

Globalisation and the Dilemmas of Australian Higher Education

Fazal Rizvi

ABSTRACT

The success of Australian universities in internationalising their campuses has been widely noted. This paper considers the ways in which this success has been measured largely in commercial terms; and argues for the importance of understanding internationalisation of higher education in historical and political terms. It suggests that when educational and cultural dimensions of internationalisation, linked to issues of globalisation, are also considered, it becomes clear that Australian efforts to internationalise higher education are beset with a number of dilemmas, relating not only to issues of capacity, volume, commitment, balance, orientation and quality but also to the ways in which international education reproduces some of the contradictions of neo-liberal globalisation.

Introduction

Higher education leaders around the world are intrigued by the spectacular success Australian universities have had in internationalising their campuses in recent years. While some are seeking to emulate Australian strategies, others view Australia as a major competitor in the fast growing global market for international students. For example, the managers of the Bologna Process (2004) cite Australia as a major competitor to Europe in the lucrative Asian market, proposing a “harmonized” European higher education space better able to compete against Australian and American universities. On the other hand, in developing their own international education policies, emerging players such as Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand have sought to learn from the Australian example.

Much of their interest is in Australia’s strategies of “exporting” higher educational services, which generates much-needed revenue for the Australian universities and contributes more than \$5 billion income to Australia’s national economy. The growth in the number of their international students, which has averaged more than ten percent per year over the past decade, has been cited as a major indicator of success. As universities in other countries experience similar financial pressures, they too have understandably looked at the recruitment of full fee paying international students as a way of generating additional income. Measured purely in commercial terms, the success of Australian universities in internationalising their campuses has indeed been spectacular. International student fees now contribute as much as thirty per cent of the total revenue of many Australian universities. Indeed, it is hard to imagine their financial sustainability without this source of income.

Australian universities have struggled, however, to recognise other important dimensions of international education. Internationalisation has clearly transformed the demography of campuses,

enhancing their cultural diversity. Partly in light of this diversity, curriculum relevance and renewal have become important issues, and potentially represent a positive force for innovation and reform. Internationalisation has opened up new possibilities of engagement with Asia in particular and with global processes more generally. New ways of looking at policy and governance have become a requirement in this educational landscape, as have new ways of working with students from a wide variety of different cultural and academic backgrounds, and giving all students international experience.

Much of this transformation has occurred against the backdrop of changes brought about by processes of globalisation. The theorisations of these processes have developed over the years, as is clear in the papers included in the three editions of the *Global Transformations Reader*, edited by Held and McGrew (1998, 2000, 2003). However, the originating idea underlying globalisation remains linked to the notion that it is driven largely by advances in information and communication technologies, resulting in “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1989). This has not only created new conditions for cross-border mobility but also new patterns of consumption of goods and services, including international higher education. In the fast growing economies of Asia, the ability to speak English fluently has become a major object of desire, as well as a marker of social status. Australian universities have been able to exploit these conditions in their search for alternative sources of revenue. The Australian government’s promotion of neo-liberal principles to guide its policies of public sector reform, with emphasis on marketisation and privatisation, has moreover complemented the universities’ entry into the global market of higher education.

Their success in international education has not, however, been without its problems. Serious issues of capacity, volume, commitment, balance, orientation and quality have emerged. Policy makers in Australian universities are now struggling to understand these issues and respond to them. Some of these issues are clearly operational, while others are grounded in a confusing conceptual terrain, linked to the ways in which the global interconnectivity between economic power, technology and knowledge has been theorised (Stromquist, 2002) and the possibilities of globalisation have been imagined (Schirato and Webb, 2003), within which the aims of internationalisation and higher educational policy are articulated. And just as globalisation has resulted in a range of contradictions for human societies, so too has international education created a range of dilemmas that educational policy makers can no longer afford to ignore.

