

## MONOGRAPH

# Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education

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This thematic issue deals with internationalisation and globalisation in higher education. The five papers that follow this introduction examine some of a broad range of aspects related to this theme and are a reflection of the importance and current attention being paid to the international dimension of higher education in Europe and beyond.

Over the past 25 years, the international dimension of higher education has become more central on the agenda of international organisations and national governments, institutions of higher education and their representative bodies, student organisations and accreditation agencies.

Uwe Brandenburg and I in a polemic essay, *The End of Internationalization* (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011), write:

"Over the last two decades, the concept of the internationalization of higher education is moved from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core. In the late 1970s up to the mid-1980s, activities that can be described as internationalization were usually neither named that way nor carried high prestige and were rather isolated and unrelated. (...) In the late 1980s changes occurred: Internationalization was invented and carried on, ever increasing its importance. New components were added to its multidimensional body in the past two decades, moving from simple exchange of students to the big business of recruitment, and from activities impacting on an incredibly small elite group to a mass phenomenon."

The international dimension and the position of higher education in the global arena are given greater emphasis in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements than ever before. Philip Altbach, Liz Reisberg and Laura Rumbley (2009: 7) in their report to the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education note:

“Universities have always been affected by international trends and to a certain degree operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research. Yet, 21<sup>st</sup> century realities have magnified the importance of the global context. The rise of English as the dominant language of scientific communication is unprecedented since Latin dominated the academy in medieval Europe. Information and communications technologies have created a universal means of instantaneous contact and simplified scientific communication. At the same time, these changes have helped to concentrate ownership of publishers, databases, and other key resources in the hands of the strongest universities and some multinational companies, located almost exclusively in the developed world.”

Internationalisation over the years has moved from a reactive to a pro-active strategic issue, from added value to mainstream, and also has seen its focus, scope and content evolve substantially. Increasing competition in higher education and the commercialisation and cross-border delivery of higher education have challenged the value traditionally attached to cooperation, such as exchanges and partnerships. At the same time, the internationalisation of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process (also referred to as ‘internationalisation at home’) has become as relevant as the traditional focus on mobility (both degree mobility and mobility as part of one’s home degree).

It would be too easy, however, to assume that everything has changed over the past ten years with regard to the internationalisation of higher education, and that this change is primarily a shift from a more cooperative model to a more competitive model. There are different accents and approaches. Internationalisation strategies are filtered and contextualised by the specific internal context of a university, by the type of university and how universities are embedded nationally. Internationalisation strategies are shaped at the programme level by the different relationships these programmes have with the market and society. An internationalisation strategy can be substantially different for a teacher training programme than for a school of dentistry or a business school. And internationalisation strategies may be different by level: doctorate, master and bachelor.

## Meanings and Rationales of Internationalisation and Globalisation

The changing dynamics in the internationalisation of higher education are reflected both in the meanings of internationalisation and globalisation, and their rationales.

What do we mean by the internationalisation of higher education? First of all, we need to recognise that there have always been many different terms used in relation to the internationalisation of higher education (De Wit, 2002: 109-116; Knight, 2008: 19-22). In the literature and in practice, it

is still quite common to use terms that only address a small part of internationalisation and/or emphasize a specific rationale for internationalisation. Most of the terms used are either curriculum related: international studies, global studies, multicultural education, intercultural education, peace education, etc., or mobility related: study abroad, education abroad, academic mobility, etc.

Over the past ten years, it has been possible to observe the emergence of a whole new group of terms that had not been actively present in the debate on the internationalisation of higher education. These are much more related to the cross-border delivery of education and are a consequence of the impact of society's globalisation on higher education: borderless education, education across borders, global education, offshore education and international trade in educational services.

