Internationalisation of Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe: Conceptualisation of the Definition Inside the Region

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Abstract. The article sets out to analyse previous research on the internationalisation in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe with a particular focus on the conceptualisation of 'internationalisation'. While there is quite a lot of research regarding both theory and implementation of internationalisation, the majority of it is conducted in the West and the most commonly accepted definition hails from the research traditions of the Anglophone world. This literature review shows that when researchers in Central and Eastern European countries use the term 'internationalisation', they either refer to a policy change encouraged (or necessitated) by a supranational institution or global education discourse, or an education process through which an international or intercultural dimension is integrated into higher education.
Keywords: internationalisation, higher education, Central and Eastern Europe, conceptualisation, definition

Aukštojo mokslo tarptautinimas Rytų ir Vidurio Europoje: apibrėžimo konceptualizavimas regione

Santrauka. Straipsnyje analizuojami aukštojo mokslo tarptautinimo tyrimai Vidurio ir Rytų Europos regione, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant tarptautinimui konceptualizuoti. Nors tyrimų, susijusių tiek su internacionalizacijos teorija, tiek su jos įgyvendinimu, yra gana daug, dauguma jų atlikta Vakaruose, o labiausiai paplitęs apibrėžimas yra kilęs iš anglakalbio pasaulio mokslinių tyrimų tradicijų. Atlikta literatūros apžvalga leidžia daryti išvadą, kad Vidurio ir Rytų Europos šalių tyrėjų darbuose tarptautinimo (*internationalisation*) sąvoka vartojama įvardyti aukštojo mokslo politikos (*policy*) pokyčius, kurie vyksta skatinant ar reikalaujant viršnacionalinėms institucijoms (šiam reiškiniui apibūdinti taip pat vartojamas europeizacijos (*Europeanization*) terminas, norint pabrėžti siekį įgyvendinti Europos Sąjungos institucijų nustatomas ar siūlomas normas) ar pasauliniam švietimo diskursui, arba procesą, per kurį į aukštąjį mokslą integruojama tarptautinė ar tarpkultūrinė dimensija.
Pagrindiniai žodžiai: tarptautinimas, aukštasis mokslas, Vidurio ir Rytų Europa, konceptualizavimas, apibrėžimas.

Introduction

Even though Europe is largely considered to be the best practical example of internationalisation with other regions and countries aspiring to emulate the successes of the Bologna Process (Westerheijden et al., 2010), achievements of various countries differ and the biggest challenges, according to the European Parliament, are seen in the European South and Central Eastern Europe (CEE). The European Union body notes that the majority of internationalisation strategies are still mostly directed towards mobility, long-term and short-term economic benefits, attracting and/or teaching talented students and researchers as well as towards international reputation and visibility of the university. More efforts are still needed to create and implement more comprehensive strategies that would pay sufficient attention to ensuring internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes (European Parliament, 2015, p. 28-29). Such tendencies, however, are to be expected. Historically, internationalisation has been understood as a process that is taking place abroad and most attention was dedicated to fostering cooperation between higher education institutions and increasing student and staff mobility; however, mobility was still available only to a small part of the university community and even such small goals as 10 % student mobility (proposed by the Erasmus+ programme) were impossible to reach. This led to the conceptualisation of *internationalisation at home* that is concerned with all students which attend the university and the activities carried out by their home university (Wächter, 2003). Internationalisation at home also encompasses *internationalisation of the curriculum* which is then defined as "the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2009, p. 209). The tendency to move away from international mobility has shaped the definition of internationalisation itself. The definition proposed by Jane Knight (2004) in its most recent iteration provided by Hans de Wit and Fiona Hunter (2017) defines internationalisation as "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit & Hunter, 2017, p. 27). We can see that there is a strong educational aspect to this definition as it pertains to the purpose, functions and delivery of education which is a more general way to refer to the curriculum and the current conceptualisation includes the notions put forth in *internationalisation at home* and *internationalisation of curriculum*.

