What is ‘global’ higher education?

CGHE series on international and global higher education - Seminar 2: The global and the post-colonial

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21 November 2019
What is ‘global’ higher education?

1. Global spatiality and higher education
   - Global space
   - International and internationalisation
   - Global and globalisation
   - Global, national and local
   - Relations of power

2. Other ideas
   - Methodological nationalism
   - Jane Knight internationalisation
   - Centre/periphery models

3. Ways forward
   - Global civil society
   - Multi-positionality
1. GLOBAL SPATIALITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Imagining the global as a distinctive space
Seeing the global: The overview effect

When astronauts first saw Earth from afar in the Apollo 8 mission in 1968 — the US's second manned mission to the moon — they described a cognitive shift in awareness after seeing the planet “hanging in the void”. In 1987, the writer Frank White interviewed and studied testimony from 29 astronauts and came up with the ‘overview effect’ theory, arguing that the sight of earth from space transforms astronauts’ perspectives on themselves and the world.
“One morning I woke up and decided to look out the window to see where we were. We were flying over America and suddenly I saw snow, the first snow we ever saw from orbit. Light and powdery, it blended with the contours of the land, with the veins of the rivers. I thought autumn, snow - people are busy getting ready for winter. A few minutes later we were flying over the Atlantic, then Europe, and then Russia. I have never visited America, but I imagined that the arrival of autumn and winter is the same there as in other places, and the process of getting ready for them is the same. And then it struck me that we are all children of our Earth. It does not matter what country you look at. We are all Earth's children, and we should treat her as our mother.”

- attributed to Soviet cosmonaut Aleksandr Aleksandrov, Soyuz T-9 mission, 1983
Is the world a subject?
A geo-spatial approach
(neutral definitions)

• International = between nations, inter-national
  A relation that spans the border between two nation-states, without any necessary change to those nation-states

• Internationalisation = the process of development or enhancement of cross-border relations

• Global = constituting and constituted at the level of the world as a whole, or the level of large world regions
  The ‘global’ is not the world and every element in it, not a universal container. It refers only to those elements that pertain to the world as an integrated whole

• Globalisation = the process of integration and convergence at the level of the world as a whole
  The extension, intensification and institutionalisation of connectedness
The ‘global’ has three principal spatialities

1. *Global systems* based in world-spanning linkages and relationships, e.g. global science

2. *Cross-border connections*, e.g. student and faculty mobility, university partnerships

3. *Global diffusion* of key ideas and models, e.g. the research ‘multiversity’ modelled in global rankings

Global city networks criss-cross the nation states and form a global system

A map showing the distribution of GaWC-ranked world cities (2010 data).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_city
‘The global’ has three principal spatialities

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Global diffusion: The spread of the rankings’ model of research university
There are multiple kinds of global convergence and integration (economic, communicative, cultural, scientific, political, ecological; capitalist, social democratic, indigenous, etc).
Economic globalisation: income inequality
Theil index: 1990-2010
(a fall in the Theil index indicates that inequality is reducing)

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Communicative globalisation

Which spatial relationship between national and global?
**Glonacal** positionality in higher education (global, national, local at the same time)

- Higher education is formed, regulated and practiced in *national* (and also in Europe and to some extent elsewhere, pan-national regional) systems
- *Local* activities and agents are important to all institutions
- *Global* activities and agents are especially obvious in research universities
- On a good day, institutional strategy synchronises local, national and global. Institutions vary in their emphases, in the mix of local, national and global

Four kinds of agents, active in all three ‘glonacal’ dimensions

THE NATION
Higher education and research are seen as sources of global resources and position

THE UNIVERSITY
The research university must go global at this time but it’s less important for other tertiary institutions to do so

THE FACULTY
Those engaged in research often collaborate across borders but the majority of all faculty work is local

THE STUDENTS
Curiosity and career drive a small but growing minority to form themselves via international mobility
Rankings as ‘disembedding’

Rankings strengthen elite research universities as global players, conferring on them a global identity and greater independence vis à vis their national government, i.e. ‘disembedding’ them from the nation (though within limits) This corresponds to the primarily global character of knowledge-based networks. However, not just research, but elite status has also been partly globalised.

