Internationalisation of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe

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Chapter Six

Meanings of and Approaches to ‘International Education’ and the ‘Internationalisation of Higher Education’

One of the fundamental problems we face when dealing with the internationalisation of higher education is the diversity of related terms. Terms frequently used both in the literature and in practice, are: international education, international studies, internationalism, transnational education, globalisation of higher education. There are also regional variants such as regionalisation of higher education – best known through the use of ‘Europeanisation of education’ – and more concrete subdivisions of the field: academic mobility, international co-operation, study abroad, international exchange. More curriculum-focused terms include area studies in education, multicultural education, intercultural education, cross-cultural education, education for international understanding, peace education, global education, international studies, transnational studies, and global studies. And there are more competence-related terms such as global competence and transnational competence. Sometimes they are used to describe a concrete element of the broad field of internationalisation, but in other cases these terms are used as ‘pars pro toto’ and as a synonym for the overall term ‘internationalisation’.

Each of these terms has a different emphasis and reflects a different approach, but are used by different authors in different ways. For a better understanding of the internationalisation of higher education it is important to place that term in perspective to approaches and other terms used, and to provide a working definition of its meaning, which is the purpose of this chapter.

1. Meaning of ‘international education’ and the ‘internationalisation of higher education’

Over the past ten years a lively debate has taken place on the definition and meaning of the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ and the related term ‘international education’, reflecting the growing relevance of this area. Several publications, seminars and symposia have dealt with this fundamental question: “What exactly does it mean to internationalize?”, as one symposium and related book (Hanson and Meyerson, 1995) phrases it. Usually the answers are given only in vague and implicit terms, by providing an overview of related aspects. Others attempt to come to a definition of its meaning. In doing so, the terms ‘international education’ and ‘internationalisation of education’ are used interchangeably. As later will be demonstrated, ‘international education’ is strongly related to activity approaches, as well as rationale, competency and ethos approaches’. American authors tend to use the term ‘international education’ more frequently, while the ‘internationalisation of (higher) education’ is used more in the non-American literature. This can be explained through the historical developments, as described in Part One. For that reason it is relevant to return first to the original use of the term ‘international education’.

60 An earlier publication (Knight and De Wit, 1995) gave an overview of this debate, which is presented here in a revised and extended version.
1.1 The origins of International Education

The purpose of this section is to place ‘international education’ within the broader context of ‘comparative and international education’. The reason is that:

a) in most literature the basic overall term within which most of the other terms are placed as a kind of subdivision is ‘international education’ – in itself a term directly related to ‘comparative education’; and

b) ‘international education’ is most frequently used in place of the internationalisation of higher education.

Historically, writes Epstein (1994, 918-19), “comparative education grew out of, and was inspired by, international education.” The origin of international education lies, according to him, in the call by César Auguste Basset in 1808 for the appointment of a scholar free from national and methodological prejudices to observe education outside of France. According to Epstein, comparative education found its origin in the publication of a series of five articles in 1816-1817 by the French scholar Marc-Antoine Jullien, in which he set out a method for the comparative study of education. This historical description of the two terms is generally accepted by other scholars. There is disagreement on the further development of the two related fields.

Altbach, Arnone and Kelly (1982, 505) state that in essence comparative education is a post Second World War field of study. Although its intellectual roots lie in the nineteenth century, “the field’s legitimacy was established only after World War II. Since that time, comparative education has sought to delineate itself as a distinct area of inquiry in educational studies that reaches beyond education for theoretical perspectives and methodology.” The same might be said about international education, that also became more important after the Second World War, in particular in the 1960s and 1970s.

Epstein (1994, 918) states that ‘comparative education’ and ‘international education’ are often confused. He describes ‘comparative education’ as “a field of study that applies historical, philosophical, and social theories and methods to international problems in education.” According to him “Comparative education is primarily an academic and interdisciplinary pursuit.” By comparison, he describes ‘international education’ as fostering “an international orientation in knowledge and attitudes and, among other initiatives, brings together students, teachers, and scholars from different nations to learn about and from each other.” Epstein in this way, similarly to many other comparative educators, makes a distinction between ‘comparativists’, being primarily scholars “interested in explaining why educational systems and processes vary and how education relates to wider social factors and forces,” and ‘international educators’, focusing “more directly on descriptive information about nations and societies and their educational systems and structures. International educators use findings derived from comparative education to understand better the educational processes they examine, and thus to enhance their ability to make policy relating to programs such as those associated with international exchange and understanding.” Elsewhere Epstein (1968, 377) even more clearly distinguished comparative education from international education, by stating that the latter “is concerned more with practice and implementing policy.”
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Wilson (1994, 453-454) also states that “the apparent dividing line between international and comparative education is the distinction between researchers (either descriptive or analytic) and practitioners directly concerned with policy and practice.” Adams and Theisen (1990, 286) differentiate not between scholar and practitioner, but between basic and applied research, where basic research is knowledge-driven, and applied research solution-driven. 61

