On the Move:

Globalising Higher Education in Europe and Beyond

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Abstract

This paper examines the rise and rise of a range of individual, institutional, national and regional mobility projects in the global higher education sector, and explores the implications of these dynamics for the economisation and thus instrumentalisation of English, as a global language, as a medium of instruction, and competitive advantage. Yet we also point to new counter-tendencies at play, including the rise of China as an education exporter, and promoter of Chinese soft-power through the Confucius Institutes. Along with changes in western labour markets that might well alter what has been to date a Eurocentric set of flows, this suggests this is a dynamic and changing landscape. We conclude by pointing to the tensions and contradictions in this changing higher education landscape, and what this means for the wider cultural and civilisation projects that languages are constitutive of.

Introduction

The world, it seems, is on the move, and so too are its universities, their teachers, and students (OECD, 2014; Altbach and Knight, 2007). Even the well-known institution known as the first of the modern European universities – the University of Bologna – has an institutional face in Buenos Aires, Argentina, proclaiming itself as "…the first campus abroad of the oldest university in the world" (University of Bologna, 2015). Every year, larger and larger numbers of students from distant lands crowd the airports of the respective receiving countries as a new academic year gets under way. From there they navigate increasingly tricky immigration systems, attempt to sort out impenetrable social norms, and work hard to fit in culturally, or find friends with familiar experiences and linguistic competences. At the same time, the numbers of countries eager to become 'sending' rather than 'receiving' countries has changed over time (UNESCO, 2013), whilst lesser and well-known universities spread their institutional fabrics out into global space in search of financial returns – such as Stanford University's recent initiative, 'Stanford Ignite', selling entrepreneurship 'Silicon Valley style' to high fee-paying students in London, beginning in 2015 (Coughlan, 2015: 1).

Drill down to the higher education sector more generally, and it is clear that even here the life is in something of a whirl as new projects and players enter the higher education sector – from student recruiters promising a steady stream of study abroad and international students into university programmes from a widening array of source countries, to firms selling mobility loans, visa advice for a price, (mostly English) language courses to ensure access to degree programmes, foundation programmes which act as a bridge between secondary schooling and first-year university enrolment, or study abroad programmes which provide a taste of academic and cultural life elsewhere (see Llanes, Mancho & Arnó – this issue), not to mention the proliferation of on-line university courses, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Taken together – the end result is that the sector itself is very different to what it looked like at the beginning of the 1990s (Robertson and Komljenovic, 2016). But mobility is not just concerned with student recruitment or their learning. International students, academic mobility, global competences, 'mobility promises', and globalised institutional fabrics are built into a myriad of policy tools and governance instruments that range from world university ranking architectures (Hazelkorn, 2011) to competitive knowledge economy proxies, national GDP figures, and statistics that in turn signal successful regional integration projects (Robertson, 2014).

In this scene setting paper for this special issue, we will argue that though the idea of ‘movement’ (for example, the wandering scholar, enlightenment thinking and progress) has been central to the ongoing development of the modern university, its increasingly economic, rather than social and cultural, character presents new and important challenges to the governing of knowledge production and its circulation by the contemporary university in Europe and beyond (Jessop et al., 2008). Students and academics, too, are increasingly mindful of what ‘being on the move’ means, what it enables with regard to their careers and futures (Waters, 2006; Acker, 2008), and what kinds of experiences and resources they need (including which language competencies) to oil the wheels of CV making, and for possibilities in the highly competitive labour markets that now characterise many societies (Varghese, 2008; Park and Wee, 2012).

The structure of our paper is as follows. We begin with some clarifications and on globalisation as a process, and sketch out the wider dynamics shaping the higher education sector – in particular the ongoing unfolding of neoliberalism as an ideological project guiding the development of competition states (Harvey, 2005). We then turn to tracing out some of the dynamics at work in the sector which have had major implications for language – in particular English (though challenged recently, in certain contexts, by the promotion of Mandarin) – as a medium of instruction, and as a competitive advantage at the level of the individual, and at the level of institutions and countries in the competition for international students. We conclude by pointing to the tensions and contradictions in this changing higher education landscape and what this means for the wider cultural and civilisation projects that languages are constitutive of.

