**Emerging Scholars Research Summary**

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# Special Issue: Emerging Scholars Summaries Introduction

### Rosalind Latiner Raby

*California State University, Northridge*

*Editor-In-Chief*

Dear Readers -

I would like to welcome you to the *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* (JCIHE) 13(5S) Supplemental Issue: Emerging Scholars Summaries. Each year, JCIHE publishes a collection of contributions from graduate students from around the world who are currently studying in a doctoral program. The 2021 Emerging Scholars Research Summaries include work-in-progress for original empirical research. The intent of this special issue is to share cutting edge research that is of broad significance to the field of comparative and international higher education. Articles must be grounded in academic scholarship and all submissions must include a Letter of Support from the student's Supervisor/Doctoral Chair indicating their approval for the publication. In that the focus is on summaries, some of the articles provide foundational information while others include preliminary findings.

Contributions for the 2021 JCIHE-Winter Supplemental Emerging Scholars Issue examine issues of higher education in seven countries. 13 of the

authors are studying in doctoral programs in institutions in the Global North (minority world) while one is studying in an institution in the Global South (majority world). Research focuses on higher education in 14 countries or regions: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Central Asia; China (two articles), Hungary (two articles), India, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Poland, South Africa, Turkey, United States (five articles), and Vietnam. Authorship includes ten women and four men. The acceptance rate for this issue was 32%. The authors for this issue are studying at the following institutions:

> **Canada:** University of British Columbia; OISE, University of Toronto; University of Western Ontario; Western University
> **Finland:** University of Jyväskylä
> **Great Britain:** IOE, University College, London
> **Hong Kong, China:** University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
> **Hungary:** Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)
> **South Africa:** University of the Free State
> **United States:** Lesley University; Teachers College, Columbia University; University of California at Santa Barbara; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; University of Maryland, College Park; Western Michigan University

Three primary themes are represented in the 2021 Emerging Scholars Summaries. While some of the research was conceived and conducted prior to COVID-19, the implications of the pandemic are apparent in most of the research presented. The three themes are: 1) conflicting pressures at macro, meso, & micro levels; 2) actor agency; and 3) institutional policies.

**Conflicting Pressures at Macro, Meso, & Micro Levels**

A central theme found in five of the articles is the conflicting pressure given by different stakeholders for educational reform. These articles identify rationales and goals for supporting internationalization and higher education reform and show how they often conflict depending on input from macro, meso, and micro levels. Saini examines the conflicting pressures in India in regard to institutional vs. personal differences in understanding and dealing with gendered social structure. Simpson explores the differences between transnational pressures to adopt internationalization and local demands for equity at a university in South Africa. Qin assesses how faculty, representing the institution, and students view bilingualism in a Medical University in China. Jafarova explores the friction between external political and economic pressures in Hungary, Poland, and Turkey with university advocacy for autonomy. Finally, Le details the transfer of decision-making authority from ministries to public HEI in Vietnam as well as the role of foreign intervention in decision-making processes.

**Actor Agency**

Another theme that is found in five articles is that of actor agency. These articles focus on the voices of actors in the institution. This includes presidents, faculty, staff, and students. Leadership perceptions are shared in the article by Liu with a focus on senior leadership sensemaking and in the article by Feld with a focus on education abroad educator's perceptions regarding the creation and adoption of virtual education abroad programming. Faculty perceptions are shared in the article by Saini. Ros examines how researchers and scholars strategically deal with educational and political transformational challenges to create opportunities for their academic work and career. Student perceptions are share in the article by Yu with a focus on Chinese International student perceptions and in the article by Nkhoma with a focus on Malawi students attending an alternative HEI, and in the article by Woods with a focus on the lived experiences of Black Sub-Sharan African-born graduate students in STEM fields at a predominantly white university.