It is true that much work in international education, whichever description one gives to this term, seems to be practically oriented, while much comparative educational work seems to be more scholarly oriented. The same might be said about the distinction between basic and applied. However, as Altbach, Arno and Kelly (1982, 506) and Wilson (1994, 484) make clear, one can find both practitioners and scholars among comparative and international educators. Wilson (1994,453) synthesises them in the term ‘academic-practitioner’: “The confusion between comparative and international educators is compounded by the dual roles played by academics who occasionally consult for these [UNESCO, ILO, World Bank, etc.] agencies and by agency personnel who continue to undertake “academic” research and publication, even though not based in academia.” This synthesis is also true for the area of ‘internationalisation of higher education’, although with a different emphasis: primarily practitioners who do academic work, instead of academics doing consultancy and/or practical work. 62

One might say that both the distinction and synthesis between basic and applied and between scholarly and practical is relevant to all fields of study, so does not help us much in clarifying the distinction between comparative and international education.

R.G. Paulston (1994, 925) sees international education as a result of the late 1960s, a new branch of comparative education as he calls it, that “addressed problems of educational planning, development, and theory construction in macrostudies of educational and social change in largely poor, newly independent countries.” Willis H. Griffin and Ralph B. Spence, cited by Anweiler, (1977, 110) note that “the term international education has been used to refer variously to curriculum content that deals with other countries and societies, with international relations among countries, exchange of students between countries, assistance to other countries’ educational development, training of specialists for diplomatic and other international work, cultural relations programs between nations and the general informing of the public of world affairs.” According to Wilson (1994, 481) this broad and vague definition is a reflection of their inclusion of topics such as development education, cross-cultural education and international co-operation and exchange.

More authors have a tendency to create subdivisions within comparative and/or international education, in particular as far as it concerns the more practitioner-oriented aspect of the term. One group of subdivision terms mentioned frequently in the literature relates to ‘development education’, ‘peace education’, ‘education for international understanding’, ‘multicultural education’, and ‘cross-cultural education’. These terms have a strong common basis in the post Second World War efforts to promote peace and international understanding, and later development co-operation. Another

61 Crossley (1999) also refers to the distinction between applied and theoretical in relation to international and comparative education.

62 This distinction is not unique for the sector. Teichler (1996 a, 436) makes reference to “a relatively vague distinction between the researcher and practitioner” in higher education in general.
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group of subdivision terms (see for instance Wilson, 1994, 461) relates to ‘study abroad’, ‘academic mobility’, ‘international exchange’ and ‘international co-operation’. This subdivision reflects more what we refer to in this study as ‘international education’.

Harari refers to Freeman Butts in 1969 (cit. Harari, 1977, 2293) who describes international education as “embracing the programs of activity which identifiable educational organizations deliberately plan and carry out for their members (students, teachers, and closely related clientele), with one of (possibly both) two major purposes in mind: (a) the study of the thought, institutions, techniques, or ways of life of other peoples and of their interrelationships, and (b) the transfer of educational institutions, ideas, or materials from society to another.” Harari identifies on the basis of that definition three strands: “the international content of the curricula, the international movement of scholars and students concerned with training and research, and the arrangements that engage a system of education co-operation programs beyond its national boundaries.” As will be explained later, this way of looking at international education and the internationalisation of higher education – terms used interchangeably by Harari – has been rather influential in the American literature on the internationalisation of higher education.

Halls (1990, 23-24) arrives at the following typology for comparative education:

- ‘comparative studies’, subdivided in: comparative pedagogy, i.e. the study of teaching and the classroom process in different countries; and intra-educational and intra-cultural analysis
- ‘education abroad’, the study of aspects of an educational system or systems other than one's own, including area-studies
- ‘international education’, sub-divided in: international pedagogy, i.e. the study of teaching multinational, multicultural and multiracial groups, or the education of linguistic or ethnic minorities, but also the study of subjects such as peace education; and the study of the work of international education institutions, closely related to international pedagogy, but more concerned with policy matters, such as the establishment of international acceptability of qualifications, the promotion of educational exchanges and the initiation of cultural agreements
- ‘development education’, the production of information and plans to assist policymakers, particularly in ‘new nations’, the development of appropriate educational methods and techniques, and the training of personnel to implement programmes.

