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Hegemonic Ideas Are Not Always Right: On the Definition of 'Internationalisation' of Higher Education

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Contents

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Abstract

The paper reviews the definition of 'internationalisation' of higher education shaped by Knight and colleagues in the 1990s and shepherded through successive revisions, justifications and debates. Internationalisation is defined as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension' into post-secondary education. This conceptualisation underpins scholarship on international education and is used to draw together practitioners of cross-border education, primarily in the Anglophone zone and Western Europe. However, while the definition has received very widespread recognition and support, cross-border higher education has not evolved as its practitioners want and there is growing criticism of and disillusionment with the definition and its double claim to explain and unify. Its problems are fundamental. The purpose of shaping practice crowds out the scholarly mission to understand and explain,

while its universalism conceals ambiguities that weaken the purchase on practice. It rests on an ideological binary between 'globalisation' (bad) and 'internationalisation' (good) that downplays global activity in higher education and science, and locks practitioners into the national container and hence into government policies in favour of competition and commercialisation. It is fundamentally non-relational, focused on the qualities of the self without regard for the consequences of self-internationalisation for the other, and this enables continued Euro-American (Western) centrism in cross-border higher education, in lineage with colonialism. The definition cannot adequately inform either scholarship or practice. The paper suggests an alternative approach to terminology and relationality in cross-border higher education.

Introduction

In public and scholarly discussion about higher education certain key terms seem to take on a life of their own. Consider 'employability', 'or 'innovation'. These terms are essential in various discussions, yet the more they are extended across the field of imagining and practice, acquiring a growing list of stakeholders, agendas and applications, the less clear they become. Another such key term in higher education is 'internationalisation'.

In a world that is globally connected in which nation-states lead social organisation, we need a word for the growth of educational relations that cross national borders, relations 'inter-national' in adjectival form. The noun 'internationalisation' signifies the creation and augmentation of such cross-border relations. But its meaning has become murky. Like employability the term 'internationalisation in higher education' has been the focus of determined attempts to shape practice. This paper is about the building of an argument, ideology and doctrine around the definition of 'internationalisation' in higher and tertiary education. (For convenience the term 'higher education' is used here generically and includes tertiary education.[1] 'Cross-border' higher education here includes all activity that ranges beyond the nation-state, including both inter-national and global activities.[2])

In particular, the paper reviews and critiques the definition of internationalisation created by Jane Knight in the 1990s (hereafter referred to as the DO Internationalisation), endorsed by many scholars and practitioners, and shepherded through successive amendments, explanations and justifications, as will be discussed. It also reflects on the associated efforts to cajole the real world of cross-border education into line with the idea. It takes in discussion of the DO Internationalisation by co-authors of Knight and others. It does not review all of Knight's work, including that on types of cross-border activity, and educational hubs (e.g. Knight 2014). It is solely focused on the DO

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[1] 'Higher education' is more widely used than 'tertiary education' but less precise. 'Tertiary' as in UNESCO (2022) is based on the educational/occupational level of programme not institutional status. The present paper uses 'higher education' to include all of 'tertiary', as in the US American 'higher education' which includes two-year programmes in community colleges as well as degree-level education.

[2] The latter includes trans-border activity such as online education and global systems like science.

Internationalisation, which in some respects has taken on a life of its own separate from its original author.

The definition of internationalisation (DO Internationalisation)

In its most widely propagated form the DO Internationalisation is as follows:

> Internationalisation at the national, sector and institutional levels
> is defined as the process of integrating an international,
> intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or
> delivery of post-secondary education (Knight 2004a, p. 11).

This set of words, so well-known as to have become commonplace and innocuous, contains a tautology (internationalisation integrates the international) and conceals a raft of assumptions, judgments, problems and issues, as will be discussed.

Why the focus on the definition of internationalisation in education? Initially in Canada and then at world level, it was seen as a means of constructing a common field of understanding and activity. 'Definitions can shape policy' (Knight 2003, p. 2). Knight started from a concern about what she saw as the looseness and meaninglessness of the term internationalisation, its eclectic application to contrary practices. 'When variations in the interpretation lead to a sense of confusion of why internationalisation is important and, ultimately to a weakened sense of legitimacy and impact, some form of action is necessary' (Knight 1997, p. 39). The task was to develop 'a conceptual model that provides some clarity on meaning and principles to guide policy and practice' (Knight 2004a, p. 6). 'Internationalisation must have parameters if it is to be assessed' (Knight 1994, p. 3).

The DO Internationalisation discourse unfolded in a series of papers, on the definition and associated augments, by Knight (e.g. 1994; 2003; 2011) and colleagues. Over time tacit assumptions and judgments about cross-border education have become apparent. Proponents of the DO Internationalisation encourage cross-border activity and seek to lift its status, while at the same time advancing a liberal internationalist world order.

Though liberal internationalism is couched in universal terms it is historically and culturally specific. In an account of international education in Canada, Trilokekar (2010) describes as one strand of foreign policy Prime Minister Lester Pearson's (1963-1968) advocacy of an inter-state order based on national sovereignty and all-round development in a just and equitable world (p. 144). This positions a high-minded capitalist state as the carrier of cross-border relations, while fostering a moderate cosmopolitanism, as in the United Nations charter. The ideal resonates in central Europe as well as the Anglophone zone (Dagen et al. 2019, p. 646). Uwe Brandenburg and Hans de Wit (2011) state that 'the higher education community still strongly believes that by definition internationalisation leads to peace and mutual understanding, the driving forces behind programmes like Fulbright in the 1950s' (p. 15). Like liberal internationalism itself, with its antecedents in the post-World War I Wilson doctrine, the 1950s Fulbright world is a Western-centric world.

Take-up of the definition

Knight's initial strategy was very successful. The DO Internationalisation was very widely taken up, especially in the Anglophone zone and Europe. It continues to be frequently cited in research and documents, permeating the English-language conversation on the topic.

At the time of writing[3] the most cited papers authored by Knight in the first decade of the definition (Knight 1994; Knight & de Wit 1995) had 996 and 977 Google Scholar cites respectively, and the most cited papers in the second decade, on the 'updated definition' (Knight 2003; Knight 2004a) had 2,196 and 3,789 citations when all versions are included. Knight's paper co-authored with Phil Altbach on 'The internationalisation of higher education: Motivations and realities' (Altbach & Knight 2007) had 5,058 citations. A content analysis of the *Journal of Studies in International Education* by Bedenlier et al. (2018) finds that the 1994 and 1995 articles were foundational to the field of research (p. 118), and Knight was both the journal's most prolifically published author with eight papers in 1997-2016, and author or co-author of the most highly cited works in the journal (pp. 114-115).

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[3] 18 September 2022

The DO Internationalisation in one or another version has been explicitly adopted by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2007, p. 23), numerous governments especially in the West, associations representing universities like the International Association of Universities, American Council on Education (e.g. ACE 2015), Universities UK and others. It is often quoted in the websites of Euro-American universities, and some universities elsewhere, where they present their international programmes.

It is a level of measurable impact that most scholars can only dream of, though the DO Internationalisation is more unanimously supported in official circles than scholarly circles. Many researchers who investigate global relations in higher education do not use it. Relatively few engage in open critiques, however (some are discussed below). This combination of widespread open endorsement and largely unexpressed dissent indicates a high level of consent for the definition and its ideas, signifying a discursive hegemony in Gramsci's (1971) sense. The definition draws support from a broad spectrum of agents in cross-border education, while being closely tailored to common sense understandings of how politics and policy work, as will be discussed. Its underlying values have also contributed to its adoption. A liberal internationalist outlook is shared by many scholars and practitioners of cross-border education. No doubt some readers will be surprised that the present paper sharply problematises a definition they have long taken for granted.