Global Dynamics and Contours

There is now a large literature on the wider global dynamics at work which are reshaping many higher education sectors around the globe, including ongoing reforms to generate new income streams, the deployment of market-mechanisms like competition and choice to generate greater efficiency in the sector, the growing penetration of private for-profit actors in a range of higher education activities – including in the core business of the university, and the valorisation of student and academic mobility as an essential ingredient in being a mobile competitive worker (cf. Marginson and Considine, 2000; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004; Robertson, et al., 2012; McGettigan, 2013). Broadly, we can refer to these dynamics as both global and regionalising rescaling processes that have, since the late 1980s, been set in train by neoliberalism as a political project (Harvey, 2005). These involve the uneven development and contingent transformation of political, economic, and cultural structures, practices and social relations arising from the strategically selective erasure of contemporary borders and the making of new ones, and the ongoing promotion of a global market society (Mittelman, 2000; Hann and Hart, 2009).

The higher education sector has been particularly implicated in this process as a result of a closer alignment between the university as a knowledge-producing sector, and the promotion of the idea of knowledge-based economies (Jessop et al., 2008). In this section we trace out the broad contours of the changes that have set universities on a new trajectory, in turn transforming not only the nature of the knowledge that is valued, but the international composition of the student population, the language of instruction in the university, and notions of inter-cultural competence (see an excellent analysis of these issues with regard to Europe in Cots, Armengol and Aguilar – this issue).

Increasing student numbers accessing higher education

The biggest sea-change has been the sheer increase in the size of the higher education sector over the past two decades, if we view it simply in global enrolment terms. In 2000, around 99.4 million students around the globe were enrolled in higher education. By 2030, some 414.2 million students are forecast to be enrolled (Calderon, 2012: 1), though this may well be wishful thinking by governments, given that there is a declining demographic, on the one hand, and growing graduate unemployment, on the other. Indeed, as Brown et al (2011) show, investing in higher education degrees at considerable cost to families in countries like the USA, United Kingdom and China, does not unilaterally net a return on investment as labour markets have become more globalised in turn creating downward pressure on graduate salaries.

Nevertheless, in policy circles, increases in access to higher education continue to be justified by government policies calling for greater investment in advanced knowledge and skills in order to create competitive knowledge-based economies (Jessop, 2008). Mobilizing the ‘brain power’ of a nation or region – these policies proclaim – is viewed as critical to the economic health of nations – because it is the creativity of this ‘brain power’ that will ostensibly drive new knowledge creation leading to innovation, patents, other forms of intellectual property and new firms (OECD, 1996; Robertson, 2008). Such arguments draw from agendas and projects driven by governments, international agencies – such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and The World Bank (WB), and regional organisations, such as the European Union (Jessop et al., 2008).

Since the 1970s, the OECD has been promoting the view – drawing from the work of writers like Daniel Bell (1973) – that all industrial societies are in transition to becoming post-industrial societies, and thus are dependent on the generation of wealth through the development of theoretical knowledge and high skills (OECD, 1996; World Bank, 2003). This kind of argument is deeply determinist, in that it is assumed all countries can be plotted in a path somewhere between being industrial and morphing into being post-industrial. What such assumptions disguise is a huge amount of political and cultural work that goes into actively shaping, producing, and remaking the respective societies and their economies, including where possible the dreams and ambitions of its citizens, the claims that citizens can make, and expectations around what counts to get ahead. Higher education institutions have been enrolled in this process, though they, and their students, also pursue and give meaning, to their own actions, activities and outcomes. In many cases this has meant systematic attempts to decentre individual’s identities away from the meanings they derive from particular places, and a recalibration around new spaces, projects and actions and ideas like European citizenship, global citizen, and so on (Delanty, 2007; see also Llurda, Balsà and Barahona – this issue).

So why, and how, has this happened, and what does this mean for higher education? If we take the challenge of creating new kinds of societies and economies as our first concern, we can point to a number of factors that coalesced by the end of the 1960s, that have been instrumental in setting in train a new set of political projects aimed at building knowledge-based economies. These dynamics include the deindustrialization of manufacturing from the developed economies (e.g. Germany, USA, UK, Australia); the subsequent rapid growth of the Asian Tigers during the late 1960s-early 1970s and the rise of Japan; the oil shocks in the early 1970s; the subsequent global economic crisis that followed in 1972; and the pressure on the West to search for a new basis for long run capital accumulation centred around new forms of knowledge creation and innovation, on the one hand, and the export of services, on the other (Marchak, 1991; Held et al., 1999; Robertson, 2009). An economy driven by advanced knowledge creation and innovation is, in turn, assumed to be dependent upon a well-educated population with tertiary level studies. Here we can see that the move from a small elite to a mass higher education system is one outcome of such policies (OECD, 1996).

