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PECULIARITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE PRC

Abstract. The article provides a retrospective analysis of higher education internationalization process in the PRC. Today, China is a global leader in virtually all areas of higher education internationalization, viewing it as a key element in the development of higher education and a system of training specialists that meets the needs of the rapidly growing national economy. The aspiration to elevate higher education to a global level, as well as higher education reforming in general, has always been under the direct control and guidance of Chinese party and government. The internationalization of higher education in China is manifested in the following forms: sending Chinese students abroad; attracting foreign students, teachers, and professors; borrowing foreign experience in the field of educational management; integrating an international aspect into university teaching and learning, developing joint educational programs with foreign universities; a system of dual degrees; introducing English textbooks and bilingual programs; opening branches of foreign universities in China and establishing overseas branches of Chinese universities, launching language centers around the world (a network of Confucius Institutes). The most widespread form of higher education internationalization in China is student mobility. Nowadays, China is the world leader in the number of students studying abroad. The number of international students in China is also growing every year. In terms of higher education internationalization, of great importance are educational cooperation programs under the auspices of the Belt and Road Initiative, which facilitates the exchange of educational experiences and practices as well as provides educational assistance to the international community, especially to most developing countries. At the same time, China also faces a number of problems such as uneven

internationalization of higher education, brain drain, and commercialization of Chinese higher education. In order to overcome existing problems and difficulties, Chinese scholars have developed the concept of “internal internationalization”, which, in a situation of significant restrictions on physical movement, can serve as an effective strategy for achieving the main goals of educational modernization. Investigating the experience of higher education internationalization in the PRC is important under the lens of studying and implementing specific institutional mechanisms and practices in Ukraine.

Keywords: internationalization, higher education in China, academic mobility, international educational programs.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЇ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ КНР

Анотація. У статті здійснено ретроспективний аналіз процесу інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти КНР. Сьогодні Китай є фактично світовим лідером за всіма напрямками інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти, розглядаючи її як ключовий елемент розвитку вищої школи та системи підготовки фахівців, які відповідають потребам національної економіки, що стрімко зростає. Прагнення вивести вищу освіту на світовий рівень, як і реформування вищої освіти загалом, завжди знаходилося під безпосереднім контролем та управлінням партії та уряду Китаю. Інтернаціоналізація вищої освіти КНР проявляється у таких формах: відправлення китайських здобувачів за кордон; залучення іноземних здобувачів, викладачів, професорів; запозичення іноземного досвіду у сфері керування освітою; інтеграція міжнародного аспекту до університетського викладання та навчання, розвиток спільних освітніх програм з іноземними університетами; система подвійних дипломів; запровадження англійських підручників та двомовних програм навчання; відкриття філій іноземних ЗВО в Китаї та створення зарубіжних філій китайських університетів, відкриття мовних центрів по всьому світу (мережі Інститутів Конфуція). Найпоширеніша форма інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти в Китаї – це мобільність студентів. На сьогодні Китай є світовим лідером за кількістю здобувачів, які навчаються за кордоном. Щороку в Китаї зростає кількість іноземних здобувачів. Велике значення в контексті інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти мають програми освітнього співробітництва під егідою «Поясу та шляху», в рамках якої здійснюється обмін досвідом та практикою навчання,

надається освітня допомога міжнародній спільноті, особливо більшості країн, що розвиваються. Натомість Китай стикається також із низкою проблем, таких як: нерівномірність процесу інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти, відтік мізків, комерціалізація китайської вищої освіти. З метою подолання існуючих проблем та труднощів китайськими вченими було розроблено концепцію «внутрішньої інтернаціоналізації», яка в ситуації значного обмеження фізичних переміщень може стати дієвою стратегією, яка дозволить досягти основних цілей модернізації освіти. Дослідження досвіду інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти в КНР є важливим з точки зору вивчення та реалізації в Україні конкретних інституційних механізмів і практик.

Ключові слова: інтернаціоналізація, вища освіта Китаю, академічна мобільність, міжнародні освітні програми.

Problem statement. At present, we can observe the process of forming a new knowledge economy with human capital as the main factor in its development. With the emergence of closer international ties and broadening globalization against the backdrop of economic and scientific-technological progress, no country can develop its educational system in isolation from the world community. Currently, in the context of intense competition in the global educational services market, the expansion and stimulation of educational exports has become one of the most important priorities of public policy in all developed countries. That is why Chinese government is focusing on the internationalization of education, which will ensure the implementation of modernization policies.

