

Understanding Higher Education Internationalization

Insights from Key Global Publications

Georgiana Mihut, Philip G. Altbach and
Hans de Wit (Eds.)



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Understanding Higher Education Internationalization

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xiii
Introduction	xv
<i>Georgiana Mihut, Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit</i>	
Part 1: Understanding Internationalization	
Introduction	3
1. Global: Changing the Mindset in Internationalisation Research	5
<i>Nico Jooste and Savo Heleta</i>	
2. Global: Internationalization of Higher Education: Nine Misconceptions	9
<i>Hans de Wit</i>	
3. Global: Five Truths about Internationalization	13
<i>Jane Knight</i>	
4. Global: Internationalisation: Variations and Vagaries	17
<i>Peta Lee</i>	
5. Global: Internationalization and Global Tension: Lessons from History	21
<i>Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit</i>	
6. Europe: The Future of Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe	25
<i>Hans de Wit and Fiona Hunter</i>	
7. France: Learning from the Past: Historical Trends in Internationalization of French Higher Education	29
<i>Guillaume Tronchet</i>	
Part 2: Transnational Education, Branch Campuses, and Hubs	
Introduction	35
8. Global: International Branch Campuses Expanding, Geopolitical Landscape Changing	37
<i>William Lawton and Alex Katsomitros</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

9. Global: World Economies and the Distribution of International Branch Campuses <i>Li Zhang, Kevin Kinser and Yunyu Shi</i>	41
10. Global: Financial Aspects of Offshore Activities <i>John Fielden</i>	45
11. Global: Five Models of International Branch Campus Facility Ownership <i>Jason E. Lane and Kevin Kinser</i>	49
12. Global: Financing of Education Hubs: Who Are the Investors? <i>Jane Knight</i>	53
13. Global: The Impact of Transnational Education in Receiving Countries <i>Jane Knight and John McNamara</i>	57
14. Europe: Franchising, Validation, and Branch Campuses in the European Union <i>Lukas Bischof</i>	61
15. United Kingdom: Technology: The Silent Partner in Transnational Education? <i>Esther Wilkinson</i>	65
Part 3: Commercialization of Internationalization	
Introduction	71
16. Global: International Higher Education and the “Neo-Liberal Turn” <i>Peter Scott</i>	73
17. Global: Growing Pathways to Study Abroad <i>Nic Mitchell</i>	77
18. Global: Coil—Virtual Mobility without Commercialisation <i>Hans de Wit</i>	83
19. Global: In Search of Solutions for the Agent Debate <i>Rahul Choudaha</i>	87
20. Europe: Fees and International Students in Nordic Nations <i>Jan Petter Myklebust</i>	91
21. France: France Debates International Student Fees <i>Ariane de Gayardon</i>	95

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 4: Quality Assurance of Internationalization

Introduction	101
22. Global: Another Week, Another Scandal: Immigration Dilemmas and Political Confusion <i>Philip G. Altbach and Liz Reisberg</i>	103
23. Global: Corruption: A Key Challenge to Internationalization <i>Philip G. Altbach</i>	107
24. Global: Are Double/Multiple Degree Programs Leading to “Discount Degrees”? <i>Jane Knight</i>	111
25. Europe: Using Lessons from Erasmus Mundus to Improve Erasmus+ Joint Degrees <i>Claire Morel</i>	115
26. Latin America: Costa Rica Rejects High Number of Medical Graduates from Cuba <i>Chrissie Long</i>	119
27. Japan: Conservatism, Red Tape Thwart International Education <i>Suvendrini Kakuchi</i>	123

Part 5: Internationalization Policies and Strategies

Introduction	129
28. Global: National Policies for Internationalization—Do They Work? <i>Robin Matross Helms and Laura E. Rumbley</i>	131
29. Global: The United Nations, International Higher Education, and Knowledge Diplomacy <i>Nanette Svenson</i>	135
30. Africa: Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda Strike HE Harmonisation Fee Deal <i>Gilbert Nganga</i>	139
31. Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan’s Bolashak Scholarship Program <i>Aida Sagintayeva and Zakir Jumakulov</i>	143
32. Brazil: Brazil Seeks Academic Boost by Sending Students Abroad <i>Marcelo Knobel</i>	147

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 6: Internationalization through Partnerships