The aforementioned definitions, however, have been conceptualised in the English-speaking world with the participation of researchers working in Western Europe. That is to be expected since the majority of research into internationalisation is conducted in English-speaking countries, the relationship of which to internationalisation is different than that of non-English speaking countries. Even though theoretically all countries can participate in internationalisation on equal ground, in practice, the scientific and cultural hegemony of the English language benefits countries where English is the dominant language in attracting international students as well as facilitating the

entire process (Hughes, 2008). While comparative data is limited, a deeper analysis of the Fourth Global Survey on Internationalization of Higher Education conducted in 2013 (1,439 HEIs from 137 countries participated) shows that specific trends can be observed in the Anglophone (the category consists of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand) world. For instance, HEIs in this group were more likely to choose increased revenue as their primary benefit of internationalisation. Also, there was a statistically significant probability of English-speaking HEIs in the United States, Canada, Francophone Canada and other Anglophone countries selecting international awareness as a benefit more often than countries in the Global South (Buckner, 2019).

Moreover, Western Europe has a substantial history in internationalisation efforts both due to the European Union higher education area integration and the more active participation in the international education market by the universities in these countries. Central and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, has joined the internationalisation trend significantly later due to historic circumstances (as members of the Soviet bloc until early 1990s these countries only had possibilities (though, also limited) to visit other countries of the Soviet Union and no opportunity to expand their networks to the other side of the "iron curtain" (Zelvys, 2015). Therefore, it is expected that the region is still not widely represented in internationalisation research (Bedenlier, Kondakci, & Zawacki-Richter, 2018; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Kosmützky & Krücken, 2014; Kuzhabekova, Hendel, & Chapman, 2015).

While there is nothing wrong with using a definition coined by others, when it comes to complex concepts such as internationalisation and its implementation, the discussion on what elements are exactly included in the semantic field of the concept is imminent to its successful implementation. Joining the debate on internationalisation and similar terms used in higher education, Whitsed and Green go as far as to say that "the act of renaming "internationalization" is a demonstration of <…> agency in the context of uneven distributions of power across the contested storylines of internationalization" (Whitsed & Green, 2014, p. 107). It stands to reason that an in-depth discussion on what internationalisation *is* and *means* in the context of Central and Eastern Europe would benefit the higher education research and practice across the region.

According to the Glossary of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Central and Eastern Europe is comprised of the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (OECD, 2001). This is the most common definition used by a significant number of researchers either implicitly or explicitly. There are several reasons for this choice. One of them and possibly the most important is the rather prominent role that OECD has taken in the education area in the last decades of the 20th century. Moreover, the other definitions (for example, the World Factbook) include countries with vastly different social, political and economic circumstances. While the countries enlisted in the OECD definition do have significant differences in terms of higher education, all of them except Albania are current members of

the European Union and their higher education systems and policies in general as well as internationalisation efforts have been greatly influenced by that. These countries are also former members of the Soviet bloc and their post-soviet transition has been marked by a clearly defined aspiration towards the integration into NATO and the European Union which provides further historical reasoning for considering these countries as a joint unit of investigation rather than separately. Prior to EU accession these countries have participated in multiple programmes specifically designed to help them prepare to join the EU, most of which were primarily concerned with international cooperation (e.g., SOCRATES or TEMPUS). As the goals of the EU and those of the national stakeholders were similar in terms of increased international cooperation, better social integration as well as improved quality of education and graduate employability, such initiatives and programmes had a long-lasting impact on the education policies of these new EU members (Silova, 2011).

Joining EU also resulted in reform initiatives related to greater unification and standardization of higher education systems across Europe (Želvys, 2020) which significantly helps facilitate international mobility as well as other internationalisation activities. While we can certainly observe similarities in the paths of educational reform in CEE countries, significant differences also occur across the country borders. These countries are particularly useful as sites for researching internationalisation due to their diverging paths of higher education reforms guided by the wish to 'catch up to Europe' (Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015). In this article, I aim to analyse internationalisation research conducted in Central and Eastern Europe concerned with the definition of internationalisation in order to determine how internationalisation researchers of the region define the concept when they focus on internationalisation of universities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Internationalisation research: the centre and peripheries

