

CHAPTER
2
GEO-CONCEPTUAL
FOUNDATIONS OF VISIONARY
INTERNATIONALIZATION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education today is the leading institution for producing intellectual and scientific/technological knowledge and sharing multilingual, multidimensional socio/cultural lifestyles. The concept of internationalization is the central concept of a new trend in the global and digital age, which has become a familiar and shared phenomenon across borders and now refers to a whole network of self-developing, highly complex relationships. This trend has a focal intensity in different parts of the world based on specific characteristics, internal dynamics, and historical and philosophical/conceptual differences. There are currently three main areas of internationalization that are interrelated and intertwined:

- (1) Conceptual/intellectual expansion centered on Europe, the historical pioneer of humanitarian culture: *Libertas/Singula*

- (2) The axis of renewed Asian practice, which is rising rapidly in the vibrant cultural nature of highly populated social localities, establishes its axis of gravity centered on the Far East: *Wuwei/Guanxi*.
- (3) The UK, which has a special place in the European context, stands out with free market themes such as brand value, worldwide recognition, and prestige in the internationalization of higher education: *Custom/Habits*
- (4) US-based globalization pragmatism, which popularizes the experience of intercultural interaction worldwide: *Pragma/Beneficium*

2.1.2 Libertas or Singula

The first of these, in terms of modern history, is the European/Latin model. Accordingly, we can embody this model with two simple concepts: liberty and the individual (*Libertas*, *Singula*). When Pope Innocent III convened the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome in 1211, the freedom of the Roman Church (*libertas ecclesiae*) was equivalent to the absolute power of the Pope (*plenam potestatem*) in both temporal and spiritual realms. The main issue discussed was how to make room for lay persons' freedom within the church's absolute freedom. The 42nd canon approved by the council acknowledges that the clerics' claims in the judicial sphere in the name of church freedom are sometimes excessive. Just as we want the laity not to usurp the rights of the clergy, we must also want the clergy not to usurp the rights of the laity. Therefore, from now on, we forbid any clergy to extend their authority to the detriment of secular justice under the pretext of religious freedom. Instead, let them be content with the written constitutions and customs that have been approved so far, so that "the works of Caesar may be given to Caesar and the works of God to God in a just distribution" (Fourth Lateran Council, 1215). However, immediately afterward, in Canon 44, he forbade princes to issue constitutions that undermined the hereditary integrity of the churches.

In Canon 46, he forbade the councils and city governors from imposing taxes on the clergy. The internal course of these canons shows that the papacy adopted a softer line than previous councils in resolving these conflicts but that the bishops did not always appear to be fully in line with the directives of Rome and that, therefore, negotiating procedures were employed that partly included the objections of the local communities. The popes thus found themselves forced to play a dual role as, on the one hand, the controllers of the bishops' actions toward civilians and, simultaneously, their external guarantors and defenders. "In a context of ever-expanding Roman power, the boundary between *libertas Ecclesie* and *libertates singularum ecclesiarum* became increasingly blurred" (D'Acunto, 2024, p. 41). The historical foundation that took shape in the context of these ecclesiastical and lay freedoms evolved into the freedoms of Catholic/Protestant clergy and the freedoms of aristocratic lay individuals and bore their fruit for the first time in a comprehensive manner in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The whole landscape found itself in the coding of freedom and the individual. In modern European thought, shaped by Descartes' famous *Cogito* philosophy, the clergy-lay distinction of freedom transformed into a dualism of the soul and the body, while the individual became the main center in which freedoms were defined. This historical framework expresses the dominant background in the cultural diplomacy apparatus of continental Europe. The Erasmus Exchange Program of the European Union represents an important, institutionalized example of cultural diplomacy. The program takes its name from the philosopher Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536). Erasmus, a leading representative of the humanist movement of the Renaissance, advocated the unity of Europe within the framework of humanism.

