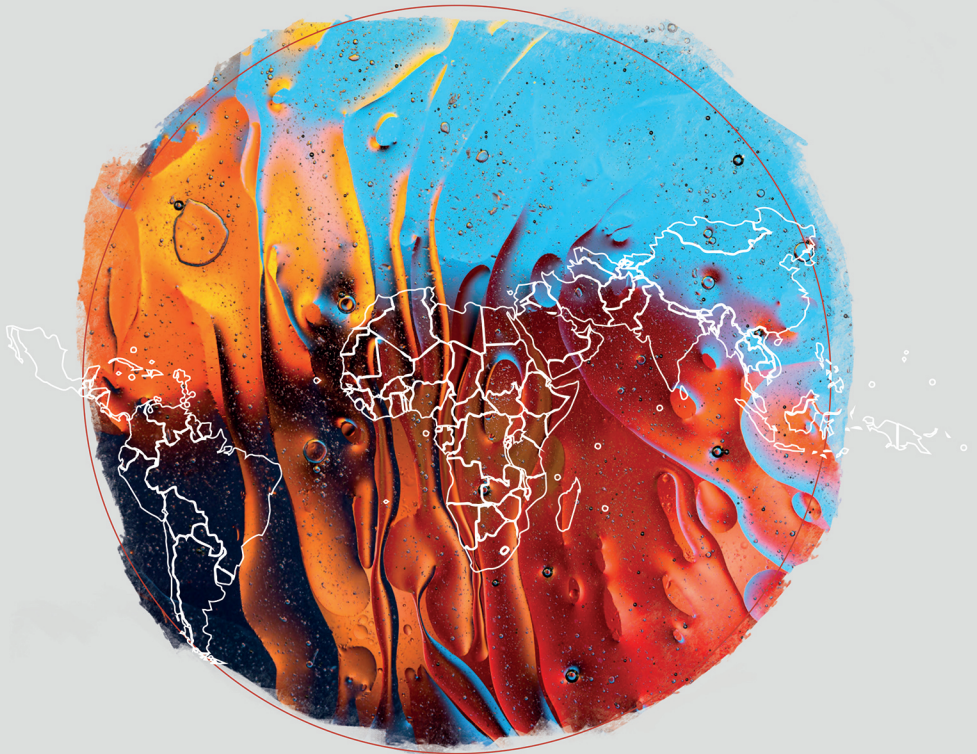


DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY



CRITICAL
REFLECTIONS ON THE
INTERNATIONALISATION
OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Edited by

EMNET TADESSE WOLDEGIORGIS AND CHERYL QIUMEI YU

Critical Reflections on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Global South

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY

A fair society is one that is just, inclusive and embracing of all without any barriers to participation based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, age, class, ability or any other social difference. One where there is access to healthcare and education, technology, justice, strong institutions, peace and security, social protection, decent work and housing. But how can research truly contribute to creating global equity and diversity without showcasing diverse voices that are underrepresented in academia or paying specific attention to the Global South?

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAPES	Coordenação De Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior [Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel]
CsF	Ciência Sem Fronteiras [Science without Borders]
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DRI	Diretoria de Relações Internacionais [Office of International Affairs]
FAUBAI	Forum of Advisory Councils for Brazilian Higher Education Institutions
HEI	higher education institution
HBI	historically black institution
HUST	Huazhong University of Science and Technology
HWI	historically white institutions/universities
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
ICT	information and communication technology
IHE	internationalisation of higher education
IA	internationalisation abroad
IaD	internationalisation at a distance
IaH	internationalisation at home
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	intellectual property
IsF	Idiomas Sem Fronteiras [Languages without Borders]
KTP	knowledge transfer partnership
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), and intersex
MENA	Middle East/North Africa
MUIC	Mahidol University International College
NAFSA	NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NLMM	neoliberal market model
NPM	new public management
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYU	New York University
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SSC	South–South cooperation

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STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TNE	transnational education
TSUIC	Taksin University International College
UFES	Federal University of Espirito Santo
UFMG	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoA	University of Alpha
WCU	world-class university
WTO	World Trade Organization

About the Authors

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Foreword: Ecosystems of Internationalisation

Ronald Barnett

What does it mean for higher education to be international? What is it to venture into a process of internationalisation? And what does it mean to form critical reflections on these matters? A beauty of this volume – so well edited and orchestrated by Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis and Cheryl Qiumei Yu – is that it does precisely what it says, and implies, on the tin. Here, we receive both new insights into what it is to be international and some highly nuanced critical reflections on the state of play in the current debate on the matter. Moreover, we are taken further, for the volume also offers us an array of suggestions as to how practices might be taken forward, not least with its admirable case studies from around the world. Given that this volume so adroitly accomplishes all of that, all I can helpfully do here in a Foreword, I think, is to chance my arm and share – to draw on the book's title – some speculative *Critical Reflections on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Global South* of my own.