A globalising student population

A second sea-change in higher education has been the global expansion of students, as a result of a huge increase in the numbers of students studying for either undergraduate or graduate degrees in a country in which they are not a citizen (OECD, 2014). The OECD, in its annual *Education at a Glance* shows that in the 1990s, around 1.3 million students were enrolled outside of their country of citizenship. Fast forward to 2015, and the figure is now more than three times that number – with around 4.5 million students now studying in another country (OECD, 2014: 342). According to some pundits – this figure is set to reach the 5 million mark in the next couple of years.

By anyone's reckoning, this is a very large population on the move, and all the more remarkable because by 2008, 24.4% of this population of international students came from just three countries – China, India and South Korea – with the largest population by far being from China (14.9%). We will come back to a more detailed analysis of flows shortly, but for now it is worth pondering the drivers that have been influential in shaping these flows. These include:

- the demand for a knowledge driven economy and skilled human resources – but where national institutional capacity is limited, such as Singapore and Hong Kong;
- the demand for English as a passport to becoming a global worker;

- an emerging middle class in Asia who have the resources to pay for higher education (such as China, Malaysia);
- an overseas education being perceived as a means of social mobility, particularly when opportunities in the country of citizenship are limited (such as Hong Kong);
- the use of an overseas higher education as a stepping stone into the labour market of the country of study (such as Australia, Canada, USA, UK)
- national marketing and recruitment strategies to bolster export earnings (such as Australia);
- institutional marketing and recruitment of full-fee-paying students to augment declining state funding (such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand);
- superior research and development experiences for students in comparison to their home country, which feeds into R&D (such as the USA, Germany, Switzerland);
- changing demographics of a country – such a declining birth rate – and thus the need to 'boost' human resource capacity (such as in Korea); and
- regional mobility initiatives, such as Erasmus Mundus, the South East Asian Higher Education Area, Mercosur, to build new higher education areas.

Taken together it is clear that a complex combination of dynamics is at work, giving momentum to these flows. It is also important to take notice of the newer players in the sector – like China and Singapore – not as major sending countries as they once were, but as increasingly important destinations. The rise of China as a global power and its comparative economic strength (despite recent falterings) to the USA has resulted in a healthy 'study abroad' programme, particularly for American students seeking to acquire some understanding of China and engagement with Mandarin as a potential contender to English (UNESCO, 2014).

Where do all the students go…?

So what do the movement patterns look like? Where do all the students go? Looking at the OECD's now landmark *Education at a Glance* series (2014: 345), we can see that the United States attracted the most foreign students (16%) followed by the United Kingdom (13%), Germany (6%), Frances (6%) and Australia (at 6%). Total these figures up and we can also say that these five countries host around half of all higher education students studying abroad (OECD, 2014: 334). Some of this pattern is determined by proximity, old colonial ties, and language. For instance, France is a favoured destination for students from countries such as Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Haiti, Coté d'Ivoire, and so on. Germany is favoured by students somewhat closer to home; such as Austria, Luxembourg, Poland and the Czech Republic. Australia recruits large numbers of students from across the Asian region – Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and China (UNESCO, 2014).

Though the US continues to have the largest share of international students – this has, in fact, decreased with time as newer players have entered. Whereas the US accounted for 40% of all international students in the early 1990s, by the late 1990s this proportion had shrunk to 32% (OECD, 2014). The attraction of the United States, of course, is not only its prestigious universities, but it has been a preferred destination for graduate students because of its world class research facilities and its generous scholarship programmes, particularly in the sciences, mathematics and engineering. It also teaches in English and is home to the top science and engineering journals; a litmus of dominance in global knowledge production (Marginson, 2014). The top sending countries to the US currently are China, India, South Korea and Saudi Arabia – whilst the favoured states for international students in the USA are California, New York, and Texas (see IIE, *Fact Sheets 2015,* for detailed information).