In 2002, I (De Wit, 2002: 14) stated that "as the international dimension of higher education gains more attention and recognition, people tend to use it in the way that best suits their purpose." This is even more the case now in view of this further proliferation of activities and terms. "Internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization," remarks Jane Knight (2008: 1). The debate on globalisation and internationalisation and the recent, rapid evolution of cross-border activities in higher education have strengthened the tendency to explain and define the internationalisation of higher education in relation to a specific rationale or purpose. Peter Scott (2006: 14) observes that both internationalisation and globalisation are complex phenomena with many strands, and concludes that "the distinction between internationalisation and globalisation, although suggestive, cannot be regarded as categorical. They overlap, and are intertwined, in all kinds of ways." Ulrich Teichler (2004: 22-23) notes that "globalisation initially seemed to be defined as the totality of substantial changes in the context and inner life of higher education, related to growing interrelationships between different parts of the world whereby national borders are blurred or even seem to vanish." But, according to him, in recent years the term 'globalisation' has been replaced by 'internationalisation' in the public debate on higher education, resulting at the same time in a shift of meanings: "the term tends to be used for any supra-regional phenomenon related to higher education (...) and/or anything on a global scale related to higher education characterised by market and competition."

Philip Altbach, Liz Reisberg and Laura Rumbley (2009, 7) state:

"Globalization, a key reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has already profoundly influenced higher education. (...) We define globalization as the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology, the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions (...). Internationalization is defined as the variety of policies and programs that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization."

Ulrich Teichler (2004), Peter Scott (2005), Philip Altbach (2006), Jane Knight (2008), Felix Maringe and Nick Fosskett (2010) and others have written extensively about the complex relationship between globalisation and internationalisation in higher education. Frans van Vught et al. (2002: 17) note:

"In terms of both practice and perceptions, internationalization is closer to the well-established tradition of international cooperation and mobility and to the core values of quality and excellence, whereas globalization refers more to competition, pushing the concept of higher education as a tradable commodity and challenging the concept of higher education as a public good."

Uwe Brandenburg and I (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011) comment that, with this distinction, internationalisation is often too easily regarded as 'good' and globalisation as 'bad':

"Internationalization is claimed to be the last stand for humanistic ideas against the world of pure economic benefits allegedly represented by the term globalization. Alas, this constructed antagonism between internationalization and globalization ignores the fact that activities that are more related to the concept of globalization (higher education as a tradable commodity) are increasingly executed under the flag of internationalization."

In the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, the two dimensions of internationalisation meet: cooperation and competition. On the one hand, both processes emphasise that there should be more cooperation in order to develop a European area for higher education and research: 'A Europe of Knowledge'. On the other hand, there is considerable emphasis on the argument that this cooperation is required in order to face up to competition from the United States, Japan and, increasingly, China, as well as other emerging economies.

As new realities and challenges of the current environment, Jane Knight mentions globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge economy, regionalisation, information and communication technologies, new providers, alternate funding sources, borderless issues, lifelong learning and the growth in the numbers and diversity of actors. Therefore, Jane Knight's definition (Knight, 2008: 21) acknowledges the various levels and the need to address the relationship and integration between them: "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." She (ibid.: 22-24) also states that it is now possible to see two basic aspects evolving in the internationalisation of higher education. One is 'internationalisation at home', including activities that help students to develop an international awareness and intercultural skills. So it is much more curriculum oriented: preparing your students to be active in a much more globalised world. Activities that fall under this at-home dimension are: curriculum and programmes, teaching and learning processes, extra-curricular activities, liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups, and research and scholarly activities. And the second aspect is 'internationalisation abroad', including all forms of education across borders: mobility of students and faculty, and mobility of projects, programmes and providers. These components should not be considered mutually exclusive, but rather intertwined within policies and programmes.

When talking about internationalisation, it is important to make the distinction between why we are internationalising higher education, and what we mean by internationalisation. Many documents, policy papers and books refer to internationalisation, but do not define the why. And, in much of the literature, meanings and rationales are muddled in the sense that a rationale for internationalisation is often presented as a definition of internationalisation.