In this paper, I discuss some of these dilemmas. My main argument is that international education in Australia has become so tied to a neo-liberal ideology that it has lost some of its capacity to serve broader, more progressive aims of higher education in a globalising world. It has moreover become an instrument through which many of the contradictions of globalisation are reproduced. To recover from this state, Australian universities need a broader conception of education with which to work towards internationalisation’s potential for realising the broader goals of intercultural understanding and exchange within an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

Changing conceptions of internationalisation

The idea of internationalisation has become something of a slogan in Australian higher education. It is important, however, to remember that Australian universities have always been linked to broader international developments. Indeed, universities in Australia were created in the nineteenth century to serve various colonial objectives of the British Empire. Like their British counterparts, Australian universities sought to provide a broad liberal education, through tightly-defined disciplinary forms of knowledge. Their aim was not to produce researchers and scientists but professional and administrative élites whose task it was to develop the institutions of the Australian colonies and to produce loyal colonial subjects who could be deployed in the service of the Empire anywhere in the world. Their worldview was based inherently on the modernist assumptions of the

European Enlightenment and the requirements of the industrial age. Many of the professors at Australian universities came directly from Britain, with little or no interest in issues relating to Australia's Asian neighbours. They viewed the world through an Orientalist lens (Said, 1985) that implicitly celebrated the Empire's global power.

This pattern persisted even after Australia became a federation in 1901. Links with the 'mother country' remained. It was not until after the Second World War that Australian higher education began to look beyond its traditional British ties, in at least two ways. Firstly, it began to forge links with universities in the United States, recruiting from there some of its teachers and researchers, and sending to American universities some of its talented graduates to complete advanced studies. And, secondly, encouraged by the Government's inevitable realisation of its geographical realities, Australia slowly began to recognise its regional responsibilities to train foreign students for the nation-building projects of the newly independent countries of Asia.

This recognition was best embodied in the 1950s development of the Colombo Plan. Primarily designed as a foreign aid programme, it highlighted Australia's commitment to ameliorate economic distress in Asia and help create local élites needed to develop the social, administrative and economic infrastructure of the developing countries in its region (Oakman, 2005). Educational scholarships were provided to enable foreign students to attend Australian universities in a specified range of academic and technical fields, such as Agriculture and Engineering. The Colombo Plan was, however, not only an aid program but was also linked to Australia's strategic interests within the broader politics of the Cold War. As a way of managing the complex dynamics of Australia-Asia relations in a rapidly decolonising world, the Plan sought to promote social and economic stability in the newly independent commonwealth countries, making them less likely to embrace communism. At the height of its popularity in the late 1960s, more than 5,000 foreign students were enrolled in Australian universities under the sponsorship of the Plan (Harman, 2004).

The historical role of the Colombo Plan in creating conditions that facilitated the subsequent policies of internationalisation of Australian universities cannot be emphasised enough. The Plan created a powerful élite in Asia well disposed towards Australia, and prepared to vouch for the benefits of its educational system, even if scholarships were no longer available and the new generation of students had to pay for their education in an increasingly market-oriented system. The relatively fast and smooth Australian policy shift from "aid" to "trade" occurred in a number of stages during the 1970s and 1980s (Harman, 2004). But, paradoxically, it was the Hawke Labour Government, which permitted the introduction of a robust set of market practices, enabling Australian higher education to become "an export industry" in which universities were encouraged to compete for students and funds.

Emergence of a new discourse of internationalisation

This policy shift was institutionalised in 1988 by the so-called Dawkins reforms, which not only introduced the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for domestic students but also allowed universities to charge international students full cost-recovery tuition fees. Interestingly, while the introduction of HECS was contested to some extent, the policy on international student fees was embraced by most universities with great enthusiasm, unleashing a culture of entrepreneurialism that had been inconceivable earlier in the decade. The policy shift established mechanisms for growth in Australian higher education that had hitherto been managed, and to a large extent constrained, by the federal bureaucracy.

During the 1990s, there thus emerged in Australian higher education a powerful new discourse of internationalisation that included a general domain of statements and practices, highlighting opportunities to develop a new understanding of international relations that had traditionally been filtered either through the history of colonialism or the Australian government's aid policies promoting its strategic interests within the Asia-Pacific region. Instead, the new discourse sought to

define the ways in which universities needed to engage with the emerging issues of globalisation, pointing to the commercial opportunities offered by the increasing movement of people, capital and ideas. It encouraged a new kind of knowledge about international relations and programmes based on a particular interpretation of the changing nature of the global economy.