Over the past forty years of higher education reforming, China has become a world leader in almost all areas of higher education internationalization, regarding it as a key element in higher education development and as a system of training specialists who meet the needs of growing national economy.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Such impressive achievements have become the subject of analysis by both leading world scientists (P. Altbach, H. de Wit, J. Knight) and Chinese researchers (Qiang Zh., Rui Y, Baocun L.). J. Knight defined the term “higher education internationalization” for the first time and identified two directions of internationalization: home or campus internationalization and cross-border education. The first approach facilitates the movement of people, knowledge, programs, service providers and curricula across national or regional borders (A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, P. Scott), the second approach refers to the targeted integration of international and intercultural aspects into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within the national educational environment. J. Hudzik developed a model of comprehensive internationalization. According to this model, higher education internationalization is viewed as a systemic process that impacts and is affected by all aspects of higher

education institutions' activities, as well as society, within the framework of the university's third mission and stakeholder theory. Research on higher education internationalization in the PRC is primarily focused on subject areas such as student and faculty mobility (Li T., D. Zweig, S. Rosen), issues concerning marketization and privatization of education (Rui Y., Guo Y.), the introduction of English as a teaching tool (P. Altbach, J. Salmi).

In recent years, there have been increasing attempts to define the Chinese specifics of education internationalization process. This theme is addressed mainly by Chinese authors. In particular, Chu Y. in his thesis outlined and comprehensively examined at the global and national levels the trends in the development of conceptual foundations of higher education internationalization. Li J., Xue E., Liu J., Gao Y. put forward the concept of "internal internationalization". Rui Y., a researcher at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, analyzed the cultural and ideological dilemmas that arise during internationalization. In his opinion, Western countries act simultaneously as a source of borrowings and an ideological and political rival, cooperation with which is necessary, but burdened by historical experience and fraught with the loss of educational sovereignty.

Ukrainian scientists widely and comprehensively consider the international experience of higher education internationalization (N. Avsheniuk, S. Verbytska, L. Horbunova, M. Debych, S. Kurbatov, V. Molodychenko, A. Sbruieva, S. Shitikova). According to the researchers, the concept "higher education internationalization" can be regarded as a process of systematic integration of the international component into the educational, research and social activities of higher education institutions (L. Dobrunova, A. Sbruieva, N. Svyrenko). However, for us, of particular scientific interest are studies by domestic scientists who investigate the specifics of higher education internationalization exactly in the Chinese context. M. Debych, O. Drobotiuk, I. Stepanenko, A. Chirva considered the main strategies and trends of internationalization in Chinese universities. N. Paziura presented the types of programs, including modern approaches to ensuring academic mobility of students in the PRC. O. Zabolotna studied the activities of the Confucius Institute as an educational tool of soft power.

Purpose of the article is to evaluate, on the basis of a retrospective analysis, the achievements of Chinese higher education system in the field of its internationalization, as well as to identify the challenges and problems it faces nowadays, which can affect the further development of higher education internationalization in China.

Presentation of the main material. Launch of higher education internationalization process in China, as well as involvement in globalization processes, coincided with the advent of Deng Xiaoping's reforms era. Development of quality education met the goals and objectives put forward by the country's

government in 1978. The policy of China's openness to the rest of the world was an integral part of the new strategy proclaimed by Deng Xiaoping. At that, openness was announced not only in the economic sphere, but also in the spheres of science, education and culture.

Rapid development of joint educational and research programs between Chinese and foreign universities, increase in educational exchanges, and the growing number of international students in China and Chinese students abroad are only part of the process of Chinese education internationalization. It also includes enhancing academic mobility of faculty and developing a network of disseminating the Chinese language abroad. At various stages of development, the internationalization of education became a tool for the country's modernization or China's adaptation to the global market conditions. In fact, by the beginning of the epoch of reform and openness, China had experienced a complete collapse of its scientific and educational community and the entire system of staff training. In order to start reforms, it was necessary to restore China's education and science, as well as grow new personnel in accordance with the demands of the time. The education sector has begun to undergo decentralization and restructuring processes, allowing for a more flexible response to the specific needs of educational institutions, and the introduction of new specialties with a greater focus on economic needs. Between 1978 and 1992, the first steps were taken towards the internationalization of Chinese education. During this period, the main focus in the improving the quality of education was on sending students abroad. With a view to form the necessary social group of specialists and scientists, in 1978 Chinese government decided to send three thousand people annually to study abroad [1]. The decision to send students abroad marked the advent of an era of openness in China. Chinese students and specialists returning from studying abroad were expected to bring advanced experience and technologies and adapt them to the needs of the country's modernization.

