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Book review: internationalisation of higher education and global mobility

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The way in which globalisation has impacted on the internationalisation of higher education and academic mobility has been a significant theme in the academic literature of higher education for more than a decade. Pioneers in this area, and notably Simon Marginson who contributes the foreword to this book, have long been writing about the unstoppable processes of globalisation moving us towards a single world society, and the tensions that creates between global pluralisation and standardisation. Their evidence lies in the hegemony of English-language science, the persistent strength of the US model of research universities, the growing development of performance indicators in education, carried out on behalf of the developed economies by OECD; the emergence of global rankings of universities; the recent irruption of massive open online courses (MOOCs) promoted by world class universities; and the growing evidence of the shift in global power with the rise of the East Asian economies. Six alone invest as much in R&D as Europe (p. 9). Meanwhile international mobility increases exponentially. It was estimated to be under 250,000 in 1960; 3.3mn in 2008 and perhaps 7.8mn by 2025.

Recent literature has contributed to a certain disentangling of how globalisation is best understood. The trend has been to separate the ideological interpretations, notably how the linkage between globalisation and neoliberalism has featured (Olsen and Peters 2006) from the rather sparser empirical evidence of globalisation. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) have done important work here, while adding a third take. Their concern is constructions of meaning through globalisation, notably what they term a social imaginary meaning. A recent addition to the literature has suggested fruitful new conceptualisations in linking education, sociology and geography to underpin the study of student mobility and the internationalisation of higher education (Brooks and Waters 2011).

This book is making its pitch in a crowded field. It does so on the basis of a collection of empirical studies, addressed to a higher education studies audience. Its aim is to inject some fresh ideas into the comparative literature of higher education. It is structured in three parts and comprises 17 chapters.

The first part of the book is scene setting, treating the global issues of internationalisation and mobility in terms of five issues. There is first the shifting balance between the traditional players (US, UK, Anglophone countries) and new actors, and the challenge of new modes such as online MOOCs for traditional institution-based structures highlighted by Rahul Choudaha and Hans de Wit. They focus on the potential change to be expected since September 11, 2001 and the financial crash of 2008 in terms of global competition for top talent, the diversity of mobile students, language and levels of study, all phenomena with the potential to alter the existing order. But given such factors as the continued growth of demand by internationally mobile students, and the ageing populations of Europe needing the dynamic of new ideas, they conclude that the growth of international student mobility is not coming to an end yet.

This scene setting view of trends needs to be combined with shifting understandings of what the internationalisation of higher education means. Here Jane Knight, who has been developing definitions and taxonomies of internationalisation for years, sees developments in terms of three generations of interpretation. There was a long phase that older hands will treasure when internationalisation meant collaborative scholarship. However, with a strong incentive to develop profits, by 2000 the critical mass in internationalisation had shifted to programmes and providers. There is, she argues, now a third generation of internationalisation dynamics, characterised by the growth of global educational hubs. However her conclusion that we have moved on from brain drain to brain gain and brain train is not substantiated here.

The other chapters in this first part highlight some alternative strategies of internationalisation: the case for paying attention to the Millennium Goals, the pedagogical benefits of North-South collaboration, and what a major fellowship programme (that of the Ford Foundation) can teach us.

The core of the book lies in the second section on mobility in different regions. These chapters feature not only Europe, the US, and China, but also the more rarely treated Islamic world, Ethiopia, and Cuba. The third part profiles the role of individual institutions, practitioners and participants in shaping international education in everyday practice. It features intercultural learning in US education abroad, Erasmus students' conception of citizenship, based on the programme in Germany; the impact, or lack of impact on incoming students and what professionals see as the key features.

This book is implicitly making a critique of an OECD view of the world by trying to enlarge the reader's vision rather than by tackling directly the phenomena noted by Marginson. The chapters in general add up to a possible challenge to received readings of international trends, national and regional practice and the role of individuals. But reader be alert: you make your own way. The editor has not chosen to write a critical introduction to the book, nor to offer conceptual themes related to internationalisation, beyond

'the massification of higher education, increased information sharing; expanded means of travel; greater movement of students and professionals world wide through an ever-changing matrix of sending and receiving countries and the shifting push and pull factors which drive them; challenges to traditional public education through new private niche providers; rapidly developing MOOCs and other experiments, and an ongoing race for new partnerships and learning collaborations through any variety of cross-border configurations' (p. 11).

Nor is there an index which might have aided a reader's construction of themes.

However this reviewer has gained some insights, and they come chiefly from selected chapters in part two. These are Bernd Wächter's chapter on recent trends in student mobility in Europe; Jürgen Henze on Chinese perspectives on internationalisation; Rose C. Amazan on Ethiopia, Anne Hickling-Hudson and Robert F. Arnove on higher education and international student mobility as managed by Cuba, Anthony Welch on Islamic Higher Education, and Thomas Nørgaard on the supposed original philosophy of the Erasmus programme.

