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Sustainability In Internationalization of Higher Education-Curriculum Internationalization as A Means To An End?

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SUSTAINABILITY IN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CURRICULUM INTERNATIONALIZATION
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Multilayered processes of globalization, in recent decades, have loosened higher education's predominantly national frameworks and have embedded them in contexts that are "multiscalar" and "multisectoral", captured by the ubiquitous term "internationalization". Internationalization, seen to be a response by higher education institutions and systems to processes of globalization, is no longer a peripheral activity within higher education institutions but has come to guide the very logic of their functioning, affecting multiple areas of decision-making (Altbach & Knight, 2007). These "qualitative leaps" have altered the conceptualization of internationalization as a "gradual change" to a purposeful systematization and routinizing of the idea in universities, regardless of their capacities and levels of operation, thus foregrounding them to be simultaneously local, national, and international (Teichler, 2004). This reconceptualization of borders in turn casts the goals of internationalization, especially those concerning student learning and development outcomes – the focus of this chapter – increasingly in notions of "global citizenship", acquisition of international, and intercultural competences (GII) (Soria & Troisi, 2014). These purported "ends" provide powerful leitmotifs for universities (but also ranking agencies) to articulate, foster, and incentivize internationalization energetically across areas of higher education functioning, such as teaching, research, collaborations, to name a few.

Against this background, international student mobility, which I use to include both recruitment of international students and facilitation of international student exchange, has been a key "means" to implement and measure internationalization initiatives of universities. However, ever since the "internationalization at home" factor, following certain setbacks of the European experience, became a reality to contend with in the early 2000s,

notions of "comprehensive internationalization", "deep internationalization", "transformative internationalization" are the new paradigms within which universities are compelled to not only "align rhetoric with practice" (de Wit & Leask, 2015)but also question the "sustainability" of such endeavours (Ilieva, Beck & Waterstone, 2014) (Wit, 2017) (Handa, 2018), making it imperative to integrate internationalization "into the ethos and key functions of higher education" (Hudzik, 2015).

This chapter aims to develop the concept of "sustainability of internationalization", which is still somewhat of a hazy term. Internationalization as *concept* and internationalization in *practice*, as I will argue, create "disjunctures" within the discursive and praxis contexts of internationalization. It is essential to critically examine the sites of these disjunctures so as to be better able to exploit the potential of internationalization for "good", thereby making it "sustainable". In the following sections, I seek to locate these disjunctures in the interlinked frameworks of i) Conceptualization of internationalization ii) Notions of global citizenship and iii) International student mobility. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the concept of "sustainability" and the potential of curriculum internationalization as a means to both mediate the disjunctures and enhance internationalization activities of universities.

Disjunctures in the narratives of internationalization

Internationalization of higher education has become an umbrella term to include a wide range of initiatives, policies, strategies, and processes of universities across the world as a response to globalization. As Marginson points out, higher education in recent times can be conceived as a "world-wide arrangement" not in the sense of a "global unitary system" but rather as a highly differentiated and complex combination of (i) global flows and networks (for example, knowledge and finance) (ii) national higher education systems with their own specificities (iii) individual institutions operating locally, nationally, and globally at the same time (Marginson, 2006). These overtures are fueled by market uncertainties, pressures of national higher education systems, and not the least of all, *social imaginaries* of institutions.

Internationalization is rationalized as a "way of being" or as an inescapable reality. Universities seek to proactively engage themselves in the