The literature (De Wit, 2002: 83-102) identifies four broad categories of rationales for internationalisation: political, economic, social and cultural, and academic. These rationales are not mutually exclusive, they may vary in importance by country and region, and their dominance may change over time. At the present time, economic rationales are considered to be more dominant than the other three. In relation to these, academic rationales such as strategic alliances, status and profile are also becoming more dominant. Jane Knight (2008: 25) speaks of emerging rationales at the national level (e.g., human resource development, strategic alliances, income generation/commercial trade, nation building, social/cultural development and mutual understanding) and at the institutional level (e.g., international branding and profile, quality enhancement/international standards, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances and knowledge production).

Rationales vary over time and by country/region, they are not mutually exclusive, and they lead to different approaches and policies. Currently, changes are taking place at a rapid pace in many parts of the world, and rationales are becoming more and more interconnected.

## Myths and Misconceptions about the Internationalisation of Higher Education

The changing landscape of international higher education as a consequence of the globalisation of our societies and economies is manifest in many ways: increasing competition for international students and academics, the growth of cross-border delivery of programmes, the emergence of international for-profit providers in higher education and the changing position of countries like India and China in the world economy and in the higher education arena. They are all realities and their impact cannot be ignored. This scenario is manifested in the complex relationship between globalisation and internationalisation in higher education. Earlier, I referred to the “constructed antagonism between internationalization and globalization” (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011: 16).

Jane Knight (2011: 14) writes about “Five Myths About Internationalization”. According to her, these myths are:

- Myth one: Foreign students as internationalization agents: “more foreign students on campus will produce more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum”.
- Myth two: International reputation as a proxy for quality: “the more international a university is (...) the better its reputation”.
- Myth three: International institutional agreements: “the greater number of international agreements or network memberships a university has the more prestigious and attractive it is”.
- Myth four: International accreditation: “the more international accreditation stars an institution has, the more internationalized it is and ergo the better it is”.
- Myth five: Global branding: “an international marketing scheme is the equivalent of an internationalization plan”.

I (De Wit, 2011) write about misconceptions and challenges for higher education, and I identify nine misconceptions, two of which are similar to Jane Knight's myths one and three. These misconceptions are:

- Internationalisation is similar to teaching in English.
- Internationalisation is similar to studying abroad.
- Internationalisation is similar to teaching an international subject.
- Internationalisation means having many international students (see Knight's myth one).
- Internationalisation can be implemented successfully with only a few international students in the classroom.
- Intercultural and international competencies do not necessarily have to be assessed as such.
- The more agreements an institution has, the more international it is (see Knight's myth three).
- Higher education is international by its very nature.
- Internationalisation is an objective in itself.

The two myths and two misconceptions on which Jane Knight and I respectively coincide relate to the instrumental approach to internationalisation as referred to above. Uwe Brandenburg and I (2011: 16) phrase the developments in internationalisation of higher education as follows:

"Gradually, the why and what have been taken over by the how and instruments of internationalization have become the main objective: more exchange, more degree mobility, and more recruitment."

For the internationalisation of higher education, it is important to go back to basics and look carefully at the what, why and how of internationalisation in the current global knowledge economy.

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He is co-editor of the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (Association for Studies in International Education/SAGE). He is the author and co-author of a number of books and articles on international education, and is actively involved in assessment and consultancy work in the field of international education for organisations including the European Commission, UNESCO, the World Bank and IMHE/OECD. His latest book is: Hans de Wit (2011). *Trends, Issues and Challenges in Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Centre for Applied Research on Economics and Management (CAREM). Amsterdam, pp. 138, ISBN 9789081712217. Other recent publications are: Hans de Wit (ed.) (2009), EAIE Occasional Paper 22 entitled *Measuring Success in Internationalisation of Higher Education*, and *The Dynamics of International Student Circulation in a Global Context* (2008), which he co-edited with Pawan Agarwal, Mohsen Elmahdy Said, Molatlhegi Sehoole and Muhammad Sirozi. In 2005/2006, he was a Fulbright New Century Scholar on Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He was a visiting scholar in the United States in 1995 and 2006 (Center for International Higher Education, Boston College) and in Australia in 2002. Between 1986 and 2005, he held the posts of vice president for International Affairs and senior international advisor, among others, at the University of Amsterdam. He is a founding member and former president of the European Association for International Education (EAIE).

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