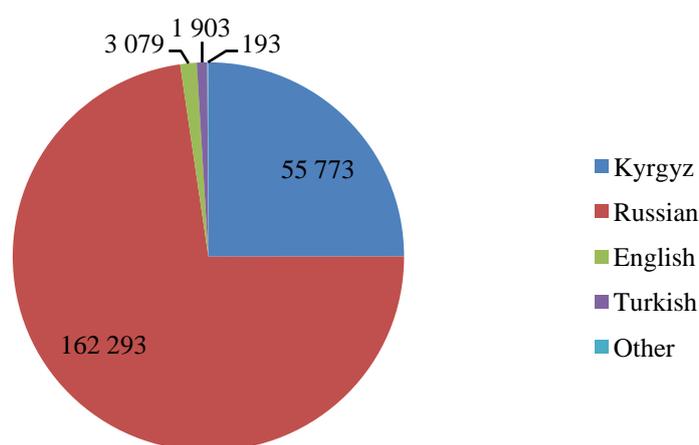
they are public have contract (fee paying) students. In 2013/14 academic year 190 854 students are fee paying students (Kyrgyzstan, National Statistics Committee, 2014)⁴⁸. Tuition fees for contract students vary from university to university and their location. Ministry of Education has established base line for day students starting from 15 000 soms or 600 euro (OECD, 2010)⁴⁹.

Table 5 Average tuition fees

In public colleges		
Full-time	13 139	23 578
Evening	13 248	21 183
Part-time	9 519	16 131
In private colleges		
Full-time	17 705	25 897
Part-time	10 011	11 099

Source: OECD, 2010

The language of instruction in Kyrgyzstan is mainly Russian and Kyrgyz. The graph shows the number of students studying in different languages.



⁴⁸Kyrgyzstan. National Statistics Committee. Education and Science in Kyrgyz Republic. (Obrazovanie I Nauke v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike). Bishkek, 2014. 25 Jan 2015

<http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf>

⁴⁹OECD. 2010. Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from PISA, OECD Publishing. 24 Jan 2015

<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264088757-en>>

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

3.4 Reform of Higher Education

Starting from 2012-2013 academic year in accordance with the Decree of the Government all higher education institutions introduced two-level structure. Now students can receive bachelor and master degrees with 4 and 6 years of studying respectively (Savelyeva)⁵⁰. A student should acquire bachelor program 240 credits and for masters 120 credits. Along with that a specialist qualification is still also given in some areas. Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science established the ECTS/Diploma Supplement National Bureau in 2007 to further support the introduction of Credit System and the European Diploma Supplement.

Ensuring the quality of higher education is one of the main objectives of the reforms in education sphere for the socio-economic growth of the country and integration into the world education sphere. Acting head of the Department of Regulation of Paid Services of the Anti-monopoly Regulation Agency Bakyt Turdaliev points out that many universities in Kyrgyzstan do not meet the requirements of quality higher education. To eliminate this problem the state should introduce strict licensing requirements that are close to leading international university standards (Eskaliev, Kazinform, 2015)⁵¹.

Former Minister of Education Kamila Sharshekeeva states that it is important to have an independent accreditation organization composed of local and foreign experts that will evaluate universities. According to Sharshekeeva accreditation is one of the

⁵⁰ Saveleva, A. Bologna process: Now we won't be different. Kyrgyzstan adopted two-level system of obtaining higher education (Bolonskii protses: teper' ne budem otlichatsya. V Kyrgyzstane prinyali dvuhurovnevuu sistemu polucheniya vysshogo obrazovaniya). KG Inform information portal. 29.08.2011. 10 April 2015 < <<http://www.kginform.com/ru/news/20110829/04351.html>>

⁵¹Eskaliev, Serik. "Many Universities in Kyrgyzstan do not provide quality education". Kazinform. 15 April 2015. 10 June 2015. < <http://inform.kz/rus/article/2765947>>

best mechanisms to monitor quality of higher education (Tynaeva, K-News, 2012)⁵². In order to improve quality many universities incorporated internal mechanisms of quality control. Education institutions have probed several methods of quality control on the basis of: ISO 9000 Standards, European Quality Improvement System criteria (EQUIS) and model developed by European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM model). These models were tested in projects carried out by universities and EFQM model was seen as promising Fund (National Erasmus Plus Office, Kyrgyzstan, 2012). External quality assurance system includes licensing and accreditation by the government. In 1993 licensing of universities was introduced. In the beginning only newly opening universities were subjected to be licensed. From 1998 the procedure became obligatory every five years. In 2001 licensing was canceled which led to uncontrollable growth of universities. Two years later in 2003 licensing was brought back. Licensing and accreditation is carried out by State Inspectorate for Licensing and Accreditation of educational institutions under the Ministry of Education. In recent years creation of independent accreditation agency is seen way to ensure the trust in accreditation and recognition of qualifications worldwide. In 2005 Academy of Management under the President of Kyrgyz Republic and Bishkek Academy of Finance and Economics have passed the accreditation of CAMEQ of the Central Asian Foundation for Management Development Fund (National Erasmus Plus Office, Kyrgyzstan, 2012)⁵³. In 2012 Kyrgyz Economic University and Osh State University have undergone international accreditation in the fields of Economics and Management

⁵²Tynaeva, Nurzada. "Kamila Sharshkeeva about problems of professional education in Kyrgyzstan" (Kamila Sharshkeeva o Problemah Professionalnogo Obrazovaniya v Kyrgystane). K-News. 16 May 2012. 10 April 2015
<http://www.knews.kg/pr_articles/16107_kamila_sharshkeeva_o_problemah_professionalnogo_obrazovaniya_v_kyrgyzstane/>

⁵³National Erasmus + Office in Kyrgyzstan. 2015. Higher Education System in Kyrgyzstan. 10 march 2015 <www.erasmusplus.kg/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Система-Высшего-образования-в-КР.pdf>

(Benliyan, Vechernii Bishkek, 2012)⁵⁴. TEMPUS project Central Asian Network on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CANQA) was designed to “enhance cooperation between HEIs, national authorities and other bodies from three countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan) to collaborate in establishing common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice” (Ednet, Tempus Project, 2015)⁵⁵. The long term goal of the project is to build up quality assurance and quality culture in Central Asia. On the basis of this project a consortium of universities was created that include seven European, twenty two Central Asian universities, organizations and three Ministries of Education (Ednet, Tempus Project, 2015)⁵⁶.

In 2014 Kyrgyzstan was included in the European Scientific-Industrial Chamber’s Academic Ranking of World Universities-European Standard ARES-2014. According to this ranking American University of Central Asia and Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University received BBB rating. The highest rate is AAA representing high quality performance, BBB+ and lower good quality performance and CCC+ and lower adequate quality performance (European Scientific Industrial Chamber, 2014)⁵⁷. In addition to that three universities from Kyrgyzstan entered short list of the best universities in Commonwealth of Independent States, Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University and Kyrgyz State Law Academy (Shabalin, News-Asia, 2014)⁵⁸.

⁵⁴Benliyan, Amaliya. “Keu and OSU First time in Kyrgyzstan have undergone international accreditation” (KEU I OshGU Pervymi v Kyrgyzstane Proshli Mejdunarodnuu Akkreditatsiu). Vechernii Bishkek 17 may 2012. 13 may 2015
<http://www.vb.kg/doc/188914_key_i_oshgy_pervymi_v_kyrgyzstane_proshli_mejdunarodnyu_akkreditaciu.html>

⁵⁵Education Network Association About Tempus Project CANQA. 2015. 11 May 2015
<http://ednet.edu.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=47&lang=ru>

⁵⁶Ibid

⁵⁷European Scientific Industrial Chamber. ARES-2014.Kyrgyzstan. 11 April 2015
<http://euchamb.com/?page_id=422>

⁵⁸Shabalin, Aleksandr. “Three Universities in Kyrgyzstan entered CIS Best Universities Ranking” (Tri Universiteta Kirgizii Popali v Reiting Lutshih Vuzov SNG). News-Asia. 26 Aug 2014. 10 March 2015
<<http://www.news-asia.ru/view/ks/politics/7069>>

3.5 Problems in higher education sector

World Bank report *Peril and Promise* concluded that in developing countries many governments and international organizations gave low priority to higher education. Thus they are underfunded, with underdeveloped curricula, poorly paid teachers and under taught students (World Bank, 2010)⁵⁹. According to Stephen P. Heyneman there are four essential factors that need to be addressed to change the current state of education in post Soviet Union countries. Firstly, after the fall of communist rule, free market was established, privatization of property carried on. Restructuring of the economy required restructuring of the education sector. The planned structure of the higher education was no longer needed. The second problem was curriculum. Subjects as business management, sociology, psychology and political science were not taught. Whereas subjects like Marxism and Leninism, history of Comparty became useless. Lack of modernization in educational institutions was another issue. Libraries were scarce and textbooks unavailable. There was a shortage of access to international information. Lastly, after the independence the demand for higher education was very high which led to the increase in the number of universities. This required the provision of private education suppliers or private funding of the public education through fees (Heyneman, 2010)⁶⁰. The reform of education brought changes to the curriculum and social science subjects were introduced. With the improvement of access to internet and new communication technologies the information became wide available. However, there are still problems in higher education that needs to be