internationalization process, as it helps articulate and put at work what I would term as the "universalist" impulse of a university and its sense of agency in the world. In the long history of the university as an institution, this impulse was contained with the emergence and consolidation of nation-states, especially in Europe, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and subsequently in the rest of the world after the Second World War. By the 1990s, much had changed: a new post-Cold War world order, emerging economies, demographic shifts (and divides) in the global north and south, mass immigration, European integration process, "Knowledge Economy", and above all, as far as the university and its position in society is concerned, the "massification" of higher education, where the enrollment of students in tertiary education and the generation of "skilled" graduates is seen as crucial for societies to respond to not only immediate national needs but also be able to compete with other countries in an increasingly globalized world. This has propelled universities and higher education systems to view, think, and act *per se* on scales and in ways that can no longer be explained by "container theories" of the nation-state. The classic position of universities in a globalizing world is to *imagine* themselves as not only being firmly located in constellation that is resolutely "international" broadly speaking and "glonacal" (Marginson, 2006) when viewed in a more nuanced manner, as *agents of change* across borders. This embeddedness in "World Society" (2006) and this renewed sense of purpose predisposes universities to rationalize internationalization as something "necessary" and for the "good" of all.

Depending on capacities, motivations, and priorities, higher education institutions view internationalization as (a) a "state of things" (b) "process" (c) "doctrine" (Stier, 2004). These approaches can be further reified into three categories to explain the sense of engagement universities display with regards to internationalization:

i)   Regard: This is remarked usually at a nascent stage of internationalization; here, universities begin to appreciate the international/" glonacal" context in which they operate; they become "internationally aware".

ii)   Role: Typically, this can characterize a mid-stage of internationalization, where universities are able to articulate a mission statement, implement small-scale reforms, initiatives, and restructuring, so as to be "internationally committed".

iii) Reinvention: Usually, visible at an advanced stage of internationalization, where universities develop well-outlined mechanisms to consolidate or enhance initial gains and recover from setbacks, position internationalization at the center-stage of their policies and processes, and proactively seek to shape larger global outcomes of internationalization; here, universities are seen to be "internationally focused".

Of course, it is true that these categories are not strictly exclusive of one another and often overlap, as the overall internationalization endeavour of a university is invariably dependent on the extent and rate at which individual departments and academic members can be part of the process and make meaningful contributions, besides other variables such countries' economic capabilities, national policies and priorities, talent and human resources etc. Therefore, it is not surprising that, while on the one hand, as the notion of internationalization gains ascendancy in higher education discourse, on the other hand, universities (but also scholars) increasingly tend to reject any "one-size-fits-all" definition or prescription of internationalization and proceed to an adjustment in their own understanding of the term, deploying it as it best suits their purpose (de Wit, 2002) (Knight, 2004). This creates a **primary disjuncture** in the narrative of internationalization itself. What emerges are then "multiple narratives", exposing both convergent and divergent modes of praxis by universities with respect to internationalization, besides evidencing the complexity and diversity that characterize the field.

However, regardless of the rationales, universities carefully attempt to "soften" the perception of internationalization as being driven by market interests to recruit fee-paying international students by instead projecting it as a *conscious engagement* for enhancing personal and professional development of several stakeholders, especially students and teachers. Internationalization of higher education is seen to be a meaningful mode of "multiscalar" engagement by universities to counter negative effects of globalization and develop perspectives and opportunities that are enabling and enriching for individuals, communities, nations, and the world.

Acquisition of global, international, and intercultural competencies: A desirable outcome

Although there are differences to be observed across higher education systems and institutions worldwide when it comes to definition, approaches,

and rationales towards internationalization (Knight, 2004; Van Damme, 2001; Altbach and Knight, 2006; Teichler, 2004), a singular point of consensus emerges with regards to the objective of training of graduates to develop a wide variety of technical, life skills, and intercultural competencies, all aimed towards membership in a global "community" has come to be identified as one of the primary arguments that allows universities to undertake internationalization (Maringe & Foskett, 2010) (Soria & Troisi, 2014). This consensus is articulated as an academic rationale that seeks to establish the relevance for developing curricula and graduates capable of responding to "global challenges", necessity of alternative perspectives to Western (dominated) models of knowledge, comparative learning etc. The competencies required to satisfy these new challenges are broadly categorized as global, international, and intercultural (GII) competencies and refers to knowledge about "several dimensions of global and international cultures; appreciation of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity; understanding the complexities of issues in a global context, and comfort in working with people from other cultures" (Soria & Troisi, 2014).

