Internationalisation of higher education: a north-south dialogue on internationalisation at home (0280)

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Internationalization of Higher Education (IoHE) is a key contemporary debate and a key strategic priority at national and institutional levels in many countries. To compete in the global marketplace, higher education institutions are increasingly adopting institutional approaches to internationalisation (Equality and Challenge Unit, 2011). The transformative trends for HE brought about by the recession, together with the influence of globalisation and technologization, have also created heightened international economic competition and growth in the for-profit sector (Robson, 2011; Corbett-Broad, 2012 http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2012/jan/23/internationalisation-in-2012). IoHE is understood and enacted differently in particular disciplines, institutions and cultural contexts (Zhou, 2016). Internationalisation strategies often focus primarily on inward and outward student mobility, with recruitment of international students regarded as an important source of income. The benefits that could be gained by exploiting the diversity of academic, social and cultural perspectives and experiences to enrich all students' learning may be overlooked (Leask, 2014).

In Brazil the regulation of higher education research is highly centralized under the federal government, and government support for research into IoHE is focused predominantly on outward student mobility (Laus & Morosini, 2005; Sá et al., 2015). English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has seen rapid growth in schools and universities as a means to facilitate student mobility and to prepare Brazilian students for participation in a globalised society. However EMI is mainly found in the private sector, where it is considered to enhance the international image, prestige and reputation of schools and universities. Hence EMI can be regarded as socially divisive, with limited access to EMI for students from lower socio-economic groups (Deardon, 2015; Tessler, 2014).

In Europe, although IoHE is understood and enacted differently across disciplines, institutions and cultural contexts, the emphasis on internationalisation as a competitive, revenue-generating strategy influencing institutional prestige and position in global rankings is a common concern. While a marketization discourse may be inevitable in the current HE funding climate, the literature highlights the complexities and lack of consensus about the purposes of IoHE. Internationalisation at Home (IaH) has the potential to advance academic, social and cultural goals, but these benefits have been under-exploited, largely due to the lack of conceptual clarity around the term (Beelen and Jones, 2015). Commercially-driven, recruitment-oriented approaches to IoHE are increasingly being challenged by advocates for more sustainable, values-driven and socially responsible approaches (http://www.eaie.org/blog/internationalisation-with-integrity/).

European universities have begun to develop more comprehensive internationalisation strategies with indicators for internationalisation of teaching, research and engagement, through initiatives such as strategic partnerships, joint programmes, MOOCS, and international staff recruitment (Collici et al., 2015). Internationalisation is now more often premised on partnership, demonstrated by the way in which EU funding programmes are designed as well as by the recent EU strategy 'European HE in the World, 2013 and the European Higher Education in a Global Setting: A Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process (www.ehea.info/Uploads/Documents/Strategy-for-EHEA-in-global-setting.pdf, cited in Collici et al., 2015).

This paper focuses on the contribution of a UK-Brazil partnership in the form of a research and practice network on IaH. The network was established to consolidate institutional research links focusing on internationalisation, with a particular aim to the construction of more equitable and values-based approaches to IoHE. A multidisciplinary group of established and emerging researchers from the UK and Brazil formed a virtual network to explore how IaH could extend the scope and sustainability of internationalisation initiatives at their institutions. The network is partnership-focused, cooperative in process and driven by a desire for a more comprehensive and equitable approach to IaH so that participants can engage positively in dialogue across disciplines, institutions and contexts.

The network identified research themes and issues of common concern related to IaH and established inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional theme groups to investigate these issues. The aim was to construct more nuanced understandings of, and innovative approaches to, IaH through an iterative approach. A particular aim of the network was that the research would lead to practice changes, that the dialogue would provoke initatives to provide more equitable opportunities to enhance learning for the non-mobile majority of HE students. Network partners researched formal and informal curricular and extra-curricular initiatives for students, seeking to support students to become more critically engaged, globally-minded, culturally, socially and ethically aware, and better prepared to engage academically and practically to address key societal challenges.

Findings indicate the scope and potential influence of IaH in both contexts. It "….touches upon everything – from the academic curriculum, to the interactions between local students and international students and faculty, to the cultivation of internationally-focused research topics, to innovative uses for digital technology" (http://www.eaie.org/community/expert-communities/internationalisation-home.html). The conceptual, methodological and practical challenges associated with researching IaH in both settings, and maintaining the dialogue within the partnership across cultures, continents and time zones are discussed.

Despite a common understanding of the importance of internationalisation, and the challenges to provide a more equitable experience for all students, the paper discusses many internal and external factors influencing the development of a more values-based approach to IaH. Four interconnecting perspectives are adopted to investigate the ways in which IaH is enacted, drawing on a four-factor model from the international business literature related to internationalisation (Cedrola, Battaglia, and Tzannis, 2009). IaH can be influenced by factors related to the university (strategic vision, internal resources/external

relations); factors related to the individual researcher (personal vision/conceptual stance/capacity/ orientation); factors related to theme groups within the network (resources and connections to other actors) and factors related to the external environment (markets/ research networks/ mobility opportunities). Nevertheless the research and practice network is offered as a positive mechanism to develop fresh perspectives on IoHE in a field dominated by recruitment and performativity agendas, with the potential to create 'deliberative spaces capable of reframing internationalization agendas' (Tadaki and Tremewan, 2013) and thus to advance conceptualisations of internationalisation.

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