However, this discourse of internationalisation is neither unitary nor consistent. It contains instead a range of competing ideas and practices, some of which have become dominant while others are marginalised. Jane Knight (1997) has identified four distinct approaches to internationalisation, based on: A typology of activities; the development of competencies; the fostering of international ethos or values on campus; and what she refers to as the process approach. The process approach stresses institutional transformation, highlighting the integration of the international and/or intercultural perspective into the primary functions of teaching, research and service, with international activities resulting in “mutually beneficial relationship among initiatives” (Knight, 1997:11). While this is indeed a noble sentiment, Australian higher education has fallen well short of this kind of internationalisation. Instead, internationalisation is normally imagined as a set of market activities.

Of these activities, international student recruitment has become dominant, with other activities increasingly filtered through the commercial lens of marketing. While, for example, large bureaucracies have been established at all Australian universities to meet client needs (i.e., to provide international student support structures, and promote internationalisation), much of their work remains commercially defined. Marketing initiatives of international offices at universities have come to occupy a dominant place, while other aspects of internationalisation are offered mostly rhetorical support. It is the marketing concerns that disproportionately attract the attention of senior university administrators as they struggle to balance their budgets within the context of declining public funds; and it is the marketing success that is celebrated by the media and government, with recognitions such as Austrade’s Export of Education Award. The media reports each year the spectacular rise in the number of international students, often overlooking the crucial issues such as the capacity of Australian universities to provide them with an appropriate and often promised educational experiences.

In terms of numbers, there is of course no denying the spectacular success of Australian higher education in its recruitment efforts. The number of international students on Australian campuses has increased from just over 26,000 in 1989 to almost 140,000 in 2004; and if offshore students are added to this number then more than 210,000 are currently enrolled in Australian higher education. While, in the mid 1990s, universities such as Monash, RMIT and New South Wales were aggressive in international recruitment, almost all Australian universities have now followed their example. Their recruitment efforts now extend well beyond the traditional source countries of Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, to other Asian countries as well as Europe and North America. The fast growing economies of China and India, each with an emerging professional class with disposable income, are now targeted for particular attention.

A new administrative technology of global marketing of education has emerged. As with other industries, this technology has its own rules of operation based on an expertise that incorporates knowledge of market segments and specificities as well as a language about the distinctive benefits of internationalisation. It involves the creation of highly specialised structures and functions responsible for global operations, for example, well developed advertising and marketing programs conducted not only through the media but also through educational Expos and market-orientated conferences at which education is sold. Extensive use is made of recruitment agents, who are often the first point of contact between the potential student and the university. The quality of their advice is at its best useful and caring but at its worst inconsistent and misleading, driven more by commercial rather than educational concerns.

The success of Australian universities in international recruitment is however not due simply to its marketing programs: Compared to its competitors, Australian tuition fees and living expenses are

lower; it is possible to complete many courses in Australia in a shorter period; and the support provided by the Australian government is significant. The government policies are highly supportive of entrepreneurial activities, especially in promoting international education through its diplomatic missions. It has also led many of the negotiations over a General Agreement in Trade of Services (GATS) at the World Trade Organization (WTO) designed to ensure the creation of a global educational market that is free from many of the current regulatory constraints. It has also forged a nexus between its higher education and immigration policies. Through its “points” system, Australia’s immigration policy permits potential students in certain disciplinary areas, such as Computing and Communications Engineering, an easier path to permanent residence.

The recruitment programs of Australian universities have also benefited from their offshore operations. In 2004, there were more than 70,000 students enrolled in Australian higher education programmes offshore. Often referred to as “transnational programmes”, Australian off-shore education has developed rapidly from early twinning programmes to a wide variety of arrangements including distance learning, collaboratively developed and delivered programmes, joint award programmes, moderated programmes and even branch campuses. Most of these arrangements involve developing partnership with local organisations and working under the requirements of local legislation relevant to the provision of educational services. More than seventy percent of these transnational partnerships are with private organisations, motivated mostly by profits. Partnerships involve commercial contracts that specify the role and responsibilities of each partner, as well as the formulae for the distribution of profits. The offshore programmes benefit Australian universities in the on-campus recruitment of international students in a number of ways, for example, by establishing “brand” recognition but more significantly through the so-called “articulation” arrangements, which enable students to transfer seamlessly from off-shore to on-campus programmes.