Hawawini (2011) argues that for higher education institutions to successfully transform themselves into truly global institutions, it is paramount for them to educate their home-based students and help *them* become effective global citizens. This would require a change of perspective towards internationalization itself. As against the popular definition of internationalization as integrating an international/cultural dimension *into* teaching, research, and service functions (Knight 1994, Knight & de Wit, 1997), a more "outward looking" of internationalization would articulate it as a process of "integrating the institution and its key stakeholders –its students, faculty, and staff into a globalizing world" and a global knowledge network (Hawawini, 2011). Thus, universities have to display *readiness* to meet the demand by both students and employers for courses, programs and research topics that are framed at a broader global level and deal with global issues and thus distinguish themselves from their peers (Ibid).

The juxtaposition of i) the student as a broader "global citizen" and ii) the exhortation on universities to train such "socially conscious" citizens capable of impacting both local and world society at large and therefore develop possibilities within education programs for the above objectives to be achieved is the other imaginary which forces a **second disjuncture**.

The notion of "global citizenship" effectively blurs the distinction between an "international" and "non-international" student. The projection of the student into the larger world society is accompanied by a mutually reinforcing ideological positioning of the university as a "committed" *global* actor. The epistemological (knowledge, ways of knowing) and institutional (ways of doing) dimensions seek to complement one another in increasingly de-territorialized spaces. That these dimensions are not decontextualized from broader global agendas will be elaborated in the following section.

International student mobility and internationalization of higher education

International student mobility is seen to be not only a key indicator of the degree of internationalization in higher education but is also linked with other issues such as "economic competitiveness", "attraction of talent" and "wealth creation" (Kehm, 2005). The UNESCO defines an internationally mobile student as "an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin" (UNESCO, 2015). In recent years, the number of students on international mobility programs has almost doubled, from 2 million students in 2000 to over 4.8 million students in 2016 (UNESCO, 2018). This constantly growing number of international students demonstrates a) a validation of the logic of mobile students as a key component of internationalization, b) increased awareness and *internalization* of the phenomenon and c) as a normative praxis on a worldwide scale.

However, these developments are offset when viewed against the larger picture of the massification of higher education systems. The majority of countries in the world are witnessing an increased enrollment in tertiary education (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). According to Maslen (2012), the number of students enrolled in higher education worldwide is set to increase up to 262 million by 2025, almost all of which will be concentrated in the Global South with China and India accounting for almost half the number. This besides, the number of students going to study abroad is likely to rise to eight million as well (ibid). Comparing international student mobility and tertiary enrolment statistics, it is clear that (there is already and) there is going to be a disproportionate ratio of students going abroad to the number of

students studying/completing their studies in the countries of their origins. In short, international mobility of students, although constantly increasing, is still available only to a relatively very small proportion of students enrolled in tertiary education. This gap will only increase proportionately to enrolment in higher education enrolment. How far can student mobility, and as a consequence, "internationalization", be achieved against the backdrop of such burgeoning populations? The problem becomes particularly acute considering the volatile nature of market dynamics, rising costs of higher education services, immigration policies, and constrained organizational capacities of universities. And when this is contextualized against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015 (called Global Goals or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), which envisages near universal access to and enrolment in higher education over the next decade, with *inclusive* and *equitable* quality education and *lifelong learning* opportunities are made available for all (OECD, 2017) being major determinants, key questions arise on the *sustainability of international student mobility* and as an extension, about internationalization as a practice. This produces the **third disjuncture**, the gap between the means and ends in internationalization of higher education, as far as student mobility is concerned.