⁵⁹ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. 2000. *Higher Education in Developing Countries Peril and Promise*. 23 May 2015
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079956815/peril_promise_en.pdf>

⁶⁰ Heyneman, S.P. A Comment on the Changes in Higher Education in the Post-Soviet Union. *European Education*. Spring 2010. 15 March 2015 <
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/heynean/PUBLICATIONS/SH%20Changes%20in%20Ed.%20Post-Soviet%20Union.pdf>>

addressed. According to the government the main problems in the higher education are inadequate knowledge that employers require. Secondly, there is an ineffective quality assurance due to lack of monitoring mechanisms. Thirdly, the quality of teachers in the universities is low; 60% of the academic personnel do not have degrees. Fourth, there is an ineffective usage of money on state scholarship students, since only 76% of the students graduate and the rest transfer to different speciality on the final year. Lastly, the link between universities and science is very weak (Kyrgyzstan, 2012)⁶¹. Moreover, the corruption at the higher education institutions is perceived to be very high. Local news agents report that 50% and more students faced corruption in universities, with the exception of few universities (Sotsinformburo, 2006)⁶². A poll conducted at a popular online forum states that 90% of students experienced corruption at entry level and/or during studies (About corruption, Kyrtag)⁶³. According to the survey conducted by Institute of Ombudsmen the reasons for corruption are students accustomed teachers to take bribes, teachers lack honesty and inadequate salaries of teachers⁶⁴. (Bakir Uulu, 2012)“Corruption is a problem at all levels of the education system, but particularly in higher education, where informal payments often secure university admission or a good examination grade. As a result, diplomas are suspect except in the few universities that have strict controls on corruption” states Mertaugh⁶⁵

⁶¹ Kyrgyzstan. The Government of Kyrgyzstan. Education Development Strategy 2020. 2012. 15 March 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/92984?cl=ru-ru#p1>>

⁶² Ranking of Universities on “Corruption” from Sociological Service “Sotsinformburo”. (Reiting VUZov v KR po Pokazatelu “Ohvat Koruptsii” ot Sotsiologicheskoi Slujby “Sotsinformburo” 1 March 2006. 5 May 2015. <<http://zdorovie.akipress.org/news:3361/>>

⁶³ About 90% of students encountered with corruption in universities – survey. (Do 90% studentov stalkivalis s koruptsiei v universitetah – opros). 3 March 2015. 14 April 2015 <<http://kyrtag.kg/news/do-90-studentov-stalkivalis-s-korruptsiei-v-universitetakh-opros/>>

⁶⁴ Bakir uulu, Tursunbai. Fakty vzyatok v vuzah respubliky nosyat sistemicheskii harakter. (Facts of bribery in higher education institutes in the republic carry systematic character) 14 April 2015 <<http://rus.gateway.kg/news/kg/obshestvo/1894>>

⁶⁵ Mertaugh, M. Education in Central Asia, With Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic. 10 March 2015 <<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.456.9169&rep=rep1&type=pdf>>

(p 24). In 2012 questionnaire revealed that universities are the most corrupt institutions, only behind law enforcement bodies (The Level of Corruption, Kginform)⁶⁶.

Since the independence of Kyrgyzstan in 1991 the higher education has gone through changes and reforms. The number of universities has risen to 55; the share of private universities has also risen. Due to shortage of funding many public universities have fee paying students. Although the budget allocation to Education is higher than other sectors, only about one per cent goes to higher education. Entrance to university is based on National Testing. Problems like low quality, corruption are hindering the reforms in higher education sector.

4. Internationalization of Higher Education in Kyrgyz Republic

In “Internationalization of Higher Education in Central Asia, Definitions, rationales, scope and choices” Merrill points out that for Central Asia the main question today is which goals to pursue with the internationalization and how to achieve those goals. The question for the region is no longer to internationalize or not, but how (2011)⁶⁷.

4.1 Government Policies and actions

The fall of Soviet Union has left shattered education system. Kyrgyzstan needed to reorganize to meet market demands, democratize politics and create new ideology for development. The reform in the education sphere started in 1992 with the adoption of the Law on Education. This law defined the priorities of the education sphere, diversified existing programs and ways of finance, and allowed to search for

⁶⁶ The Level of Corruption in Kyrgyzstan did not change (Uroven koruptsii v Kyrgyzstane pochti ne izmenilsya) 23 April 2012.Kginform. May 4 2015
<<http://www.kginform.com/ru/news/20120423/09363.html> >

⁶⁷Merill, M. 2011. Internationalization of Higher Education in Central Asia, Definitions, rationales, scope and choices in Silova, I. Globalization on the Margins Education and Post Socialist transformations in Central Asia. Information Age Publishing.

partners (Ryskulueva)⁶⁸. In other words this law allowed a transformation in the educational system, changing from Soviet type to a new yet to be formed system. 1996 was proclaimed as a year of “Education” and new national education program “Bilim” was adopted (Kyrgyzstan, Bilim, 1996)⁶⁹. This program aimed at improving the legislation on education, changes in the content of education and social protection of teachers and professors (Ryskulueva)⁷⁰. The principles for reforming the system of education - democratization, openness, humanization, differentiation, flexibility, variability and Continuing Education were introduced. “Bilim” set out the Education Development Strategy for 1996-2000. The Strategy highlighted the necessity of integration of Kyrgyzstan universities into international higher education system and establishment of communication. Moreover, it set down as a priority to achieve recognition of diplomas and academic degrees gained internationally, to develop student and teacher exchange programs, to attract foreign students to study in the Kyrgyz Republic, to open joint educational institutions and branches universities with other countries, and to attract foreign investment and grants, international funds for investment in education (Kyrgyzstan, Bilim, 1996)⁷¹.

Development of Education, Science and Culture Concept approved in 1998 included gradual shift to international classification of degrees. The concept also seeks to ensure equivalence of degrees between partner countries. It highlighted the

⁶⁸ Ryskulueva, F.I.Natsionalnii doklad: O Sostoyanii i putyah razvitiya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (National Report: On the Current State and Ways of Development of Kyrgyz Republic). 11 March 2015

<<http://cis.bsu.by/second.aspx?uid=50&type=Article> >

⁶⁹ Kyrgyzstan. Decree of President. Main Directions of the Educational Program “Bilim”. Review of National Educational Program “Bilim”. 1996. (Osnovnye Napravleniya obrazovatelnoi program Bilim. Obzor Natsionalnoi Obrazovatelnoi Programmy “Bilim”). 26 Jan 2015

<http://www.baldar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=448:-qq&catid=79:2010-03-16-09-51-40&Itemid=189>

⁷⁰ Ryskulueva, F.I.Natsionalnii doklad: O Sostoyanii i putyah razvitiya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (National Report: On the Current State and Ways of Development of Kyrgyz Republic). 11 March 2015

<<http://cis.bsu.by/second.aspx?uid=50&type=Article>>

⁷¹ Kyrgyzstan. Decree of President. Main Directions of the Educational Program “Bilim”. Review of National Educational Program “Bilim”. 1996. (Osnovnye Napravleniya obrazovatelnoi program Bilim. Obzor Natsionalnoi Obrazovatelnoi Programmy “Bilim”). 15 March 2015

<www.cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/46439 >

importance of foreign languages, especially the fluency in foreign languages of the Master and Aspirantura degree students. Lastly, the concept highlights the need to create conditions for international accreditation of educational institutions (Kyrgyzstan, Concept, 1998)⁷².

In 1997 an Agreement on Cooperation in creating Single Educational Space in 1997 was signed between eleven countries of Commonwealth of Independent States and about 28 agreements were signed between the Ministries of Education. Along with that Council on Cooperation in Education was created. The Council promotes the formation of a Single Educational Space, specifically: examines the process of cooperation in the field of education, training and certification of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel, analyzes the progress of the implementation of multilateral agreements on cooperation in education, explores the possibilities of further development, considers and prepares multilateral educational programs (Kyrgyzstan, Agreement, 1997)⁷³.

In 1998 between Kyrgyzstan, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and Russia an agreement was reached on recognition of diplomas, academic titles and degrees (Ryskulueva)⁷⁴. In addition to that, the Decree of the Government from 2000 approved the opening and functioning of branch universities in the signatory states of the Agreement on the Customs Union and Single Economic Space: Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan, Decree, 2000)⁷⁵.

⁷² Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyz Republic. Development of Education, Science and Culture Concept. 1998. 15 March 2015) <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/5684>>

⁷³ Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyz Republic. Decree on Approval of the Agreement on Creating Single Educational Space signed in 1997. 2001. 15 March 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/38412?cl=ru-ru>>

⁷⁴Ryskulueva, F.I.Natsionalnii doklad: O Sostoyanii i putyah razvitiya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (National Report: On the Current State and Ways of Development of Kyrgyz Republic). 15 March 2015 <<http://cis.bsu.by/second.aspx?uid=50&type=Article>>

⁷⁵ Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyz Republic. Decree on Approval of the Agreement on Creating and Functioning of Branches of Universities in Customs Union and Single Economic Space Signatory countries signed in 1999. 2000. 15 March 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/33034>>

In 2000 Kyrgyzstan adopted a State Doctrine on Education developed during the international conference “Education and Youth on the turn of the Century” (Ryskulueva)⁷⁶. The Kyrgyzstan Education Development Strategy for 2007-2010, approved by the Ministry of Education, set out medium-term goals to achieve in education. In higher education it seeks to revise the offered courses and specialities, so that they would correspond to society needs. Secondly, it proposed to develop Education Management specialty highlighting the importance of better management in education. Moreover, according to the Strategy there should be new State Education Standards developed with the proposals from university staff, teachers, and professional associations. It also urges to continue expanding Bologna principles and carry on the pilot projects in the fields of technical, humanitarian, pedagogical and agricultural courses. It also set a plan to include Bachelor Degree’s in the Labour Code so that people with this degree could compete in the job market together with specialist degree holders. In the quality assurance field the Strategy urges to introduce an independent system of HEI accreditation and develop a public system of university ratings. Also it plans to change the system of appointing the Rectors (Heads) of higher education institutions and make them more of executives to determine strategies, fund-raising activities and improving the image of the HEI (Kyrgyzstan, Strategy, 2006)⁷⁷.