Introduction	153
33. Global: Ensuring Equality in Higher Education Partnerships Involving Unequal Universities in Divergent Contexts <i>Cornelius Hagenmeier</i>	155
34. Global: Perspectives on Global University Networks <i>Robin Middlehurst</i>	159
35. Global: The Dragon's Deal: Sino-African Cooperation in Education <i>Milton O. Obamba</i>	163
36. Asia: Partnership with Russia for New, World-Class University <i>Hiep Pham</i>	167
37. Europe: Western Balkan Nations Collaborate on Higher Education <i>Ard Jongsma</i>	171
38. Global: Is America's 100,000 Strong China Initiative Anaemic? <i>Joseph Stetar and Modi Li</i>	175

Part 7: International Students: Recruitment, Access, and Student Choice

Introduction	181
39. Global: Global Postgraduate Student Mobility Trends to 2024 <i>Karen MacGregor</i>	183
40. Global: International Student Enrollment: Evidence-Driven Strategies <i>Rahul Choudaha</i>	187
41. Asia: Far East Aims High for International Student Numbers <i>Ryan M. Allen</i>	191
42. China: Thousands to Head to Hong Kong for US Examinations <i>Patrick Boehler</i>	193
43. China: The Role of Chinese Parents in Decisions about Overseas Study <i>Peter Bodycott and Ada Lai</i>	197
44. Vietnam: Struggling to Attract International Students <i>Hiep Pham</i>	203
45. Sweden: Is Sweden Recovering from the International Student Crash? <i>Nic Mitchell</i>	207

TABLE OF CONTENTS

46. India: Mobility Trends <i>Wesley Teller and Don Martin</i>	211
47. India: International Students in Indian Universities <i>Veena Bhalla and Krishnapratap B. Powar</i>	215
Part 8: The Experience of Student Mobility	
Introduction	221
48. Europe: Questioning the Student Mobility Imperative <i>Bernd Wächter</i>	223
49. China: The Study-Abroad Fever among Chinese Students <i>Zha Qiang</i>	227
50. Canada, US and UK: Canada's Immigration Policies to Attract International Students <i>Anita Gopal</i>	231
51. Australia: Foreign Students Exploited as Temporary Workers <i>Bob Kinnaird</i>	235
52. Australia: Schools Are the New Battleground for Foreign Students <i>Brendan O'Malley</i>	239
Part 9: Internationalization, Faculty, and Staff	
Introduction	245
53. Global: Professors: The Key to Internationalization <i>Gerard A. Postiglione and Philip G. Altbach</i>	247
54. Global: Faculty and International Engagement: Has Internationalization Changed Academic Work? <i>Douglas Proctor</i>	251
55. Global: International Visiting Scholars: Brain-Circulation and Internationalization <i>Yukiko Shimmi</i>	255
56. Global: Flying Faculty Teaching—Who Benefits? <i>Karen Smith</i>	259
57. Japan: Young Researchers Need More International Experience <i>Tomoaki Wada</i>	263

TABLE OF CONTENTS

58. Europe: More Focus Needed on Higher Education Staff Mobility <i>Nic Mitchell</i>	267
59. Germany: The Value of Administrative Staff for Internationalization <i>Uwe Brandenburg</i>	271
Part 10: Internationalization of Governance	
Introduction	277
60. Global: International Advisory Councils: A New Aspect of Internationalization <i>Philip G. Altbach, Georgiana Mihut and Jamil Salmi</i>	279
61. Global: Integrating Institutional Policies and Leadership for 21st Century Internationalization <i>John K. Hudzik</i>	283
62. Global: The Changing Role of Leadership in International Education <i>Hans de Wit</i>	287
63. Global: Brics University League Starts to Form, but Needs True Collaboration <i>Maxim Khomyakov</i>	291
64. Asean: The Need for an Asean University <i>Roger Y. Chao Jr.</i>	295
65. United States: Value of Foreign-Born University Leaders Is Rising <i>Mary Beth Marklein</i>	299
Part 11: Internationalization of Research	
Introduction	305
66. Global: Gender and International Research Cooperation <i>Agnete Vabø</i>	307
67. Africa: The Value of Research Networks in Africa <i>Piyushi Kotecha</i>	311
68. Africa: International Collaboration in African Research—Who Wins? <i>Sharon Dell</i>	315
69. Europe: Progress, Problems with Researcher Mobility in Europe <i>Karen MacGregor</i>	319