In these processes, other higher education institutions are further separated from the leading institutions
Friedman (2018) on UK global strategies

Position in the university field shapes the teaching mission

All four UK universities saw themselves as generating ‘cosmopolitan capital’ but did so in radically different ways

• Neo-imperial Old Elite University saw itself as world-leading and ‘global’ just by being itself unchanged (*le monde c’est moi*).

• New Elite University pursued an aggressive global agenda, offering global competence, the ‘cultural transformation of the self’, as a tool of individual advantage and upward mobility.

• Urban Access University wanted its students to gain global sensibilities while preparing for professional employment.

• Valley Access University saw cosmopolitan capital as more marginal but a possible asset in seeking local employment.

Friedman (2018) on national and global sensibilities of elite university leaders

In interviews with leaders of elite institutions in UK and US:

• All leaders gestured to the global level, valuing free cosmopolitan exchange and collaborative research

• At the same time they routinely understood their national role as ‘common sense, natural, and enduring’, saw their universities as embodying national characteristics, and as obliged to serve national interests

• Arguably, states Friedman, ‘banal’ or everyday nationalism was central to the ‘conceptualization and enactment of internationalisation’ in these universities.

• ‘These findings complicate discussions of elite universities as globalizing and unmooring from the nation-state framework’

‘Taking back [national] control’ vs. international student mobility

‘If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere’ ~ Prime Minister Theresa May, Conservative Party conference, 5 October 2016

The Independent, 12 December 2016
Knowledge:
A thing or a flow? A gift or a commodity?

Percentage of papers internationally co-authored: 2003 and 2016
Global science is becoming more open, distributed, autonomous, and dominant *vis a vis* national science

“The organization may be more open to new members... fewer communications pass through the leading nodes or countries ... international cooperation is particularly advantageous for less advanced countries... The global network presents opportunities for science policy-makers to seek efficiencies that were not available when a few nations dominated science.” (p. 12),

“... the international and national networks may be shaping each other in a process of co-evolution between the national institutional structure and the global network. The relative influences of national and international networks appear to vary among nations. Globalization and internationalization can first be considered as a tendency, but in more than half of the countries, the international network has become the better predictor of the national participation at the global level than vice versa. In other cases, national patterns of collaboration still prevail.... The global network is arguably now a more stable system that serves as a source of vitality and direction to R&D at all lower levels” (p. 11, p. 12)

“Collaboration has grown for reasons independent of the needs and policies of the state ... This dynamic system, operating orthogonally to national systems, is increasingly difficult to influence and even less amenable to governance as it grows (p. 2, p. 12)

Selected examples of intensive regional research collaboration: 2016

Rate of international co-authorship in science and engineering papers between named countries in the pair, relative to their overall rate of co-authorship with all countries. **world average = 1.00**
Proportion of all papers internationally co-authored, 2006 and 2016

Share of world S&E articles with international collaboration, by S&E field: 2006 and 2016

S&E field

- Astronomy
- Geosciences
- Biological sciences
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Agricultural sciences
- Psychology
- Computer sciences
- Medical sciences
- Engineering
- Other life sciences
- Social sciences

Percent

- 2006
- 2016
## First language speakers and total language speakers, Ethnologue 2018

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National investment in R&D, 2016
OECD data, $s billion, constant 2010 USD PPP

United States: 464.3
China: 410.2
Japan: 149.5
Germany: 104.1
South Korea: 75.9
France: 55.8
UK: 42.9
Russia: 42.2
Taiwan: 32.5
Italy: 26.1
Canada: 24.7
Spain: 18.0
Turkey: 17.3
Netherlands: 16.0

2016
Hegemony: Who cites US, who is cited by US

The rate at which papers by authors from selected countries are cited by papers with authors from United States, compared to the rate that these countries cite United States authors, science and engineering papers, 2014. **world average = 1.00**
The global research system?

- Arms race of competing nations?
- Market of competing universities?
- A flat network?
- Hierarchy (and if so, of what kind?)
The global research system?

