An Introduction: Internationalisation at Home in Context

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THE BIRTH OF INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME

In the late 1990s, Bengt Nilsson was faced with a new challenge. Already at that time well-established as a brand name in European and international higher education cooperation, Nilsson left his post as the director of the International Relations Office of Lund University to become the vice president for international affairs at the newly founded university in Malmö, Sweden—a small step in terms of distance, a big one otherwise. Lund is one of Europe's oldest and most established research universities. Malmö was a fledgling institution *in statu nascendi* when Bengt Nilsson arrived there. But precisely this lack of old traditions and structures also opened up new opportunities. One of them was internationalisation. In Lund, the focus of international activity had been on the mobility of persons. In Malmö, Nilsson decided to go down an altogether different avenue. He opted for *internationalisation at home* (IaH).

There were two main reasons for this conceptual reorientation. First, it had become clear to Nilsson (and to many others in the international higher education business) that even the rather modest aim of the initial Erasmus Programme—to enable every 10th student to spend a study period in another European country—could not be attained. This failure called for a new approach: to " internationalise" the education of that vast majority of higher education students who would never leave their home country. Second, the new university in Malmö was to cater to a regional target population, amongst other things. And the Malmö region has an immigrant rate of about one third. A sizeable part of the expected student population would therefore have cultural roots very different from those of the traditional Swedish student. As a consequence, intercultural studies and intercultural communication would have to play a strong role. This (unjustifiably) short history of Bengt Nilsson's move contains, in a nutshell, the two pillars on which the concept of IaH rested from the begin-

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ning: an understanding of internationalisation that went beyond mobility and a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning in a culturally diverse setting.

Bengt Nilsson decided to share his idea with others. As far as can be seen, there were again two reasons. First, he obviously hoped for some cross-fertilisation through exchange and debate, and thus for food for thought that would help him to successfully face his challenging task back home. But, second, it was also clear that the situation in Malmö was not so different from that in other parts of Europe and, perhaps, the wider world. International migration was on the rise everywhere and the limitations to a further expansion of physical mobility existed all over Europe, too. In a sense, Malmö was everywhere. In hindsight, it is therefore less of a surprise than it appeared to be at the time that Bengt Nilsson's idea received the enthusiastic welcome it did. The success story started in late 1999, at a conference of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) in Maastricht, where his proposal to create a special interest group devoted to IaH met with overwhelming resonance. More than 100 international academics and administrators spontaneously jumped on the bandwagon. They elected from amongst themselves a steering group headed by Bengt Nilsson and including Paul Crowther (Lille), Michael Joris (Diepenbeek), Hanneke Teekens (Enschede), Matthias Otten (Karlsruhe), and the author of this article. Five of these people have contributed to the present issue. Maastricht changed Bengt Nilsson's life. Ever since, he has been in high demand around the globe. His life at times turned into one long lecture tour, which led him to the *quatre coins du monde*.

THE WIDER CONTEXT

To be perfectly honest, IaH is not an altogether new concept. It is a rediscovery. This does not at all diminish its importance. On the contrary, what counts is that the original discovery did not manage to implant the concept in the public consciousness, and that Bengt Nilsson's IaH did. This is typical of rediscoveries in general, as, for example, Columbus's discovery of America. He was not the first one to set foot there, as we know. But his discovery was the one that mattered because it turned America into a reality. The same is true of IaH. It was launched at the right time and it was effectively communicated to stakeholders. Its earlier incarnation remained largely a bureaucratic invention without any impact on the public mind. To understand what is meant by these possibly cryptic remarks, the reader is invited on a short tour of the recent history of internationalisation.[1]

Internationalisation—in Europe, at any rate—was a marginal phenomenon in most countries until the mid-1980s. Activity levels in internationalisation (or international cooperation, as it was called at the time) were extremely low. Internationalisation was largely identical with the mobility of persons, in other

words, of students and scholars. Moreover, its basis was *individual*, meaning that there was no structural involvement of the higher education institutions themselves. This was Phase 1 in the history of internationalisation.