TABLE OF CONTENTS

70. Central America: The Value of International Academic Cooperation <i>Nanette Svenson</i>	325
71. Europe: “Internationalists” and “Locals” in Research: Similar Productivity Patterns across Europe <i>Marek Kwiek</i>	329
72. Saudi Arabia: Internationalizing Research in Saudi Arabia: Purchasing Questionable Privilege <i>Manail Anis Ahmed</i>	333
73. China: Joint Research: Alternative to Branch Campus? <i>Yojana Sharma</i>	337
Part 12: Teaching and Internationalization	
Introduction	343
74. Global: Internationalization, the Curriculum, and the Disciplines <i>Hans de Wit and Betty Leask</i>	345
75. Global: English as “Lingua Franca” and the Internationalization of Academe <i>Michele Rostan</i>	349
76. Global: Graduate Employability and Internationalization of the Curriculum at Home <i>Elspeth Jones</i>	353
77. Japan: Nationalism vs Internationalism <i>Jeremy Rappleye and Edward Vickers</i>	357
78. Norway: Increasing Internationalisation in PhD Education <i>Jan Petter Myklebust and Jacquie Withers</i>	363
Part 13: Peace, Diplomacy, and Social Service	
Introduction	369
79. Global: Neo-Nationalism: Challenges for International Students <i>Jenny J. Lee</i>	371
80. Global: Transnational Education and Human Rights Obligations <i>Gearóid Ó. Cuinn</i>	375
81. Global: Beyond the Syrian Refugee Crisis <i>Hans de Wit</i>	379

TABLE OF CONTENTS

82. Global: Moving from Soft Power to Knowledge Diplomacy <i>Jane Knight</i>	381
83. US-Iran: Restoring Relationships in Higher Education <i>Daniel Obst</i>	383
About the Contributors	387

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book emerged from the collaboration between *International Higher Education* (IHE), the quarterly publication of the Boston College Center for International Higher Education and *University World News* (UWN), the weekly on-line publication. Both publications provide news and analysis to the higher education community worldwide. We have selected for this book some of the most relevant articles over the past five years on aspects of lasting interest on the topic of internationalization. This book follows a first book focused on aspects relevant to the field of higher education broadly.

We are indebted to our colleagues at *UWN* for their continuing collaboration. Brendan O'Malley, Mandy Garner, and Karen MacGregor have been especially helpful. At the CIHE, we thank Salina Kopellas for her continuing staff support and Lisa Unangst for editorial assistance. We thank Peter de Liefde of Sense Publishers for his ongoing support to the Book Series on Global Perspectives in Higher Education, in which this book is published as number 39.

Georgiana Mihut has taken the main responsibility for selecting and organizing the articles included here and for drafting the introductions to the sections.

GEORGIANA MIHUT, PHILIP G. ALTBACH AND HANS DE WIT

INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together selected articles published in *University World News* (UWN) and *International Higher Education* (IHE) focused on aspects of internationalization. The articles are logically organized by key themes that reflect the most central issues within the broad phenomena of internationalization. While both publications are freely available online, this book provides a thematically coherent selection of articles, offering an accessible and analytic perspective on the pressing concerns of contemporary higher education and internationalization.

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners alike further the development of higher education as a field of study through public, dynamic conversations. It is news, analysis, and commentary publications like UWN and IHE that facilitate this dialogue and keep pace with the most up-to-date developments in the field. *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization: Insights from Key Global Publications* draws on the contributions of both IHE and UWN to highlight major trends in higher education internationalization in the last five years, and may be best understood as an exercise in curation. With few exceptions, articles published between the 1st of January 2011 and 31st of May 2016 were considered for inclusion. Our philosophy in selecting articles was to prioritize breadth of content and perspective. As editors, we tried to select works that are insightful, clear, and representative—we have not necessarily attempted to select the “best” articles of the respective publications. Lastly, we have grouped selected works by themes of internationalization that are recurrent in both publications—and that we feel have a continued relevance and importance to higher education worldwide.