His typology does not help much in clarifying the concept of comparative and international education, in fact it causes more confusion. He uses the term ‘education abroad’ to describe something different to what is described by study abroad. He also uses the term international education in a different way to most other authors. Halls (1990, 23) himself admits that there is “no agreement among comparative educationists as to the use of terms”, giving as an example the confusion between the use of the terms ‘international education’ and ‘development education’. Vestal (1994, 13) also makes reference to the diversity in meanings of international education and the multiplicity of definitions. He, like other American authors on international education such as Lambert (1989) and Harari (1977), tends to make a subdivision between curriculum – using the term ‘international studies’ as alternate term – and organisation – using ‘study abroad’ or ‘international exchanges’ as synonyms for international education.
Two European authors have made an attempt to give the ‘international’ in ‘comparative and international education’ a clearer and, as far as the internationalisation of higher education is concerned, more relevant place.

Anweiler (1977, 109/113) writes that “in the current American usage” in ‘comparative education’ is "comparing and contrasting different national systems of education," and ‘international education’ is "many different theoretical studies or practical activities, which are held together by the term ‘internationalism’.” As an alternative, he emphasises ‘internationalisation’ as “a characteristic feature of comparative education”. He answers the question ‘What is the meaning of international in comparative education?’ as follows: “Comparative education is concerned with problems at the different levels of internationalization, which, as such, it is able to determine from the historical analysis of the internationalization process, and from contemporary review.”

Husén (1994, 2972) describes ‘international education’ as “a cross-disciplinary study of international and intercultural problems in education. As such, it overlaps to some extent with comparative education but goes beyond it in its international orientation.” According to him, “international education refers both to the objectives and content of certain educational pursuits and to the internationalization of such activities.” Like others, he makes a distinction between the scholar, ‘the academic pursuit’ and the practitioner, "efforts that aim to foster an international orientation in knowledge and attitudes.” He sees links with multicultural education, peace education, as well as new forms such as education for development and for a new international economic order. UNESCO is mentioned as its main promoter and he refers to a meeting of UNESCO in 1991 in Tunis on the integration of international education into higher education.

Husén states that international education can be studied from the following perspectives: historical development, goals and objectives (typically to increase the awareness of students and to promote reflection and research on global issues, and in this way to promote international understanding, co-operation, human rights, peace, and so on), implementation and institutional arrangements (national and international agencies and units to dispense educational programmes in the field), and means (curricular provisions, teaching material, publications, and research programmes, as well as the use of media in dispensing international education).

According to Husén, (1994, 2974) global interdependence and global education demanded “internationalising education, with two major objectives, one more idealistic and elusive and one more tangible and pragmatic. In the first place, by means of certain programs in the formal educational system, a heightened awareness is sought among young people of global interdependence by presenting them with, among other things, certain basic facts. This could be regarded as sensitivity training in international thinking with the purpose of fostering certain attitudes that lead to international solidarity, rejection of racial prejudices, and understanding of other cultures. The other overriding objective is to impart certain skills and competencies that will enable young people to function in an international setting, such as mastery of foreign languages, knowledge and insights into foreign cultures, and the history and geography of other nations.” In line with these arguments, Crossley (1999) calls for a reconceptualised field of comparative and international education to position it better for the study of globalisation, culture and identity.

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63 According to Husén, a term introduced in 1985 by Soedjatmoko, at that time rector of the UN University, Tokyo.
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Anweiler and Husén bring into the debate two related elements that are relevant for the study of the internationalisation of higher education:
- the historical factor, and
- the term internationalisation, emphasising that it is a process and not something static, as the term 'international education' suggests.

These two elements are essential in the analysis of international education and the internationalisation of higher education, the subject of the next section.

1.2 Meanings of international education and the internationalisation of higher education

Sven Groenings (1987 b) comments as early as 1987 that, even though it is moving along a massive front, "like the early scientific revolution, internationalization lacks orderly process or agreed upon definitions." The Association of Universities and Canadian Colleges (AUCC, 1993) concludes in 1993 that "there is no simple, unique or all encompassing definition of internationalization of the university. It is a multitude of activities aimed at providing an educational experience within an environment that truly integrates a global perspective.

