

CIHE  
Perspectives  
No. 19

# Innovative and Inclusive Internationalization:

*Proceedings of the 2021 WES–CIHE Summer Institute  
Boston College*

Tessa DeLaquil, Maia Gelashvili,  
and Rebecca Schendel  
Editors



**BOSTON COLLEGE**

Lynch School of Education and Human Development

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION



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## CIHE Perspectives

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## FOREWORD

It is our great pleasure to present the fourth annual **Proceedings of the WES-CIHE Summer Institute on Innovative and Inclusive Internationalization**, a joint initiative of World Education Services (WES) and the *Center for International Higher Education* (CIHE) at Boston College. Following the unfortunate cancellation of our 2020 Summer Institute, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were determined to hold the event as planned in June 2021. The Summer Institute has always been an in-person event, but – as we watched the global trends in the pandemic through the winter and spring of 2021 – we realized that the only option for June 2021 was an entirely virtual conference. Although we initially felt some trepidation about the online format, worrying that we would necessarily have to sacrifice some of the more informal networking that has always been a strength of this event, we were delighted to find that the virtual format actually allowed us to organize the most diverse (indeed, inclusive!) Summer Institute to date. As you will see from the papers included in this publication, the 2021 Summer Institute attracted presenters from all over the world, writing on a broad variety of important topics related to inclusivity and innovation in internationalization. We were also able to bring speakers from around the world to participate in the event, each of whom raised concerns and perspectives from their own regional and national contexts. Indeed, the online format was such a success that we anticipate continuing to offer the Summer Institute in at least a hybrid mode, moving forward.

The great strength of the Summer Institute is that it leverages the ideas and insights of the next generation of international higher education scholars. These newer voices to the field push us to think about things in new ways, raise concerns and perspectives that have long been marginalized, and offer a hopeful vision of where our field may go in future. We think you will agree that the hope and potential represented by this collection of papers offer an inspiring view of what will come next for higher education internationalization efforts around the world. There is no question that internationalization is a rapidly changing concept, as a result of the pandemic but also other stresses such as

climate change. The concerns and aspirations of the next generation will help us to understand and navigate these changes, while also holding us to account in terms of ensuring that we fully welcome and serve those who have been traditionally marginalized from internationalization efforts around the world.

CIHE would like to thank WES for its ongoing financial support for the annual Summer Institute and for making this annual publication possible.

CIHE and WES would collectively like to thank the post-doctoral and doctoral student members of the 2021 Summer Institute planning committee (Ayenachew Woldegiyorgis, Tessa DeLaquil and Maia Gelashvili) for their invaluable insights into how best to organize a virtual event, as well as all of the hard work and energy that they provided during the Institute. We would also like to thank the editors of this publication, as well as Salina Kopellas, Staff Assistant at CIHE, for the layout and design.

We look forward to the next WES-CIHE Summer Institute in June 2022. Whether it be online or in-person, we know that it will continue to offer a crucial space for the next generation of scholars in our field to meet one another and share their insights with us all.

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# TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

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## Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi: A Moral Compass for Inclusive Internationalization in Aotearoa/New Zealand ?

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### Introduction

Aotearoa/New Zealand in its current form was founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi (The Treaty). Despite the ongoing discussions about its implications within a New Zealand context, it is accepted that partnership, participation, and protection are the key Treaty principles identified thus far, and they must be observed in all functions of the government (Hudson & Russell, 2009). This paper contends that, while New Zealand universities are established within a colonial context and are implicated in global power struggles, the Treaty serves as a moral and ethical compass for New Zealand universities' internationalisation efforts. It asserts that by upholding the Treaty principles in the process of internationalizing higher education, New Zealand has the potential to resist neo-colonial and neo-imperial assumptions of Western superiority and Eurocentrism within the global academic hierarchy, and to advocate against academic hegemony based on colonial logics and universal truth. It argues that the Treaty serves to protect the multiplicity of knowledge systems and to enrich the process of global learning and knowledge (re)production. This paper is written from the view of a female *tangata tiriti* (people of the Treaty) working within higher education, and from a perspective of hope.

### Inclusivity: The Spirit and Principles of the Treaty

Within the New Zealand context, the Treaty is regarded

as a living document, is forward looking, and its principles are organically evolving as the Treaty is applied to new issues and situations (Te Puni Kōkiri: Wellington, 2002). The Treaty, one could suggest, is in fact a cross-cultural partnership agreement between the Māori/Indigenous and the Crown/non-Indigenous. Central to the spirit of the Treaty are the concepts of mutual benefit and reciprocity, which underpins the principle of equal partnership (Te Puni Kōkiri: Wellington, 2002). Hudson & Russell (2009) argue that the notions of reciprocity and mutual benefit are of paramount importance when operationalizing Treaty principles in research. They advocate for an outcome-oriented understanding of the Treaty principles rather than one that focuses on process/engagement. Their interpretation necessitates respect and recognition for indigenous cultural knowledge and traditions (including rights, cultural values, norms, practices, language), control over the extent of research involvement and process by Māori, active protection for Māori rights and ensuring real benefits to Māori groups in a fair manner (Hudson & Russell, 2009). In other words, all interactions require a genuine concern for both parties involved, the willingness to engage respectfully and in good faith, and to negotiate without subsuming each party's values, rights, and needs (Te Puni Kōkiri: Wellington, 2002).

There is an increasing voice demanding cultural respect, acknowledgement of contextual problems resulting from dominance, validation of plural knowledge systems and the people of these systems,

collaboration instead of competition, and responsibilities to global communities when conceptualizing internationalisation (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Dawson, 2020; Healey, 2017; Hoey, 2016; Stein, 2016). The (re)interpretation of the Treaty principles is useful in the context of international education, as there is a growing appetite for ethical internationalization. For instance, Hoey (2016) suggests eight ethical principles for building a higher education partnership, affirming the significance of authenticity, equal partnership (outcome-focused), positive regard of difference, collaborative effort, and assuming a position of ignorance (i.e. non-expert). Lumby & Foskett (2016) also endorse the not-knowing stance and urge universities to adopt this view to negate cultural and epistemic dominance. de Wit, on the other hand, incorporates intentionality and impact/outcome into his definition of internationalization (de Wit, 2020).

These understandings depart from a process-focused position and highlight the human consequences of internationalization (Buckner & Stein, 2020; de Wit, 2020; Jiang, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2016). Coincidentally, the spirit of the Treaty mirrors this sentiment. One could infer that, at the heart of the Treaty, is the recognition of diversity, collaboration, and equality. Furthermore, while the Treaty deals with a New Zealand context specifically, the underlying spirit of the Treaty can be applied to New Zealand universities' internationalization efforts onshore and abroad, as the universities are both 'indigenous' and 'the other' simultaneously in this context. By applying the Treaty principles in academic exchanges and research, one could contend, a space is created for the exchange of knowledge(s) and ongoing dialogues for developing plural epistemologies and ontologies (Hudson & Russell, 2009). It paves the way for building solidarity and developing an 'ecology of knowledges', where multiple forms of knowing and knowledge coexist, to respond to the planetary issues (such as poverty, inequality, climate change) that confronts humanity (Dawson, 2020; Smith, 2012). Simply put, the spirit and principles of the Treaty provide an alternative discourse to the neo-liberal one, offering an inclusive model of thinking, being, and acting; collectively, this will empower New Zealand universities to work more effectively locally and globally.

## Conclusion

The Treaty is an active document. It demands actions: recognizing historical and current contexts (eg. social, cultural, political, economic) and devising solutions collaboratively. It has the potential to build an alternative truth through education – a humane and compassionate one – to the current neoliberal capitalist view. Internationalization is commonly accepted as a dynamic process where an international dimension is incorporated into the workings of tertiary education in response to globalization (de Wit, 2020; Jiang, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2016; Zha et al., 2019). Ethical internationalization, on the other hand, requires collective efforts, and a genuine desire, determination, and will, to empower all. In this sense, the spirit of the Treaty has much to offer New Zealand universities in their internationalization efforts, as it impacts on research, curriculum, intercultural engagement, and pedagogy.

Further, the notions of reciprocity and mutual benefit embedded in the Treaty can guide New Zealand universities to consider how they engage with their international partners (eg. institutions, academics, students) and progress in an ethical manner to avoid building "a thriving and globally connected New Zealand through world-class international education" (New Zealand Government, 2018) at the expense of those who are less privileged and/or historically subjugated. In return, New Zealand universities have the potential to lead in (ethical) international education and exemplify prospering through collaboration and diversity: "Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi: With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive".

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## Addressing Social Engagement within Internationalization Strategies: Insight from Brazil

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In a context of ever-increasing emphasis on the social role of higher education, there has been a strong call for universities to engage more deeply with society. However, within the internationalization of higher education, initiatives have mainly focused on teaching and research activities, often overlooking social engagement. An emerging development in the field is the concept of Internationalization in Higher Education for Society (IHES). Developed by Brandenburg et al. (2020), it is described as an overlapping area between internationalization and social engagement. The authors advocate for a systematic approach to internationalization beyond the walls of higher education institutions, emphasizing the intentional purpose of internationalization as contributing meaningfully to society through social engagement.

Triggered by the IHES concept, my master's thesis aimed at investigating how social engagement, through university extension, is addressed within the interna-

tionalization strategies of Brazilian universities. Drawing on the findings of my research, I argue that integrating university extension activities into internationalization strategies is a more inclusive approach to internationalization. This piece also adds to the growing conversation around the topic by presenting some recommendations aiming at greater integration between internationalization and social engagement.

### Social Engagement and Internationalization: Evidence from Brazil

My research involved analyzing institutional documents from nine Brazilian universities and interviewing representatives from five of them.

Having a small number of participants and only one representative interviewed from each of the five universities are some of the limitations of the study. Despite an invitation to participate in the study having been sent aiming to reach eighteen participants (the

rector and the international office director of each university), only eight people responded to it. Out of those eight, six agreed to participate: one dean for university extension, four international office directors, and one rector. The first interview, conducted with one of the directors, was used as a pilot (therefore not used for data analysis). The low response rate might have been related to a variety of reasons, including the COVID-19 outbreak that overwhelmed the institutional representatives, who lacked the time to participate; an understanding that the research topic was not within their responsibility, and therefore that they were not the most appropriate persons to participate; or simply the lack of interest in the topic.

However, despite this small sample size, some tentative conclusions could be drawn. Findings from the qualitative analysis suggest that, although internationalization is an explicit part of the universities' strategy, university extension is not explicitly integrated into the institutional internationalization plans. Participants recognized that internationalization can be a tool to create a positive impact on society, enabling mutual learning and growth, but implied that these benefits are mainly secondary effects of internationalization and not a result of direct engagement with society. Despite university extension being mentioned in the internationalization plans, results show the approach to it is mainly rhetorical.

This lack of greater integration between internationalization and university extension may have several explanations. In a context where educational policies and systems push towards research excellence, university extension is often overlooked in the higher education agenda. There is also a misconception that engaging in these activities means sacrificing internationalization capacity at the institution. Moreover, in Brazil, the government has a strong influence on the internationalization process, shaping what internationalization is and could be, contributing to disregard for university extension as a possibility for international and intercultural engagement (de Wit et al., 2020).

### Addressing Social Engagement within Internationalization Strategies at Brazilian Universities

For the longest time, academic mobility – an opportu-

nity limited to a few students and scholars – has been the main pillar of internationalization. In this context, the concept of internationalization at home emphasizes the importance of producing internationalization experiences that benefit all students, not simply those who study abroad (Beelen & Jones, 2015). With mobility on hold because of the COVID outbreak, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of developing internationalization at home and international and intercultural opportunities for all.

Linking social engagement and internationalization is a way to promote internationalization at home through engagement with local cultural and international groups and thus benefit a greater number of students and society. Besides having a more inclusive approach to internationalization, offering these experiences to students can also contribute to developing more internationally and interculturally aware individuals.

Universities are institutions deeply ingrained in societies. In Brazil, university extension is an academic function embedded in the universities' mission, providing the context within which the relationship with society exists. Yet, universities have long been seen as ivory towers distanced from their societal contexts and needs. Economic rationales, increasing competition, and focus on rankings have diverted internationalization policies away from social engagement. Addressing social engagement within internationalization strategies is a key means for generating more connectedness between higher education institutions and the communities in which they are situated.

According to de Wit et al. (2020), this integration is important to ensure “that internationalization efforts do not end up suppressing the more direct social role of those institutions” (p. 582). Integration can be an avenue to promote the social role of universities – but addressing social engagement in internationalization strategies must be done deliberately and followed through with vigor.

My study identified that one of the barriers hindering this integration is the lack of communication and information exchange. Participants acknowledged that while internationalization-university extension activities exist at the institutional level, they are hard to keep track of because they result from individual initia-

tives. Recommendations to overcome this barrier include tracking existing social engagement initiatives that overlap with internationalization efforts to strategically build on them.

Second, internationalization and social engagement should not be seen as independent and competing areas. Therefore, it is essential to establish better communication between the offices in charge of these areas to create synergies. Finally, these initiatives should be valued and recognized by institutional leadership and through policies of higher education institutions. Providing institutional support is fundamental to ensure that the integration between internationalization and social engagement becomes a systematic, institution-wide effort.

### The Future of Internationalization is Socially-Engaged

The role of universities is under scrutiny. The debate about their public value and the benefit they bring to society is ever-growing. The current global health crisis has disrupted higher education and challenged the field of higher education internationalization. Debates abound about how the future will look, making practitioners and scholars reflect on current structures and practices. As the academic world goes through a period

of unprecedented change, searching for solutions that require international collaboration, internationalization will continue to be a strategic part of higher education. As some scholars have already stated, internationalization is not a goal in itself, but a means to a greater goal. It should be seen as a tool for positive change in both higher education and society. In that sense, addressing social engagement as part of internationalization strategies is a way to challenge current practices and the mainstream view of internationalization. In doing so, a move in the direction of more inclusive internationalization for all is inevitable.

