

Four stories: confronting contemporary ideas about globalisation and internationalisation in higher education

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There is a common distinction between globalisation and internationalisation in higher education scholarship. Globalisation is seen as an over-arching social and economic process where as internationalisation is understood as the ways in which institutions of higher education respond to globalisation. This conceptual distinction has also worked its way into the practice of university administration around the world. Drawing on the theoretical work of Foucault and Giddiness, this conception the consequences of the globalisation / internationalisation distinction are analysed through four of higher accounts education strategies.

Keywords: higher education; globalisation; internationalisation

Introduction

Within the field of higher education, the impact of globalisation on colleges and universities has become a major line of inquiry. Academic journals are now filled with research and scholarship addressing higher education globalisation and internationalisation. The notion that we have entered a ‘knowledge society’ – or a disjuncture from materialist modes of economic production to an economy driven by the production and transmission of information, has, for many observers, placed the burden of social economic fortunes for individuals and nation states on the ability of higher education to produce globally relevant knowledge (OECD 1998; Task Force on Higher Education and Society 2002). As one scholar put it, ‘Today, rapid globalization and postmodern society point toward a future *internationalization* mission for the university as a service to the body of worldwide nation-states’ (Scott 2006, 33, emphasis in the original).

Despite the ubiquity and seeming urgency of globalisation in higher education research, it is a relatively new concept in the field. The term first appeared as a keyword in a scholarly article in the journal *Higher Education* just over a decade and a half ago (Buchbinder 1993). In the late 1990s a handful of books were published that dealt with the topic of globalisation and higher education (see Altbach 1998; Currie and Newson 1998; Slaughter and Leslie 1997). Since that time, with notable exceptions (see Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Marginson and Swair 2005; Robertson 2006), a general consensus has emerged (Stromquest 2007) whereby globalisation is understood as an inevitable, downward pressing social, economic and political force and internationalisation is the process of institutions responding to globalisation (Altbach 2004; De Whit 1999; Knight 2004; Scott 2000; Van Der Wende 2001).

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While there are important differences in the way that globalisation has been distinguished from internationalisation among higher education scholars, in making this distinction, globalisation tends to be represented as a state of being rather than a process. This has the effect of abstracting globalisation above real social relations (Held et al. 1999). Such an abstraction has further implications. First, since globalisation is seen as above or beyond actual social relations, it is reified as a downward pressing force that floats above the social world but also directly impacts social reality. This averts questions of power incumbent within international relations by detaching the process of globalisation from structures of domination and subordination that create winners and losers. Second, globalisation is portrayed as inevitable (Altbach 2004 states this explicitly). When conceptualised as a state of being, globalisation demands a response but cannot be confronted or influenced. This denies the possibility of globalisation as a dialectic process in which institutions of higher education can participate actively.

There is an enormous amount of scholarship on globalisation in general (see Castells 2001; Held et al. 1999; Waters 2001) and globalisation has been addressed along numerous specific lines including (among others) economic, political, social, cultural, technological and spatial (Appadurai 2000; Beck 2001; Beiler and Morton 2001; Brenner 2001; Giddens 2001; Sassen 2000; Stiglitz 2003; Swngedouw 2004). This paper is not intended to be an assessment of how well globalisation concepts applies to higher education in various contexts, as this has been addressed (Marginson and Swair 2005). Rather, the purpose of this paper is to confront the way that globalisation has been predominantly understood among higher education scholars and policy-makers, and explore how this understanding has worked its way into practice. In other words, we assess how the inter-subjectivity of a particular account of higher education globalisation has, in part, lead to the reproduction of stratification among higher education institutions internationally through the actions of policy-makers who take on this account of globalisation.

The remainder of this paper is organised in two main parts. The first part is theoretical and the second part is empirical. In the next section we continue our critique on the way globalisation is typically conceptualised in higher education scholarship and employ concepts by Michael Foucault and Anthony Giddens to aid our empirical analysis. In the subsequent section we draw on empirical examples in the form of four stories – events within higher education internationally – to explore how the predominant conception of higher education globalisation has played out within the field. The empirical stories used are accounts of real events with names and other identifying details omitted.

Globalisation as predominantly understood in higher education

As stated above, in the field of higher education, globalisation is typically distinguished from internationalisation. In this distinction, globalisation is something that happens to universities and internationalisation is how universities respond. This conceptualisation is perhaps no more concisely or directly asserted than by Altbach and Knight (2006), who define ‘globalization as the economic, political, and societal forces *pushing* twenty-first century higher education toward greater international involvement’ (1, our emphasis). Hence, globalisation is the sum of these exogenous forces pressing down on higher education, while internationalisation is the particular manifestation of cross-border interactions undertaken by institutions in reaction to being pushed.