In 2012 the Government approved Education Development Concept for 2012-2020. The Concept defines following problems for the education in Kyrgyzstan in 21st century. Firstly, there is a gap between labour market needs and graduate abilities. Fast developing (global) world demands quick adjustments and problem-solving skills.

⁷⁶Ryskulueva, F.I.Natsionalnii doklad: O Sostoyanii i putyah razvitiya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (National Report: On the Current State and Ways of Development of Kyrgyz Republic). 11 March 2015 <<http://cis.bsu.by/second.aspx?uid=50&type=Article>>

⁷⁷ Kyrgyzstan. Ministry of Education and Science. Kyrgyzstan Education Development Strategy 2007-2010. 2006. 14 March, 2015 <<http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/uploads/Kyrgyzstan%20-%20National%20Development%20Strategy%202007-2010.pdf>>

Education providers are not capable of supplying necessary skilled professionals. The Concept sees the solution to this problem can be in creating “flexible and open continuing education” which will allow adapting to new challenges and gain needed expertise. The Strategy states that for Kyrgyzstan it is important to increase human capital, including attracting foreign students. Thus Kyrgyzstan can become a regional leader in higher education and be competitive in regional and global level. “In the times of globalization to protect national interests and preserve the country’s prestige the educational system should help to keep and develop cultural heritage, support multiculturalism, and inclusion of Kyrgyzstan into regional and global education” (Kyrgyzstan, Concept, 2012)⁷⁸. According to the Concept higher Education should help to increase human potential, prepare professionals, willing and able to work in the realities of the labour market, and also meet the educational needs of the individual. The priority in the reform of higher education should be the increase of the quality of education. For this according to the Concept it is important to: a) to change the way universities provide knowledge (qualified academic staff, institutions of various forms of ownership, self-financed universities, free choice of management model for higher education, close relationship between universities and employers); b) to change the structure and content of higher education (of multi-level education system, a national educational standards of new generation based on the competency model, flexible and variable choice of subjects for each student, academic mobility through the introduction of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, use of information technologies); c) to improve of internal and external quality control, d) to change in the role of science (Kyrgyzstan, Concept, 2012)⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ Kyrgyzstan. Ministry of Education and Science. Education Development Concept 2020. 2012. 14 March 2015 <http://edu.gov.kg/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/str_ru.pdf>

⁷⁹ *ibid*

Since there isn't a separate internationalization concept or policy and internationalization as such is not included in the Development Concept 2020 other relevant concepts were also studied. Strategy for Country Development 2007-2010 states that education should help to improve economic development of Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan, Concept, 2007). Foreign Policy Concept of Kyrgyz Republic state that development of Kyrgyz, Russian and English languages is a crucial factor in integration into world society⁸⁰ (Kyrgyzstan, Foreign Policy Concept, 2007). The Ministry of Education and Science establishes the order of recognizing degrees gained in foreign countries. In 2012 the government issued a decree on recognizing PhD degrees gained abroad. The recognition is carried out by the Higher Attestation Commission and the equivalence is the Candidate Nauk⁸¹.

4.2 Student Mobility

One of the noticeable and widely accepted aspects of internationalization is student and academic mobility. Student mobility emerges from supply and demand (Van Vught et al). There is a demand for education from countries, which have poor higher education infrastructure. In addition to this, well-known universities in the developed countries due to cuts in the funding are seeking ways to diversify their income and fee-paying students from abroad are seen as solution (van Vught, van Der Wende, Westerheijden)⁸².

According to the latest UNESCO in 2014 there are 16 999 mobile students in Kyrgyzstan. 5 736 students are from Kyrgyzstan are studying abroad and 11 263 foreign students are studying in Kyrgyzstan.

⁸⁰ Kyrgyzstan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Policy Concept. 2007. 14 March 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/4569?cl=ru-ru>>

⁸¹ Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyzstan. Provision on nostrification of PhD in Kyrgyz Republic. 2012. 20 June 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/7617?cl=ru-ru>>

⁸² Van Vught, F. Van Der Wende, M. Westerheijden, D. Globalization and Internationalization: Policy Agendas Compared. Jan 13 2015 http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/course/module6_3/18_vanvught02.pdf

**Table 6 Incoming and Outgoing students
Kyrgyzstan**

Country of origin		Destination country		Key Indicators	
Kazakhstan	4,357	Russian Federation	2,716		
Uzbekistan	1,219	Turkey	785		
India	1,137	Germany	534		
Russian Federation	927	Kazakhstan	434		
Tajikistan	885	Saudi Arabia	312		
Pakistan	778	United States	246	Total number of mobile students abroad	5,736
Turkey	772	Tajikistan	112	% of total mobile students	0.2
China	385	France	95	Outbound mobility ratio	2.2
Turkmenistan	369	Austria	84	Gross outbound enrolment ration	0.9
Republic of Moldova	152	Japan	83	Total number of mobile students hosted	11,263
Afghanistan	54	Korea Rep.	74	% of total mobile students	0.3
Azerbaijan	41	Czech Republic	72	Inbound mobility rate	4.0
Iran Islamic Rep.	25	Malaysia	67		
Nepal	21	United Kingdom	61		
Ukraine	18	Bulgaria	43		
Belarus	8	Switzerland	33		

Source: UNESCO, 2014
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx>

The main destination countries include Russian Federation (2,716), Turkey (785), Germany (534) and Kazakhstan (434). Russian Federation historically has been an important player in Kyrgyzstan. The reasons for choosing to study in Russia can be geographical proximity, knowledge of Russian language (Russian language is the second official language in Kyrgyzstan and many studies in universities are carried out in Russian). The runner-up country Turkey is culturally, religiously and in language is close to Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, the availability of scholarships to Turkey and Germany make these countries in the top of student choices.

There are 11 263 students studying in Kyrgyzstan. It is 8.5% of total students. The highest number of students coming to Kyrgyzstan to study include Kazakhstan (4 357), Uzbekistan (1 219), India (1 137) and Russian Federation (927). Uzbekistan, which was a leader in 2009/2010 academic year, was only third in 2013-2014, lacking behind Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The drastic changes in the number of students coming from Uzbekistan can be related to the interethnic conflict that erupted in the south of Kyrgyzstan in 2010 after the coup, which resulted in ousting of president Bakiev.

Table 7 Number of foreign students from CIS (persons, as of beginning of academic year)

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Total	12 994	9 814	7 068	7 977	8 195
Azerbaijan	16	21	29	41	132
Armenia	2	3	8	1	-
Byelorussia	41	-	3	8	-
Kazakhstan	3 107	2 700	2 941	4 357	4 338
Moldavia	1	2	2	152	3
Russia	842	818	847	927	1 225
Tajikistan	1 196	570	1 113	885	1 130
Turkmenistan	1 751	1 567	571	369	240
Ukraine	71	11	10	18	33
Uzbekistan	5 967	4 122	1 544	1 219	1 094

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

From non-CIS countries the largest numbers are from India, Turkey, and Pakistan. This fact can be explained by the growing number of education seekers both in India and Turkey. Non-CIS students mainly major in medicine, languages and technical subjects (OECD, 2010)⁸³.