The critique

However, an idea must stand or fall on its merits, not its level of support nor its status as an orthodoxy. It will be argued in this paper that the DO Internationalisation and its worldview cannot adequately inform the field of cross-border education so as to underpin scholarship and practice. Nor can they norm practice as their proponents want.

It will be argued that there are three flaws. First, the teleology, the purpose of shaping practice crowds out the scholarly mission to understand and explain. The universal terms of the definition enhance its reach and emotive power but conceal ambiguities, and ultimately this weakens its purchase on practice. Second, the definition's geography is seriously misleading. The ideological

distinction between 'globalisation' and 'internationalisation' conceals from view part of cross-border activity, and locks practitioners into the neoliberal policies on global competition favoured by national governments. Third, the definition reinforces unequal power in higher education. It is non-relational and Euro-American (Western) centric. The sharpest criticism is from non-Western countries for whom Western-led internationalisation negates rather than enhances their potentials as agents.

These statements are evidenced and discussed in the remainder of the paper. The next section provides an overview of the DO Internationalisation in three phases: origins in the 1990s; the challenge of global knowledge economy policy in the 2000s, leading to modifications in the definition; and the accumulating crisis among the definition's proponents in the 2010s. The final section of the paper reviews the flaws in the DO Internationalisation, outlines a different terminology for scholars and practitioners, and suggests ways of monitoring relations of power in cross-border higher education.

An idea in three phases

The ball started rolling with two papers for Canadian practitioners of cross-border higher education that positioned institutional programmes within the national setting and addressed this whole field simultaneously. This melding of the familiar, the general and the practical was the easiest route to a quasi-universal framing of international education, perhaps the only route. But while the descriptor 'integrating the international' was readily agreed, it meant different things to different people. Knight successfully established a broad church in phase 1 but it was unified by ambiguous doctrine and rent by hidden divisions. Theological adjustments and appeals to virtuous practice on phase 2 could not steer internationalisation to the promised land in phase 3.

Phase 1, the 1990s: Foundations

In the Canadian Bureau of International Education's *International Education Magazine* in 1993, Knight defines 'internationalisation' as 'the process of integrating the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education' (Knight 1994, p. 3). The 1994 *CBIE Research* bulletin on 'Internationalisation: Elements and checkpoints'

focuses on 'organisational factors and principles which help to integrate internationalisation' (p. 1). The definition from 1993 is supplemented by 'an international dimension means a perspective, activity or service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of higher education' (p. 3). It is not just about activity, it concerns mindset: 'perspective' and 'outlook'. The 1994 bulletin lists the many places in an institution where an 'international outlook' can be integrated and provides a full discussion of rationales and motivations, elements of cross-border activity, academic and organisational factors, 'checkpoints for an internationalisation strategy' with 63 dot points, and a diagrammatic 'internationalisation cycle'. It also reviews organisations in Canada that facilitate cross-border activities. The next year Knight's book with the University of Amsterdam's Director of the Office of Foreign Relations, Hans de Wit, is less prescriptive but opens a global conversation (Knight & de Wit 1995), more abstract as it moves beyond Canada.

As the 1990s proceed, global transformations are increasingly apparent. Internet usage spreads. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of Web of Science papers with authors from more than one country increases from 8.9 to 16.4 per cent (Olechnicka et al. 2019, p. 78). Commercial international education grows in the UK and Australia. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of full fee paying international students in Australian higher education rises from 14,379 to 72,717 (AEI, various years). Knight (1994) evidences only moderate concern about economic globalisation in Canada. Trends to commercialisation are largely confined in 'business schools' (p. 5). A survey finds that income generation ranks very low as a rationale for internationalisation (Knight 1997, p. 41). But Knight (1999) registers a shift. Institutions are expected 'to be more entrepreneurial … and think medium to long-term in their approach to the international market' (p. 2). The paper is agnostic. 'There can be a direct and beneficial relationship between an international market orientation and the internationalisation of the primary functions of a university/college or institute', but 'this is not always the case'. Further research is needed. 'The key is 'the balance between income generation motives and academic ones' (p. 8). This will become a recurring theme.

The DO Internationalisation has emerged amid intense debates about globalisation. Global convergence and integration (Held et al. 1999) is advancing, simultaneously, through immersive worldwide communications via the Internet; the spread of Americanised culture and language; expanding cross-border movement of people; neoliberal policies of financial deregulation and the liberalisation of trade; and the growth of multinational companies, offshoring of production and global supply chains. These strands pull different ways, and within higher education there are various takes on globalisation (Marginson 2022a). University leaders see opportunities to expand the reach, status and income of institutions. Some scholars, influenced by Appadurai (1996), Beck (2000) and others, focus on potentials for cross-border networking, global civil society, cosmopolitan learning and new hybridities. Others focus on the undermining of the public good by global capital and see a good/evil binary of globalisation and internationalisation: 'The current worldwide tide of globomania threatens to engulf moves towards genuine internationalisation of universities' (Welch 2002, p. 471). A third group of scholars see all the elements in play: national and global, economic and cultural, positive and negative (e.g. Henry et al. 1999).

At the time the DO Internationalisation emerges, the Anglophone zone, especially the United States (US), is overwhelmingly dominant in higher and cross-border education, and growing global communications extend and intensify the impact of the new idea.

In 1999 Knight explains her take on internationalisation and globalisation. There are two kinds of cross-border geography, international and global. 'International' means inter-national. 'In a literal sense, international education can be interpreted to mean "a kind or process of education which involves, relates to or is carried on between two or more nations"' (Knight 1999, p. 10). Second, the literal meaning of 'global' is '"worldwide" or "relating to the earth or world as a whole", calling up "connectedness, interdependence"' (p. 13). This includes global flows of 'technology, economy, knowledge, people, ideas' (p. 14). 'The central feature that distinguishes global from international … is the concept of nation' (p. 13). Here Knight's distinction is non-ideological and broadly agreed in social science and higher education studies (e.g. Scott 1998; Marginson & Rhoades 2002).

However, Knight (1999) uses the noun form, the 'isation' words, in a different way to the adjectives. Used literally, 'internationalisation' would mean the creation or growth of relations between nations or between organisations or persons in nations. 'Globalisation' would mean the extension or intensification of relations on the world scale. However, states Knight, the neutral approach to international 'results in a rather restricted approach to the concept' (p. 10). She notes that 'the distinction between internationalisation and globalisation of higher education is controversial and often debated… it is not the literal meanings of these terms which cause the debate but the implied purpose and impact of internationalisation versus globalisation which is at the root of the controversy' (p. 13). Knight's definition rests on a good/evil binary of internationalisation and globalisation. She avoids the extremes of this binary in the literature on cross-border education (e.g. Jones 1998) but it fashions her approach. Globalisation is primarily economic globalisation, a threat and external to higher education. In contrast, internationalisation is controlled by educators within a national framework and the site of potentially virtuous practice. It is 'pro-active', a 'response to or result of increased globalisation' from outside (Knight 1999, p. 14). This underpins Knight's assertion of internationalisation as the master concept for unifying practitioners. Those who cite the definition buy into this ideological geography.

Knight avoids a wholly negative view of globalisation but she links it to the suppression of national differences, cultural homogenisation, a 'neo-colonist approach' (p. 15) and 'commercialisation' (p. 9). The paper sidesteps the counter arguments – while globalisation homogenises it also brings in more agents and expands the encounter with difference; a Western-led approach to internationalisation can also be standardising.

