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DEFINING INTERNATIONALISATION, GLOBALISATION AND EUROPEANISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION¹

Abstract. *Although the higher education (HE) research field has been developing dynamically, it has also seen the fragmentation of research, still devoid of clear definitions and demarcations among globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation in HE. The article presents the results of a search for the common elements of these definitions based on HE experts' judgements gathered by applying the Delphi method.*

Keywords: *globalisation, internationalisation, Europeanisation, higher education, definition*

Introduction

In the last 250 years or so, several waves of globalisation have swept across the world, changing it in the process. However, in particular, it is the period after 1989 that has seen technology (personal computers, the Internet and mobile phones) facilitate unprecedented levels of global social interconnectedness (Johnson, 2008). Indeed, since the 1980s globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation have also strongly entered the academic research arena. These terms now appear in various disciplines and research fields, including higher education (HE) (Fink-Hafner and Dagen, 2017).

Historians define globalisation as “*actions, events, and relations at an increasingly greater distance from the locality affect community life*” (Coatsworth, Cole, Hangan, Perdue, C. Tilly, L. Tilly, 2015: 1). Yet, for social scientists, globalisation phenomena are ever wider, deeper and ever more rapidly linking states and societies (Shaw, 2000; Held, 2000; Anderson, 2002; Grugel, 2002; Held and McGrew (eds.), 2003; Kaldor, 2003; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton, 2003; Ougaard and Higgott (eds.), 2002).

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¹ The authors acknowledge the financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency (research core funding No. P5-0136 and No. P5-0151).

In studying the European Union, social scientists have developed quite complex views and related definitions of Europeanisation. In broad social science terms, Europeanisation is mainly understood in two ways. First, as social constructivists (Risse, 2004) would claim, it is part of a global social interconnectedness which establishes the character or quality of the social reality of connections beyond administrative/political borders. They stress that social connections, networking, discourse and social action (namely, social interaction) have been building a new social quality beyond simple inter-nation connections (Rosamond, 2000; Wiener and Diez (eds.), 2004). Second, especially authors who examine European integration processes from the neofunctionalist points of view initially regard political integration and supranational institutionalisation as side-effects of economic integration (Rosamond, 2000; Hooghe and Marks, 2019). Political scientists further stress that the EU is both an international organisation and to some extent a multi-level political system, within which the increasing interconnectedness of various political actors and their activities may be observed. It is also in these terms that Radaelli (2006: 3) defines Europeanisation as:

processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies...

He also stresses that

it covers both cases in which EU policies exist, and other cases in which EU-level discussion does not end up with policies, yet domestic actors re-orient their behaviour because 'Europe' has become the common grammar. (Radaelli, 2006: 11)

While efforts have been made in the mentioned scientific disciplines sciences to help clarify the meaning of globalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation, only a few scholars have attempted to link all these definitions terms within higher education as a scientific field (e.g. Knight, 1994, 2004, 2007, 2013; Van der Wende, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Teichler, 2004; Altbach and Knight, 2007). Further, there is no agreement on the definitions. We believe the primary reason for this is that education policies in general and HE policies in particular have remained confined to political decision-making within the nation state. This explains why not only intra-state activities and process but also activities and processes connected with activities

and processes beyond the nation state have remained more or less state-controlled. In fact, for policy fields like education, the definition of “internationalisation” as a process *inter* nations (Zgaga, Teichler and Brennan, 2013: 13) resembles the basic definition of internationalisation seen in other academic fields, especially political science/international relations. However, in HE it is just one of many attempts to define internationalisation. Researchers in the HE field apply the terms globalisation and internationalisation in the framework of ever more fragmented research themes, looking particularly at the EU while only rarely stating clearly what they mean by either globalisation, internationalisation or Europeanisation.

Our thesis is that the current stage of research fragmentation calls for a new step in academic development – the synthesis and consolidation of research based on the creation of a basic set of terminology/definitions to facilitate further academic development.

The aim of this article is to contribute to the search for common definitions. Based on empirical research, we offer common ‘thin’ definitions of globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation in HE. Accordingly, we focus on the consensus achieved regarding the definitions of globalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation in HE. Our analysis is based on the Delphi method seeking to include authors in the HE field from around the world. We hope our contribution based on empirical research findings encourages broader academic debate.