The prominence of this approach is not surprising given its elegance and seeming applicability to both research and practice. For example, this approach has been used to describe phenomena such as Europeanisation among national higher education systems (Neave 2005) and to theorise the rationales behind individual institutional cross-border initiatives (Knight 2004). Hence, part of the attractiveness of this approach is that distinguishing between globalisation and internationalisation yields frameworks that can be easily applied in numerous contexts. This conceptualisation is not without critics (Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Marginson and Swair 2005; Robertson 2006); nevertheless, it has become the orthodox way of understanding globalisation in the field of higher education (Stromquest 2007) and therefore warrants further examination. Underlying this conception are three interrelated assumptions: (1) institutions respond to globalisation automatically; (2) rationally; (3) and with institutional autonomy. First, the assumption that globalisation automatically pushes universities, and their constituents, across borders positions higher education as entirely reactive. A clear manifestation of this assumption is this common notion that international students are moved across borders by social, political and economic forces that push them from their home countries and pull them to host countries (see Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). The implicitly automatic movements embedded in the 'push-pull' model have been challenged in recent empirical work which has found that 'push-pull' does not explain why many students are not moved by these forces (Li and Bray 2007) and cannot account for the movement of students in directions that run counter to the prevailing forces (Cantwell, Luca, and Lee 2009).

Second, the assumption of rationality is dubious. Universities are not coherent organisations whose movements that can be orchestrated by administrators according to a transcendent logic. Rather, they are loosely coupled organisations that simultaneously move in multiple directions at different rhythms and with varying objectives (Rhoades 2000). Attempts to rationalise higher education have often produced irrational outcomes, counter to the objectives of academic managers (Radice 2008). In fact, cross border interactions are best understood when exploring the particularities of history, culture, discipline and material circumstances and as processes driven not only from the top by administrators but also from the bottom up by students and individual faculty members (Maldonado-Maldonado and Cantwell 2008a).

Third, embedded in the globalisation/internationalisation distinction is an assumption that universities are able to exercise total self-determination in the way they internationalise. This assumption is limiting for at least two reasons: First, it is contradictory to the internal logic of the globalisation/internationalisation distinction – if institutions are compelled to respond to globalisation by internationalising, the option to do nothing is necessarily foreclosed; and second, the assumption of autonomy ignores the reproductive tendency of social stratification. Universities occupy differential positions within an international hierarchy (Altbach 1998) and even the most powerful universities are not total masters of their own destiny (Marginson 2007).

Glocalisation and the 'glonocal' approach

Given these assumptions, we believe that the globalisation/internationalisation distinction is inadequate. One way researchers have attempted to move beyond understanding higher education internationalisation as simply a reaction to globalisation forces is by introducing geographic scalar analytics. The interface between scalar analytical levels has been addressed by looking at the interaction of distinct 'forces'

originating from global and local scales (Douglass 2005). Douglass notes that researchers have been keen to point to global forces as the catalyst of transformations in higher education. He does not deny the impact of globalisation but asserts that many of the predictions about globalisation (for example the dominance of distance learning and demise of the 'traditional' university) have not come to pass. He argues that countervailing forces from local and national levels have mitigated global forces. Hence, in Douglass' account, internationalisation is not a story of the local responding to the global but the product of a complicated set of contestations between global forces and countervailing local forces. This understanding allows the potential for proactive agency within higher education in that local agencies can actively resist global forces. However, a major concern with Douglass' (2005) notion of global forces and countervailing local forces is that, while it does show *interaction* between the ostensibly local and global, it does not truly address *interconnections*. In fact, the idea of forces and countervailing forces more closely resembles Newtonian physics (action and reaction) than Hegelian dialectics (opposition, interaction, and synthesis), and, thus, does not move far beyond the globalisation/internationalisation distinction. That is, the idea of forces and countervailing forces also invokes action and automatic reaction rather than negotiation, interconnection and synthesis.

We find Marginson and Rhoades' (2002) 'glonacal' heuristic more compelling. Rejecting the separate and oppositional spaces described as market and state in liberal and neo-liberal thought, they posit a crystalline, multi-dimensional agency heuristic, in which human and institutional agencies at numerous local, national and global levels interact complexly. Marginson and Rhoades take a more fluid approach in which higher education globalisation is understood as a dialectic process between various human and intuitional agencies at multiple spatial layers, and in which clear lines of demarcation between the local and global are difficult to identify.

The glonacal agency heuristic makes important strides towards understanding the role(s) of universities within the processes of globalisation (Marginson and Rhoades 2002). By refusing a clear division between market/state; structure/agency, this framework facilitates analysing universities, and individuals within universities, as both positioned by the structures that organise social arrangements but also capable of positioning themselves in ways can influence social rearrangement. Marginson and Rhoades draw on the idea of flows from globalisation theories (Castells 2001), but see flows as reciprocal (not in one to one symmetry), in a feedback loop in which in which structure orders agency but agents, in turn, influence structure. The glonacal approach overcomes many of the problems embedded in predominant distinction between globalisation and internationalisation made in higher education. By focusing on the interaction of institutions and their constituents at local, national and global levels, globalisation is conceptualised as a dynamic process in which universities take part, not a state of being to which universities respond. The glonacal approach also sees universities as complex assemblages with an array of interactions at local, national and global levels, rather than monolithic organisations that can be strategically guided by administrative initiative.