On the other hand, two conceptual attitudes that stand out as economic slogans in the cultural geography of Europe have a foundational effect that includes the commercial and economic applications of cultural diplomacy. These slogans became famous as the words spoken by the French merchants to the finance minister in the 1750s. These have become a political principle that expresses the liberal

business world, liberal education, and political/ideological ideals with their different forms, such as "do not govern too much" (*pas trop gouverner!*), "*laissez-faire! et laissez passer!*" (let be and let pass!). These concepts also reflect the spirit of today's free market economy (Hamilton, 2008, pp. 8–9). In terms of the world of consumption and the manipulation of consumer perception, cultural diplomacy is a nature that is of interest and investment to companies as well as countries. The EXPO World's Fairs today were first organized in London in 1851 under the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. According to the information provided by the EXPO Paris central office, "Participating in Expos allows countries to create a temporary miniature world, a microcosm of global progress and dialogue. Expos provide a unique and international stage for participating in cultural diplomacy and interacting with the host country, other participants, potential tourists, trade partners, and investors. Each country creates a global village that offers a unique experience to visitors and participants by projecting itself to a wide, ready, and diverse audience through pavilions or special areas" (Bureau International des Expositions [BIE], 2025). These definitions appear as a practice of internationalizing or globalizing trade in accordance with the *laissez-faire* heritage of overseas merchants.

The relationship of geography with culture and the shaping of any culture according to the place of its birth and rise constructs cultural geographies. Certain concepts show characteristic diversity in the mentality formation and civilization manifestation of any cultural geography.

In the global world, three main types of internationalization models have emerged geographically. These generalized models are structured around fundamental philosophical and cultural concepts in higher education. The first of these in terms of modern history is the European/Latin model. Accordingly, we can concretize this model with two simple concepts: freedom and the individual (*Libertas, Singula*). Bologna and Erasmus's programs stand out in the Internationalization

processes of European universities. Bologna is the oldest university in Europe. Its foundation dates back to 1088.

When we look at the promotion of the University of Bologna, we see that it preserved a free and scientific thought and education system in contrast to Europe's dark and bigoted atmosphere during the Middle Ages. Especially during the Renaissance period, the Anatomy Theatre (Archiginnasio) was accepted as one of the turning points in the history of medicine, and its extensive research library increased the historical importance of the university. Thus, with the name 'Universitas,' used for the first time, scientific freedom is historically emphasized in Bologna.

The Erasmus program of the European Union is named after the philosopher Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536). As the leading representative of the Renaissance's humanist movement, Erasmus defended Europe's unity within the framework of humanism.

He embraced the humanist belief in the individual's capacity for self-development and the essential role of education in raising human beings above the level of wild animals. The driving force of Erasmus' educational program was promoting what he called "*docta pietas*," learned piety or "the philosophy of Christ." This is an aspect of the broader concept of *pietas*, the moral conscience that governs the proper relationship between the individual and God and between the individual and society.

2.1.3 Wuwei or Guanxi

When we look at Asia's vast geography of internationalization, which we can call the Eastern type, we encounter China-centered cultural geography concepts shaped by the widespread influence of Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian cultures. The cultural diplomacy developed by China is especially shaped around the traditional concepts of (無為) Wuwei and Quanxi (關係). The concept of Wuwei is defined as an administrative principle and a law of nature according to ancient Taoist philosophy and is defined as a life principle in the sense of doing a job and overcoming a problem without behavior or conflict contrary to the

laws of nature. It can also be defined as doing something without doing something in the sense of complete harmony with nature or as action without action. The principle of Wuwei, which is first used in the *Tao Te Ching* attributed to Lao Tzu (601 BC–?) in the sense of inaction contrary to nature, suggests that everyone carries the two polarities of yin and yang within themselves and therefore should avoid extremes and suggests the wisdom of moderation. 'Therefore, sages manage affairs without doing anything and communicate instructions without using their speech' (Laozi, 2008, p. 11). Therefore, the true character of Wuwei is not only inactivity but also inactivity that expresses perfect action. In other words, Wuwei is an action that is not performed independently of heaven and earth and is not contrary to the dynamism of the whole. It is in perfect harmony with the whole. It is not simple passivity, but rather an action that rightfully appears effortless and spontaneous because it is based on perfect harmony with our nature and our place in the order of things (Kurşunoğlu, 2020, pp. 47–52). "Wuwei" expresses a wise and kind action by participating in the flow of the environment in nature or society. This concept seems to inspire China's silent and profound opening and international mobility. In cultural diplomacy, we come across another related concept, *quanxi*. The concept of *quanxi*, meaning the social network to which a person belongs or has, refers to the fact that relationships established in Chinese society aim to change others by convincing them about themselves. Interpersonal relationships are defined as a kind of destiny that confirms the relationship of everyone with their natural counterparts according to their socio-economic status (Hwang, 1987, p. 963). In the *quanxi* process, the two parties who exchange gifts see this encounter as a predetermined event and aim to achieve positive results by assimilating each other within their social networks. The cultural diplomacy area where China faithfully implements this ancient heritage is the Confucius Institutes. Confucius Institutes are often compared to other cultural diplomacy institutions such as the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, and the British Council. These institutes are diplomatic tools

used in foreign cultural regions through language, tourism, and cultural promotion.