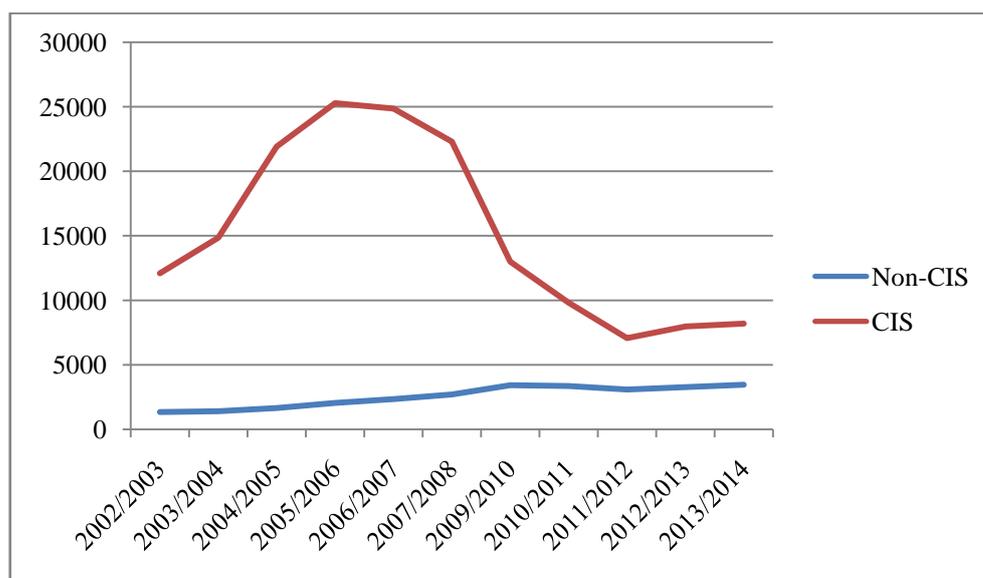
⁸³OECD. 2010. Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from PISA, OECD Publishing.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264088757-en>

Table 8 Number of foreign students from non-CIS (persons, as of beginning of academic year)

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Total	3431	3366	3099	3286	3467
Afghanistan	87	73	74	54	66
China	601	539	433	385	255
India	497	581	788	1137	1709
Iran	18	17	21	25	2
Mongolia	28	13	7	2	1
Nepal	52	82	50	21	45
Syria	22	27	24	43	7
Pakistan	911	955	928	778	628
Turkey	1057	793	727	772	679
Georgia	11	5	4	3	1
Other	147	281	43	66	74

Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2014.
http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/tematika/social/2014/Education_and_science_ru.pdf

Chart 1 Foreign students in Kyrgyzstan HEIs



Source: National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, 2002-2014.
<http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs>

Chart 1 above shows the dynamics of foreign students since the beginning of millennium. The peak of students from CIS countries was from 2004 to 2010. Inbound mobility (students from abroad studying in Kyrgyzstan) rate is 6.9%, where as in

Kazakhstan it is 1.6, Tajikistan 2.0 and in Uzbekistan 0.1%. Thus the net flow (inbound-outbound) ratio of mobile students is 5.4% (UNESCO, 2011)⁸⁴

In 1995 governmental scholarship program “The Cadres of the XXI Century” was created (Kyrgyzstan, Bilim, 1996)⁸⁵. The mission states that to form a society with new international ideology and culture requires international cooperation in the sphere of education and science, and integration of the Kyrgyz Republic into the global educational system. Thus the program aims to ensure inclusion of children and young people of Kyrgyzstan to international programs, to support gifted and talented youth in studying abroad, to train specialists in the leading educational institutions, to develop international educational institutions and centres in the country, to expand informational and technical cooperation with foreign countries in the field of education, and to develop and implement the most important international projects in the field of education and science (Kyrgyzstan, 1995)⁸⁶. “The Cadres of the XXI Century” was the first state funded program for students to pursue studies abroad. Due to lack of financing in recent years the program is facing difficulties.

4.3 Bilateral agreements and foreign university branches

Since the independence in 1991 Kyrgyzstan started to establish bilateral agreements with foreign countries in political, social, cultural and educational spheres.

This led to the opening of joint and foreign universities; branches of foreign

⁸⁴UNESCO. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Global Education Digest 2011 Comparing Education Statistics across the World. 14 Jan 2015 <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002135/213517e.pdf>>

⁸⁵Kyrgyzstan. Decree of President. Main Directions of the Educational Program “Bilim”. Review of National Educational Program “Bilim”. 1996. (Osnovnye Napravleniya obrazovatelnoi program Bilim. Obzor Natsionalnoi Obrazovatelnoi Programmy “Bilim”). 26 Jan 2015 <http://www.baldar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=448:-qq&catid=79:2010-03-16-09-51-40&Itemid=189>

⁸⁶ Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyzstan. The Decree on the Presidential Educational Program “Cadres of XXI century”. 1995. 11 March, 2015 <<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/46921>>

universities. Russia has been one of the important players in the Kyrgyzstan higher education. In 1993 Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University was founded. The university is under a joint subordination of Kyrgyzstan and Russian Federation and graduates receive Kyrgyz and Russian type diploma (Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, 2015)⁸⁷. Another higher education institution that was opened jointly by Kyrgyzstan and Russia is Kyrgyz-Russian Education Academy. There are also numerous branches of Russian universities like Moscow State Open University named after Chernomyrdin, Russian State Social University in Osh city, International Slavic Institute, three branches of Moscow Institute of Business and Law in Bishkek, Karakol and Osh cities, Russian State Trade and Economic University, Baltic Technical State University named after Ustinov (Ministry of Education and Science)⁸⁸.

In 1997 an agreement to open Kyrgyz-Uzbek College was signed between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In 1998 the college became Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, with the chance of getting Kyrgyz and Uzbek diploma. Unfortunately in 2000 Uzbekistan issued non-recognition decree of diplomas from this university. Now the university changed its name to Osh Social University (Tashbaev, 2011)⁸⁹.

In 1996-97 Kyrgyzstan and Turkey signed an agreement to open Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University⁹⁰ and International Ataturk-Alatoo University⁹¹. Both

⁸⁷ Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. History. 2015. 14 Feb 2015 <www.krsu.edu.kg>

⁸⁸ Kyrgyz Republic. Ministry of Education and Science. List of Higher Education Institutions of Kyrgyzstan. 15 Feb 2015 <www.edu.gov.kg/material/>

⁸⁹ Tashbaev, Aziz. Renamed Kyrgyz-Uzbek University is not recognized by the government (Pereimenovanni Kyrgyzsko-Uzbekskii universitet poka ne priznan vlastyami strany) Kloop.kg .2011. www.kloop.kg/blog/2011/06/10

⁹⁰ Kyrgyz Turkish Manas University. 18 March 2015 <www.manas.edu.kg>

⁹¹ International Ataturk-Alatoo University. 18 March 2015 <www.iaau.edu.kg>

universities conduct studies in Kyrgyz, Turkish and English (Kyrgyz Turkish Manas University, International Ataturk-Alatoo University, 2015).

As a support to establish democracy and develop future leaders American University in Central Asia was opened in 1993, which receives funding from the US State Department and Open Society Institute⁹². Initially the university was called American University in Kyrgyzstan; to pinpoint its regional significance in 2002 the University became American University of Central Asia. In 2009 AUCA and Bard College in the USA started a partnership which grants AUCA graduates Bard College degrees (American University of Central Asia, 2015)⁹³.

In 1993 the Government of Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Science Academy and San-Francisco State University in the USA established International University of Kyrgyzstan. The mission of the university is to dissemination of existing and creation of new knowledge through training and research, training of professionals and future leaders, promoting social, economic and cultural development of Kyrgyzstan (International University of Kyrgyzstan, 2015)⁹⁴.

In 1999 with the financing of Kuwait Kyrgyz-Kuwait University was opened. In 2004 the university was renamed to Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari Barskani⁹⁵. One year later University of Central Asia was established. The founders are

⁹²Reeves, M. “ The Role of Universities in the Transformation of Societies Case Study of the American University – Central Asia” 21 Feb 2015 <<https://www.open.ac.uk/cheri/documents/transf-final-report.pdf>>

⁹³American University of Central Asia. AUCA at a Glance. 10 June 2015 <www.auca.kg/en/auca_at_a_glance >

⁹⁴International University of Kyrgyzstan. 10 June 2015 <<http://iuk.kg/About/MissionPolicy>>

⁹⁵Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari-Barskani. 10 June 2015 <http://www.chygysh.kg/?page_id=39>

Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Aga Khan Foundation (Central Asian University, 2015)⁹⁶.

It is also noteworthy to mention two universities that are formed from multilateral agreements. The first one is the OSCE Academy that was established in 2002 after signing the Memorandum of Understanding between Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Government of Kyrgyzstan. The mission of the Academy is to promote regional security dialogue and good governance⁹⁷. Another university is Shanghai Cooperation Organization Network University. It operates on the basis of existing universities in SCO member countries (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) and observer countries (Mongolia, India, Iran, Pakistan). The official languages of the studies are Russian and Chinese. The main subject areas include regional studies, ecology, energy sector, information technologies, nanotechnologies, pedagogy and economics⁹⁸.

With the development of ICT the learning process went to a new level. Several international distant learning centers opened within universities. For example in International University of Kyrgyzstan there are Kyrgyz-Russian Faculty of Distance Education and Central Asian-Indian Institute of Distance Education. Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture opened a Distant Education Center (Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture, 20105)⁹⁹.