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## The Sustainable Development Goals as Institutional Signal: A Social Cartography Approach

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Higher education institutions are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (SDSN Australia/Pacific, 2017), and universities worldwide are committing to (or committing to the appearance of) engaging with the SDGs. This study draws upon signaling theory (Spence, 1973) to interrogate how universities communicate their commitment and connect institutional activities to the SDGs. In signaling theory, an organization will use a signal for “the deliberate communication of positive information to

convey positive organizational attributes” (Connelly et al., 2011, p. 44). The organizational attributes most often conveyed by a signal are those related to an organization’s quality and/or intentions (Connelly et al., 2011).

Universities today face competing and contradictory demands that intersect the local and global: They must help with local and national economic competitiveness while also contributing to the betterment of local and global society (GUNI, 2017). The SDGs are



valuable to higher education institutions because, as a single signal, the goals allow universities to speak to both demands by conveying their quality and their intentions. For example, in a recent survey of 178 institutions, 65 percent reported that alignment with the SDGs had “positively influenced the image of the institution by showing its contribution to global and local wellbeing” (SDG Accord, 2020, p. 7). The Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings clearly exemplify the signaling power of the goals as well, by making institutional behavior (i.e. alignment with the SDGs) a measure of institutional quality.

In addition to demonstrating institutional impact, the SDGs are a mechanism to capture new demand and funding streams (SDSN Australia/Pacific, 2017). This means that the SDGs can be useful for institutions jockeying for resources in a competitive global higher education marketplace, because those universities that successfully signal with the SDGs have the potential for financial gain. Therefore, the goals are a signal in tension, both in meaning and in use, as they represent contribution and competition.

This study turns to social cartography for its potential to visualize these tensions and contradictions (Stein et al., 2016; Andreotti et al., 2016) to explore the meaning of the SDGs in global higher education. Ultimately, this study will map how universities signal with the SDGs against different contextual factors, such as region, institutional ranking, and national wealth. This research contributes on two levels by providing data as to how the SDGs are being used by institutions, while also attempting to “link higher education with a diversity of perspectives about development” (Stein et al., 2019, p. 292) by representing what meaning institutions worldwide make of the SDGs.

## Methods

The sample was drawn from International Association of Universities (IAU) member institutions. The IAU was selected because its membership was considered more likely to engage with the SDGs, since the IAU has direct ties to the UN as “the voice of global higher education to UNESCO,” and also launched a “global cluster” focused on achievement of the SDGs (International Association of Universities, n.d.). Additionally, the IAU bills itself as the most globally representative university association, which was appealing for this project. (It is

important to note that institutions must pay to join the IAU, which is a limitation to its representativeness.)

IAU member webpages were searched for SDG content. Webpages are data repositories, while also a form of marketing to internal and external stakeholders. Thus, they are an ideal site to investigate how institutions infuse their own meaning into the SDGs and signal that meaning outwards. Every IAU member webpage was searched, using both search engines and institutional search functions, for explicit SDG content. Those institutions without SDG content were excluded from the sample, as were institutions whose content was not in English or could not be easily translated into English. SDG content in English by non-English medium institutions suggests that the content is targeted to a specific audience and reinforces the notion that the SDGs are being used as a signal. In all, 96 institutions in 46 countries were included in the sample.

The totality of each included institution’s SDG-related online content was reviewed and numerically coded by two reviewers across six institutional priorities (equity, recognition, internationalization, engagement, environmental, modernization) and five institutional functions (research, education, service, operations, and entrepreneurial). The priorities represent the values that institutions attached to the SDGs, while the functions represent the specific types of institutional activities that are linked to the goals. Ratings considered both the level at which SDG-related content was present (e.g. strategic plan versus a singular activity) and the extent of the SDG-related content (e.g. detailed information versus a passing reference). Webpage content was considered for multiple linkages. For example, SDG content on the webpage of a research unit investigating anti-pollution measures would receive a rating on the environmental and research indicators, but if the language of the webpage linked anti-pollution measures to environmental justice, then it would also be rated on the equity indicator.

This paper represents a first step toward the study’s goal of social cartography. Ultimately, the numerical codes will be used as coordinates to map institutions across the indicators. At this stage in the study, the indicator scores have been evaluated to discover points of tension and alignment in the way institutions signal with the goals.

## Results

The two most communicated institutional priorities were engagement, which represents the values of helping and partnerships, and recognition, which represents the values of prestige-seeking and competition. Engagement had a positive relationship to all the other indicators, except recognition. When institutions communicate about the SDGs via engagement, they are more likely to communicate about the other indicators as well. In particular, the positive relationship between the engagement priority and the equity, environmental, research, education, and service indicators were significant. Thus, institutions are linking the language of the SDGs across multiple indicators and are attempting to align both programmatic and practical aspects of the institution to the ethos of the SDGs. The goals appear to be a way for institutions to communicate globally-minded and ethical behavior. Using the SDGs in this way can be considered values-based SDG signaling and speaks to the way universities contribute to local and global society.

The recognition indicator was as prevalent as engagement, but it is the opposite of engagement in the values it communicates and in its relationship to the other indicators. Institutions with high scores in recognition were more likely to have low scores across all other indicators. When institutions choose to use the goals to signal reputational characteristics, they forgo the other values and ideas that can be associated with the SDGs. This can be considered competition-based SDG signaling and relates to the expectation that institutions will help with local and national competitiveness. Further, because the recognition priority does not have a positive relationship to the other indicators, this suggests that the SDGs are at risk of being co-opted as a signal of institutional position alone.

The results show that the SDGs have dual and contradictory meanings in the global higher education space. Values-based SDG signaling is used to communicate contribution, while competition-based SDG signaling is used to gain status. The mapping of individual institutions based on these indicators in the next phase of the study will allow for further exploration of the multiple and divergent meanings in the SDGs and help to better understand what causes institutions to employ

values or competition-based signaling.

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# Bridging the Global and the Local through Pursuit of their Third Mission: The Case of the University of Venda

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## Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have recently come under pressure to internationalize their campuses through increasing study abroad offerings and international student recruitment. De Wit et al. (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 the importance of internationalization in making a meaningful contribution to society opens up a renewed conversation around the changing purpose of higher education (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. Examples of an institution's TM including service learning, participatory-based research and volunteering opportunities.

De Wit et al.'s 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. Thus, university leaders must often balance transnational pressures to internationalize and the need to respond to local demands for education equity.

## Data & Methodologies

This article focuses on a case study of the University of

Venda (Univen) located in South Africa's Limpopo province. To understand how Univen communicates its internationalization initiatives to the collegiate community and the decision-making process of internationalization administrators, faculty and staff, my research answers the following: What orientations (rationales) are deployed when Univen conveys its internationalization initiatives? How closely are these aligned to its third mission?

I conducted a content and document analysis of Univen's mission, vision, goals and outcomes statements, strategic plans (2012-2016; 2016-2020), and international education and African languages websites. Data was analyzed through the lens of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1999). The coding process consisted of an initial reading of all content to gain an understanding of the information and 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 and the following categories emerged: Key stakeholders, the global and the local, and organizational values.

## Preliminary Findings

### *Key Stakeholders*

Univen's 2012-2016 strategic plan emphasized that the support of different stakeholders will be critical in the successful implementation of its strategic plan (p. 2). Thus, community engagement serves as a cornerstone of the university, exemplified by services such as a legal aid clinic and on-campus pre-school. Establishing reciprocal relationships between community stakeholders is central in advancing the wider knowledge of the



community and ensuring university research is aligned with their needs. A wider array of stakeholders, including additional universities and public, private and government audiences, were addressed throughout the 2016-2020 strategic plan as important conduits of development. Examples included establishing joint-degree programs and collaborative research projects.

#### *The Global & the Local*

Univen acknowledges the importance of mutually beneficial linkages with regional, national and international partners. The inclusion of provincial governments as an important part of knowledge production and Univen's focus on mobile and domestic forms of internationalization speak to the sustainable nature of its efforts. The most recent strategic plan (2016-2020) posited intercultural competence as not an assimilation of a perceived "global identity," but instead, a pride in one's own cultural and ethnic background (p.29). This is significant because internationalization is now described as a necessary duality, not prioritizing one culture over another.

#### *Organizational Values*

Four of Univen's institutional values stand out: Accountability and transparency, respect and social responsibility, community engagement, and ubuntu. Accountability and transparency allow the university to be answerable to their mandates and open to public scrutiny (p. 9). Terms such as responsibility, engagement and ubuntu specifically ensure the intellectual, social and economic wellbeing of Univen's communities are adequately served. Univen's 2012-2016 strategic plan also includes mentions of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The intentional inclusion of weaknesses reaffirms that Univen is open to public accountability and benchmarking of their progress. Strengths such as its rural location (p. 44) and threats such as negative perceptions of quality graduates (p. 45) underscore the need to continually balance assumptions about Univen.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The myriad responsibilities facing HE in South Africa

may provide an alternative approach to inform dialogue and practice, leading to new articulations of university mission statements. Given the fiscal constraints in this context, income generation is a primary concern, and informs the first, second and third missions of the university. Thus, divisions between teaching, research, and community engagement practices, as well as the need to be financially sustainable, were felt at the University of Venda.

The central dilemma is how to continue providing education that is globally competitive, while meeting the ever-growing needs of students, staff and the broader community in a highly stratified landscape. My content and document analysis shed light on tensions between policy context, student demands, and the needs of researchers and community members. In this instance, the context is preparing students for the workforce and producing new academic knowledge. Students similarly desire redress through access to HE, funding and student support. Researchers also need the time and resources to conduct research, which is central to career progression. Lastly, community members want mutually-beneficial support given the embeddedness of these institutions in local environments. In contexts where HE is commonly viewed to be a pathway out of poverty, and a means of addressing historical injustices, members of the university are constantly juggling these multiple purposes and priorities.

Three recommendations emerged from this study, which might prove useful for Univen (and other similar institutions) as they seek to remedy these challenges:

1. To adopt promotion policies for faculty members that reward community engagement, alongside traditional markers of advancement, such as research and teaching outputs

Incentivizing faculty members to engage with the community allows for the prioritization of an institution's first, second and third missions to be more equitable and advancement within the academy to be based less on teaching and research.

2. To better integrate non-academic stakeholders (such as community members, local business owners, and civil society organizations) into the

decision-making and agenda-setting processes of the institution

By increasing the decision-making capacity of non-academic audiences, power and resources may be more evenly distributed between those working within and beyond a university setting. Furthermore, in areas where students' mobility is limited, increasing contact with off-campus audiences provides students with greater intercultural experiences.

3. To utilize design thinking as an approach to stakeholder engagement and institutional entrepreneurship

As proposed by Kisker (2021), design thinking - a process which involves working in teams to recognize diverse contributions and engage in active listening - is a useful approach for stimulating entrepreneurial institutional behavior, as it enables the development of viable responses to challenges through the capacity building of all stakeholders. Although speaking about a United States context, Kisker's recommendation is also potentially relevant for Univen, given the similarities between community colleges and low-resource institutions such as the University of Venda. For both kinds of

institutions, the ability to learn, collaborate and develop new knowledge networks between institutions will be essential going forward, and the design thinking approach could help to achieve such synergies.

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# Strategies for Internationalization in Chinese Higher Education Institutions: Examining the National Teaching Achievement Awardees since 1989

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China is building the fastest-growing higher education system in the world, in terms of both quality as well as quantity (Kirby, 2014). Enrollment rates in tertiary education in China soared from 5.95 percent in 1998 to 53.8 percent in 2019 (UNESCO, 2020). The number of recognized research universities located in the Chinese mainland has grown remarkably, from eight of the world's top 500 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) in 2005 to 71 in 2020 (ARWU, 2020). The purpose of this paper is to explore

internationalization strategies employed at award-winning Chinese four-year universities for their internationalization efforts.

## Literature Review

The explosive growth of higher education in China in the last four decades has been made possible by a national/global synergy, facilitated and engineered by ongoing reform and opening up policies (Marginson, 2018). The goal of catching up to global norms, partic-

ularly those modeled by the US, has become the theme for self-cultivation in many universities. China therefore emphasizes internationalization in its education policy as a guide to building its capacity and developing its talent (Vincent-Lancrin, 2005). However, the use of international higher education to build capacity is a long-term process and can only be effective when it is accompanied by appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks.

In 1989, China's Ministry of Education launched the National Teaching Achievement Award, the highest national award in teaching and education (Ministry of Education, 1994), which is presented to institutions and project teams that have made outstanding contributions to educational theory and practice. Since China's inclusion as a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001, there has been a significant increase in the number of award-winning four-year institutions with a focus on internationalization strategies. While only three projects/institutions won for their internationalization strategies in 1989, the number of award winners increased to 47 by the eighth iteration of the competition in 2018, bringing the total number of awardees focused on internationalization to 152 projects/institutions (Ministry of Education, 2018). As capacity building is committed to a long-term perspective, this list of 152 projects/institutions may also be of use for those who are interested in the long-term internationalization strategies of Chinese universities.

## Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to explore internationalization strategies utilized at select award-winning Chinese four-year universities. The following two research questions guide this study:

1. What are the institutional approaches to internationalization at Chinese award-winning four-year universities?
2. How have awardees' institutional internationalization strategies evolved over time?