The paper notes 'a mounting belief in the inherent worth of internationalisation'. However, only in 'the Western world… this is not the case in other regions of the world where internationalisation is seen as a form of westernisation or even neo-colonisation' (Knight 1999, p. 1). This ought to ring alarm bells but seems to be a second order issue. The 'neo-colonist approach' is transferred to globalisation (p. 15), protecting the notion of virtuous internationalisation. Internationalisation is fashioned as a Weberian ideal type, with the inconvenient truths attributed to globalisation. But with globalisation seen as external, as non-

educational in character, there is a limit to this manoeuvre. What if the international practices of institutions themselves are the problem?

'The next decade will be critical for the international work of higher education institutions', concludes Knight (1999). 'Which approach will dominate – a market approach, academic cooperation and collaboration, or something else?'. She calls for 'balance' (p. 16).

Phase 2, the 2000s: Challenge of the knowledge economy

By the early 2000s the balance seems awry amid a rapid economisation of policy on cross-border education. The junction tightens between economic globalisation and neo-liberal policy and its diffusion, amid faltering commitments to higher education as a public good. Higher education is positioned in an imagined global knowledge economy in which learning and knowledge are seen as sources of value. Global competition is framed by the university rankings that begin in 2003. Van der Wende (2001) refers to a paradigmatic shift from cooperation to competition. Rizvi and Lingard (2009) state that 'public policy, including education, is now increasingly required to serve the interests of global capitalism' (p. 30).

The World Trade Organisation's General Agreement of Trade in Services (WTO GATS) gains momentum, including the deregulation of cross-border trade in education (OECD 2004), despite pushback from international educators (Altbach 2001). Subsequently Bashir (2007) notes for the World Bank that while most emerging nations have not made binding commitments under GATS, 'international trade in higher education services has grown rapidly' (p. 4). In Australia fee paying international students rise from 72,717 in 2000 to 242,186 in 2010 (AEI, various years). For many, an internationalisation strategy becomes the accumulation of the quantitative indicators that comprise rankings: research outputs and collaborations, numbers of international students and faculty. Older notions that globalisation threatens the nation-state fade away, and globalisation and internationalisation are often seen as synonymous (Teichler 2004, p. 23).

This is not liberal internationalism but it drags with it what the DO Internationalisation sees as nationally-controlled internationalisation. Global

commercial activity, strongly supported by some governments, falls inside the definition. Global rankings, increasingly seen as national performance indicators, lack only the intercultural aspect. Fee based markets undermine the educational motivations of institutions. Nation-states positioned as competitors in the global knowledge economy are not dependable protectors of social and cultural values. Phase 1 DO Internationalisation is in question. Either its proponents drop the notion of a universal inter-national practice separate from global relations, or they maintain the definition and focuses on purifying internationalisation. Knight takes the latter path. The 2003/2004 papers that 'update' and 'remodel' the DO Internationalisation attempt to shore up the earlier approach without changing anything fundamental.

The renovated definition has two features. First, it extends beyond the institution, referring to 'internationalisation at the national, sector and institutional levels'. Though in many countries national policy is moving in the wrong direction, and confining cross-border activity to the national container locks in institutions, Knight still hopes that government will protect a cooperative liberal internationalism. Second, the definition is rendered still more abstract and universal. Instead of referring to 'teaching, research and service functions' it now mentions 'the purpose, functions or delivery'. This captures the broader group of higher education providers that have emerged, mostly in commercial and corporate forms of cross-border higher education (Knight 2004a, pp. 11-12).

The paper continues to avoid the explicit proscription of undesirable activities, stating that there is 'no right approach' (Knight 2004a, p. 18). Instead it calls for self-reflection and wide discussion on policies, strategies, programmes and activities (p. 19), and a review of academic, social, cultural, political and economic rationales. But the author is worried. There is 'increasing emphasis on competition at the international level' and 'a not-so-subtle shift towards developing an international reputation' to boost competitive position (p. 21). Is there a 'discernible shift away from the social and cultural rationales?' (p. 29). There is a mild critique of 'branding' (p. 21) and ranking. Here the paper seems to conflate the profit motive in commercial cross-border education with World-Class University policies for building national capacity and strength. Huang (2007) notes that internationalisation in established systems may be

commercial, but emerging countries focus on academic capacity building and 'catching up with the advanced countries', especially the US (pp. 58-59). That is, World-Class Universities are driven more by geo-politics than by global capitalism.

Phase 2 expands on the ideological binary of globalisation/ internationalisation. The two terms are 'purposely used differently' in education (Knight 2005, p. 5). Internationalisation is the site of 'ongoing and continuous effort' (Knight 2003, p. 2); while globalisation is dangerous, it involves 'challenges, and risks' (p. 3).

> The discussion does not centre on the globalisation of education. Rather, globalisation is presented as a process impacting internationalisation … In fact, substantial efforts have been made during this past decade to maintain the focus on the internationalisation of education and to avoid using the term globalisation of education (Knight 2003, p. 3).

Knight expresses the binary relation in a much-quoted narrative: 'globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation', while 'internationalisation is changing the world of education' (Knight 2003, p. 3). This linear chain of causation can be called the GIHE narrative: globalisation-internationalisation-higher education. Institutions and people exercise international agency, via the national filter, but not global agency. With internationalisation the master concept, even the neutral 'global' is positioned within the definition as a subset of the internationalisation process. Global geography is both screened out as external and tucked away in the national container. This entails an oddly comforting gymnastic logic, an outside/inside inversion: the global begins the narrative as an all-powerful outside menace towering over internationalisation and ends it as a tick-the-box inside an internationalisation strategy, subordinate and listed after 'intercultural'.

Knight (2004b) takes further the tensions inside practice. International recruitment is focused on competition for talent. Nation-building economic and political rationales are more evident than is intercultural understanding. 'A clearer articulation of the values guiding internationalisation is becoming increasingly important … Values give shape and meaning to the rationales and expected outcomes that underpin' internationalisation (p. 5). Altbach and Knight

(2007) again take up values and focus on unequal relations of power, normally less evident in Knight's work but a recurring theme for Altbach.[4] They start with external economic globalisation. 'Global capital has, for the first time, heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide, including higher education and advanced training' (p. 290). The globalisation of knowledge, the cross-border mobility of students and faculty, and the transfer of models from global north to south, all compound pre-existing inequalities between countries. 'The north largely controls the process'. Again, the solution lies in the right kind of internationalisation: academic programmes, innovations and practices 'created to cope with globalisation and to reap its benefits'. 'Globalisation may be unalterable, but internationalisation involves many choices' (p. 291). The GIHE narrative is the way forward.

The authors rightly note that internationalisation is not the same everywhere: student mobility in Europe also has instrumental purposes but these are 'economic and political integration' rather than making money (Altbach & Knight 2007, p. 293). The main issue, though, is the contaminating effects of economic competition. 'We are at a crossroads – today's emerging programmes and practices must ensure that international higher education benefits the public and not simply be a profit centre' (p. 304). But how can this happen? Institutions and national systems exercise agency, and their behaviour falls within the original DO Internationalisation, but they are not doing what its proponents want.

