Diverse Goals, Motivations and Rationales: Rethinking Internationalization Policies in the Global Knowledge Economy

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The notion of 'internationalization of higher education' dates from the 1990's.

- Before, there exited already a tradition of international dimensions of higher education, in general under the term 'international education'.

- Or under terms that reflect some kind of international activity, either related to mobility, such as study abroad, exchanges, international students or academic mobility, or to curriculum, such as multicultural education, international studies, peace education, area studies.

- These terms described a concrete element of international education, and in many cases were used, and still are, as pars pro toto and as a synonym for the overall term.

From International Education to Internationalization

- It is not clear when the transition took place from 'international education' to 'internationalization of (higher) education'.

- The use of 'internationalization' in relation to higher education already can be noticed in publications in the 1970s. But only in the 1990s there emerges a systematic and conceptual approach to internationalization in higher education

Internationalization as a Concept

- In the 1990s the term 'internationalization' really takes over from 'international education' as describing the different ways the international dimensions in higher education are taking shape.

- This shift is a reflection of the increasing importance of these international dimensions in higher education and of the related transfer from a marginal set of programs and activities to a more comprehensive process.

Internationalization of Higher Education

The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education

(Knight, 2003)

It is this process oriented view on internationalization of higher education that can be accredited mostly for the shift from the more static term 'international education' into 'internationalization', even though the reality not always confirms this shift.

The new context of Internationalization: from the 1990s to the current situation

- There is an increasingly more **competitive higher education environment** (impact of international rankings)

- The role of **cross-border delivery of education** is becoming an alternative for student mobility

- **Skilled immigration**: competition for skilled labour in the global knowledge economy between developed countries and emerging countries **is becoming more driving**

- **Outcomes and competences**: a move from input and output to outcomes and competences

From margin to centre

- '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.

- (The End of Internationalization, *Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011*)

- This process is also described as *mainstreaming of internationalization.*

- And by others as *comprehensive internationalization.*

- Basically labels that re-emphasize the integrative and *process component* in the definition of internationalization by Jane Knight.

Emerging concerns with the concept

- **At the same time internationalization has become a rather *broad concept*, combining many different and even contradictive elements and activities.**

- **Internationalization has moved from innovation to tradition.**

- **One can observe an inclination to divide the concept of internationalization into different categories/ dimensions/ideologies, as well as the emergence of new generic terms.**

Internationalization can be seen as to consist of **two components**:

Internationalization at Home: activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills

Internationalization Abroad: all forms of education crossing borders, mobility of students, teachers, scholars, programmes, courses, curriculum, projects

(Knight, 2006)

Globalization and Internationalization

Van Vught, van der Wende, and Westerheijden make a distinction between globalization and internationalization:

"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.*"

Good (Internationalization) versus Bad (Globalization) ?

- '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.'

  (Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011)

Emerging notions and terms

- And internationalization also is related to terms and concepts such as

- Intercultural,
- International and
- Global,

- without clearly defining them and distinguishing between them and increasingly labelling them under vague notions, such as global competence, global citizenship and global engagement.

Discrepancy between discourse and reality

- There seems to be in the discourse a move towards a process oriented and comprehensive internationalization, for instance expressed in the paper by John Hudzik *'Comprehensive Internationalization'* (NAFSA, 2011, www.nafsa.org/cizn)

- In reality there appears to be still a predominantly activity- oriented or even instrumental approach towards internationalization.

- This leads to major myths and misconceptions about what internationalization actually means.

Misconceptions about internationalization

- Internationalization is regarded as synonymous with a specific programmatic or organisational strategy to promote internationalization

- In other words: *the means appear to be the goal*.

We have to go back to the fundamental question: Why internationalization?

- In the current time, that question requires different answers and related approaches and strategies than in the previous decades, in the light of the global knowledge society, and moving away from the misconceptions of the past years.

- At the same time, the foundation remains the same: internationalization is not a goal in itself but a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their contribution to society.

Rethinking Internationalization

- A process of **rethinking of internationalization** is taking place currently, in response to this changing environment for higher education and its international dimensions in the global knowledge economy, to the broader scope of the notion of internationalization, **and to** the lack of innovative response to the challenges resulting from them

Rethinking Internationalization

" a re-orientation towards outcomes and impacts and away from a purely input and output approach. Instead of bragging about the number of students going abroad and reception of international fee paying students, the number of courses in English and the abstract claim of making students global citizens, we want to focus on learning outcomes."

(Brandenburg and de Wit, 2012)

Rationales for Rethinking Internationalization

1. The discourse of internationalization does not seem to meet always the reality, in which internationalization is still more a synonym of international education

2. The further development of globalization, the increase of commodification in higher education and of the notion of a global knowledge society and economy, has also resulted in a new range of forms, providers and products, such as branch campuses, franchises, trade in education services.

And as a consequence new, sometimes even conflicting dimensions, views and elements are emerging in the discourse of internationalization.

Rationales for Rethinking

3. The international higher education context is rapidly changing. Was until recently 'internationalization' like 'international education' predominantly a western phenomenon, in which the developing countries only played a reactive role, the emerging economies and the higher education community in other parts of the world alter the landscape of internationalization.

Moving away from a western, neocolonial concept, as several educators perceive 'internationalization', it has to incorporate these emerging other views.

Rationales for Rethinking

4. The discourse on internationalization is too much dominated by a small group of stakeholders: higher education leaders, governments and international bodies.

Other stakeholders, such as the professional field, and in particular the faculty and the student voice are far less heard, and by that the discourse is insufficiently influenced by those who should be impacted most by it.

Rationales for Rethinking

5. Too much of the discourse is oriented to the national and institutional level with little attention for the program level: research, the curriculum, and the teaching and learning process, which should be more at the core of internationalization, as expressed by movements such as 'Internationalization at Home'.

Rationales for Rethinking

6. Internationalization is too much input/output focused, a quantitative approach on numbers instead of an outcome based approach.

7. There has also been in the discourse too little attention on norms, values, ethics of internationalization practice. The approach has been too pragmatically oriented to reaching targets without a debate on the potential risks and ethical consequences.

Rationales for Rethinking

8. The increased awareness that the notion of 'internationalization' should not only be related to the relation between nations, but even more to the relation between cultures and between the global and local

The overarching reason for Rethinking Internationalization is:

- We consider internationalization of higher education too much as a goal in itself instead of as a means to an end.

- Internationalization is not more and less than a way to enhance the quality of education and research. That objective is too much forgotten in the strive for quantitative goals.

- The rethinking exercise of IAU, more than an attempt to redefine the still young concept of internationalization, has to be seen as a call for action to bring the core values and objectives of internationalization back to the forefront.

Thank You

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