## Methodology

This study utilizes a historical document analysis design (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000) to explore strat-

egies for internationalization in Chinese award-winning, four-year universities. Documents reviewed include application packages, institutional websites and archives, journal articles, and government documents relevant to a total of 152 four-year projects/institutions that have received the National Teaching Achievement Award for their internationalization strategies since 1989. This longitudinal approach to reviewing documents is designed to develop thick data for analyzing change dynamics and the effects of internationalization strategies (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000).

Document research requires researchers to collect, collate and analyze empirical data to produce a theoretical account that either describes, interprets or explains what has occurred (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Prior (2003) asserts that a university's identity is defined through documents, for "a university ... is in its documents rather than its buildings" (p. 60). In document analysis, it is important to adopt a critical stance in reading the documents (Scott, 1990). All documents should be assessed according to four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning.

## Findings

The findings indicate that the great majority of the award-winning four-year institutions are research universities at the center of the Chinese higher education system. As key points of international contact and involvement, research universities are typically the most internationalized postsecondary institutions (Altbach, 2013). In fact, more than 20 institutions have won the award for their internationalization strategies twice or more since 1989. In addition, elite universities are part of the excellence programs that pump billions of dollars into a limited number of top Chinese universities (Mohrman, 2013).

At the institutional level, using internationalization strategies effectively is a strategic dimension in accelerating transformation into a world-class university (Salmi, 2009). To attract, recruit, and retain leading academics, the award-winning institutions rely principally on Chinese academics trained in top universities in North America and Europe, as well as on

the recruitment of highly qualified foreign faculty. Other internationalization strategies include a strong emphasis on global publication, widespread use of international benchmarking, a significant increase in the percentage of courses taught in English, and capacity building through cross-border education.

The results show that internationalization helps reinforce the capacity of China in terms of educational offerings and human resources for its higher education system. Transnational agreements and partnerships developed by foreign universities and Chinese institutions are encouraged in order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between foreign and local educational institutions. Simultaneously, China's migration policy promotes the temporary mobility of students and scholars, while encouraging the return of its nationals who have left to study or to complete their education abroad, so as to prevent massive brain drain and, indeed, to promote brain gain and brain circulation.

The award-winning institutions see themselves as part of the global academic community and develop the necessary infrastructure to support comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik, 2011). Chinese research universities are key points of international contact and involvement linking the Chinese higher education system with the larger global knowledge community. In Rogers' (2003) terms, they are early innovators who are rewarded for their success in internationalization. In this sense, the National Teaching Achievement Award can be considered a mechanism whereby conditions and rewards are created for the diffusion of innovations from early innovators – the award-winning institutions in this study – to early adopters who spread the innovation, and then to the remainder of institutions within the Chinese higher education system.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study lend support to Vincent-Lancrin's (2005) conceptual research of the use of international higher education to promote capacity building. The capacity-building approach to internationalization is a long-term process, and each country and institution must consider how to use international higher education to promote benefits and mitigate risks. More longitudinal research is needed to describe, document, and interpret the critical factors to the planning, implementation, and change processes in the international-

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# International Faculty Members: Are They Included on Host University Campuses?

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Although internationalization has become one of the most critical strategies in universities' agendas over the past three decades, it is not as comprehensive and inclusive as expected. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated that the physical mobility of students and staff cannot be the only means of internationalization. Thus, more sustainable and inclusive practices of internationalization at home are necessary.

International faculty members (IFMs) are regarded as especially important, due to the new perspectives they potentially bring to university research, teaching, and campus life (Altbach & Yudkevich, 2017), due to their diverse backgrounds, affiliations and professional expertise in different fields (Seggie & Çalıkoğlu, 2021). In other words, IFMs - academics recruited and employed in different countries from where they were born and/or where they received their first postsecondary degrees (Altbach & Yudkevich, 2017) - arrive on the scene as essential drivers of campus internationalization.

As a result of this important role, the hiring of IFMs has gained more importance in the last few decades, especially in non-English speaking countries, as it is seen as one of the most effective ways of improving the internationalization of higher education, contributing to the global rankings, and enhancing research and teaching capabilities of the universities (Huang et al., 2019).

However, despite this crucial role for internationalization at home and inclusive internationalization, IFMs can face difficulties & challenges during their recruitment processes and day-to-day work lives. The challenges faced by IFMs can be categorized under two broad types: temporary logistical challenges, and perennial cultural challenges (Pherali, 2012). While the former is related to more bureaucratic challenges, such as visa restrictions and immigration status, the latter is

mainly related to cultural aspects, including, but not limited to, adapting to and integrating into new academic cultures and higher education systems (Huang et al., 2019). Acknowledging the importance of IFMs, this study examines their experiences and challenges from an inclusive internationalization perspective.

## Methodology

Qualitative methods were employed to investigate the experiences and challenges of IFMs working in one of the flagship universities in Turkey, where the medium of instruction is English. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 8 IFMs who are from China (1), Croatia (1), France (2), Greece (1), Japan (1), Spain (1), and the USA (1). Their years of experience range from 1 to 15 years, and they teach in various fields, including the social sciences, languages and natural sciences. Two researchers coded the data separately to ensure inter-coder reliability, and thematic analysis was used in accordance with Creswell's (1998) guidelines. Specific themes under each category are discussed below.

## Results

IFMs have positive and negative experiences, which can be categorized as *enablers* for and *barriers* to inclusive internationalization. Looking at the enablers for inclusive internationalization, participants feel themselves to be in a privileged and respected position within the university. Furthermore, they do not experience any discrimination and problems in their relations with students and other faculty members. The themes found related to enablers are mainly connected to campus life and personal relations within the institution, which might be associated with characteristics of the university, such as having an English medium of instruction and having faculty members who studied abroad. Partici-



pants experienced some common challenges, acting as obstacles for inclusive internationalization, similar to what has been observed in other literature. These obstacles can be classified as operating at national and institutional levels.

*National level challenges* mainly arise from the centralized structure of Turkish higher education, which causes bureaucratic and procedural problems. The participants mentioned that they had to wait for the approval of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) for their appointment, which is perceived by the participants as a very slow, hidden and uncertain process.

IFMs in Turkey have annual contracts, which causes them to feel unsafe, as there is no long-term stability. Each year, they stress that their contract may not be renewed, preventing them from making long-term plans for themselves and their families. For instance, one of the participants explained that the contract of one of his friends was not renewed without any clear reason. This caused him (and many others) to feel insecure, and he thinks that the same thing may happen to him one day. His words - "...we are at the mercy of the department and CoHE for each year" - summarize the feeling that many participants have.

Another participant put forth that retention and promotion processes are not clear and that IFMs do not know what is expected from them. She added that the "...yearly contract... is stressful. What are the criteria to renew it? Writing articles or good rating from students? We don't know the criteria of renewing". Annual contracts carry additional problems, such as renewals of visas and working permits each year, which may again be very problematic, due to the bureaucratic challenges across different government offices.

Another issue to mention is that IFMs have less access to research, project and professional development opportunities. Participants explained that they also do not receive advantages like sabbaticals or allowances, to which their Turkish colleagues have access, especially based on seniority. Besides, although their chances are limited (again due to bureaucratic procedures and Turkish application forms) when they are included in any project, double taxes are withheld from their wages, which is perceived as a kind of penalty.

*Institutional level obstacles* can be classified as lan-

guage problems; ignorance of the decision-making processes; a lack of social, academic and cultural support systems or international funding opportunities; and communication problems with administrative staff on campus. Almost all of the participants stated that the language of communication outside the campus is Turkish, and they usually get e-mails in Turkish. In such cases, however, they either use Google Translate or tend to ignore these e-mails. Thereby, language is found to be the main obstacle to inclusive internationalization, by alienating participants from the information flow on campus.

Besides, the participants complained that IFMs are rarely part of committee boards, and they cannot access key decision-maker positions within the institution. The participants explained that "the structure of the university is quite a Turkish citizen holder oriented," making them feel excluded. The participants also expressed that, except for the academic orientation program when they started working, there was no other systematic and sustainable social, academic & cultural support structure provided for them. One of them complained, saying, "...at the university there was no support so to speak of... Without my Turkish wife to guide me I would have been 100 percent lost!". It is clear that the institution does not provide support mechanisms and that there are not any culturally-specific activities related to cultural holidays, such as Christmas, Easter etc.

Considering support issues, a lack of financial support for IFMs is another issue that deserves to be mentioned. IFMs cannot benefit from any funding opportunities for travel for international conferences or joint projects. A participant explained: "If I want to collaborate with another colleague from another university, it has to be free..."

Finally, the fact that the administrative staff do not know English and do not seem to possess much by way of intercultural communication skills makes the situation even harder for IFMs. This causes miscommunication, as IFMs always need a "translator" to communicate with any administrative unit.

All in all, even though some positive experiences act as enablers for inclusive internationalization, other national and institutional obstacles cause IFMs to feel excluded. Inclusive internationalization (de Wit &

Jones, 2018) focuses on students and staff who do not travel. However, the above-mentioned examples of exclusion lead us to consider not only non-mobile students and staff, but also the inclusion of international students and staff who have moved to our campuses. Most universities have embraced an increase in IFMs, but that is a vacuous strategy by itself. As Altbach and Yudkevich (2017) mention, IFMs are the drivers of international consciousness at universities, and a more systematic approach towards their satisfaction and integration is required.

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# Implementing an Inclusion and Diversity Policy in a Ghanaian University: Prospects and Challenges

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Higher educational institutions (HEIs) around the world are noted for finding solutions to a myriad of problems confronting humanity through research and innovation. In achieving this, HEIs bring together people of diverse backgrounds, expertise, and experience worldwide to work together, making diversity in the workforce of HEIs an important factor. Diversity deals with creating an organizational culture of inclusion, in which differences are valued and accepted. In African HEI governance, diversity and inclusion are even more paramount, as people with different characteristics must be managed. These include people with different ethnic background, as Africans have several ethnicity and different cultural norms. People may have religious differences, gender differences, age differences and differences in terms of disability status

among several others.

## Diversity in the Workplace

A diverse workforce is defined as the distinctive contrasts and likenesses in groups of individuals joined to a common management objective, on an individual and sub-group level. These distinctions and similarities can manifest in areas such as age, race, culture, philosophical thoughts, viewpoints, and religion, among others. All these differences are important considerations that must be factored in when managing the human resources of any institution, as they can affect its effectiveness (Baym, 2015; Guillaume et al., 2017). Diversity can even provide competitive advantage (Luthans et al., 2015). However, simply ensuring a diversity of cultural viewpoints is insufficient for ensuring in-

clusion (Blau, 2017). Systemic management of diversity can have a wide-ranging impact on making a workplace healthy and united (Simpkins et al., 2017).

In Ghana, inclusion and diversity policies within higher education ensure that all members of the campus community adhere to inclusion principles and treat all people with fairness, dignity and respect, as a key requirement of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission. Although some newly established universities do not yet have such policies, most do. However, in practice, some institutions do not have adequate structures to implement these policies.

Little is currently known about the implementation of diversity and inclusion policies in the Ghanaian context. The purpose of this study is to examine how a newly upgraded Ghanaian Technical University is implementing a policy to ensure effective inclusion. Inspired by Horwitz's (2005) Conceptual Framework of Team Diversity for Performance, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the policy framework for implementing inclusive policy; and
2. Examine the challenges and prospects associated with the implementation of an inclusion policy.

## Methodology

Interviews and document analysis were conducted using qualitative approaches to sample opinion. Six management members (one Dean, three Heads of Department, and two members of the central administration) were purposively sampled to share their opinion on the implementation of inclusion policy, as individuals in these positions are directly responsible for policy implementation in the university. The institution was selected for the case study because it was recently upgraded from a polytechnic to a public technical university and the researchers were interested in finding out how new institutions comply with state regulations on education.

Interview guides developed were subjected to expert review to ensure validity and reliability. Ethical considerations on the anonymity of the institution and the participants were assured. Document and records analyses were performed through content analysis of

major policies of the institution. These were done to appreciate the policy framework and systems in place for policy implementation. The responses received were subsequently transcribed and analysed.

## Results and Discussion

### *Policy Framework*

From the responses, the technical university does not have a "stand-alone" inclusion and diversity policy. A similar study by Addo, Asamoah, Adusei and colleagues (2021) also indicates that 60 percent of public universities in Ghana have yet to publish a "stand-alone" policy on risk management. However, there were policy statements related to diversity and inclusion in other policies like HR policy. Again, it was observed that institutional advertisements for recruitment do not state the institution's policy on diversity to guide potential staff.

### *Prospects*

Respondents generally agreed that an inclusion policy would help in eliminating unnecessary discrimination within the working environment and create more harmony in the workplace. This aligns with Horwitz (2005) who observed that bio-demographic diversity (age, gender, race/ethnicity) had a relationship with team performance (effectiveness and efficiency).

### *Challenges*

Some of the challenges faced by this HEI are gender and cultural norms which were also observed by Blau (2017). In African contexts, cultural norms affect inclusion in recruitment. Certain roles are reserved for certain genders. For example, women mostly perform junior level cleaning of offices, while men mostly perform security roles.

Academic qualifications and other factors also sometimes affect inclusion. One respondent indicated that "including people for inclusion's sake may not be the best option as they may not have the required qualification and experience," while another said, "some perceived minority group may not be available to be included in recruitment, making enforcement of state policy difficult".



Limited resources (staff training and scholarships), favoritism and political affiliation were identified as major factors affecting the implementation of organizational policies related to diversity and inclusion.

## Conclusion

National regulatory policy exists to guide HEI inclusion and diversity policy, but institutional arrangements to comply fully are not in place to ensure efficient implementation, thus creating unnecessary challenges. Newly established institutions are not adequately supported to implement policies and systems for a smooth take-off.

## Recommendations

From the above, the study recommends the enforcement of policies at the institutional level. Institutions should be supported to develop a stand-alone, comprehensive policy for inclusion and diversity. This will assist in achieving the goal that all persons with the requisite qualifications and cultural backgrounds be included in the operations of the institution.