Sustainability of internationalization and internationalization of curriculum

The three disjunctures outlined in the previous sections, i.e., i) Multiple narratives of internationalization, ii) Blurring of lines between "international" and "non-international" students in the context of global citizenship and iii) Gap between the means and ends of internationalization not only outline the complexity of internationalization as discourse and practice but also necessitate a more critical understanding of the same. *Sustainability* of internationalization assumes special significance given the inescapable reality of globalization and concomitantly the role expected of universities to respond to the opportunities and challenges thereof. However, the aspect of sustainability of internationalization has not been studied in detail and is relatively under theorized. For example, it is not very clear to what extent the "international" and "intercultural" dimension can be incorporated within universities with varied organizational capacities, how an international

perspective can inform all major functions of a university, how universities can prioritize their international activities with local and national imperatives, how universities with limited resources can still contribute to larger sustainable goals, the equity and access to international education across social groups, especially in developing economies etc.

Ilieva et al. (2014, citing de Castell et al.) remark that although the notion of sustainability is well inscribed mainly in popular understandings related to the environment, such as conservation, resource management, environmental education etc., little attention has been paid to the sustainability of "*educational* domains", or as they go ahead to term, "*educational* ecologies" that can guarantee desired results within internationalization. This is not unsurprising given the self-validating logic of internationalization as an end in itself. In as much as economic rationales do guide internationalization endeavours of universities (and very strongly at that), it would indeed be self-defeating for universities to view or attempt to articulate internationalization in purely economic terms. As described in the previous sections, the global aspirations of the university are transposed on to and legitimized through the projection of its students as future members of the "global community". Internationalization, when viewed through this prism, forces universities to cease adopting ad hoc measures and commit themselves instead to develop approaches that transfer the benefits of the internationalization agenda to *all* its stakeholders. There is, thus, a greater need than ever before to establish long-term strategies that can address issues of inequality of opportunities and outcomes in international education. As de Wit & Leask (2015) point out,

> In this world, coherent and connected approaches to international education, which address epistemological, praxis, and ontological elements of all students' development, are urgently needed. Focusing attention on these goals has the capacity to transform an institution's approach to internationalization and the identity of the institution. (p 345)

Key questions also arise on how universities may indeed set about achieving outcomes of "global citizenship", how these skills and competences are defined and measured, and these aspects are often overlooked in most discussions of internationalization. Earlier notions of international student mobility, as the key (if not only) catalyst towards acquisition of global

competencies, are also thus brought under the scanner so as to make internationalization more inclusive and convert it into a veritable institutional *ethos*. As early as 2004, Kehm and Teichler pointed out to the "quantitative limits" of the often-brandished student mobility and international experience. They also call our attention to the fact that while in the early stages of internationalization (the mid-1980s and 1990s), international learning would have seemed a rarity, in recent times, the notion of an international experience has not only become somewhat commonplace but also mediated by the "internationalization of everyday life" itself (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). This certainly is the case of student experiences in the global north and therefore it becomes doubly incumbent upon universities in other parts of the world to approach the plethora of connotations that the term "internationalization" routinely throws up with caution and engage with the discourse on internationalization, often emanating from vastly different university traditions and motivations, more critically.

These deliberations force us to look closer at the epistemological dimension, the primary site, within institutions that shapes learning, and as an extension, teaching and research too – the *curriculum* – and examine how "internationalized" it is or is in alignment with larger institutional strategies on internationalization and its scope to foster sustainability of the internationalization process. Curriculum has a tendency to "slip through the cracks" in the discursive context of internationalization. It is subordinated within two levels of functioning within institutions: while university administrators typically concern themselves with "form-issues", i.e., the policy, strategy, structure and form of internationalization, "content-issues" relating to curriculum innovation, considerations of pedagogical practices and perspectives are left to, often, the academic staff (Stier, 2004). These two levels, although not necessarily decoupled from one another, nevertheless, operate for most part in separate fields and matters of curriculum are largely dependent on individual motivations and conceptualizations of academic staff to align themselves with larger institutional strategies on internationalization. Curriculum internationalization is perceived as a "trickle-down" process, in the sense that is seen as an "outcome" and not as an "enabler". Table 9.1 has been developed to present some common notions of "curriculum internationalization". These notions are limited if internationalization as a process has to be inclusive and sustainable.