Phase 3 in the 2010s: Growing disillusionment

The third phase is dramatised by Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) as 'the end of internationalisation'. Knight gives less ground but has a growing list of problems (Knight 2011; Knight 2013; Knight & de Wit 2018). Nonetheless,

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[4] In 'Servitude of the mind? Education dependency, and neocolonialism' Altbach describes asymmetries in resources, technologies, language use, and cross-border mobility that sustain global hierarchy. Industrialised nations at the global 'centre' exercise a controlling influence over nations in the 'periphery' (Altbach 1977, pp. 197-198). This was almost three decades before these issues were widely discussed in the global literature. Altbach emphasises agency: 'The struggle to build independent sources of intellectual power, to make sure that educational systems serve indigenous needs, and to engender intellectual originality and self-respect, is a long and difficult one' (p. 204). Altbach seems to see centre-periphery relations as fixed, and inequalities as increasing through global relations - despite emerging evidence of more distributed strength and multi-polarity in higher education and research (see Marginson 2022b) - but Altbach (2009), which urges research-intensive universities in emerging and middle-income countries, partly breaks from this pessimism.

cross-border practices in higher education roll on, despite growing geo-political tensions (Altbach & de Wit 2018). Internationalisation 'has evolved from a marginal and ad hoc range of activities to more comprehensive and central processes and policies' (de Wit 2022, p. 4). The International Association of Universities (IAU) finds in 2018 that more than 90 per cent of institutions mention internationalisation in their mission or strategic plan, except in North America where only one third do so (Marinoni 2019; de Wit and Altbach 2021). The DO Internationalisation seems to be as widely cited as in phase 2. Institutions use it freely without taking on the self-examination that Knight mandates. Meanwhile contradictory practices are normal, as always. Universities register critiques of Western homogenisation of knowledge, and respect for other cultures - while unabashedly selling places to students from emerging countries on the basis of assumptions about the intrinsic superiority of Western offerings in continuity with the imperial era (Stein 2021, p. 1774).

Knight's strategy is still to clarify doctrinal meanings of internationalisation and tacitly nudge practice in the desired direction: to normalise without appearing prescriptive. The purpose of 'Five myths about internationalisation' (Knight 2011) 'is to ensure that internationalisation is on the right track', and 'higher education sectors weather these rather turbulent times when competitiveness, rankings, and commercialisation seem to be the driving forces' (p. 15). Internationalisation 'is a catchall phrase and losing its meaning and direction' (p. 14). The number of foreign students or cross-border agreements, or marketing, branding, international accreditation or reputation, should not be equated with internationalisation. Quantitative indicators can meet accountability requirements but do not capture the 'intangible' human essence (p. 15). Knight has moved away from the detailed management of internationalisation she proposed in the 1990s.

'Internationalisation of higher education: Nine misconceptions' by de Wit (2011a) takes a similar tack. 'Naming internationalisation will not revive it' (de Wit 2011b) runs deeper. 'Internationalisation is suffering from an identity or mid-life crisis'. De Wit wants to reappraise relations between international, intercultural and global, noting 'the changing global landscape and the related debate about internationalisation as a "Western concept" or as a repetition of the old system by new players'. Then Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) prise

open the ideological binary. 'Internationalisation has become the white knight of higher education, the moral ground that needs to be defended, and the epitome of justice and equity' while 'globalisation is loaded with negative connotations' (p. 15). 'This constructed antagonism between internationalisation and globalisation' ignores the fact that economic globalisation is 'increasingly executed under the flag of internationalisation'. 'Holding firmly onto traditional concepts and acting on them while the world around moves forward' is not viable. 'We have to move away from dogmatic and idealist concepts' (p. 16) and develop new 'values and rationales' for 'meaningful' outcomes. 'The future of higher education is a global one' and 'it is our job' to help prepare higher education for this. 'Possibly we must even leave the old concepts of internationalisation and globalisation and move on to a fresh unbiased paradigm' (p. 17). Would this be a new universal doctrine, or a different strategy? They do not say.

In response Knight offers not a new blueprint but partial disillusionment. 'Nothing unfolds entirely as planned and it is necessary to stay alert to unexpected bumps and diversions along the road to internationalisation'. But 'competition, commercialisation, self-interest, and status building' are winning. 'Serious reflection and debate are needed'. Is internationalisation 'co-opted by the "dark" side of the globalisation agenda'? The binary still keeps the definition afloat. 'Academics and organisations' want 'a new conceptualisation, definition or term for internationalisation'. Yet 'are new words enough' if practice does not change? (Knight 2013, p. 89). Knight is not ready to declare the end of the DO Internationalisation.

In 'Reconsidering the concept of internationalisation' de Wit (2013) presses on. There should be more attention to 'norms, values, or ethics', and relations between global and local (p. 6). Leask and de Wit (2016) want everyone to 'think locally, nationally and globally', again suggesting a larger geography, and to broaden 'the knowledge base of the curriculum beyond the European canon and Western-limited views'. 'Is a more diverse and inclusive internationalisation paradigm replacing the Western paradigm?' asks de Wit (2019a, p. 10). Other scholars offer adjectives that strengthen the definition normatively and/or make purposes and value explicit: 'comprehensive internationalisation', 'intelligent internationalisation', 'conscientious internationalisation', 'responsible

internalisation, 'humanistic internationalisation' (de Wit 2022, pp. 13-14). In a report for the European Parliament de Wit and colleagues (2015) expand the definition. Internationalisation now is:

> 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 et al. 2015, p. 29).

De Wit and colleagues want to broaden the agenda beyond revenue generation and competition between research universities, to foster internationalisation at home and implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Brandenburg et al., 2019). 'There are tensions between a short term neoliberal approach to internationalisation, focusing primarily on mobility and research, and a long term comprehensive quality approach, global learning for all' (de Wit 2019a, p. 15). However, the revised definition adds more ambiguity ('quality', 'meaningful contribution') that still admits most practices.

None of these proposals clearly break with the universal abstraction of phase 1, its privileging of the national/international above the global, or its Western-centrism. Nor do Knight and de Wit (2018). Instead they offer 'knowledge diplomacy', a multilateral framework for cooperation, via higher education and research, on global problems. Here 'national self-interests are still in play' but relations between nations are imagined as 'horizontal' and 'collaborative' (Knight 2019, p. 11). Knowledge diplomacy rests on a nation-bound liberal internationalism. It repeats the DO Internationalisation geo-politics.

In truth revising the definition is no longer an option. The DO internationalisation has become a fixed doctrine with its own symbolic functions. Knight and colleagues are no longer steering either concept or practice. The old evolution of internationalisation has run into sand. If something new is to be said the definition must be wholly set aside. However, this is a bridge too far. From a longer critical distance Stein (2021) reflects on the myths and misconceptions, the promises to 'reconceptualise' and the end of internationalisation argument. She notes 'the intellectual and affective difficulties of "imagining otherwise"',

and a 'lack of stamina for addressing uncertainty and complexity, and perceived entitlements to autonomy, cohesion and control' (p. 1772).

> In some ways concerns about the 'decline' of internationalisation appears to be a thinly veiled concern about a potential declining advantage and dominance of Western higher education. In particular, there is decreasing certainty that there will be a perpetual pool of international students willing to pay exorbitant prices for study in Western institutions (Stein 2021, pp. 1775-1776).

Stein (2021) finds that 'Euro-centred nostalgia' about the pre-commercial era in cross-border education makes it 'easier to uncritically frame the perceived risk of "decline" in the West as collective, universally-experienced loss' (p. 1776). Critics of commercial practices advocate internationalisation for 'the global public good'. But 'who gets to determine what constitutes the global public good?' (p. 1778). She calls for an 'internationalisation that might prepare us to surrender our learned sense of superiority and separation, and affirms our radical interdependence and responsibility to each other and the earth itself' (p. 1779)

Discussion

The next section expands on the flaws in the DO Internationalisation approach, apparent in phases 1-3: the doctrinal teleology at the expense of explanation, the ideological geography, and the effects in relations of power. This is followed by ideas for an alternative approach.

A universal doctrine of practice

In phase 1 Knight positions herself and the definition as practical in nature and intent:

> More emphasis is placed on analysing the conceptual aspects of international education (i.e. meaning, rationale and goals) than on operational aspects (programmes and activities). However, it is important to note that it is written from a professional practitioner's perspective not a theoretician's (Knight 1999, p. 1).