Collectively these chapters suggest that we might, with more evidence, be able to build some new generalisations which would revise some of the received ideas about internationalisation. The first is that Europe has no cause for complacency even if it is still the destination of 50 per cent of international students, for Europe is failing to look outwards. The second is that the current leaders in internationalisation (and, I would add the countries on the European periphery) may be failing to perceive the potential of diasporas to influence the quality of higher education policymaking. Thirdly, as the concept of mobility and internationalisation undergoes the changes that Knight points to, we should also be widening our concept of higher education hubs.

Wächter's chapter deserves wide circulation. It is an account of how the meaning of international students has been changed largely under pressure from the Academic Cooperation Association which he has run for many years. It is only now that the inflationary effect of counting foreign-born students already resident in their country of study is being excluded. He has a fine analysis of both incomers and outgoers. But for the purposes of this review the chapter is also notable for the almost throw-away line about the low rates of outward mobility of European students: 'One would think that Europe needs a critical mass of young, highly educated future leaders with first-hand experience in [the] economic powerhouses of tomorrow' (p. 94).

The contrast with the Chinese is instructive. Henze introduces us to the role of the Chinese 'knowledge diaspora' and the 'academic intellectual diaspora' born of the combination of Chinese language and cultural original, in combination with a first academic degree from a Chinese institution and a PhD at a Western university. These young researchers are integral to the creation of a new academic space beyond disciplinary, cultural and national boundaries and to identity formation (p. 188). Far greater critical understanding of what Chinese policy is aimed at is becoming possible, as are the possibilities of richer academic collaboration.

The chapter on Ethiopia is a sad story of losing the good will of a well-intentioned diaspora of skilled professionals the country desperately needs when you cannot offer them the resources to make a difference. It holds the unenviable position of African leader in terms of losing the well qualified to an easier existence abroad. The chapter on Cuba is enlightening. By basing its internationalisation policy on solidarity with other developing countries, provision based on need and capability, it has attracted many students from the global south. It is an example which merits further study.

The book also produces welcome evidence of the policy diversity of Islamic states. It is sad however to be told by Welch that a famous saying attributed to Mohammed is probably apocryphal: 'Seek knowledge throughout the World, even if you have to go to China' (p. 136). But Welch's chapter is a reminder of the way in which Baghdad, Cairo and Alexandria were once extraordinary centres of scholar-

ship long before becoming sites of war, and his is an effective introduction to the diverse ways in which countries of South East Asia now treat knowledge. His comparison of Indonesia and Malaysia is instructive. Despite its population ten times the size of Malaysia's, Indonesia has not developed policies to attract tertiary students from elsewhere to its universities and many of its students travel to Malaysia. Malaysia in contrast has situated itself as an outward looking 'eduhub' with an ambitious programme to get national institutions featured in international rankings while extending its influence regionally and trans-regionally. Among the features, it offers programmes in English and in Arabic, and plays an active role in pan-Islamic bodies. It has been a keen participant in the development of an Islamic Higher Education Area, modelled loosely on the European Higher Education Area.

The last chapter on which I wish to comment is the sparkling essay by Nørgaard on Sofia Corradi, an educationist who played a leading role in the 1980s in developing the ideas on which the Erasmus programme was initially based. She started on this path as an indignant Fulbright student who came back with a master's degree from Columbia to find the Italian system was snubbing her for doing it. The experience launched her on a two decades' fight in support of student mobility based on the liberal education she had enjoyed in the US. Nørgaard goes on to contrast the rich liberal arts ideas behind Erasmus with the bureaucracy of the Bologna process. The evolution of European policymaking in higher education has been at the centre of my own researches, I have met many of the early actors as well as having searched the archives, and I cannot agree with the black and white picture he paints (see Corbett 2005)¹. But I commend his essay for its philosophical conceptualisation.

Let me end by saying that I know that it is tough producing a book whether edited or a monograph. I do not want to criticise unduly. But by the time I had finished this book I wished that the prolific publisher behind it had been thinking a bit more about the busy world academics live in, and what makes a book a book. To bring 17 chapters previously published in a review without saying why we might want to read them as a book will leave many potential readers by the wayside. At best this book is as a taster for readers wanting to know more about the topic. And as I have tried to indicate here, it does offer a few sparks for future scholarship. But there was clearly a better book struggling to get out, had those connected with its production accorded it more time and thought.

¹ Corbett, A. (2005). *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge: Ideas, Institutions and Policy Entrepreneurship in European Union Higher Education, 1955–2005*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.