Strategic planning must also be adopted. Institutional policies are the bedrock on which the vision and mission of every institution are achieved. Planning to have the needed policies in place is critical for the continuous growth of every institution, especially new ones undergoing transitions, as observed by Aspvik and Aspvik (2017).

HEIs, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, must appreciate the unique role of inclusion in higher education governance and administration as postulated by Bratton and Gold (2017). Students as well as marginalized and minority groups are to be included in major decision-making (Addo, Asamoah, Nuako et al., 2021). There is a need to put in place human resource planning to build capacity for all staff to appreciate inclusion, as observed by Luthans and colleagues (2015).

Policy evaluation is key to ensure effective implementation. Establishing systems to check whether policies are being achieved is pivotal. Society keeps evolving and therefore, constant reviews of policies and, in some cases, alignment of policies is essential to create resilient institutions.

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# Exposing the ‘Acknowledgement Gap’ in US Higher Education Admissions: A Search for Refugee-Inclusive Language and Resources on US Admissions Websites

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Over the last 20 years, protracted conflicts across the globe have fueled a tidal wave of forced displacement, pushing millions of individuals into extreme poverty and cutting off access to education, particularly at the tertiary level. Of the 26 million displaced individuals worldwide that are formally classified as refugees, only three percent have access to higher education (UNHCR, 2020). This lack of access contributes to a more challenging social and economic integration process once a displaced individual settles in a host country, the consequences of which can include extreme poverty and health issues (Arar et al., 2020; Baker et al., 2019; Schick et al., 2016; Łukasiewicz, 2017).

Given the Biden administration’s recent proposal to raise the US refugee admissions ceiling to 125,000 by 2022 (Lee & Watson, 2021), the US higher education system must be prepared to address the challenges facing the growing population of displaced individuals that settle within our borders as refugees. One of the most significant challenges facing refugee applicants to higher education is the “information barrier” – the cultural, linguistic, and institutional obstacles that prevent refugees from accessing information about the educational systems in their host countries and supports available to students from refugee backgrounds (Shakya et al., 2010, p. 71).

Recent research on refugee internet-use and the success of online information-sharing platforms like IIE PEER (IIE, 2018) indicate that the internet is a crucial tool to help refugees circumvent this information barrier and find important information about educational opportunities (Streitwieser et al., 2018; UNHCR, 2020; Dekker et al., 2018). For this to be possible, however, the admissions websites of US higher education institutions (HEIs) must acknowledge refugee applicants and provide information and resources specific to

the refugee population. Research exploring the extent to which US HEIs do this is limited; however, Unangst’s (2020) survey of the websites of HEIs in Maine and Idaho provides a useful model for a broader exploration of refugee-inclusive language and resources available on the admissions websites of HEIs across the US.

## Methodology

Informed by Unangst (2020) and Cazzetta (2019), this research employs a mixed-methods approach to understanding the current landscape of refugee-inclusive language and resources available on US admissions websites. Refugee-inclusive in this context means any reference to the refugee applicant population that meaningfully promotes inclusion through direct statements welcoming refugee applicants and/or resources allocated specifically for refugee applicants. This research consists of a survey of 50 US admissions websites (one per state), supplemented with four interviews with admissions professionals at US HEIs. The survey of admissions websites was conducted using a keyword search of the terms “refugee,” “asylee,” “asylum seeker,” “stateless,” “refugee admissions,” and “refugee applicants.” The four interviews with admissions professionals were conducted over Zoom. The interviews covered the following two questions: (i) Does your institution publish information specific to refugee applicants on your website, and if not, why not? and (ii) Does your institution have established procedures for supporting and evaluating refugee applicants?

## Findings

Out of the 50 institutional websites surveyed, 48 make at least some reference to the existence of the refugee applicant population. However, the vast majority of references are not particularly meaningful. They serve the purpose of defining citizenship and residency status for

tuition and/or financial aid purposes and do not actively promote inclusion. Only 14 percent of institutions surveyed provide general resources for refugee applicants. Out of all surveyed institutions, the University of California's institutional website is the only one that acknowledges a willingness to consider special circumstances facing refugee applicants when coming to an admissions decision. They note that academic accomplishments are considered in the context of "your life experiences and special circumstances", including "refugee status" (University of California, n.d.).

Three of the four interviewees indicated that their institution does have established procedures for supporting and evaluating refugee applicants, but they do not publish information on their websites for fear of generating false expectations, confusing other applicants, or receiving backlash from the local community.

## Discussion

Given that only one out of the 50 websites surveyed acknowledge the special circumstances facing refugee applicants, and that the majority of websites surveyed fail to make any meaningful reference to the refugee applicant population, there is a clear *acknowledgement gap* in US higher education admissions. The *acknowledgement gap* is defined here as a failure of US HEIs to acknowledge – through inclusive language and resources published on admissions websites – the existence of and unique circumstances facing refugee applicants. Refugee students interested in applying to any of the institutions surveyed in this project would struggle to find information addressing the unique challenges that they face.

While the interviews with admissions professionals were only supplemental and do not offer a comprehensive understanding of the situation at all US HEIs, they indicate that institutional policy around supporting and evaluating refugee applicants does exist in some cases, despite a lack of public information on admissions websites. Understandably, institutions would be reluctant to publish specific information about the application process on their admissions websites, but it is unclear why institutions cannot publish statements of inclusion and provide resources, similar to targeted pages that many institutions have for DACA students (Indiana University, 2021). Macalester College's (2020)

"Refugee, Displaced Person, Asylum Seeker and Stateless Applicants" page on their admissions website is a useful template for acknowledging the existence of the refugee applicant population and providing resources without causing confusion or generating false expectations.

In exposing the acknowledgement gap in US higher education admissions, this research identifies the need for advocacy and policy encouraging US HEIs to be more inclusive on their admissions websites through published statements of inclusion and resources for refugee applicants, ultimately requiring institutions to develop policy and procedure for supporting and evaluating refugee applicants with fairness and compassion. Interestingly, challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic have forced HEIs to begin the process of better supporting refugee applicants, both through admissions flexibility and greater transparency online. By waiving standardized testing requirements (Vigdor & Diaz, 2020), accepting English language proficiency test scores from online providers and admissions websites expressing a willingness to work with applicants unable to obtain certain documents, HEIs have removed obstacles that have long prevented refugee students from submitting applications. Making such admissions flexibility and transparency permanent in the post-COVID-19 era will serve to acknowledge the challenges facing refugee applicants, combat the information barrier that these students face, and increase access for this population, ultimately supporting campus diversification and internationalization by harnessing the existing diversity of local communities.

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## Innovative Ways of Alleviating International Students' Stress: How Prepared Are Nigerian Universities?

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Several authors, such as Alharbi and Smith (2018), have reported on the difficulties faced by international students in their host countries. However, the experiences of international students in Nigeria is under-researched (Agbeniga, 2016; Agbaje, 2019). Specifically, most existing studies report on the inbound mobility of Nigerian students to the global North. Little is known about why there is only a relatively small number of international students studying in Nigeria, despite its relatively large higher education system. One possible reason for limited inbound mobility might be a lack of support from institutions for international students studying in Nigeria. This study aims to fill this gap by examining some of the sources of stress facing

international students studying at Nigerian universities.

For the proper contextualization of this paper, Nigeria is located in West Africa and is the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million inhabitants. Its higher education system is the largest in sub-Saharan Africa, comprising about 420 institutions. Most of the international students in Nigeria originate from other African countries. Scholarship opportunities rank as the topmost reason why international students choose to study in Nigeria, especially scholarships for post-graduate studies which are offered by various intra-Africa student mobility schemes that promote international study within Africa (Agbeniga, 2016).

This paper focuses on three sources of stress for international students in Nigeria, namely academic, cultural, and administrative. The paper also proposes recommendations for innovative approaches that might alleviate some of the stressful encounters faced by international students in Nigeria. This paper addresses one primary research question: How can Nigerian universities adopt innovative ways of alleviating international students' stress?

## A Review of Stress and Stressors Reported by International Students

International students experience stress at varying levels. According to Alharbi and Smith (2018), acculturative stress is one of the most frequent stressors reported in the literature. The psychological capacity of an individual, geographic origin, the nature of a society, the social attributes of a host people, and language fluency are some of the factors that determine the level of stress emanating from acculturation. For example, a study conducted by Rice and colleagues (2012) found that Indian students studying in the United States of America displayed a lower level of acculturative stress than their Chinese counterparts, for reasons linked to their familiarity with the Western culture as a result of their greater English language abilities. Academic, cultural, and financial stress have also been reported as a great source of stress that constitutes mental health concerns for international students (Yasuda & Duan, 2002).

Evidence from the literature also strongly suggests that host institutions can play a vital role in dealing with the sources of stress for international students (Agbeniga, 2017; Alharbi & Smith, 2018, Taylor & Ali, 2017).

## Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study made use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect data from 40 international students (20 from each institution) at two Nigerian universities (Uni A and Uni B). The total population of international students was estimated to be 200 at Uni A and about 40 at Uni B, according to the respective offices of international students. 95 percent of the participants were from other African countries. They were selected based on the following criteria: (i) ability to converse in English; (ii) full-time degree students; (iii) completed at least one semester at

university.

This paper is premised on the Folkman and Lazarus (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping (TTSC). The theory explains stress as a dynamic process and a transaction between a person and his/her complex environment. Folkman and Lazarus proposed two appraisal processes of stress – a primary appraisal process and a secondary appraisal process. The primary appraisal process determines whether a stressful event is threatening to a person, while the secondary appraisal process entails an individual assessing his/her coping mechanisms. This theory provides the lens through which this paper examines the stressful events confronting the international students at two Nigerian universities, and the coping mechanisms devised by the students, as well as those provided by the host universities.

## Findings

The findings of this study reveal three areas of stress affecting students in the study:

### 1. Academic stress:

The participants complained of too great an academic workload from the universities, which resulted in academic stress. For example, one of the participants shared an aspect of her encounter with academic stress thus:

Every day, we get like four assignments to be due on the next day. Sometimes we have two assignments in one day from different courses. Sometimes, I do five assignments in one day, that is so stressful." (Female, South Africa).

To the student above, her appraisal of stress is in comparison with her peers in her home country, who only have to do about three assignments in a semester of about five months. Some other participants expressed that they do as many as 14 courses per semester, which are way too many and stressful compared to courses undertaken by students enrolled for the same discipline in other countries (especially Southern Africa), who undertake not more than four to five courses per semester.

### 2. Administrative stress:

The international students at both universities shared



their stressful experiences of administrative processes. When asked about his encounter with administrative stress, one of the participants responded:

When it comes to doing registration, it is so stressful. Like now, we are not done with our registration, since October 16 last year [and now we are in August of the following year]. Every now and then we are asked to come with one thing or the other like passport photographs, yet we have not completed our registration. (Male, Mali).

Like the above participant, the international students expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting 'seemingly easy things' done at the university. For example, they believe that administrative processes could be made easier for students and staff via digital platforms.

### 3. Cultural stress:

The students also alluded to cultural stress, as one of the participants stated:

The Nigerian culture observes more of respect than back home. Back home I could say 'hi' to my mum, but it is disrespectful to say 'hi' to an older person in Nigeria. You also have to bow your head when you are talking to an older person in Nigeria, otherwise you will look disrespectful. I found it stressful. (Male, Zambia)

Apart from greeting, the international students expressed culture shock at Nigerian foods, which they found to be too peppery. According to some of the participants they had to eat potato chips for several weeks until they adapted to some of the foods.

Interestingly, unlike many international students in other countries who struggle with financial stress, financial stress was not reported as one of the stressors in this study. This is likely because most of the participants were on scholarships that catered for their school fees, accommodation, monthly stipends, and other basic needs.

## Conclusion

Ninety percent of the participants in this study indicated that studying in Nigeria is stressful. The sources of

stress identified here could be addressed by institutions interested in welcoming international students. Recommendations for addressing this concern include the following:

1. Online registration could replace current manual forms of registration.
2. Orientation before and upon arrival could help keep international students abreast of what to expect to avoid shocking encounters.
3. The institution could (and should) provide academic, administrative, and sociocultural support to international students.
4. Lecturers should be made aware of cultural diversity in the classrooms, as most lecturers assume that all the students in the classrooms are Nigerians, especially because most international students in Nigeria are black.
5. Home students should be sensitised to tolerate social and cultural diversity, as most of the international students reported that they were frequently laughed at for their accents.

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# INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION IN PANDEMIC TIMES

## Crisis-Triggered Innovation in Shallow Internationalization: The Case of Poland

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In the face of a rapidly changing and challenging external environment (Locke, 2021), unstable governmental support and rising xenophobia or even nationalism (de Wit & Deca, 2020), it can be challenging for higher education institutions (HEIs) to remain focused on internationalization. This article explores bottom-up reactions to internationalization-hampering phenomena that have occurred in the midst of such recent crises in the case of Poland.

### The View from the Inside

My study regarding internal factors influencing internationalization was conducted in two stages. First, I analyzed the organizational intent and readiness of universities to support and promote internationalization and to set up the internal framework for its development. This was judged based on statutory and strategic documents and their content, and by applying the concept of multidimensional discourse analysis (Warnke & Spitzmüller, 2008) to the official development strategies of universities (Kristensen & Karlsen, 2018; Soliman et al., 2019).

Secondly, the perception of internationalization among the employees of the universities was analyzed by a self-designed online questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled out online by 1436 employees of seven universities of technology. The perception of internationalization was defined as a conglomerate of three elements: (i) awareness (what is considered as internationalization); (ii) motivation (what are the expected results from international activities and the level of satisfaction); and (iii) engagement (which areas of activity are considered as being international).

