

IS THE IDEA WRONG OR IS THE FLAW IN REALITY?

ON THE DEFINITION OF
'INTERNATIONALISATION'
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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KNIGHT DEFINITIONS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

1994

‘Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university or college. 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’.

2003/2004

‘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’.

‘DEFINITIONS CAN SHAPE POLICY’: SOFT UNIVERSALISM IN A FIELD OF DIFFERENCE

‘A challenging part of developing a definition is taking into account its application to many different countries, cultures and education systems....At issue is not developing a universal definition but rather ensuring that the meaning is appropriate for a broad range of contexts and countries of the world’ (Knight 2003).

‘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 2004)



SCHOLARLY TAKE UP OF THE DEFINITION

Paper	Google Scholar cites 1 November 2022
Knight, J. (1994). Internationalization: Elements and checkpoints. <i>CBIE Research No. 7</i> . Canadian Bureau for International Education. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED549823.pdf	1003
Knight, J. (2003). Updating the definition of internationalization. <i>International Higher Education</i> , 33, 2-3. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2003.33.7391	1570
Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodelled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. <i>Journal of Studies in International education</i> , 8 (1), 5-31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832	3841

FLAWS IN THE DEFINITION-DRIVEN APPROACH

1. Teleology has crowded out the mission to understand and explain: the definition is underpinned by a highly ideological geography (internationalisation good, globalisation bad), blocking global activities from view
2. The universal terms of the definition enhance its reach across practice, but provide equivalent support to any and every cross-border activity – from commercial recruitment to education for global citizenship
3. The definition is self-centred and non relational, and leaves untouched the historical legacy of Euro-American centrism in cross-border education



HIGHER EDUCATION HAS LONG HAD *TWO KINDS* OF CROSS-BORDER CONNECTIONS

- **Global relations** – flows of knowledge and ideas, scholar to scholar links, university to university agreements, the global science system (almost 30 per cent of articles are now written by scientists from more than one country)
- **International relations** – conducted through the nation-state framework, for example student mobility which is mediated by government visa policies, negotiations between national accreditation agencies. The Knight definition imagines cross-border activity as all pushed into the national/international container