Only more recently has the US begun to consider increasing its recruitment of international students into its undergraduate programmes to help manage the financial pressures many of its institutions are now facing. In contrast with the US, which has around 4% of international students in its overall student body, Australia has – over the past three decades – built up huge intakes into its undergraduate programs – with around 1 in 5 students being an international student, and of this number – 8 in every 10 comes from the Asian region (OECD, 2014: 349). Yet such dependencies also create their own problems. The financial crisis in 1997, or until recently the strength of the Australian dollar which made it an increasingly expensive place to study, resulted in the rapid drop in numbers flowing into Australia, creating major issues for universities, including staff redundancies.

Regional projects and mobility

What is remarkable is the growing importance of Asia, not just as a region that sends a large number of students abroad, but as a destination. Here we can point to the growing importance of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and China as potential destinations for students from the West (UNESCO, 2013; IIE, 2013). South Korea is attempting to manage the consequences of a falling birth-rate by encouraging inward flows of international students. Hong Kong, too, is seeking to take advantage of its location between the East and the West, and attract fee-paying students to its higher education institutions. In 2006, Taiwan launched its higher education 'Excellence Initiative' – hoping to attract 130,000 international students there by 2020. The main reason for this is that it wants to break into the world's top 50 universities – and to do that it needs a healthy international student population, as that is one of the criteria built into the global rankings tools.

And where is China in this? Martin Jacques' cheekily titled book – *When China Rules the World* offers a serious analysis of the rise of China as a global power. By 2020, China plans to host 300,000 international students. Indeed, the number of international students already studying in China has risen to a record 265,090 in 2010 – up from 52,150 in 2000 (see UNESCO, 2013: 20-21). All things being equal (that is, there are no serious economic shocks), China will have easily reached and passed its target of 300,000 by 2020. And, whilst the dominant group of international students flowing into China tend to be Asian (161,605) – North America sends around 25,557 students, though largely on study abroad programmes (IIE, 2013).

Two regions of the world are typically not mentioned in global figures; that of Latin America and Africa, though new region building projects typically try to have an effect on student mobility across the region very often funded by the European Commission in order to promote Europe's interests (cf. Robertson, 2014). Latin America contributes around 6% of the global share of students who are mobile, with most students (three quarters) ending up in the US – whilst 23% are mobile across the region. Cuba is a major destination for students from within the Latin American region – with some 30,000 students studying in Cuba, often in advanced areas like medicine, and in some cases funded through regional projects such as the Bolivarian Alliance for Our Peoples of America – known as ALBA (Muhr, 2010).

But it is Sub-Saharan Africa – a region of some 40 countries in total – which faces the greatest challenges in the provision of higher education and where student mobility is also a major issue (UNESCO, 2013). In relation to higher education rates in general, there have been major increases over the past four decades with an annual growth rate of 8.4% compared to 4.3% for the world in general. However, despite this growth – its gross enrolment rate is just 6% (compare this with something close to 72% for North America – or 13% for South West Asia).

In a sign that the European Commission was willing to use a wide variety of rationales for enhancing all kinds of mobility across Europe that went beyond the programmes that had been in place since the late 1980s, the European Commission spent the Spring of 2008 laying the groundwork for a new 'fifth freedom' – "the free movement of knowledge" (EC, 2009: 6) – where Member States were invited to deepen their dialogue and expand cooperation to identify and remove obstacles to cross border mobility. Not only were goods, services, capital and people on the move, but knowledge too.

In 2009, the Council of the European Union placed 'mobility' at the top of its strategic objectives for education and training. Mobility is represented as "…an essential element of lifelong learning and an important means of enhancing people's employability and adaptability" (CoE, 2009: 3) whilst "Youth on the move"—is now one of four Flagship Initiatives in the European Commission's (2010) communication aimed at realizing a competitive and sustainable Europe by 2020. The strength of the commitment to mobility is litmus in the fact that for learners, teachers and teacher trainers, mobility is to be "…the rule rather than the exception" (EC, 2010: 4), with *a European Quality Charter for Mobility* laying down the principles to ensure the quality of this learning experience. We offer an extended quote below of the principles that have been promoted as part of the charter.

