Chapter 1
Introduction: Developments in Internationalisation in the Twenty-First Century

Leon Cremonini, John Taylor, and K. M. Joshi

Abstract This volume presents a series of new perspectives on internationalisation in higher education predicated on the notion that drawing lessons from traditionally researched countries alone (mainly the US, Europe and Australia) can no longer do justice to understanding where internationalisation is going. All across the globe, universities have engaged in internationalisation for centuries; "being international" has been deemed to be the *essence* of higher education for generations. However, as demonstrated by contributors to this book, many of the challenges that now impact upon internationalisation have evolved over time. For much of the post-World War II era, the issues dominating the internationalisation agenda were predominantly ideological, regulatory and market-driven. Emphasis was placed on matters such as "mutual understanding", cross-border accreditation mechanisms, international student recruitment and the attractiveness of higher education (see amongst others, OECD, 2004; Wildavsky, 2010; Cremonini et al., 2012; Cremonini & Taylor, 2018). Economic drivers have also played a critical role in contributing to national and institutional income as many universities see internationalisation as a viable alternative or supplement to national funding. This is the case, for example, in Australia and the UK where it has been known for several decades that universities and individual academic departments are heavily dependent on international student fee income (see e.g. Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; OECD, 2008). In addition, a deeply-rooted perception amongst, *inter alia*, institutional leaders, staff, and students that "international" equals "high quality" has long held sway. However, in recent years

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L. Cremonini (✉)
Strategy and Policy (S&P) Department, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands
e-mail: l.cremonini@utwente.nl

J. Taylor
Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK
e-mail: j.r.taylor@lancaster.ac.uk

K. M. Joshi
Department of Economics, Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University, Bhavnagar, India
e-mail: kmjoshi1972@gmail.com

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much as changed. Demands that higher education be “international” have grown beyond regulation and economics. At the same time, more inward-looking approaches have visibly changed the playing field. Thus, this volume concentrates on elements as yet less researched, which are nonetheless redefining the internationalisation of higher education.

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However, in recent years much as changed. Demands that higher education be “international” have grown beyond regulation and economics. At the same time, more inward-looking approaches, like those following the 2014 elections in India, the 2016 presidential election in the US and the “Brexit” referendum in the UK have visibly changed the playing field.

The first trend is, perhaps, epitomized by expectations of societies and governments that internationalisation should not merely be a way for universities to compete within an over-saturated market or for academic staff and students to benefit from international experiences. Instead, it is increasingly deemed an essential dimension for internationalisation to demonstrate its ability to address national and/or local societal problems. This is particularly evident in emergent economies (see e.g. Papadimitriou & Boboc, 2021, pp. 141–168; 229–250).

In parallel, the link between internationalisation and nationalism is evolving. For the better part of the last half century, internationalisation was considered a channel for countries to extend their international influence, looking outwards. The UK, the US, China and Germany – amongst others – have all used internationalisation as a tool of "soft power" (see e.g. Brandenburg et al., 2020; Li, 2018; Yang, 2010) including, for example, the creation of campuses abroad, or by promoting student exports and their socio-cultural influence abroad. However, more recently, nationalist movements have increasingly pushed for a more inward-looking approach, building up national expertise and skills. Thus, many of the same countries are now changing their emphasis, decreasing their student exports.

Thus, it is time to concentrate on elements as yet less researched, which are nonetheless beginning to redefine internationalisation drastically. This book focuses on how global changes in demand, supply and processes of tertiary education have impinged on established teleological paradigms of the relationship between higher education and its internationalisation. Continuing dependence on strategies and models stemming from past (dogmatic) paradigms will not suffice. *Autre temps, autre moeurs*?

This publication sets the groundwork for a necessary reflection on a new approach to internationalisation. Namely, a wide-ranging approach that accounts for the diversity of players and the recent events which have accelerated the pace of change.