**Institutional Policies**

The final theme is an examination of institutional policies. Four articles examine institutional policies as interpreted through national, institutional, and programmatic level lenses. Each of these articles look to identify criteria that promotes success. Zhang and Feld both focus on the institutional and actor levels to see how personal vision mirrors institutional support and aligns with institutional policies. Brunner examines wicked problems that present themselves in creating national policies and in how institutions interpret those policies. Finally, Anafinova explores what is needed to build regional accreditation & curriculum conversion in Centra Asia

**Articles**

The Following Articles are included in this Issue

**Lisa Ruth Brunner**, University of British Columbia. *Edugration' as a wicked problem: Higher education and three-step immigration*

Two-step immigration is a well-established policy strategy in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the U.S. to retain so-called 'highly skilled' immigrants. The recruitment and retention of post-secondary international students specifically now includes a three-step form of immigration that is shifting the role of higher education in society. This paper proposes the term edugration – an amalgamation of 'education' and 'immigration' – to describe this system. It argues that edugration presents an ethically wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973), requiring not only increased attention from higher education, international education, and (im)migration scholars, but also a shift in our analytic approach.

**Jiajie (Jay) Liu**, IOE, University College London. *The Growth of Academic Identity in the Early Career Stage in Chinese Higher Education*

This study explores how early career academics (ECA) experience their sense of belonging to the academic profession and how they experience the teaching-research nexus during the transition of their institution from a teaching- to a research-led environment with an ethnography-informed phenomenology approach. The research examines the complexity of the transition and the role that ECAs play in the university repositioning. This study seeks to place the investigation in a broader frame of social and cultural analysis in order to go deep into the everyday experiences of the ECAs in China around issues of their sense of identity, as well as their ways of connecting and bringing about changes in their work communities during a changing environment.

**Peter Simpson**, Teachers College, Columbia University, United States. *Aligning the Purpose, Function & Mission of a Historically Disadvantaged Public South African University: The Case of the University of Venda*

The field of internationalization of higher education (IHE) serves many purposes in South Africa. IHE has mostly been theorized from a Euro-American perspective, often not taking into account actors in periphery contexts. This article examines how an African university, University of Vena, repositions itself vis-à-vis diverse stakeholders by relying on its third mission to balance transnational pressures to internationalize and local demands for equity. Drawing on insights from a mixed-methodology case study at a historically disadvantaged public South African university, it is argued this institution's reliance on non-academic stakeholders within their internationalization decision-making processes, holds together these imperatives.

**Ruchi Saini**, University of Maryland, College Park. *College Faculty's Narratives of Addressing Gender-Based Violence at a Higher Education Institution in Delhi (India)*

This study examines faculty experiences with addressing gender-based violence (GBV) at a public HEI in Delhi (India) through the use of narrative inquiry. Data is showing that female students who experience GBV typically refuse to lodge a formal complaint due to the fear of social stigma, and advocating for them in the absence of institutional support takes a psychological toll on the faculty. In that safeguarding the college's reputation is a key concern, faculty often dissuade victims from coming forward. The study draws attention to the nexus between the gendered social structure at the macro level and institutional/personal responses to GBV at the meso and micro level.

**Jing Yu**, University of California, Santa Barbara. *A Critical Study of Chinese International Students' Experiences Pursuing American Higher Education in the Age of Trump and COVID-19*

This article consists of two study areas, examining Chinese international students' experiences pursuing American higher education in the Age of Trump and COVID-19. Each context has a common theme of the need to better understand the current generation of Chinese international students against the backdrop of Sino-US tensions, the global pandemic, and anti-Asian racism in the US. Drawing on theories in international education, the first area stresses the role of human agency and demonstrates that Chinese students tend to live and study resiliently amid current heightened uncertainties. The other one focuses on how Chinese international students perceive race and racism in the US. Through semi-structured interviews and follow-up text exchanges at the climax of two anti-racist US social movements, the Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate, the findings reveal that Chinese students held contrastive views on race and racism before and after their arrival, due to the disjuncture between ideological indoctrination in the home country and experiential exploration in the host country.