This is rhetorically powerful as justification for a purpose-driven definition. Who can argue against a focus on practice? The implication, that practitioners know more about the real world than theorists, does not need to be stated. But there is something worrying here. Consider the reverse argument. 'I am a theoretician not a professional practitioner. However, I have developed a piece of advice on how your work should be done. (Subtext: My status as a theoretician suggests that you should listen and learn)'. Those engaged in conceptual inquiry also want to understand reality. Knight has said that she is working conceptually, and the DO Internationalisation and accompanying arguments should be judged on the basis of intellectual coherence as well as practical orientation. The definition is more than a how-to-do-it for university leaders, recruiters or cross-cultural teachers.

More fundamentally, why pose an either/or opposition between conceptualisation and practice? A scholarship of practice should be unambiguous and verifiable so as to enable a productive relation between concept-research-practice. It should be possible to develop an idea that is all of conceptually robust, empirically insightful and applicable - one useful to both practitioners and scholars. The problem is not that the DO Internationalisation is purpose driven. The problem is that it does not tick all these boxes. It is not a realist theorisation, it is normative advocacy of an ideal and an 'outlook' (Knight 1994, p. 3).

Friedman (2017) locates internationalisation as an organisational imperative in an 'advocacy tradition' in cross-border education, especially in the US, that predates Knight (pp. 10-11). 'This advocacy orientation can be seen acutely among those who have criticised universities for implementing internationalisation wrong, as they decry the "myths" and "misconceptions" about it' (p. 11). There are 'limitations to this approach for the social scientific study of higher education', states Friedman. It becomes 'hard to separate analysis from advocacy'. While the notion of 'best practices' serves 'to orient a community of practice that believes in this cause', these best practices are based on a theorised vision, an ideal, rather than empirically grounded realities (p. 12).

This helps explain the universal and doctrinal character of the DO internationalisation. Knight (2003) notes the challenges entailed in a universal approach. Education has many contexts, countries and systems (p. 2). Stakeholders have diverse perspectives, purposes and agendas (Knight 1999, p. 10). She is 'not developing a universal definition', but nevertheless 'ensuring that the meaning is appropriate for a broad range of contexts and countries in the world' (Knight 2003, p. 2). More strongly, she states that 'it is important to have a common understanding of the term so that when we discuss and analyse the phenomenon [internationalisation] we understand one another and also refer to the same phenomenon when advocating for increased attention and support' (Knight 2004a, p. 9). It is soft universalism, but universalism nevertheless. The reach of the definition is maximised by couching the words in abstract and inclusive terms. The doctrinal approach feeds powerful affective notions of internationalisation as a shared universal mission and good thing in itself. Nominally, Knight distances herself from the notion that all cross-border activity is necessarily desirable (e.g. Knight 2013), but proponents of the DO internationalisation are talking up a cause, as Friedman notes.

When the method is doctrinal the capacity of words can be overstated. For advocates of the cause, tweaking the theology and scolding the recalcitrants keeps everyone inside the congregation. But when reality fails to conform with the ideal, what is to blame? Those who deviated from the doctrine. The doctrine is beyond reproach. However, it increasingly peels away from practice: the price of abstract universalism is ambiguity and lack of purchase.

To function effectively as a common definition the DO Internationalisation requires priori agreement as to the purpose of 'integrating' an international, intercultural or global dimension into higher education. Having a purpose in itself is not the problem – much scholarship is driven by practical purposes - but it is difficult to achieve a priori agreement about a purpose capable of such widely varying interpretations. The DO internationalisation readily takes in knowledge economy policies, educational commerce, status promotion, and soft power. If these are separated out by redefining internationalisation only as approved practices, universal inclusion is gone, and proponents of the DO Internationalisation have broken with the nation-states at the centre of their strategy. Hence Knight stigmatises policies and practices that she dislikes

rather than excluding them from the definition. This prolongs the life of the DO internationalisation but weakens its normative power. At the same time, by obscuring the actual localities, specificities, differences and faultlines in cross-border education, the universal abstract approach again reduces the purchase on practice (Friedman 2017, p. 14). The most spectacular example is the imposition of a would-be universal Western internationalisation in non-Western countries, as will be discussed.

An ideological geography

As noted, the neutral geographical distinction between the global and national scales is reworked as internationalisation versus globalisation. The DO Internationalisation has maintained this ideological binary for three decades, despite occasional efforts by Knight's collaborators to suggest a global agenda alongside the international (e.g. de Wit 2011b). This implies that all cross-border education is, or should be, framed by nation-states. Legitimate visible practice is confined to the 'national container' (Shahjahan & Kezar 2013) (Figure 1). This ties higher education closely to government, while blocking from view its global activity beyond the nation-state, which is educational, scientific and cultural and well as economic.

On this platform the DO Internationalisation establishes the linear causal framework of GIHE: globalisation transforms internationalisation transforms higher education. This is seductive. It seems to empower higher education agents. It simplifies a complex world, and identifies moves they can make in response to globalisation. You can take back control of the agenda, it states. Together with your national government, a weighty ally, you can protect higher education by articulating, moderating and diverting global forces. The DO Internationalisation also fits common-sense perceptions of policy, politics and practice. It has been adopted in part or whole by many scholars of cross-border education, for example van Vught et al. (2002), Horie (2002), Currie et al. (2003), Chan (2004), Unterhalter and Carpentier (2010), Warwick (2014), Scott (2017). But it constrains agents to a small set of nation-bound options in which higher education is a branch of the knowledge economy.

Figure 1. Geographical framework of the DO Internationalisation, and its limitations

Causation: 'globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation', and 'internationalisation is changing the world of higher education'

National container: The nation-state provides part protection from economic globalisation and filters its effects

External economic globalisation*

Nation-state policy container

Internationalisation activities of institutions**

Higher education institutions***
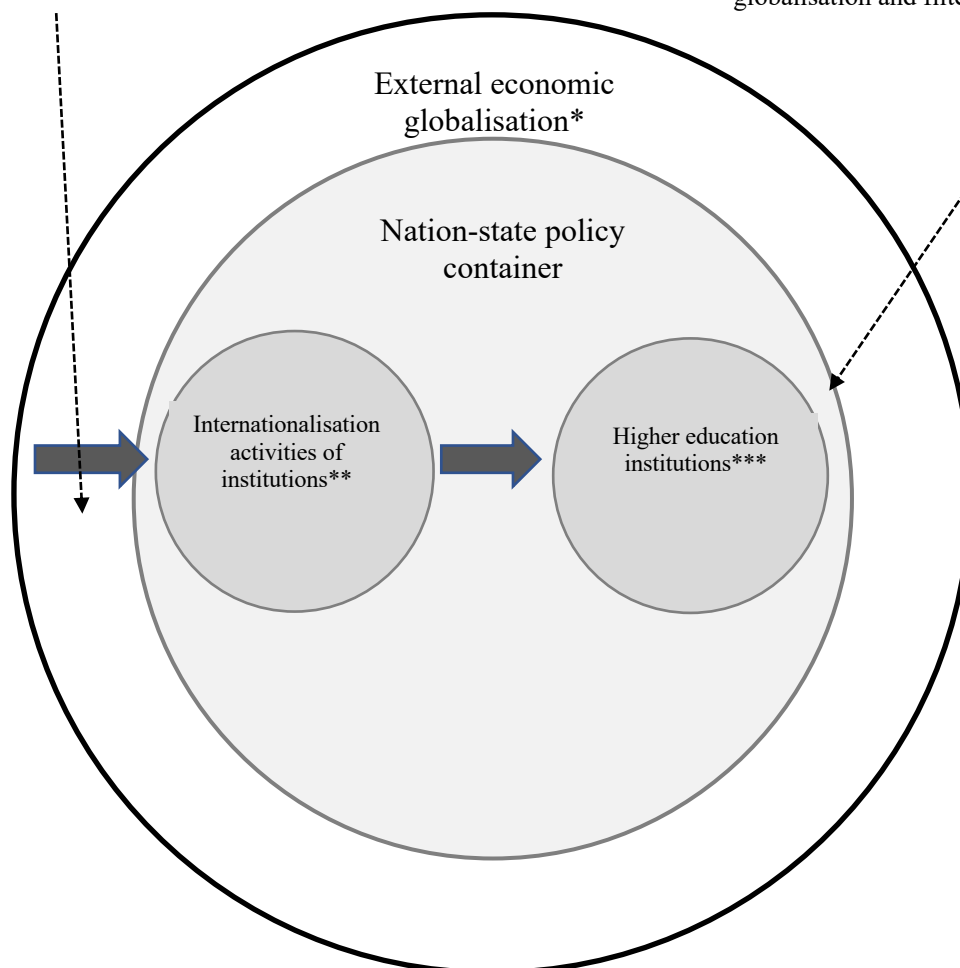
* Other forms of globalisation, e.g. in communications, culture, information and knowledge, are subordinate to external economic globalisation or are ignored. Limitations of the framework are apparent when higher education institutions themselves act as agents in global space and further globalisation, whether the activity is economic, communicative, cultural or knowledge-related. Such activity is then internal to higher education.