There are, however, limits to the glonacal agency heuristic. Chief among them, the spatial layers they present (local, national, global) – though complexly interconnected – appear to be separated as static, nested positions. In other words, what constitutes the national, local and global is assumed as separate spaces, with a-priori divisions. Välimaa (2004) has shown, the local, national and global can be produced in a single situated case rather than stratified jurisdictional boundaries. Furthermore, we assert

that the local, national and global, are not self-evident but are instead reified through power mechanisms and repeated practice. Take for example the common observation that English has become the global language of science. There is, of course, nothing transcendentally global about English. It is through colonial histories, contemporary mechanism of power, and consistent use over time and space that makes English 'global'. And yet for those outside of the Anglophonic core there is a strong compulsion to use English in order to obtain global status. This can be seen in the increasing number of continental European universities offering courses and degree programs in English in order to attract more international students. In short, what the glonocal agency heuristic fails to do is to account for how the standard globalisation/internationalisation division remains so potent, despite the problematic assumptions underling this conceptualisation.

If we are to reject a binary distinction between globalisation and internationalisation in favour of a multi-scalier dialectic process at least two questions remain:

- (1) How are spatial levels, or scales, (local, national, global) produced?
- (2) What are the mechanisms of power, or technologies of governance, involved in the production of these levels in higher education internationalising practices?

In order to address these questions we turn to prominent concepts from twentieth century social thought.

Technologies of governance and structural reproduction

According to Waters (2001), 'globalisation is a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly' (5). The last part of this broad definition suggests that globalisation is an inter-subjective process; that is, a collective belief in globalisation and reflexive responses to that belief, in part, drive the process. At the centre of this issue is how this notion of globalisation has worked its way in the practices and policy decisions of higher education policy-makers. Thus, our question is: How do concepts about higher education globalisation lead to particular practices in the field by individual and groups of actors? Specifically, how is this concept used in defining the global, national and local and what are the techniques and technologies used in producing these definitions? We evaluate these questions through four empirical examples, stories of higher education practice. In this analysis we are largely informed by the work of Michael Foucault and Anthony Giddens. These authors are particularly useful because of Foucault's emphasis on practices and power, which allow us to examine the way globalisation concepts have been embedded in higher education practices, and Giddens' theory of structuration, which highlights social constraint and reflexivity.

Practices and power

Foucault's work offered three major contributions to philosophical thought (Florence 1984). The first was to generate scepticism towards universal anthropologies. In other words, rather than searching for the essence of humanity, he argued that people and social institutions in context should be the focus of philosophy. Foucault's questions were epistemological (how do we know) rather than ontological (what is there to

know). This leads us to question any account that posits globalisation as inevitable. We are interested in how knowledge about globalisation is generated rather than what globalisation is in essence. The second of Foucault's major philosophical contributions was to focus on the study of actual social practices. Instead of considering hypothetical exercises, Foucault preferred to draw on empirical observations. Hence, we turn to real stories in higher education. His third contribution was to provide a methodology for analysing social practices as way to draw connections between the subject and object of social inquiry. In this case, higher education practices and the globalisation of higher education. These three contributions are interconnected. Foucault's work established a kind of empirical philosophy in which anthropological methods are applied to ask and answer questions about relationships between knowledge, social practices, and power. In short, Foucault refused universal categories and ideal types, which are commonplace in both philosophical and sociological work. Instead, he focused on practices in actual social settings. 'What do we do today as a better way to define us than something such as what are we today?' The first may be the type of question Foucault preferred in comparison to traditional philosophical problems such as; 'What is the world? What is a man? What is truth? What is knowledge?' (Foucault 1988, 145). Again, we take this guide to ask 'how are local and global defined in higher education?' rather than what are the 'local and global?'

In questioning the 'relations', 'mechanics', 'tactics', 'technologies' and 'regimes' of power, Foucault selected specific social institutions including prisons, schools and the police as well as broad social arenas such as sexuality and academic disciplines. He used these social setting as the sites from which to explore the relationship between power and practices (Foucault 1995). The Foucauldian understanding of power goes beyond force and coercion to the mechanisms and systems of power. In this mechanistic view, power apparatuses are diffuse, imbedded in social institutions and deployed through practice (Foucault 1991). Individuals, within particular social contexts, are both agents driving the mechanics of power and bodies subjected to them. In justifying his methodological focus on practices, Foucault explained:

What I am looking for... are the techniques, the practices, which give a concrete form to this new political rationality and to this new kind of relationship between the social entity and the individual. (Foucault 1988, 153)

Extending to the task-at-hand, we look to unpackaged the techniques used in establishing the global as a set of forces to which higher education must respond. Here, Foucault's concept of 'technology of government' offers insights into understanding how the global and local are constructed in higher education practice. A technology of government is the complex set of power mechanisms that allow subject (globalisation) governance of object (intuitions, sub-institutional units). For instance, Foucault studied the division between the study of the sick and illness and the criminal and society. Hospitals, mental institutions and prisons have converted human individuals into objects of intervention. This included the creation of physical discipline but also the development of academic fields (the other disciplines) to study them (i.e., psychiatry, criminology or social work) (Foucault 1995). For Foucault, there are three main forms of a technology of government (1998, 154). The first form is imaginative and refers to the dream of an ideal or utopian state. The second form is active and regulatory, involving the practices and rules of government within real institutions. The third form is academic and pertains to the discipline of governance studies. We see applicability's

of all three in the case of higher education globalisation. Within the field of higher education, globalisation has been conceptualised as a state of existence detached that is from social institutions; or in other words, globalisation is imagined as an ideal type. Externally, states are regulating higher education in ways that compel them to confront globalisation (the Bologna process in Europe is one example) and internally, university administrations that enact policies aimed at elevating institutions to the status of 'world class'. Additionally, the study of globalisation and higher education has produced technological information relevant for the governance of higher education by globalisation. For instance, the Academic Ranking of World Universities have been developed by researchers at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. This is an example where the subject of globalisation has been produced, in part, by the objects it governs.