**Susanne Feld**, Lesley University. *Professionalization of Virtual Education Abroad: Where are we in the Innovation-Decision Process?*

The COVID-19 pandemic upended the Education Abroad (EA) field when in-person programming and travel became impossible. In order to continue offering international experiences to students, many universities and organizations developed virtual EA offerings (VEA). Data examines EA practitioners' experiences in creating, facilitating, and administering these programs through a qualitative survey and optional follow-up semi-structured interview. The data reveals positive outcomes and strong support for the continuation of VEA even post-pandemic. Using Sahin's application of Rogers' Theory of Diffusion of Innovations on incorporating technology into education, this paper considers what stage EA stakeholders are at now in the process of accepting the use of the virtual space in the field.

**Paiwei Qin**, University of Jyväskylä, Finalnd, *Exploring Bilingual Ideology and Identity of EMI   Medical Teachers and Students in China's Mainland*

This qualitative study investigates the bilingual ideology and identity of EMI (English-medium-instruction) teachers and students at a Chinese medical university. The study aims to enrich the understanding of bi/multilingualism in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) from domestic stakeholders' perspectives. The researcher conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with Chinese medical content teachers and students throughout an academic term. Supplementary research materials include texts, such as lecturers' PowerPoint slides and institutional documents. The preliminary findings suggest that the teachers and students present diverse ideological stances towards bilingualism and that they perform an ambivalent identity: privileged, yet unable to fulfil the expected bilingual identity by self and others, due to ideological and

practical constraints. The discussion and potential implications are given in the summary.

**Andrew Achichizga Nkhoma**, University of the Free State, South Africa. *Youth Aspirations and Experiences: A Case Study of Alternative Higher Education Programs offered by an NGO in Malawi.*

Malawi struggles with youth access to higher education. Up to 60% of eligible university candidates may not be accepted, while less than 1% of Malawi's qualified cohort get enrolled in some form of tertiary education. This paper reveals youth's experiences in alternative higher education programs and show if the programs align with their aspirations and prepare them for lives that they have a reason to value and enhance their wellbeing. Limited explorations and knowledge on whether alternative higher education programs offered by NGOs for youth who fail to access university in Malawi meet the youth's aspirations; the paucity of such studies in Malawian higher education necessitated empirical research on this topic. The article uses the capabilities approach as a conceptual framework to refine it within higher education.

**Johnny C. Woods, Jr.**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, United States. *Un(Bundling) the Black Experience at PWIs: Using Assets-based Frameworks to Explore     the Lived Experiences of Black Sub-Sharan African-born Graduate Students in STEM*

The experiences of Black Sub-Saharan African-born (BSSA) graduate students are largely understudied. This article examines BSSA who are pursuing degrees in the STEM fields at a predominantly white institution (PWI). The study is guided by complementary theoretical frameworks that shed light on the assets of BSSA graduate students as they navigate challenging educational environments such as STEM departments and PWIs. Attention is placed on how these students thrive in their educational environments, especially those in the STEM fields.

**Zahra Jafarova**, University of Toronto, Canada. *Mapping Institutional Changes in Higher Education: The Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Democratic Backsliding*

The world has witnessed a democratic decline in 29 countries worldwide during the last decade in the context of rising nationalism and right-wing populism. Political transformations of this scale can reshape the higher education field because governments have legislative power, financial tools, and control over political and economic environments. This article investigates the effect of democratic backsliding on the university autonomy in Turkey, Hungary, and Poland, countries with worsening democratic conditions. The friction between external political pressure and university autonomy offers a unique opportunity to observe how the universities change owing to slow and steady political transformations and represents an essential field for current and future research.

This study contributes to the emerging literature of crisis and precarity in higher education by offering interdisciplinary analysis of institutional change and resistance.

