

JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5(S), 2021

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CIES HIGHER EDUCATION SIG

ISSUE INTRODUCTIONS

Rosalind Latiner Raby 1 JCIHE: Vol. 13 Issue 5S, 2021 Introduction

EMERGING SCHOLAR SUMMARIES

Saule Anafinova 10 Asia/Europe Inter-university Cooperation in Higher Education: The Case of Tuning Central Asian Higher Education Area (TuCAHEA)

Lisa Ruth Brunner 25 Edugration' as a Wicked Problem: Higher Education and Three-step Immigration

Susanne Feld 38 Professionalization of Virtual Education Abroad: Where are we in the Innovation-Decision Process?

Zahra Jafarova 46 Mapping Institutional Changes in Higher Education: The Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Democratic Backsliding

Anh Thi Haoi Le 55 The Influence of Institutional Autonomy Policy on Internationalization of Higher Education: A Case Study in Vietnam

Jiajie Liu 64 The Growth of Academic Identity in the Early Career Stage in Chinese Higher Education

Andrew Achichizga Nkhoma 71 Youth Aspirations and Experiences: A Case Study of Alternative Higher Education Programs Offered by an NGO in Malawi

Paiwei Qin 79 Exploring Bilingual Ideology and Identity of EMI Medical Teachers and Students in China's Mainland

JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5(S), 2021

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CIES HIGHER EDUCATION SIG

Ruchi Saini	87	College Faculty's Narratives of Addressing Gender-Based Violence at a Higher Education Institution in Delhi (India)
Peter Simpson	95	Aligning the Purpose, Function and Mission of a Historically Disadvantaged Public South African University: The Case of the University of Venda
Jing Yu	103	A Critical Study of Chinese International Students' Experiences Pursuing American Higher Education in the Age of Trump and COVID-19
Vutha Ros	110	Legacy-innovation Challenges in Post-Soviet Higher Education: Scholars' Academic Transformation in Cambodia and Kazakhstan
Johnny Woods Jr.	118	Un(bundling) the Black Experience at PWIs: Using Assets-based Frameworks to Explore the Lived Experiences of Black Sub-Saharan African-born Graduate Students in STEM
Yuqian Zhang	126	Sustainability in U.S.-China Higher Education Collaborations: The Case of GUFU-WMU Joint Institute

JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5(S), 2021

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CIES HIGHER EDUCATION SIG

Philosophy for JCIHE

This is the official journal of the Comparative and International Education Society's (CIES) Higher Education Special Interest Group (HESIG), which was created in 2008. HESIG serves as a networking hub for promoting scholarship opportunities, critical dialogue, and linking professionals and academics to the international aspects of higher education. Accordingly, HESIG will serve as a professional forum supporting development, analysis, and dissemination of theory-, policy-, and practice-related issues that influence higher education.

Submission and Review

1) EMPIRICAL ARTICLES

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Empirical Articles: empirical research should demonstrate high rigor and quality. Original research collects and analyzes data in systematic ways to present important new research that adds to and advances the debates within the field of comparative and international higher education. Articles clearly and substantively contribute to current thought by expanding, correcting, broadening, posing questions in a new light, or strengthening current conceptual and/or methodological discussions in the field of comparative and international higher education. We especially welcome new topics and issues that have been under-emphasized in the field.

Empirical Articles are 5,500 - 7,500 words excluding references and tables.

2) REVIEW/ESSAYS

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Review/Essays: scholarly research-based review/essays demonstrate rigor and quality. Original research that a) describes new developments in the state of knowledge, b) examines area studies and regional developments of social, cultural, political and economic contexts in specific regions worldwide, c) analyzes existing data sets applying new theoretical or methodological foci, d) synthesizes divergent bodies of literature, e) places the topic at hand into a platform for future dialogue or within broader debates in the field, f) explores research-to-practice, g) examines practical application in education systems worldwide, or h) provides future directions that are of broad significance to the field. Submissions must be situated within relevant literature and can be theoretical or methodological in focus. Review/Essays are 3,500 to 4,500 words excluding references and tables.

3) SPECIAL ISSUES.

JCIHE offers two special issues annually that address current issues of comparative and international higher education. Calls for submissions are included in the home-page.

JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5(S), 2021

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CIES HIGHER EDUCATION SIG

4) EMERGING SCHOLARS RESEARCH SUMMARIES

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Emerging Scholars Research Summaries share thesis or dissertation work-in-progress or 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 include a literature review, theory focus, and strong methods sections. Articles are 1,000 - 1,500 words excluding references and tables.

NOTE: Submissions must include a Letter of Support from the student's Supervisor/chair indicating their approval for the publication.

The style and format of the *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* follows the APA style (7th Edition). Footnotes/Endnotes are not allowed. USA spelling (e.g., center, color, organize) and punctuation are preferred (single quotations within double if needed), and requires a short paragraph of bibliographical details for all

contributors. Please see Instructions to Authors for additional formatting information.

Copyright

Published by the Higher Education SIG of the Comparative and International Education Society. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* are entirely those of the authors and should not be attributed in any manner to CIES, HESIG, or the sponsoring universities of the Editorial Staff. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors, who should be contacted directly about their work. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* is published up to three times a year.

Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education Volume 13, No. 5 (2021)

Editorial Team

<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/about/editorialTeam>

Contact Information

Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education

Higher Education SIG

Website: ojed.org/jcihe

Email: jcihe.hesig@gmail.com

ISSN 2151-0393 (Print)

ISSN 2151-0407 (Online)

JCIHE: Vol 13(5S) 2021

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 shared 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-Saharan 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, Finland, *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 Asset-based Frameworks to Explore the Lived Experiences of Black Sub-Saharan 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 thank 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.

JCIHE ADVISORY BOARD

Mark Ashwill, Capestone Vietnam
Yeow-Tong Chia, University of Sydney
Omolabake Fakunle, University of Edinburgh
Mei Li, East China Normal University
Ka Ho Mok (Joshua), University of Hong Kong
Mousumi Mukherjee, O.P. Jindal Global University, India
Ali Said Ali Ibrahim, United Arab Emirates University
Dante J Salto, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Sharon Stein, University of British Columbia

JCIHE Senior Leadership Team

Peter Ghazarian, Ashland University
Pilar Mendoza, University of Missouri
Ray Mitic, University of North Dakota
Anatoly Oleksiyenko, University of Hong Kong
Bernhard Streitwieser, George Washington University
Hayes Tang, University of Hong Kong

CIES Higher Education SIG Senior Leadership Team

Stephanie Kim, Georgetown University
Jeana Morrison, Albion University
Michelle Vital, Lesley University

Editor in Chief, Rosalind Latiner Raby
March 2022

**Asia/Europe Inter-university Cooperation in Higher Education:
The case of Tuning Central Asian Higher Education Area (TuCAHEA)**Saule Anafinova^{a*}^a*ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary**Corresponding author: Email: saule.anafinova@ppk.elte.hu.

Address: ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

ABSTRACT

The ongoing dissertation investigates the EU-funded Tuning Central Asia initiative, which aimed to support curriculum convergence in higher education in five Central Asian countries. The Tuning Central Asian Higher Education Area (TuCAHEA) initiative 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 between 2012 and 2016. The study adopts the constructivist paradigm from International Relations and Deductive Qualitative Analysis as research designs and data analysis methods. 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.

Keywords: higher education inter-regionalism, capacity building, Central Asia, Tuning, TuCAHEA, epistemic community

INTER-REGIONALISM AND HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONALIZATION

The period after the Cold War has been characterized by the increased regionalization in different world regions (Söderbaum & van Langenhove, 2005). This process of regionalization has expressed itself in the creation of “issue-specific or general” regional spaces (Söderbaum, 2011, p.19) According to Hettne and Söderbaum, “The regionalization process can be intentional or nonintentional and may proceed unevenly along the various dimensions of the ‘new regionalism’ (i.e., economics, politics, culture, security, etc.)” (2000, p. 462). Regional cooperation can be explained by the contribution of regional organizations in the resolution of issues of regional security, migration, or economic development (van Langenhove & Gatev, 2019). Thus, regional organizations assumed the role of public good providers, which used to be the domain of the state and in the process of regionalization, standard-setting became important. As noted by van Langenhove and Gatev (2019), “The harmonization of standards advanced through regional cooperation has a beneficial effect on economic activity and therefore represents a type of public good” (p. 284). Harmonization of standards is also important for inter-regional cooperation in higher education and can contribute to the regionalization of higher education (Knight, 2014).

The European Union (EU) has been an active supporter of the process of regionalization in other world regions. The EU has made the support of regional cooperation in other world regions one of its priorities, by engaging in “Capacity building inter-regionalism” (Doidge, 2007, p. 242). According to Doidge, “capacity building inter-regionalism” is characterized by the way in which a weaker regional integration arrangement is gradually strengthened through involvement with a more advanced regional counterpart” (Doidge 2007, p. 242).

Capacity building inter-regionalism increases the process of regionalization in one or more sectors (Doidge, 2007; Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000). Thus, EU-funded projects in different world regions have aided in the process of harmonization of standards in various sectors of regional politics. One of the EU-funded initiatives in higher education has been particularly relevant to the process of higher education regionalization in various world regions, including Latin America, Africa, and Central Asia (TuCAHEA, n.d.). According to Knight (2014), “The Tuning Project is an interesting and successful initiative which has addressed the reform of institutional level structures through curriculum convergence, but which has important implications for the regionalization of higher education at sub-regional and regional levels” (p. 109). The present ongoing doctoral study aims to investigate the role of Tuning in the higher education regionalization of Central Asia.

TUCAHEA PROJECT

In the field of education, the European Union has put significant efforts into the process of the EU-Central Asian inter-regionalism (Jones, 2010). Specifically, the EU has supported several inter-university projects that involved the EU on the one side and the five Central Asian countries on the other side (e. g. Central Asian Education Platform (CAEP) or Central Asian Education and Research Network (CAREN)) (Jones, 2010).

Despite the pessimistic analysis of the EU-Central Asian inter-regionalism by Jones in 2010, a project titled “Towards a Central Asian Higher Education Area: Tuning Structures and Building Quality Culture” was funded by the European Commission (Isaacs, 2014). The short abbreviation of the project’s name – TuCAHEA- was based on combination of the words “Tuning” and “Central Asian Higher Education Area” (Isaacs, 2014). The project set an ambitious aim in 2012: “TuCAHEA's broad aim is to contribute to building a Central Asian Higher Education Area [CAHEA], aligned with the European Higher Education Area [EHEA], able to take into account and valorise the specific needs and potentials of the Region and the partner countries, thus responding to the needs of the higher education community and society at large”(TuCAHEA, n.d.). Already at the start of the project, Knight (2014) positively assessed the potential of Tuning to support higher education regionalization in Central Asia. Indeed, by the end of the project in 2016, TuCAHEA made an important political achievement: “TuCAHEA arranged an information and consultation meeting in preparation of the Riga conference,

and a communiqué was signed by five education ministries in Rome in 2014 under the auspices of TuCAHEA” (Rao et al., 2016). In addition, TuCAHEA conducted a pilot mobility scheme between Central Asian universities (Isaacs, 2014; TuCAHEA Consortium, 2016).

According to the TuCAHEA website, the project involved eight universities from the European Union, as well as thirty-four universities and five education ministries from the following Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (TuCAHEA, n. d.). The project covered eight subject groups (business, economy, education, engineering, environment, history, language, and law) (TuCAHEA, n. d.). Based on the European Tuning methodology, European and Central Asian experts developed common generic and subject-specific competencies, subject area guidelines, and reference points (Rao et al., 2016).

Given the challenges for regional cooperation in Central Asia (Jones, 2010), the TuCAHEA project was selected as a successful case of Asia/Europe higher education inter-regionalism. Furthermore, the early project evaluations of the TuCAHEA could not capture its long-term effects (Rao et al., 2016). Finally, in the summer of 2021, a conference of Central Asian education ministers took place in Kazakhstan entitled “Central Asian Higher Education Area: regional cooperation, national reforms” (BPAMC, n.d.). Such a conference signifies the interest of Central Asian republics towards regional inter-university cooperation in higher education. In connection with this, it is important to study the long-term effect of the TuCAHEA project as a case notable for its success in the history of Asia/Europe higher education inter-regionalism.

While the Tuning methodology was studied by many researchers from the perspective of the competency-based approach, the present study analyses TuCAHEA as a case of the EU-Central Asia inter-regionalism in higher education. Also, this study stands at the intersection of international relations and higher education research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Problem

Most regionalism researchers used to focus on formal regional organizations such as the EU and the ASEAN. However, new regionalization processes have emerged that do not fit the description of formal regionalism. In higher education, the inter-governmental Bologna Process and the European

Higher Education Area include countries that are not members of the European Union. Furthermore, the formal approach may not adequately explain the process of capacity building inter-regionalism (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2002; van Langenhove & Gatev, 2019; Murray & Warleigh-Lack, 2013). In addition, the focus on formal organizations may ignore contextual factors that may hinder regional and inter-regional projects (Jones, 2010). Finally, the focus on formal regionalism may ignore the unintended social effects of inter-regional initiatives (Lucia & Mattheis, 2021).

The present dissertation suggests studying the effect of the EU-Central Asian inter-regionalism by applying the concept of “epistemic community.” According to Haas, “An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (1992, p. 3). According to Haas (1992), members of the epistemic community, despite coming from diverse backgrounds, shall share a set of common beliefs and practices, which helps them to promote a certain policy in their area in a coherent way.

This dissertation draws on literature on epistemic communities to reveal the role of European ideas in the Central Asian higher education context. Applying the concept of epistemic community helps to understand the process of norm diffusion within the EU-Central Asia capacity building inter-regionalism. Along with the “track-two diplomacy,” the concept of epistemic community is one of two major ways to research scholarly involvement in sectoral regionalization (Acharya, 2011). The literature has shown the role of ideas in driving the involvement of epistemic communities in policymaking processes. In 1994 Risse-Kappen, suggested that domestic structures can shape international traveling policies. Similarly, Acharya proposed the “localization” framework, which considered local policy dynamics and suggested that the support of local epistemic communities is important for the successful norm reception” (2004, p. 248).

In connection with this, Schmidt (2005, 2008) criticized the top-down view of the policy process, suggesting that policy actors take ideas from discursive communities, including epistemic communities, and engage in discursive interaction, in which certain ideas get selected over others. Similarly, it was suggested that epistemic communities using the ICTs and the ICT-driven global inter-connectedness diffuse the discourse of New Public Management (NPM) (Bislev et al., 2002). In 2018 De Almagro, showed how epistemic communities re-

produce discourse on gender security. Inspired by Schmidt (2005, 2008), scholars such as Wahlström and Sundberg (2017) as well as Sivesind and Wahlström (2017) undertook analytical theorization on the role of ideas in curriculum policy. Despite the existing research on the importance of epistemic communities in the process of policy travel and diffusion, empirical examination of causal ideas driving the activities of epistemic communities and their influence on the processes of higher education regionalization is absent from literature.

Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of Asia/Europe higher education inter-regionalism on the regional modes of higher education cooperation in Central Asia?
2. How do members of the Asian and European academic community perceive Central Asia and Europe as global actors of inter-regional cooperation in higher education?
3. What are the prevalent challenges for the development of Asia-Europe cooperation in higher education in Central Asia?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a researcher, my position has been influenced by two factors: (1) my previous professional experience and (2) by my doctoral study program. I had previously taken part in several projects, where the international experience was being transferred in the local context. Through these projects, I understood the importance of expertise in the adaptation of international ideas and policies. Therefore, I became interested in studying how inter-university cooperation is shaped by the parties involved.

In the Ph.D. program, doctoral students were required to defend a detailed research plan which had to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant literature and theories. This requirement influenced my choice to use a theory-guided approach in the current study. While initially, I studied the research methods based on the textbook by Creswell and Poth (2018), I found some differences between constructivism as defined in International Relations and constructivism as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the latter is followed by Creswell and Poth. I adopt pragmatism and “thin” constructivism in this current study (Holzscheiter, 2013, p. 145), as both paradigms are understood in International Relations research (Spindler, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism by Guba, Lincoln and Denzin

Creswell and Poth (2018) follow Denzin and Lincoln (2011) in their understanding of social constructivism and interpretivism as the same paradigm (2018). According to Lee (2011), constructivism by Egon Guba, Yvonna Lincoln, and Norman Denzin, is a special, distinct case of a research paradigm that should be called “constructionism” (p. 4). Avenier and Thomas (2015) cite Guba and Lincoln, who describe their “constructivist paradigm” as interpretive (p. 7). To differentiate it from pragmatic constructivism, Avenier and Thomas (2015) include it in quotation marks.

According to Gilgun (2015), “With the publication of Glaser and Strauss’s (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, induction became associated with qualitative research and, for many researchers, prior conceptual frameworks, or deductive qualitative research, became suspect” (p. 2). Some researchers criticize this perception of qualitative research as simplistic (Berkovich, 2017; Packer, 2018). Analyzing the history behind the grounded theory, Gilgun found that Glaser and Strauss (1967) admitted that “researchers are not tabula rasa but bring their own ideas into research questions” (2015, p. 10). Gilgun also found a note by Glaser (1978), which suggested that knowledge of theory can help in the conduct of grounded theory research. Furthermore, Strauss (1987) admitted that funding agencies require researchers to include conceptual frameworks in their grant proposals (Gilgun, 2015). The scholar concluded that the position of Glaser and Strauss towards a priori theory is not as negative, as it is believed. According to Su (2018), the Straussian approach to qualitative research can combine deductive and inductive thinking (as opposed to the Glaserian approach).

Wendtian Constructivism in International Relations

In International Relations research, various constructivist theories exist that differ by ontology and epistemology (Spindler, 2013). The current research employs “thin” constructivism (Holzscheiter, 2013, p.145), which was developed by Alexander Wendt (1987). In contrast to “constructivism” by Guba, Lincoln, and Denzin, Spindler (2013) states that “Wendtian constructivism is scientific realist and constructivist in ontology, and positivist in epistemology” (p. 221).

Wendt (1987) considered three types of structures that exist in the social world: material resources, interests, and ideas (Spindler, 2013). He was looking for ways to investigate the effects of ideas. As a solution to the problem, Spindler (2013) suggested that ideas can have a constitutive effect that is different from a

linear type of effect. By means of constitutive explanation, Wendt (1987) allowed for the deductive approach to the study of ideas as causal structures. Spindler (2013) called this approach an “explanation by the concept” (p. 215).

A clear example of constitutive explanation is given by Parsons (2010):

We need constitutive scholarship, for example, to see how the norm of sovereignty constitutes the state. This is not a separable, temporally sequential, causal explanatory relationship. The very minute that people accepted norms of sovereignty they looked around and saw states. Explanatory approaches can analyze dynamics within that socially constructed reality (p. 28).

International Relations scholars have supported the idea of constitutive explanation posited by Wendt (1987). In 2008, Wight noted that researchers in the social sciences deal with open systems, while researchers in the natural sciences deal with closed systems (Wight, 2008). Therefore, non-linear cause-effect relationships can be observed in the social world, unlike in the natural world where researchers often seek to establish linear cause-effect relationships. Existing research shows that the goals of inter-regional projects can be challenged by local circumstances (Jones, 2010; Lucia & Mattheis, 2021), which creates non-linear relations between the goals of the inter-regionalism and its effect. In connection with this, the present research adopts a constitutive explanation of the impact of the EU-driven higher education inter-regionalism on Central Asian countries.

Research Method

The dissertation employs a simultaneous qualitative case study method (Morse, 2010), in which data is gathered utilizing semi-structured interviews and qualitative content analysis. Thus, the case study consists of two simultaneous stages: the interview stage and the analysis of articles by European and Central Asian members of the Tuning community.

Participants

In the project, there is no single specific site, but several locations, which are mainly the building campuses of universities and their experts, who participated in the study. First, all the participants of the projects were identified in the final report of the TuCAHEA project, which resulted in a purposive sampling approach. Participants were targeted based on their involvement in the project, so purposive sampling is applied against people, who are selected based on their "professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience”

(Cohen, 2018, p. 115). The purpose of the sampling was “to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it” (Cohen, 2018, p. 115). Additionally, snowball sampling and networking were used to get access to a wider pool of participants for interviews (Cohen, 2018). Ethical permission was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the university before the start of data collection. Participants read and signed the consent form before interviews. In terms of access to the interview participants, the TuCAHEA members have shown high openness and transparency to the researcher.

However, the spread of COVID-19 has influenced the process of data collection. So far, I have completed 14 interviews from European and Central Asian members of the TuCAHEA project. I also conducted two additional interviews with European experts, who were often involved in the EU-Central Asia inter-university projects aimed at facilitating higher education regionalization. I am now in the process of gathering additional interviews from TuCAHEA members and relevant Central Asian and European experts in inter-university cooperation. I have taken steps to protect the anonymity of the interviewees. Their names are replaced with code names at all stages in the dissertation and I am the only one who has access to their interviews.

Data collection took place during a series of field trips to Kazakhstan and to certain universities in Europe. Interviews in Kazakhstan were all conducted in person. Interviews in Europe and other countries of Central Asia were conducted either in person or by phone or over the Internet. Interviews lasted on average between 60 to 90 minutes. The interview guide contained about 20 questions on Tuning participants’ beliefs and practices of the project. Initially, the interview guide was inspired by research on epistemic communities and policy networks (Dalglish, 2015; Saçli, 2011; F. Saçli, personal communication, October 4, 2018), but after a few pilot interviews and a first round of interviews, I modified/ and clarified the interview questions.

In parallel, I am analyzing publications of European and Central Asian Tuning participants on the topics of competency-based approach. Qualitative content analysis of scholarly articles is applied to reveal the causal beliefs of Tuning participants about the competency-based approach as a tool of regional curriculum convergence. At present, 29 publications by Central Asian Tuning experts have been identified in the Russian Science Citation

Index. Furthermore, research articles of European Tuning experts will also be analyzed.

Data Analysis

The adoption of Wendtian constructivism from International Relations and the theory-guided approach has led me to follow deductive thinking in the process of data analysis. In 2015, Gilgun suggested that Deductive Qualitative Analysis (DQA) is a theory-driven but flexible approach that allows qualitative researchers to test theories. This scholar has stated that:

Researchers may simply use theory to focus and guide their research, or they may develop hypotheses and test them. If doing theory development, researchers test the theory on cases. When the theory does not fit findings, the theory is changed. If using theory as focus and guide, researchers typically find new dimensions of the phenomena of interest that the theory did not predict (Gilgun, 2015, p. 13).

The scholar has further suggested that DQA is suitable for Ph.D. students, who are often required by the dissertation committees to show their knowledge of existing theories and literature in the research plans. The scholar also points out that funders often reject research proposals that do not have detailed descriptions of the research framework and methods. These situations often drive early-career researchers to use deductive thinking in their research. For Gilgun (2015), the use of QDA is important because without a preliminary study of literature, early-career researchers could miss important aspects of the studied phenomena thus spending more time on finding the research focus.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION

The dissertation is expected to contribute to the understanding of higher education regionalization and inter-university cooperation in the Central Asian context. Thus, the present paper contributes to the JCIHE discussion on regional cooperation and higher education regionalization in world regions and sub-regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa (Fossey, 2014), ASEAN (Chao Jr, 2018), Northeast Asia (Hammond, 2018), and the Northern Triangle of Central America (Griffin & Gall, 2019).