> This guidance consists of **ten principles** implemented on a voluntary and flexible basis, and which are viewed as sufficiently adaptable to the nature and peculiarities of each mobility stay by a student. These principles include elements such as:
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> - **information and guidance**: every candidate should have access to clear and reliable sources of information and guidance on mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up, including details of the Charter itself and the roles of sending and hosting organisations;

- **a learning plan**: a plan is drawn up and signed by the sending and hosting organisations and participants before every stay for education or training purposes. It must describe the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and evaluation, and must also take account of reintegration issues;
- **personalisation**: mobility must fit in with personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of participants, and should develop or supplement them;
- **general preparation**: before departure, participants should receive general preparation tailored to their specific needs and covering linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural or financial aspects;
- **linguistic aspects**: language skills make for more effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Arrangements should therefore include a pre-departure assessment of language skills, the possibility of attending courses in the language of the host country and/or language learning and linguistic support and advice in the host country;
- **logistical support**: this could include providing participants with information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, the portability of government grants and loans, residence or work permits, social security and any other practical aspects;
- **mentoring**: the hosting organisation should provide mentoring to advise and help participants throughout their stay, also to ensure their integration;
- **recognition**: if periods of study or training abroad are an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the learning plan must mention this, and participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, certification by an appropriate document, such as The Europass, is necessary;
- **reintegration and evaluation**: on returning to their country of origin, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay and, following a long stay, any necessary help with reintegration. Evaluation of the experience acquired should make it possible to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved;
- **commitments and responsibilities**: the responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and hosting organisations and participants) (EC, 2015 website).

The flagship mobility programme in Europe is 'Erasmus'– part of the EU's Lifelong Learning programme (EC, 2014). Beginning in 1987 to create opportunities for students to undertake some of their studies in another European university – Erasmus is also ambitiously aimed at helping create European citizens (Delanty, 2007; see also Llurda, Balsà and Barahona, this issue). In 2012-13, the EU heralded the fact that some 3 million students had benefitted from mobility since it began. Yet this is a tiny figure in comparison to the numbers of students enrolled in higher education institutions across Europe (European Commission, 2014: 4). However this has not dented the ambition of the European Commission; that "…by 2020 at least 20% of all graduates from the European Higher Education Area should have spent a period of time studying or training abroad" (p. 5). One of the most successful sending countries is Spain, as well as also being one of the largest receiving countries (p. 6). The average duration of mobility is 6 months. New initiatives have also been added to the Erasmus portfolio that includes work placements, and whilst the UK has very low figures as a sending country, it is the 5th largest sender of students on work placements (EC, 2014: 6).

A major challenge for institutions receiving students is the language of instruction. Countries with a small language community – such as Finland, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden – have tended to teach many of their subjects in English (OECD, 2014: 346). In this regard, Hultgren et al (2014) refer to the effective "Englishisation" (after McArthur 1992) of Nordic universities, where 80-90% of doctoral theses are produced in English and up to a quarter of undergraduate courses use EMI. Even countries like Spain are adding in programmes to be taught in English to attract full-fee-paying students from the Asian region (OECD, 2014). The students, in turn, are keen to take advantage of the affordability of the country, to benefit from its cultural and social environment, and to also acquire English competences that might open up access to global labour markets. At present, the OECD reports that countries like Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Greece, Israel, Mexico and Russia teach very little if any programmes in English (ibid).

Academic mobility is not just a European phenomenon, and similar dynamics are at work not just around what might be a shared language for the region, or what might be the language of instruction, but also what might the institutional and political arrangements that bind them together. Within Asia, the regional body—the South East Asian Ministries of Education (SEAMEO)—launched a pilot mobility scheme in 2009 (The MIT Student Mobility Project) involving higher education institutions within the region – beginning with Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. The purpose of the project is to scope the pathway for a regional integration strategy, with mobility an important mechanism to promote regional cooperation, and the mutual recognition of qualifications. At the same time, English has been adopted as the regional language – in turn bolstering it as a hegemonic *lingua franca*.

Despite the rise of China as a potential destination for international students, for the moment it is clear that the “Anglophone asymmetry” (Hughes 2008) remains in place. However, non-English-speaking nations are becoming increasingly active in their efforts to attract international students and to gradually establish themselves as receiving countries. One of the mechanisms used to implement this internationalisation agenda has been the adoption of English as a medium of instruction by university departments (OBHE 2007). The rationale for this policy as well as its impact and associated challenges have been well documented by a number of scholars, including Kirkpatrick (2014) for East and Southeast Asia; Earls (2015) for Germany; Hultgren et al (2014) for Scandinavia; while Doiz et al. (2013) offer a more global perspective.