• *Not an arms race*: national industry sources most of its innovations from foreign not national science, nationally generated ideas help industry abroad more than at home, science is increasingly collaborative on a global basis

• *Not a global market of WCUs*: research collaboration is dynamic, both collaboration and competition are primarily bottom-up, university agency is less determining than researcher agency

• *World science combines network and hierarchy*. Both dynamics are in play and each has an ongoing potential to modify the other. Nevertheless, despite inequalities and hierarchy, science is more open than are most social systems, and less determined by states and economic capital. It has evolved towards more not less openness and inclusion over time  
  
  [but watch this space...]
2. OTHER IDEAS
Methodological nationalism

- ‘Methodological nationalism’: the assumption that the nation is the ultimate horizon of meaning, ‘the natural social and political form of the modern world’ (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 301).

- Methodological nationalism blocks from view those features of the higher education landscape not part of the master-system; and leads to under-estimation of phenomena that cross borders, or pertain to global systems, including the world research system, the spread of neoliberal policies in national systems, and the world-wide spread of aspirations higher education.


- On the other hand, some global analysis unduly prioritises cross-border connections and flows. Nations matter
Explanatory concepts as practices:
The normative definition of ‘internationalisation’

• ”Internationalisation at the national, sector and international levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight 2003)

• The concept is also used at the course/programme level and has been transferred into an attribute of persons

• Knight has struggled with the distinction between internationalisation and globalisation, revising several times

• While Knight and colleagues attach their definition of internationalisation to multilateral equality between states and educational/cultural values, it has been attached also to many other purposes such as revenue raising

Jane Knight (2003), Updating the definition of internationalisation, *International Higher Education*, Fall 2003, pp. 2-3
Internationalisation for whom by whom?
Is it a ‘property’ (like human capital) or a relationship?

- Rui Yang: Internationalisation as practised by Western universities is not experienced as a benign developed country, with its international understanding, helping a developing country to emerge. It is experienced as culturally dislocating and invasive and robs agency as much as it builds agency.

- Damtew Teferra: A more inclusive and more neutral definition of internationalisation is needed to explain what internationalisation means for higher education in Africa. The normative Jane Knight / Hans de Wit definition, which is concerned with the characteristics of higher education in rich countries, conceals the negative impact of neo-imperial Western forms of internationalisation in Africa.


Centre-periphery model of worldwide higher education

More complex than centre-periphery suggests

More than one ‘centre’, networked groupings
3. WAYS FORWARD
Global science and global civil society
The global commons: Neither state nor market

• Governments invest in R&D to secure a technological advantage in innovation. But scientists collaborate to advance knowledge and solve global problems. There is much immense voluntary cooperation, not just between research groups but between universities. (It recalls the argument about voluntary cooperation in civil society by Elinor Ostrom)


• How robust will be the growth dynamic of global cooperation, in the face of heightened nationalism and the new Cold War between China and the United States, remains to be seen

• Can higher education help to bring global society forward to a more integrated, combined perspective? If so it would need to be based in global diversity, not Anglo-American hegemony
Multiple perspectives on the global
Western political culture
(note absence of the global)
Post-Confucian political culture

tianxia
all under heaven

state/
society

family

individual
Multiple identities, multiple locations

- The world is a compound of plural identities and differing ways of seeing. This suggests the advantages of a trans-positional method, not only in understanding the world but in developing understandings that can be common to global civil society.

“Observations are unavoidably position-based, but scientific reasoning need not, of course, be based on observational information from one specific position only. There is a need for what may be called “trans-positional” assessment—drawing on but going beyond different positional observations. The constructed “view from nowhere” would then be based on synthesizing different views from distinct positions. The positional objectivity of the respective observations would still remain important but not in itself adequate. A trans-positional scrutiny would also demand some kind of coherence between different positional views.”

Global potentials in higher education

• The global in higher education and knowledge is the ‘space of the possible’

• All persons act in conditions they do not determine, as Marx famously remarked about history. But there is more scope for agency (vis a vis structure) than is often realised, in education and in society, and this is particularly true in the global setting

• Persons, institutions and nations have varied agency freedom. Building agency freedom through self-formation is both an end in itself and the means to other ends. Developing and sustaining autonomy – not an absolute autonomy from society or the state, but an autonomy to act positively in society – is the key to making the best of the potentials of the global sphere