The idea of internationalisation is intriguing itself. What is it to be *international*? Split in this way, the concept becomes open and – to use a popular term – emergent. It suggests not only two-way traffic between nations but some kind of equivalence; some kind of symmetry in contributions to a complex set of relationships (plural). But that 'inter' also hints at inter-actions and dynamism. The parties in the relationship enjoy a level of agency and exercise it. Moreover, when used in the context of a massive global system such as higher education, those interactions multiply with responses and counter-responses happening continuously. Internationalisation becomes a theatre of effervescent actions, encounters, and counter-actions. Country x takes in students from country y, only to be followed by a new situation in which country z provides a new offer (abolishes its visa requirement and/or lowers its fees) and so gains some (if not all) of those students and more.

This is a setting, therefore, of some turbulence. Internationalisation has become an arena of global competitiveness. Moreover, the competitiveness is not just institutional (between institutions of higher education) but is now geo-political. International students are the not just bearers of potential for export markets but carry geo-political clout. Moreover, as this volume so powerfully identifies, the platforms on which internationalisation takes place are far from

level: indeed, the relationships between institutions are often *asymmetrical*, with university x exercising more epistemological and status leverage than university y (with which university x is forging some kind of interconnection). And this asymmetry is evident in many forms – epistemic power, geo-political power, language, cultural capital, and financial resources.

There is, accordingly, a raft of different kinds of relationships that fall under the banner of internationalisation. I have in mind not only the activities that carry the flags of ‘research’ or ‘students’ but of the micro-activities that are subsumed by those broad categories. The *pedagogical relationship* that involves international students, for example, connotes very many pertinent actions and interactions, sentiments and values, and presuppositions and orientations, as to how the pedagogical relationship is construed and practised by both teachers and students; and these dimensions reach deeply. For instance, just how are the bureaucratic online forms for student registration being understood by the different parties? What seems straightforward to those in the host institution may seem daunting, peculiar, arcane or even threatening to a youngish international student on the other side of the world and in a distant culture.

But in speaking of a raft of different relationships between institutions, I have even more in mind. Institutions may be adjudged to have *intentional* and *non-intentional* orientations in a cross-institutional international relationship. Institution x (in one country) may work with institution y (in another country) in setting up a joint programme of study, or may send out its emissaries to institution y in a bid to woo potential students. University x may also have determined, as part of a new research strategy, to encourage its staff to organise joint projects with university y. (The extent to which these activities are genuinely joint, as indicated, is a further matter.) The point is that such ventures are examples of *intentional* forms of internationalisation.

However, (at least in the aggregate) institutions – say in the Global North – may and do exercise *non-intentional* interconnections with institutions in the Global South. And, viewed in the round, those interconnections may be judged to exhibit power differentials. World rankings are not mere descriptors of states of affairs but exert much influence, and in situations of considerable inequities. Some may even say that there is a new form of colonialism present here; call it *epistemic colonisation*. Be that as it may, in a world of knowledge capitalism – which includes varieties of cross-institutional competition – institutions stand in relation to each other with all manner of *degrees of intentionality*.

In these brief reflections, we have many hares running, indicative of multiple interests, forces, patterns, and power-plays at work. These vectors are variously epistemic, educational, national, political, cultural, and identity-forming in character. Also, they are to be found right across most (if not all) of the activities and practices of universities (including student admissions, the contents of study programmes, the pedagogical relationship, the languages of instruction and communication, style of papers in journals, funding of cross-national research projects, and construction of cross-national projects).

In shedding light on all these movements and patterns, we might be tempted to call up the idea (especially from Félix Guattari) of ‘lines of flight’. Present here, it

might be suggested, are multiple lines of flight, going in a myriad of directions. A single institution may be involved in projects and positions of internationalisation that even cut across each other. On the one hand, staff may be encouraged to seek to understand something of the cultural backgrounds and pre-conceptualisations of teaching and learning held by their international students. On the other hand, those same staff – in, say, reviewing papers for academic journals – may be unwittingly down-valuing texts from those students' very home nations that reflect alternative conceptions of bonafide academic work.

Ultimately, however, the 'lines of flight' gambit is inadequate, for the forces at work are not travelling in definite directions, but are much more haphazard. In the settings that may be construed as spaces of internationalisation, a more powerful metaphor is that of ecosystem. What we are witnessing is much more a set of mega-ecosystems moving in and out of each other, like giant clouds. These ecosystems include those of knowledge, learning, economy, the polity, individuals and their identity, culture and societal systems. These ecosystems flow into each other and internationalisation flows across them all and they in it.

Seeing internationalisation in this way (as flows within and across even larger flows) suggests both that internationalisation is subject to huge forces that come at it out-of-the-blue (the clouds keep shifting) and yet has some possibilities of its own – at least marginally – to shape matters. Options may keep arising for those (individuals, institutions, and nations) concerned with internationalisation. And this is where this volume scores so well, in conducting its conversations so widely, for it opens windows to new possibilities in widening diversity and in lessening inequalities – and even at global levels.

I have just named seven great ecosystems in which internationalisation is implicated – knowledge, learning, the economy, the national and global polity, individuals (each as a complex ecosystem), social institutions, and culture. These are surely the ecosystems most commonly in play in the relevant debates. However, identifying ecosystems at work in this way prompts the issue as to whether there is any other major ecosystem that might come into the reckoning concerning internationalisation. Is it not time, for instance, that Nature – as an ecosystem – made an entrance into the plot?

