

## **Public Interest in the Internationalisation of Universities(0244)**

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The aim of this poster is to address one of the critical concerns of modern universities, namely internationalisation, from the novel perspective of the public interest. In particular, we adopt a Deweyan approach (Dewey, 1927) to explore the requirements and implications of forms of internationalisation that seek to accommodate and meet the interests of multiple publics.

To do so, our analysis draws upon the development of Deweyan logic in the context of socio-economic analysis of international dimensions of production organisation (*inter alia* Cowling and Sugden, 1998; Cowling and Tomlinson, 2000; Sugden and Wilson, 2005; Sacchetti and Sugden, 2009). Insights from that literature are integrated with those from research more particularly about education and universities, especially their internationalisation.

More specifically, the analysis is founded upon, and seeks to integrate, three strands of research, each of which is the subject of a section of the poster.

### **1. Contributions on the internationalisation of higher education**

It is clear that there is not one way of defining internationalisation in higher education, the term instead lending itself to different associations and practices; Briguglio (2007, p. 9), for example, states that “internationalization is conceived and defined in various ways.”

Reviewing the existing literature, we suggest that it points to the internationalisation of a university being seen as a comprehensive process of integrated actions impacting not only directly on those actually acting, but also indirectly and thus more broadly. Further, the determinants of such a process need to be appreciated in terms of the rationales of the actors, and in turn those rationales require to be understood

according to particular and inter-acting interests, needs, values and objectives (*inter alia*, Altbach, 2002; Barrington, 2004; Knight, 2008, 2009; Knight and de Wit, 1995; Stier, 2002).

This extant literature on higher education leaves unexplored the explicit requirements and implications of forms of internationalisation that would accommodate and meet the public interest (understood in terms of rigorous analysis), but it does provide an analytical foundation from which those considerations can be addressed.

## **2. Literature applying Deweyan understanding of the interests of publics**

Indeed, the focus of the internationalisation of higher education literature on direct and indirect effects points immediately to the relevance of Deweyan analysis of public interests.

For Dewey (1927), the consequences of an act – for example, a strategic choice to internationalise, or a step in pursuit of that internationalisation – might impact significantly not only on those (people and organisations) directly undertaking the act, but also on others. The interests of the direct participants are said to be private, whereas those of the others are public. Moreover, an act might be associated with more than one public (Dewey, 1927); the idea is that a public has “a shared concern” with an act’s consequences (Long, 1990, p. 171), and that there might be a variety of shared concerns.

This line of argument has been developed extensively in literature on the organisation of socio-economic activities, including the organisation of transnational production by corporations (Branston *et al.*, 2006) and more broadly the organisation of international development and so-called ‘globalisation’ (Sacchetti *et al.*, 2009). The suggestion from that literature is that certain forms of internationalisation are clearly (and deliberately) undertaken in private interests, not the interests of publics. Accordingly, there are significant lessons for a university making choices about its internationalisation.

Most especially, there are implications for a university that is not only concerned about impacts directly on those who are choosing and actually implementing a strategy for internationalisation, but also concerned about the extent to which an act of

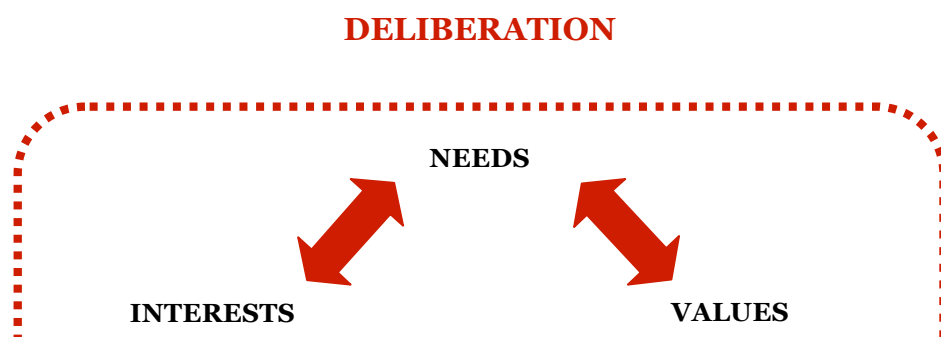
internationalisation might (or might not) impact (and possibly serve) those upon whom it has an indirect impact (i.e. publics). These implications go to the heart of the very process of internationalisation, suggesting the necessity for certain forms of academic behaviour and for particular types of engagement with both students and with 'outside' (i.e. non-university) bodies.

### 3. Deweyan analysis of inter-related interests, needs, values and objectives

Furthermore, the focus of literature on the internationalisation of higher education is not only on direct and indirect interests but also on particular needs, values and objectives. This points to the relevance of a third strand of research, namely that concentrating on both the *inter-action* between needs, values and objectives; and the ways in which needs, values and objectives are *jointly determined and shaped*. This is again linked to Deweyan analysis and its application in work on socio-economic development (see especially Sacchetti, 2009, also: Dewey, 1938; Joas, 1996; Sacchetti and Sugden, 2009). We explore the implications of these arguments and thereby draw together the three strands of literature at the heart of this poster.

Our approach to the internationalisation of a university is depicted in Figure 1. We draw conclusions about the requirements for serving the public and about the evolving impacts of our approach on people and organisations. In so doing, we make comparisons and contrasts with typical market models of international activity.

**Figure 1: Internationalisation in the interests of publics**





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