Priority areas that were supposed to be mastered by students abroad were determined. Deng Xiaoping declared that those sent for training were supposed to study chiefly natural sciences [2, P. 11]. Among those who went to study in the United States between 1979 and 1984, 78% studied mechanical engineering, computer science, medicine, biology, mathematics, and physics, 18% studied management, law, and social sciences, and 3% – other subjects.

After higher education internationalization was established as a strategic priority for national development by Chinese Party and government in the 1980s, a well-designed Western pattern of internationalization was chosen for its implementation. Despite the ongoing debate on combining Western higher education model and its international component with traditional Chinese culture and philosophy, overall, higher education reform has continued in the direction of creating universities modeled on best global practices.

Under China's political reform, higher education internationalization took three main forms: studying abroad, integrating international perspectives into university teaching and learning, and implementing joint programs with foreign institutional partners in Chinese universities. In all these areas, China achieved large-scale results, but it was unable to avoid difficulties caused by the reform process. The higher education reform and drive to bring Chinese higher education up to the global level were under the direct control and management of Chinese party and government. Among the instruments there were special government initiatives aimed at creating a group of leading universities – so-called academic excellence programs.

After 1992, the focus was on attracting foreign specialists and professors, as well as on returning students who had gone abroad to their home countries.

In 1993, the “Main Points of Education Reform and Development in China” outlined priorities for the further development of education, which included the development of international cooperation in the field of education and adoption of foreign experience in the field of education management. Impetus was also given to the development of joint educational programs with foreign universities. China was forced to orient itself towards international standards in education, follow the demands of higher education internationalization, and compete to attract foreign students.

One of the main directions of reforming the higher education system became orientation towards Western educational models and globalization of the educational process, including opening the border for Chinese students to travel abroad to get education or carry out scientific research. As one of its strategic goals Chinese government did their best to increase the competitiveness of Chinese universities in order to achieve equal positions with leading global universities. With a view to achieve this goal, projects 985 and 211 were adopted. In 1995 project 211 was announced by Chinese Ministry of Education. Around one hundred leading universities in the country were selected for funding by the Government to train leading personnel to implement national programs in the social and economic spheres. Project 985, established in 1998, aimed to raise 39 leading Chinese universities to the global level through special funding.

The “Interim Rules for the Organization of Higher Education Institutions’ Activities in Cooperation with Foreign Partners” adopted in 1995 and the “Notice on Strengthening Management in the Field of Awarding Degrees within the Organization of Educational Institutions’ Activities in Cooperation with Foreign Partners” enacted in 1997 introduced new elements into the process of Chinese education internationalization. The emphasis was placed on the import of foreign educational services and development of joint educational programs. These measures were intended to more quickly adapt Chinese education to the conditions of the global market and globalization process in anticipation of China's accession to the WTO.

After the adoption of these regulations, the number of joint educational programs in China began to grow rapidly. If in 1995 there were only 2 joint educational programs in Chinese universities, in 2004 there existed already 745. According to the 1995 regulations, educational services by foreign educational institutions in China were to be provided in cooperation with Chinese universities. Foreign universities did not have the right to autonomously carry out educational activities in China.

China's accession to the WTO was a major driver of higher education internationalization, as China became part of the global economy, formally joining the globalization process that also affected education. As a WTO member, China attracted foreign investors interested in developing its university system. China's entry to the WTO and its active promotion in foreign markets, conducted within the framework of the "going out" strategy, opened a new stage in Chinese education internationalization, which gave new impetus to the development of international educational programs in China, primarily joint programs between Chinese and foreign universities. Moreover, a new emphasis was placed on the export of Chinese education, not only as a tool for expanding Chinese influence through the use of "soft power," but also as a potential source of increased income for Chinese universities.

Process of higher education internationalization in the PRC took several forms: 1) sending Chinese students abroad; 2) attracting foreign students, teachers, and professors; 3) inviting foreign specialists in the scientific and technical fields; 4) developing joint educational programs with foreign universities; 5) a system of double degrees; 6) introducing English textbooks and bilingual curricula; 7) opening language centers around the world, etc.