Grueinzweig and Rinehart (1998) comment: "the field of international academic exchange and study abroad has become a curious hybrid between an academic discipline and a professional practice whose discourse is often characterised by the repetition of unquestioned dogmas and the use of inadequately defined terms." Teichler (1996 b, 344) concludes that "there is no unanimously agreed definition among experts." Mestenhauser (1998, 70) paraphrases it as follows: "everything that quacks must be international education." And Halliday (1999, 99) speaks of this 'fetish' covering a variety of issues and meanings: "it is at once a spur and a sales gimmick, an appeal that issues as easily from the mouth of the financial manager as from the lips of the cosmopolitan scholar."

The comment "there is no simple, unique or all encompassing definition" may very well summarise the current sentiment and situation in several countries regarding the meaning of internationalisation and parallels the observation of Wilson (1994, 480) on the term 'international education', to which has been referred to in the previous section.

Originally, in the research field the term 'international education' covered several elements of the internationalisation of higher education, such as study abroad, but gradually during the last two decades this has diminished. In the field of internationalisation practitioners, however, the term 'international education' is still used as an equivalent of the internationalisation of higher education. Organisations such as IIE (Institute for International Education), NAFSA (Association of International Educators), and AIEA (Association of International Education Administrators), in the USA; the CBIE (Canadian Bureau for International Education) in Canada; and the EAIIE (European Association for International Education) in Europe, all use the term 'international education'. The same is true for the 'Journal of Studies in International Education'.

One possible explanation for the use of the term 'international education' by these organisations is that in the 1960s and 1970s there was a close link between technical assistance, development education and internationalisation. Organisations such as the CBIE in Canada and NUFFIC (Netherlands Foundation for International Co-operation in Higher Education) were
primarily oriented to technical assistance and development education at that time. This correlates with the close similarity in much literature of international education and development education. Another explanation may be found in the strong link seen by several researchers between international education and practice. The organisations mentioned above all have a strong focus on administration; they are mainly organisations of practitioners. Both arguments are relevant, but more important in my view is that the term ‘international education’, as described earlier in the historical part, covers the fragmented but organised state of development in the international dimension of higher education, as it emerges in the United States and to a lesser extent in Europe after the First and Second World War, and in particular during the Cold War.

The term ‘international education’, however, creates confusion when used as an equivalent to, or short-hand for the ‘internationalisation of higher education’. As has been remarked above, researchers of ‘comparative and international education’ have used the term ‘international education’ in recent years to refer more to issues such as development education and country studies than to the internationalisation of higher education. The ‘Comparative Education Review’, the academic journal of CIES, for instance, has seldom, if ever, dealt with issues related to the internationalisation of higher education. The cumulative index 1957–1998 of the review (1998) mentions six articles on internationalisation, none of which deals with the internationalisation of higher education as such. Sixteen articles deal with study abroad, of which eight were published in a special issue on foreign students in comparative perspective, May 1984. In February 1998, an article on academic staff mobility in the European Community was published. This is the result of the 40 years’ existence of the review on this area of study.

Others, in particular American authors, use the term ‘international education’ more in relation to activity, competency, rationale and ethos approaches than to process approaches to internationalisation (see section two of this chapter), and for that reason may be considered as covering a different stage of development, closer to the meanings as presented in the field of comparative and international education research.

However, we have to recognise the general acceptance of the term international education as covering and even being an abbreviation of the term ‘internationalisation of higher education’. General acceptance of the limitation of the use of the term ‘international education’ as an abbreviation of the ‘internationalisation of education’ would help in solving the confusing mix of terminologies in the study of comparative and international education. At the same time, the use of international education as an alternative term for the internationalisation of higher education disregards the crucial aspects of ‘history’ and ‘process’.

In addition, given the different interpretation of international education within the Comparative and International Education Society, it is unlikely that this terminology will be accepted there easily. For that reason, the confusion between the two terms and the two worlds should be recognised as a fact of life, with ‘internationalisation of higher education’ related to the process approach, and ‘international education’ relate more to one or several of the other approaches.

This is not the case for another term that is sometimes used in place of ‘international education’ and the ‘internationalisation of higher education’: ‘internationalism’ (Altbach, 1998; Scott, 1999, 37). Authors such as Altbach and Scott use the term in particular to describe the
generic international character of universities, such as “the long tradition of internationalism in higher education” (Altbach) and “internationalism has always been part of the life-world of the university” (Scott). Used in this way, the term is rather superficial. As an alternative for the two other terms, as for instance in the title of an article by Barbara Burn (1996, 19) and by Altbach (1997 b), it is confusing and unclear, because internationalism is identified more with ideological than conceptual meanings. (See also Knight, 1999 c). Zoltán Abádi-Nagy (1999) gives an interesting critique on the use of ‘internationalism’ writing on internationalism and national identity in Eastern Europe: “For eastern Europeans, ‘internationalism’ can stir unpleasant memories.”