⁹⁶ University of Central Asia. 10 June 2015 <<http://www.ucentralasia.org/about.asp>>

⁹⁷ OSCE Academy. 10 June 2015 <<http://www.osce-academy.net/en/about/mission/>>

⁹⁸ SCO University. 6 June 2015 <http://uni-sco.ru/stat/2/stat_2.html>

⁹⁹ Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture. Distant Education Center. 6 June 2015 <<http://www.cde.ksucta.kg/>>

4.4 International Collaboration

Universities have created extensive collaboration with foreign universities and joined international associations. One of the main reasons for international collaboration of Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University is the internationalization of education and integration into world education sphere. To form professionals with new ideological culture there are Centers of American, Chinese, Iran, Turkic, Ukrainian, Korean and Tajik Studies at the university. There are more than 200 agreements between Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University and different associations and universities. The university is a member of Association of Asian Universities, Association of Schools of International Affairs of the CIS, SCO Network University (Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, 2015)¹⁰⁰. For Bishkek Humanitarian University international activities are aimed at participating in international programs to improve quality of education and to increase international prestige of BHU. The university currently has joint degrees with Shanghai Cooperation Organization Network in “Regionalism”, Japanese and Korean Universities in philology Bishkek Humanitarian University, 2015)¹⁰¹. Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture have also several joint faculties such as Kyrgyz-German Faculty of Applied Informatics Indo-Kyrgyz Center of Information Technologies and Austrian-Central Asian Geographic Information Science Center (Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture, 2015)¹⁰². Kyrgyz Economic University has partner relations with universities in more than 35 countries. It is a member of International organization Magna Charta Universitatum, The Central and East European Management

¹⁰⁰ Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. International Activities. 18 March 2015
<http://www.krsu.edu.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=129&lang=ru>

¹⁰¹ Bishkek Humanitarian University. International Connections. 18 March 2015
<<http://www.bhu.kg/cooperation>>

¹⁰² Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture. 18 March 2015
<www.ksucta.kg>

Development Association, International Organization of Trade and Economic Education, International Association of Hospitality and Tourism Universities (EURHODIP), «EdNet» Association, the signatory of Taraz Declaration on creation of Central Asian Higher Education Zone. The objective of the international activities is to assist the University in improving the quality of the education and in training specialists that will be demanded on the international labor market. For this purpose the university organizes seminars, trainings, round tables and semester training with the involvement of international organizations and academic partners from abroad (Kyrgyz Economic University, 2015)¹⁰³.

4.5 Donor assistance

Involvement of international donors has also impacted the internationalization process in Kyrgyzstan. Governments of different countries provide scholarships for students from Kyrgyzstan. For example German Academic Exchange Service DAAD offers scholarships for students in developing countries for language courses, undergraduate studies, Master and PhD programs in Germany and strengthens the relations between German and foreign universities. Since 1990 there were 784 students funded through the program. DAAD also funds long-term (3 per year) and short-term (2 lecturers for 5 years) German lecturers to visit Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, DAAD also works to establish cooperation between German and Kyrgyz universities by funding special advisers, university representative to visit Kyrgyzstan, by helping to develop curricula, research ties, mobility programs (in Sociology between Kyrgyz State University Arabaeva, Kyrgyz Economic University, Kyrgyz National University and University Wuppertal. Also with cooperation between Germany and Kyrgyzstan

¹⁰³ Kyrgyz Economic University. 18 March 2015 <www.keu.gov.kg>

resulted in opening Kyrgyz-German Technical Faculty at Kyrgyz Technical University Razzakova and Kyrgyz-German Faculty on Information Science at Kyrgyz State University of Construction and Architecture (DAAD Information Center, 2011)¹⁰⁴.

The United States has several programs for student, academic and professionals. The aim of the programs is to endorse “exchange of ideas and information for mutual understanding between US and Kyrgyzstan citizens”. For students and university faculty members there are Fulbright Foreign Research Scholarship Fellow, Fulbright Foreign Student, Global Undergraduate Exchange, Joint Faculty Development, Study of the U.S. Summer Institutes and Seminars Programs (US Embassy in Bishkek, 2015)¹⁰⁵.

Open Society Foundation through Soros Kyrgyzstan office also has scholarship programs to pursue Master’s and doctoral programs in universities in the UK, France, Hungary and North America. 345 students received scholarships since 2001. International Higher Education Support program Academic Development Program and Global Faculty Grants Program are aimed at cooperation with universities social science and humanities, promote professional development and research (Soros Foundation – Kyrgyzstan, Annual Report 2013)¹⁰⁶.

4.6 EU-Kyrgyzstan cooperation

Projects financed by EU have also influenced the internationalization process in Kyrgyzstan. Ann Katherine Isaacs note that “since the early 1990s Central Asian

¹⁰⁴ DAAD Information Center Bishkek. DAAD in Kyrgyzstan – an overview. 2011. 18 March 2015 <<http://www.slideserve.com/sandro/daad-in-kyrgyzstan-an-overview>>

¹⁰⁵ US Embassy in Bishkek. Education and Exchange Programs. 18 March 2015 <http://bishkek.usembassy.gov/exchange_programs.html>

¹⁰⁶ Soros Foundation – Kyrgyzstan. Annual Report 2013. 18 March 2015 <http://soros.kg/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/report_eng_2013.pdf>

countries have been objects of interest of many countries and organizations”¹⁰⁷. (2014, p. 40). In this regard the author notes that the “soft proposal of the European Union were attractive and useful¹⁰⁸” (Isaacs, 2014, page 40). The activities and projects within the EU-Central Asia cooperation are Bologna process, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus.

Kyrgyzstan is not a member of Bologna process; nevertheless some features of the process have been implemented. In 2003 international conference on “Integration of educational system of Kyrgyzstan to Bologna process” was held. The main areas of the Bologna process include three-cycle system of higher education, mobility, quality assurance, employability, recognition of qualifications, joint degrees, social dimension and lifelong learning¹⁰⁹ (Jones, 2010). Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Students, in short Tempus, is the main project that promotes elements of Bologna process in Kyrgyzstan. Tempus is a European Union program that supports the development of higher education institutional cooperation in partner countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, The Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region (European Commission, 2015)¹¹⁰. The goals of the project are to support the modernization of higher education in partner countries, to create partnership between EU and partner countries, to increase quality and importance of higher education in partner countries, to increase the potential of universities and to strengthen university-market-society relations (National Erasmus Plus Office in Kyrgyzstan, 2015)¹¹¹. There are three types of programs financed by Tempus: Structural and Contemporary

¹⁰⁷Isaacs, A.K. 2014. Building a Higher Education Area in Central Asia: challenges and prospects. Tuning Journal for Higher Education, University of Duesto. 18 March 2015
<<http://www.tuningjournal.org/article/view/69>>

¹⁰⁸*ibid*

¹⁰⁹Jones, P. 2011. Regulatory Regionalism and Education: the European Union and Central Asia, 2010 in choices in Silova, I. Globalization on the Margins Education and Post Socialist transformations in Central Asia. Information Age Publishing.

¹¹⁰ European Commission. Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Tempus IV. About the Program. 18 March 2015 <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_ru.php>

¹¹¹ National Erasmus Plus Office in Kyrgyzstan. 2015. Tempus Program in Kyrgyzstan 1995-2013. 18 March 2015 <<http://erasmusplus.kg>>

Measures, Joint European Projects and Individual Mobility grants. Tempus program began its work in Kyrgyzstan in 1995 and since then 55 projects were implemented and total amount of Euros allocated since then is approximately 16 million (European Commission, 2015)¹¹². In 2006 in the framework of Tempus project the National Information Center on Bologna process in Kyrgyzstan was formed on the basis of International University of Kyrgyzstan. Today there are five branches of the National Information Center located in the regions. Furthermore, Consortia of universities were formed by 13 Kyrgyzstan and 2 European universities, University of Gent, Belgium and University of Pisa, Italy (International University of Kyrgyzstan, 2015)¹¹³.

Tempus project also helped to introduce European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. In 2004 “Elaboration of a Strategy for the Transition to ECTS in the Kyrgyz Republic” project sought to study European experience of credit system and introduce it to Kyrgyzstan universities. By the decision of the Ministry of Education “About carrying out an experiment on the organization of educational process on credit technologies in pilot HEIs” the ECTS was introduced in seven universities: Kyrgyz National University, Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Naryn State University, International University of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek State University of Economy and Business, Osh Technological University, Bishkek Financial and Economic Academy (Active Report)¹¹⁴. The credit system was first introduced to the courses in economics. From academic year of 2006 it was decided to involve technical, agricultural, pedagogical and humanities vocational undergraduate education

¹¹² European Commission. Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. The Main Achievements of Tempus Programme in Central Asia 1994-2013. 18 March 2015
<<http://cesie.org/media/The-main-achievements-of-the-TEMPUS-in-Central-Asia.pdf>>

¹¹³ International University of Kyrgyzstan. National Information Center on Bologna Process. (Natsionalnii Informatsonnii tsentr po vnedreniu Bolonskogo protsessu). 18 March 2015
<<http://iuk.kg/activity/resource/51-nacionalnyy-informacionnyy-centr-po-vnedreniyu-bolonskogo-processa-v-kr.html>>

¹¹⁴ Active Report. Central Asia. 18 March 2015
<http://62.204.192.148/activeasia/images/Documentos/active_report_central_asia.pdf>

(Brunner, Tillett)¹¹⁵. Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science established the ECTS/Diploma Supplement National Bureau in 2007 to further support the introduction of Credit System and the European Diploma Supplement (European Commission, 2015)¹¹⁶. The authors of the Manual on the application of European System of Transfer and Accumulation of Credits in Kyrgyz Republic note that there are three reasons to adopt ECTS. The first reason is to give freedom in the length of study and subject choice. The second reason is to promote academic mobility abroad and to ease the changing of the study subject. The third reason is that credit system will give more flexibility in financial matters, students will pay for the credits earned and will be able to better adjust financial issues (European Commission, 2015)¹¹⁷. According to the official site of Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn the credit system allows “to make the system transparent, to ensure the recognition of qualifications at the level of European educational space and to improve student and staff mobility”. Furthermore, the credit system permits to enter European academic sphere, provide variety of subject choices, increase the responsibility of the student over his/her studies (Kyrgyz National University, 2013)¹¹⁸.