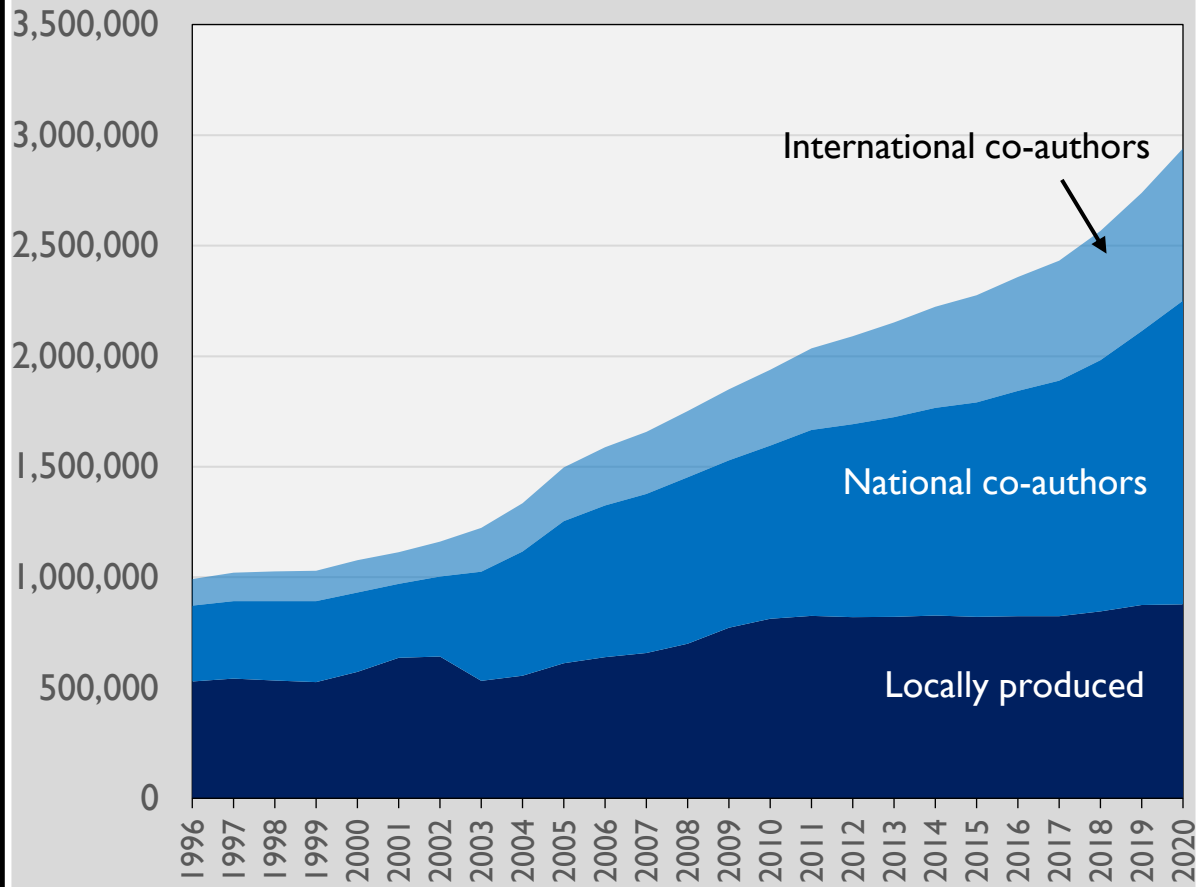




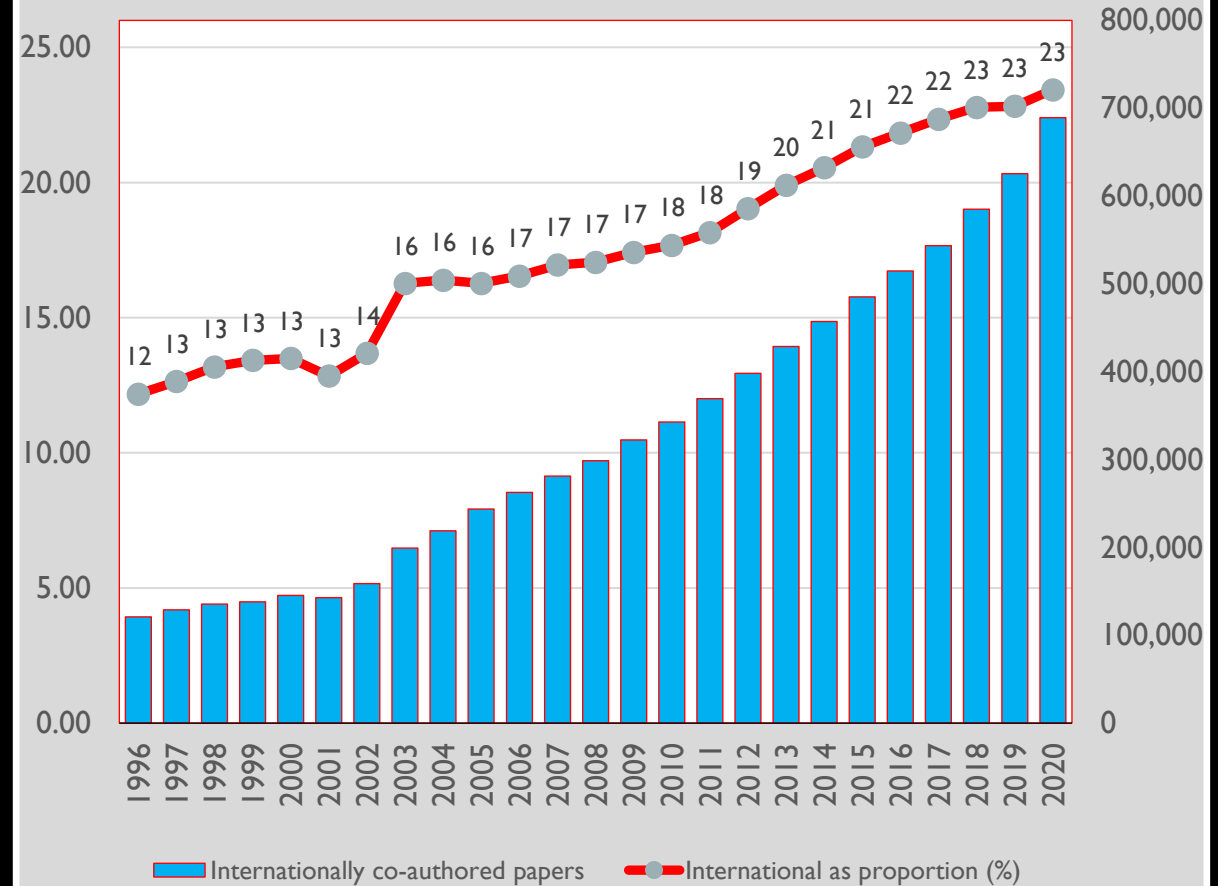
GLOBAL SCIENCE

- Since the Internet began in 1989 there has been great growth in all networked information-based systems. A global science system has expanded rapidly, grounded in global publishing in English and networked collaboration, but excluding knowledge in other languages and all indigenous knowledge
- Global work often dominates intellectually in the science disciplines, though research and scholarship in social sciences, humanities and some professional fields is often more local-national than global
- Global science is resourced by but not controlled by individual national governments. It is shaped primarily by grass-roots interactions between researchers working across national borders