Structuration

A central problem in sociological thought is the tension between micro and macro levels of analysis. The macro/micro tension is relevant to higher education globalisation because it helps to understand the production of local and global analytical levels. Micro perspectives tend to stress individual and relational behaviour while macro perspectives place the emphasis on social order and forces (Alexander et al. 1987). In this case, the global might be understood as macro and the local as micro. A number of sociological perspectives address the macro/micro tension. Perhaps most notably, Marxist theory has offered insights to connect macro and micro analytics as a sort of hinge in philosophical and sociological debates. One of the main concerns in Marxism has been to understand the fusion between thinking and acting where the concept of praxis becomes relevant. It shows how humans can become 'operative' and are subjects whose thoughts become actions and whose actions, in turn, become thoughts (Xirau 1990, 319); or in other words, the relationship between class work and consciousness.

Non-Marxists theories have built upon and extend the idea of praxis. Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory is divergent from the Marxist tradition in many ways but nevertheless offers powerful insights for understanding the connections between thought (reflexivity) and action. Giddens' meso approach confronts the traditional division between the micro and macro in sociological theory. For Giddens, social structures are both constituted by human agency and are the medium through which agency is expressed (Giddens 1979, 1984). The idea of 'duality of structure', whereby structure and agency are not separate entities but are mutually constituted, is particularly useful. Duality differs from dualism in that a duality is not oppositional, whereas dualism refers to binary sets (e.g., local/global; structure/agency; state/market). 'According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize' (Giddens 1984, 25). Individuals act by drawing on the rules and resources embedded in social structures, which, in turn are the crystallisations of social practices in time and space. Action, which is exercised by drawing on the rules and resources of structures, has the tendency of reproducing major social principles. The notion of structure–agency duality can be applied to the production of local and global analytical spaces. When higher education practice is enacted through a particular definition of the global, this has the effect of hardening the global around a particular set of definitional rules.

There is not, however, determinism, in social reproduction. According to Giddens individuals act with 'reflexivity', which is 'the purposive, or intentional, character of

human behaviour, considered within the flow of activity of the agent' (Giddens 1984, 376). As such, individuals are able to act in ways that consciously confront, and even transform, some aspects of social structure. Nevertheless, such action is limited as it reproduces other aspects of social structure that were drawn upon in the course of acting. Extending this to globalisation processes, actors are able to influence these process but only through the processes themselves.

We now turn to our empirical analysis. Each of the stories presented below are a real world example of the higher education internationalisation as a necessary response to globalisation concept as played out in practice. The purpose of presenting these stories is to analyse the ways in which this conceptualisation has been operationalised by policy-makers and the implementations of its use.

Theoretical assumptions in empirical reality

As stated previously, there are nuances within the literature that assert a distinction between globalisation and internationalisation within higher education, yet the fundamental division between global forces and local reactions is relatively stable. A number of assumptions related to these approaches can be found in first-hand accounts of events that have occurred in the course of policy-making, administration and professional practice in international higher education. The four stories presented below are accounts of real-world higher education policy dilemmas we have encountered though our studies of international higher education over the course of the past few years. In each story, policy-makers are actively engaged in defining how global, national, local and even regional planes of activity will be operationalised in the execution of higher education policy. One story is trans-regional with the other three come from Latin America. The first story involves trans-national coordination, the second and third are accounts of individual institutional 'global strategies', and the third is a national policy dilemma. Our analysis of each of these stories applies Foucault and Giddens' work to understand how and why particular conceptions of the national, local, and global are produced and the globalisation/internationalisation division persists in practice.

Story 1: chasing the leader

When a group of ministers of higher education and research from Islamic countries convened in Kuwait City in 2006, the global position of higher education in Islamic countries was near the top of their agenda. The ministers were troubled because no universities from their countries were represented among the top 100 worldwide in either the Shanghai Jiao Tong University or *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES) global university rankings. In fact, at that time there were no universities from Islamic countries among the 200 institutions ranked by THES. In the Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings there were only two universities from Islamic countries among the top 500: The University of Istanbul and Cairo University, and both were among the group of universities ranked 403–510. The ministers were convinced that world-class higher education is the key to competing in the high-tech global economy, and with the ranking situation in mind, they agreed to cooperate in supporting a handful of select institutions from among their countries with the goal of having 10 universities from Islamic countries among the world's top-flight. Prior to making this decision, they discussed which 10 universities had the greatest potential to enter the

top 100. One participant in the discussion argued that achieving the goal was extremely complicated; nevertheless, they agreed to peruse this policy. Once this was decided, the question shifted. They asked if a world-class Islamic university would look the same as a top-western institution? The ministers agreed that it would not but did not specify how it would differ.