The most widespread form of higher education internationalization in China, as in many countries, is student mobility. It involves students going abroad to receive education at foreign universities. China currently leads the world in the number of students studying abroad. During the period from 1978 to 2018, 12,956 persons were sent through the state line, of which 2,496 were sent to bachelor's degrees, 3,459 – to master's degrees, 139 – to postgraduate studies, and 6,863 persons – to other programs [3]. Since 2003, 300 students from China studying abroad at their own expense and demonstrating the best results have been awarded a one-time scholarship of \$5,000 annually.

Since 1999, China International Educational Exhibition Tour has been held annually in China. Representatives from more than 20 countries regularly take part in it. Its unique feature is that it provides access to information and allows Chinese citizens to become familiar with areas and opportunities for studying abroad. Every year, the number of Chinese students going abroad to study is increasing by 13%.

However, despite such a significant increase in the number of students leaving to study, China continues to actively develop this area. In 2007, Chinese government

decided to send 5,000 postgraduate students abroad for internships at government expense each year [4]. According to the results of a survey conducted among Chinese students and high school students by the Institute of International Education Research in 2011, the most popular countries for obtaining education were the United States (32% of respondents), Australia and New Zealand (29%), Great Britain (20%), Canada, France, Singapore, Germany, Holland and Korea. Bachelor's degree students make up 57% of the total number of students traveling abroad, followed by high school students (22%), undergraduates (7%), postgraduates (5%), elementary school students (1%), and other students (8%).

The most popular universities were Harvard, the USA (12% of the total number of respondents); Cambridge, the UK (11%); University of Tokyo, Japan (6.9%); Stanford University, the USA (6.8%); Oxford, the UK (6.2%); University of Vienna (5.6%); Heidelberg University, Germany (5.4%); The Sixth Paris University, France (5.2%); Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the USA (4.9%); University of Rome, Italy (4.7%). In the 2000/2001 academic year, approximately 120,000 Chinese students were admitted to universities abroad. By 2013, the number of Chinese students abroad had grown to 380,000.

Internationalization at home is another form of reforming Chinese higher education, with Sino-foreign joint programs and institutions becoming a key instrument. Main motive for introducing this tool was intention, on the one hand, to introduce advanced teaching approaches and tools into Chinese higher education practice in cooperation with selected foreign universities, and on the other hand, to expand access to international education for more Chinese students at more Chinese universities.

Development of international educational programs with foreign universities is an important direction in the course of higher education internationalization. Since the early 2000s, Chinese universities have begun to widely introduce foreign, primarily English-language, textbooks into the educational process. Range and forms of international educational programs in Chinese universities are noticeable. Forms of these programs include joint programs, double degree systems, franchises of foreign programs, the opening of university branches abroad, online learning and distance education programs. Chinese government is actively pursuing a policy of attracting foreign scientists and teachers to China. In particular, in 1998, the government increased funding of universities, which resulted in the allocation of more than ¥200 million to nine leading universities with purpose of recruiting specialists from abroad.

Introduction of English and English-language textbooks into Chinese educational process reflects global trends. The need to meet global standards requires studying best international practices, which are not always available in Chinese. It should be noted that these processes primarily take place in natural sciences and

economics. Chinese universities are actively adopting advanced foreign methodological developments. In 2002, leading Chinese universities purchased and introduced into the educational process a significant portion of textbooks used in leading foreign universities such as Harvard, Stanford, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

First joint educational projects began to emerge in the early 1990s, but they virtually could take off only in 2003 after the Chinese Ministry of Education adopted special regulations and approved joint educational programs. Typical schemes are “two+two”, “three+one”, “one+ three”, which involve Chinese students studying for one to three years in China and one to three years abroad. Most of joint programs are at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels; the share of joint doctoral programs in the total number is very small. China is interested in developing joint programs and importing foreign programs not only in the technical field, but also in specialties that Chinese educational institutions are unable to teach autonomously due to a lack of relevant competencies (primarily in MBA and international finance).

One of the first joint educational programs introduced in China was the MBA program of Tianjin College of Economics and Finance, implemented jointly with the University of Oklahoma in 1988 with the right to award the MBA degree of the University of Oklahoma. Currently, Chinese government is actively engaging companies in the process of implementing and financing joint educational programs. In such a scheme, the government most often provides the technical base (buildings, equipment), and companies provide financial resources for bringing into practice programs and granting scholarships to students.