Table 9.1. Typology of Curriculum Internationalization

Typology	Examples	Remarks
Discipline	Natural Sciences (Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology etc.)	*Inherent, limited to disciplines*
Specialized studies	Area studies (European Studies, South Asian Studies etc.)	*Inherent, limited to specific kinds of studies*
Student Mobility	Across disciplines	*Presence of international students means international curriculum*
Programs for a specific public	Stand-alone or set of courses specifically for international students	*Created only for specific audience*
Twinning Programs/ Joint Degrees	Partners propose a different curriculum/share or develop one jointly	*Curriculum is international in scope, but limited only to certain programs*
Delivery Format	Transnational delivery – MOOCs; Offshore Campuses	*Not clear of links to curricula at home institution*

Ever since the "internationalization at home" paradigm has gained attention, leaders and academics have had to reconsider hitherto presumed and taken for granted links between international student's/student mobility/international programs (to name a few) and an international curriculum. The assumption that the mere presence of international students or the delivery of a program in an offshore setting evidence an international curriculum is beginning to be recognized as flawed, not to mention the polarizing effect this creates between "domestic" and "international" students (Leask, 2015). As curriculum is not only the "material" basis through which knowledge is communicated but also where the three missions of the university – teaching, research, and service – of the university find expression and meaning, it becomes necessary to privilege student learning on campus over student mobility and engage more critically with the assumption that the more inbound and outbound student mobility programs that a university develops, the curriculum would "internationalize" on its own. It must be added that researchers have always included curriculum as one of the key elements if not the key element of internationalization (Knight, 1994; Leask, 2001, 2005; Otten, 2003; Gacel-Ávila, 2005). It is through a holistic curriculum that universities can seek to train graduates with the required skills and competencies towards broader international goals of sustainable development and creating an equitable and tolerant society (Gacel-Ávila, 2005). Thus, the depth and scope of a university's academic content becomes essential for enhanced internationalization. A "conscientiously" internationalized curriculum may

be thought as one where the academic content, pedagogy, and assessment take into consideration diverse perspectives and make it accessible to all as opposed to a few students. As Leask (2009), points out, a well-developed *internationalized* curriculum "engages students with internationally informed research and cultural and linguistic diversity and purposefully develops their international and intercultural perspectives as global professionals and citizens". It is to be noted that the point being underscored here is not one of having to neglect international student recruitment or exchange; on the contrary, these activities are to be further enhanced, and universities should continue to seek newer avenues of promoting the same. But my argument here is that these initiatives are more likely to succeed when there is an equally concerted effort to make the international experience more accessible. After all, there has to be something unique about the learning experience at a university that would make an "international" student study there in the first place.

Conclusions and outlook

The above sections pointed out to disjunctures in discursive and praxis contexts of internationalization and attempted to highlight how, through the mediation of an internationalized curriculum, a new paradigm may be envisaged in which universities begin to see students, whether international or domestic, that they are active contributors and stakeholders in a global society. It is essential that curriculum moves to the forefront of the internationalization process in order to cope with the shifts that multilayered contexts of internationalization have induced and see it as a point of departure to enhanced internationalization than a point of return. It is the curriculum which possesses the orientation and pedagogical stimuli for universities to develop essential international practices towards its important missions of teaching and research, and thus this dimension instead of being optional or "hidden", needs to be fleshed out to the open. As Australian universities have made it a mission statement to articulate that their curricula has an import on international perspectives and global citizenship, it is equally incumbent upon higher education institutions and leaders to highlight more powerfully the potential strengths and uniqueness of their study programs in terms of learning, as these often tend to be obscured in projections of numbers and clichéd statements of producing "world-class leaders" or being a "world-class university".

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