REFERENCES

- Acharya, A. (2004). How ideas spread: Whose norms matter? Norm localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism. *International Organization*, 58(02). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818304582024>
- Acharya, A. (2011). Engagement or entrapment? scholarship and policymaking on Asian regionalism. *International Studies Review*, 13(1), 12–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2010.00993.x>
- Avenier, M.J., Thomas, C. (2015). Finding one's way around various methodological guidelines for doing rigorous case studies: A comparison of four epistemological frameworks. *Systèmes D'information & Management*, Volume 20(1), 61–98. <https://doi.org/10.3917/sim.151.0061>
- Berkovich, I. (2017). Beyond qualitative/quantitative structuralism: The positivist qualitative research and the paradigmatic disclaimer. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(5), 2063–2077. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0607-3>
- Bislev, S., Salskov-Iversen, D., Hansen, H. K. (2002). The global diffusion of managerialism: Transnational Discourse Communities at work. *Global Society*, 16(2), 199–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537320220132929>
- Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Center (BPAMC). (n.d.). Conference of Ministers of Education of Central Asian Countries 2021 "Central Asian Higher Education Area: Regional Cooperation, National Reforms". [Konferencija Ministrov obrazovanija stran Central'noj Azii 2021 "Central'no-Aziatskoe prostranstvo vysshego obrazovanija: regional'noe sotrudnichestvo, nacional'nye reformy".] Retrieved January 4, 2022, from <https://enic-kazakhstan.edu.kz/ru/post/99>
- Chao, Jr., R. Y. (2019). Entrepreneurial Universities in ASEAN Nations. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 10(Winter), 6–13. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v10iwinter.684>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publication Inc.
- de Almagro, M. M. (2018). Lost boomerangs, the rebound effect and transnational advocacy networks: A discursive approach to norm diffusion. *Review of International Studies*, 44(4), 672–693. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210518000086>

- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1–32). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Dalglish, S. (2015). *Power and the policy machine: The development of child survival policy at the global level and in Niger*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Doidge, M. (2007). Joined at the hip: Regionalism and interregionalism. *Journal of European Integration*, 29(2), 229–248.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07036330701252474>
- Fossey, R. (2014). Why not Help Africa? American Universities should make a Civic Commitment to Strengthening Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 6(Summer), 36-37.
- Gilgun, J. F. (2015). *Deductive qualitative analysis as middle ground: theory-guided qualitative research*. Amazon Digital Services LLC, Seattle, WA, USA.
- Glaser, B. G., Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine De Gruyter.
- Griffin, J., Requena Gall, L. (2019). Higher education regionalization in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11(Winter), 4–13. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11iwinter.1195>
- Hammond, C. D. (2019). Regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 10(Winter), 46–48.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v10iwinter.689>
- Hettne, B., Söderbaum, F. (n.d.). Theorising the rise of regionness. *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy*, 33–47.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203361672_chapter_3
- Holzscheiter, A. (2013). Between communicative interaction and structures of signification: Discourse theory and analysis in international relations. *International Studies Perspectives*, 15(2), 142–162.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12005>
- Hsieh, H.-F., Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–1288.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>

- Isaacs, A. K. (2014). Building a higher education area in Central Asia: Challenges and prospects. *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*, 2(1), 31. [https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-2\(1\)-2014pp31-58](https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-2(1)-2014pp31-58)
- Isaacs, A. K., Najmitdinov, A. Tasbolat, A. (2016) (eds.). *Pioneering student mobility in Central Asia: The TuCAHEA Pilot scheme*. TuCAHEA Consortium.
- Jones, P. (2010). Regulatory regionalism and education: The European Union in Central Asia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 8(1), 59–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720903574082>
- Knight, J. (2014). A model for the regionalization of Higher Education: The role and contribution of tuning. *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*, 1(1), 105. [https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-1\(1\)-2013pp105-125](https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-1(1)-2013pp105-125)
- Kurki, M. (2008). *Causation in international relations: Reclaiming causal analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, C. G. (2011). Reconsidering constructivism in qualitative research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(4), 403–412. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00720.x>
- Lucia, L. E., Mattheis, F. (2021). *The unintended consequences of interregionalism: Effects on regional actors, societies and structures*. Routledge.
- Morse, J. M. (2010). Simultaneous and Sequential Qualitative Mixed Method Designs. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 483–491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364741>
- Murray, P., Warleigh-Lack, A. (2013). Europe–Asia Studies: The Contribution of Comparative Regional Integration. In T. Christiansen & E. Kirchner (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations* (pp. 1–664). Essay, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Packer, M. J. (2018). *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Parsons, C. (2010). *How to map arguments in political science*. Oxford University Press.
- Rao, K. P., Roberts, K., Dosch, J., Saloven, M., Dietrich, S. (2016). Evaluation of EU regional-level support to Central Asia (2007-2014) 2, pp. 1–143). Freiburg, Germany: The Evaluation Unit of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (European Commission).

- Risse-Kappen, T. (1994). Ideas do not float freely: Transnational coalitions, domestic structures, and the end of the Cold War. *International Organization*, 48(2), 185–214.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300028162>
- Saçlı Fatma. (2011). Understanding the interdependence between policy networks and policy outcomes: A dialectical approach applied to business parks in the Netherlands (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands.
- Schmidt, V. (2005). The role of public discourse in European social democratic reform projects. Available at SSRN 754087.
- Schmidt, V. A. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: The explanatory power of ideas and discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1), 303–326.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060606.135342>
- Sivesind, K., Wahlström, N. (2017). Curriculum and leadership in transnational reform policy: A Discursive-Institutionalist Approach. In *Bridging Educational Leadership, Curriculum Theory and Didaktik* (pp. 439-462). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58650-2_14
- Söderbaum, F. (2011). Theories of regionalism. In M. Beeson & R. Stubbs (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Regionalism* (pp. 1–488). essay, Routledge.
- Söderbaum, F., van Langenhove, L. (2005). Introduction: The EU as a global actor and the role of Interregionalism. *Journal of European Integration*, 27(3), 249–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036330500190073>
- Spindler, M. (2013). *International relations: A self-study guide to theory*. Budrich.
- Su, N. (2018). Positivist qualitative methods. In *The sage handbook of qualitative business and management research methods* (pp. 17-31). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781526430212>
- TUCAHEA. (n.d.). TuCAHEA Official Website. Retrieved January 4, 2022, from <http://www.tucahea.org/>
- van Langenhove, L., Gatev, I. (2019). Regionalization and Transregional Policies. In D. Stone and K. Moloney (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Policy and Transnational Administration* (pp. 1–765). Essay, Oxford University Press.

- Wahlström, N., Sundberg, D. (2017). Discursive institutionalism: Towards a framework for analysing the relation between policy and Curriculum. *Journal of Education Policy*, 33(1), 163–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2017.1344879>
- Wendt, A. E. (1987). The agent-structure problem in international relations theory. *International Organization*, 41(3), 335–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s002081830002751x>
- Wight, C. (2008). *Agents, structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology*. Cambridge University Press.

SAULE ANAFINOVA, a Ph.D. candidate, is a member of the Doctoral School of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary. Her doctoral studies were funded in frames of the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program by the Hungarian Tempus Public Foundation. Her research interests include international and comparative higher education.
saule.anafinova@ppk.elte.hu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I acknowledge the academics who have provided guidance and inspiration during my doctoral research. Thank you to my doctoral research supervisor Professor Gábor Halász, from the Institute of Education at ELTE, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary for guidance and support in the conduct of the present doctoral research. My humble gratitude to Professor Ann Katherine Isaacs, Università di Pisa (UniPi), Italy, and to Professor Pavel Zgaga, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia for providing inspiration, support and for connecting me with the TuCAHEA community. Finally, thank you to Dr. Rosalind Latiner Raby, Editor-in-Chief of JCIHE, and the anonymous reviewers for the helpful and constructive feedback on the paper.

FUNDING: The researcher's doctoral studies were funded in frames of the Stipendium Hungaricum program by Tempus Public Foundation, Hungary.

‘Edugration’ as a wicked problem: Higher education and three-step immigration

Lisa Ruth Brunner^{a*}

^a*University of British Columbia, Canada*

*Corresponding author: Email: lisa.brunner@ubc.ca

Address: University of British Columbia, x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) Traditional Territory, Canada

ABSTRACT

Two-step immigration is now a well-established policy strategy in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the U.S. to retain so-called ‘highly skilled,’ or higher-wage, immigrants. However, as this paper argues, the specific recruitment and retention of post-secondary international students in some contexts has become a distinct three-step form of immigration, shifting the role of higher education in society. The term edugration – an amalgamation of ‘education’ and ‘immigration’ – is proposed to describe this system. This paper also contends 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.

Keywords: education-migration nexus, edugration, international student mobility, international students, internationalization, wicked problem

INTRODUCTION

The recruitment and retention of post-secondary international students as immigrants has become a distinct and consequential three-step form of immigration. Yet because the process spans two relatively disparate fields – education and immigration – it is rarely analyzed in a holistic way (Brunner, 2017), foreclosing opportunities to fully articulate its complexities. Here, I propose the term *edugration* – amalgamating *education* and *immigration* – to describe this unique three-step process and to encourage more multi/interdisciplinary systemic engagements. I argue that, when viewed through this comprehensive lens, *edugration* presents an ethically wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973), requiring not only increased attention from higher/international education and (im)migration scholars, but also a shift in our analytic approach.

EDUGRATION AS A DISTINCT FORM OF IMMIGRATION

International student mobility’s intersection with permanent immigration arose largely in the past 25 years. In an intensifying global race for so-called “highly skilled,” or higher-wage, economic migrants at the turn of the century, many minority-world countries (a term roughly analogous to Global North; see Alam, 2008) economically and demographically dependent on immigrants — came to function as recruiters rather than gatekeepers, facilitating “talent for citizenship” exchanges (Shachar, 2006, p. 148). The U.S., Canada, Australia, and France attracted particularly high net inflows of highly-educated migrants during this time (OECD, 2008), and many remained long-term. As countries competed for the most desirable immigrants – which, from the perspective of neoliberal governments, meant those best positioned to integrate economically – a trend emerged: *two-step* immigration, or the permanent retention of temporary residents (e.g. foreign workers) already integrated into local labour markets (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014; Boucher & Cerna, 2014; Gregory, 2014; Hawthorne, 2010;). Two-step immigration is now a well-established concept in immigration policy and highly influential in countries such as the U.S., Australia, and Canada (Clarke et al., 2019; Crossman et al., 2020; Dauvergne, 2016).

During roughly the same time, a global race for international students also developed. As the number of international students climbed (IOM GMDAC, 2021), so did their tuition payments and other expenditures, which became increasingly vital to higher education systems and local economies. While international students had previously been viewed as short-term visitors, some

countries (e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., the U.S., and Germany) began promoting post-graduation work permits as recruitment tools. In a two-step immigration policy environment, these recently-graduated temporary workers emerged as “ideal” migrants to retain due to their relatively young age, high human/economic capital, and language proficiency (GAC, 2019; Scott et al., 2015). In other words, they required comparatively limited integration support from governments (Hawthorne, 2012; Trilokekar & El Masri, 2019), thanks in part to the pre-sorting inherent to higher education’s selective admission processes and the extended period of time international students spent embedded within education institutions. Soon, permanent residency itself – or rather the possibility of permanent residency, a nuance not always made clear during recruitment – was used to promote national higher education systems.

In two-step immigration literature, many conflate the study and post-graduation work permit periods, referring to immigrants who “come first as a temporary immigrant, to *work or study*, and then seek to move to permanent status” (Gregory, 2014, p. 1, emphasis added). Some international students do transition directly to permanent residency after graduation (Brunner, 2017). However, much more common is a three-step filtering system involving periods of both study and work: international students who (1) gain admission to, and graduate from, a qualifying higher education institution can (2) compete in the labour market for a limited time on a post-graduation work permit, during which those who gain sufficient qualifying work experience can (3) remain permanently as immigrants and, eventually, citizens. This particular three-step process – in which the first step as a student is explicitly identified to make its significance clear – is what I refer to as *edugration*.

Viewing *edugration* as a system is important. For example, it shows how (1) the line between student and immigrant recruitment has blurred, (2) the co-dependency between higher education and other immigrant actors (such as the state) is entrenched, and (3) international student mobility has become a specific form of social mobility (Kim & Kwak, 2019; Maldonado-Maldonado, 2014). It also raises questions about higher education’s role in society, particularly in the selection (Brunner, 2017) and integration (Walton-Roberts, 2011) of immigrants.

As Giebel (2020) wrote, “by admitting international students... universities are assuming a role in international relations [which] must come with responsibility and integrity” (p. 74), echoing calls for more ethical international

student mobility practices (Coate & Rathnayake, 2012). Yet without a comprehensive understanding of how *edugration* functions, universities and individuals alike are limited by a partial understanding of their own role in a larger system. Those working, and studying in higher education tend to focus on the first step (the study period) in the three-step process. They are often unaware of the cascading *edugration* effects that follow seemingly minor policy changes in immigration or higher education policy arenas, the former of which tends to shift rapidly (Dauvergne, 2016). On the other hand, (im)migration policy scholars tend to focus primarily on immigrants' transition from temporary foreign worker to permanent resident (the second and third steps of *edugtaion*). This leads to an overemphasis on the role of employers, ignoring the power higher education institutions, recruiters, and other internationalization agents hold in determining the characteristics of, and integrating, temporary foreign workers. It is to these conversations I suggest higher/international education scholars might more robustly contribute.

EDUGRATION AS A TOPIC IN HIGHER AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STUDIES

Although growing (Bozheva et al., 2021; Chen & Skuterud, 2020), research examining *edugration* remains limited, particularly within education (Brunner, 2017). The *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* [JCIHE], for example, contains several explorations of higher education and international student integration (Ballo et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2019; Sin & Tavares, 2019; Yao, 2015). However, few explore how this process is concurrently tied up in migration systems (Cong & Glass, 2019; Etshim, 2019). Only one JCIHE article directly addresses internationalization and immigration policy connections (Al-Haque, 2017). As international students become increasingly positioned as temporary workers (during their studies, after graduation, or both) and potential immigrants, more work is needed to bridge higher/international education studies and (im)migration studies.

More nuanced ethical discussions about the issue are also needed (Stein, 2019b). In JCIHE, authors largely treat integration as a worthwhile goal (with the possible exception of Yao, (2015), who focuses instead on students' social belonging). This is understandable, given that international students face real and limiting "social and academic exclusion triggered by linguistic and cultural difference," (Sin & Tavares, 2019, p. 64; Van Mol, 2019). However, the

technique, measurement, and promotion of integration can itself be a colonial practice. As Schinkel (2018) writes:

the agenda of those who insist on ‘immigrant integration’, and who thereby a priori assume that migrants have not really arrived, are not yet ‘members of society’ is in its effects only slightly removed from the explicit racism of the current white backlash on the (alt-)right (p. 15).

Many of us research how to ‘better’ integrate international students (or immigrants) out of a desire to mitigate exclusion. However, in this attempt, we may unknowingly or unintentionally perpetuate a larger harm (Andreotti, 2012).

Geibel (2020) wrote that higher education is driven by two types of motivations: strategic which focuses on “advantages to a person, community or state in relation to others... rooted within the neoliberal view of globalization and development” (p. 68), and humanistic, which seek “to reduce prejudice and ignorance thereby leading to the development of global citizens who are able to actively contribute to a better world” (p. 69). Many surface-level higher education injustices occur when the former masquerades as the latter – an unfortunately common occurrence in international education. However, a less visible violence occurs one layer deeper: when a supposedly humanistic motivation masks something else.

As a field, we need to supplement the immediate question of *how* with *why*. We should interrogate how the rules of these games are set, whose interests they are rigged to serve, and how we, as scholars and practitioners, are complicit in playing. This work is often uncomfortable because it requires critiquing an ecosystem we are invested in and is unsatisfying because it offers no easy solutions. However, it is necessary if we wish to avoid reproducing current harms (Stein, 2019a). It can also be a productive and even generous practice if we use our collective imperfections and impurities as starting points rather than ends (Shotwell, 2016; Todd, 2009). In what follows, I introduce a way to consider *edugration* through this lens.

EDUGRATION AS A WICKED PROBLEM

The ethical issues involved in *edugration* are complex (Brunner, 2022). The system is often painted as a triple win: students gain a valuable education and desirable citizenship on the global market; higher education institutions gain revenue, labor, and diversity; and immigrant-dependent countries gain human/economic capital, population growth, and soft power. However, this

framing ignores *edugration*'s larger replications of privilege and power, concealing externalized losses such as brain drain and problematic enablement such as the dominance of a hierarchical global imaginary rooted in Western supremacy which dictates the desirability of its education (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). It also overlooks those international students who are filtered out in the process, unable to achieve the promise of permanent residency (Al-Haque, 2017); the varying degrees of “cultural suicide” international students may undergo as they are (often implicitly) asked to integrate (Tierney, 1999, p. 82; Yao, 2015); and the affective impacts of embodying an ‘international student’ role, where one’s desirability is layered with perceptions of threat and racism (Obradović-Ratković, 2020; Schiffecker, 2020). In a broader sense, it ignores the ways in which colonialism (settler or otherwise) played constitutive roles in the development of minority-world societies (Ellermann & O’Heran, 2021), and how both higher education and (im)migration continue to play active roles in colonialism today.

Edugration also elongates the time spent in ‘temporariness’ as a migrant. For some, the retention of already-integrated temporary residents as immigrants offers a promising antidote to brain waste or over education – painful experiences well-known to immigrants selected from abroad who struggle to leverage their human capital (e.g. education) gained elsewhere (Crossman et al., 2020; Lo et al., 2019). For others, it problematically cements a precarious period of provisional admittance and conditional inclusion in not only temporary, but now also permanent, migration (Rajkumar et al., 2012). Two-step immigration has been called “probationary immigration” (Ellermann & Gorokhovskaia, 2019, p. 45) and “trial migration” in that it “allow[s] states to ‘pre-test’ potential permanent migrants...reflect[ing] the demise of ‘settlement’ of migrants as a public value” (Dauvergne, 2016, p. 176) as well as the privatization of integration. *Edugration* extends that probationary trial period – typically by years – in which entitlements such as working, voting, and social services are restricted, settlement costs are borne by individuals, and permanent residency is never guaranteed.

In short, *edugration* is a wicked problem. Rittel and Webber (1973) identified a distinction between problems: some were ‘tame’ (definable and easily broken into manageable, solvable parts) while others were ‘wicked’ (elusive and resistant to simple solutions) (pp.160-161). Table 1 lists six

characteristics of wicked problems (as described by van Berkel & Manickam, 2020) illustrated by *edugration*.

Table 1: *Edugration* 's wicked problem characteristics

Wicked problem characteristic	Example(s) within <i>edugration</i>
Can be defined in multiple ways	Framed as: internationalization of higher education; immigration selection systems; access to education; international social mobility; ongoing settler-colonialism; over-reliance on international student markets; etc.
Cannot be distilled into smaller problems	E.g. economies and higher education systems are deeply invested; while intertwined, they seek different outcomes and are regulated by different jurisdictions
Involves multiple parties and interests	Actors include: students (international and domestic); HE systems; immigration regimes; Indigenous peoples and nations; non-humans (e.g. impacted by climate crisis); etc.
Invokes different proposed solutions	Proposed solutions include: increasing (or restricting) the number of international students; retaining more (or less) international students as immigrants; prioritizing certain international students as immigrants (e.g. those who will better 'integrate,' or those who have been historically disadvantaged and are more 'deserving'); charging international students more (or less) tuition; expanding (or disinvesting from) international student mobility; etc.
Triggers new problems with each solution	E.g. post-graduation work permit holders in Canada have been shown to be underemployed (Choi et al., 2021) and may compete with lower-wage workers (CIC, 2015)
Unpredictable	E.g. ripple effects of COVID-19's international student (physical) mobility interruptions (Brunner, 2022)

Wicked problems are “messes” – sets of interrelated problems forming a “system of problems” (Ackoff, 1974, p. 21). These messes are inseparable from other challenges, and the resulting interconnections between these systems, or “systems of systems,” is what make them so resistant to analysis and resolution (Horn & Weber, 2007, p. 6).

Positioning *edugration* as a wicked problem does several things. It encourages linkages beyond the field of higher/international education to broaden its discussion. It shifts the conversation away from individual moves of innocence (or blame) to show how we are all implicated, to varying degrees, in ‘social messes.’ It also encourages moves past business as usual towards radically different approaches to higher education.

What it does not do is show a way out of the mess. Instead, it “resist[s] the temptation for certainty, totality, and instrumentalization in Western reasoning by keeping our claims contingent, contextual, tentative, and incomplete” (Ahenakew, 2016, p. 333). That next step is for all of us to find.

REFERENCES

- Ackoff, R. L. (1974). *Redesigning the future: A systems approach to societal problems*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Ahenakew C. (2016). Grafting Indigenous ways of knowing onto non-Indigenous ways of being: the (underestimated) challenges of a decolonial imagination. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 9(3), 323-340. <https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.3.323>
- Akbari, A., & MacDonald, M. (2014). Immigration policy in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States: An overview of recent trends. *International Migration Review*, 48(3), 801–822. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12128>
- Al-Haque, R. (2019). University internationalization, immigration, and the Canadian dream: how federal citizenship immigration legislation marginalizes international graduate students. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 9, 5-9.
- Alam, S. (2008). Majority world: challenging the west's rhetoric of democracy. *Amerasia Journal*, 34(1), 88-98. <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.34.1.13176027k4q614v5>
- Andreotti, V. (2012). Editor’s preface ‘HEADS UP.’ *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, 6(1), 1-3.

- Ballo, A., Mathies, C., & Weimer, L. (2019). Applying student development theories: enhancing international student academic success and integration. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 18–24. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1092>
- Boucher, A., & Cerna, L. (2014). Current policy trends in skilled immigration policy. *International Migration*, 52(3), 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12152>
- Bozheva, A., Brunner, L. R., Erittu, E., Morris-Lange, S., Sabzalieva, E., & Trilokekar, R. D. (2021, July 8). Panel Presentation: E. Sabzalieva & R. D. Trilokekar (Chairs), *Global policy discourses on immigration and international student mobility* [Panel]. International Conference on Public Policy, Barcelona, Spain. <https://www.ippapublicpolicy.org/>
- Brunner, L. R. (2017). Higher educational institutions as emerging immigrant selection actors: a history of British Columbia's retention of international graduates, 2001–2016. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 1(1), 22-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2016.1243016>
- Brunner, L. R. (2022). Towards a more just Canadian education-migration system: International student mobility in crisis. *Studies in Social Justice*, 16(1), 79-102 <https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v16i1.2685>
- Chen, Z. J., & Skuterud, M. (2020). Relative academic achievement of international students: Evidence from an Ontario university. *Canadian Public Policy*, 46(1), 125-144. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2019-033>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC]. (2015, June.) The Post-Graduation Work Permit Program: Proposed options for program redesign. Advice to Minister [secret internal report]. Obtained through Access to Information and Privacy request A-2015-32618.
- Clarke, A., Ferrer, A., & Skuterud, M. (2019). A comparative analysis of the labor market performance of university-educated immigrants in Australia, Canada, and the United States: Does policy matter? *Journal of Labor Economics*, 37(S2), S443-S490. <https://doi.org/10.1086/703256>
- Coate, K., & Rathnayake, G. (2012). An ethical commitment: Responsibility, care and cosmopolitanism in the internationalized university. In S. Sovic & M. Blythman (Eds.), *International Students Negotiating Higher Education: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 39-53). Routledge.
- Cong, C., & Glass, C. R. (2019). Stronger together: educational service augmenters and traditional predictors of adjustment for international students in the US. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 25-35. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1223>
- Crossman, E., Hou, F., & Picot, G. (2020, July 22). Two-step immigration selection: A review of benefits and potential challenges. *Statistics Canada Economic Insights*, 11-626-X No. 111.
- Dauvergne, C. (2016). *The New Politics of Immigration and the End of Settler Societies*. Cambridge.