However, when we look at the various activities of Confucius Institutes in Africa and Asia, we can clearly observe a quanxi exchange put into practice with the understanding of mutual learning and understanding and mutual benefit. Just like the five layers of traditional quanxi (father, son, spouse, brother, friend), there is a five-layer quanxi network here. The first layer is the connection to the institute headquarters in Beijing. The second layer is the university's partnership, where the institute's local office is opened with a university in China. The third network is the connection of the institution's headquarters, where the office is opened, with other headquarters in the region. The fourth layer connects a leading Chinese university with multiple institutes abroad (which may be in different countries, such as sister branch campuses). The fifth layer connects all institutes in host countries that have a common Chinese partner (Benabdallah, 2020, pp. 114–115). This complex network (Hanban), which we can call "quanxi power" in cultural diplomacy, uses its connections in different countries (through CIs) to achieve commercial and political goals. Hanban sponsors activities to create and maintain lively interactions between partners, alumni networks, and the headquarters in Beijing. Activities and interactions among students, lecturers, and administrators grow the network nodes from the simple linear relationship between the customer (students or universities) and the provider (Hanban) to network synergy.

Today's emerging Chinese capitalism is structured and named based on the concepts of Guanxi (關係), Mianzi (面子), and Renqing (人情), all of which refer to traditional relations and networks of family, kinship, and social relations. Thus, the social and economic order structured around the Wuwei principle is accompanied by many axiomatic concepts. The forms of Eastern-type capitalism exemplified by China are not significantly different from those in other countries in Far Asia. The social structures in countries such as Indonesia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia belong to ancient Confucian, Buddhist, and

Islamic cultures. Moreover, they rank as similar types where individualism makes sense for society.

The concept of being still (無為:Wuwei), which reflects the Taoist understanding of Chinese culture, is defined as an administrative principle and a law of nature as well as a life principle in the sense of doing a job and overcoming a problem without any conflict or conflict against the laws of nature (action without action). In the *Tao te Ching*, first attributed to Lao Tzu (601 BC-?), the Wuwei principle, which is used in the sense of immobility against nature, suggests that everyone carries the bipolarity of yin and yang in themselves and therefore should avoid excesses and suggests the wisdom of moderation. 'Therefore, the wise manage affairs without doing anything and convey instructions without using their speech' (Laozi, 2008, p. 11).

Thus, the true character of Wuwei is not only inactivity but also movement without activity, which expresses perfect action. In other words, Wuwei is an action that is not performed independently of heaven and earth and does not contradict the whole's dynamism. It is in perfect harmony with the whole. It is not simple passivity but rather an action that rightly appears effortless and spontaneous because it is based on perfect harmony with our nature and place in the scheme of things.

The concept of "Guanxi" refers to the fact that the relationships established in Chinese society are oriented towards changing the other by convincing them about themselves. Interpersonal relationships are defined as a kind of fate, affirming everyone's relationship with their natural counterparts based on their socio-economic status. The two parties who meet in the Guanxi process see this encounter as a predetermined event and aim to achieve positive results by trying to assimilate each other within their social networks.

Mianzi emphasizes the person's recognition by other people based on their social status and prestige and reflects the impression management and personality image of the person in society. Thanks to the degree of Mianzi, a person can create a positive image and shape other people's minds. The concept of Mianzi has a Confucianist basis and a historical background of at least 2000 years. This concept has two

aspects: *lian* (face) and *mian* (image). *Lian* involves the integrity of an individual's moral character. However, it is also a social norm that, if lost or damaged, brings shame and disgrace to the individual, their family, and social network.

On the other hand, *Mian* considers a person's social image reflection as a social status and reputation derived from their performance in social roles. *Mianzi* has four essential characteristics. These are relationality, which is manifested in the general sum of solidarity, loyalty, harmony, and honesty, and morality, which refers to one's moral career and relatedness.

The emphasis of these concepts on social harmony and status relations has brought higher education into a new type of development and economic growth process rising in the Far Asian region and created a regional form of internationalization based on a solid network of relationships. In the thematic emphasis of the ASEAN University Network (AUN, n.d.), we see that internationalization in higher education focuses mainly on developing regional networks.