Important as these recruitment programmes are, they do not exhaust the scope of internationalisation. As I have already noted, the presence of international students has not only changed the demography of Australian campuses, it has also demanded a new policy agenda to meet their distinctive needs and to re-imagine many aspects of university curriculum and pedagogy. Most universities have had to develop new policies in support of cultural diversity, especially after 1998, when publicity surrounding the xenophobic politics of Pauline Hanson threatened to damage Asia-Australia relations and with it Australia’s share of the global educational market. The corporate rhetoric of diversity and globalism now abounds, together with programmes designed specifically for international students.

Now, while much of the international activity focuses on students from abroad, most universities also recognise the need to provide international experience to Australian students through study abroad and student exchange programmes. There have also been pedagogic reforms to encourage greater collaborations between international and domestic students. In the area of research, Australian universities have sought to form new networks with universities and industries abroad. They have also joined, and often led, global university consortia, to facilitate greater cooperation in student and academic exchange and in the development of joint research and teaching programmes. Examples of such consortia include *Universitas 21* and *Global University Alliance (GUA)*. The problem with these initiatives, however, has been the scope of their work, as well as their underlying motivations. Their focus has been largely concerned with the development of jointly produced on-line programmes, aimed primarily at the fast growing China market, which suggests that they have been driven largely by commercial rather than academic motivations.

Globalisation and Higher Education

So far in this paper, I have argued that in Australia a new discourse of internationalisation of higher education has been evolving, even if it remains contested. Over the past two decades, the explicitly

colonial and aid perspectives have given way to a market discourse of internationalisation spawning a range of practices designed to recruit international students to Australian campuses. Granted, Australia has been highly strategic and sometimes aggressive in its marketing practices, its entrepreneurial initiatives could, however, still not have by themselves produced the success its universities have had in recruiting Asian students. How might we account for the fast growing interest in Asia for Australian higher education?

Some of this interest relates to the history of colonialism and the regional ties Australia has with former British colonies such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, which remain the largest source countries of international students to Australia. The Colombo Plan consolidated some of these ties, and many of the current recruits are simply following a family tradition or have been advised by those with positive experiences of Australian education. Lack of opportunities for higher education in their own countries is also a contributing factor: Demand has far exceeded the capacity in most Asian countries. Particular national policies such as the affirmative action in Malaysia favouring *Bumiputras* have led to a large number of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia to seek higher education abroad. In China, spectacular economic growth and one-child policy have created a middle class with disposable income, interested in investing heavily in the higher education of their children. Coupled with these factors is the widespread perception in Asia that in terms of tuition fees and living costs Australia is 'cheaper' than the United States and Great Britain; and that it is not only geographically closer to Asia but that it is also 'safer and more friendly'. Australia provides moreover better prospects of securing permanent residence and immigration.

While these factors are clearly indicative of additional factors why Australian education is sought in Asia, they still do not adequately explain the fast growing interest in international education *per se*. To understand this, we need to look at the broader social and economic conditions that have given rise to the emergence of a strong middle class in the newly industrialised countries, which attaches much status to international education. In many of these countries, English is uniformly viewed as a global language of commerce, and there is a perception that, in the globally changing labour market, those with good English and international experiences have a better chance of securing well-paid jobs, particularly in transnational corporations. Even without such an expectation, there is a growing interest in cosmopolitan experiences, together with a sense that in a globally interconnected and interdependent world, those with intercultural skills and an international outlook are better equipped to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy.

This account suggests a strong link between the motivations underlying the current discourses and practices of international education and the contemporary processes of globalisation. There is, of course, nothing new about the assertion that there is a relationship between globalisation and recent developments in higher education. A range of scholars, both conservative and critical, have explored the ways in which globalisation impacts on educational policy and governance. They (for example, Burbules and Torres, 2000) have suggested that globalisation, with its assumptions of economic progress based on notions of human capital and development, is steering educational preferences and policies everywhere into the same neo-liberal direction; and that this is threatening to weaken educational links to the imperatives of local and national communities, while making stronger its relationship to the requirements of the global economy. Currie and Newsom (1998) have suggested that recent educational reform policies are anchored within a set of structural conditions shaping nation-states' policy options; and that globalisation represents an "unstoppable tidal wave force" affecting not only educational policies but also the educational preferences of the transnational élites around the world.