As the field of internationalisation research rapidly developed in the past decades, several valuable efforts have been made to overview the growing amount of literature on the subject. The first comprehensive evaluation on internationalisation research came in 2007, on the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the *Journal of Studies in International Education (JSIE)* in 1997, the primary outlet for internationalisation research. Kehm and Teichler (2007) have identified seven broad themes of internationalisation research articles published during this period: "mobility of students and academic staff, mutual influences of higher education systems on each other, internationalisation of the substance of teaching, learning, and research, institutional strategies of internationalisation, knowledge transfer, cooperation and competition, national and supranational policies as regarding the international dimension of higher education" (Kehm & Teichler, 2007, p. 264). One of the seven topics, internationalisation of the substance of teaching, learning, and research, encompasses both attempts at definition and the research focused on internationalisation of curricula and internationalisation at home. Moreover, as the only research available to the study was that published in English, it was observed to mostly represent internationalisation in the United States, Australia and Western Europe. The same pattern emerged in the

authorship of said research: the majority of authors came from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Kehm & Teichler, 2007).

Similar conclusions have also been drawn in the most recent analysis of all articles published in *JSIE* conducted by Bedenlier, Kondacki, & Zawacki-Richter (2018). Having analysed the data of all titles and abstracts of the 406 articles published in *JSIE* from 1997 to 2016 (first issue) the authors have concluded that in terms of the topics, the delineation of the field (from 1997 to 2001) was followed by the institutionalisation and management of internationalisation (from 2002 to 2006) and consequences of internationalisation which concern student needs and support structures (from 2007 to 2011). The last period (2012-2016) is, thus, marked by the move from the institutional to the transnational context of internationalisation. It is worth mentioning that 'curriculum' emerges as one of the major themes (concepts) in three out of the four established time periods with the exception of 2007-2012. In the concept map of the last period, 'curriculum' forms a line together with 'countries' and 'internationalisation' which shows the growing importance of the internationalisation of curriculum and the possible influence of a national context. The concept map also shows that internationalisation of curriculum is mentioned with reference to frameworks, approaches and is perceived as an institutional process.

As to what regards the geographical representation of internationalisation research, the situation has slightly changed since 2007, however, the majority (58.4 per cent) of publications are still contributed by authors from the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Papers by researchers from Central and Eastern Europe comprise 0.7 per cent of all articles (2 articles are contributed by authors from Latvia and 1, from Poland) prompting the authors to conclude that contributions by Eastern European authors remain low in number (Bedenlier et al., 2018).

This pattern had also emerged in previous literature reviews in the field of higher education research which used larger samples from a wider selection of sources. Kosmützky and Krücken (2014) analysed 4,095 articles in the Web of Science database published between 1992 and 2012 focusing on international comparative higher education research. Countries with the highest numbers of comparisons are again the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. The following CEE countries are compared infrequently (2-9 times, compared with 20-99 times for frequently compared countries): Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Croatia, Latvia, Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic (Kosmützky & Krücken, 2014).

A further research by Kosmützky and Putty (2016) on transnational, offshore, cross-border, and borderless higher education using 1,931 publications does not provide surprises of CEE representation in the field either: in the most-frequent keyword list Europe is only represented by Germany (mentioned 22 times) and the most frequent country keywords are either the main English-speaking academic mobility destination countries (e.g., the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada) which are usually the "providers" of transnational education or the "receivers" of such education located in the Middle East and Asia (e.g., China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Qatar) (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016).

Expanding the scope of the literature review, Kuzhabekova, Hendel and Chapman (2015) analysed the papers on international higher education in the Web of Science database from 2002 to 2011. They concluded that even though the overall number of articles increased, the research is still dominated by several Western countries. The majority of papers were authored by researchers from institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia with notable additions from South Africa and China. However, Central and Eastern Europe (referred to as former Soviet Union in the article) still remains invisible (Kuzhabekova et al., 2015).

Overall, the majority of internationalisation research still comes from the so-called centre of the higher education research community, the English-speaking countries or those with long internationalisation traditions located in Western Europe. The region under investigation in this study, Central and Eastern Europe, as has been pointed out by multiple researchers in the field, remains under-represented when it comes to internationalisation research.

Methodology

The present literature review aims at bringing to light the internationalisation research in Central and Eastern Europe in various journals published since 2009. While previous literature analyses focused on a specific aspect on internationalisation and were not geographically limited, in order to bring the internationalisation research in CEE to the forefront of this analysis, only those articles that explicitly mention internationalisation in any of the countries which belong to the region, have been analysed. Also, in order to explore the concept of internationalisation used in the region, the definition and use of the notion of internationalisation in the context of higher education was a prerequisite.