The collection of chapters we offer in this volume presents a unique selection of approaches and contributions from regions that have previously been under-represented in the academic literature, including Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. This reflects the broad range of emerging areas of research that affect how twenty-first century internationalisation in higher education is changing. Decolonisation in higher education and the role of new technologies in internationalising higher education – particularly as a result of challenges posed by Covid – are examples of momentous developments that will, one way or another, reshape how governments, providers and individuals construe, plan and execute internationalisation in higher education.

Although each chapter describes a specific national setting, conceptually three central themes impact how nations, institutions, and individuals (the three "building blocks" of this volume) experience and build internationalisation:

1. The role of government;
2. Innovations in technology;
3. Increasing awareness of ethical concerns.

These three themes are this book's conceptual backdrop against which each of the broad topics transpiring from the chapters contribute to understanding the new directions that internationalisation policies have been taking since the turn of the century – and which are briefly listed at the end of the introduction.

The Role of Government

The impact of national governments on internationalisation in higher education is both varied and complex, as emerges clearly from the different contributions to this volume. There is no single paradigm for government activity. In essence, government fulfils four roles:

- (i) **Instigator**: governments seek to encourage internationalisation for many reasons often linked to economic benefits (especially the income generated by international students), workforce development, knowledge transfer and international status and influence;
- (ii) **Regulator**: governments exercise huge influence over the conduct of internationalisation in higher education, including the regulation of fees, the granting of visas (for students, staff and visitors) and arrangements for long-term residence;
- (iii) **Facilitator**: at the same time, governments are commonly parties to international and domestic agreements and organisations intended to promote internationalisation, often requiring significant commitment of resources; governments may also play an important role in developing the infrastructure for internationalisation, including data collection, access to communications technology and ensuring the safety for international travellers;
- (iv) **Evaluator**: Governments commonly act as an evaluator for internationalisation, both in terms of policy and delivery. Such evaluation may be direct through government agencies or indirect by setting out the arrangements and expectations to be applied by other bodies. Given the wider roles of government, there is a strong sense of being “judge and jury”.

The wide and geographically dispersed range of countries referenced to in this book uncover the diversity of influence governments have over aspects of internationalisation. Whatever the dominant paradigm, the importance of effective government incentives show that policy statements alone are insufficient without the application of public inducements as well as a well-defined communication strategy.

For example, in Greece, research policy has been strongly influenced by the development of the European Research Area (ERA), which is dominated by larger economies (Chap. 2; Daimer et al., 2011. The Greek government is one, relatively small voice in shaping the activities of the ERA and this might lead to compromise as far as national or local priorities are concerned. The Hungarian government is keen to attract incoming students, but offers little encouragement for the outward movement of staff and students (Chap. 10). Finland enjoys an open and supportive approach to internationalisation. However, what is also clear is that, whilst some aspects of internationalisation are relatively “easy to sell”, such as research benefits, in other cases it is more difficult to convince a sceptical audience of staff and students. Finland’s “internationalisation at home” policy demonstrates the importance of building attractive rewards, normally in funding. Similar arguments might be made for Flanders and other northern European countries. Further afield, navigating in a very different context, India is concerned with increasing inward movement in the face of massive outward movement (Chap. 3).

But governments do not just “steer and fund”. They create agencies, departments and schemes intended to promote aspects of internationalisation in higher education, as the cases of Argentina and India presented in this book testify to (see Chaps. 4 and 5). Still, ensuring effective coordination between such bodies and avoiding unnecessary duplication and wastage of resources is of the essence. Therefore, governments must deliver clear and consistent messages.

A conclusion, therefore, is that, for the good or the bad, internationalisation represents a pressure on national agendas and affects how governments and universities make policies and decisions. Internationalisation exposes tensions within government, such as the friction between attracting incoming students, especially with the prospect of long-term residency, set against immigration and security arguments; at the same time, some countries – notably peripheral and emerging economies – invest in initiatives such as student and research exchange programmes for national reputational and economic benefit even though this often reinforces patterns of global inequality. Universities are pressured to pursue world-class status and develop relevant networks that promote this objective (Ostrom, 2011).