The discourse analysis results showed that, although all of the analyzed HEIs include international content in their development strategies, it was usually done in a very general way and was rarely followed by any explicit, specific internationalization strategies, making an impression of a rather spontaneous and not strategically deliberate approach.

This was well backed by the results of the employee perception study, showing high awareness of typical internationalization features (Sandstrom & Hudson, 2018) – such as the presence of international students, international student and staff mobility backed by European funds, and international research publications – and ignorance of the elements of internationalization at home (IaH) (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Elements of IaH included internal structures, trainings or regulations regarding internationalization, international student- and staff-friendly infrastructure, and internationally adjusted internal regulations. Only 25 percent of the interviewed university employees had an international experience of over three months abroad.

Despite some improvement in international publication activity (Kwiek, 2019), forced by the national science evaluation system introduced in 2009-2012 (Kwiek, 2021) and resulting in the parametrization of scientific units, most scholars (especially the older generation) (Kwiek, 2018, 2020) still prefer to teach and publish in Polish.

The resulting conclusion is that the internationalization of HE in Poland is rather shallow. The employees of the universities have little international experience, and their interest in internationalization is limited to the most basic elements, i.e. fee-paying for-

eign students and externally funded mobility. This – combined with hardly existent and ineffective international research collaboration (Kwiek, 2018) – makes internationalization of HE in Poland highly vulnerable to any unfavorable developments in social conditions and at the political level.

## The Prospects

Future prospects are not promising. External institutional support for internationalization, as was the case in recent years (Korytkowski & Kulczycki, 2019) in face of the “renationalization” of higher education (Kwiek, 2021), is not in sight. Recently introduced changes in the list of journals approved by the Ministry of Education (Kwiek, 2021) favor Polish language, national journals. Hence, they are rather demotivating to international collaborative research activity.

The National Agency for Academic Mobility (NAWA), established in 2017 after a clunky and boisterous start, is struggling organizationally with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the realization of international programs. Additionally, despite international experts’ recommendations in the Peer Review of Poland’s Higher Education and Science System, organized by the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (Marklund et al., 2017), no visible institutional efforts have been made to address the problem of xenophobia.

Bearing in mind the above, Polish HEIs have to consider their ways of dealing with the problem of the rapidly changing face of internationalization.

## Pandemic as a Trigger

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly forced Polish HEIs to digitalize their teaching. It also made them painfully aware that competition from highly ranked, prestigious universities offering online courses is real and close. Evidence from International Offices (obtained through interviews with the international research officers (IROs) of seven Polish HEIs conducted in the period between October 2019-March 2020) shows that significantly impeded physical mobility made them focus on other features of internationalization – like IaH – or on catching up in terms of service quality and the administration of internationalization.

Having no choice, Polish HEIs are turning to an online mode in teaching and administrative affairs. Therefore, the pandemic may have become an unintentional trigger for more comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik, 2015). For instance, as noticed by one of the interviewed IROs, many international events – previously attended mostly by the management of the university or active researchers – would now be open to wider groups of employees. As travel expenses are no longer a constraint, the number of participants in online meetings, workshops, and conferences grows significantly (Beech & Ansel, 2020). There is a lot of inspiration available, as HEIs worldwide are looking for the most beneficial solutions to maintaining their positions in the permanently changing, pandemic environment. Employees, who had never dared to go abroad or never had the opportunity to go, can now participate in online international events and activities.

The initially mobility-focused internationalization programs financed by NAWA had to be reformulated due to the lockdown (Czeladko, 2020). Evidence from universities shows that various forms of internationalization support have been developed instead of mobility. These include multicultural diversity training and tutorials for academic and administrative staff, mobile applications, directories and publications for international students and guests, promotional activities using social media (e.g., Facebook campaigns), translation of internet sites, and proofreading.

The digital world, being a natural environment for younger researchers, gives them the chance to maintain international links, despite the blockage of physical mobility (Beech & Ansel, 2020). The crisis forces even faster changes and adjustments not only technically, but also mentally (Xu, 2020). Younger, more internationally open generations take the lead in research. This also can be advantageous for the international development of Polish HEIs.

The above bottom-up activities are likely to contribute to the development of IaH and make the internationalization of Polish HEIs more comprehensive. The scope of contributions and the resulting change remains to be evaluated, based on previously proposed multilevel ranking (Wysocka, 2020), which requires both time and more data.



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# Career Development and Job Search Experiences of US International Students during Pandemic Times: A Systems Theory Framework Analysis

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According to the Open Doors report by the Institute of International Education (IIE) (2020), international students constitute roughly 5.5 percent of the total student enrollment in US higher education institutions. International students who desire to work in the US have long faced challenges that domestic students do not face, such as language and cultural barriers (Yeh & Inose, 2003; Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Poyrazli et al., 2001), lack of social capital in the United States (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007), and US immigration policies (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2019). The recent global pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, making it even more difficult for this population to find US-based work following graduation. In this paper, we highlight these recent challenges and draw out some implications for those seeking to support this population.

## Literature Review

Few research studies have explored students' career development during the pandemic. A survey given to 1500 undergraduate students at Arizona State University (Aucejo et al., 2020) indicated that around 40 percent of students lost a job, job offer, or an internship during the pandemic. Additionally, students' perceived probability of finding a job before graduation decreased by almost 20 percent, while 13 percent of students intended to delay graduation (Aucejo et al., 2020). Student perceptions of job opportunities are not unfounded. Stanford's career education center reported that the total number of full-time jobs posted to Handshake, the number one platform that US students use to look for jobs, fell 45 percent from May 2019 to May 2020 (Kekauoha, 2020). Moreover, the US Congressional research service (Falk et al., 2021) reported that the

US unemployment rate was at its highest in April 2020 (14.8 percent) and remained at an elevated level through December 2020 (6.7 percent). Thus, the lack of pandemic-time job opportunities appears to be a persistent challenge for graduating students.

Even before these recent trends, international students hoping to work in the US have had to contend with myriad challenges. Most importantly, US federal regulations do not make it easy for international students to remain in the US following graduation. Students with F-1 visas can utilize Optional Practical Training (OPT) by applying for an Employment Authorization document to legally work in the US for 12 months. Students must then find a job within 90 days of their graduation that is related to their degree (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2019). STEM majors may extend their OPT for a total of three years in the US, while non-STEM majors may only work one year in the US (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2019). After OPT ends, international employees must gain H1-B sponsorship by their employer to continue working in the US (USCIS, 2020).

## Purpose

The present study contributes to the literature on international student employment by exploring the pandemic-time career development and job search experiences of international students in the US. Specifically, the Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STFCD) by Patton & McMahon (1999) was used to identify how international students' career development is influenced at individual, social and environmental/societal systems levels, and how these systems interact, in the pandemic context.

## Theoretical Framework

The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STFCDD) was initially developed to explore the adolescent career decision-making process. It has been gradually modified and extended to a range of student groups (Patton & McMahon, 1999). The STFCDD is comprised of three key inter-related systems: the environmental/societal system (i.e., historical trends, employment market, and geographical location, etc.), the social system (i.e., peers, family, mentors, career services, media, community groups, etc.), and the individual system (i.e., beliefs, personality, interests, values, skills, etc.). The theory presents career development as a dynamic process that is subject to change as one system influences another.

## Research Method

Beginning in February 2021, our team reached out to nine international students who were within one year of their graduation date at a US Midwest university and seeking employment in the US. All participants held an F-1 student visa. Participant demographics are displayed in Table 1. Semi-structured interviews took place over Zoom and were recorded with participant permission. Students were asked questions related to their career search and social network, their experiences with campus career services and the influence of their previous work experiences.

MAXQDA 2020 software (VERBI Software, 2019) was used to assist in the coding transcripts. We followed the steps of thematic analysis outlined by Braun

& Clarke (2006). Participant transcripts were reviewed several times, and codes (i.e., career services, networking, obstacles, etc.) and themes were developed. In the final step, themes were sorted into systems of influence within STFCDD.

## Results

One theme that emerged at the environmental/societal systems level was the global pandemic disrupting recent graduates' career development. Students mentioned several ways in which they were affected by the pandemic, including disrupted internship or job opportunities, difficulty communicating with professors and advisors about future plans, reduced number of positions in the job market, and difficulty interacting with future potential employers.

An additional theme that emerged was federal regulations limiting students' access to visa sponsorship and job opportunities. Multiple students had the perception that companies would not accept international student workers who need H1-B sponsorship. Additionally, students mentioned that companies may reject international students due to the limited time they can work for the company, due to Optional Practical Training (OPT) or due to their unfamiliarity with hiring OPT students. Furthermore, students perceived international student STEM majors as benefiting more than non-STEM majors from current regulations.

At the social system level, participants highlighted the importance of peer and media support in job searching. All students expressed that interactions with peers, especially international student friends and US

**Table 1**  
*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Gender	School Level	Home Country	Major
1	Male	Undergrad	Uganda	STEM
2	Male	Undergrad	Malawi	Non-STEM
3	Female	Undergrad	Taiwan	STEM
4	Female	Undergrad	China	STEM
5	Female	Undergrad	China	Non-STEM
6	Female	Grad	China	Non-STEM
7	Female	Grad	Malaysia	Non-STEM
8	Female	Grad	Taiwan	Non-STEM
9	Male	Grad	China	STEM

classmates, were beneficial. The peers that students mentioned were mostly current students and young professionals. Peers advised on how to navigate OPT and visa application processes, where to look for specific job opportunities, and what obstacles might be expected throughout the job search process. Regarding the theme of media support, all students found social media platforms, like LinkedIn and Handshake, to be helpful for job searching.

Another important theme was a sense that career services could be doing more to support the unique career development needs of international students. Specifically, participants highlighted the following supports that would have been beneficial for them during their job search: (i) Provide international students with a recurring resource or platform that lists jobs to which international students can apply; (ii) Provide international students with culturally sensitive advising, which empathizes with students' value systems but also prepares students for the US job market; (iii) Improve the visibility and accessibility of career services among international students.

At the individual level, the most prevalent theme relating to international student career development was language or cultural barriers and adjustment. Students mentioned that domestic students have an advantage, due to their familiarity with local companies. Students also expressed a desire to learn more about the English language and cultural norms through campus instruction or internships.

## Conclusion

The present study explores the pandemic-time career development and job search experiences of international students in the U.S. Guided by the STFCD, we report how the environmental/societal, social, and individual levels interact and how these factors both positively and negatively affect international students. The results indicate that disruptions from the global pandemic, federal regulations, peer and media support, career services, and language or cultural barriers, all had a significant impact on international students. These findings have implications on supporting international students who are preparing to graduate and desire employment in the U.S.

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# Virtualization of Internationalization: Inclusion for Global Learning?

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International experiences can help to improve graduate outcomes and employability. Students who study, work or volunteer abroad are often more likely to be hired into graduate-level jobs after graduation. However, only a small number of students can participate in international mobility as part of their study program. It is therefore important to identify other opportunities for students through ‘domestic internationalization’ that can reach a more significant number of students (McRobbie et al., 2021).

This study aims to address this need, while also taking advantage of the unique circumstances caused by the 2020-21 global COVID-19 pandemic. The internationalization process at many Brazilian institutions was significantly affected this past year (as was the case elsewhere in the world), as the pandemic forced students who had intended to study overseas to remain home. The most remarkable outcome of this effort was the virtualization of internationalization. In COVID-19 times, remote and virtual meetings, which started as palliative measures, have become a new force and opened up a wide range of possibilities for the university. Of course, these opportunities existed before, but the compelling need to expand virtual actions triggered action which permitted Brazilian institutions to recognise the full potential of the virtualization of internationalization processes.

The guiding question that leads us to write this paper is to understand whether the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the range of student participation, that is, whether it affected the inclusivity of internationalization programs. In order to consider this question, we analyze the change in profile of students involved in internationalization programs at a private institution in Brazil. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the students

involved in this study transitioned from study abroad programs to virtual programs, which have been promoting not only “internationalization at home,” but also internationalization of the curriculum. In this paper, we compare the socio-economic profile of students participating in study abroad programs from the pre-pandemic period (2018 - 2019) and the profile of students participating in the pandemic period’s virtual programs (2020 - 2021).

## Virtual Internationalization

Virtual internationalization offers a number of possible benefits, including reduced costs, decreased bureaucratic processes, increased accessibility and ease of sharing, and the possibility of superconnected institutions. Virtual internationalization has helped faculty to infuse a global perspective into the course content for their students. It is also a valuable tool for students to become more deeply involved in the curriculum. As seen in Mudiamu (2020), digital international experiences can increase the global level of students’ learning and engagement and reinforce the belief that all students should have access to international education.

In addition to the pandemic effects that potentiated internationalization’s virtualization process, Knight (2021) presents another reason to contribute to such a process. The author states that the number of students worldwide who have some type of study abroad experience is frustratingly low. For this reason, institutions must develop other forms of internationalization opportunities to help students live in a more interconnected and culturally diverse world.

According to Nilsson (2003), at first, the term ‘internationalization at home’ was used by professors who were troubled that internationalization efforts based on



mobility would generate unequal learning and career results between students who studied abroad and students who did not. However, Leask, Jones, and de Wit (2018) said that the “internationalization of the curriculum at home” struggles to thrive. They believe we are still far away from any form of internationalization that is inclusive and accessible. Therefore, the recent efforts related to internationalization at home and the internationalization of the curriculum, especially in a virtual way, led to this research.

## Study Methods

The institution analyzed by this paper has invested in virtual programs, such as COIL courses, since the beginning of the pandemic. The managers noticed a change in the students’ socio-economic profile, considering the students who generally participated in study abroad opportunities.