Another Tempus project Central Asian Network on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CANQA) was designed to “enhance cooperation between HEIs, national

¹¹⁵Brunner, J.J, Tillett, A. Higher Education in Central Asia, the Challenges of Modernization. Case studies from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, The Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan.
http://mt.educarchile.cl/MT/jjbrunner/archives/libros/TANES/HE%20REPORT%20FINAL_ENG%20prn.pdf

¹¹⁶European Commission. Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA). Tempus. 2010. Review of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan. 25 Jan 2015
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/reviews/kyrgyzstan_review_of_higher_education.pdf>

¹¹⁷European Commission. Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA). Tempus. 2010. Review of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan. 25 Jan 2015
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/reviews/kyrgyzstan_review_of_higher_education.pdf>

¹¹⁸Kyrgyz National University. Regulations on Credit System of education at Kyrgyz National University. (Polojeniya o kreditnoi sisteme obucheniya v KNU) 2013.
http://www.university.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3894:2013-10-01-06-25-51&catid=916:2013-09-17-11-12-12&Itemid=462

authorities and other bodies from three countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan) to collaborate in establishing common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice”(Education Network Association, 2015)¹¹⁹. The long term goal of the project is to build up quality assurance and quality culture in Central Asia. On the basis of this project a consortium of universities was created that include seven European, twenty two Central Asian universities, organizations and three Ministries of Education”(Education Network Association, 2015)¹²⁰.

One more well-known project of the EU Erasmus Mundus also operates in Kyrgyzstan. It is a cooperation and mobility program that seeks to improve education quality in European Union and promote dialogue and cooperation between European Union and Third-Countries (European Commission, 2013)¹²¹. It has three different Action programs. For example Action 1 is Joint master and doctoral programs including a scholarship scheme. It supports high quality joint master and doctoral programs in consortium of European and Third Country institutions. It also provides scholarships for master and doctor students. Action 2 is an Erasmus Mundus Partnership program that targets academic cooperation and exchange in order to contribute the development of non-European partners highlighted by the European Union external policy. Action 3 positions Europe as the center of education excellence and promotes European higher education. Thus Erasmus Mundus supports higher education institutions, students, researchers, university staff and organizations active in higher education field¹²².

¹¹⁹ Education Network Association. Tempus Project CANQA.2015.

http://ednet.edu.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=47&lang=ru

¹²⁰ Education Network Association. Tempus Project CANQA.2015.

http://ednet.edu.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=47&lang=ru

¹²¹ European Commission. Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA). About Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013. 2013.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/about_erasmus_mundus_en.php

¹²² *ibid*

Tempus Structural Measures project TuCAHEA (Towards a Central Asian Higher Education Area; Tuning Structures and Building Quality Culture) aims to improve regional higher education system, to form a platform for knowledge sharing. Ministries of Education of five partner countries, 24 Central Asian Universities and 8 European Union Universities are participating in the project. It also, seeks to help ministries, experts to use competence-based tools, create legislation for CAHEA, and promote student mobility. Partners from Kyrgyzstan are the Ministry of Education and Science, EdNet, Bishkek Academy of Finance and Economics, I. Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, International University of Kyrgyzstan, Issyk-Kul State University named after K. Tynystanov, Jalal-Abad State University, Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University, Kyrgyz National University, Naryn State University, Talas State University (Towards CEHEA, 2015) ¹²³. If implemented successfully Central Asian Higher Education Area could mean together with educational more political and social integration in Central Asia

Internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan is happening in the form of student and staff mobility, international cooperation and Bologna process reforms. The number of foreign students is more than the number of outgoing students from Kyrgyzstan. In accordance with bilateral agreements universities like American University in Central Asia, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, and Central Asian University are opened. Branches of foreign universities, mainly from Russia are also providing higher education to Kyrgyzstan citizens. The role of international actors has been great in promoting reforms as well as internationalization processes. The European Union projects assist not only in student and staff mobility but also help to introduce

¹²³ Towards a Central Asian Higher Education Area: Tuning Structures and Building Quality Culture. Tempus Project. Jan 19 2015 <<http://www.tucahea.org/>>

structural changes like two-level system, credit system, quality assurance. What are the rationales for these changes will be discussed in the chapter below.

5. Rationales for internationalization

As suggested in the chapter 1 the research generally defines political, economic, academic and socio-cultural rationales for internationalizations (Knight, de Wit). This part of the thesis will analyze each of the rationale with respect to internationalization processes in higher education in Kyrgyzstan will be discussed separately. When it comes to rationales for internationalization the analysis of the statistical data, available literature and responses of the interviewees are helpful. For the purpose of better understanding the rationales for internationalization of higher education six people were interviewed. The background of interviewees include a teacher at the public university, a head of quality control department at the university, two representatives of international offices, a representative of the leadership development office at the university and former member of a joint faculty and current mobility program student. Using Knight's rationales provided in the conceptual framework the answers of the respondents were broken down to rationales.

Table 9 Breakdown of respondent answers according to rationales

	Political	Social/Cultural	Economic	Educational
Respondent 1		Intercultural understanding National cultural identity	Financial incentives Labor market	Enhancement of quality Extension of academic horizon International academic standards
Respondent 2			Financial incentives	Enhancement of quality Expansion of curricula <i>Expansion of the</i>

Respondent 3			Economic development	Enhancement of quality
Respondent 4			Financial incentives	<i>Effective quality assurance system</i>
Respondent 5	<i>Kyrgyzstan becomes visible to world</i>	Intercultural understanding Citizenship development	Financial incentives	Enhancement of quality structural changes to the universities
Respondent 6		Intercultural understanding	Financial incentives	Enhancement of quality
Government actions	Foreign Policy National Security Technical assistance Regional identity	Intercultural understanding	Education export (Education Development Concept 2020)	International Standards (ETCS, two-level cycle) Enhancement of quality

Source: Rationales developed by Knight, J. de Wit., Knight 2004, Answers given during the interviews

5.1 Political Rationale

Political rationale includes issues like foreign policy, national and regional identity, national security and peace, technical assistance. The wide accepted element of internationalization student mobility also serves as a political rationale. Britta Baron (1993, p. 50) states that between 1950-1975 “academic mobility was predominantly seen as an element of foreign policy¹²⁴”. Foreign students are seen as future elite of their home country and provide useful links between countries. Students who return after studying abroad bring along foreign experience and know-how, help to establish

¹²⁴Baron, B. The Politics of Academic Mobility in Western Europe. Higher Education Policy Vol. 6, No.3, 1993 http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/eaie_lit/01_baron93.pdf

relations with foreign countries. Sending students to study at world best universities as a way to prepare future leaders also serves political purposes. One of the aims of the Cadres of XXI century program is to help the society to “adapt to new socio-economic realities through targeted training of new generation leaders abroad in fields that are the most relevant in Kyrgyzstan” (Kyrgyzstan, Cadres of XXI Century, 1995)¹²⁵. Unfortunately due to lack of control and mechanisms of the return of the student, the program was not successful.

With the collapse of Soviet Union Kyrgyzstan needed to find its place in the world. Establishing relations with foreign countries on equal terms and as equal partners in education gave a possibility for Kyrgyzstan to show itself as an independent country. The major educational partners for Kyrgyzstan after the independence were neighbouring countries. The Agreement on Cooperation in creating Single Education Space in 1997 and recognition of diplomas signal that regional cooperation is important and necessary for Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, the lack of interest or political will and different state doctrines resulted in poor work in the creation of Single Education Space. Another step to create common educational space is taken by Tempus’ CAHEA project. The hope behind the project is to create Central Asian Higher Education Area, just like the European Higher Education Area. CAHEA brings not only educational institutions together but also ministries and government agencies. The project will help ministries, experts to use competence-based tools and to create necessary legislation. These above mentioned projects promote not only national but also regional identity.

The technical assistance of developed countries to Kyrgyzstan is great. The above mentioned programs of German, US, the EU help not only with giving scholarships to students, but also with training academic staff, administration of

¹²⁵ Kyrgyzstan. Government of Kyrgyzstan. The Decree on the Presidential Educational Program “Cadres of XXI century”. 1995. 6 June 2015< <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/46921>>

universities, and help in creating legislation. It should be pointed out that none of the respondents mentioned political rationale for internationalization. Only Respondent 5 pointed out that with international standards and high quality education Kyrgyzstan will be known to the world Respondent 5, interview). Perhaps the background of respondents is the reason for this, as Knight pointed out political rationales is important on government level (Knight, 2004)¹²⁶.

5.2 Cultural and Social rationales

Cultural/Social rationale includes national cultural identity, intercultural understanding, citizenship development, and social and community development. Preserving national cultural identity and at the same time incorporating into world education are highlighted in many education policy papers. For example the Concept paper for 1995-2000 “Education through Culture” state that “education through culture in higher education should aim at systematic targeted learning of own culture as well as world culture” (Kyrgyzstan, 1995)

Internationalization of higher education can serve also as a tool to promote intercultural understanding. For example one of the aims of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek University was promoting the preservation, development and enrichment of culture, languages, historical and national traditions of the people living in the Kyrgyz Republic¹²⁷. The university was created in 1994 on the basis of an agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. However, after the interethnic conflict in 2010 many students from Uzbekistan stopped enrolling to the university. In 2005 Uzbekistan annulled the agreement and do not recognize diplomas of Kyrgyz-Uzbek University

¹²⁶ Knight, J. 2004. Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 5 May 2015 <<http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/8/1/5> >

¹²⁷ Kyrgyzstan. Government Resolution on Kyrgyz-Uzbek University Charter. 1997. <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/34448>

(Tashbaev, 2011)¹²⁸. Four of the respondents pointed out the cultural growth during mobility stays. Learning about not only other but also about native culture, promoting tolerance are the main rationale of internationalization for the respondents. Respondent 2 mentions “mobile students have a chance to learn cultural communities in other countries”.