The following overview of meanings of ‘international education’ and ‘internationalisation of higher education’, illustrates the different perceptions behind the use and meaning of these terms.

Maurice Harari (1989) suggests that international education must encompass not only the curriculum, international exchanges of scholars/ students, co-operative programmes with the community, training and a wide array of administrative services but also “distinct commitment, attitudes, global awareness, an orientation and dimension which transcends the entire institution and shapes its ethos.” His work in the 1970s and 1980s reflects the development of the internationalisation of higher education in the US, and the acceptance in the US of the term ‘international education’ for that — although other terms are also used, such as ‘international studies’ (see for instance Lambert, 1996).

Stephen Arum and Jack Van de Water (1992) identify the need for a clearer and more focused definition of international education. They base their search for a definition on an analysis of concepts and definitions used in the United States during the past thirty years. The definition they favour is one proposed by Harari in 1972. It combines three main elements: 1) international content of the curriculum; 2) international movement of scholars and students concerned with training and research; and 3) international technical assistance and co-operation programmes. They built on this perspective and developed their own tripartite definition, which refers to “the multiple activities, programmes and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical co-operation.”

Mestenhauser (1998 b, 70-71) questions the possibility of fitting international education into a single definition, given the genuine conceptual confusion surrounding the term. He proposes a ‘contingency concept’ of international education, a collage of nine different pictures: target groups; the levels of education; the defining disciplines; theories about the nature of knowledge; structure and goals; ‘meta-knowing’ perspectives; the dramatically changing nature of changing international relations; the geography of international education; and the nature of change. Elsewhere (Mestenhauser, 2000), he describes international education as a complex, multidimensional and interdisciplinary phenomenon, with several levels of analysis. Although he raises several relevant and important points in his description of these nine pictures, his contingency concept of international

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64 His work, together with that of others such as Sven Groenings, Richard D. Lambert, Barbara Burn and Joseph Mestenhauser, has heavily influenced the further debate in the US. The debate only came to life again in the 1990s (in particular in Europe, Canada and Australia) partly as a reaction to the American interpretations (De Wit, 1993 and 1998 c).
education is even more confusing with regard to understanding its meaning than the confusion surrounding international education itself.

Schoorman (1999, 21) defines internationalisation as “an ongoing, counterhegemonic educational process that occurs in an international context of knowledge and practice where societies are viewed as subsystems of a larger, inclusive world. The process of internationalization at an educational institution entails a comprehensive, multifaceted programme of action that is integrated into all aspects of education.” This definition, which includes several aspects that are explicitly or implicitly present in the definition by Jane Knight (such as process, integration and international dimension) limits itself to the teaching function of the institution and is too abstract and too complex to be useful.

Kerr (1994, 12-13) describes internationalisation of learning as being divided into four components: the flow of new knowledge, the flow of scholars, the flow of students and the content of the curriculum. According to Scott (1998, 116-117), the international dimensions of higher education are also concentrated in four aspects: student flows, flow of academic staff, collaboration between institutions, and the flow of ideas. Elements of this description of internationalisation are to be found in Van der Wende (1996), Rudzki (1998) and others. Halliday, (1999, 104) for instance, gives the following four elements: students, staff, income and location.

What is remarkable about these definitions, which come mainly from American authors, is that they sum up or emphasise activities, rationales, competencies and/or ethos, and that they use the term ‘international education’ rather than ‘internationalisation of higher education’. This will be illustrated by comparing these definitions with those by non-American authors and organisations over the past decade.

The European Association for International Education (EAIE, 1992) states that the internationalisation of higher education covers a broad range of activities and can only be defined in a general way as meaning all the activities dealing with the internationalisation of higher education, “internationalization being the whole range of processes by which higher education becomes less national and more internationally oriented.”

One of the recommendations from a British Columbia Centre for International Education (BCCIE) Task Force (Francis, 1993) addresses the “need for clarification of the definition of internationalization, both in the context of the post-secondary system as a whole, and at the individual institutional level.” This results from the Task Force finding that “not only did the meaning attributed to the term vary between individuals, but so too did the comfort level with using the word.” The Task Force develops and suggests the following as a working definition for the province of British Columbia: “internationalization is a process that prepares the community for successful participation in an increasingly interdependent world. In Canada, our multicultural reality is the stage for internationalization. The process should infuse all facets of the post-secondary education system, fostering global understanding and developing skills for effective living and working in a diverse world.”