Phase 2, spanning the period from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, was characterised by mobility as well. But mobility became organised and now took place in the framework of international networks (of university departments). It also happened on a much greater scale than before. This chapter, like much that took place in post-World War II European cooperation, was written by the European Union. It was above all the Erasmus scheme that brought about the changes described.

The European Union was also at the origin of Phase 3, which began in 1995. Mobility was still a central concern, but it was no longer the be-all and end-all of the internationalisation project. Curricular internationalisation, in the form of international subject matter and comparative approaches, as well as institutionalisation of internationalisation, became the new foci. The paradigm change was attempted by the new Erasmus Programme, which was by that time becoming incorporated into the wider Socrates scheme. Curricular internationalisation was contained in the so-called Curriculum Development (CD) measures. The institutional approach was to be brought about by the so-called Institutional Contract, a hotly debated innovation at the time. It was to shift the responsibility for cooperation matters from individual volunteers at the academic base to the leadership of higher education institutions. It was to develop policies (a set of aims) and strategies (an implementation plan), where earlier only random action prevailed.

The last phase (4) of the history of internationalisation in Europe started at the end of the millennium in Bologna, Italy, where the education ministers of almost 30 European countries subscribed to a system-level reform of various structural features of higher education, above all of the architecture of degrees. The drivers in this phase were the governments of the individual countries of Europe, but the eminence grise behind them was an emerging world market of higher education, competition, and globalisation in general.

Looking at the overall development, a pattern becomes discernible. Internationalisation moves from the level of the individual person (Phase 1), to that of academic units (Phase 2), to the institutional level (Phase 3), and finally to the system level (4). Where then does IaH figure in this history? It belongs in Phase 3, characterised by the attempt to move beyond mobility and into curricular internationalisation, and into institutionalisation of higher education institutions. But why did IaH not take off at that time? The simple answer is that the Erasmus reform failed. The Institutional Contract in the end turned out to be a reform of programme delivery logistics rather than of the *finalité* of the

programme itself. The higher education institutions disliked the shift to the institutional core, and they mourned the end of the programme networks. The curricular reorientation, the second part of the reform, never really took off due to severe funding limitations (cf. Teichler, 2002). The first attempt at IaH was stillborn. A second attempt became necessary. Bengt Nilsson undertook it, successfully.

And what about the second pillar of IaH, the intercultural element? It can be safely said that IaH did not invent intercultural studies, of course. They have a much longer tradition, especially in the United States, a multicultural society since its beginnings (cf. Otten, 2003 [this issue]). What is relatively new is its application in the field of education or, to be precise, of higher education. What is also new is the attempt to link it to the internationalisation agenda described above. The word *attempt* must be stressed: Looking at the articles in this issue, one must say that the intercultural and the international agenda have not yet, in every case, been integrated, but often rather lead a parallel existence.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IAH

Bengt Nilsson, and the wider circle of IaH disciples, have always shared a set of common assumptions about IaH. At the same time, it has been avoided to freeze the concept into a simple rigid definition. One reason for this has been and still is that IaH should be the opposite of a concept cast in iron: It is meant to develop. At the same time, the agreement on a set of basic assumptions was meant to avoid the danger that IaH might turn into anything anyone would like it to mean, and that any theme with a faint link to internationalisation and intercultural education would automatically be worthy of the label. In what ways has IaH developed then, since its beginnings in late 1999? When comparing the original set of ideas with those expressed in the present issue of articles, a number of trends emerge.

Concreteness

The original concept was, by necessity, of a rather general nature and is still, if not in part, quite abstract. The position paper (Crowther, Joris, Otten, Teekens, & Wächter, 2000) in which the steering group put down the concept for the first time identified and at best outlined elements constituting an IaH concept, but it did not elaborate on them in detail and it hardly indicated what these elements could mean in practice. During the many workshops devoted to IaH since the end of 1999, the concept gained in palpability through case studies, for example. This trend is being continued in the present issue, in the guise of the four institu-

tional case studies by Bengt Nilsson, Paula Dunstan, Michael Paige, and Hanneke Teekens and Huib de Jong.