A common assumption about globalisation is that it is flattening the world, forcing institutions to compete on a levelled global playing field (Friedman 2005). This assumption exists within higher education. According to Peter Scott:

... globalisation impels a radical reordering of this status quo as new regional blocs emerge and old enemies become new allies (and vice versa); and as national boundaries are rendered obsolete by the transgressive tendencies of high technology and mass culture. (2000, 4)

For Scott, in order for universities to survive this 'radical reordering' they must become global by shifting to a 'Mode 2' production model (Gibbons et al. 1994), which includes interdisciplinary, market-related research in competition and collaboration with corporations and other universities around the world. Thus, becoming global may be difficult for universities lacking the resources and technical ability to easily switch to 'Mode 2' (Scott 2000); however, Scott does not see fundamental challenges, inequities or alternatives to such a model of academic production.

The ministers in *Story 1* also felt compelled to compete. In deciding to redirect resources to a handful of universities among their respective countries, these higher education policy-makers appear to have assumed that the success of their institutions is dependent on their ability to measure up against the world's best universities according to two prominent, yet methodologically controversial, global university ranking schemes (Marginson 2007; Salmi and Saroyan 2007). In fact, for the ministers, the very existence and notoriety of these schemes appears to be testament to the fact that world-wide university competition is both worthwhile (if not necessary) and possible to assess.

The outcome proposed by the ministers, getting ten Islamic universities among the top one hundred worldwide, is difficult, if not impossible to obtain as both world university ranking schemes privilege western universities. One (THES) relies heavily on reputation data gathered from mostly European and North American university faculty and administrators; the other (Shanghai Jiao Tong) heavily weighs publication counts in elite English-language scientific journals. In fact, the ministers themselves seemed to realise the difficulty they faced. They dealt with this challenge by inserting a caveat – world-class Islamic universities are different than world-class western universities. However, the assumption that globalisation had compelled them to compete was so engrained that they did not fundamentally question the need to compete under terms they had no input in setting.

Structuration theory highlights the technical pitfalls of a policy designed to advance within world university ranking systems as they are designed now. The world university ranking algorithms can be understood at the internal structures of these ranking systems – these are the rules of the ranking system – and the ranking order as the external structure. In order to advance institutions global position or transform the external structure, requires that universities engage the internal metrics of these ranking systems. In other words, moving up in these ranking systems can only be accomplished through the systems themselves. And the metrics underlying ranking algorithms privilege the predominately North American and Western European universities that are most highly ranked. When non-western intuitions explicitly engage the structures underlying world

university rankings individual universities may be able to advance their absolute position within the ranking schemes, but the overall structure of the rankings is reproduced and the relative dominance of the already elite intuitions is maintained.

Understanding ranking systems as a 'technology of governance' helps to explain why the globalisation/internationalisation division is tacitly incorporated into the education ministers' conception of the global. Ranking systems are assessment technologies that reify the ranking methodologies as globalisation and subjects individual institutions to the objectivity measurement. Power is embedded in this measurement of objects, and naming the rankings 'global' and 'world' is a tactic to circumscribe all institutions within the jurisdiction of these governance technologies. By the very act of acknowledging the rankings, even to contest position within them, the ministers further subjected themselves (or at least their universities) to the objectification of global measurement. In responding to the rankings, the ministers re-established the global as an external force pressing down on institutional objects, which are compelled to respond by internationalising, in this case directing resources across national borders in order to enhance the performance of a few universities in external assessments.

Story 2: dreaming with the 'super league'

After a morning of talks with administrators from an American university aimed at developing a range of cross-border collaborations, the rector of one of the largest and most prestigious public universities in Mexico gave a presentation to a group faculty and students. Included in the audience were a number of Mexican nationals who worked and studied in the US. The rector's talk addressed the challenges facing Mexican higher education. He argued that in order for Mexican universities to serve their country and communities they needed to respond more effectively to globalisation. For him global scholarship was defined by the use English and cross-border interactions with American universities. When asked why he was not aggressively perusing contacts with other universities in Latin America, he answered by explaining, 'we have excellent relations with them [universities in Latin America] but this is about being related to the best of the best'. The prescription he offered for Mexican higher education was straightforward: his university would have to recruit more faculty members with PhDs from American universities, offer more courses taught in English, and produce more English publications.

Globalisation in general and, specifically, the globalisation of higher education is often claimed to be a form of Americanisation. Altbach (2004), among others, has asserted that this is at least partly true. According to him, the most powerful influence of American higher education globally is the rise of English as the academic lingua franca (Altbach 2004). Today, most top scientific journals are published in English and there is a growing trend of offering English-language instruction at universities in non-English speaking countries around the world. However, it should be noted, the predominance of English is not isolated to higher education. For example, English remains the language most often used on the internet.

Marginson (2007) has also observed the global influence of English within higher education. He critically noted that not only has English become the lingua franca of higher learning but a handful of Anglophonic universities have become the vanguard of higher education globally. The top-tier of US universities along with a handful of British institutions constitute what he has called the 'super league' of higher education

– a select group of universities that are household names around the world. Because of the status of these universities as the *exemplars par excellence* of global higher education countless universities around the world have become global ‘super league’ aspirants. Ironically, the most powerful resources making these ‘top’ universities ‘global’ is scarcity of access (Marginson 2007).