This book is the second publication resulting from a qualitative analysis of 1,897 published pieces in UWN and IHE. The first book—*Understanding Global Higher Education: Insights from Key Global Publications*—is centered on general aspects of global higher education. This volume is built around internationalization, as the most frequently addressed higher education topic within both IHE and UWN. Altogether, 454 articles among those analyzed focus on aspects connected to higher education internationalization. The 86 articles included in this publication were chosen from among this subset. Most themes included in this book will be familiar to higher education readers, but some will seem less obvious. In order to help the reader make sense of our selected articles, each section of the book will start with a brief introduction that aims to tie together the articles included.

WHAT PROMPTED THIS BOOK?

An established tradition in the field of higher education seeks to map activity and important developments within the field as a whole, often reflected in published surveys of higher education publications and websites. It is likely the disparate nature of higher education as a field that draws researchers to review and analyze the products of their own discipline.

Indeed, higher education, by most standards, is a new field of inquiry (Sadlak & Altbach, 1997). The field itself is very diverse, prompting Macfarlane and Grant (2012) to describe it as “multiple series of intersecting cognate fields” (p. 1). Philip Altbach considered the emergence of the field and provided a sense of its history and current status (Altbach, 2014). Tight (2012) defines the field of higher education in relation to the topics it approaches, the methods it uses, the theories it employs, and the levels of analysis at which research is conducted. To support his definition, which resulted from a similar mapping exercise as the one on which this book is based, Tight (2012) engaged in an analysis of the academic articles and books published in the field of higher education with the purpose of defining its contemporary features. Similarly, Horta and Jung (2014) pursued an indexing exercise of internationally published higher education articles for the purpose of mapping the research approaches employed as well as common themes. At the end of the process, the authors were able to illustrate that publications by Asian higher education researchers cluster around one of two motifs: policy or teaching and learning. Later, Jung (2015) replicated this methodology to analyze the research output of South Korean higher education researchers, identifying a national-centric approach as predominant. Using a similar thematic and longitudinal approach, Kehm (2015) mapped scholarly activity among members of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers, one of the largest communities of higher education researchers. The results of this inquiry illustrate an increased focus on governance, management, and organizational issues in the field of higher education. Other attempts at defining the field have focused on mapping the curriculum taught to PhD students in higher education, specifically in the United States. This analysis reveals that while a focus on administration, leadership, and organization seems common across all reviewed programs, topics such as community colleges and multiculturalism receive less representation (Card, Chambers, & Freeman, 2016).

However, similar exercises have not been conducted on news and editorial publications relevant to the field of higher education. Importantly, these publications offer broad scope and up to date analysis, which is atypical of more formal academic literature. The Boston College Center for International Higher Education has a strong tradition of mapping the field of higher education and is well positioned to fill this gap. Its most prominent mapping exercise to date is the *Worldwide Higher Education Inventory of research centers, academic programs, and journals and publications*. The most up to date edition of the inventory was published in 2014 (Rumbley et al., 2014), and an interactive online version is available on the center’s website.

WHY HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION

While the first book, *Understanding Global Higher Education*, was focused on international developments in higher education, this volume addresses the international dimensions of higher education. Internationalization has its own dynamics, but more important, it is transversal to all aspects of higher education. Internationalization is defined as the “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, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015, p. 283). Internationalization has become one of the key drivers in higher education worldwide and has impacted all its aspects, as the structure of this volume shows.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION
AND UNIVERSITY WORLD NEWS

International Higher Education (IHE) is a quarterly publication published by the Boston College Center for International Higher Education which offers contributions from authors worldwide who address local, regional, and global issues in the field of higher education. It is currently translated into 6 languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese). In addition, IHE is also published in English as a supplement to the *Deutsche Universitätszeitung*, the main magazine focusing on higher education in German-speaking countries.

University World News (UWN) is the oldest and most comprehensive global news outlet for the field of higher education. The publication provides reporting and commentary on developments in higher education and related issues of concern. It also reports on international conferences of higher education and holds webinars with a view to provoking debate and sharing opinion and expertise globally. UWN distributes its e-newspaper weekly to higher education professionals worldwide, most of them senior academics, university leaders, higher education managers, and policy-makers. UWN is read in 150 countries and enjoys a strong readership base in all regions, particularly in Europe, North America, and Africa. The e-newspaper has gained a reputation as a high-quality publication, was the sole media partner of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (2009), and has had media partnerships with OECD, the Talloires Network, British Council, CHEA and the MasterCard Foundation, among others. Launched in 2007, *University World News* has nearly 50,000 readers who receive its weekly global edition newsletter, and nearly 27,000 subscribers to its Africa edition weekly newsletter; its website has 1.5 million hits a month and the publication has 14,000 twitter followers as well as 16,000 Facebook “likes.”