Even within Europe, where the European Commission officially stresses the value of linguistic diversity and promotes the mainstreaming of multilingualism into EU policies in line with the Barcelona objective (MT+2), the significance of English for the internationalisation agenda is widely accepted. Although the first EMI programmes on the continent date back to the 1980s – Maastricht University being among the first non-Anglophone institutions to offer a degree in English (Wilkinson 2013), recently there has been an exponential growth in the number of universities introducing English-language courses and full degree programmes. By October 2011, the total number of Master’s programmes listed at MastersPortal by European universities (excluding British and Irish HEIs) and taught entirely or partly in English reached 4,664 (or approximately 25%) (Brenn-White and van Rest 2012).

The hegemonic position of English is pointed out by Saarinen (2014), who highlights the implicit conflation of ‘foreign language’ and ‘English’ in national policies on internationalisation, often to the detriment of national or regional languages, as the internationalisation agenda trumps concerns over linguistic ecology. Such developments in turn raise questions about the place of multilingual practices on the internationalisation and knowledge mobility agendas which are being actively promoted through the various

European Commission programmes. This includes concerns about the long-term viability of pursuing the EU objective of multilingualism under the Erasmus + programme or the European Language Label (ELL) scheme. And indeed this has prompted some scholars to talk of the *paradox of internationalisation* (Kirkpatrick 2014; Saarinen 2014; Haberland 2011) whereby an increase in academic mobility purported to result in greater diversity is in fact accompanied by a rise in EMI programmes, effectively leading to greater linguistic homogeneity.

Counting money, calculating value

Despite protests around brain drain, linguistic imperialism, and cultural hegemony, the deep dependence by departments, institutions, cities and nations on international student mobility is likely to result in the ongoing embedding of internationalisation rather than its diminution. Institutions benefit through fees/tuition, and so on. Nations also benefit as they count the benefit of huge populations of students who also contribute to the local and national economy and its talent recruitment strategies. The scale of the value of higher education – however – is eye watering – if we accept the ways in which the value of the international student is calculated.

The significance of the value of trade in education can be witnessed in facts such as; the New Zealand economy generates more export earnings from education than their famous wine industry. Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reported that in 2015, education related travel services ranked as one of its top exports in goods and services – fourth only behind major extractive industries, such as iron ore and concentrates, gas, and gold (DFAT, 2015). To most casual observers, describing education is a key export in a nation's 'trade', sounds decidedly odd. After all, higher education has been – and continues to be – widely viewed as a 'public good' rather than a tradeable services sector. Yet increasingly governments around the world are developing tools for representing education in this way, which is why student mobility has also become more and more critical to ongoing economic development for countries committed to developing their services sectors.

The fine grain calculations which institutions and national higher education sectors also make over how best to position this national export are also worth scrutinizing (Lury, 2004). In many ways the branding of higher education sectors has all of the hallmarks of the pride we see in having a national airline! Similarly branding the higher education sector has also become an important dimension of trading education as a services sector. The New Zealand government makes great efforts to promote a New Zealand Education Brand story as one that is widely shared by all of the institutions that make up the sector through the ways in which they manage the sector's representation of itself. NUFFIC – the Dutch government's education trading arm promotes *Study in Holland* – and trumpets the qualities of the Dutch people and their history (unique, creative, pioneering, connected) to potential international students via those who have studied there in the past and who are willing to provide testimonials about their experiences. Similarly *StudyMalaysia* – the advertising arm for the Malaysian government – positions itself in its branding as offering "the best of the East and the West" – whilst "…international students will also have the chance to learn about the rich and diverse culture in Malaysia. The multicultural society of Malaysia that and religions living harmoniously is a fine example of a country that promote peace and prosperity. The people of Malaysia are warm, friendly and accommodating – international students will find that they fill fit in to the lifestyle here easily." Place and people do, indeed, have a $$$ value which is being valorized and put to work for the sector.