5.3 Economic rationale

Economic rationale as discussed in previous chapters is seen as primary rationale for many developed countries, since the revenue from foreign students is high. The economic rationale includes competitiveness, economic growth, increase in human capital and financial profits for governments and institutions. Financial incentive is the reason attracting foreign students. There are more incoming students to Kyrgyzstan than any other Central Asian country. Thus there is a potential for Kyrgyzstan to gain financial benefit from foreign students. Unfortunately there is only one work available on the economic benefits of education export in Kyrgyzstan. Nurbek Jenish in his research “Export of Higher Education Services in Kyrgyzstan” states that Kyrgyzstan has become a leader in Central Asia in attracting foreign students. The main reasons behind this, the author sees in increased number of education institutions, relatively low tuition fees and cost of living and increase in programs taught in English and Turkish. Based on the financial data supplied by the respondents Nurbek Jenish calculated the economic impact of international students.

¹²⁸ Tashbaev, Aziz. Renamed Kyrgyz-Uzbek University is not recognized by the government (Pereimenovanni Kyrgyzsko-Uzbekskii universitet poka ne priznan vlastyami strany) Kloop.kg .2011. www.kloop.kg/blog/2011/06/10

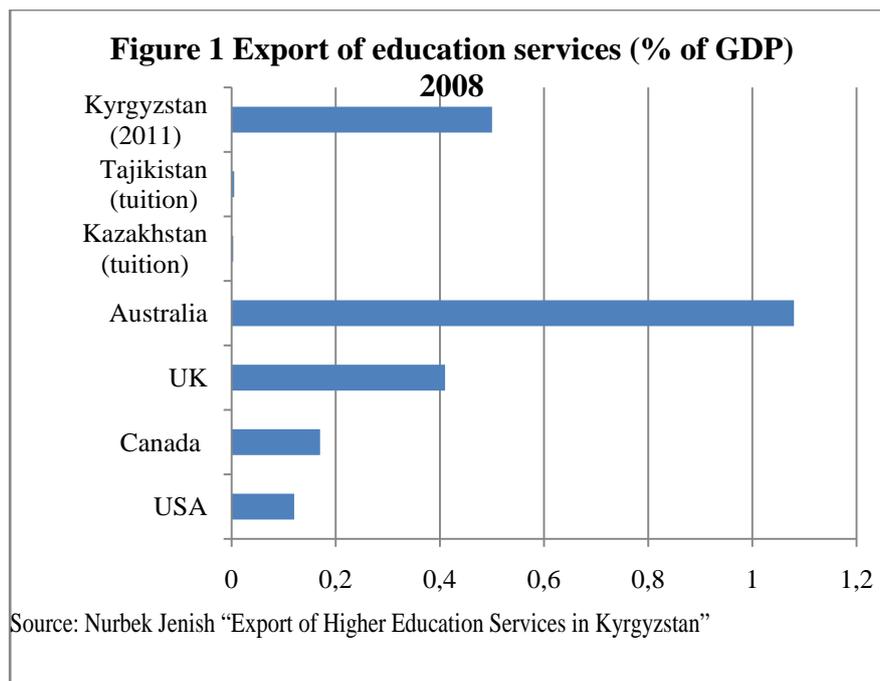
Table 10 International student's expenditures and contribution to Kyrgyz GDP

Expenses	USD	Value-added coefficient	Contribution to GDP (USD)
Tuition	8,141,300	0.7	5,689,910
Accommodation	7,086,022	0.56	3,968,172
Utilities	2,267,527	0.45	1,020,387
Food	7,086,022	0.24	1,700,645
Communication	1,417,204	0.5	708,602
Books and other education materials	283,411	0.2	56,688
Visa and registration	144,744	0.6	86,865
Other	3,401,290	0.55	1,870,710
Total	29,827,580		15,110,979

Source: Jenish Nurbek "Export of Higher Education Services in Kyrgyzstan" <http://www.ucentralasia.org/downloads/UCA-IPPA-WP-7-Education.pdf>

Foreign students pay not only tuition fees, but also spend on accommodation, food and family visits. The author states that the total amount of USD 15 million equals to the 0,25% of GDP in 2011. Despite the fact that this number might not be large, it is more than the government allocation to higher education in 2011, which was equal to USD 12 million. Moreover, in relative terms the economic impact of education export is similar to leading education exporters (Jenish, 2012)¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ Jenish, N. "Export of Higher Education Services in Kyrgyzstan" Working Paper No.7, 2012. <http://www.ucentralasia.org/downloads/UCA-IPPA-WP-7-Education.pdf>



There are more students coming to study to Kyrgyzstan than outbound students. Nurbek Jenish's study shows that the economic benefit from foreign students can be very substantial. Education Development Concept for 2012-2020 acknowledges the fact that Kyrgyzstan can become an education exporter. However, there are no clear objectives and ways laid out.

There is also economic benefit from international donors. According to Open Aid Data the amount of help provided since 2000 to Higher Education is 76,997,258 USD (Open Aid Data, 2014)¹³⁰.

Due to lack of financing Kyrgyzstan is not able to support students wishing to study abroad. Scholarships provided by the international organizations and foreign countries for Kyrgyzstan students relieve the burden from the government. Another economic rationale for internationalization is labour market. der Wende defines internationalization as "any systematic effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies,

¹³⁰Open Aid Data. Post-Secondary Education Kyrgyz Republic. 2014. <http://www.openaiddata.org/purpose/614/114/1/>

economy and labor markets¹³¹” (in Knight, 2008, p.20) Kyrgyzstan is experiencing problem with labour matching it is important to be up-to-date with new technologies. Internationalization can help to bring new knowledge to Kyrgyzstan. Respondent 6 notes that “summer schools or study abroad programs give a chance to see new technologies” All of the respondents stated that internationalization or having foreign students is a way of generating income. Respondent 5 notes that “foreign students help universities become self-sustainable”.

5.4 Educational rationale

Academic rationales include adding international dimension into teaching and research, institution building, importance of profile and status to the academic institution, enhancement of quality and international standards. One of the main rationales for internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan is to integrate into world education sphere. To do this Kyrgyzstan took steps to set up international standards in higher education. Kyrgyzstan signed Agreement on Cooperation in creating Single Educational Space among CIS countries. Joint subordination universities were opened. International standards were introduced. With the assistance of EU projects Kyrgyzstan introduced some elements of Bologna process, like ECTS, two-level cycle. Several universities have undergone international accreditation. Activities are being carried out to create Central Asian Education Area. Respondents stated that educational rationale is the main thing for internationalization. Through mobility programs Kyrgyzstan universities have a chance to gain experience, learn from others. Students gain deeper theoretical and practical knowledge.

¹³¹ Der Wende, M. quote in Knight, J. 2008. Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.. 5 May 2015 <<https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf>>

6. Discussion of the Findings:

Whether approved or criticized globalization and internationalization are happening worldwide. Kyrgyzstan which does not possess natural resources should look for other means of economic growth. If internationalization provides financial benefits for developed countries, for Kyrgyzstan first of all internationalization means integration into world education space. Laws and development strategies such as Education Development strategy 1996-2000 called for more international cooperation. The State Doctrine on Education set the stage to implement Bologna principles. The first finding in the analysis of internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan is that European Union's projects, mainly the Bologna process have greatly influenced the process of internationalization. In order to integrate into world educational space Kyrgyzstan chose to pursue Bologna principles such as three-level cycle (although currently only the two-level is introduced), credit system, international independent accreditation. The initiative to organize these reforms came from the government; however, the role played by Tempus project is great. Moreover, the financial assistance of the international donors help Kyrgyzstan with student and staff mobility, give chance to exchange experiences and learn from foreign education systems. Educational cooperation is one of the means of sustaining good relationships with foreign countries. For example many scholarship programs are designed not only to give an opportunity to gain foreign degree, but also to promote mutual understanding between countries, for example US sponsored programs. In case of Kyrgyzstan supporting democratization processes through first-hand experience of students and academic staff are also reasons behind scholarship programs funded by developed countries. The financial assistance to the higher education section in the sum of 76,997,258 USD is also very significant.

The next finding is that there are more incoming students than outgoing students. The majority of these students are from CIS countries. Thus Kyrgyzstan can clearly benefit from making its higher education more attractive to incoming students. The Jenish study shows that the income although not large by international standards can be tangible. Education Development Concept for 2012-2020 acknowledges the fact that Kyrgyzstan can become a leader in providing education to foreign students. However, there are no clear objectives and ways laid out. The Concept acknowledges the importance of developing human capital, together with attracting foreign students and making Kyrgyzstan a leader in the export of education in the region and to ensure regional and global competitiveness. However, the Concept does not specify what are the goals, aims and ways to become a regional leader in education export. It can be concluded that Kyrgyzstan sees the potential of becoming regional leader in education export, but current problems that the higher education faces draws away the attention from developing clear goals, aims and tools to become a regional leader. The existence of not only national universities but also international universities such as AUCA, Manas, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University that teach in English, Russian, and Turkish provides variety of choices for foreign students.