These accounts conflate globalisation with a sociological take on the social, economic and political processes that, taken together, imply the production of the characteristic conditions of contemporary existence. They describe the ways in which distant parts of the world have become connected to each other in an historically unprecedented manner. They indicate how for the first time in history, it is now possible to imagine the *world as a single space* linked by various

technological, economic, social and cultural forces. Giddens (1990:15) refers to this phenomenon as “the intensification of world-wide social relations”; and Robertson (1992: 23) suggests “the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole”. In her analysis of global cities, Sassen (1991) has a similar understanding of globalisation, characterised by increased economic transgression of national boundaries; heightened capital mobility; shift from manufacturing to business and financial services; control of economic activity from a distance; and hierarchical organisation of economic activity in a global system of accumulation, command and movement of international capital.

Now, while there is a great deal of truth to these descriptions of the profound historical changes people around the world are currently experiencing, there are two main problems with this account of globalisation. First, it naturalises globalisation, without making any serious attempt to historicise its various hegemonic expressions, or to understand it as part of a broader cultural politics of naming. It uncritically accepts claims of its empirical reality and historical inevitability as articulated by corporations, governments and popular media alike. It also privileges the economic dimensions of globalisation, drawing our attention disproportionately to the global economy, “reified as a pre-given thing, existing outside of thought” whose developmental logic, as Smith (2000:12) points out, “not only explains the development of cities but even determines the subjectivity of their inhabitants, without ever interrogating them about what they are up to”. In so far as these accounts of globalisation give “scant attention to the discursive and material practices by which people create the regularized patterns that enable and constrain them, these discourses lack an effective theory of political agency, or any other kind of agency” (12). There is an assumption, for example, that it is “time-space compression” that *causes* people, independently of their historical and social location, and their will, to have the experiences they do, and make the decisions they make.

In contrast, if we are to take the role of agency seriously then the global phenomenon of the growing international mobility of students needs to be understood in an historically specific way, rather than as a function of some set of naturalised economic processes operating in a reified fashion. Otherwise, many of the popular neo-liberal ideas of recent years, which explain student mobility as a function of demand and supply, will continue to appear as a natural and inevitable outcome of the steering logic of economic globalisation. It will be impossible to recognise globalisation as an ideology that serves the interests of transnational corporate and financial élites. Globalisation will then appear as independent from its roots in the Euro-American projects of imperialism and colonialism, which continue to shape the lives of people. Unless some notion of agency is included in analyses of global processes, it will be difficult to understand how global forces have given rise to many of the dilemmas of social life we confront today, and how it might be possible to deal with them in a critical and politically productive manner.

These dilemmas are inherent in the economic and cultural shifts that have transformed social landscapes around the world in a variety of uneven and chaotic ways (Bauman, 1998). While the phenomena of the movement of people and instant communication across the globe have led to new cultural possibilities, they have also threatened cultural traditions, fragmenting production across national boundaries yet intensifying relations of dependency. While global economic processes have contributed to the growth in gross national products of many countries, they have also widened global inequalities, creating new patterns of disadvantage. While globalisation promises greater secularisation and cosmopolitanisation, global cultural intervention into local lives has been potentially alienating and psychologically degrading, leading to religious and national fundamentalisms. While global cultural exchanges across national boundaries have led to the emergence of hybrid identities and the creation of new global commodities for consumption, they have also served to standardise expectations, desires and aspirations. Globalisation has created new patterns of consumerist desire that can only be realised by an élite who can travel freely and by choice around the world, while most others have either been trapped in place or have been driven out of their homes. The key dilemma surrounding globalisation is that, while it celebrates global

mobility of capital, ideas, technologies and people, only a few are able to take advantage of its cultural possibilities, while others are trapped into patterns of global inequalities.