At present, there exist about 2,000 joint educational programs of various levels being implemented in China. Joint programs are in demand by both Chinese universities and Chinese university entrants. Universities are interested in such programs because they allow to offer students a unique program and attract foreign specialists to work at their university, as well as to compare and improve their teaching methods. Students benefit from such programs because they enable them to gain access to a foreign education and, often, to a foreign diploma at a lower cost, and minimize the costs associated with adapting to and meeting the requirements of a foreign educational environment, since they complete part of their educational program at a Chinese university.

Opening branches of foreign universities in China is actually prohibited. Currently, there operate only two universities in China, opened jointly by foreign and Chinese educational institutions. In 2004, the University of Nottingham, in cooperation with the Wanli Education Group (Zhejiang Province), opened a branch of the University of Nottingham in Ningbo. In 2006, a joint international university with the University of Liverpool appeared on the basis of Xi'an Jiaotong University. In 2010, the Chinese Ministry of Education approved the launching of a branch of

New York University in China, and the University of Nottingham was also invited to open a second branch in Shanghai. Thus, the ban on opening branches of foreign universities in China is gradually being lifted. Gradual nature of this process corresponds to the general logic of progressive reforms and conduct of experiments before implementation into widespread practice. Given the ongoing processes, it can be said that China is getting ready for a broader introduction of a branch network of foreign universities in China and closer integration into the international educational network.

China's economic success as well as growing interest in Chinese language culture and history through the extensive network of Confucius Institutes around the world, have led to increased interest among international students in studying in China. As a result, the number of international students in China is growing rapidly. In 2009 there were 230,000 of them. By the end of 2011, the number of international students studying in China had exceeded 290,000, representing a 10% growth over 2010. In 2020, the number reached 500,000. Most of these students are from South Korea, Japan, the US, Vietnam, and Thailand. The most popular majors are those related to the Chinese language, medicine, and management [5]

In order to attract leading foreign universities to China, the government issued a package of regulations, including the "Measures for the Management and Evaluation of Sino-Foreign Joint Institutions" and "Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Joint Management of Education in Educational Institutions [6]. China also initiated two platforms (an information platform for the supervision of Sino-foreign joint educational programs and a working platform for the certification of diplomas) and two mechanisms (a mechanism for assessing the quality of joint programs and "law enforcement and punishment mechanism") to further standardize the management of joint programs in higher education. The aforementioned laws establish the following model of joint education: Chinese legislation does not allow the opening of a fully overseas branch and only permits joint educational activities between Chinese and foreign universities.

Currently, there are 2,332 joint educational institutions and programs at all levels in China with the participation of China and foreign institutions that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, including 1,230 joint institutions and programs that focus on bachelor's degrees and above.

In June 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and eight other ministries and departments issued the "Guidelines for Accelerating and Expanding Openness of Education to the External World in the New Era," which proposed easing restrictions on the Sino-foreign cooperation regime in the management of joint programs [7].

First, in order to strengthen cooperation with world-class universities and academic institutions, Chinese government is prepared to grant certain rights in the

field of international relations to Chinese universities that have been included in the list of “Leading Universities and World-Class Universities”. To illustrate this, it is relevant to mention that in September 2017, two Projects 985 and 211 aimed at supporting the academic leadership of Chinese universities were merged and transformed into a new one, the goal of which is to create world-class universities by the end of 2050).

Second, it is planned to create new experimental educational spaces to attract the best foreign resources such as a demonstration zone for international education in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a new model of educational openness in the Xiong'an new district of a state-level, and an international educational innovation center on Hainan Island.

Third, China is going to prepare an updated version of the educational cooperation program within the Belt and Road Initiative, which plans to expand the range of international educational products provided, intensify the exchange of experience and educational practices, and provide assistance to the international community, especially most developing countries.

Overall, the measures taken mean that a shift from quantity to quality is currently underway within joint programs with foreign universities.

China also has experience in launching university branches abroad since the 1970s. In 2014, only three branches were opened. On December 9, 2015, at the 19th meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensive Deepening of Reforms, the “Recommendations on Openness of Education to the External World in the New Period” were adopted [8]. This document emphasizes the importance of openness in education and defines approaches to ensuring it.

In February 2019, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council published a document titled “Modernization of Education in China to 2035,” proposing ten major strategic tasks for the future of education, including the establishment of overseas international branches with Chinese characteristics. Among its work priorities, the Chinese Ministry of Education has planned to develop a “Work Plan to Promote the Construction of Overseas Branches of Chinese Universities” and to support the pilot construction of overseas Chinese international institutions.