Kazuhiro Ebuchi (1993) gives the following definition: “Internationalisation is a process by which the teaching, research and service functions of a higher education system become
internationally and cross-culturally compatible.” The problem with this definition is that it implies a greater homogeneity of outcome than is necessarily the case.

The Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) of the OECD (OECD, 1994, see also Knight and De Wit, 1995, 2 and 16) uses a formulation of the internationalisation of higher education in the following general terms: “The complex of processes whose combined effect, whether planned or not, is to enhance the international dimension of the experience of higher education in universities and similar educational institutions.”

Rudzki (1998, 16), observing that “one of the major problems ... has been the lack of an accepted definition of ‘internationalization’ within the context of education” defines it for the purpose of his work as “a process of organizational change, curriculum innovation, staff development and student mobility for the purpose of attaining excellence in teaching, research and the other activities which universities undertake as part of their function.”

Jane Knight (1993) adopts a process view of internationalisation. An international dimension is described as “a perspective, activity or programme which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of a university or college.” In later publications she presented a slightly adapted version of her original definition (Knight, 1997, 8 and 1999, 16). She adds to the definition the intercultural dimension: “Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution.”

Comparing the American definitions of Harari, Arum and Van der Water and Mestenhauser – Schoorman is an exception on the American side, from a younger generation and influenced by the new literature from outside the USA – and the non-American definitions of the EAIE, BCCIE, Ebuchi, Rudzki, IMHE and Knight, one notes that the last emphasise internationalisation as a process, while the first sum up programmes and activities relevant to the American study abroad tradition. This is also reflected in the use of the term ‘international education’ by most American authors and ‘internationalisation of (higher) education’ in most non-American literature. Halpern (1969, 123) illustrates the American position clearly with the case of the Institute of International Education: “The Institute failed to give international education real definition. Its goals were vague, its programs eclectic and its work with foreign exchange projects excessively administrative. There was a tendency to regard almost any kind of transnational academic contact as part of international education, a tendency which was intellectually lazy and misleading. Years after international education was fully accepted in America it was unclear to many what it actually meant and whether it had proven accomplishments.”

As we have seen in Chapter One, from a historical point of view, ‘international education’ reflects the period between the Second World War and the end of the Cold War and is more strongly observed in the United States than elsewhere, and the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ reflects the period starting with the end of the Cold War, and is more predominant in Europe, as well as Australia and Canada. The differences in the meanings of American authors and others can be explained by the fact that most practice and analysis in the period before the end of the Cold War was

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65 The same is true for Ellingboe (1998, 199), who also defines internationalisation as a process.
done by Americans and still dominates American practice, whereas most practice and analysis of the international dimension of higher education now takes place outside of the United States, in particular Europe, Canada and Australia.

As Jane Knight and De Wit (1995, 16) have observed, the conclusion "there is no simple, unique or all encompassing definition of internationalization of the university" itself can be seen as an accomplishment, given the fact that until recently both the formulation and the implementation of internationalisation was predominantly American-based, the debate relatively new and the research tradition young. As the international dimension of higher education gains more attention and recognition, people tend to use it in the way that best suits their purpose. While one can easily understand this happening, it is not helpful for internationalisation to become a catch-all phrase for everything and anything international. A more focused definition is necessary if it is to be understood and treated with the importance that it deserves. Even if there is no agreement on a precise definition, internationalisation needs to have parameters if it is to be assessed and to advance higher education. This is why the use of a working definition in combination with a conceptual framework for internationalisation of higher education is relevant.

The working definition of Jane Knight: “internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” and the related conceptual framework as designed by Jane Knight and de Wit (1995) now seem to be increasingly accepted as a useful working definition and framework. See for instance Van der Wende, 1996, 8; Back, Davis and Olsen, 1996, 15; Mallea, 1996, 113; Gacel-Avila, 1999; Bond and Lemasson, 1999; Wächter, 1999 a. Callan (2000, 16) qualifies it as “a now classic formulation of internationalization at institutional level in terms of its desired or intended effects.”

However, Van der Wende (1997 a, 18-19) notes that this definition limits the focus to institutional strategies and policies and excludes national governments. This could be solved by changing ‘of the institution’ into ‘higher education’ in Jane Knight’s definition, but would ignore the fact that national policies, as well as those of other stakeholders, are only relevant if they are directed to or at least channelled by institutions of higher education. She also comments that internationalisation defined in this way suggests that it is an aim in itself, lacking a wider goal. But, as we will see later, these wider goals, which are part of the rationales for internationalisation, are explicitly left out of the definition in order to give it a more workable and general meaning.