In the next section, we first present existing variations found in definitions of globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation in the HE field. This is followed by a methodological explanation of our empirical research. After presenting minimal definitions and their relationships based on our research, we conclude with some thoughts on what the presented definitions mean in terms of the used methodology’s potential and limitations and how these limitations might be overcome in future academic endeavours.

Theoretical framework: variations in definitions

Definitions over time

Interest in HE research has seen three main waves (Table 1), each in response to real-life processes of national governments increasing their policy cooperation in the HE field.

It is particularly after the 1990s that globalisation processes have intensified to include ever more policy areas (also HE). The spread of international connections in the HE field has translated into an increasingly broader network of HE research and researchers around the world since the 2000s.

Table 1: WAVES OF ACADEMIC INTEREST IN HE RESEARCH

Periods	Main focus	themes	EU specific topics	Geographical spread of researchers
1970-1980s	initial rise in interest in the internationalisation of HE	primarily research into internationalisation of HE in the USA		Harari (USA)
1990s	internationalisation of HE; emerging interest in the conceptualisation of Europeanisation and the relationships between internationalisation and Europeanisation	the development of new activities with an international dimension, establishing new forms for HE institutions' collaboration with various partner institutions, alternative sources of HE funding	implementation of EU policies that touch on HE (e.g. Bologna Process); mobility and internationalisation related to the Erasmus programme (starting in 1987)	notably Anglo-Saxon researchers and some researchers coming from a Germanic tradition including Dutch researchers
2000s	links between internationalisation and globalisation	the ever more diverse subfields of HE research: analysing the management and organisation models of HE institutions; analysis of policy change in the HE field and at university level; analysis of the academic profession; student and academic staff mobility; policies and strategies of internationalisation; knowledge transfer; branch campuses; HE rankings; quality of HE institutions and accreditation procedures; governance of HE institutions; internationalisation of research; global migrations, particularly refugees and asylum-seekers	examining EU policies in the HE field, also encompassing the Bologna Process in a global context	notably Anglo-Saxon researchers and researchers from European countries (especially EU member states); increasingly also from other parts of the world (such as China, Japan, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates), although often in collaboration with Anglo-Saxon researchers

Source: Authors' analysis based on Dagen et al. (2018).

It is also since the 1990s that the European Union's evolution into a state-like regional political system has highlighted its both international and federal aspects (seen especially in federal supranational institutions and the ever more numerous common European policies), triggering research interest in European (EU) HE idiosyncrasies.

Research has so far evolved within increasingly particular subfields while theoretical/conceptual progress seems to have been delayed.

Definitions of internationalisation in HE

Initially, the concept of internationalisation in HE was nested in the US milieu and focused on the internationalisation of US higher education by altering the content of the curriculum, international exchanges of scholars and students, cooperative programmes with the community, training, and the development of administrative services and national policies oriented to other parts of the world (Harari, 1972; 1989). Yet, early definitions of internationalisation were not limited to activities and institutions, but also included internationalisation as a distinct ethos built on commitment, attitudes and global awareness, an orientation and dimension beyond any particular HE organisation (Harari, 1989).

Harari's definition (Harari, 1972) strongly inspired definitions emerging in the early 1990s, especially that by Arum and Van de Water (1992). Nevertheless, as their definition of internationalisation chiefly focused on education and included normative statements, it was criticised for being overly American-centric and too rhetorical (de Wit, 2001). In 1993, Jane Knight defined the internationalisation of HE as *"the process of integrating the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education"* (Knight, 1993). This definition has since been cited many times, even though Knight and other researchers have altered it. In 1994, for example, Knight made a small change to the second part of the definition (*"the process of integrating the international dimension into the teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university or college"*), by adding *"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"* (Knight, 1994: 3). In 2003, she further refined the definition: *"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 postsecondary education"* (Knight, 2003b: 2).

During the 1990s, the growing variety of dimensions of internationalisation attracted greater attention to the definition of internationalisation in HE. For example, Van der Wende (1997: 19) saw internationalisation in HE as *"any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets"*. Knight and de Wit (1995: 16-17) revealed four perspectives in the study of internationalisation that are based on: a) activities; b) competencies; c) ethos; and d) processes.