Thus, this paper intends to investigate whether this profile change occurred by conducting research using open and closed-ended question questionnaires. The software IRaMuTeQ was used to assist the analysis and treatment of the data. The questions were created on Google Forms and sent to students from study abroad programs (2018 and 2019) and virtual programs (2020 and 2021). The socio-economic questions involved gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, the presence or absence of disabilities, students’ academic background, parents, housing, employment, and income.

The mobility programs questions considered issues such as the type(s) of programs they participated in, the positive and negative aspects of the experience they had, its characteristics, the problems and barriers they faced or overcame, the reasons that led them to enroll in such programs, and whether they would recommend it to other students or not, and why. The survey was conducted with a sample of 80 students: 40 students who attended the study abroad programs and 40 students who attended virtual programs.

## Results

The results indicate that the participants’ socioeconomic profiles have changed and that students see the opportunities for virtual internationalization as more accessible and inclusive.

Some examples of data that corroborate this statement are: 15 percent of the virtual programs’ respondents have some type of disability or learning disorder; 80 percent earn less than US\$500 a month; 55 percent said they did not participate in study abroad programs because they could not afford them; 92 percent had their first opportunity for internationalization through virtual programs. The similarity test carried out using the IRaMuTeQ software revealed that 47 percent of the problems that lead them not to have access to international opportunities are related to money. It was one of the main reasons that they decided to take an international virtual course.

In one of the respondents’ words: “It is pocket friendly, the costs of traveling and rent are cut off. It is efficient for working moms. It is the first step for introvert people who are not comfortable with public speaking.” Another exciting thing taken from a participant’s response is the following: “as I have ADHD, it gets easier to learn whenever I want (the classes are recorded, and I can watch again).”

Some other characteristics of the participants are worth mentioning: in study abroad programs, most of the student participants are male, while in virtual programs, female. There is greater diversity in the participation of different generations in virtual programs, and there is also greater racial diversity. There is an inclusion of students with some types of disabilities or disorders in virtual programs.

## Conclusions

The data from this study suggest that the path to inclusion and accessibility may lie in creating virtual opportunities. Furthermore, according to the participants’ responses, it appears that virtual internationalization may do more than increase accessibility, as online experiences can also help to address other challenges, such as learning difficulties, financial problems, and time constraint issues.

Returning to the discussion introduced at the beginning, we note that these results show that the participants’ profile has changed in a way that students who could not afford a study abroad program and the costs arising from that type of program –

such as accommodation, food, plane tickets, and other expenses – are now having their first international opportunities with virtual internationalization programs.

We hope that this work can contribute to this topic's discussion and stimulate further research.

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## REGIONAL TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

### A New Dawn for Chinese International Student Mobility in the Post-Pandemic World?

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International student mobility has been an important indicator for the scale and scope of internationalization of higher education, as well as a great contributor to global understanding among students and scholars from all over the world. While academic mobility is supposed to be multidirectional, there is no denying that the United States and China as receiving and sending countries are the major players in defining today's international education landscape. In the 2019-20 academic year, US colleges and universities enrolled 372,532 Chinese international students, accounting for 35 percent of the total number of available seats (IIE, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatical-

ly affected Chinese student mobility in 2020.

After experiencing more than one year of campus lockdowns and remote learning, many US institutions are asking: Will Chinese international students still come to the US? Exacerbated by US-China rivalry and rampant anti-Asian racism in the US, the question becomes even more challenging to answer. Since self-funded Chinese international students have been an indispensable component of the US national economy, institutional revenues, and domestic workforce, it is urgent to explore whether or not Chinese students still want a US education in the post-pandemic world.

## Literature Review

Compared to other epidemics, such as SARS in 2003 and MERS in 2012, the evolving COVID-19 crisis more seriously impedes international student mobility and may contribute to long-lasting changes in the way students pursue a higher education degree abroad. As Marginson (2020) argues, there will be a post-pandemic shift from a seller's market to a buyer's market, with Chinese students having abundant choices of study abroad destinations. According to recent research conducted with 2,739 students from Mainland China and Hong Kong (Mok et al., 2021), 84 percent showed no interest in studying abroad after the pandemic. The research also indicates that, unlike the traditional East-to-West mode, international student mobility might shift into an East Asia-oriented mode with a growing interest in study in Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan, due to their geographical proximity and cultural affinity to Mainland China.

Does the pandemic mark the beginning of higher education regionalization in the Asia-Pacific region (Knight, 2016)? If yes, what are the possible opportunities and challenges afforded against the backdrop of the new geopolitics of international higher education? Standing at the crossroads of the potential transformation of international student mobility, is it possible to ensure that emerging regional actors do not repeat regional asymmetries and inequalities?

## Research Findings

In an attempt to address these critical questions above, I conducted a timely research project amid economic and political uncertainties to explore how COVID-19 pandemic and pandemic-related Sinophobia affect Chinese students' perspectives related to their decision to study abroad in the US (Yu, 2021).

Based on Zoom interviews of a sample of 21 Chinese undergraduate students studying at a US public research university, this study demonstrates that, although the US remains an attractive destination, it is gradually losing its dominant role on the global stage. By comparison, Asian countries and regions, especially Singapore and Hong Kong, are becoming newly attractive destinations, due to their excellent handling of the virus and the perception of similar cultural practices.

Another key finding is that the COVID-19 crisis re-orders the factors with which Chinese students and parents choose a country for studying abroad, from being institutional ranking-oriented to holding health security and emotional well-being as priorities. While students' attitudes towards the US might improve as the pandemic is brought under control, the seed of hatred that the Trump administration has planted has caused irrevocable harm to Chinese international student mobility. Since the study abroad decision is a multiple-year investment, constantly changeable policies and uncertain Sino-US relations are certain to negatively affect Chinese students' and parents' impression of the US as the most favorable host country. The rise of newly attractive destinations may, therefore, point to a new era of Chinese international student mobility.

## Regionalization of Higher Education

Well before the COVID-19 pandemic, the regionalization of higher education has gained attention as an alternative to the unidirectional student flow from the Majority World to Western universities in Europe and North America. Various models for educational regionalization (e.g., regional-based university networks, regional student mobility programs, and pan-regional higher education associations) have been implemented at the intra-regional and inter-regional levels.

Although the development of regional hubs of higher education facilitates economic growth, attracts talented individuals, and enhances regional/global influences, historical disputes and shifts in the military balance of power have presented a major obstacle to moving forward with a form of regionalism – let alone the variety of languages and ethnicities, differences in credit systems, curricula, and grading systems. Moreover, in tandem with internationalization, the regionalization of higher education also has its “dark” side of corporatization and cultural homogenization (cf. Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011). Hence, it is essential to learn from these lessons to order to intervene early in regional (re)productions of hierarchy, epistemic violence, and power relations.

## Early Interventions

First, the role of higher education at the regional level is embedded in the global context, so advocating democracy, human rights, and peace-oriented values in the curriculum is essential to caution against a continuation of oppression and dominance (Leask, 2015). This new generation of Chinese international students are people-to-be in power, so it is much needed to cultivate their social responsibility such that it involves a moral obligation to both self and community.

Second, the regionalization of higher education not only emerges out of economic interests but is politically motivated as well. Thus, special attention should be paid to the dynamic relationship between international students and their host universities (Waters, 2018; Stein, 2016). Power relations should be centered when looking at students' struggles and difficulties in the new learning environment.

Third, as regional actors are still very much rooted in their national environments, it is important to move beyond "methodological nationalism" (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013) in the process of knowledge production (e.g., research and publication) to avoid (re)producing epistemic injustice within the Asia-Pacific regional context.

To conclude, based on my research findings, the new destination countries and region are still primarily driven by neoliberal ideology in re-alignment of shifting international relations on a multipolar basis, so it is crucial not to copy and paste the Western paradigm (Wit & Altbach, 2021), but to build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable system of higher education in pursuit of regional solidarity and collaboration. Although academic revolution is not about to take place (Altbach & Wit, 2021), we can reach a consensus that the market for international higher education is likely to become more diverse and competitive in the post-pandemic world. As such, we should be proactive instead of reactive to advance equity and social justice at the regional level.

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# The Complex Global Higher Education Field: Examining Activities of Regional University Associations in Asia

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Globalization shapes higher education, a field long considered as operating primarily in the national sphere. The impact of globalization is manifested to a certain extent in the construction of a global higher education “regime” or field. In this regime, a growing network of international organizations – which is partly dominated by university associations – supports a global higher education agenda (Zapp & Ramirez, 2019). University associations, particularly international ones, have grown rapidly since the 1940s (Brankovic, 2018). Among international university associations, a surprising number (58 or 59 percent) are regional university associations (RUAs), with their member universities located within a certain geographic region (e.g. Europe, Asia).

The existence of RUAs seems to be related to the phenomenon of higher education regionalization, commonly defined as the “process of building closer collaboration and alignment among higher education actors and systems within a defined area or framework called a region” (Knight, 2012, p. 19). That is to say, RUAs seem to be actors in the global higher education field, in which collaboration at the regional level is on the rise. Despite the increasing number of RUAs in global higher education, we have little understanding of what these RUAs do and why they exist. Important unresolved questions are: how are RUAs supporting a global higher education agenda, and why do they operate within a single world region? This study seeks to explore these questions by examining the activities and purposes of RUAs in Asia. Drawing on RUA annual reports and websites, preliminary findings suggest that common activities of Asian RUAs fall into three categories: mobility programs, research cooperation, and conferences. In addition, Asian RUAs typically frame their purposes as (i) promoting networking and cooperation; (ii) promoting or maintaining Asian or other institutional identities; and (iii) enhancing institutional capacity.

## Theoretical Framework

This study conceptualizes RUAs as meta-organizations, defined as an organization with organizations, instead of individuals, as its members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005). Ahrne and Brunsson (2005) explain three views of meta-organizations’ emergence. Meta-organizations may emerge (1) to introduce a new way of organizing in the environment for efficiency or (2) to represent the collective voice of their members. These two explanations are in line with functional explanations of organizational expansion that emphasize productivity and power (Bromley & Meyer, 2015). Moreover, meta-organizations may also emerge (3) to establish identity and status. This is in line with the neo-institutionalist view that emphasizes organizational needs for legitimacy (Bromley & Meyer, 2015), through establishing proper identity and status. This study expects the activities and purposes of RUAs to map onto these three views.

## Methods and Data

The data of this study come from the most recent reports and the most updated websites (as of June 2021) of the nine RUAs in Asia. These RUAs were identified by previous research (Brankovic, 2018). The RUAs included are not necessarily comprehensive, but they provide good coverage of the landscape, given that the RUA dataset from Brankovic (2018) is perhaps the only global dataset that exists. Reports were downloaded, and screenshots of website information were taken for systematic coding and analysis. Using emergent and iterative coding methods (Charmaz, 2006), the qualitative coding software NVivo was used to code the activities for content analysis (Mayring, 2014). Table 1 lists the RUAs analyzed and the data sources.



**Table 1**  
List of Regional University Associations in Asia and Data Sources

Regional University Associations in Asia	Data Source
Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning	Website
Asian Association of Agricultural Colleges and Universities	Website and History Report
Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia	Website
Asian Association of Open Universities	Website and 2019 Annual Report
Association of Southeast and East Asian Catholic Colleges and Universities	Website
Association of East Asian Research Universities	Website
International Consortium for Universities of Education in East Asia	Website
Asian Universities Alliance	Website
The Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities	Website

### Preliminary Findings

A preliminary analysis of the nine regional university associations in Asia suggests three main categories of activities. Firstly and predominantly, RUAs in Asia aim at promoting student, staff, and faculty mobility among member institutions. Seven of the nine associations examined mention mobility schemes as part of their activities. Student mobility programs often aim at promoting mutual understanding and interaction among students in the region. Faculty mobility often aims at promoting an exchange of ideas through lectures and meetings. In the case of staff, the mobility programs are often aimed at enhancing institutional capacity.

Second, RUAs also aim specifically at promoting research cooperation, through organizing joint research groups, and publishing books and academic journals. For example, the Asian Association of Open Universities Journal publishes peer-reviewed articles on open and distance education. Another example is

the International Consortium for Universities of Education in East Asia (ICUE). ICUE organizes three research working groups to conduct joint research.

Third, RUAs organize themed conferences for networking and collaboration among their members and beyond. For example, the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning organizes conferences to discuss major issues in Asian higher education. It is also not uncommon for RUAs to convene high-level presidents' summits to discuss issues in the field. For example, the Asian Universities Alliance conducts a Presidents' Forum every year to discuss issues pertaining to higher education in Asia, particularly in the context of the changing landscape of global higher education.

The above three types of activities map onto the view that meta-organizations aim at improving organization in the field to improve efficiency. In the case of RUAs, efficiency is perceived as being achieved through networking and cooperation from mobility programs,

conferences, and research activities.

While the rationale of improving efficiency is dominant among the RUAs, RUAs also mention the importance of identity among their member universities, such that RUAs themselves seem to play a role in promoting or maintaining university identities. Two types of identity are common: universities as Asian institutions, and universities with identities associated with their mandates. For example, the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia aims at developing and maintaining the Christian character of their member institutions. Another example is the Asian University Alliance, which indicates that the alliance personifies Asian identity in the educational landscape through the strong collaboration among their member institutions. The emphasis on identity is in line with the neo-institutionalist view that identity is important for institutions and that joining associations may reinforce institutional identity and possibly confer organizational legitimacy in an increasingly competitive and complex global higher education field.

## Discussion and Significance

The findings of this study potentially offer insights into a few distinct areas. First, this study pays attention to the activities and roles of RUAs, which are understudied organizations in the global higher education field (Brankovic, 2018). The findings suggest that RUAs play an important role in terms of promoting student, staff, and faculty mobility in the same region. Thus, RUAs are critical in facilitating mutual understanding, universities' international partnerships, and knowledge co-production through research cooperation.