We see a reciprocal relationship between the perception and reality of higher education globalisation as synonymous with Anglo-Americanisation. As more and more universities go English, the need to go English becomes an ever-increasing imperative. If there is a duality of structure and agency then the act of ‘going English’ over time and space will harden the parameters defining global higher education as higher education conducted in English, leveraging further pressure on all universities wishing to be global to go English. The primacy of English-language higher education as global higher education is sociality constructed, and thus not transcendent, yet power of social structures exercised over individual institutions is palpable. In fact, this ‘need’ recently to go English has in recent years become a constant in policy discussions among private and public universities in Mexico. The fact that these pressures are contemporary is notable. Mexico has long been subordinated to the US in a set of asymmetric cultural, political and economic relations. Yet the linguistic subordination of Mexican higher education was not achieved until globalisation became a technology of governance subjected to higher education. Thus, the rector in *Story 2* is a prime example of how the global and local are defined oppositionally. Instead of the local being the site of countervailing forces, as in Douglas’ (2005) conceptualisation, the local is constructed as a site of oppositional accommodation. The local higher education context must subsume itself in response to the global higher education context, or else, the rector asserts, face irrelevance.

His belief that in order to become global, his university needs to teach more courses in English, produce more English publications, develop stronger ties with universities in the US, and recruit new faculty with PhDs from abroad may make this a reality in practice. In other words, following through on this belief would require students to speak English to gain admission, compel faculty to publish in English in order to secure promotion, and make an international PhD the requisite qualification for faculty positions. Nevertheless, a review of available institutional data show that achieving these goals is problematic. In 2006, the university in *Story 2* reported 57 institutional agreements with European universities, 34 with Latin American universities, 29 with other Mexican institutions, and only 13 with North American institutions (US and Canada). In terms of faculty visiting other universities, while 32.6% of faculty members from this institution have visited another university in Mexico, 30.2% have made a trip to a European university and 21.9% have gone to Latin America, only 13.1% have traveled to North America. Finally, the distribution of students studying abroad from this university in 2006 was as follows: Spain is the most common destination receiving 97 students followed by 67 students who went to Chile. Eighty-two students went to Australia, France, Germany and Canada combined. Costa Rica received 11 students from this university in the same year, followed by the US, which hosted only 10 students from the university in *Story 2* (General Office of Cooperation and Internationalisation, University Official Website, 2008).

Thus, promoting English instruction and publication would not only be difficult to achieve but would also exclude large numbers of local faculty and students and eschew a rich intellectual tradition rooted in the Spanish language and in European higher education. The numbers presented above show that even with temporary

programs, in other worlds non-degree seeking study abroad students and faculty as visiting professors, the US does not appear to be a main destination for faculty and students from this university. In this context, the rectors' idea about promoting links with the US and placing his institution as a peer for many US universities does not seem promising in the short or medium terms. Furthermore, recruiting large numbers of faculty from American universities is a daunting task given the massive difference in wages. The rector acknowledged this by offering tequila and beaches as an incentive for faculty members to work at his university at lower wages than they would receive in the US. Despite this, the rector's steadfast commitment to the idea that globalisation compels universities to respond by going English suggests status of global, as he defines it, in our estimation, will be difficult to achieve, though striving for this status may re-define the rich tradition of Mexican higher education as a stereotype of sandy-shores and distilled agave.

Story 3: approaches to internationalisation/globalising practices

Upon being appointed director of an international affairs office at a public university in Latin America, an international education professional assessed the formal agreements her university had with institutions abroad. She was dismayed to discover that her university did not have any agreements with prestigious universities in the US. As she explained:

Once I became responsible for the international office here I asked my staff members 'why isn't Harvard University our partner?' And they laughed when I said that from now on these are the types of partners we are looking for.

Having led the office for some years she had come to understand why Harvard is not interested in establishing collaborative agreements with her university. Harvard already had many partnerships abroad and part of its prestige is its exclusivity. Despite this realisation, her continued goal is to convince the most prestigious universities in the US that it would be advantageous for them to collaborate with her institution. Her efforts, thus far, have gone unrewarded.

Knight defines internationalisation as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (2004, 11). According to her, universities' international response to globalisation differs according to varying rationales and approaches held by university administrators. While she is careful to point out that there is not single form of internationalisation, and that the way universities internationalise depends on the institutions themselves, Knight (2004) sets out a schematic matrix delineating possible forms of internationalisation. Chief among them is establishing ties with universities abroad.

This type of approach to internationalisation at the institutional level 'is described with respect to the primary motivations or rationales driving it. This can include academic standards, income generation, cultural diversity, and student and staff development' (Knight 2004, 20). The assumption embedded within Knight's definition of internationalisation is that institutions, particularly those located outside of the core, are compelled to develop international standards in terms of resource levels, academic, student and staff standards. The international affairs director in *Story 3* seems to share the assumption that her institution must respond to globalisation by

making ties with institutions abroad. We do not contest potential benefits from cross-border collaboration. For sure, such endeavours can be fruitful for all involved. The problem develops, however, when it is assumed that universities in Latin America and other developing regions *need* to establish ties with Harvard and the like, because it is simply impossible for the many to have meaningful relationships with the few. When Latin American universities feel this compulsion, globalisation becomes a transcendent state; an omnipresent force compelling universities to adopt a singular definition of the global.