** In the DO Internationalisation only inter-national activities are taken into account. Global activities of agents in higher education are ignored (see Figure 2). This occludes phenomena such as global science.

*** In this model agency is unclear. Though in reality institutions shape their own international (and global) strategies, the DO Internationalisation states a reverse causation: internationalisation shapes higher education. This suggests that institutions are weak agents vis a vis external global pressures and the nation-state, but that people involved in internationalisation are powerful agents inside their institutions.

Source: author

This ideological reading of geography is by no means shared across social science. In *For Space* (2005) the human geographer Doreen Massey tackles the space/place binary in discussion of globalisation. In this binary global space is seen as a fixed external structure while place is the site of agency and must be defended. This is the DO Internationalisation imaginary. Massey (2005) argues that defining global capitalism as external and inevitable concedes too much to it, and in any case, the space/place binary is nonsense. Global space and local place are both spaces and all kinds of space are social relations constructed by humans. Space making blends material elements, imagining, and social order. We exercise agency in global relations, as we do in national and local relations. Global activities 'are utterly everyday and grounded, at the same as they may, when linked together, go round the world' (p. 7). Consider the ongoing collaborations in networked global science.

Human geography differs from the DO Internationalisation in that in geography, scale is multiple. People and institutions are active in more than one geographical domain, in the global, national and local scales (Leask & de Wit 2016), and in the regional scale as Knight (1999) in fact notes (p. 3). There is no good reason to ideologically privilege one scale over others, whether the national (and through that the international) scale or the global scale (Marginson & Rhoades 2002; Marginson 2022c). Privileging one scale can only be for normative reasons, to push practice one way or another. This has costs for explanation.

Multiple scales in higher education were not created in the Internet era. From its beginnings the medieval European university had a double geography. This continues. On one hand institutions are embedded in local communities and cities - and though they are mostly part-autonomous they are established, regulated and part-funded by national governments. On the other hand, higher education has always had a de-territorialised and would-be universal mission in knowledge, scholarship and research. Universities have always linked freely to their counterparts. Scholars, students and ideas circulate across borders. The same was true of the great Buddhist centres of scholarship in India in the first millennium CE, like Vikramashila and Nalanda. Today the fact of multiple geography is instinctively grasped by institutional leaders, scientists and mobile students.

The change in the Internet era is that the global has growing weight (Marginson 2022a) through the intensified mobility of people, money, information, ideas and models; the emergence of a global field of comparison; and especially global science (Marginson 2022b). Altbach and Knight (2007) and de Wit (2019) see global science as a function of national policy in a global knowledge economy. It is true nations invest in science to build prestige and technological capacity. But science is produced not by governments but by networked scientists. It is primarily collaborative and located beyond the nation (Wagner et al. 2015).

However, the subtlety is this – this double national and global geography creates not just two spaces of activity, but *two different kinds of cross-border practice* (Figure 2).

First, relations conducted within national policy and regulation and shaped within the multilateral inter-state order. For example, student migration: governments in education countries fix the conditions of and number of student visas. Second, relations in which institutions, people and ideas move across borders with little national intervention. For example, science, and most communications. In some countries cross-border university partnerships are regulated, in others not. The difference between the two kinds of cross-border relation matters. In international action, people and institutions draw on resources from government. In global activities they have less support but more freedom to act. Nation-states do not always have the best interests of higher education at heart. All else being equal, tying higher education agents more closely to the nation-state, as in the DO internationalisation, tends to reduce their options and their freedom of action.

Figure 2. Simplified geographical model of active agency in higher education
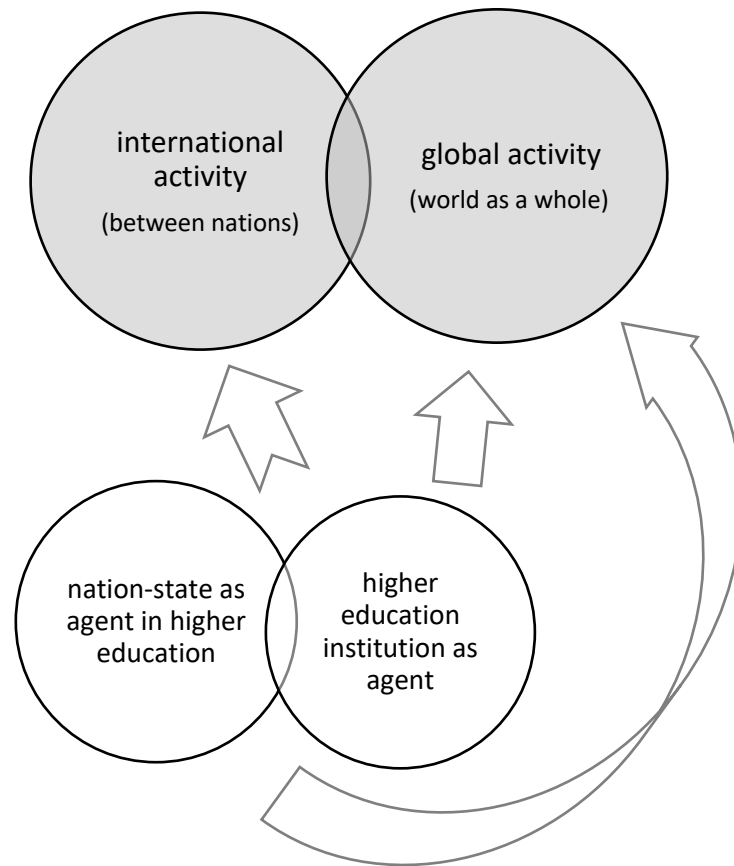
In international relations and activities, higher education institutions and persons act in conjunction with the nation-state. In global relations and activities they act on their own behalf. Nation-states also operate through both inter-national relations, within the multilateral system of states, and operate directly as agents in global relations. The diagram excludes other geographical spaces such as regions

Source: author

Once a multiple geography is accepted the linear GIHE narrative becomes just one part of the story. Causation flows in all directions (Marginson & Rhoades 2002). Globalisation constitutes conditions for internationalisation and vice versa. Repeated international connections foster global integration over time (Zha & Xu 2000, p. 103) and some 'de-nationalisation' (Teichler 2004, p. 23). As well as nations and institutions responding to global factors, their global dealings are calibrated by events at home: for example, lack of national funding drives commercial recruitment, as Knight (2004a) notes (pp. 26-27). Higher education is both subject and object of globalisation (Scott 1998), actor and reactor (Beerkens 2004). Institutions also respond to each other's international and global moves.