In addition, RUAs potentially offer opportunities for international exchange that otherwise would not arise. Particularly for institutions with fewer international resources in relation to the so-called Global North, RUAs offer insight in terms of how universities respond to globalization in new ways, such as through higher education regionalization. Moreover, the findings suggest that RUAs play an important role in the regionalization trend in higher education internationalization, such as in student mobility and research cooperation (Chan, 2012; Hausteine et al., 2011). Thus, it sheds light on how universities engage in regionalization, such as through regional organizations in Asia.

Furthermore, the study also makes a theoretical contribution through empirically examining how the three views of meta-organizations are manifested in higher education.

The results of this study are not necessarily generalizable to other regions. Research in other regions is therefore needed to further understand the emergence of RUAs in higher education as a global phenomenon, and how it relates to higher education regionalization and, more broadly, to globalization.

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# Legitimizing Kosovo's Higher Education Institutions? A Discourse Analysis of NGO Reporting

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Is Kosovo's legitimacy predicated upon the legitimacy of its institutions? The European Union (EU) thinks so, having elaborated 35 features of legitimacy and an entire Western Balkans stabilization process to describe how Kosovo might manifest its desire to join the EU (European Commission, 2020). Developing legitimacy in the EU's eyes is a big-C Conversation (see Gee, 2014) in Kosovo, Europe's newest country. Scholars have consistently commented about the nature of these Conversations (Bache & Taylor, 2003; Visoka & Musliu, 2019) and the struggles around the 'European future' of Kosovo (K. Gashi, 2020).

One institution at the center of this legitimization question is the University of Prishtina (UP), the oldest and most prestigious educational institution in Kosovo. Several NGOs have invested in building UP's legitimacy to move Kosovo toward its 'European future'. This is primarily by exposing illegitimate activities and institutional practices in hopes that Kosovo will stand a better chance of developing its higher education sector after flaws are made transparent. In this discourse analysis, I consider how one such NGO report frames this issue-spotting project with relation to the legitimacy Conversation, and its implications for Kosovar students and professors.

## National Context of Higher Education Legitimacy

King and Whetten (2008) define legitimacy as, "a perception that organizations conform with taken-for-granted standards" (p. 192). Based on this framework, Kosovo did not have its first legitimate university until the University of Prishtina's founding in 1970 (Šoljan, 1991). For the next 20 years, it operated similarly to other public European higher education institutions (HEIs). With ethnic Albanian academic staff expelled from the rectorate and the university's faculties in 1990, a parallel education system arose in

private homes (Bache & Taylor, 2003). In 1999, following the war, formerly exiled Albanian academic staff reoccupied academic buildings (Bache & Taylor, 2003), but the university's fragmentation accelerated the emergence of other HEIs. Today, the system now comprises approximately 30 public and private universities (Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2019).

Currently, Kosovar HEIs have been closely monitored as indicators of the country's readiness for accession into the EU. To move toward this desired national outcome, Kosovo's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) mandated that all HEIs adopt the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and abandon preexisting course-counting processes (Tahirsylaj, 2010). To do so, internal and external stakeholders scrutinized the development and delivery of credit-bearing courses in the new universities, leading to the high-stakes inspection of course content (Kadriu & Gougeon, 2014) and university leadership and governance (Tahirsylaj, 2013, 2018).

Among competing tensions of expansion and quality assurance, MESTI formed the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), heavily relying on international experts to provide guidance and legitimacy for KAA's implementation (Kačaniku et al., 2018; Selenica, 2017). However, supranational actors quickly debased the agency's legitimacy, leaving its status in flux (Baliu, 2019; EQAR, 2018).

Amidst many actors, NGO stakeholders have positioned themselves as watchdogs to promote transparency regarding postsecondary sector dealings. The relationships between MESTI, KAA, European quality assurance agents, and HEIs have been scrutinized by several nonprofits. The most notable watchdog organizations are those affiliated with KITU, the Coalition for Integrity and Transparency in the University, an alliance of seven organizations that work to build public

trust in universities, funded by the Soros-backed Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). These organizations publish criticism of the higher education sector, particularly in relation to the lack of legitimate credentials of professors, the role of publications in disreputable academic journals used to justify faculty positions in national institutions, the lack of budgetary transparency, the university leadership's financial management practices, and conflicts of interest among KAA staff (e.g. Admovere, 2021; KFOS, 2021; Organization for Improving the Quality of Education, 2021).

## Method

Gee (2014) offers codified sets of *building tasks* and tools of inquiry to approach texts for discourse analysis. I deploy Gee's building tasks of Practices, Relationships, Connections, and Sign Systems/Knowledge, and the tools of Social Languages, Situated Meanings, and Form-Function Correlations to consider how foreign-funded NGOs contribute to the Conversations around the legitimacy of UP as a legitimate educational institution, as well as of Kosovo's national legitimacy. I consider these alongside forerunning poststructural approaches to scholarship on Kosovo (e.g. K. Gashi, 2020; Musliu, 2019) by focusing on a report entitled *The UP situation: Where professors pretend to be lecturing and students to be studying* (S. Gashi, 2017a, 2017b).

## Findings

In conducting this discourse analysis, I find that the NGO intent for transparency through issue-spotting builds the legitimacy of the NGO sector, challenges without destabilizing the legitimacy of UP, and irrevocably delegitimizes the students and professors at UP. The cover art, provocative title, publication information, and introduction provide rich framing for the report, seemingly without regard to its contents. The invoked Social Language positions the sponsoring NGOs as legitimacy-granting agents through this formal report, augmented by a whimsical cover, a sarcastic title, and technical introductions. The graphic theme throughout the text contributes to a Sign System that invokes economic exchange and the publication process.

With references only understandable to those familiar with UP, the intended audience of this report is constructed as an audience of insiders, but the English-language translation reporting on an Albanian-language university suggests an audience of outsiders. The duality has the effect of bringing outsiders in, reifying the NGO-legitimizing practice of providing transparency. Moreover, the title and its provocative dependent clause invoke an Activity of pretending. The human actors who do the pretending – professors and students – are cast as responsible for the illegitimate UP situation, as 'pretending' neutralizes the gerunds of 'lecturing' and 'studying', casting them as illegitimate or illusory activities.

The project of making institutional flaws transparent is the NGO intention, purportedly to support UP's long-term legitimacy, yet this framing casts UP's students and professors as illegitimate pretenders who hold little hope of subsequently redeeming legitimacy. Thus, Kosovar academics – rather than institutions – become the harmed parties of transparency measures framed in this NGO-legitimizing manner. NGOs seeking to improve Kosovo's higher education sector should consider this form of individual reputational harm in conducting subsequent work.

## Conclusion

The unique historical and policy contexts of Kosovo, inextricably linked to discourses of a 'European future' and national legitimacy, serve as the backdrop for NGOs seeking to improve the higher education sector in Europe's newest country. By analyzing the text of a NGO report that questions the legitimacy of practices in the higher education sector, I argue that the issue-spotting practices do little to reform university practices, but instead delegitimize individuals connected to universities – students and academic staff alike. Ultimately, this contributes to indefinitely deferring a 'European future' for Kosovo, counter to the stated aims of the higher education NGOs.

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## THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

# “Why Am I Here?”: A Longitudinal Study of the Psychological Adjustment of International Students in the UK

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**D**ue to the increasing importance of mental well-being to students' lives, this study aimed to explore the psychological adjustment of international students in the UK over time.

In 2015/16, international students accounted for 19.6 percent of the student population within British higher education (HE) and contributed approximately £20.3 billion of net impact to the British economy (UUKI, 2019). However, it has been suggested that international students are more vulnerable to stress than 'home' students (Redfern, 2016; Scopelliti & Tiberio, 2010).

### A Focus on Psychological Adjustment

Most studies on international students have focused on socio-cultural adjustment (McClure, 2007; Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002; Pedersen, Neighbors, Larimer, & Lee, 2011; Ward & Kennedy, 1999), so little is known about the psychological adjustment of international students. Furthermore, among the small number of studies on psychological adjustment, most have applied cross-sectional design (Crockett et al., 2007; Hamamura & Laird, 2014; Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006), making it more difficult to observe changes in adjustment. The pattern of psychological adjustment is complex, with the literature suggesting opposing patterns. Berry (2005) and Furnham (2004) argue that the individual experiences psychological issues early in the sojourn, while Lysgaard (1955) suggests the opposite. It is therefore important to follow students longitudinally, in order to gain a clear understanding of how psycho-

logical adjustment occurs in the international student population.

### Methodology

The study applied a longitudinal qualitative design, conducted over 16 months. Participants, randomly recruited, were students at one-year taught master's programs at a British university, with similar English proficiency (i.e., minimum IELTS 6.5 or equivalent). More than 60 percent of the participants were from East and Southeast Asia, aged 20 to 40.

One unique feature of the study is that it took place over a year, including re-entry to the home context. Twenty-three participants were interviewed in the early sojourn period (meaning less than 3 months into their program). These interviews took place in October and November of 2017. Nineteen of these participants were interviewed again in their late sojourn (nearly 9 months into the program). These interviews happened in August and September of 2018. Finally, 13 participants were interviewed at the repatriation stage, nearly 3 months after returning to their home countries. These interviews occurred between December of 2018 and March of 2019.

In total, this design generated a total of 55 transcripts (see Table 1). Thematic analysis (Braun, 2006) was applied.

**Table 1**

Early Sojourn	Late Sojourn	Repatriation
Oct 2017 – Nov 2017	Aug 2018 – Sep 2018	Dec 2018 – Mar 2019
Less than 03 months into the program	Nearly 09 months into the program	Nearly 03 months after returning to home countries
23 participants	19 participants	13 participants

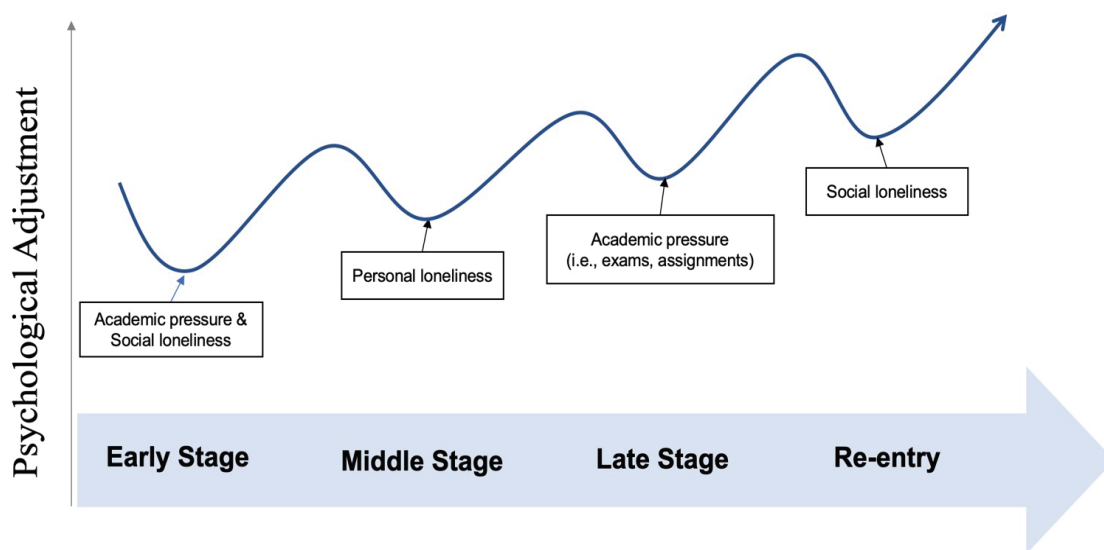
### Findings and Discussions

There were four main findings. First, despite several ‘plumets’, the psychological adjustment of international students followed a rising trajectory, showing the students’ enhanced capability in managing psychological issues over time (see Figure 1). Second, three adaptation domains are interrelated strongly with each other, as suggested by many researchers (Young et al., 2017; Young et al., 2013). Four critical periods could be identified, namely the early, middle, and late stages of the sojourn, and the re-entry, which coincided with periods when the pressure of academic and socio-cultural adjustment was most intense.

In the early stage, participants rarely mentioned cultural shock and generally felt excited about the new cultural experience. However, academic adjustment appeared to negatively influence psychological well-being. Eleven students were overwhelmed by the requirements of study programs (e.g., workload). Some students were demotivated by the loss of their old social networks, theoretically known as ‘social loneliness’ (Weiss, 1973), as a student from Taiwan explained:

Well, to be honest, the first few weeks I was kind of struggling. “Why am I here?” [...] I had a job, I had a salary and I had good friends [at home].

**Figure 1**  
The Psychological Adjustment of International Students in UK HE



In the middle stage, students were confronted with emotional or personal loneliness, caused by the loss of personal relationships (Weiss, 1973). For some students, the holiday break (Christmas and New Year), often associated with family reunions, was regarded as the most difficult time:

Well, I kind of feel homesick around February. I think it's because it's the Lunar New Year in Taiwan. You know, it's a family-get-together thing. During that time, I get a bit homesick.

The late-stage, during the exam period and assignment deadline, was predominant in terms of psychological turmoil. Symptoms of stress, such as anxiety and panic, sleeplessness, and difficulty in concentration, were often reported, as a student from Italy indicated:

I have a friend, she was so depressed, she was sleep-deprived for the last month. She didn't sleep at all like she fell asleep in the morning. She slept 3 – 4 hours and then went to the exam to do the exam.