- Ellermann, A., & Gorokhovskaia, Y. (2019). The impermanence of permanence: The rise of probationary immigration in Canada. *International Migration*, 58(6), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12645>
- Ellermann, A., & O’Heran, B. (2021). Unsettling migration studies: Indigeneity and immigration in settler colonial states. In C. Dauvergne (Ed.), *Research handbook on the law and politics of migration* (pp. 21-34). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789902266>
- Etshim, R. (2019). Integrating international graduate students on campus: the perspectives of student affairs professionals. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 107-109. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11iWinter.1613>
- Global Affairs Canada [GAC]. (2019). Building on success: International education strategy (2019-2024). Cat. No.: FR5-165/2019E-PDF. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx>
- Geibel, W. R. (2020). A pedagogy of student mobility: facilitating humanistic outcomes in internationalization and student mobility. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12, 67-77. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12iSpring.1271>
- Gregory, R. G. (2014, March). *The two-step Australian immigration policy and its impact on immigrant employment outcomes*. IZA Institute of Labor Economics (Discussion Paper No. 8061). <http://ftp.iza.org/dp8061.pdf>
- Hawthorne, L. (2010). How valuable is ‘two-step migration’? Labour market outcomes for international student migrants to Australia. *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, 19(1), 5-36.
- Hawthorne, L. (2012). Designer immigrants? International students and two-step migration. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl, & T. Adams (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of international higher education* (pp. 417–437). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n23>
- Horn, R. E., & Webber, R. P. (2007). *New tools for resolving wicked problems: mess mapping and resolution mapping processes*. https://www.strategykinetics.com/new_tools_for_resolving_wicked_problems.pdf
- International Organization for Migration [IOM] Global Migration Data Analysis Centre [GMDAC]. (2021) *Migration Data Portal*. <https://migrationdataportal.org/>
- Kim, A. H., & Kwak, M. (2019). Introduction: Education migration, social mobility, and structuring institutions. In M. Kwak & A. H. Kim (Eds.), *Outward and upward mobilities: International students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 3-22). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-004>

- Lo, L., Li, W., & Yu, W. (2019). Highly-skilled migration from China and India to Canada and the United States. *International Migration*, 57(3), 317-333. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12388>
- Maldonado-Maldonado, A. (2014). Academic mobility as social mobility or the point of no return. In A. Maldonado-Maldonado and R.M. Bassett (Eds.), *The forefront of international higher education: A Festschrift in honor of Philip G. Altbach* (pp. 127-137). Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7085-0_9
- Nilsson, P. A. (2019). The Buddy Programme: integration and social support for international students. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1095>
- Obradović-Ratković, S., Woloshyn, V., & Sethi, B. (2020). Reflections on migration, resilience, and graduate education: supporting female students with refugee backgrounds. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12(3), 81-11. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12iWinter.2014>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2008, September). The global competition for talent: Mobility of the highly skilled. ISBN: 978-92-64-04774-7. <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/theglobalcompetitionfortalentmobilityofthehighlyskilled.htm>
- Rajkumar, D., Berkowitz, L., Vosko, L. F., Preston, V., & Latham, R. (2012). At the temporary–permanent divide: How Canada produces temporariness and makes citizens through its security, work, and settlement policies. *Citizenship Studies*, 16(3-4), 483-510. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2012.683262>
- Rittel, H., & Webber M. (1973). Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4, 155-169.
- Scott, C., Safdar, S., Trilokekar, R., & El Masri, A. (2015). International students as ‘ideal immigrants’ in Canada: A disconnect between policy makers’ assumptions and the lived experiences of international students. *Canadian and international education/Éducation canadienne et internationale*, 43(5). <https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v43i3.9261>
- Shachar, A. (2006). The race for talent: Highly skilled migrants and competitive immigration regimes. *New York University Law Review*, 81(April), 148-206.
- Schiffecker, S. M. (2020). Leading the many, considering the few -- university presidents' perspectives on international students during COVID-19. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12, 105-112. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.3034>
- Schinkel, W. (2018). Against ‘immigrant integration’: for an end to neocolonial knowledge production. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 6(31), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0095-1>

- Shotwell, A. (2016). *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Sin, C., & Tavares, O. (2019). Integrating international students: The missing link in Portuguese higher education institutions. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 59-65. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1110>
- Stein, S. (2019a). Beyond higher education as we know it: Gesturing towards decolonial horizons of possibility. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 38, 143-161. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-018-9622-7>
- Stein, S. (2019b). Critical internationalization studies at an impasse: Making space for complexity, uncertainty, and complicity in a time of global challenges. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1704722>
- Stein, S., & Andreotti, V. (2016). Cash, competition, or charity: international students and the global imaginary. *Higher Education*, 72(2), 225-239. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9949-8>
- Tierney, W. G. (1999). Models of minority college-going and retention: Cultural integrity versus cultural suicide. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 68(1), 80-91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2668211>
- Todd, S. (2009). *Toward an imperfect education: Facing humanity, rethinking cosmopolitanism*. Routledge.
- Trilokekar, R. D. & El Masri, A. (2019). "International students are...golden": Canada's changing policy contexts, approaches, and national peculiarities in attracting international students as future immigrants. In M. Kwak & A. H. Kim (Eds.), *Outward and upward mobilities: international students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 25-55). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-005>
- van Berkel, K., & Manickam, A. (2020). *Wicked World: Complex Challenges and Systems Innovation*. Noordhoff.
- Van Mol, C. (2019). Integrating international students in local (student) communities: a theory-to-practice perspective. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11, 14-17. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1246>
- Walton-Roberts, M. (2011). Immigration, the university and the welcoming second tier city. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 12(4), 453-473. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-011-0187-3>
- Yao, C. W. (2015). Sense of belonging in international students: making the case against integration to US institutions of higher education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 7, 6-10.

LISA RUTH BRUNNER is a PhD candidate in Educational Studies, a Liu Scholar, and a Centre for Migration Studies affiliate at the University of British Columbia in Canada. She is also a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant with a decade of practitioner experience as an International Student Advisor. Lisa serves on Canada's national Pathways to Prosperity Standing Committee of Students and Junior Scholar Engagement. She holds an MA in Geography and a BA in English Literature and Political Science. Email: lisa.brunner@ubc.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I am grateful for Sharon Stein's review of an earlier version of this paper and the thoughtful feedback provided by two anonymous reviewers.

Professionalization of Virtual Education Abroad: Where are we in the Innovation-Decision Process?

Susanne Feld

Lesley University, USA

Email: susanneelenafeld@gmail.com

Lesley University, 29 Everett St, Cambridge, MA, USA

ABSTRACT

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). This article presents data from a study that examined educators' experiences creating, facilitating, and administering these programs through a qualitative survey and optional follow-up semi-structured interview. Including the reflections of 51 EA practitioners, the data reveal positive outcomes and strong support for the continuation of VEA even post-pandemic; the implications of this research are that VEA is an important part of an EA organization's portfolio and merits additional research. 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.

Keywords: abroad, COVID-19, education, international, online, professionalization, virtual

INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread, all travel-based education abroad (EA) programs in the United States were canceled (Moody, 2020). To continue offering the benefits of EA, many organizations and practitioners hurriedly created virtual EA (VEA) programs. This meant reconfiguring EA pedagogy to work in the online space, rapidly learning new skills, and discovering student reactions and results in real time. Practitioners now posit that VEA might offer similarly effective benefits as in-person programs, with the caveat that they are based on sound, well-designed pedagogy, and that in the post-pandemic future they might constitute one part of an organization's portfolio (Angell et al., 2021; Dietrich, 2020). While some VEA existed before the pandemic, the profusion of new programs created out of necessity offers a chance to evaluate VEA's potential as well as consider its future. This qualitative study asked: What experience did educators have in the process of creating, leading, and administering VEA programs during the pandemic?

LITERATURE REVIEW

EA is an umbrella term including various international curricular and co-curricular student activities. These include study abroad, international internships, faculty-led programs, and others (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). Research on the benefits of EA and developments in the field have increased in recent decades (Davidson et al., 2018) and professionalization has steadily increased since the 50s, including more EA publications and conferences, career tracks, and specializations (Davidson et al., 2018; Hibel, n.d.). Online education has also increased over the past decades as technology

has improved and strategies, structures, and programs have emerged. Researchers have examined the potential benefits of this teaching modality (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) but cautioned that online education is only effective when technology is used in the service of effective pedagogy (Mittelmeier et al., 2020).

Research on EA and online learning have overlapped, often in specific contexts and amongst certain practitioner communities. Some students have accessed classes and degrees in other countries by participating in online programs (Mittelmeier et al., 2021). A small group of educators have urged colleagues to consider technology-assisted EA and have developed programs in the forms of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Virtual Exchange (VE) (Dorroll et al., 2019), but enthusiasm and ambition for the development of these models remained within their respective communities (Dietrich, 2021). In 2018, before the pandemic, Zhang and Pearlman reported that,

Despite the benefits technology enhanced COIL courses bring to American and international students, faculty, and institutions, it is important to point out the lack of pedagogical and instructional support, and on-going technological professional development for faculty who teach online (p. 9). During the pandemic when educators had no choice but to either cease offering EA or switch to VEA because of the health risks of meeting in-person, VEA programming increased dramatically (Dietrich, 2021; Mudiamu, 2021).

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Sahin (2006) demonstrated how Rogers' Theory of Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) (Rogers, 2003) can be used as a framework to examine innovations in incorporating technology into education. In this article, one aspect of DOI theory will be used: the Innovation-Decision Process. Sahin (2006) describes this as five sequential steps: Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and Confirmation. Briefly, the Knowledge Stage concerns the awareness that an innovation exists and an increase in know-how to use and understand it. The Persuasion Stage involves shifting feelings and evaluations of the innovation. The Decision Stage concerns adoption or rejection of the innovation; the Implementation Stage involves putting the innovation into

practice; and at the Confirmation Stage individuals look for confirming evidence to back their decision about the innovation.

RESEARCH METHOD

A snowball sampling method was used to recruit individuals who led, designed, and/or administered VEA during the pandemic by posting the research call on industry listservs SECUSS'L and NAFSA as well as an alumni network. The call was also forwarded by email through professional networks. Data were collected using an online qualitative survey. Questions included demographic information; whether participants' institutions offered VEA and why; what kinds of programs they were; their experience creating, facilitating, or administering them; how they were received by students; whether programs achieved their learning goals; and whether they thought their organization should continue offering the programs. Finally, participants were asked if they were interested in taking part in a follow-up semi-structured interview. Data were analyzed using first and second cycle coding as outlined by Miles et al. (2014).

RESULTS

In all, there were 60 questionnaire respondents. 51 reported offering VEA; the remaining responses were not included in this analysis. 23 interviews were conducted. 41 participants were located in the United States or Canada, 7 in Europe, 3 in Latin America, and 2 in Asia. Other participant details are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Participant information

Variable	Number of participants
Organization where participant works	
3 rd party provider of EA	12
University	31
Other	7
Position at Organization	
Global education program designer	4
Global education program facilitator	9
Both designer and facilitator	25
Other	12

Notes: "Other" responses of where participant works included community college, high school, and liberal arts college. "Other" responses of position included administrator, advocate, director, and faculty. One participant chose not to respond to each question.

Preliminary findings revealed an initial scramble to continue offering international experiences, resulting in new VEA that often surprised their creators with positive outcomes. When asked about student perception, 19 reported a very positive reception from students, 19 a positive one, nine a 'better than nothing' feeling, three had overall negative impressions, and one did not respond. These numbers indicate that in the perception of educators, many students enjoyed and learned from VEA. Several participants expressed surprise at how successful programs were. One participant said about their VEA, "They were beloved. Honestly, they surpassed all expectations. We conducted multiple levels of assessment and the ICC [intercultural competence] gains were higher than we see in some in-person programming." Others remained skeptical, saying for example, "It's not a substitute for being in-country, but students felt they were very worthwhile".

14 participants described the initial change-over to VEA stressful or challenging, and 11 mentioned the need for careful collaboration within their institution and with international contacts. One elaborated, "I would say the process required [1] flexibility, 2) innovative thinking, 3) creativity, and 4) high level of organization and administrative oversight." 45 participants planned on continuing all or part of the programs they developed as a permanent part of their EA portfolio, and many planned on using virtual to support in-person programs for pre- and post-program training, advising, and more. 16 called virtual a potential tool to increase student access to international experiences and inspire future in-person travel. Six participants framed VEA as only a stopgap measure that they would not continue in the future.

DISCUSSION

Rogers' Innovation-Decision Process (Sahin, 2006) can be used to consider in which stage VEA finds itself now and at what velocity it has reached that point. The Knowledge Phase constituted years of dedicated scholars and practitioners creating VEA which despite showing encouraging results enjoyed

little support (Dorroll et al., 2019; Zhang & Pearlman, 2018). After the pandemic hit, the speed of the Innovation-Decision Process accelerated rapidly, as seen by the results of this study. Suddenly, educators had no choice but to move programs online (Moody, 2020), and they both innovated and turned to research from previous years (Dietrich, 2021; Mudiamu, 2021). VEA rushed into the Persuasion Phase and picked up many adherents in the process.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This paper highlights several implications for the future of VEA and expands the research supporting the educational and developmental value of EA and online learning for students. As of Summer 2021, some individuals or institutions reflected in this study were entering the Decision Phase, while some were further along in the Implementation or Confirmation Phases (Sahin, 2006). Many participants anticipated continuing VEA while others indicated a wait-and-see mindset. As the COVID-19 pandemic lingers and the concept of normal remains an elusive state, universally reaching the Implementation or Confirmation phases is still hazy in a hard-to-imagine future. Some participants asked: Will students be excited about anything virtual after these long Zoom-filled years? Many said yes, as part of a larger EA portfolio. Some wondered: Will an aim for equity and accessibility in EA back-fire and create a two-tiered system of the ‘haves’ taking planes and ‘have-nots’ in front of a computer? Several participants reported that not only did VEA increase access to international experiences for students, but many also expressed a desire to travel post-pandemic.

This study supports the idea that well-designed VEA can enhance students’ intercultural competencies and provide access to international experiences, among other benefits (Angell et al., 2021; Dietrich, 2020). Institutions and educators are recommended to incorporate VEA into their practice. To push these innovations into the mainstream and gain support from all stakeholders, practitioners and researchers will need to keep in mind the industry-wide Implementation and Confirmation phases that are yet to come. Gathering and sharing data and experiences will bolster the momentum resulting from the rapid creation of VEA during the pandemic. This will represent a shift of VEA from a knee-jerk reaction to COVID to part of the professional fabric of EA. As one participant put it, “COVID-19 is often discussed as a deficit or negative

impact on all aspects of life. In my view this is an opportunity for reinvention, innovation, and evolution.” Educators should recognize this opportunity and seize it.

REFERENCES

- Angell, K., Hertz, A., & Woolf, J. (2021). Teaching with tech: Implications for study abroad. *CAPA's Online Journal 1*(Fall 2021), 37-45.
- Davidson, P. M, Taylor, C. S., Park, M., Dzotsenidze, N., & Wiseman, A. W. (2018). Reflecting on trends in comparative and international education: A three-year examination of research publications. *International Perspectives on Education and Society*, 34, 1-27. <http://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-367920180000034001>
- Dietrich, A. J. (2020). Charting a path forward for education abroad research. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 32(2), 1-11. <http://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v32i2.465>
- Dietrich, A. J. (2021). The upshot to embracing online experiences. *CAPA's Online Journal 1*(Fall 2021), 46-52.
- Dorroll, C., Hall, K., Blouke, C., & Witsell, E. (2019). Virtual exchange pedagogy: A digital humanities approach. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 11(Spring), 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11iSpring.925>
- Garrison, D., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education*, 7, 95-105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001>
- Hibel, A. (n.d.) *Is the world smaller? The need for international education*. HigherEd Jobs. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/HigherEdCareers/interviews.cfm?ID=350>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. SAGE.
- Mittelmeier, J., Rienties, B., Gunter, A., & Raghuram, P. (2020). Conceptualizing internationalization at a distance: A “third category” of university internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 25(3), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315320906176>
- Moody, J. (2020, March 27). *Study abroad programs and COVID-19: What to know*. *U.S. News & World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-coronavirus-is-changing-course-of-study-abroad-programs>
- Mudiamu, S. S. (2021). *The missing link in COIL*. *NAFSA*. <https://www.nafsa.org/ie-magazine/2021/5/5/missing-link-coil>

- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations 5th Edition*. Free Press.
- Sahin, I. (2006). Detailed review of Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory and educational technology-related studies based on Rogers' theory. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 5(2), 14-23.
- The Forum on Education Abroad (n.d.). Education abroad. In *Glossary*.
<https://forumea.org/resources/glossary/?letter=E>
- Zhang, J., & Pearlman, A. M. G. (2018). Expanding access to international education through technology enhanced collaborative online international learning (COIL) courses. *International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning*, 14(1), 1-11.

SUSANNE FELD is a graduate of the International Higher Education Master's Program at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, USA. At Lesley, she researched the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on education abroad and the related development of virtual programs. susanneelenafeld@gmail.com

Mapping Institutional Changes in Higher Education: The Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Democratic Backsliding

Zahra Jafarova

University of Toronto, Canada

Email: zahra.jafarova@mail.utoronto.ca

University of Toronto, 252 Bloor St W, Toronto, ON M5S 1V6, Canada

ABSTRACT

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. My research investigates the effect of democratic backsliding on the university autonomy in countries with worsening democratic conditions. This study employs the comparative case study method of Turkey, Hungary, and Poland. 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.

Keywords: academic freedom, democratic backsliding, university autonomy

INTRODUCTION

The last decade has been described as a period of democratic regression worldwide (Diamond, 2021). Many new democracies stopped growing (Freedom House, 2019) and began to roll back while experiencing populism and right-wing nationalism (Fraser Institute, 2017; Robertson, 2018). Today, 29 countries worldwide are classified as being in democratic decline. As a result, the world has fewer democracies now than at any time since 1995 (Freedom House, 2020). Instead of coups, which were characteristics of twentieth-century democratic breakdown, the most prevalent feature of contemporary democratic decline is democratic backsliding. Democratic backsliding is the incremental stripping away of constitutional guarantees and fragmented dismantling of democratic institutions by elected officials and frequently illiberally inclined populists (Cianetti & Hanley, 2021). Democratic backsliding coincides with a rise in populism and illiberal nationalism, corruption, and a weakened civil society (Tomini, 2017). While the problem of democratic backsliding has come under increased scrutiny in the recent decade, some of its implications have received only modest attention. For example, its effects on legislative and executive forces, human rights, and media have been widely studied, while the impact on public sector has remained under-researched because these changes cannot be easily detected as the changes in political institutions.

The transformation of higher education does not pose a difficulty for democratically backsliding governments, as the state remains the leading provider of the legislative framework for higher education activities (Pachuashvili, 2011), the largest funder of higher education (Mettler, 2014), the regulator of access to higher education (Perry, 2015), and, finally, the definer of the political and economic atmosphere of higher education (Levy, 2009). To ensure better service to the regimes' objectives, governments have the privilege

of owning and employing the different measures to consolidate control and power over both public and private universities. However, during several centuries the norms of academic freedom and university autonomy have shielded universities from external pressure. The friction between external political pressure and university autonomy offers a unique opportunity to observe how the higher education landscape changes as a result of the slow and steady political transformation of political institutions as democratic backsliding. Given that university autonomy is a comprehensive term that encompasses the practices undertaken by universities to operate, researching its aspects and assessing the true implications of democratic backsliding on universities are essential for current and future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the relationship between the government and universities, university autonomy has a distinct position in which the government is considered a primary political institution with the power to design, reform, and dismantle institutions. Furthermore, democratic logic recognizes that universities are neither entirely autonomous nor independent. Their special status stems from governments' willingness to secure autonomy, notwithstanding the fact that universities heavily depend on governments for funding, legislative support, and access (Olsen, 2009a). Even private universities that are assumed to enjoy more financial and administrative autonomy (Christensen, 2011) rely on governments for maintaining political and social order and for protecting them from coercion and external pressure. However, in some countries, university autonomy is seeing a surge of transformation as a result of the restructuring of political institutions, changing political priorities, and expectations from universities. Furthermore, recent policies initiated by the leaders of right-wing/nationalist/populist governments suggest that the rationale for the changes could also be the political incentive to increase control of HEIs to neutralize opposing views (cripple academic freedom) and ensure the conformity of scholars ("educated acquiescence") (Perry, 2020). Another unexplored field is that, although the effects of democratic backsliding are often debated as having a detrimental impact on intellectual freedoms and university autonomy, multiple facets of autonomy take different paths under new realities. For example, although institutional autonomy to elect/appoint rectors often diminishes, financial autonomy expands (Christensen, 2011).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To answer my research questions, I will use two general concepts: authoritarian neoliberalism (AN) (Bruff, 2014) and historical institutionalism (HI) (Hall & Taylor, 1996). AN would allow me to investigate how democratically backsliding governments under the preposition of neoliberal policies (changes to governance, funding, research, and faculty rights) try to establish supervision of government directly and indirectly (Peck 2010, Crouch 2011). HI will let me successfully explore the punctuated equilibrium – democratic backsliding (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994) and define moments that result in different effects on institutional autonomy depending on the formal or informal practices, rituals, norms, and principles embedded in the institutional structure.

RESEARCH METHOD

My research investigates the impact of democratic backsliding on the university autonomy by examining the cases of Turkey, Hungary, and Poland. These countries were considered democracies until the 2010s, but they are increasingly moving away from democracy (Freedom House, 2020). On par with other changes taking place in the backstage, governments are also altering higher education policies to expand government leverage over universities and preserve compliance. While higher education landscape in these countries was structurally distinct before democratic backsliding started, universities pass through similar phases of policy changes, face similar forms of oppression that force them to transform and conform to new conditions.

To evaluate the consequences of democratic backsliding on university autonomy, I will employ Ordorika's (2003) framework of autonomy: appointive (hiring, promotion, and dismissal of staff), financial (funding levels and criteria, preparation and allocation of the university budget, and accountability), and academic (access, curriculum, degree requirements, and academic freedom) dimensions will be studied in depth to map out the comprehensive picture of changes and to find out the causal relationships for the increase of autonomy on some dimensions even though the negative trend is expected. In particular, I intend to have answers to the following questions:

- 1) What tools do democratically backsliding governments use to expand control over universities?
- 2) How do political transformations affect different dimensions of university autonomy?
- 3) How do universities negotiate their autonomy differently based on the existing institutional characteristics, missions, and political cultures?

RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine the consequences of democratic backsliding, this research uses a comparative case study of Turkey, Hungary, and Poland. This approach would allow me to investigate the problem through various tools, explore the whole phenomenon and its repercussions (Peters & Fontain, 2020), and discover contextual factors defining the shape of response from universities (Yin, 2003).

The benefit of case study analysis is the ability to use many data sources, which increases data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). The initial review of academic literature that has already finalized and will be supported by both primary and secondary data sources to further enrich this analysis. To get necessary secondary data, I will perform process tracing (Beach, 2020) by reviewing grey and white papers in the higher education field related to the democratic backsliding, archival data wherever appropriate, online media outlets showcasing public officials' views, university mission statements, decrees, and other documentations. This step would enable me to identify the known effects of democratic backsliding on higher education. The next step will be to complete the site visits to the case study universities and obtain primary data. During fieldwork, my aim is to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with faculty, university personnel and administration, and students, as well as collect statistical data on governance, administration, management, and funding dynamics. This step would help me to analyze the dynamics of changes of different dimensions of university autonomy and to cross-check the findings and understand cases better.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While discussions about the state's role in higher education continue (Valimaa, 2014; Pusser, 2016), the pressure on universities increases. Academic freedom and university autonomy in the countries experiencing democratic backsliding are increasingly attacked depending on the major and minor political events that occur in these countries. The impact of democratic backsliding,

especially repression, has intensified the structural transformations of higher education and created a transformational juncture in various country contexts (Dönmez & Duman, 2020), even though this phenomenon has not been studied substantially except in critical literature (Giroux, 2011; Szadkowski & Krzeski, 2019; Vatansever, 2020). This comparative study will enrich the literature that is mostly based on single case studies. Furthermore, it will contribute to the newly emerging field of research in higher education as nationalism, populism, and political cleavage studies (Aboye, 2021).