Teichler (2009) rejects the DO Internationalisation narrative. Cross-border activities seem much the same whether institutions see national borders as fixed or blurred (p. 96). They pursue both competitive economic agendas and collaboration. If internationalisation and globalisation are distinct and opposing, states Beck (2012), and the former is grounded in agent identity, 'how then did internationalisation go the way of economic globalisation? Where can agency be found?' (p. 138). Beck notes there are multiple kinds of globalisation and internationalisation. Once the idealised notion of DO Internationalisation is discarded it becomes possible to explain how, like globalisation, real internationalisation can be captured - by capitalism, geo-politics or soft power agendas - or blocked by nativism. Other scholars note that while global capitalism is potent, globalisation is not solely neoliberal (Torres & Rhoads 2006). Rizvi and Lingard (2009) argue that 'there is nothing inevitable or necessary about locating globalisation within this [global knowledge economy] imaginary. It is indeed possible to understand the facts of global interconnectivity and interdependence in radically different ways' (p. 90; see also Rizvi et al. 2022). Santos (2006) wants 'an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalisation' based on epistemic heterogeneity, including indigenous knowledge, and in this setting 'the university as public good' (p. 78).

These arguments are cogent and the question remains: why has the distorted geography of the DO Internationalisation achieved such influence? One explanation is the hold of methodological nationalism, 'the belief that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (Wimmer & Schiller 2003, p. 301). In this framework cross-border activity is seen as both wholly determined by the nation-state and marginal to the nation. This is why practitioners of cross-border education are cast as perpetual advocates, always having to talk it up no matter how large it is; and also why global relations and forces can be seen as wholly external to higher education as in the DO Internationalisation framework. (Critiques of methodological nationalism in higher education include Dale 2005, Lo & Ng 2013; Shahjahan & Kezar 2013; Marginson 2022c).

The institutional case studies by Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado (2009) confirm that the DO Internationalisation geography has a common-sense potency. In all four cases the global is seen as a transcendent external

structure; while the local is the site of agency and compelled to react to the global (p. 303). The authors conclude that while the DO Internationalisation is 'theoretically unsatisfying', it 'is itself part of a technology of governance … under this conceptualisation, globalisation is seen as monolithic and unproblematic and the range of potential reactive positions is predetermined' (p. 304). These are the nationally-defined policies, embodying competition and commercialisation in the knowledge economy. The GIHE imaginary is deeply embedded and it locks agents into the very policies that concern Knight and others. Sadly, despite their intentions, the hegemonic DO Internationalisation strategy reinforces rather than weakens neo-liberalism.

Even for some who understand that higher education has a multiple geography, and who know the global scale, it is the national scale, the domain of politics and policy, that always takes priority. Friedman (2017) found this in his interviews with administrators of international programmes in US and UK universities. Unfortunately, as Shahjahan and Grimm (2022) remark, this 'precludes a planetary consciousness, as we are stuck in global discourses underpinned by nation-state categories and identities' (p. 10).

Western-centrism

The liberal internationalism at the base of the DO Internationalisation assumes not just the possibility of a benign capitalism, a wish doomed to be disappointed, but the superiority of Euro-American values and their universal applicability. In an increasingly multi-polar world this position is difficult to sustain. Beck and Grande (2010) critique ideas of developmental convergence based on 'a homogeneous and universal model of Western modernity' (p. 413). However, the DO Internationalisation has been unable to evolve to address this issue. The definition does not specify Western-centric higher education but it helps to sustain it.

The problem is not just unequal resources. The default process of internationalisation takes place after two hundred years of Western domination. Eurocentrism is 'the most fundamental issue' in international higher education (Yang 2019, p. 65; Lo & Ng 2013, p. 38). Though proponents of the DO Internationalisation are aware of the issue, nothing in the conceptual structure of the definition challenges the default of Western centrism.

30

The Anglophone countries, France and Netherlands between them educate the majority of incoming students. These nations maintain patterns of brain drain and epistemic exclusion inherited from colonialism and the neo-imperial domination by the US after World War II. This power is sustained by inherited institutional concentrations, claims to cultural superiority, global English, and the compelling attractions of Whiteness to cross-border students (Shahjahan & Edwards 2022). Relations between Western higher education and the rest 'continue to be predicated on the Western belief that it is morally superior and that it is its right to act on such a basis' (Yang 2019, p. 66). One test is the curriculum. In the thirty years of the DO Internationalisation the cultural contents of the curriculum have been little impacted by non-Western knowledge. Programmes for global citizenship and global competences mostly (not always) focus on equipping Westerners to operate freely on a global basis. Capacity building projects in emerging countries often perpetuate dependence on the West. All of this calls for a wrenching self-appraisal in the colonising countries, as Stein (2021) notes. Nothing in the DO Internationalisation triggers such a self-appraisal.

What Knight (1999) calls 'neo-colonisation' is not a pathology of globalisation separate from and opposed to the DO Internationalisation. It was always part of internationalisation and will remain so until there is a change in the relational structure of internationalisation. This relational structure – or, rather, the lack of one - is a key weakness in the definition.

Knight (2004a) rightly states that 'the term international emphasises … the relationship between and among different nations' (p. 8). But this sensibility is not structured into the definition. As the wording shows, the DO Internationalisation is *solely focused on the qualities of the self* without regard for the effects on the other party. Internationalisation means 'integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education'. Inescapably, this is one's own education. Changing one's own education is the end in itself, not fostering outcomes for all parties. As Beck (2012) points out, the DO Internationalisation formula sees the institution as 'a point where activity begins and ends' (p. 142) not as part of a larger constellation of connections.

The DO Internationalisation not only allows agents to be self-referencing without an obligation to be other-referencing, it shuts out the effects of that self-internationalisation on the other. It not only makes Euro-American centrism possible, it structures it into the heart of the DO Internationalisation when that is pursued by Western institutions and systems. The framing is narcissistic and negates the very idea of *inter-national* relations. The other side of the Western claim to universalism is Western individualism and self-regard.

It is unsurprising that the DO Internationalisation is harshly criticised from non-Western positions. From the global East, Yang (2014) states that in 'non-Western societies … a so-called "international" perspective has been imposed from the outset' (p. 153; see also Yang 2016).

> What is lacking is an appropriate combination of the 'international' and the local. Within the contemporary context of Western dominance, internationalisation of higher education in non-Western societies necessarily touches on longstanding knotty issues and tensions between Westernisation and indigenisation. This is particularly true in China, a country with a continuous history of fostering unique cultural heritages for thousands of years (Yang 2014, p. 153).

From the global South, Ogachi (2009) states that the pre-existing global hierarchy, global competition for student talent and exploitative commercial providers 'deconstruct the notion of an altruistic internationalisation of higher education process' (p. 333).

> Although internationalisation of higher education is touted as a solution to the problems facing higher education provision in Africa, the reality is different. What internationalisation may well do is to deepen the relation of dependency of local higher education institutions on higher education institutions in industrialised countries' (Ogachi 2009, p. 333).

Teferra (2019a) takes issue with the idea of internationalisation as 'intentional' in the rebadged definition by de Wit et al. (2015). 'Internationalisation as regards the global South, particularly Africa, is far from being an intentional

process' determined by agents. Universities in the global South engage in 'massive consumption' of ideas, knowledge and textbooks from the global North 'while staunchly, but helplessly, adhering the international academic and scholastic norms and values'. Former colonies maintain the academic language of the coloniser. Global rankings 'have pushed the internationalisation pendulum from intention to coercion', pressuring institutions 'to do things not necessarily within the realm of burning institutional needs'. Teferra (2019b) sees the 'benevolent intentionality in internationalisation' as 'a continuation of the neo-colonial project which the global South needs to do away with'. He calls for 'a more neutral, robust, "intention free" and inclusive definition'. Definitional ideas of internationalisation should not focus on what it 'ought to be', but on what it is, on the essence of the phenomenon'. They should be realistic.

