GEOGRAPHY IS OUR FRIEND:
SPACE AND SCALE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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CGHE webinar 10 November 2022

Peter Bruegel the Elder, The Tower of Babel, c. 1563

2002 glonacal paper
Growing global and regional activity, nation-states still crucial
Space in higher education created by human agents
Space as material, imagined, practised
Multiple scales in higher education
Conclusions

Zhejiang University, China
THE GLONACAL PAPER

https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014699605875
HIGHER EDUCATION IS A MULTI-SCALAR SECTOR

• Higher education is not always or inevitably ‘national’ or ‘global’. It is always both of these, and more
• Individual and institutional agents have open possibilities and causation can flow from any of the intersecting scales of activity – global, regional, national and local

EXPANDING GLOBAL SCALE IN SCIENCE, 1996-2020 – US NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD DATA FROM SCOPUS

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONALLY CO-AUTHORED PAPERS, WORLD: 1996-2020
The authors identified three main themes in the literature on global and international aspects of higher education

1. The role of nation-states in higher education is declining amid the growing impact of global relations;
2. The role of the nation-state in higher education remains very important;
3. Higher education institutions tend to adapt to global norms

LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGICAL NATIONALISM

- Methodological nationalism: ‘the belief that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world’ (Wimmer & Schiller 2003). It rests on the ‘internalist’ fallacy that the trajectory of nations is entirely determined by their own efforts (Conrad 2016)
- ‘Methodological nationalism operates both about and for the nation-state, to the point where the only reality we are able to comprehensively describe statistically is a national, or at best an international one’ (Dale 2005)
- This ‘precludes a planetary consciousness, as we are stuck in global discourses underpinned by nation-state categories and identities’ (Shahjahan & Grimm 2022)
SPACE = SOCIAL SPACES WITH MATERIAL COORDINATES
SPACES ARE CONSTELLATIONS OF RELATIONS THAT PEOPLE MAKE FOR THEMSELVES

THIS

NOT

‘IF TIME UNFOLDS AS CHANGE, THEN SPACE UNFOLDS AS INTERACTION’ - MASSEY
SPACE IS AGENTIC AND MULTIPLE


HOW AGENTS MAKE SPACE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A. space as material
   (e.g. resources, policies, networks, pre-given hierarchies etc)

B. space as imagined
   (e.g. perspectives, interpretations, ideas, ideologies etc)

C. space as social practices
   (e.g. actions, programmes, connections, systems etc)
ACTS OF SPACE MAKING, ACTS OF POWER

Shaping science as an arms race in technology

Creating a high participation e-learning space

RANKING AS SPACE MAKING: GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION AS ONE WORLDWIDE COMPETITION AND HIERARCHY

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<tr>
<th>university</th>
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<th>top 5% papers</th>
<th>all papers</th>
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EVENTUALLY EVERY SPACE ‘ESCAPES IN PART FROM THOSE WHO MAKE USE OF IT’ - LEFEVRE

MULTIPLE SCALES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

the world as a whole (contains activity in all the scales)

- global
- pan-national region
- national
- sub-national region (state, city)
- local (institution, discipline)

agency and activity in any one scale can intersect with any of the other scales
IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE ALL THE SCALES ARE HIGHLY ACTIVE

THE PAN-NATIONAL REGION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
NATION-STATES CONTINUE TO BE CRUCIAL IN SHAPING HIGHER EDUCATION

THE LOCAL SCALE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – SECURE HAVEN IN A MOVING WORLD?
THE LOCAL SCALE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – SECURE HAVEN IN A MOVING WORLD?

GEOGRAPHICAL SCALES FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER
SINCE THE SCHOLARLY MONASTERIES IN INDIA AND THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE, HIGHER EDUCATION HAS HAD TWO KINDS OF CROSS-BORDER CONNECTION: GLOBAL AND INTER-NATIONAL

- **Global relations** – flows of knowledge and ideas, scholar to scholar links, university to university agreements, the global science system. For example, almost 30 per cent of articles are now written by scientists from more than one country;
- **National/international relations** – conducted through the territorial (now nation-state) framework, for example student mobility which is mediated by government visa policies, and the negotiations between national accreditation agencies.

MIXING AND MATCHING GEOGRAPHICAL SCALES
THERE ARE NO RULES OF SPACE AND PLACE' - MASSEY

THE EXPANDED VERSION OF THE PAPER IS AT:

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SOME REFERENCES