From the perspective of universities, government pressures play a significant part in their institutional strategizing on – inter alia – internationalisation. Thus, in the case of Hungary, most strategies for internationalisation developed within universities closely mirror the expectations of government. However, as shown in other chapters in this book, the role that institutions themselves can play in shaping internationalisation outside the direct influence of government can be substantial. In Flanders, for example, both the institutions considered have taken forward a vigorous commitment to internationalisation that has gone well beyond the expectations of their government. A key principle that underpins strategic planning in higher education institutions, as well as in other sectors, is the desire to shape one’s own destiny, aware of and sensitive to, but not driven by, external constraints. This approach can be seen in the two Flanders cases. In taking forward their strategies, both institutions were driven by their own histories, cultures and, possibly most important of all, ambitions. Similarly, the example which we present of an institutional merger in Finland shows how aspirations towards establishing a new institution with increased critical mass in both education and research and able to make a strong international impact could drive forward actions with little direct government involvement. It is interesting to note that, in several of the cases studied in this book, a key factor in stimulating a new institutional approach to internationalisation has been the reaction to international university rankings. This was true in Finland and was also an important factor behind a new emphasis on internationalisation in Brazil.

Another challenge to the role of national governments can come through the development of new models for internationalisation of higher education. For example, regional universities described in Chap. 6 may not only open up the prospect of new forms of international education and research. They might challenge the idea of higher education as essentially a matter for national concern.

How Innovation and Technology Shape Internationalisation

The application of new technologies for and in higher education, and their impact on internationalisation, is a prominent aspect that the COVID-19 pandemic has made all too clear. The relationship between internationalisation and technology has long been complex. On the one hand, internationalisation and technological advances are often self-reinforcing. After all, opportunities and networking are facilitated by online platforms and communities. But, on the other hand, less technologically advanced countries start at a disadvantage. They possess less facilities and opportunities and, thence, risk remaining relatively unattractive as advanced economies enjoy the benefits of the "technological oligopoly of nations" to which they belong. Apportionment of technological advancements is still not fluid globally. The oft-vaunted speed and depth of twenty-first century technological developments risks deepening existing centre-periphery divides (see e.g. Altbach & De Wit, 2021). Nor should we ignore that reliance on technology – especially post-Covid – has broad implications on research collaborations, degree structures and pedagogy. It will not be a case of "delivering old formats in new ways". New formats and content will be necessary. It is indeed noteworthy how in recent years, governments, university organizations, and supranational bodies (e.g. the EU) have increased their interest in lifelong learning and new forms of flexibility in education (see e.g. European Commission, 2020). Moreover, the applications of new technology are not driven simply by the technology itself. New technology requires human expertise if it is to be exploited; training in necessary skills is equally as important as access to the latest equipment.

Fundamentally, there are two key drivers that affect if and how we use technology. These include the *desire* to do so (i.e. the willingness and acceptability) and whether or not it is *practical* to so do (i.e. the degree to which obstacles such as poor infrastructure or lack of digital security may inhibit us from using technology). From this perspective, it is clear that there are differences in potentials and futures, which reflect different levels of development globally, as well as possible priorities (policy choices). The chart below shows how these developments can play out in different contexts. For instance, many emerging economies might show a high motivation to use technologies but a low level of practicality (e.g. because of poor infrastructure). But this can promote prioritizing investments in digital development to boost access, thus moving towards a more positive future. Developed countries, on the contrary, might have less obstacles but may face low willingness to invest and use technology. In this case, uncertainty and suspicion towards innovation (e.g. universities that do use technology extensively in their education) might ensue. It might then be wise to consider countermeasures such as (government) incentives to promote digital education. A more positive future could be where there is a willingness and acceptability to use technologies in a system where obstacles are low. This paves the way for new opportunities in internationalisation (e.g. because of lower costs, greater access to higher education opportunities, environmental benefits). The negatives appear more like the legacy of a world where practical obstacles were significant and – thus – the desire to use, invest and create new technology was also low. Overcoming this scenario is necessary to reduce international inequalities and develop new pedagogy.