**Yuqian "Yvonne" Zhang**, Western Michigan University, USA. *Sustainability in U.S.-China Higher Education Collaborations: The Case of GUFE-WMU Joint Institute*

U.S. and Chinese universities have engaged in four decades of collaboration since the late 1970s, but these partnerships are subject to potentially unstable forces. Only long-term sustainable partnerships have the potential to develop into reciprocal relationships that establish "negotiated space" around cultural differences. This paper utilizes a qualitative single case study design to explore the factors contributing to the long-term sustainability of U.S.-China higher education partnerships. The findings indicate that a set of essential enablers must be in place to foster long-term and sustainable global partnerships: Leadership, faculty and staff engagement, and policy support.

**Vutha Ros**, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China. *Legacy-Innovation Challenges in Post-Soviet Higher Education: Scholars' Academic Transformation in Cambodia and Kazakhstan*

Scholars have had to adapt themselves from a Post-Soviet educational system to maintain their academic work and career. The research compares the lives of scholars in Cambodia and Kazakhstan who lived as students and scholars under the influence of Soviet imperialism. As guided by the framework of legacy-innovation tensions and theory of accumulative advantage, interviews with nine Cambodian and eight Kazakh scholars were conducted to shed light on how they strategically dealt with transformational challenges to create opportunities for their academic work and career. This study shows that their strategies for pursuing academic careers rely on their achievement during the Soviet time to grab opportunities. Meanwhile, these strategies were also influenced by local contexts.

**Anh Le**, Western University, Canada. *The Influence of Institutional Autonomy Policy on Internationalization of Higher Education: A Case Study in Vietnam*

This article explores the enactment of institutional autonomy policy as a reform strategy to support internationalization of higher education in Vietnam. The autonomy policy signifies the transfer of decision-making authority from the ministries to public universities so that university leaders can decide on matters of teaching, research, finance, personnel, and international cooperation. I draw on neo-institutionalism to gain insights on the enactment of autonomy policy and use thematic analysis to analyze data which include policy documents and interviews with senior leaders at one Vietnamese university. The findings indicate that while the autonomy policy has facilitated internationalization

agendas with significant outcomes for teaching and research, the policy has been enacted through the interactions of Vietnam's political features and foreign values. The article contributes to the understanding of higher education reform in centralized contexts of Vietnam and other post-Soviet countries in response to the influences of the globalized knowledge economy.

**Saule Anafinova**, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary. *Asia/Europe Inter-university Cooperation in Higher Education: The case of Tuning Central Asian Higher Education Area (TuCAHEA)*

This article investigates the EU-funded Tuning Central Asia initiative which aims for curriculum convergence in higher education of five Central Asian countries. The Tuning Central Asian Higher Education Area (TuCAHEA) consortium is selected as a successful case of an inter-regional project, that helped to prepare the ground for further higher education regionalization in Central Asia in the period from 2012 to 2016. The study adopts the constructivist paradigm from International Relations and Deductive Qualitative Analysis as a research method. This is a simultaneous qualitative case study, in which data is gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and qualitative content analysis of scholarly publications by European and Central Asian members of the Tuning community. The concept of epistemic community is applied to understand the role of academic experts in higher education regionalization.

### Conclusion

The *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* (JCIHE) serves as a place to share new thinking on analysis, theory, policy, and practice that relate to issues that influence comparative and international higher education. The JCIHE is the official journal of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Higher Education Special Interest Group (HESIG). I want to thank several individuals who were instrumental in the publication of this issue. First, I want to thank the JCIHE Associate Editor, Hayes Tang for his support, insight, and creativity. Second, I want to that the co-chairs of the CIES HE-SIG, Pilar Mendoza and Anatoly Oleksiyenko for their guidance. Third, the timely publication of the issue is dependent on the expert management of the journal by the JCIHE Managing and Copy-Editor Director, Prashanti Chennamsetti and the JCIHE Production Co-Editors, Hannah (Minghui) Hou, Marisa Lally, Yovanna, Parmeswaree Soobrayen Veerasamy, Emily Marchese, and Jacob Kelley. It is their dedication that helps keep the standards and integrity for the journal. Finally, I want to give special thanks to the JCIHE Advisory Board, JCIHE Senior Leadership Team, and the CIES Higher Education SIG Senior Leadership Team for their support for this issue.