In the context of the same study on national policies for internationalisation, Van der Wende presents an alternative definition of internationalisation, including “any systematic effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets.” With the lack of a generally accepted definition, there seems to be a general trend in studies on the internationalisation of higher education to define it ‘in the context of’ or ‘for the purpose of’ specific studies. This is a correct way of defining an approach to internationalisation, as long as an explicit reference to the domain itself is made, such as in the definition cited above, used by Van der Wende in her study of national policies, or the one used in her study on the internationalisation of the curriculum – Van der Wende, 1996, 18: “the process of curriculum development or curriculum change which is aimed at integrating an
international dimension into the content of the curriculum, and, if relevant, also into the method of instruction."

However, in many cases no definition is given at all, and terms are used in parallel without any distinction. As indicated above and on other occasions (De Wit, 1998c), several American definitions have a tendency towards an implicit national approach to and description of international education, as synonym for internationalisation of higher education. Examples of such national American approaches are to be found in the work of Richard D. Lambert (1993, 189 and 298) and of Ann Kelleher (1996).

The various definitions given to ‘international education’ and the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ reflect different approaches to the role of the international dimension in higher education: activity, rationale, competency, ethos and process approaches.

2. Approaches to internationalisation

If we look at the literature and practice of the internationalisation of higher education, in many cases its meaning is linked to its rationales, its means, its content and/or its activities. This has contributed to the confusing overlap in terms used to describe (elements of) internationalisation. As long as the limitation is made explicit and the author does not claim general use of the term, this is no problem, but there is a trend to be rather superficial in the use of these terms. Sometimes three or more terms are used to describe the same phenomenon in a single article.

Four different approaches to internationalisation of higher education are identified: activity, rationale, competency and process. While each approach has a key aspect which distinguishes it from the others, it is important to recognise that they are not mutually exclusive. It may be more appropriate to think of them as different strands in a cord which integrates the different aspects of internationalisation. A brief description of each approach follows.

Activity Approach

The ‘activity approach’ describes internationalisation in terms of categories or types of activities. These include academic and extra-curricular activities, such as curricular development and innovation; scholar, student and faculty exchange; area studies; technical assistance; intercultural training; international students; and joint research activities. This approach focuses exclusively on the content of the activities and does not necessarily include any of the organisational issues needed to initiate, develop and sustain the activities. It is this approach, however, which is most widely used in the description of internationalisation, and terms related to this approach are frequently used as being equivalent to the ‘internationalisation of higher education’.

Curricular development and innovation or internationalisation of the curriculum might be considered a, crucial – perhaps the most crucial – activity in internationalisation. Terms used

Jane Knight (1994) also mentions four approaches, not including the rationale approach but an ethos approach, which in my view is part of the rationale approach. See also Knight and De Wit, 1996.
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frequently in relation to ‘curriculum’ as an activity approach are: international education, international studies, area studies, multicultural education, intercultural education, cross-cultural education, education for international understanding, peace education, global education, development education, international studies, transnational studies, global studies.

As we will see, most definitions relate to this approach, and most studies on the internationalisation of higher education fall under it. The next two, rationale and competency, are more specific and narrow approaches. Jane Knight (1999 a, 15) mentions that the activity approach is seen by some as synonymous with the term international education. This, in my view, is also true for the rationale and competency approaches.

**Rationale Approach**

The ‘rationale approach’ defines internationalisation in terms of its purposes or intended outcomes. In the previous chapter, the rationales for internationalisation are extensively dealt with. Here it is important to note that the ‘rationale approach’ analyses and defines internationalisation from the perspective of its purpose. This is true in particular for several American studies on internationalisation and its aspirations for peace and mutual understanding (see De Wit, 1998 c), but also for recent studies on internationalisation, in which it is seen as an mechanism for income generation through foreign student recruitment, in particular in Australia and the United Kingdom (Pratt and Poole, 1998 a and b; Humfrey, 1999).

Terms frequently used in relation to this approach – referring to a specific rationale – are peace education, education for international understanding, development education, and technical assistance.

Knight (1994) mentions the ‘ethos approach’ which focuses on developing an ethos or culture that values and supports intercultural and international perspectives and initiatives. This approach is most frequently addressed in American studies on international education, such as Harari (1989), Pickert (1992), Klasek (1992) and Kelleher (1996), as was demonstrated in Chapter Two. As a separate approach it is too narrow and should be seen in the context of the broader rationale approach as presented here.