REFERENCES

- Aboye, A. (2021). Political Ideology and Academic Autonomy in Ethiopia. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(4), 16–27.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i4.2871>
- Beach, D. (2020). Causal case studies for comparative policy analysis. In *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Comparative Policy Analysis* (Edited by B. Guy Peters and Guillaume Fontaine, pp. 238–153).
https://www.elgaronline.com/search?f_0=author&q_0=Derek+Beach
- Bruff, I. (2014). The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 26(1), 113–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935696.2013.843250>
- Christensen, T. (2011). University governance reforms: Potential problems of more autonomy? *Higher Education*, 62(4), 503–517.
- Cianetti, L., & Hanley, S. (2021). The End of the Backsliding Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy*, 32(2), 66–80.
- Csaky, Z. (2020). *Nations in Transit 2020: Dropping the Democratic Facade*. Freedom House. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2020/dropping-democratic-facade>
- Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-death of Neo-liberalism*. Polity.
- Diamond, L. (2021). Democratic regression in comparative perspective: Scope, methods, and causes. *Democratization*, 28(1), 22–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1807517>
- Dönmez, P. E., & Duman, A. (2020). Marketisation of Academia and Authoritarian Governments: The Cases of Hungary and Turkey in Critical Perspective. *Critical Sociology*, 0896920520976780.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520976780>
- Fraser Institute. (2017, September 28). *Economic Freedom of the World: 2017 Annual Report*. Fraser Institute. <https://bit.ly/2yq5JF2>

- Freedom House. (2019). *Democracy in Retreat*. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/democracy-retreat>
- Giroux, H. A. (2011). *On critical pedagogy*. Continuum.
- Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms. *Political Studies*, 44(5), 936–957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00343.x>
- Levy, D. (2009). For-profit versus Nonprofit Private Higher Education. *International Higher Education*, 54, Article 54. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2009.54.8414>
- Marginson, S. (2007). The public/private divide in higher education: A global revision. *Higher Education*, 53(3), 307–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-005-8230-y>
- Marginson, S. (2017). *Higher education and the common good*. Melbourne University Publishing.
- Mettler, S. (2014). *Degrees of inequality: How the politics of higher education sabotaged the American dream*. Basic Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group.
- Olsen, J. P. (2009a). Change and continuity: An institutional approach to institutions of democratic government. *European Political Science Review*, 1(1), 3–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773909000022>
- Olsen, J. P. (2009b). Democratic Government, Institutional Autonomy and the Dynamics of Change. *West European Politics*, 32(3), 439–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380902779048>
- Ordorika, I. (2003). The Limits of University Autonomy: Power and Politics at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. *Higher Education*, 46(3), 361–388. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025382504110>
- Pachuashvili, M. (2011). Governmental Policies and their Impact on Private Higher Education Development in Post-Communist Countries: Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia, 1990-2005. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 13(4), 397–410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2011.583108>
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*, 2nd ed (p. 532). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Perry, E. J. (2015). *Higher Education and Authoritarian Resilience: The Case of China, Past and Present*.
- Perry, E. J. (2020). Educated acquiescence: How academia sustains authoritarianism in China. *Theory and Society*, 49(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09373-1>
- Peters, B. G., & Fontain, G. (2020). *Handbook of research methods and applications in comparative policy analysis*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Pusser, B. (2016). A State Theoretical Approach to Understanding Contest in Higher Education. In S. Slaughter & B. J. Taylor (Eds.), *Higher Education, Stratification, and Workforce Development: Competitive Advantage in Europe*,

- the US, and Canada* (pp. 331–348). Springer International Publishing.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-21512-9_17
- Robertson, S. (2018, August 2). Diversity in the higher education ecosystem. *Culture, Politics and Global Justice*. <https://cpjcam.net/2018/08/02/diversity-in-the-higher-education-ecosystem/>
- Robertson, S. L. (2020). Powershift: Universities and the Seismic Winds of Change. In *Universities as Political Institutions* (pp. 11–32). Brill.
<https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004422582/BP000012.xml>
- Romanelli, E., & Tushman, M. L. (1994). Organizational Transformation as Punctuated Equilibrium: An Empirical Test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(5), 1141–1166. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256669>
- O’Donnell, G. A., Whitehead, L., & Schmitter, P. C. (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Prospects for democracy*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- O’Donnell, G., Schmitter, P. C., & Whitehead, L. (2013). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. JHU Press.
- Peck, J. (2010). *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. Oxford University Press.
- Salto, D. J. (2020). Comparative Higher Education Policy Under Nondemocratic Regimes in Argentina and Chile: Similar Paths, Different Policy Choices. *Higher Education Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-020-00194-x>
- Szadkowski, K., & Krzeski, J. (2019). In, Against, and Beyond: A Marxist Critique for Higher Education in Crisis. *Social Epistemology*, 33(6), 463–476.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2019.1638465>
- Tomini, L. (2017). *When Democracies Collapse: Assessing Transitions to Non-Democratic Regimes in the Contemporary World*. Taylor and Francis.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315189888>
- Valimaa, J. (2014). University Revolutions and Academic Capitalism: Actors, Mechanisms, Field, and Networks—Research portal—Converis—University of Jyväskylä. In *Academic Capitalism in the Age of Globalization* (B. Cantwell, I. Kauppinen, pp. 33–54). Johns Hopkins University Press.
https://converis.jyu.fi/converis/portal/detail/Publication/23946018?auxfun=&lang=en_GB
- Vatansever, A. (2020). *At the margins of academia: Exile, precariousness, and subjectivity*. Brill.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Applications of case study research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications

ZAHRA JAFAROVA is a PhD student in Higher Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto with collaborative specialization in Comparative, International and Development Education. She has extensive experience as a coordinator of capacity building projects in the field of higher education. Her research interests include politics of higher education, neoliberalism, and private higher education in comparative perspective. Email: zahra.jafarova@mail.utoronto.ca. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7998-4254>

The Influence of Institutional Autonomy Policy on Internationalization of Higher Education: A Case Study in Vietnam

Anh Thi Hoai Le ^{a*}

^aWestern University, Canada

*Corresponding author: Email: hle48@uwo.ca

Address: Western University, Ontario, Canada

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the enactment of institutional autonomy policy as a reform strategy to support the 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 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 paper 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.

Keywords: internationalization, institutional autonomy, neo-institutionalism, post-Soviet countries, higher education reform, centralized context

INTRODUCTION

Resembling many Asian countries, Vietnam has associated internationalization of higher education with the country's competitiveness and status in the global knowledge economy (Zhang, 2020). Yet, internationalization in Vietnam's context is in stark contrast to the legacy of centralized governance adopted from the former Soviet countries in which the ministries have complete control over public universities and are conservative in adopting foreign values (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Huisman et al., 2018). For example, while internationalization aims to attract internationally-recognized scholars, the recruitment of foreign labors for teaching and research activities is subject to ministerial approvals, resulting in bureaucratic processes that are lengthy and cumbersome, but not consistently successful (Tran et al., 2017). The Soviet's legacy emerges as the main challenge for internationalization in Vietnam.

To support public universities in internationalizing processes, the Vietnamese government has enacted the institutional autonomy policy. As the Higher Education Law (2012) states, the autonomy policy signifies the transfer of decision-making authority from ministries to public universities; accordingly, university leaders will have the power to decide on issues of teaching, research, finance, personnel, and international collaboration to achieve internationalizing goals. In this study, I explore how the autonomy policy has been implemented in a centralized context of Vietnam to support public universities in internationalizing processes. The findings contribute to our understanding of higher education reform in centralized contexts, not only Vietnam but also other post-Soviet countries in the shifting context of globalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on internationalization of higher education in Vietnam has been enriched by both local and foreign researchers who cover a wide range of topics from conceptualization, initiatives, challenges to outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2016; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Nhan & Le, 2019). Internationalization is defined as the process of integrating international, intercultural, and global dimensions

into the purpose, function, and delivery of tertiary education (Knight, 2003). Internationalizing initiatives might include branch campuses or cross-border collaborative programs and degrees (Altbach & Knight, 2007). For example, Vietnam is an emerging center of internationalization in Asia with RMIT's branch campus in Vietnam. Rationales of internationalization can be classified as academic, cultural, political, and economic reasons (de Wit, 2020) and include international profile and reputation, student and staff development, income generation, strategic alliances, and research and knowledge production (Knight, 2004). Most studies share a commonly held belief on internationalization in Vietnam's context as westernization in higher education, in which Vietnamese institutions adopt practices from western countries (Tran et al., 2017; Sperduti, 2017), for instance, using curriculum from Australia, Canada, America, or England. Prior studies have also found interactions between local history, culture, politics, and foreign influences during the internationalization process at Vietnamese universities (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Ngo et al., 2006).

The concept of institutional autonomy has been discussed extensively in the literature under different terms such as university autonomy, academic freedom, self-governance, and independence. Scholars in early studies defined university autonomy as academic freedom—the freedom of individual academics to teach, research, and pursue truth without fear of punishment or termination of employment (Ashby & Anderson, 1966; Berdahl, 1990; Ash, 2006; Enders, 2006). Behind this conceptualization of autonomy lies a rationale based on the principle that freedom of thought is a non-negotiable condition that is necessary to uphold the university's mission to provide society with scientific knowledge (Neave, 2012). Autonomy is also conceptualized as self-governance, that is, the power of an institution to govern all matters concerning admission, curriculum, assessment, recruitment, finance, and research, without control or influence from any level of government (Tight, 1992; Anderson & Johnson, 1998). In the neoliberal context, the meaning of autonomy has been expanded to include influences of external stakeholders such as the state, market, and society on the university. A vast body of literature has explored autonomy as a mutually dependent relationship between the university's decision-making authority and accountability to the state (Yokoyama, 2007, 2008, 2011; Maassen et al., 2017; Amsler & Shore, 2017). For example, Huisman (2018) argues that public universities are gradually being granted more authority to make decisions on their matters, yet, the

government is also implementing accountability measures to keep track of the university's behavior and performance.

Recent studies have also explored the influence of local context, that is, historical, cultural, political characteristics, on the enactment of autonomy policy in Vietnam (Tran, 2009; Vo, 2018; Dang, 2013). For example, drawing on neo-institutionalism, Vo (2018) illuminates how institutional factors shape the implementation of autonomy policy which borrows the reform ideology from western countries. Despite many studies on internationalization and autonomy policy, there is an absence of study investigating the connection between these two important reform policies in Vietnam. I argue that a nuanced understanding of the linkage between the autonomy policy and internationalization can boost the internationalizing process at Vietnamese public universities. Specifically, university leaders can take advantage of their autonomy to adopt internationalizing initiatives and be aware of what to take into consideration in their internationalization strategies to avoid conflict with the ministries.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I draw on neo-institutionalism to gain insights into the enactment of autonomy policy in Vietnam. Neo-institutionalism emphasizes the dependence of any change on characteristics of local context; accordingly, the reform must occur within the interplay of organizational characteristics and the ideology adopted externally (Maassen, 2017; Campbell, 2004). The perspective of neo-institutionalism is useful for understanding the implementation of autonomy policy in Vietnam's context, in which the autonomy policy is borrowed from western countries in order for Vietnam to adapt to the shifting context of globalization. Yet, the reform ideology, that is, transferring authorities from ministries to public universities, is conflicting with the local context in which the governance system is centralized to the ministries' control.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, I employ a qualitative case study to explore the influence of the autonomy policy on internationalization. As Yin (2014) suggests, case study is a design particularly suited to the situation in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon from its context. Given Vietnam's cultural and political context, a case study is appropriate to explore the phenomenon of autonomy. The study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm, in which the goal is to rely as much as possible on participants' views of the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such a

goal is consistent with this study—to gain an in-depth understanding of autonomy and internationalization from the perspectives of university leaders. The first primary data source I used is semi-structured interviews with seventeen leaders at one Vietnamese public university, which I call University A. I interviewed senior leaders because they are information-rich participants who have thorough understandings of and experience on implementing autonomy policy and internationalization at University A. Thus, they can provide useful insights on these reform strategies.

In addition to interviews, I used the Vietnamese government's official policy documents and University A's internal documents. With the support of Nvivo, I conducted thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which include six steps: (1) familiarizing myself with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing a report. With this data-driven coding method, themes or findings emerge from data. To increase trustworthiness of the findings, I used strategies of triangulation between data sources, member checking, reflexivity, and audit trail.

RESULTS

The findings indicate that the autonomy policy has facilitated internationalization with significant outcomes for research and teaching. Specifically, the Vietnamese government has transferred considerable authority to University A and removed barriers of ministerial control to pave the way for the university in adopting international practices. University A has gained the power to recruit foreigner scholars without having ministerial approvals. Thanks for this support, the university's research reputation has been boosted through the organization of international conferences and publications on prestigious English scientific journals. The outcomes support the university's goal to become a research-intensive university by 2030. In addition, University A has authority to internationalize curriculum such as using foreign textbooks and importing international programs, which help to modernize curriculum and increase education quality. However, the university's autonomy on managerial issues, especially the appointment of senior positions, is very limited. Furthermore, the government strictly controls content in curriculum. For example, the university is not allowed to abolish political courses and must use textbooks written by Vietnamese authors for these courses, although contents are not necessary for many majors. The restrictions have limited the university's integration process

into the international education market because the university has difficulties in developing joint degrees with foreign institutions.

DISCUSSION

I argue that the autonomy policy has been enacted through interactions of Vietnam's political features and foreign ideologies. The policy has supported University A to achieve its goals of internationalization, that is, to increase resources in a globalized context (Knight, 2004). Specifically, the university has gained international profile and reputation through strategic alliances with foreign institutions and researchers. It also achieves knowledge acquisition through imported curriculum in which contents are updated. However, the legacy of centralized governance in which the ministries have ultimate power and are conservative on western values still impedes the internationalizing process. As Stensaker et al. (2008) emphasizes, the political power of a country plays a critical role in the field of internationalization. Consequently, the university's curriculum is a mixture of Vietnamese and foreign contents and leadership positions are limited to Vietnamese people. This means local forces still play a decisive role in Vietnam's internationalization agendas.

The findings confirm the literature on outcomes of internationalization in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2016; Nhan & Le, 2019) and the hybridity of Vietnamese values and external influences during the integration process (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Ngo et al., 2006). The paper contributes to the field of comparative and international higher education by reinforcing the goal of internationalization in Asian countries, that is, to seek a national identity (Ritter, 2019) and a global competitiveness and status (Zhang, 2020). The study joins with Spurduti (2017) about internationalization as westernization, in which Vietnam's universities import contents from western countries and publish in English academic journals. However, the study advances the conversation by acknowledging the role of centralized governance context in post-Soviet countries during the reform process to adapt to globalization.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the implementation of autonomy policy as the Vietnamese government's support for internationalization strategies at public universities. While Vietnamese institutions are in the initial phase of implementing autonomy and internationalization, findings have important implications for future policy-making and practice. University leaders can take advantage of their

decision-making authority to boost internationalizing processes. However, they need to be aware of what to consider in their internationalization plans. I strongly recommend that policy-makers and university leaders take into consideration political features of Vietnam in adopting the autonomy policy. Also, given the Soviet's legacy as the main challenge for internationalization in Vietnam, university leaders must dare to think, dare to act, and be extremely flexible during the internationalizing process.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, D., & Johnson, R. (1998). *University autonomy in twenty countries*. Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The Internationalization of higher education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), 290–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Amsler, M., & Shore, C. (2017). Responsibilisation and leadership in the neoliberal university: A New Zealand perspective. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 38(1), 123-137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1104857>
- Ashby, E., & Anderson, M. (1966). *Universities: British, Indian, African. A study of the ecology of higher education*. London, England: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Ash, M. G. (2006). Bachelor of what, master of whom? The Humboldt myth and historical transformations of higher education in German-speaking Europe and the United States. *European Journal of Education*, 41(2), 245-267. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3435.2006.00258.x>
- Berdahl, R. (1990). Academic freedom, autonomy, and accountability in British universities. *Studies in Higher Education*, 15(2), 169-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079012331377491>
- Braun, C. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Campbell, J. L. (2004). *Institutional Change and Globalization*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691216348>
- Creswell, J.W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- de Wit, H. (2020). Internationalization of higher education. *Journal of International Students*, 10(1), i–iv. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i1.1893>
- Enders, J. (2006). The academic profession. In P. G. Altbach & J. J. F. Forest (Eds.),

- International handbook of higher education* (pp. 5-22). Springer.
- Hayden, M., & Thiep, L. Q. (2007). Institutional autonomy for higher education in Vietnam. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 26(1), 73–85.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360601166828>
- Higher Education Law, Publ. L. No. 08/2012/QH2013 (2012).
http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=1&_page=1&mode=detail&document_id=163054
- Huisman, J., Smolentseva, A., & Froumin, I. (2018). *25 Years of transformations of higher education systems in post-Soviet countries: Reform and continuity*. Springer Open. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52980-6>
- Knight, J. (2003). Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2-3.
- Maassen, P. (2017). The university's governance paradox. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 71(3), 290-298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12125>
- Maassen, P., Gornitzka, Å., & Fumasoli, T. (2017). University reform and institutional autonomy: A framework for analyzing the living autonomy. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 71(3), 239-250. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12129>
- Ngo, T. M., Lingard, B., & Mitchell, J. (2006). The policy cycle and vernacular globalization: A case study of the creation of Vietnam National University-Hochiminh City. *Comparative Education*, 42(2), 225–242.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060600628082>
- Neave, G. (2012). *The evaluative state, institutional autonomy and re-engineering higher education in Europe: The prince and his pleasure*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Nguyen, D. P., Vickers, M., Ly, T. M. C., & Tran, M. D. (2016). Internationalizing higher education (HE) in Vietnam. *Education + Training*, 58(2), 193–208.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-08-2015-0072>
- Nguyen, N., & Tran, L. (2018). Looking inward or outward? Vietnam higher education at the superhighway of globalization: Culture, values, and changes. *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 11(1), 28–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17516234.2017.1332457>
- Nhan, T. T., & Le, K. A. T. (2019). Internationalisation of higher education in Vietnam. In C. H. Nguyen & M. Shah (Eds.), *Quality Assurance in Vietnamese Higher Education* (pp. 25–58). Springer International Publishing.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26859-6_2
- Ritter, Z. S. (2019). Singapore's search for national identity: Building a nation through education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 5(Spring), 16–21.
<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/831>
- Sperduti, V. R. (2017). Internationalization as Westernization in Higher

- Education. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 9(Spring), 9–12.
<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/887>
- Stensaker, B., Frølich, N., Gornitzka, Å., & Maassen, P. (2008). Internationalisation of higher education: The gap between national policy-making and institutional needs. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 6(1), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720701855550>
- Tight, M. (1992). Institutional autonomy. In B. L. Clark & G. Neave (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of higher education*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Tran, L. T., Ngo, M., Nguyen, N., & Dang, X. T. (2017). Hybridity in Vietnamese universities: An analysis of the interactions between Vietnamese traditions and foreign influences. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(10), 1899–1916.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1376872>
- Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Yokoyama, K. (2007). Changing definitions of university autonomy: The cases of England and Japan. *Higher Education in Europe*, 32(4), 399-409.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03797720802066294>
- Yokoyama, K. (2008). Neo-liberal 'governmentality' in the English and Japanese higher education systems. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 18(3-4), 231-247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210802492815>
- Yokoyama, K. (2011). Quality assurance and the changing meaning of autonomy and accountability between home and overseas campuses of the universities in New York State. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 15(3), 261-278.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315309342577>
- Zhang, Y. (2020). Internationalization higher education for what?: An analysis of national strategies of higher education internationalization in East Asia. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 12(6S1), 10–15.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.3077>

ANH THI HOAI LE is a final year doctoral student at Western University, Canada. She is interested in internationalization of higher education, university governance, and critical policy studies from a comparative perspective. Email: hle48@uwo.ca. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7518-9205>.

The Growth of Academic Identity in the Early Career Stage in Chinese Higher Education

Jiajie (Jay) Liu ^{a*}

^aIOE, University College London

*Corresponding author: Email: jiajie.liu@ucl.ac.uk

Address: IOE, University College London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

This doctoral study explores how early career academics 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. Moreover, it 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 to go deep into the everyday experiences of the ECAs 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. It will shed light on scholarly debates on the growth of academic identity in the early career stage and faculty development in China.

Keywords: ECAs, Chinese HE, Academic Identity, Phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

As China integrates into the global knowledge economy in an increasingly important way, there is a growing political desire to develop its higher education system to meet both the internal needs of the transition to a market economy and the external pressures to remain globally competitive (Zha, 2011). Under this condition, a series of higher education reforms which could be categorized into three stages (i.e. massification, internationalization and pursuit of world-class) are driven by the government (Mok, 2016; Wang & Mok, 2014; Yang, 2015).

By replacing the 211 and 985 Projects, the Double First-class Scheme is a reform-based performance-related attempt to help higher education institutions optimize their disciplinary structures by recruiting talented scholars and scientists worldwide. More importantly, this new Scheme hopes to effectively eliminate the monopoly of past 211/985 universities on governmental resources and encourage more comprehensive development of Chinese higher education. This Scheme also led a number of universities making transition from teacher-oriented to research-oriented ones. Meanwhile, the university repositioning brought a series of changes to academics, especially those in their early career stage.

While the emerging body of research focusing on the growth of academic identity is encouraging, what is still missing to this point is precisely how ECAs' academic identity is shaped overtime and how do they experience particular changes in terms of their sense of belonging and teaching-research relationship in the field of social sciences. This dissertation study aims to address three main questions:

1. How do ECAs experience their sense of belonging to the academic profession during the transition of teaching-intensive universities in Chinese higher education system?
2. How do ECAs experience the teaching and research nexus through the transition of their institutions from a teaching- to a research-led environment?
3. In what ways do ECAs facilitate their research career during the transition? And what factors influence this?

Teaching-Research Nexus

The relationship between teaching and research has recently been a controversial issue in higher education (Horta et al., 2011; Zhang & Shin, 2015). The relationship matters, partly because of its implication for higher education

structure and resources and partly because of its intrinsic importance in helping to define higher education. Since the relationship between teaching and research is important to the higher education system, understanding the nature of the nexus with reference to the operations level and disciplinary variation could support HE managers to design the reward mechanisms (Song, 2018) and incentives policy (Zhang et al., 2019) for faculty staff in a specific HE context.

There is an old Chinese saying goes like ‘teaching others teachers yourself (教学相长)’ which means that the capacities of teachers will be strengthened during their teaching activities. In the higher education context, previous studies on teaching-informed research (e.g. Willcoxson et al., 2011) and research-informed pedagogy (e.g. Mathieson, 2019) evidently support the existing nexus between teaching and research. Currently, both quantitative and qualitative studies seek to find out the nexus and understand how does the nexus operate crossing various disciplines in universities (Boyd et al., 2010; Connolly et al., 2021), but very few studies look at the academic’s experience of the nexus let alone applying the nexus to faculty development. Past studies have captured the teaching-research nexus and have explored the relationship primarily in terms of disciplinary and pedagogical practices. The direct experience of ECAs as subjects conducting teaching and research is also useful in providing an in-depth understanding of the nexus. The implementation of the ‘Double First-class Scheme’ policy has led to the quest for organizational change in terms of organizational culture and research development in many Chinese universities. At the same time, this transition has given this study an opportunity to observe these changes and to gain insights into the nexus between teaching and research from the perspective of ECAs.

METHODOLOGY

A paradigm or worldview of a researcher is “a basic of belief that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). This study adopts the social constructionist’s worldview that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meaning directed toward certain objects. Under social constructionist’s paradigm, Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen as the major methodology to the doctoral study.

The document data not only serve as the backdrop of the study but also situate the discussion in a wider context. The main documents analyzed are from the Chinese government, Ministry of Education, and the universities. Documents

from the government related to faculty development included government plans at the national and municipal levels, policy initiatives, and regulations. Documents from the universities related to faculty development included strategic planning (vision, expectations, etc.), annual reports, HRM and incentive policy. Newsletters of universities included official policies and public opinions from faculty, staff, and administrators related to ECA and faculty development.

Qualitative research is concerned with the depth of data rather than generalizability. In terms of the number of people interviewed, data saturation occurred as a sign of sufficiency. For this study, the number of participants was determined by analyzing data after a pilot study. Participants (8 ECAs) in this study are recruited according to several criteria such as age (under 35 years old), sex, research field, type of PhD awarding institution from four universities which are located in Eastern (Coastal), Central (middle), Western, and Northeastern regions of China. In the main study, focused ethnographic observations are carried out in several scenarios like classroom, supervision of undergraduate dissertation, and departmental meetings. The short-term field observations in this study mainly contribute to a better understanding of the context in which participants work and live daily. These understandings better informed the design and implementation of in-depth phenomenological interviews which focuses on participants' life history, details of experience and acute reflection (Seidman, 2019).

CONTRIBUTION TO COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

The study on the experience of Chinese academics in their early career stage in teaching-intensive higher education institutions is significant for several reasons. First of all, ECAs is the largest group of the academy and the most important intellectual reserve. Their experience on academic profession is helpful for policy-makers, senior management of HEIs and faculty developers to design the learning and development policies that facilitate the research development and strengthen the nexus of teaching and research. The 'Double First-class' Scheme replaces the 985 Project and reflect the focus on Chinese higher education reform has been shifted by the government from building individual prestigious universities to promoting the overall quality of higher education and faculty development. As knowledge carriers and producers, academics in universities are regarded as the basis of innovation and knowledge reproduction in China, and also the early career stage as the most vigorous period of academic vitality (Freebody,

2010). However, their stories of academic growth have not yet been adequately chaptered. In fact, there are limited ways of understanding of what is entailed in the process of decision-making and academic development, particularly their motivations, experiences, struggles, and possibilities.

Second, a close investigation on the transition of teaching-intensive university will shed some light on the ‘Double First-class’ Scheme and its quest for creating world-class universities and disciplines. China, in recent years, has aggressively moved to advance its higher education through setting up world-class universities. This research makes a contribution to the literature of comparative higher education study.

Furthermore, this study is valuable to researchers who are interested in the growth of academic identity in Chinese higher education context over time. While scholarship on identity formation has opened up a new conceptual framework for understanding the growth of identity with the life-course and social-cultural developmental approach (Eteläpelto et al., 2013), which indicates that professional agency should be conceptualized from a subject-centered socio-cultural and life-long learning perspective, turning attention to subjects’ construction of their identity position at work, and focusing on how they negotiate agency in education and working life to construct meaningful careers and life courses. Through phenomenological interviews and field observations, this study will answer the above mentioned research questions with rich and in-depth qualitative data, which includes the life history, personal experiences, and reflections of ECAs and will enable the researcher to recognize the mechanisms by which they construct their identity of the academic profession and how they experience the nexus between teaching and research during periods of transition. The research finding may contribute to the faculty developers for facilitating ECA’s research career in practice. There has been growing literature on faculty development with different concentrations on JCIHE (e.g. Kwiek, 2014; Djiraro Mangué & Gonondo, 2021 and Ruan, 2020), this emerging study will enrich the scholarly debate on these topics.