NUMBER OF SCIENCE PAPERS IN SCOPUS, BY TYPE OF COLLABORATION, WORLD: 1996-2020 - NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD



NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONALLY CO-AUTHORED PAPERS, WORLD: 1996-2020 - NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD



RATIONALE FOR AN IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH

- '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 nations". Developing a definition of "international education" in this way results in a rather neutral approach to the concept'
- 'The distinction between internationalization and globalization of higher education is controversial and often debated ... it is not the literal meanings of these terms which causes the debate but the implied purpose and impact of internationalisation versus globalisation which is at the root of the controversy'.
- '... concern about globalisation being a neo-colonist approach to international relations' (Knight 1999)
- '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)

THE IMAGINED GLOBAL GEOGRAPHY AND CAUSALITY

**'globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation', while
'internationalisation is changing the world of education' (Knight 2003)**



national container
protects higher
education against
globalisation

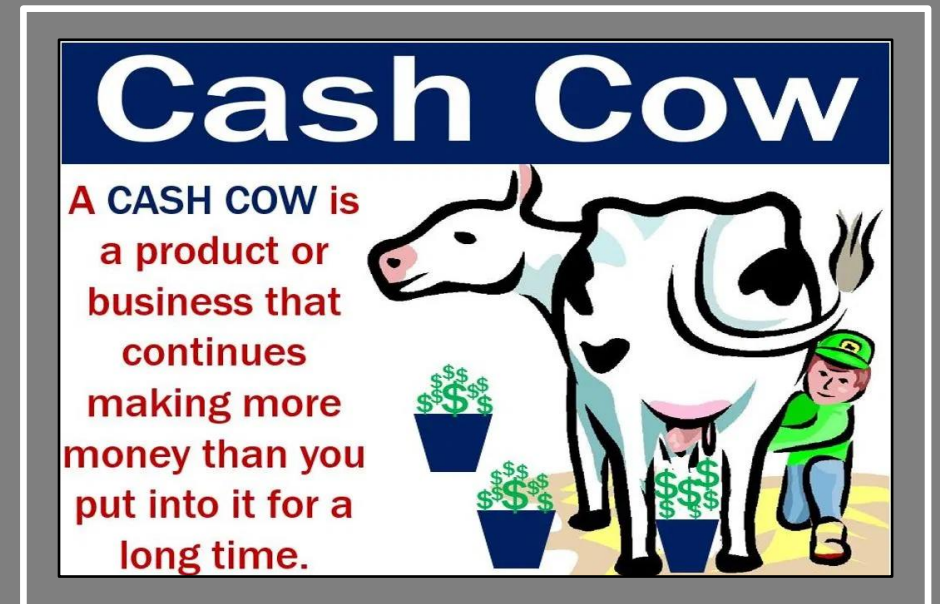
advocates of
internationalisation
have a key role in
their institutions

BUT

- Many national governments and university leaders have adopted policies of global economic competition and implemented them in higher education, rather than insulating higher education from global forces as imagined. These policies are often implemented under the banner of ‘internationalisation’
- and many higher education institutions are global agents in their own right – higher education is both object and subject of globalisation
- globalisation is about knowledge and culture as well as economics
- so Knight’s imagined distinction between external economic globalisation (threatening) and internal educational internationalisation (agent controlled) breaks down at several points

IT'S ALL 'INTEGRATING AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION' INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

- Stein (2021) cites the University of British Columbia international strategy document which states: "We recognize our colonial past and present, our contribution to systemic inequities, and we commit to advancing global engagement that rests on a foundation of integrity, inclusivity, equity, accountability, mutual benefit and positive impact'
- 'UBC raised inter- national student tuition by over 50% between 2015 and 2018, and the fees continue to rise. This equates to a tuition cost seven times more than domestic students'



BRANDENBURG AND DE WIT ON 'THE END OF INTERNATIONALISATION' (2011)

- '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... 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' and develop new 'values and rationales'
- 'The future of higher education is a global one'.
- 'Possibly we must even leave the old concepts of internationalisation and globalisation and move on to a fresh unbiased paradigm'