While IHE includes standardized articles in terms of length and structure, UWN is more flexible in the type of pieces published. However, both publications encourage

a diversity of authors, topics and perspectives and frequently include short pieces about relevant research published in the field, as well as book reviews, analysis of policy initiatives, and debates on different topics. The two publications also closely collaborate: UWN publishes IHE articles on a regular basis. In addition, as of 2017 the two publications are working together as partners. Thus, through an analysis of these publications we may derive insights about higher education research and practice.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Before introducing the sections of this book, we offer a few observations about the reproduction of the articles from IHE and UWN in book format. First, we note that the UWN articles included were retrieved from the UWN website. Online articles traditionally have different layout standards than printed materials, particularly with respect to paragraph structure, which tends to be shorter, sometimes comprised of one sentence alone. Being cognizant of the reader's experience, articles included here have been re-formatted with the print publication in mind. Another distinct feature of online news articles is the use of hyperlinks as opposed to traditional referencing systems; in this book, hyperlinks representing relevant content references were transformed into in-text citations following the American Psychological Association referencing system. Hyperlinks that linked the name of an organization to the corresponding website were excluded during this process. Lastly, while UWN is published in British English, IHE uses American English, and reproductions in this volume match the original language versions of each publication.

This book is structured in thirteen distinct sections, each of them addressing a major internationalization-related theme resulting from a coding process which included all articles reviewed for this publication. These themes are by no means exhaustive, but do capture the main areas of focus in both IHE and UWN. Each section includes a different number of articles, generally beginning with a global focus, followed by articles addressing regions, and then country-specific pieces. Each section of the book is accompanied by a brief introduction that aims to draw a connective thread among selected articles. The titles of the articles include a note about the respective geographical unit of focus: if an article has a global perspective, "Global" appears at the beginning of the title. The country or region of focus is similarly labeled.

The first section of this book attempts to offer an accessible introduction to the topic of internationalization. The articles included in this section offer different takes on what internationalization is and what it is not, how it has evolved over time, and some of the imperatives it responds to. The second section includes articles focused on transnational education, branch campuses, and higher education hubs, as specific means through which internationalization occurs. Section three draws awareness to the commercialization of internationalization. The articles included in this section include important debates on fees, the use of agents, neoliberalism, and the privilege

associated with access to internationalization. Quality assurance, featured in section four, represents another concern associated with internationalization. Section five includes articles focused on internationalization policies and strategies. This section reveals that internationalization policies are increasingly developed at a supranational level, but that different countries, too, attempt to both take advantage of and steer the direction of internationalization. Partnerships are essential in promoting internationalization at regional, national, and institutional levels; section six of this book discusses some of the complexities associated with partnerships and networks. The following two sections of the book address internationalization with a focus on students: section seven highlights relevant factors and perspectives on access, recruitment, and student choice for international students, including standardized examinations, parental involvement, and push and pull factors. Part eight reflects on and highlights the mixed experience of mobile students.

In recent years, faculty and staff have been more involved with and affected by internationalization, and section nine includes articles that speak to the ways in which the academic profession has changed as an effect of internationalization, offering discussion on the importance of training university staff for internationalization processes. In addition to affecting students, academics, and staff, internationalization has shifted governance practices and priorities of the higher education sector. Aspects of the internationalization of governance are captured in section ten. As sections seven, eight, nine, and ten illustrate, key actors within the higher education arena are entrenched in internationalization, and indeed this also applies to the key missions of universities. Section eleven discusses the impacts of internationalization on research; section twelve addresses the intersections of teaching and internationalization. The concluding section of the book discusses the importance of internationalization for the service mission of universities, while highlighting the relation between internationalization and peace, diplomacy, and social service.