The period from 2009 was chosen due to the fact that the Bologna process is considered to be one of the major influences in the internationalisation of Europe (U Teichler, 2009) and the majority of CEE countries have joined the initiative in 1999 (except Croatia, in 2001 and Albania, in 2003); therefore, 2009 marks the beginning of the second decade of participation. The first decade of the Bologna process in Europe was dedicated to structural change and internationalisation became a part of the agenda only later. The Bologna Process Independent Assessment authors note that prior to 2007 there were "hardly any specific actions in the Bologna Process directed at the global dimension" (Westerheijden et. al., 2010, p. 77). Since a significant amount of internationalisation activities (especially, mobility) entail funding that is related to CEE countries being members of the European Union, the time period was moved slightly further in order to attempt to even out the experiences among the countries that joined the EU at different times (with the exception of Albania, nearly all CEE countries joined EU in 2004, Bulgaria and Romania, in 2007).

In order to select the articles for analysis, two journals were selected: Journal of Studies in International Education and the European Journal of Higher Education. They were consistently mentioned in previous literature reviews and listed internationalisation research as one of the focuses of the journal. The search query formulated was [All:

internationalization] OR [All: internationalisation] AND [Publication Date: (01/01/2009 TO 12/31/2019)] meaning that we were searching for articles that mentioned the word 'internationalisation' (or its alternate spelling) in the title, abstract or keyword sections of the article (editorials and concluding remarks were removed from the selection). The titles and abstracts of these articles were reviewed in order to determine whether the paper specifically focuses on the region or any country which belongs to Central and Eastern Europe as well as on internationalisation of the study process. This resulted in 32 articles in total. Articles that were concerned with certain aspects of internationalisation (e.g., internationalisation of research, student or teacher mobility) but did not discuss the definition of internationalisation were removed from further analysis after a closer reading of the articles. The final selection resulted in 7 articles focusing on South-East Europe, Estonia, Lithuanian, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. As the selection was very small, 3 additional articles from other journals that specifically discussed the conceptualisation of internationalisation in the region were included.

As with previous research, only the articles published in English were taken for analysis so as to not have unequal distribution among countries (the author of this article cannot read in all CEE languages). This may have influenced the limited number of results, however, the tendency to publish in English, especially in international and comparative education is very strong and researchers working in the field (especially those publishing in the past decade) are also likely to publish in English.

Internationalisation in Central and Eastern Europe: conceptualisation of the definition

Aside from introducing a different term, i.e. Europeanization (Dobbins, 2015; Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015; Vukasovic, 2013), researchers generally choose not to explicitly redefine internationalisation (e.g., Dima & Vasilache, 2016; Hauptman Komotar, 2018; Zgaga, 2013). However, there are certain observable differences in how internationalisation is perceived. There are three main tendencies among the articles analysed regarding the concept of internationalisation:

a) internationalisation as a process of higher education policy change due to explicit requirements by supranational bodies and/or agencies (e.g., the European Commission) or the general education policy discourse in the region (also often referred to as Europeanization);

b) internationalisation as an umbrella term for multiple international activities taking place at a university (mobility, research requirements) and a general push towards active participation in the international higher education area. In these cases it is often not explicitly defined and the reader is expected to infer their own meaning of the concept;

c) internationalisation as integration of an international dimension into higher education with the explicit purpose to improve the quality of education. This conceptualisation is built on the commonly accepted definition of higher education internationalisation referred to in the introduction of this article;

As Europeanization is sometimes used in place of or together with internationalisation, it merits a deeper discussion. Martina Vukasovic (2013) explains the concept from two distinct perspectives: Europeanization through external incentives and through social learning. In her work, Europeanization is conceptualised as "institutionalisation of formal and informal rules developed in a process that involves a supranational or an intergovernmental body" (Vukasovic, 2013, p. 312). This process of adapting to the European rules (the bodies Vukasovic refer to belong to the EU structure) can take place in the higher education system (macro level) and in particular universities or quality assurance agencies (meso level) (Vukasovic, 2013). Generally, Europeanization refers to the specific policy transfer that happens in the member countries of the European Union as they alter their education policy in accordance with the model proposed by the supranational institutions of the EU.