In response to Teferra (2019a) de Wit (2019b) acknowledges that most discussion of the internationalisation of higher education 'has focused on the Western world, with little attention being paid to the implications of colonisation'. Agency must be built in Africa. Yet the two are at cross-purposes. De Wit wants the West to be more inclusive. Teferra wants a different relational framework, with responsibility and accountability at both ends.

Alternative approaches

If the DO Internationalisation is set aside, we can explore approaches less ideological and doctrinal, grounded in social science understandings of geography and more explanatory of the international and global aspects - and hence more effective in informing scholarship, policy and practice. Such concepts should be consistent with distributed agency and relational, mutual and just processes in cross-border higher education. In particular:

Table 1. Examples of preferred approach to definitions, using adjectives as well as nouns

Term	Definition
International	Phenomena or relations between nations, inter-national, or between organisations or persons in nations
Internationalisation	Creation or growth of relations between nations, or between organisations or persons in nations
Reciprocal internationalisation	Inter-national relations between agents (organisations or persons), mutually influenced and governed by just exchange
Neo-colonial internationalisation	Inter-national relations that maintain asymmetric agency, i.e. coercion or dependence, in continuity with the colonial period
Curricular internationalisation	The creation or growth of inter-national phenomena or relations in the forms and/or contents of the curriculum
Global	Phenomena or relations pertaining to the world as a whole, or a large part of the world
Globalisation	Any extension or intensification of relations on the world or planetary scale, leading to convergence and/or integration
Democratic globalisation	Relations between nations, organisations and/or persons on the world scale grounded in openness and distributed agency
Neo-liberal globalisation	Policies that further the development of unfettered economic markets and accumulation of capital on a worldwide scale
Communicative globalisation	Worldwide convergence and/or integration through the expansion and intensification of networked messaging and data transfer

Source: Author

1. *Explanation and practice*: Terminology should be conceptually robust, empirically explanatory and applicable, and useful to both scholars and practitioners.
2. *Social science and ideology*: Terminology should be non-ideological and neutral in the scientific sense, and to the extent possible, consistent with sound recognisable usage in other social science disciplines (e.g. the use of scale in geography).
3. *Relationality and power*: Terminology should facilitate understanding of, and the observation and analysis of, relationality in cross-border higher education, including inequalities and relations of power.

Table 2. Questions about relationality and power in cross-border higher education

Global scale	
Cooperation in science and knowledge	Which knowledge is included in the recognised global pool and which is excluded (nations, places of origin, languages, disciplines etc.)?
	Who has access to what knowledge and on what basis (openness, cost)? Who makes the decisions about knowledge validation and inclusion?
	In a research partnership, who initiates? Who sets the terms? What is the division of labour? Who determines topic and method? Authorship? Resource flows?
Partnerships between universities	In a bilateral partnership between institutions, who initiates? What is the net flow of resources? Who sets the terms of the agreement?
Mobility of institutions	What is the operating basis? Home country rules, language? Host country? A hybrid? How are governance and accountability configured? Resource flows?
Mobility of programmes	Which country regulates the content and mode of delivery? Access and distribution? What is the language of learning? How open is the programme?
National/international scale	
Cross-border mobility of persons for study	In considering bilateral relations between two countries, what is the balance of people movement (temporary and permanent) between them?
	What are financial flows between the country of student origin and the country of education, taken all aspects into account?
	To what extent are curricula and pedagogy transformed by educational mobility, i.e. what educational-cultural hybridity develops, if any?
Joint programmes with national agreement	Who initiates? Who sets programme terms and contents? What is the division of labour? Flows of resources, knowledge, people? Is dependency created?

Source: author

Terminology should not seek to shape practice by constituting one universal field of cross-border higher education without regard for the diversity of positions and activities. Rather, terminology should provide concepts that explain cross-border higher education with maximum inclusion and clarity, and enable the free identification of similarities and differences, thereby informing practice. A definition should require a priori agreement as to interpretation not included in the definition. If a definition is purpose driven it should nevertheless

maximise the scope for explanation. For example, terminology should help to explain questions of educational justice, not by building normative concepts into the terminology so as to pre-set what can and cannot be observed, but by providing tools that illuminate issues of justice for all to see, enabling people to make up their own minds.

Tables 1 and 2 start the process. The purpose of Table 1 is non-ideological language. Neutral approaches to globalisation and internationalisation, and a non-pejorative geography, are used. Table 1 assumes that both global and international relations are multiple. Different kinds of relation are indicated by adjectives. These do the work in discussion of analysing, normalising or politicising, without violating the explanatory power of the core noun. Table 1 of course does not exhaust the possible variations.

Table 2 is more tentative and incomplete. It suggests ways of observing and judging relationality in cross-border education, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. New ideas are always a collective process, and in this domain are a worldwide process. Tables 1 and 2 are a modest beginning. We can look forward to further discussion.

Conclusions

The DO Internationalisation project is the unification of research and practice in cross-border higher education on the basis of hegemonic concepts and their interpretation. This project has had a thirty-year trial and its defects are clear. It should be abandoned.

Reality cannot be shaped to match the normative definition, while a definition that is restricted by Euro-American centrism and a disabling geography cannot fully explain reality. Advocates of the DO Internationalisation have variously sought to locate its problem in the reality or the exact wording of the definition, but the two could never have been aligned.

First, the character of the DO Internationalisation as a doctrine for shaping practice weakens its capacity for explanation that could inform practice. Second, more specifically, the definition embodies an ideological geography. A normative distinction between two kinds of cross-border practice (desirable

educational practices vs. undesirable competitive and commercial practices) is mapped onto the geographical distinction between the global scale and the national/international scale. This traps thinking about cross-border education in methodological nationalism, blocking a clear understanding of its global aspects, and subordinating its local practice to knowledge economy policies. Third, the definition, framed in universal terms, is unable to acknowledge real world diversity or discriminate clearly between different kinds and effects of cross-border education. Fourth, the application of the universal definition has empowered the Euro-American world but subordinated the rest.

Some readers may see the critique in the present paper as unnecessary. From time to time, advocates of the DO Internationalisation note issues in the geography (maybe 'globalisation' is not all bad) and relationality (decolonisation should be discussed), and have suggested modifications. The 2011 paper by Brandenburg and de Wit was the highpoint of this internal criticism. However, the doctrinal project itself, its universalism, its claim to unite scholarship and practice in a single totemic sentence, have never been abandoned. The purpose and core wording of the 1990s definition have survived each turn in the debate. Its flexible application in diverse national and local contexts, the many permutations in which its essential mission is restated, recall the comment of Shahjahan and Edwards (2022) about the 'malleability' of hegemony, 'its ability to shape-shift in response to its present environment to (re)construct its past and future' (p. 2). In the end, the limited self-criticism and the 'end of internationalisation' talk have served to protect the discourse.

It is essential to start again with an approach less ambitious in one sense and more ambitious in another. Less ambitious, in that it abandons the unrealistic conceit of uniting all cross-border practices while nudging the non-conforming into line. More ambitious, in that it is internally coherent, more explanatory, more effective in developing genuine reciprocity based on equality of respect and in opening the way to decoloniality in cross-border higher education, and able to combine the discussion of the inter-national with discussion of the global and worldwide scales. Tables 1 and 2 may assist in developing this approach. But others will have more and better ideas. This is a domain in which there are many voices to be heard, some that must be heard for the first time, and the critical reflexivity is collective.

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