The outcomes of some academic mobility schemes, however, are often un- or under-stated; a strategy and sensibility that is represented as leading to 'understanding' and enhanced cooperation. When greater specification in policy does occur, as in the Communique´ from the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education (2009), mobility is viewed as producing 'effects' that range from enhancing the quality of programmes, to creating excellence in research, strengthening the academic and cultural internationalisation of European higher education, promoting personal development and employability, fostering respect for diversity, encouraging linguistic pluralism, and increasing cooperation *and* competition between higher education institutions (BFUG, 2009: 4). From this list, mobility is conceived of as a positive force; a powerful mechanism of social change. However, statements like this are an overly romantic rendering of mobility. For it is evident that greater academic mobility across Europe is *reducing* rather than increasing linguistic diversity as we have argued above; the result of the rapid growth of teaching in English to cope with the linguistic diversity in the classroom arising from EC funded-programmes, such as Erasmus, or mobility promises as part of the student experience, such as we see with many study abroad programmes.

In the USA, the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors* annual report for 2009 noted a record number of U.S. students choosing to study abroad. They note not only an increase of 8.5% from the year before, but there were four times as many U.S. students participating in study abroad in 2007/08 than in 1987/88. According to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Judith A. McHale, "Today more than ever before, study abroad can help our students to understand our interconnected world and to participate productively in the global economy" (Institute of International Education, 2009: 1). Notable in this report, however, were significant increases in the numbers of students going to China and India; an indication that new calculations were being made by institutions and families about the strategic importance of emerging centres of power in the world to their own academic futures and trajectories.

Such developments are not without their tensions and contradictions. Concentrations of international students in some of the science departments in the UK – where more than 50% of the students might be international students – has led the Higher Education Funding Council to become particularly concerned about what they called vulnerable and strategic subjects (HEFCE, 2008). This became particularly evident when new immigration rules were put into place by the UK Border Agency making it more difficult for international students to access visas. A department with a heavy dependence on international students can quickly face the threat of closure if suddenly the flow of students is interrupted.

Equally important is when the chances of staying on after studying are make more difficult. Here you can see the challenges facing one policy area which might be promoting city regional development through attracting skilled labour is made more complicated when a significant component of that graduate skilled labour international students unable to make their knowledge and skills available to the region. And there are other effects as well. Whilst particular local and national economies have been economically invigorated, the colour and character of parts of institutions and cities have also dramatically changed. Cities like

Vancouver, Sydney, London, and Auckland, and more recently Singapore and Hong Kong, have seen their institutional profiles, built environments, and cultural milieus transformed, but not without significant local resentment.

Language/culture institutes and other agencies promoting student mobility

Even those institutions once enrolled to promote 'national values' and national linguistic competences – such as the British Council, or the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) have been enrolled to promote international student mobility. In relation to outward mobility, in a recent joint research project, the British Council and DAAD have reviewed national government-funded outward mobility scholarship schemes in eleven countries (Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam). Their study concluded that the main rationale for outward mobility programmes is to enhance the national knowledge base in the fields perceived to be most closely associated with economic development, namely in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The study has also found that publicly funded mobility tends to be 'vertical' in nature, whereby priority is given to prestigious, highly ranked HEIs, mainly in the global north (British Council/DAAD 2014).

But internationalisation efforts are also being supported through schemes aimed at attracting international students into local HEIs. Among the key players here are Britain's Education UK, run under the aegis of the British Council, which focuses on showcasing UK universities abroad but offers limited scholarship opportunities – mainly targeted at specific nations under bilateral agreements (including China, India, Brazil, USA). The British Council also plays an increasingly more important strategic role in forging links between HEIs in the UK and overseas through policy dialogues and research collaborations.

By way of comparison, DAAD is another significant actor whose main goal is to help strengthen Germany's standing as a major host country for international students. As a private but state-funded agency, it supports almost 120,000 German and foreign students and researchers each year, making it the world's largest grantor of support for international academic mobility (DAAD n.d.).

In France, a key example of a state-funded student mobility schemes is the EIFFEL Excellence Scholarship programme launched by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1999 as part of its Strategy for Mobility. EIFFEL aims to support French HEIs in international recruitment "amid growing competition among developed countries to attract the elite of foreign students" (France Diplomatie, n.d.). The programme focuses on aspiring foreign policy-makers from the private and public sectors in the sciences, economics and management, and law and political science. Its narrow focus might explain the relatively small number of scholarships it awards every year – about 400 at Master's and 40 at doctoral level.