Dakowska and Harmsen (2015) draw upon the 'catch up to Europe' narrative and use *Europeanization* conceptualizing it in relation to wider trends of internationalisation and globalization. The authors claim that *Europeanization* spans three core dimensions of the concept: first, the emergence and development of European-level governance structures in the higher education sector; second, the adaptation of national institutions and policies to European developments; third, the adoption of European norms and templates. Europeanization can broadly be observed in how the actors in higher education of CEE countries refer to Europe when constructing international education. While the international norms may be adopted, the adoption will be marked by national policy-making processes and conditioned by the pre-existing domestic norms, i.e., translated or re-contextualised in a national higher education area. These processes will be mediated by particular local actors whose personal or organizational international experience would also play a role in the final result of internationalisation (Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015).

While both internationalisation and Europeanization did not originate in the scientific field of education, internationalisation of higher education in its current conceptualisation can refer to education process as well as education policy. Europeanization, however, is invoked when talking about education policy or management (e. g., institutionalisation, governance, quality assurance) and not the education process itself (Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015; Deca, 2015; Dobbins, 2015; Vukasovic, 2013). Conceptually, it is a variation of the conceptualisation that perceives internationalisation as a process of higher education policy change due to explicit requirements by supranational bodies and/or agencies (a).

Others choose not to explicitly define the concepts they use, understanding Europeanization and internationalisation as a general push towards international norms proposed by both European and wider international bodies (OECD, World Bank, etc.). This is sometimes expressed by the usage of 'Europeanization/internationalisation' as in the case of Deca (2015) in describing the situation in Romania, or the conceptualisation of Europeanization as a kind of internationalisation first introduced by Teichler (2010) and used by Hauptman Komotar in discussing the Slovenian case (Hauptman Komotar, 2019). In terms of conceptualisation, the 'Europeanization/internationalisation' variation

is used as a shorthand to refer to the process of translation or adoption of international norms by national actors (Deca, 2015), again focusing more deeply on policy and institutional change rather than the education process. Internationalisation, then, is also used in the broader sense referring to various international activities conducted at universities (b). Following Teichler, Hauptman Komotar (2019) uses the term 'Europeanisation' in the previously described sense of policy change encouraged by the wish to meet the requirements of the European Union (a) and 'internationalisation' to refer to the other aspects of introducing the international dimension into higher education.

Hauptman Komotar's (2019) analysis also employs the comprehensive conceptualisation of internationalisation (c). She discusses both internationalisation abroad and at home, noting that these are still perceived as distinct processes in Slovenian higher education, and concludes that in Slovenia internationalisation is still considered to be something that happens abroad and the concept itself is still foreign to some Slovenian HEIs (Hauptman Komotar, 2019). A similar path of conceptualisation is chosen by Tamtik and Kirss (2015) who in their study on building a norm of internationalisation in Estonia, conceptualize internationalisation as "an intrinsic process built within and by the mutual activities of governments, higher education institutions, students, faculty, citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other institutions" (Tamtik & Kirss, 2015, p. 165). While the authors re-formulate the definition, it maintains all the fundamental elements: internationalisation is a process and it works within and across all levels of higher education, including both policy and the educational process (c). As the article focuses on who is the most influential in the norm-building process, the definition also explicitly refers to actors involved in the process rather than the features of the process itself, yet they can be inferred.

Based on the literature review, we can conclude that there is less focus in Central and Eastern Europe on the educational process than in the general field of internationalisation research. A significant part of research is mostly concerned with the institutionalisation and policy change of international norms whether it is explicitly stated in the definition of internationalisation or not. This is further supported by the fact that inside the universities, internationalisation is understood as more of a managerial process of meeting certain requirements than a comprehensive process implied by the commonly used definition (see also Hauptman Komotar, 2019; Tamtik & Kirss, 2015).