	Strong practicality		
Low motivation	Students uncertain Governments and employers suspicious	More opportunities for higher education New opportunities for internationalisation Reduced costs (e.g. less travel) Environmental benefits	**High motivation**
	International inequalities Cost of investment Failure to develop new pedagogy Insufficient skills Lack of skilled support Lack of infrastructure	New technologies Increasing access	
	Significant practical issues		

From the student perspective, two broad issues, if under-researched at present, will no doubt go on to dominate academic literature for many years to come, namely the impact of new technology on the structure, organisation, delivery and experience of higher education, including internationalisation, and the pressures for decolonisation of higher education, with immediate consequences on the movement of staff and students, the conduct of international collaborative research and curriculum. At the same time, several authors have also considered the impact of the Covid pandemic on internationalisation of higher education, especially, but not exclusively, from a student perspective. These issues are each important in their own right, but they are also inter-related. As the pandemic has curtailed the delivery of traditional forms of face-to-face teaching and disrupted international travel, a new emphasis has been placed on opportunities for international delivery of programmes in online and blended formats. On the one hand, this has the potential to enhance diversity and broaden access to higher education. On the other hand, as can be seen in, *inter alia*, Hungary and India, many prejudices remain about the value and quality of online courses. Moreover, there are many deep concerns about access to the necessary technologies in poorer parts of the world, especially in terms of equipment and expertise. These concerns apply just as much, sometimes even more so, to academic staff as to students.

Increasing Ethical Awareness

Issues of diversity and access raised in connection with the applications of new technology are, in practice, also part of an increasing recognition of the importance of ethical considerations in the delivery of internationalisation. International travel and living expenses can be expensive, often deterring students from poorer backgrounds or from less developed countries. Universities are now focussed on providing the benefits of internationalisation for staff and students from the widest possible background, regardless of wealth, ethnicity, gender, age and disability. However, progress remains limited. One response outlined in several chapters is the development of ‘internationalisation at home’ whereby increasing numbers of students can enjoy, to some degree, an international experience.

Internationalisation in higher education is also increasingly influenced by ethical concerns associated with the environment. International travel, especially by air, has serious environmental consequences. Increasingly, staff and students are questioning the justification for long-distance travel, especially given new opportunities for online communications.

A further key illustration of the increasing impact of ethical concerns on internationalisation in higher education highlighted in this book relates to the colonial heritage that has for many centuries shaped staff and student experience. The relationships between internationalisation and national priorities have changed. It is now clearer than before that different countries “use”, and are “affected by”, internationalisation in different ways. This has led to debates on a number of subjects hitherto largely bypassed, including the nature and impact of north-south relationships that reflect continuing colonial heritages. Indeed, the issue of decolonising university sectors faces many former colonial nations across the world. Yet, how this will impact on internationalisation in higher education remains uncertain. At its heart, the issue raises questions over the friction between the ascendency of a Northern and Western vision of higher education and the potential that internationalisation offers to forge new alliances that transcend an asymmetric “north-south” cooperation paradigm. One author in this book calls for a radical re-thinking in the delivery of higher education to reflect national needs and traditions and a re-balancing of activity, especially in the conduct of research partnerships.

However, this is neither a straightforward development nor an easy option. For instance, for all its promise, the surge in popularity of new technologies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic may have rather stimulated unexpected effects. New technology may pose an alternative to traditional international movements of students, but the applications of new technology and the related educational pedagogies are still dominated by Northern and Western universities; the flowers of internationalisation might be changing, but the roots are still the same. Covid has increased the attraction of online delivery and may have created some new opportunities, but it may actually have cemented still further the domination of Northern and Western approaches. Indeed, the chapter on Brazil shows how the pandemic has resulted in a sense of caution in shaping new university partnerships, a reversion to familiar faces and connections.

Overall Developments Worth Considering

Governance, innovation and ethical innovation shape a number of key shifts in internationalisation priorities across the world. Without a claim to exhaustiveness, we believe this volume's 12 chapters, collectively, unfurl important developments that help grasp some of the new trends that internationalisation policies have been taking since the turn of the century. Below, we list four that are most prominent across the chapters.