This book brings together not only articles written by authors located in different geographic regions, but also from diverse professional backgrounds. Contributions from journalists, doctoral students, higher education researchers, and higher education practitioners are included. Together, the articles included in this volume—alongside the section introductions—offer a rich and relevant picture of the dynamic state of internationalization of higher education globally.

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G. MIHUT ET AL.

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PART 1

UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

In a time when societies around the world grow further apart, some within the sphere of higher education have put their hopes for global understanding, solidarity, and acceptance in internationalization—the guided encounter between those far away. This first section of this book discusses broader themes and concepts related to internationalization, what it is, and what it is not, and how it can be better understood.

In the first article of the section, Nico Jooste and Savo Heleta draw attention to the need to understand and research internationalization in the broader societal context in which it takes place. This requires awareness of power relations between the global south and the global north, as well as critical engagement with multifaceted challenges such as armed conflict, climate change, inequality, migration, xenophobia, and oppression. The article written by Hans de Wit highlights some of the misconceptions associated with mainstreaming internationalization, thus paving the way for a more comprehensive and productive understanding of the phenomenon. Complementing the article written by de Wit, Jane Knight offers her take on the canons that should guide internationalization endeavors, including the importance of respecting local context, acknowledging unintended consequences, and the difference between globalization and internationalization. In the next article, Peta Lee provides a comprehensive summary of the report *Internationalization of Higher Education* requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education. The report serves as an important update on the state of internationalization in multiple countries around the world.

Philip Altbach and Hans de Wit offer here an overview of the historical development of internationalization and its relation with global political and military tensions, including the two World Wars and the Cold War. In an article focused on Europe, Hans de Wit, and Fiona Hunter provide an optimistic yet cautious take on the future of internationalization of higher education on the continent. The final article in the section, written by Guillaume Tronchet, tries to understand the present-day features of internationalization trends in France by employing a historical lens.

Together, the articles in this section offer a broad yet comprehensive take on the internationalization of higher education, ranging from key guiding principles, historical analyses, and socio-political imperatives, to national-level descriptions and institutional-level rationales.

NICO JOOSTE AND SAVO HELETA

1. GLOBAL: CHANGING THE MINDSET IN INTERNATIONALISATION RESEARCH

University World News, 23 October 2015, Issue 387

Higher education internationalisation research and debates have, for decades, been dominated by organisations and individuals from the developed world, lacking inclusivity and genuine collaboration. This has mainly been due to the power imbalances and dominance of the global North in all spheres of life, including higher education. In addition, the passivity from many parts of the global South has added to its lack of representation and voices in this space. In order to develop an inclusive and truly international engagement in the higher education internationalisation arena, the existing paradigms, research approaches, and practices need to be reconsidered.

Instead of the powerful and “mainstream” organisations and experts co-opting the voices from the global South to make their research and agendas look more “inclusive,” real collaboration between equals is needed. Such collaboration will not happen if the higher education internationalisation researchers and practitioners from the global South remain passive and do not engage more actively in research, analysis, and knowledge production in the field. In addition, the active voices from the South, many of whom were for far too long ignored and excluded from the mainstream debates on internationalisation should no longer be called the “new” or “emerging” voices but “previously unheard” voices—as many of them have been there all along, but have been ignored or sidelined in the mainstream debates and publications.

The existing theories and approaches, developed in the global North, are in most cases the primary references for all. Higher education institutions in the global South often tend to copy the approaches, strategies and frameworks developed and used in the global North. The problem with this is that what works for one setting will not necessarily work in another setting. In anything we do—in any field of study or work—context is important. There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to anything. The “copy and paste” approach needs to be replaced by practices and approaches developed for specific settings and informed by sound research.

RETHINKING THE RESEARCH FOCUS

The research focus in internationalisation needs urgent rethinking. For years, the focus of research and debates has been student and staff mobility, student recruitment, study abroad, internationalisation at home, internationalisation of the curriculum, joint degrees, partnerships, and other topics. While these topics are important, Leonard Engel, executive director of the European Association for International Education, points out that they are often addressed “as if they are entities in their own right” and not “in the context of the world in which we live.”