**Competency Approach**

The ‘competency approach’ looks at internationalisation in terms of developing new skills, attitudes, and knowledge in students, faculty and staff. The focus is clearly on the human dimension, not on academic activities or organisational issues. In the literature one can identify use of the following competency terms: learning competencies, career competencies, global competence, transnational competence and international competencies. Studies such as Opper, Teichler and Carlson (1990), Maiworm, Steube and Teichler (1991) on ‘learning competencies’; Maiworm and Teichler (1996) and Bremer (1998) on ‘career competencies’; Yershova, DeJaegher and Mestenhauser (2000) on intercultural competencies; IIE (1997) on ‘transnational competence’; Lambert (1994) on ‘global competence’; and Wilson (1998) on ‘international competencies’ fall under this category.

There is little difference between the elements attributed by the authors to the four terms
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‘intercultural’, ‘transnational’, ‘global’ and ‘international’ competence. Using the meaning given in an IIE study (2000, 5) to transnational competence, one can say that these four competencies refer to the ability of individuals, organisations, communities, and governments to cope effectively with the rapidly changing transnational/intercultural/global/international environment and to realise their goals. One might wonder if these are new terms used to describe the same concepts and ideas, or if there are differences in reality. Looking at the different elements described, my perception is that there is more overlap than difference.

Process Approach

The ‘process approach’ frames internationalisation as a process which integrates an international dimension or perspective into the major functions of the institution. Terms such as infuse, integrate, permeate and incorporate are used to characterise the process approach. A wide range of academic activities, organisational policies and procedures, and strategies are part of this process. This can be described as the most comprehensive approach to describing internationalisation, and is reflected in the working definition.

Studies in this area include (comparative) studies on the internationalisation strategies of institutions of higher education (Knight and de Wit, 1995; Back, Davis and Olsen, 1996); on national policies (Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997); on the link between globalisation and internationalisation (Scott, 1998 and 1999); and on quality assurance and internationalisation (Knight and De Wit, 1999).

3. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, an overview has been given of the different meanings of and approaches to ‘international education’ and the ‘internationalisation of higher education’. In an essay, Jane Knight (1999 c) addresses the opportunities and challenges for internationalisation of higher education in relation to new societal trends: globalisation and regionalisation, and related to them, the knowledge society, information and communication technologies, the labour market and lifelong learning. She links these trends to the rationales for internationalisation and the way they change and become more diversified. Based on these trends and changing rationales, she reflects on the concept of internationalisation. She tries to define international education in relation to global education, regional education and transnational education. She distinguishes between ‘ism’ (principle, value), ‘isation’ (process) and ‘al’ (kind of): internationalism, internationalisation and international, and the same for global, regional and transnational. International means of, between or among nations; transnational means: extending across borders or over nations; regional means a group of nations based on physical proximity or a particular part of the world; and global means relating to the world as a whole.

She applies these meanings to education in the following way: international education involves and/or relates to the people, cultures and systems of different nations; transnational education occurs across borders of nations; regional education involves and/or relates to nations that are in close proximity to one another and can be seen as a subset of international education; and global education involves the world and relates to worldwide issues.
This seems solid and logical, but her framework for analysis of the different terms remains rather abstract and generic; which is also the case with her definition of international education as she herself admits (Ibid., 12): “a kind of education where the purpose, outcomes, activities, content or participants relate to or involve the people, culture and systems of different nations.”

She is correct to observe that, as the rationales shift, as the types of activities diversify, as outcomes take on increasing importance, as the nature of the interactions among the participants changes, then so will the terminology. In this thesis, a historical development and a related development in terminology can also be observed: international dimension, international education, internationalisation of higher education. What is not sufficiently emphasised in Jane Knight’s analysis is this notion of development and historical analysis in the interpretation of the differences and relationships between these terms, as presented in this chapter and the previous chapters. ‘International dimension’ is used as a generic term to cover all aspects of higher education that have an international aspect or dimension, regardless of whether or not it is programmatically or strategically organised. The term ‘international education’ refers to a more developed form of international dimension, a programme or organisation. ‘Internationalisation’ is an extension of ‘international education’, and refers to a more strategic process approach. All three forms are present in higher education today and are not mutually exclusive.

Like Peter Scott, (1998, 109-113) emphasis is placed on the historical dimension of the internationalisation of higher education, an aspect to which only lip-service has been paid in most studies, mainly linking it to the ‘myth’ of the international university of the Middle Ages and to the current transition to globalisation. A combination of a historical analysis and a conceptual framework – Part One and Part Two of this study – allows us to approach a better understanding of the term.

After having dealt with the ‘what’, the next chapter analyses strategies for internationalisation of higher education and organisational models, the ‘how’ of internationalisation of higher education.
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