A recent article appearing in the *New York Times* (Lewin 2008) offers some insight on the scope of this desire to partner or collaborate with universities in the US. In that article an administrator who directs overseas programs at a prominent US university reported receiving ‘about a proposal a week’ from universities abroad. According to him, ‘it’s almost like spam’. In the same article, the former director of international programs at another American university explained: ‘Where universities are heading now is toward becoming global universities... We’ll have more and more universities competing internationally for resources, faculty and the best students’ (Lewin 2008). This system of partnerships and aspirant partnerships shows that power is diffused in the mechanisms of social practice. It is not simply resource disparities that give elite US universities power over aspirant partners in Mexico and elsewhere but the power to refuse association that establishes primacy.

When all universities are competing for the same set of contacts, the same resources and so forth, only a few will win. Framing internationalisation within narrow terms and as a necessary response to globalisation condemns innumerable institutions around the world as irrelevant in global era. Take for example the Latin American university in *Story 3*. Institutional data show that of the 3544 full-time faculty members employed at that university in 2007, less than ten percent (334) reported being fluent in a second language and less than half of those (113) are able to publish in English. In 2006, 170 students from this university studied abroad, but only seven of these students went to the US and only five Americans came to study at this university. While the institution had 41 formal agreements with other universities in 2007, only two were with universities in the US (Office of International Cooperation and Academic Exchange, University Official Website 2008). Given these facts the international affairs director in *Story 3* has come to the realisation that it will be hard to develop collaborative relationships with elite US universities, not the least because of the conditions needed to do so, such as having faculty fluent in English.

Story 4: power and contradictory choices: the paradoxes of internationalisation for a developing country’s higher education system

A top administrator from the National Science Agency (NSA, pseudonym) of a Latin American country delivered a presentation on higher education and science and technology policy in his country. During the presentation he covered a wide range of issues but focused especially on initiatives designed to increase the research capacity of higher education in his country through training and establishing collaborative networks. Two proposed initiatives were of particular interest to the audience, which was comprised of a group of graduate students, faculty members and administrators at a university in the US (many of them citizens of this Latin American country). The first proposal he introduced was to allow citizens working at universities outside of his country to join the National Network of Investigators (NNI) – a prestigious

national peer reviewed research system. He explained that membership in the NNI would allow nationals working outside of the country to participate in research networks addressing issues of importance to this country. It would also open up the possibility for these researchers to participate in NNI sponsored conferences and funded projects. The second proposed initiative was to fund recent PhDs from his country to take postdoctoral positions abroad. He explained that this was intended to enhance the skills young researchers in preparation for a faculty career. Sending researchers to work as post-docs at universities in the US and Europe world, hoped the science administrator, lead to higher levels of academic production when these researchers returned.

The policy initiatives laid out by the NSA administrator highlight the importance of practice in understanding higher education globalisation and serve as examples for addressing the questions outlined at the beginning of this paper. Each of the two initiatives can be understood as technologies of governance and have implications for the way spatial levels are defined. They both propose 'global' solutions to build the capacity of 'local' institutions and individuals in order to address national interests. Both engage existing sets of social structures, though one has the potential to be more transformative of these structures while the other will likely reproduce existing asymmetries.

In electing to fund postdoctoral positions abroad, the global level is defined as beyond the national and local levels. In other words, for research experience to be global, it must be outside of Latin America and more specifically in either the US or Western Europe. This policy will subject researchers to social geographies with scalar divisions that make conducting 'global' research out of reach in their home institutions. In contrast, drawing nationals working outside of the country into the NNI defines global spaces as stitched together with local and national spaces. The second policy will produce constellations of researchers dispersed across space oriented towards addressing problems ostensibly relevant to local concerns. As such, by extending NNI membership to expatriates the local can be included into the global, not simply subsumed by it.

The practices proposed in one initiative construct hierarchical patterns in space, while the other constructs relational spatial patterns. At the time of writing, there are 14,681 faculty members in the NNI. Opening the NNI to expatriates who are working as faculty members may be the first step for this country towards developing relevant research networks with academics abroad. This can be seen as a response to the brain drain problem this country faces. From 1980 to 1998 the NSA funded 1678 researchers from this Latin American country to earn PhDs at universities in the US, yet only 22% of these researchers returned and eventually became members of the NNI. In short, the policy of sending researchers abroad to build local capacity simply has not worked, in part we speculate, because of the ways in which the local and global have been constructed through this policy. The implication is that researchers are sent abroad to become globally relevant only to return to global irrelevance.

Different technologies of government are also deployed in these two initiatives. These different technologies create different restrictions and opportunities for agency. Funding postdoctoral positions abroad relies on a financial technology of exchanging capital for knowledge and experience. The intention of these practices is to make an investment in the country's higher education system in order to become globally relevant. Yet, given the rules embedded in global structures and the resources available to policy-makers from this country, a likely unintended consequence is that current

asymmetries in the global higher education will be reproduced or even extended.