Discussion

The review of a selection of articles on higher education internationalisation in Central amd Eastern Europe with a focus on how internationalisation is conceptualised results in an interesting case of 'life imitates art'. As already mentioned (Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015) the implementation of internationalisation is marked by the mediating forces in the local (national, political, university) context and the final result depends on the interplay of these forces. One of the commonalities that emerged in the current analysis was the way internationalisation was implemented in HEIs across the region. In discussing the implementation of the Bologna process in the region Leisyte et al. (2015) have

noted that the HEIs under study displayed formal conformity with the new regulations (which the authors very aptly called 'symbolic compliance'); however, when it came to implementation, the dominating trend was for HEI staff to "re-contextualize the Bologna action lines in different ways depending on their experiences and everyday practices, the type of HEIs and the discipline" (Leisyte, Zelvys, & Zenkiene, 2015). Michael Dobbins (2015) explored the changes in the governance of Polish higher education institutions in the light of balancing restored historical legacies and Europeanization. According to him, even though Europeanization has lent legitimacy to the state's push for marketiz-ation and competitiveness, and the new rhetoric of quality assurance and international-isation has been observed, the existing system has only been 'moderately recalibrated' rather than profoundly changed (Dobbins, 2015, p. 26). Similar conclusions have also been made by others (Dakowska & Harmsen, 2015; Deca, 2015; Hauptman Komotar, 2019).

There is a parallel to be drawn here. Internationalisation often falls prey to its own complexity: since it is a multi-level process encompassing many elements of higher education, a particular kind of selectiveness can be observed in how it is conceptualised and later implemented. HEIs use internationalisation as a legitimacy tool or show com-pliance in adopting regulations, however, they still focus almost exclusively on interna-tionalisation abroad. The conceptualisation of internationalisation in Central and Eastern Europe also tends to skew towards a more managerial approach, concerning itself more with policy changes than the impact it should have on the education process. While the expanded definition of internationalisation used in the Global West, refers to both insti-tutional and educational practices, and is sometimes used in CEE, the more prominent tendency also mirrored in the implementation of internationalisation is to focus on insti-tutionalisation and policy change.

There could be several reasons for this selectiveness and some of them are hinted in the research discussed in this article. The transformation of the education systems of the region from a Soviet to a 'Western' one has been marked by a rather non-critical approach, especially in the early stages, and the radical change that they had to undergo happened in a comparatively short period of time (Želvys, 2020). This did not allow for a lot of reflection and discussion regarding the aims and broader educational implications of this change. Possibly due to the Soviet-fostered tradition of following the rules, the non-questioning nature of adopting EU regulations was observed in the Bologna process as well when HEIs formally adopted the rules as instructed, yet the staff re-contextual-ized them as they saw fit (Leisyte et al., 2015). It is a broader tendency, not limited to internationalisation, to narrow the broader educational goals into performance indicators which can then be measured and evaluated (Želvys, Dukynaitė, Vaitekaitis, & Jakaitienė, 2020) and it tends to be applied to internationalisation as well.

The managerial approach can also be explained by looking at the rationales for in-ternationalisation in the region as well as who is leading the process. After joining the EU, the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe still remained in the periphery of the common higher education area (Silova, 2011) and the free movement of people coupled

with demographic issues resulted in decreasing number of students coming into universities. As the market approach led to university funding being dependent on the number of students, universities are looking at international students for a solution and economic rationales for internationalisation are prominent in many universities, including those in CEE (Chankseliani, 2019).

No less important than the why is the who, and in this case, more often than not we can observe governments and university rector offices being the ones calling for greater internationalisation (Chankseliani, 2019; Tamtik & Kirss, 2015). This is due to the fact that internationalisation is often used in university rankings which in some, though not all CEE countries, relates to university funding (Želvys, 2020). Moreover, internationalisation is associated with increased prestige and reputation not only by university leaders but the governments and the conflation of quality and internationalisation in education can be observed. There have been reports of a rather high degree of top-down management in higher education institutions of CEE countries (Flander, Klemenčič, & Kočar, 2020; Leišytė, Želvys, Bružienė, Rose, & Peksen, 2020) and it has been suggested that when the institutional top-down approach is followed, internationalisation "becomes a compliance exercise with academics, at best, employing a 'tick-the-box' approach" (Whitsed & Green, 2016, p. 295).

While all or a number of these reasons can be valid, there is a need for further research into the approach and attitudes of academic staff regarding internationalisation and its implementation in Central and Eastern Europe.

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