REFERENCES

- Boyd, W. E., O’Reilly, M., Bucher, D., Fisher, K., & Morton, A. (2010). Activating the Teaching-Research Nexus in smaller universities: Case studies highlighting

- diversity of practice. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 7(19), <http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol7/iss2/9>
- Connolly, C., Hall, T., Ryan, M., McMahon, J., McGann, M., & Egan, A. (2021). A fusion of research-informed teaching and teaching-informed research: Designing a scalable online ecosystem for new partnerships in educational research. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 37(1), 82-95. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.6131>
- Djiraro Mangué, C. L., & Gonondo, J. (2021). Academic Culture and Talent Cultivation: The Chinese Experience. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(1), 133–150. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i1.3133>
- Eteläpelto, A., Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., & Paloniemi, S. What is agency? Conceptualizing professional agency at work. *Educational Research Review*, 10, 45-65, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2013.05.001>
- Guba, E. G. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Sage Publications.
- Kwiek, M. (2019). Strong Research Performers” vs. “Strong Teaching Performers” in European Higher Education: A Comparative Quantitative Perspective. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 6(Spring), 20–27. Retrieved from <https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/858>
- Horta, H., Dautel, V., & Veloso, F. M. (2011). An output perspective on the teaching–research nexus: an analysis focusing on the United States higher education system. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37 (2), 171-187, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.503268>
- Mathieson, S. (2019). Integrating research, teaching and practice in the context of new institutional policies: a social practice approach. *Higher Education*, 78, 799–815. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00371-x>
- Mok, K. H. (2016). *The quest for world-class university status: implications for sustainable development of Asian universities*, Centre for Global Higher Education Working Papers, No. 8, Oxford: University of Oxford
- Ruan, N. (2020). Female Professors Developing Intellectual Leadership in Hong Kong: Considering Disciplinary, Institutional and Gender Factors. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12 (6S1). <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.3010>
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. Teacher College Press.
- Song, J. (2018). Creating world-class universities in China: strategies and impacts at a renowned research university, *Higher Education*, 75, 729-742, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0167-4>

- Wang, L. and Mok, K.H. (2014). The impacts of neo-Liberalism on higher education in China, in A. Turner & H. Yolcu (Eds.) *Neo-liberal Educational Reforms: A Critical Analysis* (pp. 139–163), London: Routledge.
- Willcoxson, L., Manning, M. L., Johnston, N., Gething, K. (2011). Enhancing the Research-Teaching Nexus: Building Teaching-Based Research from Research-Based Teaching. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 23(1), 1-10.
- Yang, R. (2015). Institutional mergers in Chinese higher education. In A. Curaj, J. C. Harper and L. Georghiou (eds.). *Mergers and alliances in higher education: international practice and emerging opportunities* (pp. 123-144), Singapore: Springer.
- Zha, Q. (2011). Understanding China's move to mass higher education: from a policy perspective. In R. Hayhoe, J. Li, J. Lin & Q. Zha (Eds.), *Portraits of 21st century Chinese universities: In the move to mass higher education* (pp. 20-57). Hong Kong China: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong & Springer.
- Zhang, L. F., & Shin, J. C. (2015). The research-teaching nexus among academics from 15 Institutions in Beijing, mainland China. *Higher Education*, 70 (3), 375-394, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9836-8>
- Zhang, L. F., Fu, M., Li, D. T., & He, Y. F. (2019). Emotions and teaching styles among academics: The mediating role of research and teaching efficacy. *Educational Psychology*. 39 (3), 370-394, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1520970>

MR. JIAJIE LIU comes from China and he identifies himself as a life-long learner, an educational practitioner and an entrepreneur. He is engaged in administrative roles in a university in mainland China, responsible for the development of scientific research and the management of internal and external funds. He made a commitment to foster a research climate within the university, motivate faculty members to pursue scientific research and apply for external funding. At the same time, he has set up an education consulting firm to provide services for the internationalisation of higher education to both individuals and organisations. He is also currently a PhD candidate at University College London, where his research interests are early career academics' academic identity and their experience of the teaching–research nexus. He was trained in engineering at undergraduate level and later gained his two Master's degrees from the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow respectively.

Youth Aspirations and Experiences: A Case Study of Alternative Higher Education Programs offered by an NGO in Malawi

Andrew Achichizga Nkhoma

University of the Free State, South Africa

Corresponding author: Email: nkhomaandrew@gmail.com

Address: University of the Free State, Free State, South Africa

ABSTRACT

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, prepare them for lives that they have a reason to value and enhance their wellbeing. The broader Ph.D. study from which this paper stems used a qualitative case study based on the views of youth from a selected NGO. 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 paper uses the capabilities approach as a conceptual framework to refine it within higher education.

Keywords: alternative higher education programs, aspirations, capabilities, Malawi, wellbeing, youth.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, nations are dealing with numerous challenges in public higher education that include access, participation, equity, and relevance. Despite efforts to improve access, Malawi still struggles to provide higher education to its growing youth population. While several alternative educational strategies have been identified in the literature, universities are still being hailed as the most beneficial option (Busson, n.d.; United Nations (U.N.), 2011). Ironically, universities struggle to accommodate most youths who qualify and aspire to pursue higher education. Studies reveal that up to 60% of eligible university candidates may not be accepted in the Malawian context due to limited infrastructure and facilities (Mahlaha, 2012). The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Malawi reports that in 2018 less than 30% of the eligible candidates were enrolled in public universities (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), 2019). Moreover, less than 1% of the qualified cohort are enrolled in some form of tertiary education (U.N., 2010).

However, there are limited critical explorations on alternative programs offered by private organizations for youth who fail to access university in Malawi; those that do hardly consider youth perspectives (Hardgrove, Pells, Boyden & Dornan, 2014). 'Although alternative pathways and credentials have conceptual and practical appeal, evidence of their efficacy is thin, and quality assurance is weak' (Brown & Kurzweil, 2017, p.4). The paucity of such studies, especially in Malawi, necessitates empirical research on this topic. Therefore, this paper explores alternative higher education (AHE) programs that youth may access and reveal their experiences in these programs while investigating whether the programs align with their aspirations. In doing so, the paper shows youth's unique experiences of the ways AHE programs do/can prepare them to live meaningful lives that they have a reason to value and enhance their wellbeing. The paper enables us to understand if AHE satisfies or stifles youths' educational aspirations, enables capability achievement, and enhances wellbeing.

This paper considers AHE programs as those that the youth attend in the absence of mainstream universities and colleges. In Malawi, these institutions are sometimes run by NGOs, are not controlled by the NCHE, but the Technical Entrepreneurial Vocational Authority (TEVETA) and are ranked lower than universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Limited access to universities and colleges has seen the mushrooming of alternative provision of post-secondary education with the different underlying assumptions of what AHE can contribute to those who attend. Four main approaches dominate scholarly debates on what should be achieved in and through AHE.

The first approach looks at AHE as a way of achieving equity of access. Scholars such as Denti and Guerin; (2008) argue that as in any education, alternative education should give equity to all groups of people and incorporate in the curriculum elements that can influence attitudes, behavior, and interpersonal skills in students from different backgrounds. Other scholars such as Odo, Adenle and Okwori (2012); Sadideen and Kneebone (2012) argue that AHE programs should be designed to equip youth with technical and practical skills and knowledge, which will be usable after completion for employment and sustainable livelihood. These scholars make a case for action-based programs (Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006). These scholars overly focus on the methodology and how teaching should be done to enhance technical and practical skills and pay much attention to the instructors and the teaching process and less attention to the students. While the approach is essential in addressing pedagogical concerns in alternative forms of higher education, it does not necessarily address youth aspirations for AHE programs. Another approach stresses the need for AHE to spur economic development through job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities. Higher education should provide the 'know how', competencies and employability for those entering the labour market (UNESCO, 1998) and alleviate youth unemployment (Kamyab, 2018).

Finally, capabilities approach scholars such as Mkwanzani (2019), Walker (2019), DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014) and Walker and Mathebula (2020) argue that alternative post-secondary education such as entrepreneurship education and any higher education program should reduce poverty, provide livelihood opportunities enhance capabilities and functionings for individual's wellbeing. Moreover, Boateng and Löwe (2018) observe that these scholars have convincingly criticized the literature on higher education aspirations that overly focus on economic and financial concerns at the expense of other aspirations such as social relationships or familial obligations. Focusing on access and the monetary benefits of education and occupations is limited. The capability approach merges the various approaches and goes beyond. It allows us to consider an individual as aspiring for different things for different reasons that lead to a life of value. However, previous research employing the capability approach has inconclusively explored AHE programs and the extent to which they fulfill the various aspects of a good life that youth aspire for.

Therefore, the paper bridges this gap by exploring youth aspirations and experiences in AHE programs in Malawi framed by the capabilities approach.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

This paper uses the capability approach, a normative framework for assessing the wellbeing and effective freedom to live a life that an individual has reason to value. Alkire (2006) indicates that the capability approach is people-centred and values human agency, while Sen (1999) asserts that the approach allows us to reconsider the role, process and content of public education, offering a set of conceptual tools that would enable a rethinking of injustices in our education systems towards the development of fair and just solutions. The framework provides a tool for understanding youth and conceptualizing fair and just ways for addressing aspirations and youth wellbeing. Sen (1999) indicates that development is about fighting against social, political, and economic deprivations. Applied as a conceptual framework, the capability approach helped formulate questions on inequalities in higher education affecting youth aspirations and how NGOs address these aspirations in Malawi. Factors that affect the aspirational freedom of youth are also examined through the approach. As a robust normative framework for studying different forms of disadvantage, the capability approach provides a lens for exploring youth aspirations. It offers the possibility to examine educational strategies enabling suggestions for positive social change (Robeyns, 2006).

RESEARCH METHOD

The broader Ph.D. study from which this paper stems used a qualitative case study. The study was systematically and purposefully designed to have three levels of analysis comprising the national context (Malawi) at level one. A unique NGO institution was on level two, namely, St. John of God Hospitaller Services. The NGO runs an institute of vocational training and offers rehabilitation services for at-risk youth. The services are accessible to youth and other people recuperating from mental illness, those with disabilities, and other vulnerabilities that include teenage mothers, orphans, and poverty-stricken out-of-school youth (TEVETA, 2018; St. John of God, n.d.). The organization offered AHE to over 200 youths who failed to access university; moreover, its location in an urban area where most youth search for education after completing their secondary school made the organization a suitable case study. Individual human actors within the selected institution made level three. This design guided the collection of detailed information using various data collection methods (Creswell, 2009) and effectively collated evidence to answer the set research questions (Hamilton, 2011; Yin, 2009).

The researcher moderated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) by focusing on general youth's perceptions of aspirations and experiences in AHE programs in Malawi and at their training institution with 24 youths. The youth were then asked to participate in individual in-depth/unstructured interviews. Twenty-three youths participated in the personal in-depth interviews. While the FGDs provided

consensus on issues discussed as the youth dwelt on issues of shared experience (DeJaeghere et al., 2020), the individual interviews captured personal stories that facilitated the production and understanding of the youth's meaning of their experience (Seidman, 2006). The study targeted youth 18 years of age and older, who had completed secondary school education, would potentially enroll with other higher education institutions but were pursuing courses at St. John of God Hospitaller Services Institute for Vocational Training. Semi-structured interviews were done with nine NGO staff members: three-course instructors, the programs manager, the coordinator of vocational training, a psycho-social counselor, two social workers, and the organization's director. Document analysis provided accurate, detailed, and unbiased information, captured official positions and meanings, further helped understand the matter under investigation, and triangulated the findings (Bowen, 2009; Merriam, 1988).

RESULTS

The initial findings demonstrate that youth aspire for higher education and can show agency for higher education by seeking alternative routes after failing to make it to university. Some will attempt to improve their grades by re-writing secondary school, leaving examinations for a competitive chance at university enrollment. An open-door policy regarding entry requirements that was in place at the NGO understudy enabled many youths to gain access and participate in post-secondary school education. The capability to aspire and hope, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, be responsible citizens, gain confidence and economic independence, and choose to marry or not for girls are some of the capabilities and functionings that were enabled for youth in AHE. The findings showed that AHE helped create financial independence for several youths, AHE acted as a means of attending universities later. Attending AHE potentially enabled youth to establish an incoming generating activity to pay for higher education programs they aspired for. However, findings also revealed that AHE institutions made the youth feel inadequate as they viewed the institutions as lower-ranked. Furthermore, findings showed that while staff members valued self-reliance, economic independence, and being responsible citizens as essential capabilities that the institution offered the youth, the students thought being economically self-reliant was something essential gained through the programs.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that environmental factors may influence what people choose to do and be. The choices people make might be influenced by contextual forces surrounding them. Robeyns (2017) discusses environmental conversion factors affecting people's choices. While youth demonstrate agency for higher education, it is not enough to see them into university; hence they adjust their aspirations and learn in AHE programs. NGOs that offer AHE create real opportunities for youth from vulnerable backgrounds by providing free post-

secondary education. However, more needs to be done to have AHE facilitate youth aspirations achievement, including aspirations for university education, decent work, independent lives, and raised social status.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The paper contributes to the capabilities approach scholarship within the higher education landscape. It broadens the scope of the context that typically comprises studies in higher education by focusing on AHE in the Malawian context. The paper enables us to understand if AHE satisfies or stifles youths' educational aspirations, enables capability achievement and enhances wellbeing, and contributes to conceptualizing and implementing educational programs that may lead to youth wellbeing.

REFERENCES

- Alkire, S. (2006). Why the capability approach? *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), 115-135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/146498805200034275>
- Boateng, E. S., & Löwe, A. (2018). *Aspirations matter: What young people in Ghana think about work*. Overseas Development Institute.
- Bowen, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Brown, J., & Kurzweil, M. (2017). *The Complex universe of alternative postsecondary credentials and pathways*. American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Busson, S. (n.d.). Skills development and youth employability in West Africa: observations on the state of TVET and good practices from Senegal, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. *Research Report*. <https://www.adeanet.org>.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- DeJaeghere, J., & Baxter, A. (2014). Entrepreneurship education for youth in Sub-Saharan Africa: A capabilities approach as an alternative framework to neoliberalism's individualizing risks: *Progress in Development Studies* 14(1), 61-71.
- DeJaeghere, J., Morrow, V., Richardson, D., Schowengerdt, B., Hinton, R., Muñoz Boudet, A. (2020). *Guidance note on qualitative research in education: Considerations for best practice*. Department for International Development.
- Denti, L., & Guerin, G. (2008). *Effective practice for adolescents with reading and literacy challenges*. Routledge.
- Hamilton, L. (2011). Case studies in educational research. *British Educational Research Association online resource*. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/case-studies-in-educational-research>.
- Hardgrove, A., Pells, K., Boyden, J., & Dornan, P. (2014). Youth vulnerabilities in life course transitions: *Occasional Paper*. UNDP-Human Development Report Office.

- Kamyab, S. (2018). The community college concept and the youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In R. L. Raby & E. J. Valeau, *Handbook on Comparative Issues of Community Colleges and Global Counterparts* (pp. 745-756). Springer Publishers.
- Mahlaha, N. (2012). Malawi. In P. Kotecha, M. Wilson-Strydom & S. N. Fongwa (Eds.), *A Profile of higher education in southern Africa* (Vol.2., pp. 43-48). SARUA. <https://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/Malawi%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). (2019). *Malawi Education Sector Analysis*. Government of Malawi.
- Mkwanzani, F. (2019). *Higher education, youth and migration in contexts of disadvantage: Understanding aspirations and capabilities*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Odo, M. I., Adenle, S. O., Okwori, R. O. (2012). Enhancing mastery of practical skills in students of vocational and technical education through activity based instruction. *Journal of Technical Education and Training (JTET)*, 4(2), 2229-8932.
- Rasmussen, E. A. & Sørheim, R. (2006). Action-based entrepreneurship education. *Technovation*, 26, 185–194.
- Robeyns, I. (2006). Three models of education: Rights, capabilities and human capital. *Theory and Research in Education*, 4(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878506060683>
- Robeyns, I. (2017). *Wellbeing, freedom and social justice: The capability approach re-examined*. Open Book Publishers.
- Sadideen, H., & Kneebone, M. R. C. S. (2012). Practical skills teaching in contemporary surgical education: How can educational theory be applied to promote effective learning? *The American Journal of Surgery*, 204, 396–401.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Alfred A Knopf.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A Guide for researchers in education and social science* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- St. John of God (sjog). (n.d.). *Institute of Vocational Training*. <https://sjog.mw>
- Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVETA). (2018). *Strategic plan 2018-2023*. TEVETA.
- United Nations. (2011). International year of the youth. 2010-2011. *Dialogue and mutual understanding*. <http://social.un.org/youthyear>
- UNESCO. (1998). Higher education in the 21st century: vision and action. *Final Report of the World Conference on Higher Education*. UNESCO.
- Walker, M. (2019). Why epistemic justice matters in and for education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-019-09601-4>
- Walker, M., & Mathebula, M. (2020) Low-income rural youth migrating to urban universities in South Africa: opportunities and inequalities. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 50(8), 1193-1209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2019.1587705>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications, Inc.

ANDREW ACHICHIZGA NKHOMA is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of the Free State, South Africa, under the SARCHi Chair in Higher Education and Human Development Research Group. His research interests include youth educational aspirations, capabilities approach and socially just societies. Email: nkhomaandrew@gmail.com

Volume 13, Issue 5S (2021), pp. 79-86
Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education
DOI: 10.32674/jcihe.v13i5S.4137 | <https://ojed.org/jcihe>

Exploring Bilingual Ideology and Identity of EMI Medical Teachers and Students in China's Mainland

Paiwei Qin^{a*}

^a *University of Jyväskylä, Finland*

*Correspondence author: email: qinpa@jyu.fi.

Address: University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research-in-progress 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.

Keywords: China, English-medium-instruction, medical education, identity, ideology

INTRODUCTION

With the internationalization of higher education (HE), EMI (English-medium-instruction) in HE has become a growing phenomenon worldwide. According to Dearden's (2014, p. 2) definition, EMI refers to "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English". In China's mainland, EMI has been promoted as a critical strategy to improve the teaching and learning efficiency of the English language in the tertiary sector since 2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001, 2005, 2007). The past two decades witnessed the development of EMI and the opportunities it has brought; meanwhile, due to the top-down manner of implementation, EMI micro-level stakeholders (teachers and students) have encountered many challenges and even questioned the existing educational practices and learning outcomes (Hu, 2019; Macaro et al., 2019; Rose et al., 2019). In addition, recent studies on bilingual education (e.g., EMI and CLIL) have criticized the default monolingualism ideology and appealed to adopt a multilingual paradigm (Fang, 2018b; García & Li, 2014; Macaro et al., 2019). As a typical EFL context, China's mainland has faced this ongoing ideological debate, swaying between a traditionally default monolingualism ideology and an emerging multilingualism as approaches to EMI. Further, it is problematic to adopt "one-size-fits-all" across different disciplines in EMI education, which requires researchers to contextualize their nuanced investigation for deepening understanding of particular disciplines (Kuteeva & Airey, 2014).

Since there is little research on EMI clinical medicine education under the multilingualism paradigm, the purpose of this study is to explore the plural language ideologies of Chinese teachers and students regarding their bilingual

practices and the construction of their identities in EMI medical education so that we could better understand and support the micro-level agents in EMI medical education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on EMI stakeholders' perceptions of language practices suggests that English plays various roles, such as course delivery and assessment, and as an asset for competing in the global market. At the same time, it sets up a language barrier for understanding content knowledge and potentially causes educational inequality (Dafouz & Smit, 2016; Fang, 2018b; Rose et al., 2019). The native language plays a part in bilingual teaching and learning practices, such as content explanation, classroom management, and collaborative and individual learning strategies. Meanwhile, the native language can be a language barrier to maximizing input and English use (Cook, 2001; Lin, 2015; Tong et al., 2020).

Regarding research on identity, prior literature suggests that EMI teachers and students frequently distinguish themselves from EFL teachers and learners – highlighting disciplinary expertise (Jiang et al., 2019; Macaro et al., 2019). Also, participation in EMI education could lead teachers and students to (critically) examine their understanding of internationalization and to (re-) construct cultural and language identity (Fang, 2018a; Gu & Lee, 2019). However, given the complexity of EMI developmental landscapes with regard to disciplines, universities, and regions/countries, it is essential to contextualize, revisit and discuss micro-level stakeholders' ideologies and identities.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Theoretically, the study draws on the Model of Investment by Darwin and Norton (2015), which portrays the fluid power flows amongst contiguous spaces: ideology, identity, and capital for what the writers call investment in or divestment from particular language and literary practices. Specifically, inspired by Bourdieu's (1991) works, this model provides a sociolinguistic framework to investigate the interaction amongst language learners and society. It recognizes the changing and competing nature of ideologies and identities and the capacity of capitals to reproduce and transform power flows in or out of agents' investment. As previous studies on language education and identity suggest (de Costa & Norton, 2016; Norton & Gao, 2008), teachers and students influenced by particular ideologies can exercise their agency to obtain or transfer valued capitals for investing in their (imagined) identity. At the same time, due to the control imposed

by predominant ideologies, some valued capitals may be challenging to attain or maintain, which constrains the agents' investment. In this study, this framework will be applied to unfold and discuss the language ideology and bilingual identity construction of the Chinese medical micro-level agents in EMI education under the multilingualism paradigm.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research participants in the study were 5 EMI teachers in three medical subject courses: Medical Microbiology, Regional Anatomy, and Pathophysiology at a key provincial medical university in southwestern China. In addition, 12 EMI students majoring in Clinical Medicine were recruited from the corresponding courses given by the teacher participants and were divided into three focus groups based on class units. Another six senior students (mixed-up 4th to 6th year) formed a one-time focus group for sharing their opinions regarding their previous EMI learning experience and its impact on their current studies. In total, 23 Chinese teachers and students participated in interviews three times (April - July 2020), discussing various topics related to the bilingual practices in their EMI courses, such as bilingual choice and use in lectures and assessments, and their views on "ideal" bilingual courses (Dörnyei, 2007). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher for qualitative analysis on what and how they said reflects their bilingual ideology and identity (Block, 2000; Talmy, 2010). Also, the interview dataset was combined with other written materials, such as lecturers' PowerPoint slides and institutional documents, provided by participants and faculty members at the focal university. These written materials, like PPT slides, visualized some bilingual teaching episodes when participants recalled their bilingual practices, and like institutional documents, offered needed information for contextualizing the research context.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Two key findings emerge from the dataset. Firstly, the teachers and students presented diverse ideological stances towards bilingualism. Specifically, the participants perceived English (also Latin) as medical vocabulary/term-focused, supplementary to Chinese instruction, often constrained in written modality, and instrumental-oriented. Meanwhile, the Chinese played a primary role – widely utilized in academic and everyday discourses. In terms of the ideological orientations towards bilingualism, many participants perceived bilingual practices as a natural process that could become a potential resource for

improving the EMI learning outcomes. On the contrary, a few regarded bilingual practices as a problem, wishing to pilot English-only and maximal use of English. However, due to the medical disciplinary nature - keeping in line with (western) medical development and meeting practical needs in the local area, the Chinese EMI stakeholders agreed that the bilingualism paradigm was rooted in their teaching and learning process and goals, regardless of which ideological stance they took or claimed.

Secondly, the teachers and students performed an ambivalent identity: privileged, yet unable to fulfill the expected bilingual identity by self and others, due to ideological and practical constraints. Having been qualified by the university, the teacher participants showed their expertise in teaching medical English vocabulary and phrases. At the same time, many of them perceived their general English language skills as insufficient, especially oracy, which constrained them to approach what they thought the bilingual teacher should be. Also, the insufficient follow-up professional development training and traditional monolingualism concept of bilinguals and English intensified their feeling of incompetence. Yet, some teachers demonstrated a broadened mindset of English varieties and being English users in intercultural communication. As for the students, they positioned themselves as more competitive candidates in future studies compared with their CMI counterparts. On the other hand, owing to their failure in developing bilingual learning skills and emphasis on exam-oriented learning, they showed resistance to the tag “elite” that was assumed by the university and teachers. Further, some students considered English as owned by foreigners, which aggregated their feeling of being incompetent English learners. Interestingly, the students regarded China English as a part of their repertoire and exemplified this in a neutral and relaxed tone. Subsequently, an interdependent relationship between English and Chinese emerged, which helps enhance students' imagined identity as competitive medical students and professionals in the future.

DISCUSSION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the Model of Investment proposes, the predominant ideology of bilingualism influenced the micro-level stakeholders' ideological stances and imagined identity construction. Meanwhile, they evaluated the working conditions and practical needs to reposition themselves and modify the investment in bilingual practices. In turn, this negotiation gave space to the alternative perspective that embraces dynamic bilingual practices to compete with the predominant ideology

of monolingualism in EMI education. Through unveiling the language ideology and the identity construction of the medical teachers and students, the researcher suggests that dynamic bilingualism serves as an alternative lens for reducing ideological constraints, like self-assumed incompetence, caused by the prevalent monolingualism stance. Also, dynamic bilingualism may increase the micro-level stakeholders' awareness of biliteracy for academic and practical uses in clinical medicine studies.

One possible implication to policymakers and planners is that it is crucial to provide sustainable support to teachers and students for upgrading their existing capitals for further investment in EMI education. Otherwise, those existing capitals may be devalued, which, in turn, could intensify the ambivalence and cause their divestment in EMI teaching and learning. In brief, this research-in-progress aims to provide a nuanced and multi-layered description of bilingual ideology and identity of Chinese medical teachers and students, which would enrich understanding of (dynamic) bi/multilingualism in the EFL context from the domestic HE stakeholders' perspectives. More importantly, this study gives a voice to EMI domestic teachers and students who are also indispensable agents in the internationalization of HE, which could diversify the perspectives on the existing knowledge of EMI programs in the medical discipline.