Where is higher education internationalisation research in relation to global challenges such as conflict, poverty, environment, climate change, inequality, migration, xenophobia, political, and other kinds of oppression, and post-conflict reconstruction? What is the role and responsibility of academia and internationalisation in peace-building, development, and social justice around the world? Why are these issues not an integral part of our work, debates, research, and practices? The complex and constantly changing world requires from higher education institutions the development of graduates who possess critical thinking skills and global competencies. The world needs graduates who can understand and engage with the environmental, social, economic, political, and other challenges of today and tomorrow.

We propose that future research in the higher education internationalisation field follows the critical social research approach, which questions how institutions, policies, and frameworks are formulated and implemented in practice. This approach does not accept existing frameworks, paradigms, power structures, world orders and ways of thinking as given; instead, it challenges them in order to highlight and transform inequalities and injustices and thereby improve future paradigms and practices. Engaging in critical social research could lead to the creation of a new body of knowledge that would help us in the development of the above-described globally competent graduates.

In terms of research collaboration, higher education internationalisation researchers and practitioners need to think critically about a number of issues related to research paradigms, approaches, and practices. Some of the key questions to consider are: What kind of collaboration and engagement in research do we need in order to develop an inclusive and representative international dialogue where all are given space, heard, and represented? How do we engage in collaboration that is grounded in respect?

GLOBAL RESEARCH COMMONS

An inclusive and truly international dialogue in the higher education internationalisation arena can be developed through the establishment of interlinked global research commons to act as vehicles for the enhancement of research capacity and collaboration around the world. The higher education internationalisation field

needs high-quality critical research and analysis from all parts of the globe in order to develop a better understanding among diverse peoples and bring about positive change in the world. There will be many challenges along the way—such as funding and attitude change—but these can be overcome if the interest and will to engage and collaborate are there. We also need to be careful that the proposed research commons do not become—or be perceived as—an elitist project for the chosen few. Research commons need to be inclusive and open to all those with the capacity to engage as well as those who require support to build capacity to be on par with others. Research commons can be places where required capacity building takes place.

Grounding research commons in the global commons concept would provide the necessary spaces for collaboration in higher education internationalisation research and debates. Dr. Nico Jooste wrote about the global commons concept in relation to higher education partnerships, but the same concept can be applied to research collaboration. Participants in the global research commons would need to accept rules that guide the behaviour within the commons. Everyone would need to recognise complex interdependent relations and resist a paternalistic mindset.

Finally, to prevent a new form of the “tragedy of the commons” within the higher education internationalisation space, global research commons would need to be spaces where the collaborators see themselves as equals who are willing to share, innovate and work towards the common good of those “in the commons” as well as their broader communities. Power dynamics would need to be neutralised in order to lift all through consensus-seeking engagement. This will require a shift in attitudes from many. However, if we are to move forward and engage in an inclusive and truly international research and dialogue where all are represented, we do not have an alternative.

HANS DE WIT

2. GLOBAL: INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: NINE MISCONCEPTIONS

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Internationalization in European higher education has developed over the last 20 years, from a marginal point of interest to a central factor—also called mainstreaming of internationalization. Indisputably, globalization of our societies and economies has expanded the influence of competition and market processes on the manner in which internationalization is implemented. Internationalization distinguishes many motives and approaches. The mainstreaming of internationalization assumes a more integral process-based approach, aimed at a better quality of higher education and competencies of staff and students. Reality is less promising, however, although the international dimension takes an increasingly central role in higher education. Still, there is a predominantly activity-oriented or even instrumental approach toward internationalization, which leads to major misconceptions about the nature of this development.

Nine misconceptions will be described (two of them coinciding with a myth as described in IHE by Jane Knight in “Five Myths About Internationalization”, no. 62, winter 2011), whereby internationalization is regarded as synonymous with a specific programmatic or organizational strategy to promote internationalization—in other words, where the means appear to have become the goal.

EDUCATION ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The influence of the English language as a medium of communication in research has been dominant for a long period of time. Also, over the past 20 years the tendency in higher education has been to teach in English, as an alternative for teaching in one's mother tongue. There are several unintended negative effects. Increasingly, education offered in the English language is regarded as the equivalent of internationalization, which results in a decreasing focus on other foreign languages; in an insufficient focus on the quality of the English spoken by students and teachers for whom English is not their native language; and thus, leading to a decline in the quality of education.