Looking at the rationales for internationalization it becomes obvious that educational rationale is very important for internationalization in Kyrgyzstan. Introduction of elements of Bologna process, ETCS, two-level structure are designed to incorporate Kyrgyzstan education system into world educational space. Moreover, these reforms are designed to increase the quality of education. Higher education in Kyrgyzstan as was discussed earlier is facing challenges like low quality of education and non-responsiveness to the market needs. Internationalization helps to increase the quality of education by providing access to the world experience, foreign methods, and

European standards. All respondents of the interview mention that internationalization helps to improve quality. For example respondent 1 says that internationalization helps “students to gain deeper theoretical and practical knowledge at home and abroad, it allows to expand the sphere of scientific research”. Respondent 2 points out that internationalization provides “teachers the possibility of enrichment of knowledge, implementation of joint research and training programs, participate in internships at foreign universities”. The cooperation of universities, creating a network of local and foreign universities is also is also beneficial for improvement of quality, because it opens to Kyrgyzstani students and teachers unlimited opportunities for continuing education, conducting joint research.

However, the introduction of credit system, two-level structure does not mean the fast improvement of the quality of education. The Bologna process is happening but the effects on the internationalization process and its educational rationale are very low. The mobility programs of students and staff help with gaining new knowledge and experience; however it is not enough to increase the quality in the whole sector and the number of those mobility programs is small. Respondent 1 mentions that “we need to change our thinking, need new ideas and teachers who are trained in the new system”. Respondent 5 says that “we need to move from the authoritative figure of the teacher to a facilitator”. There is also a fear that increase in the universities can bring commercialization of universities as Respondent 1 notes. “There is a danger that there will be increase in foreign *lipovii* (meaning fake) diplomas and low quality providers”.

Economic rationale comes in second rationale for internationalization. Profit from foreign students is an attractive alternative in financially difficult times. In addition to this students who have studied abroad bring new ideas, techniques to their home countries, thus facilitate the economic development of the country. As

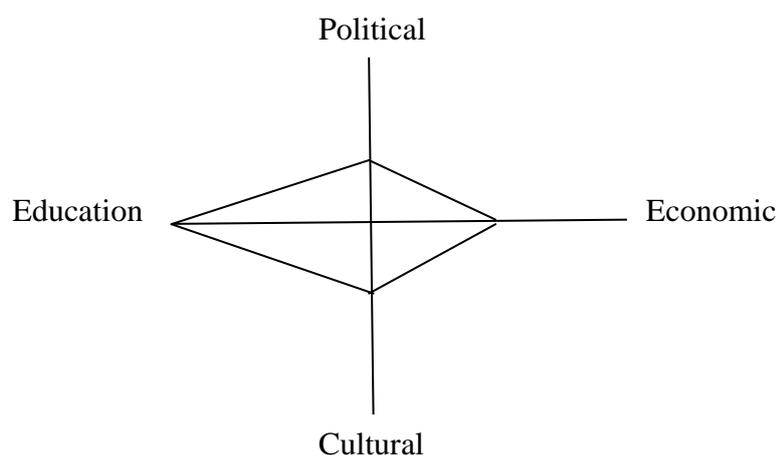
Respondent 3 notes “There is an economic side to this, because all this knowledge they can apply here at home for the country’s development.” Labor market rationale inside the economic rationale is also importance plays the. The experience of foreign countries in developing curricula, the content of knowledge and skills that are needed for employment are valuable. Respondent 1 says that “In Europe, in the preparation of training programs universities are guided by professional standards. For each specialty professional community develops the standards. The standards specify what basic skills employee should have. And students chose subjects to study according to standards. Therefore it is necessary to promote the internationalization of the Kyrgyz Republic.” Furthermore Respondent 6 says from his experience that “the equipment and machines are brought from developed world, but we don’t know how to use them, that is why joint faculties especially in technical fields are important”.

According the respondents one of the main benefits of student and staff mobility is the promotion of tolerance, diversity, introduction to new cultures that fall under the Cultural/Social rationale. Noteworthy is a comment from respondent 1 “during student years person form certain values and attitudes. Students from other countries in the course of his training actively learn the language, culture, achievements of the science of the host country. These students gain valuable social capital, and return home with a new baggage of accumulated knowledge, relationships, sympathy and new friends; these students tend to become effective agents of the language and culture of the host country”. In the light of radicalization threats in the world this particular rationale seems important to create mutual understanding and respect.

Political rationale includes issues like foreign policy, national and regional identity, national security and peace, technical assistance. Opening up universities together with Russia, Turkey, the USA show that Kyrgyzstan’s foreign policy is diverse

and oriented towards establishing relations with foreign countries. National security and peace is promoted through higher education by opening OSCE Academy. Moreover, the internationalization process in Kyrgyzstan has been greatly influenced by the technical assistance from foreign countries and international organization. Together with providing mobility of students and teachers foreign donors helped to make structural changes in the higher education sector. Nevertheless, none of the interview respondents associated internationalization with political rationale.

Thus concluding the above discussion the educational rationale prevails in the internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan.



Source: Kalvermak T., van der Wende M. (1997). *National Policies for the Internationalization of Higher education in Europe*. Stockholm: National Agency for Higher Education

However, the internationalization process in Kyrgyzstan is ad hoc. Joint subordination universities and branches of foreign (Russian) universities have opened. The government is initiating laws and decrees to harmonize higher education with Bologna process. However, there is no clear and separate policy or strategy on internationalization. The factors promoting internationalization are universities themselves, the Bologna process and projects sponsored by foreign donors. However, the effects of these mobility programs are not large. Only several hundred people have a

chance to study abroad through scholarships from international organizations. Only 17000 out of 223 241 students are mobile. The Council created after signing the Agreement on Cooperation in creating Single Educational Space in 1997 between CIS countries does not function. Only Russia and Kazakhstan are destination countries from CIS for Kyrgyzstani students, 2 716 and 434 students in 2104 respectively. The factors hindering the process of internationalization are low economic development and political instability (two revolutions, ethnic conflict). The GDI (gross national income) per capita in Kyrgyzstan is USD \$1200, thus only rich and able students can go to study abroad¹³². For this reason and in order to achieve internationalization rationales it is important to internationalize home universities, attract foreign students and professors, expand curricula.

Moreover, it is well known that English became lingua franca of science and it could be a challenge for our universities where the knowledge of English is low. As Respondent 2 notes “Teaching teachers of specialized departments of foreign languages and the development of subject courses in a foreign language as the basis for future educational programs”. Almost 75 percent of studies are conducted in Russian, thus attracting only those students who have a command of Russian.

Former Minister of Education Boldjurova notes that “...internationalization carries great opportunities for Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, it exacerbates competition and generates tensions by creating new education services providers”(Boldjurova, p.6)¹³³. In order to benefit from internationalization of higher education and deter from

¹³² The World Bank News. 2014 World Bank Income Classifications. 24 July 2014. 10 June 2015 <<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/07/24/kyrgyz-republic-becomes-lower-middle-income-country>>

¹³³ Boldjurova, I.S. Higher Education in the Kyrgyz Republic: Problems of Modernization and Internationalization. 6 March 2015 <http://www.a-jrc.jp/ajj/02/pdf/02_Boldjurova.pdf>

its dangers it is necessary for Kyrgyzstan to develop clear goals and strategies for internationalization.

7. Conclusion

The thesis attempts to answer several questions. The first question is ‘what are the major trends of internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan?’ Since the independence Kyrgyzstan reformed its higher education in order to incorporate into the world education community. Agreements on recognition of qualifications were signed between CIS countries. Joint subordination universities and branches of foreign universities were opened, totalling to more than 17. The number of outgoing students reached 5 736 and incoming students are 11 263. Major reforms are done in accordance with Bologna principles. International standards such as two-level cycle and credit system were introduced. Independence international accreditation became possible. Currently efforts are being made to create Common Central Asian Education Space.

The second question is ‘what rationales are for internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan?’ The review of literature and statistics as well as the interviews revealed that educational rationale play an important role in internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan. Mainly the increasing of quality of education through mobility of students and staff, introducing international standards, introduction of independent accreditation seems to be the drivers of internationalization. Economic, political and social/cultural rationales thus far are less of importance. With decrease of quality of education today it is important for Kyrgyzstan to reform and introduce new experience and ideas. Internationalization provides possibilities through mobility of programs, university cooperation, donor assistance to learn from foreign countries and universities.

The internationalization of higher education in Kyrgyzstan is not researched widely. The strategies taken by different stakeholders to internationalize can be very interesting for a comprehensive analysis of internationalization in Kyrgyzstan. One of the possible topics for further research is a case study research of strategies taken by universities to internationalize.

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Appendix

Questions asked during the interviews?

1. What is for you internationalization of higher education?
2. In your opinion what are the rationales for internationalization?
3. Is beneficial/advantageous for Kyrgyzstan to internationalize its higher education?
4. What could be potential minuses of internationalization?