REFERENCES

- Block, D. (2000). Interview Research in TESOL Interview Data: Voices in the Mind's Machine? *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(4), 757–763. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587788>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.). Polity Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3685295>
- Cook, V. (2001). Using the First Language in the Classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402–423. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402>
- Dafouz, E., & Smit, U. (2016). Towards a dynamic conceptual framework for English-medium education in multilingual university settings. *Applied Linguistics*, 37(3), 397–415. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu034>
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35(2015), 36–56. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000191>

- De Costa, P., & Norton, B. (2016). Identity in language learning and teaching: Research agendas for the future. In S. Preece (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Identity* (pp. 586–601). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315669816>
- Dearden, J. (2014). English as a Medium of Instruction - a growing global phenomenon. In *British Council*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013191610140107>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Fang, F. (2018a). Ideology and identity debate of English in China: past, present and future. *Asian Englishes*, 20(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2017.1415516>
- Fang, F. (2018b). Review of English as a medium of instruction in Chinese universities today: Current trends and future directions. *English Today*, 34(1), 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078417000360>
- García, O., & Li, W. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gu, M. M., & Lee, J. C. K. (2019). “They lost internationalization in pursuit of internationalization”: students’ language practices and identity construction in a cross-disciplinary EMI program in a university in China. *Higher Education*, 78, 389–405. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00444-x>
- Hu, G. (2019). English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education: Lessons from China. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.1.1.1>
- Jiang, L., Zhang, L. J., & May, S. (2019). Implementing English-medium instruction (EMI) in China: teachers’ practices and perceptions, and students’ learning motivation and needs. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(2), 107–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1231166>
- Kuteeva, M., & Airey, J. (2014). Disciplinary differences in the use of English in higher education: Reflections on recent language policy developments. *Higher Education*, 67, 533–549. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9660-6>
- Lin, A. M. Y. (2015). Conceptualising the potential role of L1 in CLIL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 28(1), 74–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2014.1000926>
- Macaro, E., Hultgren, A. K., Kirkpatrick, A., & Lasagabaster, D. (2019). English medium instruction: Global views and countries in focus: English medium instruction: Global views and countries in focus: Introduction to the symposium held at the Department of Education, University of Oxford on Wednesday 4 November 2015. *Language Teaching*, 52(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444816000380>

- Ministry of Education. (2001). *Guanyu jiaqiang benke jiaoxue gongzuo tigao jiaoxue zhiliang de ruogan yijian [Recommendations for strengthening college undergraduate programs and enhancing the quality of instruction]*.
http://old.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_309/200412/4682.html
- Ministry of Education. (2005). *Guanyu jinyibu jiaqiang gaodeng xuexiao benke jiaoxue gongzuo de ruogan yijian [Guidelines for further improving undergraduate education]*.
http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A08/s7056/200501/t20050107_80315.html
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *Jiaoyubu guanyu jinyibu shenhua benke jiaoxue gaige quanmian tigao jiaoxue zhiliang de ruogan yijian [Recommendations on further reforming the college undergraduate programs and enhancing the quality of instruction]*.
http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A08/s7056/200702/t20070217_79865.html
- Norton, B., & Gao, Y. (2008). Identity, investment, and Chinese learners of English. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 18(1), 109–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.18.1.07nor>
- Rose, H., Mckinley, J., Xu, X. X., & Zhou, S. (2019). *Investigating policy and implementation of English medium instruction in higher education institutions in China* (Issue January). <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10673.74080>
- Talmy, S. (2010). Qualitative interviews in applied linguistics: From research instrument to social practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30(2010), 128–148.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190510000085>
- Tong, F., Wang, Z., Min, Y., & Tang, S. (2020). A Systematic Literature Synthesis of 19 Years of Bilingual Education in Chinese Higher Education: Where Does the Academic Discourse Stand? *SAGE Open*, 10(2), 1–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020926510>

Paiwei Qin, is a PhD researcher at Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests lie in bilingualism and multilingualism, language education, and internationalization of higher education. Email: qinpa@jyu.fi.

College Faculty's Narratives of Addressing Gender-Based Violence at a Higher Education Institution in Delhi (India)

Ruchi Saini^{a*}

^a *University of Maryland, College Park*

*Corresponding author: Email: rsaini3@terpmail.umd.edu

University of Maryland, College of Education, College Park, MD 20783

ABSTRACT

Despite the central role played by faculty as teachers, advocates, and policy-makers in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) within higher education institutions (HEIs), their experiences have received limited attention in the context of India. The study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring teaching faculty's (n=10) experiences with addressing GBV at a public HEI in Delhi (India) through the use of narrative inquiry. Analysis of data from a pilot interview with an associate professor at the college reveals 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. Further, safeguarding the college's

reputation is a key concern for the organization, which often dissuades victims from coming forward. The preliminary findings highlight the need for greater institutional support for HEI faculty in India to advocate for survivors of GBV and draw 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.

Keywords: faculty, gender-based violence (GBV), higher education institutions (HEIs), India, narrative

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to acts and threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence perpetrated due to gender norms and stereotypes (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016, p.10). Despite the key role played by faculty as “teachers, researchers, advocates, and policymakers” (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019, p.1352) in confronting GBV in higher education institutions (HEIs), their experiences remain largely unexplored within academia. This is a troubling research gap because knowledge about how college faculty respond to GBV and the extent of institutional support available can help provide more effective social-structural responses for addressing the problem. However, the majority of the existing empirical literature deals with students’ experiences with GBV in HEIs (Arnold et al, 2008; Forbes Mewett & McCulloch, 2016; Philpart et al, 2009), and the limited studies that focus on faculty’s experiences are centered in HEIs outside South Asia (Hurtado, 2020; Kaufmann et al, 2019; Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). The study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of faculty members at a public HEI in India when responding to GBV faced by the students?
2. To what extent do existing institutional structures at the college enable the faculty to respond effectively to GBV?

It is essential to point out here that GBV in HEIs is not limited to the physical space of campuses but often takes place when the student is traveling,

walking, socializing outside classes, or is involved in romantic relationships (Rogers, 2008).

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

A survey carried out by the *Thomson Reuters Foundation* in 2018 ranks India as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for women because of high incidents of sexual violence and slave labor (Goldsmith & Beresford, 2018). According to the *Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation* in India, there has been a gradual increase in criminal cases against women in the past decade (2018). Further, official statistics released by the *University Grants Commission* (UGC) reveal that reported cases of sexual harassment in HEIs in India grew from 143 in 2019 to 245 in 2020 (n.d.). Despite having one of the fastest-growing post-secondary sectors in the world (Saini, 2021), limited efforts have been taken towards developing robust institutional structures in HEIs in India to confront GBV. While the UGC has explicitly laid down the guidelines for dealing with forms of GBV such as sexual harassment in HEIs (MHRD, 2016), widespread acceptance of traditional gender roles and the taboo surrounding sex influence the implementation of these policies (Nieder et al, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

A GENDERED UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE

The study goes beyond a dichotomized understanding of women as victims of GBV and men as perpetrators. Instead it focuses on how existing gendered relations, stereotypes, and unequal power structures within the society lead to GBV; where both men and women can be victims of it. The theoretical framework is guided by a three-tiered structure for understanding GBV at the micro, meso, and macro-level developed by Buiten & Naidoo (2020). At the micro-level, GBV is understood in terms of the gender identities that people are socialized to ascribe to, which in turn are associated with certain gender traits and roles. This socialization perpetuates GBV in contexts where cultural beliefs about gender identities normalize violence. At the meso-level, the framework focuses on gendered patterns of *behaviors*, which refers to how one sits, talks, gestures, etc., and emphasizes how individuals act in ways that are often predetermined by the culture. Finally, at the macro-level, GBV is understood in terms of the gendered social structure existing within the society, which organizes not only

identities and behaviors, but also institutions, systems, and practices (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020, p 64-65).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry (NI) is a way of viewing the world and reflecting on experience through stories (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Jovchelovitch et al, 2000). Within NI, researchers collect stories from their participants about their experiences with a specific phenomenon (Jovchelovitch et al, 2000), and the interview is relatively open-ended and collaborative. NI was chosen because of its capacity to engage individuals in active, meaning-making dialogues that enables the researchers to move beyond a strict problem-focused approach to a more general exploration of an issue (Fraser, 2004, p. 181).

Research Site and Participants

The study will take place in a public HEI in Delhi (India) affiliated with a central university in India. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling will be used to recruit ten faculty members who have dealt with cases of GBV, and are willing to share their experiences. A recruitment call has already been shared with the faculty via email and social media, and at the time of writing the paper (November 2021), six faculty members have agreed to be a part of the study. The paper presents preliminary findings based on a pilot interview conducted with a female associate professor working at the college for the past twenty-five years. The interview was conducted in two sessions lasting approximately an hour each, and open coding was used to label concepts, as well as, define, and develop categories which were finally collated into themes (Khandkar, 2009).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Fear of Reporting GBV due to Social Stigma

A common thread across all the cases was the reluctance of victims to report GBV formally to the police station, or the college sexual harassment committee. Aakriti (pseudonym) shared a case where a male professor, who was initially friends with a female student, said lewd things behind her back in the staff room and classroom once they stopped talking. And even though the student sought Aakriti's help, she did not want to pursue the case formally:

When I said you give something in written, she (the student) said I only want the problem to end. I don't want this gentleman to comment negatively on my character... but I don't want to chase it further...the college administration then kept away from the case as the girl was not ready to report.

Despite efforts by Aakriti and another female colleague to talk to the professor, his behavior did not change, and he ended up harassing another young female colleague a few years later and “even she did not want to make a big deal about it, she only wanted the nonsense to stop”. Aakriti shared another incident where a female student was a victim of online harassment. An unknown person entered the class using her name and started typing profanities about her in the chat, which traumatized the student. She stopped attending classes for some time, and when she was asked to formally report the case, she refused as “her parents would not send her to college if she did”.

Psychological Toll of Activism in the Absence of Institutional Support

Aakriti revealed that she had also been a victim of physical and psychological violence when she was married and hence was passionate about activism linked to GBV. However, helping students in the absence of institutional infrastructure often takes a psychological toll on her:

Because I have faced it...I feel like I can make a difference. Because when I was suffering, nobody was around... But I feel that it is easier said than done...we can support the victim but if we also have to look after feeding her and ensuring her safety, she is crying we have to console her...it is all very taxing.

She shared an incident where a female student, who was physically assaulted by her boyfriend, hid at her place for several weeks while the police were searching for the culprit. The student was bruised when she came to Aakriti, and the college did not provide the victim with a safe place to stay. Aakriti expressed disappointment about this lack of support from the college, due to which many victims have to go back to their abusers “since they have no other choice”. According to her, one of the prerequisites for redressing GBV is that HEIs provide survivors with a safe place to stay, where they are well fed and looked after, and the teachers can check on them.

Safeguarding the College Reputation

While the college has a sexual harassment committee, Aakriti felt that it has people who are more concerned with protecting the college's reputation than bringing justice to the victims. She believed that "people who are radical", or those who would "actually take action, expose the perpetrators...would never be given a position in such committees". Safeguarding the college's reputation is the primary factor when putting together such committees since if a case of GBV comes to light, "nobody will say the individual is bad, they will say the institution is bad". She felt that the sexual harassment committees should comprise of individuals who have a "sound understanding" of issues linked to GBV and can bring justice to victims, instead of keeping "people who are there to stall the movement".

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings draw attention to how the gendered structures at the micro, meso, and macro-level interact to weave a net of obstacles for victims of GBV. Firstly, at the micro-level, the victims' identities as wives, daughters, and/or girlfriends are central to their sense of self; safeguarding, which seems more important to them than reporting the perpetrators to the police. At the meso level, harassment by men (especially when it does not involve sexual intercourse) is normalized, and victims do not consider it feasible to report such cases. Both these factors lead to a gendered institutional structure at the macro-level where both the college and the society indirectly sustain GBV. While on the one hand, female victims are reluctant to report the cases, on the other hand, the college is concerned with safeguarding their reputation instead of bringing justice to the victims. The findings draw attention to the need for greater institutional support to enable faculty in HEIs in India to support the victims of GBV. It also highlights the nexus between the institutional structure and the gendered structure of the society, where far from being gender-neutral spaces, HEIs tend to construct and reinforce the gendered hierarchy, gender culture, and subsequently the gender violence prevalent in the society (Connell, 2005). The exclusive focus on heterosexual forms of violence within Aakriti's narratives also highlights the need for future research to focus on other forms of GBV such as homophobic violence, student-on-teacher violence, and women-on-women violence (Dunne et al, 2006) to develop a holistic understanding of how gendered social structures inflict violence on both women and men.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, C., & Kirkpatrick, S. (2016). Narrative interviewing. *International journal of clinical pharmacy*, 38(3), 631-634.
- Arnold, D., Gelaye, B., Goshu, M., Berhane, Y., & Williams, M. A. (2008). Prevalence and risk factors of gender-based violence among female college students in Awassa, Ethiopia. *Violence and Victims*, 23(6), 787-800.
- Buiten, D., & Naidoo, K. (2020). Laying Claim to a Name: Towards a Sociology of “Gender-Based Violence”. *South African Review of Sociology*, 1-8.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). Narrative inquiry. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass
- Connell, R. (2005). Advancing gender reform in large-scale organisations: A new approach for practitioners and researchers. *Policy and society*, 24(4), 5-24.
- Dunne, M., Humphreys, S., & Leach, F. (2006). Gender violence in schools in the developing world. *Gender and education*, 18(1), 75-98.
- Forbes-Mewett, H., & McCulloch, J. (2016). International students and gender-based violence. *Violence against women*, 22(3), 344-365.
- Fraser, H. (2004). Doing narrative research: Analysing personal stories line by line. *Qualitative social work*, 3(2), 179-201.
- Goldsmith, B & Bereford, G. (2018). Exclusive: India most Dangerous for women with sexual violence rife-Global Poll. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-women-dangerous-poll-exclusive/exclusive-india-most-dangerous-country-for-women-with-sexual-violence-rife-global-poll-idUSKBN1JM01X>
- Jovchelovitch, Sandra; Bauer, Martin W. (2000). Narrative interviewing. London: LSE Research Online. Available online at <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2633>.
- Kaufman, M. R., Williams, A. M., Grilo, G., Marea, C. X., Fentaye, F. W., Gebretsadik, L. A., & Yedenekal, S. A. (2019). “We are responsible for the violence, and prevention is up to us”: a qualitative study of perceived risk factors for gender-based violence among Ethiopian university students. *BMC women's health*, 19(1), 1-10.
- Khandkar, S. H. (2009). Open coding. *University of Calgary*, 23, 2009. Available online at <http://pages.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/~saul/wiki/uploads/CPSC681/open-coding.pdf>
- Ministry of Human Resources & Development (MHRD) (May 2, 2016). University Grants Commission (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions) Regulation, 2015. Available online at https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7203627_UGC_regulations-harassment.pdf
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2018). *Women and Men in India (A Statistical compilation of gender related indicators in India)*. Central

- Statistics Office. New Delhi. Retrieved from http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Women%20and%20Men%20in%20India%202018.pdf
- Nieder, C., Bosch, J. F., Nockemann, A. P., & Kärtner, J. (2020). Evaluation of RISE: A Sexual Violence Prevention Program for Female College Students in India. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 0886260520959631.
- Philpart, M., Goshu, M., Gelaye, B., Williams, M. A., & Berhane, Y. (2009). Prevalence and risk factors of gender-based violence committed by male college students in Awassa, Ethiopia. *Violence and Victims*, 24(1), 122-136.
- Rogers, M. (2008). Modernity, 'authenticity', and ambivalence: subaltern masculinities on a South Indian college campus. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 14(1), 79-95.
- Saini, R. (2020). A Comparative Analysis of Academic Freedom within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India and the USA. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 12(n6S1), 37-44.
- Sharoni, S., & Klocke, B. (2019). Faculty confronting gender-based violence on campus: Opportunities and challenges. *Violence against women*, 25(11), 1352-1369.
- Srivastava, H. C., & Murugesan, P. (2001). Violence against women in Andhra Pradesh: Region-wise analysis based on NFHS-2. In *XXIVth Annual Conference of Indian Association for Studies on Population, February, Visakhapatnam, India*.
- UNESCO & UN Women (2016). *Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence*. UNESCO Publishing. Available online at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/global-guidance-on-addressing-school-related-gender-based-violence>
- University Grants Commission. (n.d.). *Gender Sensitization Data in Universities, Colleges, & Institutions in India*. Retrieved 22 November, 2021 from https://www.ugc.ac.in/subpage/gender_sensitization_data.aspx

RUCHI SAINI is a PhD candidate in International Education Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research focuses on gender-based violence (GBV) in formal institutes of education in South Asia and the use of decolonizing methodologies for conducting feminist research. She holds a Master's degree in English from the University of Delhi (India) and a Master's degree in Education from the University of Glasgow (Scotland).

A Critical Study of Chinese International Students' Experiences Pursuing American Higher Education in the Age of Trump and COVID-19

Jing Yu ^{a*}

^aUniversity of California, Santa Barbara

*Corresponding author: Email: jing02@ucsb.edu

Address: University of California Santa Barbara, California, USA

ABSTRACT

This article consists of two study areas, examining Chinese international students' experiences pursuing American higher education in the Age of Trump and COVID-19. Despite different issues explored in each area, these issues have a common theme of better understanding 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

Received September 24, 2021; revised December 16, 2021; accepted December 23, 2021

ideological indoctrination in the home country and experiential exploration in the host country.

Keywords: agency, Chinese international students, race, racism, US higher education

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization as a concept and strategic agenda has grown its scope, scale, importance, and complexity over the past 30 years (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Research on international student experience has always been the mainstay in the field of international education and study abroad. Exacerbated by the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and racially motivated hate crime targeting the Asian population in the US, there is a more pressing need to make sense of student agency as well as their perceptions toward race, racism, and race relations in the post-pandemic world.

A review of the literature shows an array of scholarships on international students studying and living in the US context, especially students from Asian countries and regions. However, the existing literature is overly reliant on cultural explanations to understand their behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes at US host universities (e.g., Heng 2021; Montgomery 2017), with less discussion on student agency and race from a transnational lens. Therefore, to avoid being trapped in the cultural-based frameworks and seeking simplistic solutions, we need to advance our research agenda by utilizing interdisciplinary knowledge, transnational perspectives, and intersectional analyses to present a comprehensive picture of the international student experience in the US context. My article takes a step toward this goal by interrupting hegemonic thinking and expanding the scope of diversity and inclusion, which is currently being heatedly discussed in the *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* (see Ghosh et al., 2021; Lanford, 2021). This study is guided by two research questions: 1) How did Chinese international students cope with the evolving pandemic and US-China geopolitical tensions? 2) How did they perceive race and racism before and after their arrival in the US?

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

By reworking culture- and nation-bound theories and practices, the theory of self-formation (Marginson, 2014) complements the existing literature on student security and agency in international education. It places self-determining agency at the center of the frame and prioritizes student security beyond the rigid conceptualization of national citizenship. The core of this emancipatory paradigm lies in the active role of human agency for becoming and self-reconstruction (Tran & Vu, 2018). Viewing international education as a continuous process of self-formation enables us to see international students as neither weak, fragile, dependent subjects, as framed by dominant discourses, nor a homogeneous group who all experience educational border crossing in the same way, as many university policies seem to assume. On the contrary, these Chinese students are active agents who take advantage of their global mobility as a tactic to broaden their career options and achieve transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991).

In addition, I center the construct of race in largely *aracial* literature in international education. To understand Chinese international students' perceptions of race and racism, I draw on theories of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) and transnational racialization (N. Kim, 2008). Racialization involves a process of Othering, making use of various perceived phenotypical differences (such as skin color, physical build, eye shape, hair texture, and so on) to classify, amalgamate, and homogenize groups of people for the purpose of domination and exploitation. Racial formation theory proposes that race is not an objective reality but is socially constructed and reconstructed for particular political reasons. And transnational racialization theory proposes that long before Chinese international students' arrival in the US, the racialization process has already taken place through mediums, such as the mass media and the internet. Despite differences in family socialization and personal experiences, this generation of Chinese youth is heavily impacted by China's state political ideologies through the "Patriotic Education Campaign" of the early 1990s (Wang, 2008), so their perceptions of race and racism are more or less influenced by their upbringing in mainland China.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary method is semi-structured Zoom interviews with 21 Chinese undergraduate students at a California public university in July 2020. For the exploration of student agency, I initially used unobtrusive online observation (Salmons, 2015) to track news related to Chinese students who were stranded abroad as well as Chinese netizens' comments in response to these news stories.

For Chinese students' perceptions of race and racism, I complemented the data with follow-up informal Q&A exchanges in April 2021. All the data were analyzed using a constructivist grounded-theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). In the preliminary analysis, evidence was first identified and coded in an open-ended fashion. Then, the various dimensions were grouped through axial coding into categories. Finally, core categories were developed as the conceptual lens to carry out selective coding and analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

As my findings indicate in the student agency piece, Chinese students actively exercise independent autonomy to facilitate plural identities, albeit under social circumstances beyond their control. Instead of being caught in the middle as framed by dominant discourses, this study shows that Chinese students' decisions about study abroad, choices about social adaptation, and career ambition and imagination are deliberate and conscious, confronting ever-changing social, cultural, political, and economic conditions.

In the racial knowledge piece, I found that Chinese international students' racial learning is jointly shaped by their upbringing in mainland China and by racial encounters in the US. Influenced by China's state ideologies and global media, Chinese students understand race through the paradigm of nationality and internalized US racial hierarchies. For this reason, they usually place themselves outside the US racial system and harbor prejudice against other people of color, particularly Blacks. However, their lived experiences in the US dramatically shifted their conceptualization of race from a nationality-based identity to the phenotype-based imposed category of Asian. They also revised their understanding of racist practices from mostly violent and explicit to mostly subtle and implicit. I argue that these changes can be attributed to the disjuncture between their ideological indoctrination in the home country and their experiential exploration in the host country. This study contributes to the broader literature on transnational racialization.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In short, in recent years, there have emerged researchers and scholars who critically reflect on internationalization (Brandenburg & Wit 2011; Stein 2019), educational policy (Guo and Guo 2017; Tannock 2013); and language teaching (Esch, Motha & Kubota 2020; Wu & Tarc 2016) in the field of international education. However, critical research on international students' lived experiences

is still largely underdeveloped and under-researched. Given escalating Asian hate crimes and uncertain global politics, it is urgent to make sense of these international students' specific needs and provide appropriate ways of supporting their study in US higher education.

The findings in this article have implications for concrete practices that can be employed by US institutions both to better prepare Chinese international students to confront US racial reality and to promote inclusion on campus. For example, open discussions of race and racism need to be included in institutions' orientation for international students. My findings demonstrate that there is a great discrepancy in understanding race and racism before and after students' arrival. It is necessary to equip them with basic racial knowledge, such as how to identify racist comments and where to seek help when discrimination and stereotyping occur. In a word, US institutions should take the shared responsibility to help international students succeed academically and, at the same time, make sure they do not drop into the complex racial milieu of the US without a meaningful support system.

REFERENCES

- Brandenburg, U., & de Wit, H. (2011). The end of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 62, 15–17.
<https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2011.62.8533>
- de Wit, H., & Altbach, P. G. (2021) Internationalization in higher education: Global trends and recommendations for its future. Policy Reviews in *Higher Education*, 5(1), 28-46.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2020.1820898>
- Ghosh, S., Lee, J., & Haupt, J. (2021). Understanding the attraction of the microcampus: A quantitative investigation of students' motivations to enroll in transnational education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 53–71.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3679>
- Guo, Y., & Guo, S. (2017). Internationalization of Canadian higher education: Discrepancies between policies and international student experiences. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(5), 85–868.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293874>

- Heng, T. T. (2021). Socioculturally-attuned understanding of and engagement with Chinese international undergraduates. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000240>
- Kim, N. Y. (2008). *Imperial citizens: Koreans and race from Seoul to LA*. Stanford University Press.
- Lanford, M. (2021). Critical perspectives on global partnerships in higher education: Strategies for inclusion, social impact, and effectiveness. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 10–14. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.4449>
- Marginson, S. (2014). Student self-formation in international education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(1), 6–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315313513036>
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Montgomery, K. A. (2017). Supporting Chinese undergraduate students in transition at U.S. colleges and universities. *Journal of International Students*, 7(4), 963–989. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v7i4.184>
- Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2015). *Racial formation in the United States* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Salmons, J. (2015). *Qualitative online interviews* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Stein, S. (2019). Critical internationalization studies at an impasse: Making space for complexity, uncertainty, and complicity in a time of global challenges. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(9), 1771–1784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1704722>
- Tannock, S (2013). When the demand for educational equality stops at the border: Wealthy students, international students and the restructuring of higher education in the UK. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(4), 449-464. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.764577>
- Tran, L. T., & Vu, T. T. P. (2018). ‘Agency in mobility’: Towards a conceptualisation of international student agency in transnational mobility. *Educational Review*, 70(2), 167–187. <http://www.doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2017.1293615>
- Von Esch, K. S, Motha, S., & Kubota, R. (2020). Race and language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 53(4), 391-421. doi:10.1017/S0261444820000269
- Wang, Z. (2008). National humiliation, history education, and the politics of historical memory: Patriotic education campaign in China. *International*

Studies Quarterly, 52(4), 783–806. <http://www.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2008.00526.x>

Wu, X., & Tarc, P. (2016). Translations and paradoxes of ‘Western’ pedagogy: Perspectives of English language teachers in a Chinese college. *L2 Journal*, 8(4), 55-75. <https://doi.org/10.5070/L28430214>

Jing Yu is a PhD candidate in Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at University of California Santa Barbara. She received M.A. in Teaching and Learning from the Ohio State University in 2015. Her research interests focus on international student mobility, intersections of race, class, and nationality, as well as international dimensions of equity and social justice. Email: jing02@ucsb.edu.