Since the 2000s, the international dimensions of HE have been equated with various international activities, such as in Teichler's definition:

Internationalisation tends to address an increase of border-crossing activities amidst a more or less persistence of national systems of higher education... and is often discussed in relation to physical mobility, academic cooperation and academic knowledge transfer as well as international education. (Teichler, 2004: 7)

The context of this definition is the process within which international activities have over time evolved from older, traditional to more recent and innovative activities in HE. These include the academic mobility of students, academics and other employees in HE, international developmental and collaborative projects, international study programmes and curricula, common and joint study programmes, international partnerships among institutions, study programmes in foreign languages, trans-national education, international networks and consortiums, dislocated campuses, phenomena related to foreign teachers, lecturers and foreign students (Van der Wende, 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Teichler, 2004, 2009; Luiten-Lub, 2007; Knight, 2008; Zgaga, 2008).

Many authors use the term internationalisation to describe both the policies and activities of governments and HE institutions that aim to adapt HE to the challenges emerging in the dynamically changing surroundings of HE. The development of systems to assure HE quality and describe particular policy discourses in HE has attracted attention.

Research based on understanding internationalisation as cooperation and the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in an international setting has flourished. Considerable growth is seen in studies looking at the mobility of students and scholars, development of study programmes in the English language, cooperation between HE institutions on research projects, joint study programmes and other international activities related to teaching and learning (Teichler, 2004, 2012; Kelo, Teichler and Wächter, 2006; Souto-Otero, Huisman, Beerkens, De Wit and Vujić, 2013).

One cluster of authors considers the internationalisation of HE primarily from the economic point of view. Their work studies branch campuses, educational hubs, virtual learning, transnational education, and franchising and twinning (e.g. Shams and Huisman, 2012; Wilkins, Stephens Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012; Deardorff, de Wit, Heyl, Eds., 2012) and mainly understands HE internationalisation as part of international competition. Similarly, Rumbley, Altbach and Reisberg (2012: 3) stress that

today internationalisation is a core issue of concern to the higher education enterprise, touching directly on questions of social and curricular relevance, institutional quality and prestige, national competitiveness, and innovation potential... institutions also view internationalisation as a source of potential revenue.

To conclude, internationalisation may be seen as “*a broad umbrella term that covers many dimensions, components, approaches and activities*” (de Wit and Hunter, 2015: 45). However, Knight’s definitions, which are inclusive, remain salient even today, albeit with a stronger inclination towards certain values. This is also seen in the definition given by Hans de Wit and colleagues at the end of 2015, which not only describes internationalisation in the HE field as “*the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education*”, but also stresses that this should be done “*in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society*” (Hunter, 2015).

On the contrary, the definitions of globalisation and Europeanisation continue to remain less well developed.

Defining globalisation in the HE field

Globalisation is defined in different ways that, as a rule, point out certain phenomena and/or distinct aspects of globalisation phenomena. Yet, in reality, they often refer to internationalisation within HE.

Some contend that globalisation in HE is “*positioned as part of the environment in which the international dimension of higher education is becoming more important and significantly changing*” (Knight, 2004: 8). This understanding is close to the reasoning that “*globalisation tends to assume that borders and national systems as such get blurred or even might disappear*” (Teichler, 2004: 7).

Teichler stresses (while relying on the work of e.g. El-Khawas, Lenn, Middlehurst and Sadlak) that globalisation is very often linked in the literature with competition and market steering, trans-national education, and commercial knowledge-transfer (Teichler, 2004: 7). Still, authors differ in the extent to which they focus on the economic aspects of globalisation. Van der Wende (2001b: 253), for example, gives the definition of globalisation a somewhat geopolitical and cultural dimension by asserting it “*generally relates to the process of increasing convergence and interdependence of economies and to the liberalisation of trade and markets... also the cultural dimension in globalisation is recognized, which encourages both the establishment of a (usually western) global-brand culture, as well as the spread of more indigenous traditions*”. In contrast, Altbach’s definition of the concept as “*the broad economic, technological, and scientific trends that directly affect higher education*” (Altbach, 2006: 123) has a narrower economic orientation.

Further, the distinction between levels of authority in governance of the HE field continues to be recognised such as when separating *internationalisation abroad* from *internationalisation at home*, particularly the internal

internationalisation of HE institutions (Knight, 2008: 22–24). In fact, ever since the early work of a pioneer of defining and studying globalisation in HE – Peter Scott (1998a, 1998b) – one of the bigger research themes has been the study of relationships between globalisation and HE organisations.