"Facilitating collaboration among ASEAN universities to strengthen education, research, and industry relevance in business and economics," Universitas Gadjah Mada "Promoting human resource development in engineering for the sustainable socio-economic development of the ASEAN region", AUN Secretariat "Platform for academic resource sharing, information exchange, and networking among academic libraries within AUN Member Universities and academic communities in the ASEAN region through an online resource sharing system," University of the Philippines Diliman, Ateneo de Manila University, and De La Salle University "Facilitating student and academic mobility in the ASEAN region," Universitas Indonesia "Network of academic collaboration by AUN Member Universities to promote education and research in human rights in Southeast Asia," Mahidol University "Facilitating social responsibility initiatives between higher education institutions and stakeholders to promote greater university-industry-community collaborations in ASEAN and Asia," Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia "Regional network of academic collaboration between health

experts, medical practitioners, and higher education institutions, focusing on the role of universities in promoting healthy lifestyles and environments," Mahidol University

"A platform to promote collaborative research between academic, industry, government agencies, and relevant organizations in support of policymaking focusing on ASEAN Economic Community related issues" Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Accordingly, all the foreseen areas of internationalization in the regional network are built on the status of certain universities.

2.1.4 Custom or Habits

David Hume (1711–1776), rejecting the ideological attitude of the French Enlightenment that dogmatized reason, defines the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Enlightenment based on industrial production, analytical and empirical reason through the concepts of traditional customs and habits (Hume, 2004, p. 26). This is also a different expression of the fact that the English style is the dominant color of this modern civilization in terms of culture, industry, and economy. In this model, based on the historical experience of the British Empire, English customs and traditional habits are decisive. The basic rule of English diplomacy is determined by educated intelligence, accurate observation habits, loyalty, spirit, speed, and precision in carrying out orders based on the given reports (Escott, 1908, p. 99). On the other hand, the idea of working for imperial ideals is another characteristic (Escott, 1908, p. 116). British cultural diplomacy developed historically with an upper-class habit and consumption style. The steady increase in the number of wealthy Englishmen who were spreading to the capitals of the Commonwealth countries and promoting their commercial products greatly contributed to the social skills of Britain's representatives abroad. Anglo-Saxon billionaires and millionaires on both sides of the Atlantic sometimes saw and used their "embassies" as a house of call where dinner invitations could be received, and letters of social credit could be obtained. Here, the embassy's main, if not only, social concern was to

avoid offending the guests and to extend its influence by judiciously selecting guests for its official banquets or entertainments. "The assembly of the upper classes in the British embassy set the tone; a discretionary tact as well as a strong and gentle exercise of judgment, popularity and prestige" (1908, p. 379). The British Council, established by the United Kingdom in 1934, aimed to manage international relations centered on English language education as well as cultural relations encompassing the masses. In this way, the aim was to move down from the embassy-based structure of the upper classes and to create soft power in social life. While the British Council evaluated cultural diplomacy as a confrontation between civil societies, it did not deviate from the tradition of diplomats guiding this encounter (Rivera, 2015, p. 9). However, it is understood that cultural diplomacy, which progresses by British traditions and diplomatic habits, has evolved into a position that contradicts the government and policies together with the norms of the European Union. The story of the United Kingdom's European Union entry into process of ending with the 2016 referendum and the exit in 2020 was realized under the name of Brexit. Thus, the traditional attitude's determining power in the Commonwealth axis continued to hold the Internationalization axis.

2.1.5 Pragma or Beneficium

Another type of internationalization model in higher education is the USA model within the Western concept. This model establishes a unique center of attraction grounded in pragmatist philosophy. The characteristic emphasis of the cultural geography of the USA is reflected in the concepts of *pragma* and *beneficium*, which are essentially a Roman/Latin heritage and manifest themselves in the Anglo-American axis. The processes of cultural export through the Hollywood film industry, the Olympics, and brands have greatly benefited the American economy. The internationalization process of higher education in America is a phenomenon that will and should directly benefit America. According to the USA Cultural Diplomacy Advisory Committee 2005

Report, the ideals of the Founding Fathers in the American Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the Bill of Rights are the basic elements that guide cultural diplomacy and enable the sharing of America's ideals around the world. The characteristic emphasis of the cultural geography of the USA embodies itself in the concepts of *pragma* and *beneficium*, which show themselves on the Anglo-American axis.

The pervasiveness of pragmatism has been a driving force in all levels of American education and teacher preparation ever since the publication of John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916). Moreover, its influence on liberal education and undergraduate curricula is documented both in the scholarly literature as well as through a thorough exploration of the publications and initiatives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, which considers liberal education as a "living tradition whose inherent flexibility and responsiveness contribute to its ongoing vitality and relevance" (Moreno-Riano, 2021).