Legacy-Innovation Challenges in Post-Soviet Higher Education: Scholars' Academic Transformation in Cambodia and Kazakhstan

Vutha Ros^{a*}

^a*University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China*

*Corresponding author: Email: vutharos@hku.hk

Address: University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

ABSTRACT

The collapse of the Soviet Union has dramatically impacted the work of scholars across the post-Soviet space. As their higher education systems have been transforming from the Soviet model of higher education, they have had to adapt themselves to maintain their academic work and career. This doctoral project 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.

Keywords: Cambodia, higher education, Kazakhstan, post-Soviet space

INTRODUCTION

Many former Soviet republics and other affiliated communist states have had to transform their higher education systems to respond to their respective changing political and economic contexts since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Huisman et al., 2018). As their countries have been opened to the outside world since the removal of the Iron Curtain, academic transformations in these countries have also been influenced by Western academic norms to develop their university research capacity to take part in global education space and internationalization process (de Wit, 2002; Silova & Niyozov, 2020). However, they have had to deal with the Soviet legacies such as separating research from universities, emphasizing specialized training for various ministries, and closely controlling academic activities (Johnson, 2008; Kuraev, 2016). The break from these legacies has dramatically impacted the academic work of scholars and students who have lived their lives through this transition period. While previous studies have examined the structural transformation of these countries (Froumin & Leshukov, 2016; Huisman et al., 2018; Silova & Niyozov, 2020), research on scholars' adaptation to tensions that have arisen from the transformation of higher education systems in a comparative lens remains understudied. At the same time, many studies in this context tend to focus on Russia rather than other peripheral societies (Chankseliani, 2017; Oleksiyenko et al., 2018). Thus, this research uses Kazakhstan, a former peripheral Soviet republic, and Cambodia, a former Soviet ally, as a comparative case to shed light on their scholars' strategies to mitigate the academic transformation challenges to maximize their intellectual pursuits and career in their respective societies. This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How did the higher education system change in the two countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union?

2. What were the major advantages and disadvantages of transformations over the last 25 years?
3. How have their scholars been coping with these transformations for intellectual pursuits?

WHY CAMBODIA AND KAZAKHSTAN

Cambodia and Kazakhstan are selected for this comparative study for two reasons. First, Cambodia and Kazakhstan were subjected to Soviet hegemony, which influenced the development of higher education and research systems. However, as a former member of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan established its higher education system to respond to Soviet industrial demands (Froumin et al., 2014). Cambodia was also dragged into Soviet imperialism when the Soviet-backed government was established after the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge after the Cambodian-Vietnamese war in 1979 (Clayton, 2000). Thus, the Soviet Union played a crucial role in rebuilding Cambodian higher education that was destroyed by the Khmer Rouge (Pit & Ford, 2004). Second, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, both countries had to restructure their higher education due to their changing political-economic landscapes and exposure to Western influence (Ahn et al., 2018; Pit & Ford, 2004). The universities also experienced structural changes as they had to include new programs to meet the growing market for higher education, introduce the European three-tier system for internationalization, and embrace globally-shaped research missions (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018; Huisman et al., 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study employs two theoretical frameworks. The first is the framework of legacy-innovation tensions. In, this study, legacies refer to inheritances from a previous political-economic system that profoundly impacts a new system, while innovations represent attempts to bring new ideas to a new system or modernize a system. These innovations often create tensions for affected individuals as they must choose whether to hold to the legacies or embrace those innovations to maintain their status quo. Thus, this framework enables me to understand how disruptions that resulted from top-down reforms in education systems affected the works of scholars in the post-Soviet space and what tensions they experienced in the reform process. Second, this study also adopts Merton's (1968, 1988) framework of accumulative advantages that examines how some scientists manage to be more recognized and gain more rewards than others based on their earlier

achievements. This theory has been used to examine how some scholars accumulate more and more resources and recognition due to their earlier achievements than others in science. However, this framework also allows me to investigate how post-Soviet scholars strategically used the advantages they accumulated from their previous system to mitigate reform tensions, thus achieving recognition and earning rewards for the continuity of their intellectual work and career during the transition period.

RESEARCH METHOD

I conducted a qualitative inquiry into the lived experience of the post-Soviet scholars in Cambodia and Kazakhstan during the transition period (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I looked for participants with the academic background in the Soviet system and their employment in the higher education systems in both countries at the time of the interviews by checking their profiles on their university websites, professional social networking sites (such as ResearchGate and LinkedIn), and referrals from my senior colleagues and some interviewed participants themselves. After sending invitations via email and phone calls, I managed to conduct semi-structured interviews with nine Cambodians and eight Kazakhs, who were university students in the 1980s and early 1990s in the Soviet system. These participants were willing to talk about their academic experience in the Soviet system, the critical changes in their universities, and stories of scholarly pursuits and academic careers. Other data sources were collected for data triangulation, including national policy papers, data on national research expenditure from UNESCO Institute of Statistics and research outputs from Web of Science (Patton, 2002). These data sets allowed me to make sense of how the transformation of higher education and the development of university research capacity influenced these participants' work and strategies. Thus, I analyzed all data sets as guided by the framework of legacy-innovation tensions and accumulative advantage. Thematic analysis was used to identify main themes and supporting excerpts from the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Despite common Soviet influences, Kazakhstan and Cambodia took divergent paths following the fall of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan experienced a budget deficit in higher education in the 1990s, causing faculty salaries to plummet and forcing many to leave the profession. Meanwhile, the absence of Soviet assistance and the withdrawal of the Soviet faculty members also forced Cambodia

to close some universities temporarily. However, their academic experience during the Soviet era or at the end of it was their advantage for the early transition period when both countries quickly opened their doors to welcome Western assistance in order to transform their higher education system. The Cambodian participants relied on their qualifications in the Soviet system to become the main teaching force for their universities and prioritized professional development. Meanwhile, the Kazakh participants relied on their expertise and research skills to apply for scholarships abroad. However, their overseas professional development served them different purposes and were shaped by their national higher education system conditions. The Kazakh participants in this study went abroad to develop their research capacity in order to continue their scholarly pursuits. This motivation is largely related to their exposure to the academic community they grew up with during the Soviet period (Kuzhabekova et al., 2019). Thus, some of them managed to earn doctoral degrees from Western countries and landed post-doctoral positions. In contrast, Cambodian participants regarded their professional development opportunities to increase their capacity to perform teaching rather than research as they had to shoulder the responsibility of improving teaching quality.

Although both countries have begun to prioritize building university research capacity, Cambodia and Kazakhstan have emphasized different goals. While Kazakhstan is focusing on improving its university's global visibility through university rankings, Cambodia is focusing on improving research for local development. Thus, publication in indexed journals has become a requirement in Kazakhstan, but it has yet to become a priority in Cambodia. The push for global recognition has pushed Kazakhstan to increase funding for research. Therefore, the Kazakh participants have secured funding to do research and collaborate with Western researchers, which increases their publication records and recognition.

Meanwhile, most of the Cambodian participants did not view themselves as researchers to contribute to research capacity building. Instead, they regarded themselves as the producers of qualified students who would later receive training to become researchers abroad. Consequently, they focused on their students' success rather than their scholarly contribution due to the weak sense of academic communities (Oleksiyenko & Ros, 2019; Ros & Oleksiyenko, 2018).

CONTRIBUTION

This comparative study offers insights into the lives of scholars in the post-colonial societies whose academic works are shaped by both local and global contexts. These scholars in this study are not constrained by the post-Soviet transformations in their societies. Instead, they actively develop strategies based on their earlier access to resources and achievement in order to grab opportunities to develop their academic careers. Moreover, the study extends the scope of comparative research to move beyond the generalization of sameness in peripheral contexts.

REFERENCES

- Ahn, E. S., Dixon, J., & Chekmareva, L. (2018). Looking at Kazakhstan's higher education landscape: From transition to transformation between 1920 and 2015. In J. Huisman, A. Smolentseva, & I. Froumin (Eds.), *25 years of transformations of higher education systems in post-Soviet countries: Reform and continuity* (pp. 199-227). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52980-6_8
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chankseliani, M. (2017). Charting the development of knowledge on Soviet and post-Soviet education through the pages of comparative and international education journals. *Comparative Education*, 53(2), 265-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2017.1293407>
- Clayton, T. (2000). *Education and the politics of language: hegemony and pragmatism in Cambodia, 1979-1989*. CERC.
- de Wit, H. (2002). *Internationalization of higher education in the United States of America and Europe: A historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis*. Greenwood Press.
- Froumin, I., Kouzminov, Y., & Semyonov, D. (2014). Institutional diversity in Russian higher education: revolutions and evolution. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 4(3), 209-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2014.916532>
- Froumin, I., & Leshukov, O. (2016). The Soviet flagship university model and its contemporary transition. In J. A. Douglass (Ed.), *The new flagship university: changing the paradigm from global ranking to national relevancy* (pp. 173-189). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137500496_8

- Huisman, J., Smolentseva, A., & Froumin, I. (Eds.). (2018). *25 years of transformations of higher education systems in post-Soviet countries: Reform and continuity*. Springer International Publishing.
- Johnson, M. S. (2008). Historical legacies of soviet higher education and the transformation of higher education systems in post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia. In D. P. Baker & A. W. Wiseman (Eds.), *The worldwide transformation of higher education* (pp. 159-176). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Kuraev, A. (2016). Soviet higher education: an alternative construct to the western university paradigm. *Higher Education*, 71(2), 181-193. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9895-5>
- Kuzhabekova, A., & Ruby, A. (2018). Raising research productivity in a post-Soviet higher education system: A case from Central Asia. *European Education*, 50(3), 266-282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2018.1444942>
- Kuzhabekova, A., Sparks, J., & Temerbayeva, A. (2019). Returning from study abroad and transitioning as a scholar: Stories of foreign PhD holders from Kazakhstan. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 14(3), 412-430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499919868644>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). The Matthew effect in science: The reward and communication systems of science are considered. *Science*, 159(3810), 56-63.
- Merton, R. K. (1988). The Matthew Effect in science, II: Cumulative advantage and the symbolism of intellectual property. *Isis*, 79(4), 606-623.
- Oleksiyenko, A., & Ros, V. (2019). Cambodian lecturers' pursuit of academic excellence: expectations vs. reality. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 39(2), 222-236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2019.1621797>
- Oleksiyenko, A., Zha, Q., Chirikov, I., & Li, J. (Eds.). (2018). *International status anxiety and higher education: The Soviet legacy in China and Russia*. CERC-Springer.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pit, C., & Ford, D. (2004). Cambodian higher education: Mixed visions. In P. G. Altbach & T. Umakoshi (Eds.), *Asian universities: Historical perspectives and contemporary challenges* (pp. 333-362). The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ros, V., & Oleksiyenko, A. (2018). Policy misalignments and development challenges in the Cambodian academic profession: insights from public university lecturers. *Higher Education Policy*, 31(1), 19-35. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-017-0043-y>

Silova, I., & Niyozov, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Globalization on the margins: Education and post-socialist transformations in Central Asia* (2nd ed.). Information Age Publishing, Inc.

VUTHA ROS is a PhD candidate at the Academic Unit of Social Contexts and Policies of Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. He is also a co-founder and co-editor of Cambodian Education Forum. His research focuses on post-Soviet higher education and academic profession.

Aligning the Purpose, Function & Mission of a Historically Disadvantaged Public South African University: The Case of the University of Venda

Peter Simpson

Teachers College, Columbia University, United States

*Corresponding author: Email: pms2171@tc.columbia.edu

Address: Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, United States

ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are under pressure to internationalize their campuses through increasing study abroad offerings and international student recruitment. The internationalization of higher education (HE) however, has mostly been theorized from a Euro-American perspective, often not taking into account actors in periphery contexts. This paper highlights the role of an emergent voice within the field that relies 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.

Keywords: international higher education, South African internationalization, third mission

INTRODUCTION

De Wit, Hunter, and Egron-Polak (2015) define internationalization as “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (p. 29). Their inclusion of internationalization’s importance in making a meaningful contribution to society opens a conversation around the changing purpose of HE. Historically, the central functions of HEIs have been teaching and learning (first mission) and research (second mission). Recently, however, many HEIs have begun to rely on their third mission (TM) to engage with local communities (Bhagwan, 2020; Teixeira & Klemenčič, 2021). Bhagwan, Teixeira, and Klemenčič speak to divergent understandings of community and civic engagement, noting the contribution of HE to society extends beyond labor market returns. In doing so, they speak to the TM of HEIs as an extension of democratic citizenship and the co-production of knowledge.

De Wit et al.’s (2015) definition also highlights common tensions within the wider field of education between economic and socio-cultural approaches to internationalization. South African universities exemplify this multiplicity of coexisting objectives, including the need to produce high-caliber research, prepare the next generation labor force, and address societal inequities. This research focuses on the understudied experiences of internationalization administrators, faculty and staff and how they may be in tension with national initiatives to democratize education access. Drawing on a previous study (Lee et al., 2020), I use global rankings as a proxy for institutional status (Stensaker et al., 2019) to provide an analysis of how hierarchical positions within the field of HE influence the strategic choices of a South African university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Klemenčič (2017) argues that “due to geographical location and perceived deficiencies, it is important for universities in the periphery to build the

institutional capacity to attract talented international students, academic staff, researchers and other higher education professionals” (p. 105). Her analysis allows us to understand how universities considered to be on the margins approach internationalization. Maringe (2010) characterizes globalization as a multidimensional concept whereby sociocultural, technological, political, and ideological aspects become presumably more homogeneous. While several scholars (Anderson-Levitt, 2007; Garnett Russell, 2016, 2018) contend that globalization is localized once on-the-ground, globalization has given rise to new forms of interconnectedness. This increase in connectivity led to the emergence of the knowledge economy, and a growing reliance on digital technologies (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

Little research however, has aimed to understand internationalization efforts in the context of the historical particularities of the periphery condition. With some exceptions (Castiello-Gutiérrez, 2019; Kwasi-Agyeman, 2020; Majee & Ress, 2020), scholars have rarely examined the challenges that university leaders face as policymakers, given demands for educational equity vis-a-vis pressures to internationalize. The South African case study featured in this paper highlights the overlap between equity-oriented processes in international higher education (IHE) and the embodiment of their TM.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

My case emerged from an interest in newer actors in the field of IHE. South Africa is increasingly regarded as a leader in Africa, and has a relatively well-established (albeit highly unequal) HE system. My focus on the University of Venda (Univen) turns our focus to a rural, historically disadvantaged university that localizes internationalization efforts to better serve their students and surrounding communities. Located near the Zimbabwe border and serving a majority of students who are of limited financial means, Univen exists in a policy ecosystem where relationships between students, the institution and the community are negotiated.

The rationales institutions use to engage in IHE are frequently communicated to participants via strategic plans and institutional websites. To understand how Univen frames international education my research answers the following: What orientations (rationales) are deployed when Univen conveys its internationalization initiatives? To what extent have these orientations (rationales)

changed due to COVID-19? How closely are these aligned to the institution's third mission?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study looked at information in Univen's mission, vision, goals and outcomes statements, strategic plans, and international education and world languages websites. Data was analyzed through the lens of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1999). A survey was distributed to university leaders to ascertain their understanding of institutional policy. Lastly, semi-structured interviews provided insights into how leaders understand the purpose of public education.

The coding process for my content and document analysis consisted of an initial reading of all content to gain an understanding of the information and presentation format. The content was then read a second time and open-coded with the unit of analysis at the sentence level and separated from the broader sample. This sample was read a third time for a second round of coding using words or phrases as the unit of analysis. Content was lastly coded using an inductive method. The findings presented below represent only a portion of my research to date.

Participants

I created an online survey utilizing Qualtrics. Composed of likert-scale, open and closed-ended questions, it focused on five sections: Governance, internationalization efforts, community/societal engagement, teaching and learning, and collaboration and research. Through snowball sampling, it was distributed to Univen administrators, faculty, and staff. Currently, my sample consists of 5 participants, of which 80% (4) are male, 20% (1) are female. 40% (2) are full-time faculty, 40% (2) administrators and 20% (1) staff members. 40% (2) have worked in the field of internationalization for 20+ years and the remaining 60% percent (3) have been working in the field 0-3, 5-10 and 10-20 years respectively (see Table 1). Given the limited number of responses, I expect to find greater variability in my participants as data collection continues. Listed below are the interviewees who support Univen's 16,000+ students.

Table 1*Univen Interviewees' Biographical Information*

Gender	Position	Years in the Field
Female	Administrator	20+
Male	Administrator	10-20
Male	Faculty	20+
Female	Faculty	0-3
Female	Faculty	5-10
Male	Staff	20+

RESULTS

The following themes emerged from my document analysis:

- **Organization Mission & Role:** Univen endeavors to provide its students with a high-level of professional and occupational skills, both of which they deem as required for economic growth. Community engagement and references to local relevance and global competitiveness exist side-by-side in Univen's strategic plans (2012-2016; 2016-2020)
- **Social & Cultural Third Mission:** Univen's TM was enacted mostly through community engagement, which it viewed as necessary for increased democratic participation. Reciprocal interaction, collaboration and partnerships between the university and rural communities, were emphasized.

I open-coded my interviews and two themes emerged: The pandemic as a portal and the centrality of Univen's rural location. As I conduct more interviews, I anticipate additional themes surrounding internationalization stakeholders and organizational values to emerge.

- **The Pandemic as a Portal:** Arundhati Roy (2020) called on us to view the pandemic as a portal. Representatives from Univen encouraged their students to stay connected through meetings and webinars. They emphasized that students would now be able to engage regardless of location.
- **The Centrality of Univen's Rural Location:** The challenges relating to the pandemic were exacerbated by the limited resources of students and the wider institution. Nonetheless, Univen also capitalizes on its location,

serving as a biosphere reserve, and meeting place for university and Indigenous knowledge creation.

DISCUSSION

The field of IHE serves many purposes in South Africa, including providing students with the requisite skills for development, producing new knowledge, and addressing societal challenges. These desires speak to how an African university repositions itself vis-à-vis diverse stakeholders. The University of Venda mentions student innovation and entrepreneurship as potential solutions to increasing student success and the long-term financial sustainability of their institution. This is in alignment with Bekele and Ofoyuru (2021), who assert that some African universities may prioritize economic interests amidst dwindling funding and global competition. Thus, given the limited mobility of students and fiscal constraints of working in low-resource contexts, the financial and cultural imperatives driving internationalization must be balanced.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In contexts including South Africa, where education is viewed as a pathway towards higher socioeconomic status, and an avenue for remedying historical inequalities, university leaders will have to respond to the growing mandates placed on their institutions. Doing so requires an eye to both the financial sustainability of one's institution, as well as improved academic outcomes, leading to a reconceptualization of an institution's third mission. Going forward, researchers may want to do more robust research surrounding international partnerships between higher education institutions located in the periphery and the outcomes for students and community members alike of these partnerships.

REFERENCES

- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3–4), 290–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Anderson-Levitt, K. (2012). Complicating the concept of culture. *Comparative Education* 48(4), 441–454.
- Bekele, T. A., & Ofoyuru, D. T. (2021). Emerging university-society engagements in Africa: An analysis of strategic plans. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(1), 151–180. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i1.1690>

- Bhagwan, R. (2018). Towards a conceptual understanding of community engagement in higher education in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 35(1), 171-185. <https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v35i1.13>
- Castiello-Gutiérrez, S. (2020). Purposeful internationalization: A common-good approach of global engagement. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 11(Winter) 93-95. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v11i1Winter.1539>
- de Wit, H., Hunter, F., Howard, L., & Egron-Polak, E. (2015). Internationalization of Higher Education. European Parliament Policy Department: Brussels, Belgium.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language & Power*. Longman.
- Gee, J.P. (1999). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory & Method*. Routledge.
- Klemenčič, M. (2017). Internationalization of universities in the periphery. In H. de Wit, J. Gacel-Ávila, E. Jones, & N. Jooste (Eds.), *The globalization of internationalization: Emerging voices and perspectives* (pp. 99-109). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315657547>
- Kwasi-Agyeman, F. (2021). Public funding of higher education and student access: A comparative study of two public universities in Africa. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12 (6S1) 45-48. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.2666>
- Lee, J.L., Vance, H., Stensaker, B., & Ghosh, S. (2020). Global rankings at a local cost? The strategic pursuit of status and the third mission. *Comparative Education*, 56:2, 236-256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2020.1741195>
- Majee, U.S., & Ress, S.B. (2018). Colonial legacies in internationalization of higher education: racial justice and geopolitical redress in South Africa and Brazil. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 50(4), 463-481. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1521264>
- Maringe, F. (2010). The meanings of globalization and internationalization in higher education: Findings from a world survey. In F. Maringe, & N. Foskett (Eds.), *Globalization and internationalization in higher education: Theoretical, strategic and management perspectives* (pp. 17-34). Bloomsbury.
- Roy, J. (2020, April 3). *Arundhati Roy: 'The pandemic is a portal' | Free to read*. FT. <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>
- Russell, S.G. (2016). Global gender discourses in education: Evidence from post-genocide Rwanda. *Comparative Education* 52(4), 495-514.
- Russell, S.G. (2018). Global discourses and local practices: Teaching citizenship and human rights in post-genocide Rwanda. *Comparative Education Review* 62(3), 385-408.
- Stensaker, B., Lee, J.J., Rhoades, G., Ghosh, S., Castiello-Gutiérrez, S., Vance, H., Çalıkoğlu, A., Kramer, V., Liu, S., Sayed Marei, M., O'Toole, L., Pavlyutkin, I., & Peel, C. (2019). Stratified university strategies: The shaping of institutional

legitimacy in a global perspective. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 90(4) 539-562. <https://doi-org.tc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1513306>

Teixeira, N.P., & Klemenčič, M. (2021). Valuing the civic role of university education in an age of competition and rapid change. In H.V. Land, A. Corcoran, & D-C. Iancu (Eds.), *The promise of higher education* (pp. 145-151). Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67245-4_23

Univen strategic plan 2012. The University of Venda.

<https://www.univen.ac.za/about/strategic-plan/>

Univen strategic plan 2016. The University of Venda.

<https://www.univen.ac.za/about/strategic-plan/>

Peter Simpson is a master's candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University (USA) in the department of International and Transcultural Studies. His research interests include international higher education and the third mission of colleges and universities. Please send correspondence to pms2171@tc.columbia.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I would like to thank the *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* editors for their generous guidance throughout the entirety of the revision process, and the two anonymous peer reviewers for their detailed feedback.

Un(Bundling) the Black Experience at PWIs: Using Assets-based Frameworks to Explore the Lived Experiences of Black Sub-Saharan African-born Graduate Students in STEM

Johnny C. Woods, Jr.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, United States

*Corresponding author: Email: johnnycw@vt.edu

Address: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia, USA

ABSTRACT

This article is a research summary of a dissertation in progress that explores the experiences of Black Sub-Saharan African-born (BSSA) graduate students pursuing degrees in the STEM fields at a predominantly white institution (PWI). This includes meaning-making of their experience with the campus climate at PWIs from BSSA graduate students' community cultural wealth, familial background, and other funds of knowledge in their educational journey and academic success. Hence, 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. The preliminary results of the study are presented along with implications of the research.

Keywords: assets-based frameworks, graduate students, STEM, Sub-Saharan Africa,

INTRODUCTION

Despite the promise that improving campus climate offers for promoting students' socialization and psychological safety, marginalized students continue to face negative experiences on campuses that hamper their academic success. This experience is grave in graduate educational environments and the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Slay et al., 2019), and at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Meanwhile, foreign-born students are represented and thrive in these educational environments. In the United States (U.S.), foreign-born students are critical to diversity in graduate education, national innovation, and economic growth. However, there are internal differences among foreign-born students. Specifically, Black Sub-Saharan African-born (BSSA) students are unique culturally, based on their orientation.