Differentiation

The trend toward enhanced concreteness is closely related to a second trend toward greater differentiation. Researchers into IaH are probing deeper than they could at the outset. The overall theme is undergoing a deconstruction process, which results in the scrutiny of subthemes. Teaching in all its facets is being explored, as is the concept of an *intercultural classroom*. At times, this trend has gone quite far, as in the case with David Hoffmann's article, which describes a subject-centred methodology to investigate the theme of discrimination against foreign faculty in Finnish higher education institutions. The same might be said of Paula Dunstan's article, but for a different reason: She leaves the field of higher education to enter school education. It is necessary to go down the road to differentiation, no doubt. At the same time, one step should be taken at a time and there is a certain danger that IaH might lose itself in "micro-micro" themes or to deviate too far from its higher-education base. Any subtheme and any excursion into neighbouring territory would need to demonstrate its link to, and relevance for, the further development of the overarching concept of IaH in higher education, and the set of common assumptions referred to above.

Regional Variety

IaH was discovered by Europeans, and its initial concept reflects very much the stage of development of internationalisation on that continent reached at the time and the particular framework conditions to which internationalisation in Europe were subject. This perspective is now becoming widened by contributions from other continents. Paula Dunstan (Australia) and Michael Paige (United States) represent this widening in the present issue. It must be stressed that conditions of internationalisation—historical and present—are different elsewhere. This might seem to be a scholarly distinction only, but it has a great practical relevance. It has been said above that IaH in Europe means going beyond mobility, and outbound student mobility in particular. There has never been a need in the United States for that, largely because there is hardly any outbound mobility from that country. At the same time, inbound mobility, under the market-driven paradigm of an "export of education," has figured much more strongly in internationalisation in the United States than anywhere in (continental) Europe. At the same time, due to a traditionally multiethnic society, the intercultural issue, but also the one of curricular internationalisation, might perhaps be said to be much less of a new discovery there.

THE INTERCULTURAL SHIFT

As stated earlier, IaH has developed from two pillars: a mature concept of internationalisation and an adaptation of intercultural studies to higher education. When Bengt Nilsson and the steering group started their work, the stronger of these two pillars was the international one. This is, after all, also reflected in the concept's name. Since then, interest on the intercultural side of the fence has grown more than on the international one. IaH is therefore more balanced now than at its outset. For future development, two things appear essential. First, that an equilibrium be kept between the two components so that neither of the two perspectives will start to dominate the other. Second, that the parallel existence of these two elements should develop into one single and integrated one, where the whole is larger and more meaningful than the sum of its parts.

AREAS IN NEED OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Are there any other unsolved problems related to the IaH concept? Given the living and developing nature of IaH, anything else would be a big surprise. At this point, two problems only are noted.

The first one concerns information and communication technologies (ICT) in general, and cyber universities in particular. I continue to have a basic problem in reconciling the concepts of a fully fledged virtual university with that of "home." I might be naive, like Elton John's "Rocket Man," for whom home was a locatable spot in the physical universe. I can see, as Michael Joris points out toward the end of his article, a meaningful use of ICT to enhance the basically down-to-earth campus. But I cannot see a home in cyberspace. Nor can I, for that matter, agree to the reasoning that the cyber university is by definition international. International education, particularly in IaH, needs to show in the content of education.

The second concern is that in the present IaH discussions, the foreign-language element is lacking. An internationalised education should enable graduates to communicate across borders. If they cannot, internationalisation will not come off. Therefore, a foreign-language component needs to be integrated into IaH. This is not, to avoid any possible misunderstandings, advocating traditional philological education. What is called for is an integration of the acquisition of two foreign languages, as a communication tool, into the education of all tertiary students.

One final observation: Internationalisation and IaH will start to relate to other reform and innovation trends in higher education and enhance these as they will reinforce IaH. Or, to use Hanneke Teeken's words, that internationalisation becomes an institutional "education policy."

NOTE

1. For a recent perspective on internationalisation differing from this one, see de Wit (2002).

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