According to William James' description "a pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon many inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, verbal solutions, bad a priori reasons, fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action, and power." (James, 1991, p. 25).

When observing the influence of pragmatism, the dominant paradigm in the USA, in the internationalization of higher education, the main emphasis is on utility and economic importance. "International students enrich U.S. universities and communities with unique perspectives and experiences that expand the horizons of American students and make U.S. institutions more competitive in the global economy. The knowledge and skills students develop on campus prepare them to become the next generation of world leaders who can work across languages, cultures, and borders to solve shared global challenges" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.)

International students and their families also benefit the United States economy: NAFSA articulates these benefits and suggests ways to promote the value of campus internationalization to the academic community (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, n.d.). When observing the influence of pragmatism, the dominant paradigm in the USA, in the internationalization of higher education, the main emphasis is on utility and economic importance.

The higher education experience in the United States was founded on the European experience in the 17th century. However, under the influence of the pragmatist paradigm, higher education gradually abandoned the education of personal reflection and the pursuit of life ideals. "Higher education has gradually become a tool for students to acquire skills in the United States. Changing the current situation of general education and balancing the relationship between the development of general education and the pursuit of pragmatic education for the future of the United States will be essential problems to be solved in the field of higher education in the United States" (Zhang, 2022, p. 43).

America is implementing its internationalization policy in higher education by establishing an attraction mechanism that will favor brain drain in the areas it needs. The leading institution of this mechanism is Fulbright Scholarships.

New types of higher education providers are challenging traditional approaches to higher education in response to changing societal needs, such as the fourth industrial revolution (e.g., artificial intelligence and virtual reality, global competition, and supply chain challenges). New alternatives range from stone and concrete buildings to campus-based higher education. Examples include higher education and business partnerships, mass access to knowledge through MOOCs (massive open online courses), open-access publications, lifelong learning, transitional institutions offering academic credit for work experience, private sector vendors, and web-based information access.

The observations and lives of the future will be globally connected, regardless of the modes and pathways of learning. What role should or

can international educators play in these alternative higher education platforms?

2.2 PREPARE: THE NEO-LIBERAL V. PUBLIC-GOOD CHALLENGE TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The neoliberal policy model (used particularly in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) prioritizes generating revenue from tuition and fees, advancing the economy, and meeting politically defined national needs. Commercialization and commodification are fellow policy travelers. Higher education, when viewed as a private gain to the individual student and only indirectly a public good, justifies high tuition and reduced public support. Neo-liberalism threatens equitable access and Internationalization's core value of broad access to cross-cultural learning.

Higher education and international education, designed for job enhancement, are for the public good. However, in the long run, the public good is better served by encouraging learners to think, analyze, and reflect rather than only preparing for a job that may not exist upon graduation. The challenge for higher education and international education is to balance liberal learning and career development and a broader range of rationales for internationalization: humanistic, political, social, economic, and cultural.

2.3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to our review:

- (1) Far Asia's wuwei-guanxi internationalization continues its rapid rise as a regional network. It establishes a futuristic, attractive ecosystem in technology, social entrepreneurship, and new skills with complex and direct solutions. This regional network produces its synergy.
- (2) Europe's liberty-singular internationalization focuses on cultural Europeanness within the framework of Erasmus as a classic.

- (3) Anglo-Saxon world's custom-habit Internationalization wants to renew its claim to excellence and branding with a globalizing intercultural interaction.
- (4) The USA's pragma-beneficial internationalization aims to create ecosystems for transferring higher education to the digital world as a profitable investment tool.

All of these are natural, historical results of internationalization processes. Therefore, a comprehensive perspective on internationalization should be able to evaluate all these competing realities together.

Global instantaneity is the new concept that includes all these formalities and interactions in the internationalization of higher education. This concept, which we can call "synchronicity" or "simultaneity," is the key to the internationalization ecosystem. This ecosystem expresses a global interaction process and vision that can include the internationalization models of the four main cultural geographies mentioned and can rapidly provide the necessary transitions between these models. In the digital-based world, the growth of synchronous relations to a level that will create synergy will turn into qualified scientific and cultural collaborations. In the internationalization policies of universities, an ecosystem that will cover all on-campus operations must be created.

On the other hand, the infrastructure must gain dynamism that will constantly structure and protect simultaneous worldwide interaction. Communication is now a new skill as much as it is a science and an art. A universal campus vision is increasingly necessary in the globalizing and digitalizing world.

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