The NSA has sufficient resources to fund post-docs abroad but, in general, universities in this country do not have the resources to attract researchers abroad back home. Additionally, since postdocs are typically employed by the institutions in which they work, funding postdoctoral positions abroad amounts to subsidising already advantaged institutions in other countries. Hence, this option will incur a high cost for this country and it may not be a sustainable policy given the economic constraints this country faces. For instance, NSA also provides scholarships to support graduate students. Data from that program show the economic consequences associated with these types of initiatives. Of the 3828 students who have been awarded this scholarship, 42.5% elected to study in the US. For each dollar spent on scholarships only 45 cents remained in the country, with 55 cents going abroad. We expect that the program sponsoring post-doctorates abroad will also direct a significant amount of money into other countries' higher education systems.

Inviting citizens working abroad to the NNI is a social technology of governance. This initiative is much less expensive and the potential benefits are much greater. While joining NNI may not bring researchers working abroad home, it will likely have the effect of drawing them into research networks that engage local and national concerns. This policy may also allow researchers working abroad feel closer to their home country and, in this regard, help in creating a sense of spatial proximity, collapsing the gulf between localities. This may result in greater engagement through the development of academic collaborations and academic projects. This opens the possibility for the development of networks in which the global is constructed as the points of connectivity between different academic spaces, rather than a hierarchical nested position.

Final remarks

In this paper we sought to confront the internationalisation/globalisation distinction which is used most commonly to understand globalisation in higher education. Although other higher education researchers have explicitly and implicitly challenged this distinction, it remains the orthodox conceptualisation in the field and has worked its way into higher education policy and practice around the world. We have found insufficient explanation as to why this conceptualisation remains so powerful within the field of higher education. Implicit in this distinction is the supposition that the global level holds primacy over the local level. We sought to explore this issue through Foucault's concept of power and governance technologies and Giddens' theory of structuration. Using four stories as empirical guideposts we asked of these theories how spatial levels are produced and what mechanisms are employed in their production.

Our analysis of four stories found that in each case, 'the global' is conceptualised as external, universally transcendent, and beyond whereas 'the local' is understood as particular and subordinate to the global. In each story the global is also understood as a normative or moral imperative, wherein the local is compelled to react to the global. The global and local have been produced oppositionally, or through negation, in that the global is conceptualised as what the local is not (except for the hegemonic core). Giddens' theory of structuration is useful in unpacking the process by which the global and local are positioned. As a universal, the global can be understood as structure, and the local as agency positioned within this structure. Local attempts at

structural transformation are limited in that the rules and resources of existing social structure are the medium through which these attempts are operationalised, inevitably leading the partial reproduction of existing positions. Yet there are limits to a structuration analysis of the stories we presented. Chief among them is an inability to explain power within social structures. Here Foucault's concept of technologies of governance is useful in showing the tactics by which the global and local are contextually produced. Higher education globalisation in its various manifestations (e.g., global university rankings, cross-border institutional interactions, harmonisation of scientific language) becomes the subject to which universities and their constituents are measured and manipulated. Power is embedded in the way globalisation is conceived. Hence, the globalisation/internationalisation distinction may be theoretically unsatisfying, but it is itself part of a technology of governance.

Three of the four stories give us little hope in contesting the way globalisation has been conceptualised in higher education through practice. In *Story 1* the ministers' decision to play the rankings game likely acts as reification and reproduction of the order established by the internal structures of global ranking systems. The rector's insistence that English will elevate his university to global relevance in *Story 2* appears to actually cast the university as irrelevant. The efforts of the international administrator in *Story 3* is another example of how efforts to become global reproduce conceptions of the global that exclude universities in the South. Only in *Story 4* do we see the possibility to re-conceptualise the global in practice by drawing the excluded local into a global, trans-spatial networks.

We do not intend to suggest agents within the NSA will shatter the power structures that restrain higher education in this Latin American country. Nor do we believe that electing to fund recent PhDs to undertake postdoctoral positions abroad will be disastrous. Rather, we think that global asymmetries will persist and that globalisation has created grater segmentation in higher education worldwide, which advantaged some institutions and disadvantaged others. However, we do believe that *Story 4* demonstrates that there are always alternatives of practice, no matter how small. Recognising these alternatives requires re-conceptualising higher education globalisation in practice. A stylistic division between globalisation and internationalisation limits the possibilities for alternatives. Under this conceptualisation, globalisation is seen as monolithic and unproblematic and the range of potential reactive practices is predetermined.

When globalisation is understood as a dynamic set of processes in which the global and local interact complexly, the construction and reconstruction of social structure become possible. This study, a theoretical treatment of four stories, is limited in scope. Future research should consider the relationship between practices and the conceptualisation of global processes. In focusing on practices, we suggest maintaining a critical view of what goes on in international higher education by following approaches like that of Foucault and deploying concepts that help to interrogate practices such as 'technology of government'. In strong agreement with Robertson (2006), we have found that new knowledge about globalisation must be generated in order to confront the governance technologies embedded and current practice. Theoretical and empirical research should work hand-in-hand, informing and refining one and other. Research on globalisation in the field of higher education would profit from pushing aside a static conception of globalisation and instead work to crack the process open to expose how higher education globalisation is constituted through practice and where the potential for more equitable rearrangement exist.

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Four stories: confronting contemporary ideas about globalisation and internationalisation in higher education

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