Research Over Student Mobility

Mobility has been for a long time *the* prime defining attribute of internationalisation, not least because of the financial benefits it brings. In the EU, non-EU/EEA+ students pay higher fees than their EU counterparts. This helps explain efforts to institutionalise strategic international partnerships with universities overseas and the primary focus on student mobility. Beyond the EU, this trend is even clearer, for example in Australia. However, research exchanges and the establishment of international research networks have increasingly played a crucial role in profiling institutional internationalisation. Partaking in international consortia of universities or research institutes produces non-price information (reputation and prestige, see Brewer et al., 2002). This means becoming a more attractive "place to be" for both students and researchers, and more research funding opportunities because of the mass of applicants and the concentration of expertise. In times of nationalism and following on from Covid, internationalisation of research seems to maintain prevalence vis-à-vis a relative weakening role of student mobility. After all, the attractiveness of an international learning experience lies largely in the foreign cultures that students imbibe. Research can often be coordinated at distance, and partners' contribution is often exactly their embeddedness in the local context. In addition, a university's role in international research is often seen as having greater reputational capital than student exchanges, especially if these are primarily at undergraduate level. This might be a factor in the post-Brexit UK's decision to opt out of Erasmus student mobility, but not the research exchange programme with the EU.

Internationalisation at Home

Another trend that is becoming increasingly commonplace is the investment in "internationalisation at home". From this perspective, mobility is understood as "a piece of the puzzle", albeit perseveringly crucial. But the "purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (Beelen & Jones, 2015) is no longer considered a marginal aspect of internationalisation. There is increased emphasis on internationalising learning outcomes for all students, including those who do not travel abroad for study. This has been apparent in the institutional organisation of internationalisation. The University of São Paulo (USP), described in this volume, is an example. USP has a dedicated body, the USP Agência de Cooperação Acadêmica Nacional e Internacional (AUCANI, or *Agency of National and International Cooperation*, in English) that defines how different aspects of the University's internationalisation policy are to be integrated and implemented across the institution. AUCANI acts on six framework elements. "Internationalisation at home" is a key objective that guides the internationalisation of the university environment internally, so that the entire university community can benefit from an international experience, regardless of actual mobility. At the same time, internationalisation at home raises further questions of access and diversity. Some academic staff question the impact of required curriculum change on their academic freedom; some subject areas are prescribed by legal and professional requirements that curtail the scope for international experience. In such circumstances, institutional and individual sensitivity and imagination are paramount.

Internationalisation as a Core Function to Fulfil a University's Social Responsibility

More than ever before, we now understand that internationalisation affects humans, the way we are and the way we think. From this perspective, it is not only a tool for economic or reputational benefit (whether for institutions or nations), but for personal benefit. When a university engages genuinely in internationalisation, it does so also to fulfil its "third mission". Unlike the prevailing twentieth century attitude, which positioned internationalisation as an addition to the core university functions, today internationalisation is *inherent to the university's mission*. In other words, internationalisation is an essential contributor to universities' social responsibility, to their duty to identify and address societal issues where they occur and to provide excellent teaching and learning. This is very evident, for example, in the developing world. Cooperating internationally contributes to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education institutions in carrying out their core functions. This includes better teaching and learning and addressing political, economic and social problems related to globalization, because "higher education is recognized as a key force for modernization and development" (see e.g. Adamu's chapter focussing on Ethiopia).

The Enthusiastic Views of Internationalisation

Finally, as internationalisation of higher education has been studied, conceptualised and scrutinised, it appears that more "benevolent" views have at times been forgotten. Academic staff often have a genuine desire to understand and work with international contexts; staff and students have a desire driven by curiosity to experience learning in different countries. This is a relevant point for at least two reasons. First, it calls for a less cynical and – perhaps – more trusting approach to the pursuit of internationalisation in higher education in the genuine belief shared by many in our universities that international relationships do yield human and academic benefits beyond revenue and prestige. In addition, and second, it recognizes that academics often are sincere believers in internationalisation, a view that warrants the further re-thinking of governance (discussed heretofore) and of the incentive and motivational mechanisms for academic work more generally.

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