A recent addition to this global portfolio of student mobility programmes is Australia's New Colombo Plan (in contrast with its older Colombo Plan which was largely superseded by its trade in education initiatives beginning in the early 1990s), announced in the Draft National Strategy for International Education (Australian Government, DAFT, 2015). This initiative aims to enhance links between Australia and the Indo Pacific by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region, with a view to encouraging a two-way flow of students and thereby redressing the balance between inward and outward mobility. The Australian Government has committed AU$100 million over five years to the New Colombo Plan.

A rather different manifestation of mobility are the Confucius Institutes (CI) funded in 2004 by the Chinese Government and modelled on similar cultural-linguistic organisations established by, among others, France (Alliance Française), Germany (Goethe Institute), and to a lesser extent Britain (British Council). Their network of 465 Institutes imbedded in host universities in 123 countries and 648 Confucius Classrooms collaborating with local primary and secondary schools is managed centrally from Beijing by Hanban (Chinese Language Council International Headquarters) and plays a key role in mobilising knowledge about China and facilitating the movement of teachers and students of Chinese (Yang 2010). Among Hanban's flagship initiatives is the Confucius Institute Scholarship Programme, which funds short and extended periods of study in China and has benefited nearly 25,000 applicants from 150 countries since its launch in 2009 (Hanban 2015). There are also examples of a wide range of bilateral agreements between Hanban and national governments and agencies, which aim to forge stronger educational and economic links with China, including, for example, the Chinese Bridge for UK Schools programme run jointly by Hanban and the British Council.

Conclusions

As we have shown – and as the papers in this special issue reveal – universities in all corners of the globe are busy scoping, planning and advertising mobility programmes, as an 'essential' component of academic's and student's learning experience, whilst governments and regional bodies around the world are promoting mobility as crucial to learning in the new global economy. Given the under-specification of mobility in policy discourses like those outlined above, it is tempting to think of 'mobility' talk as a fashionable slogan and "…evocative keyword for the twenty-first century" (Hannan et al, 2006: 1) that with time will fade. However, as is clear from the intensifying focus in policy and programmes, and the growing dependence on higher education as a value-producing sector for the economy, there are few signs that this will be the outcome. Rather, mobility is here to stay, in turn creating a range of effects on individuals, institutions, cities, nations and regions. Such developments have led social theorists, such as Sheller and Urry (2006), to argue that mobility projects are generating deep changes in our social formations but in ways that we need to better understand.

Yet as Fahey and Kenway (2010) argue, *how* we research and understand mobility as an object of intellectual inquiry has been, and continues to be, much slower off the mark. The papers in this issue make an important contribution in that they show that more ethnographically-based approaches reveal considerable complexities at play. Fahey and Kenway (2010) also observe that the earlier paradigms that have tended to inform analyses of academic mobility have not sufficiently considered the epistemological, ontological or ethical issues associated with international mobility, including an obsession with linear understandings of the direction of *movement* (as in 'brain drain/brain gain' framings of skilled migration); with neo-classical accounts of *knowledge* being moved (as human capital) and not cultures and political understandings, of spaces themselves as being largely self-enclosed territorial containers reducible to the nation state; or that the *sociality* of movement (as a good thing for everyone; cosmopolitanism) is taken for granted. There are also pressing environmental concerns that are also being raised by those highlighting the growing carbon footprint, or cultural and political issues around language communities and the basis of ongoing cultural and social reproduction.

Language is a particularly important issue in all of this, not least because it is not only a means of engaging in communication and meaning making, but it is at the heart of all forms of cultural production and identity making. The trend toward English which many of these processes tend to foster needs to be countered by efforts to ensure cultural and thus social diversity – not only because of the relationship between language, cultures and modes of expression, but because languages are the bearers, makers and markers of diversity. The paradox here, of course, is that a creative economy will thrive on this diversity, whilst a narrow more instrumental approach to creativity will place limits on the very resource that it is dependent on.

All these issues are opened up in fascinating ways in this special issue – through the lenses of language, identity and citizenship. Taken together they offer real insights into a fascinating dynamic which is transforming individuals, institutions, cities, nations and regions, though not always in preferred, desirable, or indeed predictable ways.

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