Dilemmas of international education

It is in the context of these broader concerns about global mobility that Australian universities confront a range of dilemmas arising out of competing demands and priorities that they must somehow balance. Dilemmas arise when the pursuit of one course of action prevents the realisation of other equally worthy goals; and when particular conditions make it difficult for institutions to work towards their core objectives. After pursuing commercial forms of internationalisation for more than a decade, Australian higher education is now caught in the dilemmas of its own success: This success has created problems of capacity for Australian universities, putting an inordinate amount of pressure on their resources, both physical and human. Most universities report shortage of room, library and computer facilities to meet the needs of an ever-increasing number of international students. Academics, particularly those who also teach in offshore programs, find it difficult to cope with work levels and with the challenge of teaching students of diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. And yet, the universities find it convenient to increase recruitment targets every year to meet the rising costs of maintaining core functions. Their dilemma lies in finding criteria appropriate for determining their capacity, as well as the balance across nationalities and disciplinary areas.

Internationalisation has clearly enabled a large number of international students to access Australian higher education. Most reports show these students to derive considerable benefits from such an education in terms of productive educational experience, enhanced job prospects or immigration to Australia. Australian campuses are also enriched by their presence, both in monetary terms and in terms of cultural diversity and networks that they represent. However, their demographic composition represents a major cause for concern. As Simon Marginson (2003: 42) has noted, far from promoting across-the-board internationalisation, Australia's "foreign-student population has been drawn heavily from middle class Chinese families, particularly from the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia". More than fifty per cent of international students in Australia come from just three source countries – Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. This heavy reliance does not only constitute a financial risk for Australian universities, it also does little to diversify the educational experiences of students from these countries, who seek intercultural experience but find few opportunities for it.

In broader terms, the heavily commercial character of international education in Australia serves to reproduce the global inequalities within its own geographic region. Under the Colombo Plan, Australian universities provided access to a large number of students from poor least developed countries within the Asia-Pacific. Under a market regime, the number of financially sponsored students has dwindled markedly, further widening the skills gap that now exists between the newly industrialising countries, from where Australian universities mostly recruit students, and poorer Pacific countries, whose economic prospects have steadily declined. This exemplifies the globally uneven and asymmetrical nature of student flows within the global market of international education. For example, Marginson (2003: 31) has noted the magnetic attraction of American higher education, and has argued that the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand sit "in the American slipstream, operating on a more entrepreneurial basis than American institutions. They gain the referred power as lesser English-language providers and sites for migration, often in a transitional stage in passage to the USA." The dilemma facing Australian universities is how to deal with this global phenomenon, and how to diversify their student base and provide opportunities to those talented students within its own region who are sidelined by commercialisation. The issue is one of access and equity at the global level, demanding remedial actions to stop the economic and social haemorrhaging of poorer countries caused by the new global geometry of power.

This haemorrhaging is further perpetuated by the 'brain drain' of the highly talented international students who can make a significant contribution to the national development of their own countries but are seduced by the opportunities presented by the richer countries. In that Australian government policies view international students as potential immigrants in areas of skill shortage, they accelerate the patterns of 'brain drain'. It is estimated that more than sixty per cent of international students qualify for immigration and are granted permanent residence, even if they do not abandon their citizenship and plan to work in a transnational space. This situation is further complicated by the fact that many students who do return to their own country either seek or are recruited into well-paying jobs within transnational corporations. In these ways, international education has increasingly become a handmaiden to corporate globalisation, providing the new global economy with the human resources it needs to expand into new markets rather than contribute to broader social and cultural goals.

If the ethnic composition of international students represents a dilemma for Australian universities then their disproportionate numbers in just three disciplinary areas of Business Studies, Engineering and Computer Science poses a further problem. Almost seventy-five per cent of international students in Australian universities are enrolled in these discipline groups, because their graduates reliably command better opportunities and good salaries both within Australia and abroad. Given that higher education is viewed by most of these students as an investment, the approach to studies will be instrumental and with an economic return in mind. As consumers of education, they demand an appropriate level of student support, and expect grades that will position them highly within the labour market.

This inevitably creates tensions between teacher expectations and students performance. While teachers might wish a curriculum that is broadly liberal and critical, international students and their parents often expect a narrowly instrumentalised and vocational curriculum tied to the requirements of the global labour market. Most Australian universities now profess the need to internationalise their curriculum, but find it difficult to imagine how this might be done, beyond the superficial level of integrating a few international examples in course narratives. Many international students moreover prefer what they regard as quintessentially Australian course content, without any modification, to better position them for work in transnational corporations. Indeed, this explains the generally held view in Australian universities that international students themselves would resist the introduction of bilingual instruction, even if university authorities could be persuaded to invest in it. In this way, international education represents a site for the reproduction of the global hegemony of the English language as the chief medium of communication in transborder relations.

