

dr hab. Agnieszka Dziedziczak-Foltyn, prof. UŁ  
Instytut Socjologii  
Wydział Ekonomiczno-Socjologiczny  
Uniwersytet Łódzki  
[agnieszka.dziedziczak@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:agnieszka.dziedziczak@uni.lodz.pl)

**An opinion on the doctoral dissertation by Mariano Martín Pérez:  
“One Path, Many Activities, One Pattern:  
Rhetorical Internationalization Towards Understanding the  
Internationalization of Argentine Public Universities”**

**This work was carried out under the supervision  
of Radosław Rybkowski (UJ)**

**General remarks**

According to Article 187(3) of the Act of 20 July 2018, i.e. the Law on Higher Education and Science, a doctoral dissertation is to present the candidate's general theoretical knowledge in the discipline or disciplines, the ability to conduct scientific or artistic work independently and to present an original solution to a scientific problem, an original solution to the application of the results of one's scientific research in the economic or social sphere or an original artistic achievement<sup>1</sup>.

With regard to the first requirement, there is some difficulty in assessing the dissertation by a representative of another discipline. The topic of the dissertation definitely deserves attention if only because of the increasing globalisation processes in the sphere of higher education. It belongs to the field of higher education research that I represent as a Reviewer. From the perspective of the sociology of higher education that I represent, the issue of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Recenzje w postępowaniach o awans naukowy. Poradnik*, Rada Doskonałości Naukowej 2022,  
<https://www.rdn.gov.pl/dl/262/attachment/c37685/Recenzje%20w%20post%C4%99powaniach%20o%20awans%20naukowy-skompresowany.pdf>

internationalisation of public universities in Argentina is an interesting and relevant research issue, and the author's knowledge of the subject is satisfactory.

However, I find it difficult to make a clear statement about the Candidate's knowledge of Cultural Studies contained in the dissertation. I can only concede the Author's point that research on the internationalisation of higher education has always been multidisciplinary and, basing on this assumption, point to the presentation of an institutional approach as an asset of the dissertation. In the case of the second requirement, which is the ability to conduct academic work independently, the Candidate demonstrated it satisfactorily. His analyses covered both the theoretical basis of the internationalisation issue as well as the practice dimension related to higher education policies aimed at internationalisation of higher education institutions. In the empirical layer, the author chose to present the issue at the institutional level using the concept of "rhetorical internationalisation", which can be considered an original solution to a scientific problem with the potential for an original solution in terms of using the results of his own research. The method of deliberation and research presented in the dissertation can generally be considered legitimate, nevertheless, the study includes not enough material – for a doctoral thesis – to support the scientific and research work done by the Author. For this reason, as a reviewer, I do not accept the dissertation for evaluation in this form, but I indicate (below) elements for improvement that the dissertation requires.

### **Notes on the structure and formal side of the dissertation**

The manuscript is very short, as it covers 237 pages, of which the main text is 152 pages (the rest is taken up by the appendix and bibliography). Of course, the length of the study does not determine its quality, but for a doctoral dissertation in the humanities and social sciences, that length corresponds rather to that of a master's thesis. The bibliography is also modest in terms of the number of publications used – 88 items.

The structure of the work, based on the distinction of five chapters, is clear. I have no doubts about the structure of Chapter I "Theoretical Assumption", in which the Author describes the conceptualisation of internationalisation, rhetorical internationalisation and methodological

issues. Also, the Author's idea of Chapters II and III, dealing with the dimension of practice, and Chapter IV, dealing with the adopted rhetorical framework of internationalisation, is formally understandable to me. However, Chapter V named Conclusions and Recommendations / Summary / Future Discussions covers only 6.5 pages and thus does not sufficiently prove the analytical work of the Author.

In many places, the author's narrative shows a lack of attention to coherence and ordering of threads (it resembles a poorly conceived "cluster" of statements and quotations). The subsections lack introductory and concluding sentences. The text of the whole work is rather chaotic.

In view of the above remarks, I suggest – from a purely formal point of view – first of all to expand and deepen Chapter V, and to enrich the bibliography with additional sources, especially after 2015 (there are only a few such sources out of 88 items). I suggest that the text of the entire work be rewritten to give this study the character of a doctoral dissertation.

### **Notes on the conceptual framework and methodology**

A strength of the paper is the overview of the concept of internationalisation of higher education over the last 25 years. In doing so, the author points to the multidisciplinary of research on the internationalisation of higher education. Quoting the names of a number of researchers (Altbach P., Knight J., Teichler U., Davies J., de Wit H.), he shows different understandings of the concept, points out different features of the internationalisation process and models of internationalisation. In addition, he refers to the process of internationalisation as seen in the light of the European Union (mainly through the history of Erasmus Mundus), myths and misconceptions about internationalisation. In this context, he describes the construction of the concept of internationalisation among Argentine public universities and the conceptual underpinnings of Erasmus Mundus Action 2 (EMA2), in the broader context of internationalisation policy. The author's review of the definitions of internationalisation is necessary, but it was conducted in a rather haphazard manner, and the summary of subsection 1.1 lacks a structured conclusion on this review.

Subsection 1.2 "Rhetorical Internationalization" (covering only 5 pages), in my opinion, lacks an introduction concerning the study of higher education discourse in general and the discourse of internationalization in particular, against which the concept of rhetoric would be discussed.

Subsection 1.3 "Methodological Issues" refers to the Grounded Theory chosen by the Author, which provides an opportunity to discover theories, concepts and claims, starting directly from the data rather than from a priori assumptions of other research or existing theoretical frameworks. This research strategy, in my opinion, deserves recognition. Nevertheless, the Author has very vaguely characterised its application in the social sciences. In other words, he has not demonstrated a general knowledge of it.

Accordingly, I suggest:

in subsection 1.1, to include the author's own synthesis on the review of the definitions of internationalisation;

in subsection 1.2, to add a section on the research on the discourse about and in higher education; and

in subsection 1.3, to include a general section explaining Grounded Theory.

### **Notes on the description of the research area**

The chapters on the practice of internationalisation of higher education (Chapters II and III) also lack some background describing the issue under the study. In subchapter 2.1, the author starts with quotations from documents without writing anything about the origins and specifics of internationalisation policies in the world or in Europe. Similarly, in subsection 2.2, there is an immediate reference to internationalisation programmes in Argentina, but there is nothing about the internationalisation policy of higher education in Argentina (apart from the references in the appendixes).

The author forgets that the programmes he describes are a tool of the state and individual university policies, which should have been clearly emphasised in the paper.

### **Notes on the empirical sections**

Assuming that Chapter IV "Rhetorical Internationalisation" constitutes the empirical part concerning the Candidate's own research, the originality of this approach should be emphasised. The model adopted is described exhaustively; I will include detailed comments on it in the review proper. On the other hand, Chapter V covering the conclusion of the research needs to be deepened. I suggest referring therein to the general discourse of internationalisation, a topic that has not come to light in this dissertation.

### **Final notes and conclusion**

In my preliminary opinion, the doctoral dissertation by Mariano Martín Pérez "One Path, Many Activities, One Pattern: Rhetorical Internationalization Towards Understanding the Internationalization of Argentine Public Universities" requires substantial revisions, as outlined above, before I can undertake to review it as a doctoral dissertation.

Łódź, czerwiec 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrzej Foltyn".