BSSA students account for students with origins from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), encompassing immigrants and international students. SSA is a region of Africa that excludes countries in the Northern/Maghreb region (Echeverria-Estrada & Batalova, 2019). Most African-born immigrants in the U.S. are Black and emanate from SSA countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, etc.). This brings a new meaning to Blackness in the U.S. due to an identity clash with the native-born Black population (Landry, 2018). Hence, there are within-group differences depicted by socio-cultural orientation among Black students. Therefore, seeking to explore the Black student population's perspectives as a monolith is problematic. From this backdrop, this research seeks to unbundle the Black experience by focusing on BSSA graduate students in STEM at PWIs. The study focuses on graduate students in STEM, given that BSSA students are more likely to pursue degrees in STEM (New American Economy, 2018).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the multiple realities of BSSA graduate students' experience with campus climate at PWIs. Essentially, focusing on BSSA graduate students' community cultural wealth, familial background, and funds of knowledge in their educational journey and academic success. Hence, the research is guided by the following research questions:

- How do BSSA graduate students in STEM deploy their assets in the lived experience with campus climate at PWIs?
- What forms of cultural wealth do BSSA graduate students in STEM engage with to sustain their interest towards degree completion at PWIs?
- How do BSSA graduate students in STEM describe the influence of family on their educational journey and success?
- What funds of knowledge among SSA families contribute to the persistence and academic success of BSSA graduate students in STEM?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campus climate represents the perception of "the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards and practices of employees and students of an institution ... that concern the access for, the inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential" (Rankin & Reason 2008, p. 264). While the construct has been used more frequently to focus on specific social groups that are largely historically underrepresented in higher education, campus climate is not limited to traditionally minoritized groups as it advances a holistic educational environment that seeks to increase the success and benefits for all groups at institutions (Rankin & Reason, 2008). Therefore, campus climate is critical to improving academic environments and promoting a culture of diversity and inclusivity of all groups, including foreign-born students.

A way to improve the campus climate for foreign students entails increasing students' sense of belonging to ensure their transition in a culturally sustaining manner (Yao, 2019). The high number of foreign-born students in STEM (Open Doors Report, 2019) and graduate programs necessitates an inclusive approach with cultural sensitivity to ensure their educational success. Specifically, the "African population is noticeably diverse culturally, linguistically, economically, and educationally" (Harushimana & Awokoya, 2011,

p.35). However, the homogeneous classification of Sub-Saharan African-born individuals into the racial and ethnic category as Black/African Americans presents African immigrants as ethnic/racial minorities in the U.S and negatively impacts African immigrants. This identity monolith also ignores the unique cultural/ethnic background of the BSSA population and generates identity clashes and tension with the domestic Black population (Nsangou & Dundes, 2018; Waters et al., 2014).

In educational environments, BSSA students face myriad challenges, including communication typical for most foreign students (Parlar Kılıç et al., 2021). Due to social identity clashes with the Black/African-American racial/ethnic group on campuses, BSSA students also become exposed to diverse forms of marginalization (George Mwangi & English, 2017). This includes racism, stereotypes, and conflicting cultural experiences imposed by previous experiences in their home countries (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Sparks, 2018). These multiple social identities continue to influence the way BSSA students are perceived and affect their overall experience (Traoré, 2006).

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

This research is guided by a complementary theoretical framework, Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) (Yosso, 2005) and Funds of Knowledge (FOK) (Moll et al., 1992). Yosso's (2005) CCW accounts for the forms of capital (*aspirational, navigational, resistant, linguistic, familial, & social*) that each ethnic/racial group possesses to support their educational success. Similarly, FOK (Moll et al., 1992) focuses on the historically and culturally accumulated knowledge from the household, family, cultural orientation, and community to inform a culturally-driven approach to improve students learning. Specifically, CCW is used to holistically understand how students deploy their cultural wealth and what specific forms of capital they utilize in navigating challenging academic environments. Similarly, FOK is used to explore the family's role and other accumulated knowledge from the cultural background to understand how essential these are to BSSA graduate students' educational journey and success.

RESEARCH METHOD

In undertaking this research, I employed a qualitative single case study (Yin, 2017). The qualitative case study research methodology is based on examining the context and every complex condition in the real-world setting of the phenomenon to have a critical understanding of that particular phenomenon (Yin,

2011, 2017). Hence, the single case study methodology presents a relevant methodological framework to focus holistically on the phenomena of interest (i.e., campus climate, family's role, funds of knowledge) in the experiences of a particular group (i.e., BSSA graduate students majoring in the STEM fields) in a specific educational and social context (i.e., PWI in the U.S.).

Research Context and Participants

This research was conducted at a public Research 1 PWI in the Mid-Atlantic of the U.S. In the 2020/2021 academic year, the institution enrolled over 6,000 graduate students (U.S. News, 2021) including BSSA students. Hence, a total of 22 BSSA graduate students were recruited as participants for this study. Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), using two graduate students' organizations for the African graduate students and Black graduate students as gatekeepers.

Data Collection

Following the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) approval, data were collected during Fall 2021. Sources of data collection included semi-structured interviews, personal reflective journal entries, focus groups, and an impending workshop. Participants participated in two individual semi-structured interviews to gauge their perspectives on the experience at PWIs, submitted a reflective journal entry based on prompts provided about the deployment and validation of their funds of knowledge and cultural wealth, and one focus group to gauge their collective educational experience. The workshop, which focuses on member checking and mapping participants' cultural wealth and funds of knowledge in keeping with the initial data is yet to be held since the analysis of the data is still ongoing.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is being conducted using the thematic analysis approach, which enables the researcher to utilize the individual experiences, interpretations, realities, and discourse found in the data as avenues to explore the group to which it belongs (Robson & McCartan, 2016). For this study, the thematic analysis provides a means to understand the cultural wealth and funds of knowledge of BSSA graduate students in STEM at PWIs as constructed through the experiences and interpretations of participants.

Transcripts are being analyzed using the open coding process to allow codes to emerge from the data and discern themes relevant in the data through two

rounds of traditional qualitative line-by-line coding (Saldaña, 2016). The coding process focuses on participants' unique lived experiences to support both within- and cross-participant analyses, guided by the theoretical frameworks on which the study is based to determine BSSA graduate students' cultural wealth and funds of knowledge.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

As a work-in-progress, the findings of this research are pending, given that an in-depth analysis of the data has just begun. However, critical issues/themes arising from the interviews, journal reflections, and focus group thus far highlight *hard work, confidence, perseverance, academic self-efficacy, self-affirmation, and determination* as some of the significant areas cutting across students' cultural wealth, deployed to resist and navigate their educational environments.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although studies have revealed the essence of supporting international/foreign-born students, empirical research on the experiences of BSSA graduate students in STEM is largely unexplored. This study provides knowledge for institutions on how to be culturally responsive to support and retain diverse international and culturally distinct students. Primarily, the research enlightens institutions and student affairs professionals, including international/global education offices of the valuable assets that BSSA graduate students in STEM fields bring to the U.S. Institutions will be capable of supporting and utilizing students' cultural backgrounds to validate their accumulated wealth and forms capital for a positive outcome.

REFERENCES

- Echeverria-Estrada, C., & Batalova, J. (2019, November 6). *Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute.
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sub-saharan-african-immigrants-united-states-2018>
- George Mwangi, C. A. & English, S. (2017). Being Black (and) immigrant students: When race, ethnicity, and nativity collide. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 19(2), 100–130. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v19i2.1317>
- George Mwangi, C. A., Daoud, N., Peralta, A., & Fries-Britt, S. (2019). Waking from the

- American dream: Conceptualizing racial activism and critical consciousness among Black immigrant college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 60(4), 401-420. DOI: [10.1353/csd.2019.0037](https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2019.0037)
- Harushimana, I. & Awokoya, J. (2011). African-born immigrants in U.S. schools: An intercultural perspective on schooling and diversity. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, 6(1), 34-38. <https://doi.org/10.9741/2161-2978.1052>
- Landry, A. (2018). Black is Black is Black?: African immigrant acculturation in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 43(4), 127-147. <https://doi.org/10.1093/melus/mly044>
- Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (Fourth Edition). John Wiley & Sons.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534>
- New American Economy (2018). *How Sub-Saharan African immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy*. New American Economy Research Fund. <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/power-of-the-purse-how-sub-saharan-africans-contribute-to-the-u-s-economy>
- Nsangou, A. & Dundes, L. (2018). Parsing the Gulf between Africans and African Americans. *Social Sciences*, 7(2):24. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7020024>
- Open Doors Report (2019). *Number of international students in the United States hits all-time high*. Institute of International Education. <https://www.iie.org/en/Why-IIE/Announcements/2019/11/Number-of-International-Students-in-the-United-States-Hits-All-Time-High>
- Parlar Kılıç, S., Karadağ, G., Kılıç, N., & Demirel, C. (2021). Difficulties and expectations of foreign nursing students in the clinic. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(1), 114-132. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i1.1684>
- Rankin, S. & Reason, R. (2008). Transformational tapestry model: A comprehensive approach to transforming campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(4), 262-274. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014018>
- Robson, C. & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real world research: A resource for users of social research methods in applied settings* (Fourth Edition). Wiley.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3E [Third Edition]). SAGE.
- Slay, K. E., Reyes, K. A., & Posselt, J. R. (2019). Bait and switch: Representation, climate, and tensions of diversity work in graduate education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42(5), 255-286. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2019.0052>

- Sparks, D. M. (2018). Are you African or African-American? Exploring the identity experiences of female STEM students born in Africa now living in America. *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology*, 10(2).
<https://rc.library.uta.edu/uta-ir/handle/10106/29553>
- Traoré, R. (2006). Voices of African students in America: “We’re not from the jungle.” *Multicultural Perspectives*, 8(2), 29-34.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327892mcp0802_6
- U.S. News and World Report (2021). *Best national university rankings*.
<https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities>
- Waters, M. C., Kasinitz, P., & Asad, A. L. (2014). Immigrants and African Americans. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40(1). 369-390.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145449>
- Yao, C. W. (2019). Sense of belonging in international students: Making the case against integration to US institutions of higher education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 7(Spring), 6–10.
<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/872>
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed). SAGE
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research applications: Design and methods* (Sixth Edition). SAGE
- Yosso*, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Johnny C. Woods, Jr. is a doctoral candidate in higher education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, VA, USA. He works on the experiences and outcomes of BSSA collegians in higher education, inclusive academic environments for marginalized populations including access and equity in STEM, and the internalization of higher education. Email: johnnycw@vt.edu

Sustainability in U.S.-China Higher Education Collaborations: The Case of GUFÉ-WMU Joint Institute

Yuqian “Yvonne” Zhang^{a*}

^aWestern Michigan University, USA

*Corresponding author: Email: yuqian.zhang@wmich.edu.

Address: Western Michigan University, Michigan, USA

ABSTRACT

U.S. and Chinese universities have engaged in four decades of collaboration since the late 1970s, but these partnerships are subject to potentially irregular 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. International partnerships must be responsive to the changing needs of the students, faculty, and administrators and to external political, economic, and ideological factors. Critical to the

sustainability of any long-term partnership is a shared commitment by both institutions.

Keywords: China, collaboration, higher education, partnership, sustainability, U.S.

INTRODUCTION

U.S. and Chinese universities have engaged in four decades of collaboration since the late 1970s (He, 2012; Julius & Leventhal, 2014), with China serving as the largest source of international students (Institute of International Education, 2020) and the top partner country in international joint and dual degree programs (Helms et al., 2017; Lin, 2016b) for U.S. universities. Additionally, the U.S. and China are each other's top collaborating countries in science and engineering publications (National Science Board & National Science Foundation, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kinser and Green (2009) define international partnerships as “cooperative agreements between a higher education institution and another distinct organization to coordinate activities, share resources, or divide responsibilities related to a specific project or goal” (p. 4). These institutional collaborations have rapidly expanded in number and importance in the past two decades (Lanford, 2021; Lin, 2016a). This trend might be considered “*the internationalization of internationalization*, signaling that the process of internationalization has itself become internationally collaborative” (Sutton et al., 2012, p. 149).

Sutton (2010) distinguishes between transactional partnerships and transformational partnerships. Transactional partnership involves exchanges of people, services, or resources, but the institutions remain largely unchanged. Transformational partnerships transform each institution through the generation of common goals, projects, and products. Transactional collaborations may be a good first step for global engagement, but long-term transformational partnerships have the potential to develop truly reciprocal relationships that promote access and equity and establish “negotiated space” around cultural differences (Hanada, 2021; Helms, 2015; Leng, 2013; Sperduti, 2019; Zuilkowski & Tsiga, 2021).

The creation of global higher education partnerships requires a considerable investment of time and resources and issues may arise that frequently hinder progress in various stages of the organizational change process (Altbach, 2010; Chan, 2021; Garrett et al., 2017; Helms, 2015; Lanford, 2020; Quinn, 2017). International partnerships are also subject to potentially unstable forces (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Enkhtur et al., 2021; Otto, 2021), including ongoing geopolitical tensions, the rise of nationalism and populism, and restrictions on international mobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With these challenges, the stakes are high as U.S.-China higher education partnerships navigate difficult and ambiguous terrain.

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this paper is to explore the factors that contribute to the sustainability of U.S.-China higher education partnerships. By sustainable partnership, I mean substantial long-term collaborations between two higher education institutions (Garrett et al., 2017; Lanford, 2020). The following research question guides this paper: What practices have been effective in improving the prospects for long-term sustainability of these partnerships?

RESEARCH METHOD

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. This single case study is exploratory in that the goal of the study is to develop the conceptual framework for future multiple case studies (Yin, 2018). The Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) refers to international academic collaboration as Chinese-foreign cooperative education (State Council, 2003). Depending on the scope of the partnerships, these collaborations fall into three types: (a) university level, (b) institute level, and (c) program level. U.S.-China joint universities and institutes are a relatively recent phenomenon, most of them established since the early 2010's.

Purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) is used to identify a single case of a U.S.-China joint institute that meets the following criteria: (1) is a joint institute between a U.S. institution and a Chinese institution, offering bachelor's degree and/or graduate education; (2) enrolled its first cohort of students no later than 2017; and (3) remains in operation at the time of the research.

The single case chosen is the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute, a partnership between Western Michigan University (WMU), a national research university

located in the Midwest, and Guizhou University of Finance and Economics (GUFU), a regional public university in Western China. Contact began in spring 2014, and the joint GUFU-WMU bachelor's program in Accountancy was approved by the MoE, with enrollment starting in 2015. In 2017, the MoE approved the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute and enrollment started in the same year. It would take almost three more years for WMU and GUFU to work out finer details of the Joint Institute. On March 12, 2020, the WMU Board of Trustees finalized and approved the GUFU-WMU 4+0 Agreement, which was just in time to add 585 students to WMU's overall enrollment as the institution braced itself for the impact of coronavirus.

Data was collected via direct observation and document analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Observation is sometimes employed by researchers in the course of qualitative case studies, but it remains an underutilized method of data collection in such studies (Bryman, 2011). In this study, operations of the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute were observed through WMU board meetings, where U.S. "sunshine laws" allow the public access to higher education information and meetings (McLendon & Hearn, 2004). This was supplemented by document research, which requires researchers to collect, collate and analyze empirical data to produce a theoretical account that either describes, interprets or explains what has occurred (Scott, 1990).

FINDINGS

To foster long-term and sustainable global partnerships, a set of essential enablers must be in place (Nolan & Hunter, 2012): Leadership, faculty and staff engagement, and policy support.

Leadership

The task of leadership is to create a collective vision and common values for global engagement by convincing the community of the need for change. Sustainable international partnerships call for a comprehensive approach to internationalization and expanded leadership (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). Leadership has to extend beyond the international office to include the board of trustees, the president, the chief academic officer, and academic deans.

On June 29, 2017, the WMU Board of Trustees approved the name change of the WMU-GUFU Joint Institute to Western Michigan Institute, GUFU. This was the last WMU board meeting that President John Dunn attended before his retirement. President Dunn elaborated on WMU's mature and new international

partnerships and shared facts and figures on the WMU-GUFE collaboration. He was going on his second trip to GUFE to attend the opening ceremony of the Western Michigan Institute.

Boards, in particular, play a key role in ensuring sustainable partnerships amidst turnover and change (Eckel & Kezar, 2016). Boards can support the appointment of internationally experienced and committed presidents and provosts (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). They can also facilitate the active recruitment and selection of deans and department chairs who are internationally experienced and have a demonstrated interest in global engagement. On September 20, 2017, for example, the WMU Board of Trustees appointed Paulo Zagalo-Melo, a Portuguese political scientist with a long track record in international education, to lead the Haenicke Institute for Global Education. Wolfgang Schlör, former Associate Provost for Global Education, had accepted a position at another institution earlier that year.

Faculty and Staff Engagement

Leaders need to invest time and energy to gain broad participation in and ownership of global engagement and identify key change agents with the necessary skills to drive the new vision forward. Participation has to extend beyond the international office to include faculty leaders and key institutional support units (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). Without the active engagement of faculty and staff, global partnerships would be impossible in any meaningful sense.

Just before the WMU Board of Trustees approved *Western Michigan University Strategic Plan: Gold Standard 2020* on March 23, 2016, Associate Provost Schlör and his team showcased to the board members WMU's global engagement. Joining Schlör were Professor Jim Butterfield, Chair of the International Education Council of the Faculty Senate, Hashim, a Fulbright student from Iran, and Naida, a U.S. student with study abroad experience. The team not only demonstrated WMU's achievements in student and faculty mobility, but also highlighted a vision toward a long-term, comprehensive approach, focusing on global learning for all.

Policy Support

Once the direction of global engagement has been established, a set of mechanisms are needed to sustain the process and realize the goals (Adams & Lanford, 2021; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). The shared vision must be supported by a clearly articulated strategy that sets out key objectives, supporting structures,

and timelines. The WMU Board of Trustees approved WMU's *Strategic Plan 2020* on March 23, 2016. Global engagement is one of the three pillars of the *Strategic Plan*.

The motion to establish the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute was passed by the WMU board on December 13, 2016. Associate Provost Schlör spoke for less than two minutes concerning the GUFU-WMU agreement, and the trustees passed the motion swiftly. McLendon and Hearn (2004) argue that "sunshine laws", designed to allow the public broad access to higher education information and meetings, may have potential negative impacts onboard communication and deliberation.

However, it is noteworthy that Schlör had prepared for the WMU Board of Trustees a document package as an open record. This 58-page package, documenting the GUFU-WMU collaboration from 2014 to 2016, included the following items: (a) the first Memorandum of Understanding; (b) three agreements on joint programs, (c) an application form for the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute, and (d) a proposal to establish the GUFU-WMU Joint Institute.

CONCLUSION

This study brings more awareness of the challenges and opportunities associated with partnerships by exploring conditions that can improve the prospects of long-term sustainability for colleges and universities interested in stable, mutually beneficial collaborations. The findings of this study confirm that a set of essential enablers must be in place in order to foster long-term and sustainable global partnerships. International partnerships must be responsive to the changing needs of the students, faculty, and administrators and to external political, economic, and ideological factors. Critical to the sustainability of any long-term partnership is a shared commitment by both institutions. Future multiple case studies are needed to describe, document, and interpret the critical factors that contribute to the sustainability of U.S.-China higher education partnerships.

REFERENCES

- Adams, K., & Lanford, M. (2021). Reimagining global partnerships in higher education through open systems theory. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.4273>

- Altbach, P. (2010). Why branch campuses may be unsustainable. *International Higher Education*, (58). <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2010.58.8467>
- Bryman, A. (2011). Research methods in the study of leadership. In A. Bryman (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of leadership* (pp. 15-28). Sage.
- Chan, R. Y. (2021). Understanding international joint and dual degree programs: Opportunities and challenges during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 86-107. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3690>
- de Wit, H., & Altbach, P. G. (2021). Internationalization in higher education: Global trends and recommendations for its future. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 5(1), 28-46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2020.1820898>
- Eckel, P. D., & Kezar, A. (2016). The interlocking authority of boards, presidents, and faculty: Toward shared leadership. In M. N. Bastedo, P. G. Altbach, & P. J. Gumpert (Eds.), *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (4th ed., pp. 155-187). JHU Press.
- Enkhtur, A., Li, M., & Zhang, X. (2021). Case studies of Japanese universities' collaborations with ASEAN, China, and Mongolia. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 145-163. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3666>
- Garrett, R., Kinser, K., Lane, J. E., & Merola, R. (2017). International branch campuses: Success factors of mature IBCs. Observatory on Borderless Higher Education and Cross-Border Education Research Team. <https://www.obhe.org/resources/international-branch-campus-success-factors-of-mature-ibcs>
- Hanada, S. (2021). Higher education partnerships between the Global North and Global South: Mutuality, rather than aid. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 135-144. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3686>
- He, J. (2012). Increasing the openness of education as an approach to promoting educational reform and development. *Chinese Education & Society*, 45(3), 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932450305>
- Helms, R. M. (2015). *International higher education partnerships: A global review of standards and practices*. American Council on Education. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/CIGE-Insights-Intl-Higher-Ed-Partnerships.pdf>
- Helms, R. M., Brajkovic, L., & Struthers, B. (2017). *Mapping internationalization on US campuses: 2017 edition*. American Council on Education. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Mapping-Internationalization-2017.pdf>
- Hudzik, J. K., & McCarthy, J. S. (2012). *Leading comprehensive internationalization: Strategy and tactics for action*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

- International Institute of Education (2020). *The Open Doors 2020 Report on International Educational Exchange*.
- Julius, D. J., & Leventhal, M. (2014). *Sino-American joint partnerships: Why some succeed and others fail*. Research & Occasional Paper Series: CSHE. 1.14. Center for Studies in Higher Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545201.pdf>
- Kinser, K., & Green, M. F. (2009). *The power of partnerships: A transatlantic dialogue*. Association of Universities & Colleges in Canada. <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/the%20power%20of%20partnerships%20a%20transatlantic%20dialogue.pdf>
- Lanford, M. (2020). Long-term sustainability in global higher education partnerships. In A. Al-Youbi, A. H. Zahed, & W. G. Tierney (Eds.), *Successful global collaborations in higher education institutions* (pp. 87-93). Springer.
- Lanford, M. (2021). Critical perspectives on global partnerships in higher education: Strategies for inclusion, social impact, and effectiveness. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 10-14. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.4449>
- Leng, P. (2013). International university partnerships in Cambodian higher education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 5(Summer), 25-30. <https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/832>
- Lin J. (2016a). Basic relationships among scale, quality, and benefits in Sino-foreign cooperative education. *Chinese Education & Society*, 49(4-5), 254-270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2016.1237847>
- Lin, J. (2016b). Study on the introduction of high-quality educational resources for Sino-foreign cooperative education. *Chinese Education & Society*, 49(4-5), 243-253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2016.1237846>
- McLendon, M. K., & Hearn, J. C. (2004). Why “sunshine” laws matter: Emerging issues for university governance, leadership, and policy. *Metropolitan Universities*, 15(1), 67-83. <https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/article/view/20148/19760>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- National Science Board, & National Science Foundation. (2019). *Publication output: U.S. trends and international comparisons. Science and engineering indicators 2020*. NSB-2020-6. <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20206/>
- Nolan, R., & Hunter, F. (2012). Institutional strategies and international programs: Learning from experiences of change. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl, & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of international higher education* (pp. 131-145). Sage.

- Otto, J. (2021). The impact of evolving transatlantic relations on international partnerships in higher education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 164-176. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3657>
- Quinn, S. S. (2017). *International partnership development today: Insights and best practices from case studies*. NAFSA.
- Scott, J. (1990). *A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research*. Polity Press.
- Sperduti, V. R. (2019). Internationalization as Westernization in higher education. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 9(Spring), 9–12. <https://ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/887>
- State Council. (2003). *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-foreign Cooperation in Running Schools*. <https://www.crs.jsj.edu.cn/news/index/3>
- Sutton, S. B. (2010). Transforming internationalization through partnerships. *International Educator*, 19(1), 60-63. https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/janfeb10_partne ring.pdf
- Sutton, S. B., Egginton, E., & Favela, R. (2012). Collaborating on the future: Strategic partnerships and linkages. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl, & T. Adams (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of international higher education* (pp. 147-165). Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Zuilkowski, S., & Tsigas, I. (2021). Building a university partnership to support early grade reading in Nigeria: The case of the Nigeria Centre for Reading, Research and Development. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 13(5), 124–134. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v13i5.3652>

YUQIAN “YVONNE” ZHANG, M.S., is a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Western Michigan University. Her research interests include the internationalization of higher education and global leadership. Email: yuqian.zhang@wmich.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The author thanks two peer reviewers and the editor for their helpful comments and suggestions. She is also grateful for the intellectual stimulation and moral support by Dr. D. Eric Archer, Associate Professor, and Dr. Regina Garza Mitchell, Professor, Educational Leadership in Higher Education, Western Michigan University.