Australian universities have not enjoyed much success in internationalising their curriculum for domestic students. Their efforts have largely been restricted to study abroad and educational exchange programs. Those students who go on such programmes clearly derive a great deal of personal and educational benefit from them. However, a contradiction lies at the heart of these programmes since most of the exchanges are with other English-speaking western countries, such as the UK, Canada and the United States, while most of the international students in Australia are from non-western Asian countries. Very few academics and students seem to express an interest in developing on-going robust relationships with universities in Asia, preferring to remain in their comfortable cultural zone. How Australian universities might seek to change this asymmetrical pattern is a problem that is not easily resolved. Nor is it easy to determine the ways in which the academic scope of study abroad might be broadened from educational tourism to curriculum engagement.

How to make a comprehensive and critical understanding of the cultural 'other' in the transnational era a major curriculum issue remains a challenge for Australian universities. As does the issue of how to assess the quality of programmes designed to engage effectively with the cultural diversity that has become a permanent feature of Australian campuses. In its offshore

education operations, the issue is even more complex. Many of the quality assurance schemes that are used by Australian universities to assess their internationalisation efforts focus largely on procedural matters, or the extent to which stated objectives are realised in practice. But this is a very narrow conception of quality assurance, which does not reflect on the nature and scope of the objectives themselves. Broader substantive issues of the purposes of education, and of appropriate forms of pedagogy and assessment, in a globally interconnected and interdependent world are overlooked; as are the issues of the distinctive responsibilities of higher education in working towards the public good. In a global context, the key dilemma facing public institutions is how to define public good in ways that not only address national priorities but also deal with issues of global interconnectivity.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown how internationalisation in Australian higher education has become dominated by a market logic, so much so that the system now measures its 'success' largely in commercial rather than educational terms. This success has not been without its problems however. Major issues of capacity, volume, balance and quality have emerged. Australian universities now face the dilemma of how to reconcile their commercial interests with their core educational and cultural objectives. It will be difficult for them to do so unless they recover some of their academic traditions, as well as a sense of responsibility not only to the students who now pay for their education but also to the global public good.

Note

An earlier version of this paper was first presented as a keynote address at the meeting of the New Zealand Association of Research in Education at Waikato University Hamilton New Zealand in December 2000, when the author was employed as a Pro Vice Chancellor (International) at RMIT University in Melbourne. This paper is based on the experiences of international education he had in that position, and on his reflections since leaving it in 2001.

References

- Bologna_Process (2004). Available at: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Higher_education/Activities/Bologna_Process/default.asp
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalisation: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Burbules, N. & Torres C. (Eds.) (2000). *Globalisation and Education: Critical perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Currie, J. & Newsom, J. (Eds.) (1998). *Universities and Globalisation: Critical perspectives*. Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *Consequences of Modernity*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Harman, G. (2004). New Directions in Internationalising Higher Education: Australia's development as an exporter of Higher Education services. *Higher Education Policy*, 17, 101-120.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989.
- Held, D. & McGrew, A. (1998, 2000, 2003 editions). *Global Transformations Reader*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Knight, J. (1997). Internationalisation of Higher Education: A conceptual framework. In J. Knight & H. De Wit (Eds.), *Internationalisation of Higher Education in Asia-Pacific Countries* Utrecht: European Association for International Education.
- Marginson, S. (2003). The Phenomenal Rise of International Degrees Down Under. *Change*, May-June.
- Marginson, S. (2003a). Markets in Higher Education: National and global competition. Radford Lecture delivered at the Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Auckland, December.
- Oakman, D. (2005). *Facing Asia: A history of the Colombo Plan*. Canberra: ANU Press
- Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalisation: Social theory and global culture*. London: Sage.
- Said, E. (1985). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.
- Sassen, S. (1991). *The Global City: New York, London and Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press.

Schirato, T. & Webb, J. (2003). *Understanding Globalization*. London: Sage.

Stromquist, N. (2002). *Education in a Globalized World: The connectivity of economic power, technology, and knowledge*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, M. P. (2001). *Transnational Urbanism: Locating globalisation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.