In its use of fossil fuels and wider environmental impacts, internationalisation is obviously affecting Nature. But there are surely wider and more diffuse layerings at work, evident in the very absence of Nature in the internationalisation debate. There is a darkness here, with students and staff of many universities being drawn widely from countries across the world, including (but also beyond) the Global South. Deep within the cultures of the students and staff are disparate ideas of the relationships of human beings to Nature. These ideas could be brought out, both to enhance the culture of universities and to help in the flourishing of pedagogies and curricula.

It is a huge strength of this volume that its very breadth and innovative insights subtly intimate that the internationalisation debates can and should go on being widened still further. Internationalisation as a phenomenon in the world possesses an open character, always extending its elements and their cross-currents.

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In the process, our concepts and frameworks – and critiques – concerned with internationalisation are always susceptible to being extended with new insights and frameworks. No greater accolade can be accorded this volume, therefore, than to say of it that it is a propaedeutic to yet further study and the creation of additional frameworks through which we might understand internationalisation and glimpse ways of developing practices anew.

Ronald Barnett
London, November 2023

Preface

In an era characterised by the continuous expansion of global knowledge exchange and research networks, the internationalisation of higher education emerges as a pivotal subject of investigation and scholarly inquiry. This book embarks on a journey to critically examine the internationalisation of higher education, adopting a perspective rooted in the social sciences. It endeavours to disrupt the prevailing Eurocentric paradigm of internationalisation and interrogates a myriad of thought-provoking inquiries. Deconstructing the underlying motivations driving internationalisation processes and the forces behind them is crucial. Driven by the relentless march of global capitalism, the intrusion of market forces has resulted in the commercialisation and liberalisation of knowledge. In this paradigm, students are often cast as customers, and profit frequently takes precedence over the core purpose of education. Can internationalisation effectively accommodate local imperatives alongside global neoliberal influences? Balancing local and global interests in internationalisation processes is a complex task because – while adhering to international benchmarks for global competitiveness – preserving the local significance of institutions presents a significant challenge. These are the issues the book is committed to discussing and addressing.

Our perspective of internationalisation extends beyond the mere mobility of students or the implementation of joint programmes or research; it encompasses diverse but equal positioning of knowledge, teaching and learning, language, culture and values. Partnerships in higher education, in particular, serve not only as instruments for institutionalisation but also as vital means of introducing new voices and perspectives to the discourse within universities. This book is driven by a curiosity to address and dissect the models and approaches that underlie meaningful international higher education partnerships. The book argues for a cooperative approach that embraces diversity and acknowledges the unique contributions of each higher education system. By questioning the notion of competition, it highlights how rivalry perpetuates hegemony and reinforces the unjust playing field of globalisation. In contrast, a cooperative approach creates a pooled space where institutions can collaborate, exchange innovations and share knowledge without imposing power hierarchies. This cooperative framework fosters a more inclusive and equitable internationalisation process, one that recognises and values the diverse perspectives and strengths of all participants.

Using case studies from diverse countries, this book thoroughly examines the intricacies of internationalisation from the perspective of the Global South. Comparisons are drawn with the practices and assumptions prevalent in the

Global North. The volume questions whether the commonly held conception of internationalisation is universally applicable. It discusses the implications of the brain drain and the political economy of tuition fees on student mobility from the Global South to the Global North. It challenges the prevailing discourse that portrays internationalisation solely as a process guided by neoliberal notions of competition and educational imperialism. This discourse has too often led to the Global South being marginalised. In some cases, international (Global South) students are used in Global North universities to compensate for the financial challenges caused by reduced government funds and capped tuition fees for domestic students. Furthermore, the book embarks on a reflective exploration of the debate surrounding rankings, prestige and the notion of 'authentic' quality as a marketing tool for international degrees, often leaving local institutions feeling undervalued and inferior. Thus, this book critically examines internationalisation using theories that emphasise power dynamics and social inequalities within higher education systems. It views internationalisation as a contested space where various agents with differing interests perpetuate global inequalities, particularly between the Global North and Global South.

Our aim is to provide fresh perspectives on the trends, challenges and prospects for the internationalisation of higher education in the Global South. It aims to generate critical reflection in internationalisation practices and to create confidence in the local knowledge and education in the Global South. Through a series of logically sequenced chapters, we dip into the critical aspects of this complex phenomenon. We challenge prevailing assumptions, practices, philosophies and ideologies and propose an alternative trajectory for the internationalisation of higher education in the Global South. Moreover, this book underscores the significance of sustainability and decolonisation in internationalisation efforts. It calls for a shift away from exploitative practices and towards a more sustainable and just approach that dismantles colonial legacies and power imbalances. Ultimately, it urges a shift towards pluriversity, interculturality, sustainability and global social justice in the future of international relations in higher education.

This book is not an exhaustive, but it aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse on internationalisation by offering a critical analysis of its implications for society. By examining internationalisation through the lens of power dynamics and social inequalities, we aim to foster a more equitable and inclusive approach to this vital aspect of higher education in the Global South.