H. DE WIT

STUDYING OR STAYING ABROAD

A study or internship abroad as part of your home studies is often regarded as the equivalent of internationalization. In particular, the European Commission's policy to stimulate this manner of mobility has contributed to that instrumental approach over the last 25 years. It is questionable, however, whether the imbalanced and oversimplified approach to mobility matches internationalization. As well, it can be said that mobility is merely an instrument for promoting internationalization and not a goal in itself. Mobility needs to be finely embedded in the internationalization of education. It should be determined whether these added values are developed among students; and more innovative reflection is required on alternative ways of achieving these added values, for instance by the use of distance education and virtual mobility.

AN INTERNATIONAL SUBJECT

A third misconception that continues to surface persistently is that internationalization is synonymous with providing training based on international content or connotation: European studies, international business, or universal music. Within the institutions and schools offering these programs, the prevailing opinion seems to imply that, in this way, internationalization has been properly implemented. Without meaning to ignore the valuable contribution of such programs, again, it is too simplistic and instrumental an argument to declare regional studies as synonymous with internationalization.

HAVING MANY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A fourth misconception of internationalization is the assumption that having many international students equals that trend. Without denying that the combination of local and international students in the lecture room can make a significant contribution to internationalization, simply having international students is not sufficient. Unfortunately, countless examples can be given of programs that are oriented exclusively toward international students or where international students are being added as an isolated group.

FEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS GUARANTEE SUCCESS

The other side of the preceding misconception occurs as well. In particular, many international programs have developed a distorted proportion between the number of local and international students. Partly as a result of the increasing national and international competition for international students, the proportion between local and international students becomes more and more unequal. Thus, one can hardly speak of an international classroom setting. Conversely, this development has a negative effect on the internationalization of mainstream, non-English-language

GLOBAL: INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: NINE MISCONCEPTIONS

programs. Local students with a certain, whether or not motivated, international interest preferably enroll in the international programs—which means the interest of mainstream education in the local language dwindles. Also, in these programs, the presence of a small number of international students creates tensions. Should the courses be taught in English if there are only one or two international students in the lecture room? How can the integration of international students be realized in such distorted proportions?

NO NEED TO TEST INTERCULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCIES

A sixth misconception assumes that students normally acquire intercultural and international competencies if they study or serve their internship abroad or take part in an international class. This misconception is closely related to the previous ones about mobility, education in English, and the presence of international students. If these kinds of activities and instruments are considered synonymous with internationalization, then it is obvious to assume that intercultural and international competences will therefore also be acquired. Once again, reality is more complicated. It is not guaranteed from the outset that these activities will actually lead to that result. After all, students can completely seclude themselves from sharing experiences with other students and other sections of the population in the countries they visit.

THE MORE PARTNERSHIPS, THE MORE INTERNATIONAL

A seventh misconception on internationalization is the focus on partnerships: the more partnerships, the more success of internationalization. Globalization, competition, and market processes have reinforced the development toward strategic partnerships. This tendency toward strategic partnerships often implicates intentions, however. The majority of partnerships remain bilateral, and in several institutions and schools the number far exceeds the number of students and teachers being exchanged.

HIGHER EDUCATION—INTERNATIONAL BY NATURE

At universities and among their researchers, the general opinion identified a truly international characteristic, and thus there is no need to stimulate and guide internationalization. Thereby, references are made to the Renaissance, the time of the philosopher Erasmus (ca. 1467–1536), whom the European exchange program is named after. This historic reference ignores the fact that universities, mostly originated in the 18th and 19th century, had a clear national orientation and function. Internationalization does not arrive naturally in general universities and universities of applied sciences, but needs to be introduced. That is why the rather widely accepted definition of internationalization by Jane Knight refers to an integration process.

H. DE WIT

INTERNATIONALIZATION AS A PRECISE GOAL

Most of the mentioned misconceptions conceive an activity or instrument as synonymous with internationalization. The last, also fairly prevailing, misconception regards internationalization as a main goal, and therefore it is in line with the misconceptions mentioned earlier. Internationalization is a process to introduce intercultural, international, and global dimensions in higher education; to improve the goals, functions, and delivery of higher education; and thus, to upgrade the quality of education and research. If internationalization is regarded as a specific goal, then it remains ad hoc and marginal.

To comprehend the challenges and opportunities for the internationalization of higher education it is compelling to recognize that these misconceptions are still fairly common.