In September 2019, the PRC’s Ministry of Education issued the “Guidelines for the Management of Overseas Higher Education Branches” [9]. It explains the criteria for establishing branches of Chinese universities, namely it is recommended to select countries with high market demand, a high degree of openness, and high quality of higher education. Accordingly, Chinese universities might be primarily interested in opening branches in the United States, European and other Western countries (this would allow them to quickly raise their international rankings and guarantee enrollment of students). The issue of educating children of foreign representatives of

Chinese organizations and Chinese citizens living abroad is also important. On October 14, 2019, the Ministry of Education of the PRC confirmed in the “Questions and Answers” section that, as directed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, accelerating the construction of overseas international institutions with Chinese characteristics will help resolve this issue and provide young Chinese with the opportunity to study the Chinese language and history.

Along with the success achieved in the course of higher education internationalization, China has faced a number of problems caused by the negative aspects of globalization process. The policy of openness to foreign countries and encouraging student and faculty mobility has led to the phenomenon of “brain drain.” Better conditions for study, work and life have made Western countries attractive to Chinese students and specialists. The main stimuli for Chinese students’ mobility include the government’s stimulating policy, the fact that Chinese youth highly appreciate the level of education in developed countries, and the growing prosperity of the middle class in China. As a result, the percentage of students returning from abroad in 2021 was no more than 40%.

In addition, the quality of specialists coming back from abroad should be taken into account. These are usually those who failed to find high-paying jobs abroad due to a lack of qualifications. As a consequence, the best personnel – the property of Chinese nation – remain outside China.

Development of China’s international academic relations is uneven and not linear. Recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the emerging slowdown in China’s economic growth, and rising tensions in China’s relations with Western countries have already been reflected in certain quantitative indicators characterizing the process of internationalization of China’s higher education system and require further study. If these changes become fundamental, this could, on the one hand, mean a general reduction in China’s share in the international education system, and on the other, a change in the geographic vector of China’s international cooperation, which could create new opportunities for other participants in the international educational services market.

It was under these conditions that the concept of “internal internationalization” of higher education was developed. In contrast to external internationalization – cross-border internationalization – which refers to the already familiar practices of current academic migration and the crossing of borders for educational products, internal internationalization – internationalization at home – consists of the availability of intercultural experience in a familiar environment without the need to travel abroad. Internal internationalization is the best response to new geopolitical realities and can serve as an effective strategy for achieving the key goals of modernization and elevating the country’s higher education to a qualitatively new level. As we can see, since the beginning of the 21st century, the PRC’s education

system has undergone qualitative changes. Chinese government is addressing the challenges of creating an “international environment” within the state, improving the quality of university education, consolidating the country’s technological base, and retaining ambitious young people to work within the country by encouraging leading universities to cooperate with foreign educational institutions. In order to develop its own economy more intensively, China is striving to expand its influence to an ever-increasing number of territories, and international education has become one of the ways to advance geopolitics. Export and import of educational services has become an integral tool for spreading China’s influence throughout the world.

Conclusions. Higher education internationalization is one of the fundamental tasks that Chinese government has been consistently implementing for more than forty years since the launch of the reform and openness policy. An important feature of China’s internationalization policy is the leading role of the state, which sets the strategic vision of its goals depending on the priorities of the domestic policy and the specifics of the foreign policy context. Currently, the internationalization of Chinese education has taken several forms, namely sending Chinese students and teachers abroad; attracting foreign teachers, professors, and researchers; inviting international students to China both at their own expense and through an extensive system of grants; developing joint educational programs with foreign universities, a system of double degrees, and modular study abroad; introducing foreign textbooks and bilingual programs into the educational process; opening foreign language centers (and implementing more extensive educational programs on their basis).

Factors that are significant for China with the support of international partners include the ability to attract top-level scientists; the university’s great international potential, primarily in the area of joint research projects; and advanced studies in the fields of exact, natural, and engineering sciences, including those with a strong innovative component. Among the driving forces, essential when selecting and backing Chinese universities for partnership with leading foreign universities, we would sort out the following: the importance of a particular university and region, its location in China’s geopolitical plans, the economic significance of the range of disciplines offered by a particular Chinese university for the development of the region, its location, and the country as a whole, and the potential of the university and its graduates as growth points for high-tech innovative entrepreneurship.

Thus, the experience of higher education internationalization in China is really relevant for universities in many countries worldwide (including Ukrainian higher education institutions) which are planning to engage with international entrants and counting on getting support from the state in this endeavor. Studying this experience is important both for understanding the existing competition and its political and economic context as well as for developing and implementing specific institutional mechanisms and practices.

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