All in all, the heterogeneity seen when defining globalisation is similar to that seen when defining Europeanisation.

Defining Europeanisation in the HE field

Europeanisation is often related to both globalisation and internationalisation. Moreover, no systematic distinction is clearly determined between: a) Europeanisation related to internal phenomena within the EU; and b) Europeanisation going beyond the EU.

For instance, Van der Wende (2004: 10) says that “*Europeanisation*’ is often employed for describing the phenomena of internationalisation on a ‘regional’ scale”. In comparison, Teichler (2004: 7) is more inclusive, stating that “*Europeanisation is the regionally defined version of either internationalisation or globalisation ... is addressed frequently when referring to cooperation and mobility. Beyond that it also covers such issues as integration, convergence of contexts, structures and substance... or to segmentation between regions of the world*”. However, while Zgaga (2008: 19) links Europeanisation very closely with internationalisation, he stresses that Europeanisation could also be called “*the European ‘internal internationalisation*” and that “*the most distinctive expression of the Europeanisation process in the context of higher education has been established as the Bologna Process*”.

To some extent, political science definitions of Europeanisation, notably Radaelli’s, have also found their way into the HE field (Radaelli, 2006: 3).

Relationships among definitions

It is quite difficult to simply show how the three terms relate to each other as they are equated with very different characteristics, such as process, activity, context, concept, frame, effort, response model, cooperation, competition, mobility, academic knowledge transfer, positive development etc. Focusing on one or two terms is the norm. When two terms are being considered, globalisation and internationalisation are usually combined. However, only a few scholars have taken pains to define globalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation in the field of higher education research (for example, Knight, 1994, 2004, 2007, 2013; Altbach and Knight, 2007; Van der Wende, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Teichler, 2004). In particular, globalisation and internationalisation are typically not clearly distinguished (Teichler, 2004).

Knight believes that “*globalisation is presented as a process impacting*

internationalisation”, and that “*internationalisation is changing the world of education and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation*” (Knight, 2003b: 3). They are “*very different but related processes*” (Knight, 2004: 8). Indeed, P. Scott (2001) stresses that globalisation “*cannot be regarded simply as a higher form of internationalisation*”, rather they are in a “*dialectical relationship*” in “*which ‘new globalisation may be the rival of the old internationalisation’*”.

In contrast, Van der Wende (2001b: 253) concentrates on activities: “*both ‘globalisation’ and ‘internationalisation’ are used to analyse the increasing international activities and outreach of higher education*”; nevertheless, internationalisation may be considered “*as a response to globalisation*” (Van der Wende, 2001b: 249). The focus on public policies has led to the definition of internationalisation as “*the variety of policies and programs that universities and governments implement to respond to globalisation*” (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009: 4). In fact, various attempts at defining the key terms have not treated internationalisation simply as an external process, but also as internal processes related to both public policies and HE institutions’ policies. At the same time, globalisation is often understood as an external process, which has impacts on HE.

When looking at the relationships between globalisation and internationalisation in HE institutions, Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado (2009: 290–291) revealed two research approaches. The first approach, also called the orthodox approach (Stromquist, 2007), views globalisation as the sum of external forces putting pressure on HE while internationalisation is one way universities react to these pressures (e.g. Altbach, De Wit, Knight, Scott, Van der Wende). The second approach (e.g. Marginson, Rhodes, Sawir, Robertson) builds on criticism of the orthodox approach by questioning whether institutions respond to globalisation automatically; whether HE institutions are internally coherent and can orchestrate their activities in line with a ‘higher logic’; and doubts whether universities are capable of full self-determination in relation to their own internationalisation.

The confusion of differentiating globalisation and internationalisation grows when Europeanisation is added. For example, while Teichler (2004: 7) understands Europeanisation as “*the regionally defined version of either internationalisation or globalisation*”, Enders does not even use the term Europeanisation, but the term regionalisation: “*regionalisation in higher education is part and parcel of the globalisation process*” (Enders, 2004: 368).

Either indirectly or directly, value dimensions also come with definitions. For example, Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) noted “*a tendency to see internationalisation as ‘good’ and globalisation as ‘evil’*”, while Zgaga (2011: 338) asks whether globalisation is “*a good or a bad thing?*” and stresses that it has “*slowly turned from a ‘promise’ to a ‘menace’*”.