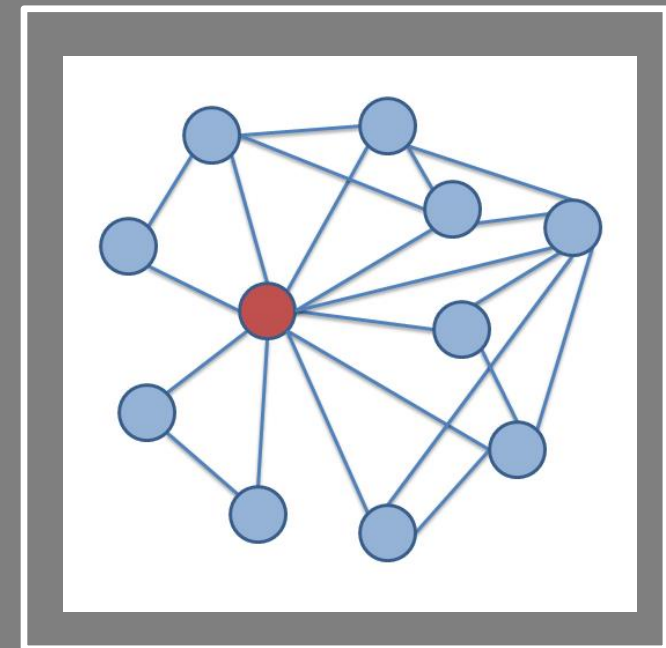
2015 DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONALISATION BY DE WIT AND COLLEAGUES FOR EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

‘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’



INTERNATIONALISATION IS NOT A 'GOOD THING' IN ITSELF - MUCH DEPENDS ON THE SOCIAL RELATIONS IN WHICH IT IS PRACTISED

'If individuals and institutions become increasingly interconnected, but power and resources are not redistributed and inherited patterns of relationship are not reimagined, then this may intensify existing patterns of inequality within an already uneven global higher education landscape' (Stein 2021)



CRITIQUE OF THE DEFINITION FROM THE GLOBAL EAST

‘To non-Western societies, modern universities are an imported concept. They originated from ‘Europe, spreading worldwide from the mid-19th century to the present time mainly due to colonialism. Even the countries that escaped colonial domination adopted Western models as well. The European-North American university model has never been tolerant toward other alternatives, leading to the inefficacy of universities in non-Western societies, on whom a so-called “international” perspective has been imposed from the outset. 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’ (Rui Yang 2014)



CRITIQUE OF THE DEFINITION FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

- ‘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)
- ‘Internationalisation as regards the global South, particularly Africa, is far from being an intentional process’. Universities in the global South engage in ‘massive consumption’ of ideas, knowledge and textbooks from the global North ‘while staunchly, but helplessly, adhering to 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 2019)



THE DEFINITION IS NOT REVISABLE: ELEMENTS OF AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

- 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 power, inequality and hierarchy



A SINGLE DEFINITION AND UNIFIED FIELD OF INTERNATIONALISED HIGHER EDUCATION IS NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR DESIRABLE

- National, cultural and educational diversities in higher education are a normal operating condition, not something to be 'managed' and unified from a national/international centre
- A unified approach to or notion of the purposes of cross-border higher education is no more feasible than a single unified approach to the purposes of higher education as a whole. If there is a single common field of practice, whose values, purposes and agendas would prevail?
- Terminology should not seek to shape practice by constituting one universal field of cross-border higher education regardless of diversity. It should explain cross-border higher education on an inclusive basis, enabling the free identification of similarities and differences so as to better inform practice. Hence our conceptual apparatus and terminology should be tools for – as clearly as possible - describing, distinguishing, analysing, investigating and changing the different practices in cross-border education

USING NEUTRAL TERMINOLOGY AND ADDING MEANING

term	Meaning
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
Global	Phenomena or relations pertaining to the world as a whole or a large part of the world
Globalisation	Extension or intensification of relations on the world or planetary scale, leading to convergence and/or integration

Examples of the use of adjectives to direct the meanings of these geographical terms

Curricular internationalisation	The creation or growth of inter-national phenomena or relations in the forms and/or contents of the curriculum
Reciprocal internationalisation	Inter-national relations between agents (organisations or persons), mutually influenced, governed by just exchange
Neo-colonial internationalisation	Inter-national relations that maintain asymmetric agency, coercion or dependence, in continuity with colonialism
Communicative globalisation	Worldwide convergence and/or integration through expansion and intensification of networks and data transfer
Democratic globalisation	Relations of nations, organisations and/or persons on 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 world scale

RELATIONALITY AND POWER IN CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

Global scale

Cooperation in science and knowledge	Which knowledge is included in the global pool and which excluded (nations,, languages, disciplines etc.)? Who has access to what knowledge and on what basis (openness, cost)? Who decides validation and inclusion? In a research partnership, who initiates? Division of labour? Topic and method? Authorship? Resource flows?
Partnerships between universities	In a bilateral partnership between institutions, who initiates? Net resource flows? Who sets the terms?
Mobility of institutions	What is the operating basis? Home country rules, language? Host country? Hybrid? Governance? 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 students	In bilateral relations, what is the balance of people movement (temporary and permanent) between the nations? What are financial flows between country of student origin and country of education, across all aspects? To what extent are curricula and pedagogy transformed by educational mobility, if at all?
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?

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