Third, psychological stress triggered students to develop coping strategies. However, only one participant, who experienced depression for a long time, had used the counselling service of the host university:

...There have been points where I had to see a counsellor in terms of depression and that kind of thing, but I think for me, it's more controlled, I would like to hope. (Student from Grenada)

Similar to previous research (Pho & Schartner, 2019), many students relied on the 'former' co-national contact in home countries (e.g., close friends and families) as indispensable sources of mental help. Online modes and telephones were the main communication vehicles. Most students, meanwhile, tended to manage psychological stress by themselves.

Fourth, during re-entry, international students developed adaptation skills, such that they could manage social loneliness when losing networks of international friends. Students experienced mixed emotions: posi-

tive when returning home, yet missing life in the UK. Incongruent with previous research (Chamove & Soeterik, 2006; Walling et al., 2006), no psychological turmoil, such as stress and depression, was reported. Many students highlighted the importance of re-entry for the consolidation of intercultural learning (cf. Arthur, 2003; Matic and Russell, 2019), since it allowed them to recognize their changes, become more aware of and respectful of cultural differences and diversity.

### Implications for Practice

First, events celebrating special occasions (i.e., Christmas and New Year) could be organized for international students who are unable to travel back home during holidays. Second, the course requirements should be clarified to international students prior to the sojourn in order to minimize the expectation gap. Pre-sojourn preparation materials, with short videos, case studies of successful (or unsuccessful) alumni, could be useful. Third, during the three critical periods in the sojourn, academic tutors could be advised to be attentive to students to recognize symptoms of stress early. Finally, information about stress management, workload management and available consultancy services could be circulated widely.

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## International Students and the Communication of Home-Host Difference

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It is not novel or surprising to suggest that, while abroad, international students may change, prompting a shift in cultural alignment between themselves, on the one hand, and their family and friends on the other. Even if an individual student does not feel that they have been changed, they may still be tasked with the interpretation of their experiences and surroundings from one cultural context to another. Could such personal changes and experiences create an intercultural disconnect between international students and those back home? According to Melinda Bihn (2019)

“International students... describe changing relationships in their home communities, as their own lived experience diverges from that of their families and friends at home” (para. 8). This paper reviews the concept of intercultural communication (IC) and proposes exploring lessons learned from IC studies to support international students who are dealing with the realities of communicating cultural difference to family and friends back home. While one cannot assume cultural differences based solely on nationalities and different upbringings (Baker, 2015), it is important to acknowl-

edge that some differences, in some new cultural contexts, may be present.

## Intercultural Communication

This project is located at the intersection of intra- and intercultural communication vis-à-vis international students and relationships back in their home country. International students are expected to have in common a great deal of “linguistic and cultural knowledge” with their family and friends back home (intracultural); however, despite this commonality, they may be living through experiences and living in cultural environments with no analogous context for their friends and family (intercultural; God & Zhang, 2019, p. 306). This can result in the student assuming responsibility for intercultural interpretation with intracultural relations, as they seek to describe their own identity changes, as well as the cultural environment informing their experiences abroad. Many common challenges for intercultural communication, such as language and communication style, are generally not assumed to be present when communicating with ones’ close friends and family (Imamura & Zhang, 2014). However, it is important to recognize that the personal change that comes with international study might, in fact, introduce such challenges. For example, through immersion in a cultural setting with different communication styles, an incompatibility between student and home relations may develop where previously it did not exist. The problem is that people coming from the same cultural background may assume that there is no possibility of intercultural communication challenges (in contrast to many situations in which IC takes place, where those who are communicating fully understand that they are engaged in cross-cultural communication [Baker, 2015]).

The IC literature includes robust and heterogeneous explorations of educational studies touching upon, among much else, short-term education abroad outcomes (Roy et al., 2014), intercultural spaces such as classrooms (Ou & Gu, 2020; Mukhametgaliyeva & Ilyashenko, 2020; Voevoda, 2020); and domestic-international student interrelations (Belford, 2017; Song & Xia, 2021). In all of its variety, IC is examined within an ecosystem of terms and approaches to develop and

grow “transcultural” communication (Baker, 2015), “intercultural understanding” (Yang, 2018), “multicultural and global competency,” “cross-cultural effectiveness,” “intercultural competence,” and “intercultural sensitivity” (Soria & Troisi, 2014, p. 262). Ngwira et al. (2015) explain that, “Effective intercultural communication occurs when a message, produced by a member of one culture, is understood by a member of another culture” (p. 62). This study expands upon this definition by proposing that the first “member” may also include those from the same culture as the second, whose frames of cultural reference have changed substantially, due to being embedded in a (host) culture as degree-seeking international students. Ultimately, the purpose of much IC scholarship is to strengthen the IC skills of those involved in intercultural relations.

## Home-Host Difference

Personal changes can entail a wide range of domains or phenomena. As described by Gu et al. (2010), “international students’ intercultural learning experiences are both transitional and transformational and necessitate identity change” to some extent (p. 20). A study focusing on Chinese students’ identities after studying abroad noted “All of the profound changes that these students undergo... are ultimately changes in identity... They see themselves differently, as both Chinese... and ‘other’...” (Gu & Schwiesfurth, 2015, p. 967). Identity changes such as these may create differences between students and family and friends—both during and after the sojourn abroad—and these changes may necessitate skilled communication of difference to facilitate maintenance of those relationships. As students change, self-censoring may also occur as students communicate with those back home, due to non-alignment of home-host perspectives. Bacigalupe & Bräuninger (2017), for example, describe one student’s self-censoring of home-host differences relating to alcohol use: “In India drinking is not considered as good thing but I need to experience it here. So I would not say to my parents that I drink here” (p. 294). Could IC training help such a student navigate this sort of complexity?



Beyond personal changes, students may also simply encounter or experience phenomena and local cultural norms that are beyond the ken of their family and friends back home. According to Kline & Liu (2005), “the process of acculturation includes developing awareness of host country values, norms, and behaviors” (p. 370). Furthermore, as these students “settle down they become more at ease and familiar with cultural traits of the host culture and they build understanding and re-adjustment to social expectations” (Belford, 2017, p. 511). All of this points to the probability that new familiarity with home-host differences may require interpretations from the student in order to bridge the cultural gulf for their family and friends. Examples of home-host differences could include, among much else, attitudes towards or familiarity with violence, dating, success, race and ethnicity, interactions with strangers, “alcoholic drink, sex, child-rearing practices, [and] overcasual forms of address” (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002, p. 345).

## Conclusion

This study prompts us to consider the capacity IC practices and studies have for supporting international students’ intercultural interpretations for family and friends back home. In this vein, further research could seek to (1) specifically identify international student and family/friend needs in this regard; (2) explore the applicability of current IC practices in this new area; (3) critically examine potential challenges due to the Western-centric nature of many current models of IC (Gao, 2020); and (4) identify what role the host university has to play in helping facilitate students’ communication of identity change and home-host experiential, cultural difference.

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## PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

# Transformative Experiences of International Student Mobility: A Human Development Framework Evaluating the Broader Benefits of Governmental Scholarship Programs

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The mobility of international students worldwide has dramatically increased over the last decades. Some estimations show that there were 0.8 million international students in the 1970s, whereas, in 2017, the number had increased to 5.3 million (OECD, 2019). Mexico is the main Latin American country sending students abroad for international education. In 2018, almost 34,000 students participated in degree mobility. One of the most longstanding sources of funding for International Student Mobility (ISM) in the country has been the National Science and Technology Council (CONACYT) scholarship program, which has funded graduate ISM since 1970, with the goal of training and consolidating human resources (Lopez-Murillo, 2015).

Currently, there are several ISM scholarship programs, supported by middle-income countries around the world. These have mainly been studied in terms of their success to develop human capital and an interna-

tionally competitive workforce for the funding country (Perna et al., 2015). In the case of the CONACYT program, research has focused on the number of students supported, occupational trajectories, and students' perceptions about economic benefits accumulated through ISM (Luchilo, 2009; Ortega et al., 2002).

While the existing body of research has contributed to our understanding of outward mobility financed by governments, it has not yet provided sufficient empirical evidence about the broader individual, social and intercultural ISM experiences. In this context, Engberg et al. (2014) have pointed out that, besides quantitative information about the number of students supported, destinations and areas of study, there are still important gaps in the literature about how these countries are benefiting through the investment in ISM. In this context, research on ISM has found that

mobility experiences have transformed people's identities, gender relations, behaviors and attitudes shaping their future life and professional trajectories (Brooks et al., 2011; Gu et al., 2015).

Some studies have used the capabilities approach (CA) to examine the benefits of credit and degree mobility (Boni et al., 2015; Martínez-Usarralde et al., 2017). These studies have found benefits of ISM, such as enhancing the wellbeing and freedom of individuals, broadening employment opportunities, and influencing social change. This paper presents a synergistic use of the CA, alongside transformative learning theory, as an alternative approach to explore the benefits of the CONACYT scholarship program from a human development lens.

### Theoretical Framework

The capabilities approach aids in the exploration of how people's diverse capabilities develop through international experience. In this study, capabilities are understood as what people can do and be, or the freedoms people enjoy to achieve the functionings they value (Sen, 1999). Capabilities are also conceptualized as skills, as part of a wider concept of a capability to achieve one's goals (Nussbaum, 2011; Walker, 2008). The CA additionally considers peoples' heterogeneities and the influence of both the particularities of students' social contexts and the characteristics of the societies where they have settled during the international experience (Robeyns, 2005). Further, it takes into account the person's previous capabilities.

The mobility experience is considered as an opportunity (Gasper et al., 2003) that is enabled by the scholarship (capability input) (Robeyns, 2005). It is up to the individual to convert that resource into valued capabilities. In this study, the CA is used in synergy with transformative learning theory concepts, by which the international sojourn is analyzed as a learning experience that can change peoples' frames of reference and, therefore, become transformative (Mezirow, 2000). The development of capabilities is thus determined by the intersection of previous capabilities, personal heterogeneities, social relations and the extent to which individuals transform their frames of reference. Finally, this framework allows the exploration of how

the achieved functionings contribute to individual agency and social well-being.

### Methods

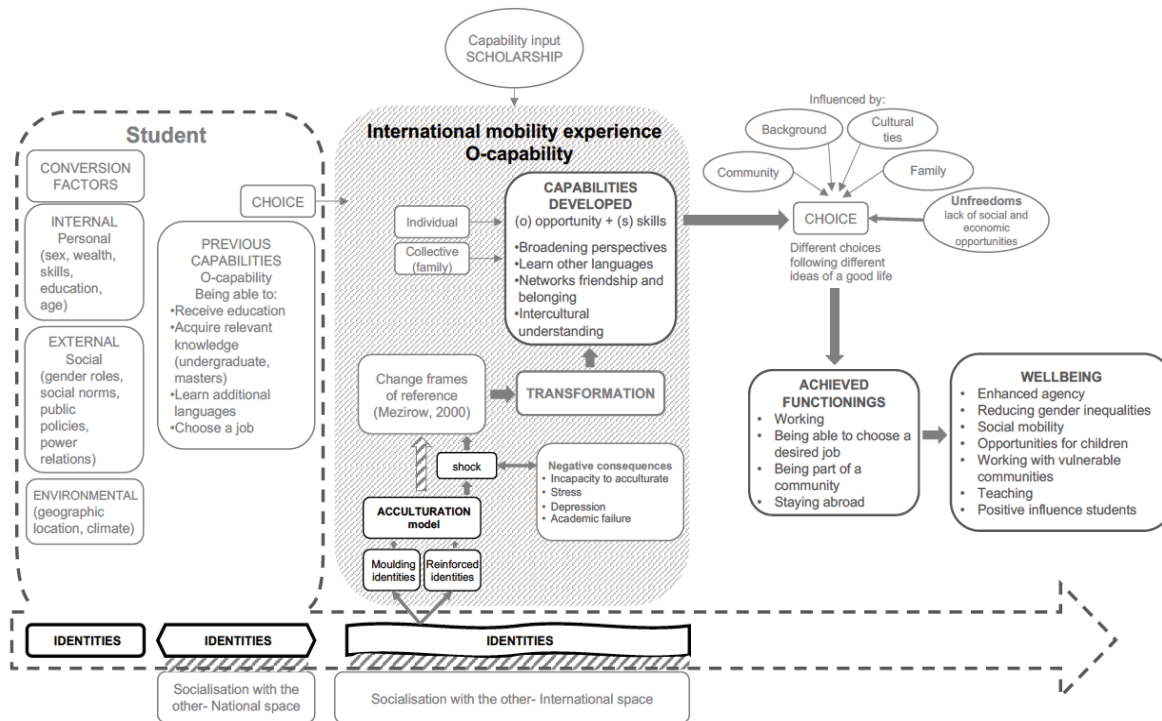
The research followed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach. From a unique sample of former doctoral students, supported between 1997 and 2008 by the CONACYT program, quantitative data were gathered through a cross-sectional survey, distributed to 120 participants. Next, following a nested sampling strategy, a subset of participants was purposefully selected, and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 34 participants, exploring their international experiences and personal meanings, and whether there were associations with their further life trajectories.

### Findings and Significance

The findings show the importance of the diverse identities that are constantly (re)shaped by the combination of personal, social and environmental conversion factors and previous capabilities (Rizvi, 2005; Sen, 1985). Before the international sojourn, those identities are additionally molded by diverse socialization processes in the national settings. During the international experience, the social interactions are diversified, and the perception of one's own cultural identity becomes more evident (Bilecen, 2014). It is at this point where conversion factors and freedoms influence the individual's agency to negotiate those identities and different interactions occur. The student might reinforce their cultural identity and, thus, cross-cultural transitions could become more challenging, and in some instances lead to negative consequences. In extreme cases, the sojourner fails to acculturate, and transformation does not take place. Alternatively, the sojourner is capable of incorporating elements of other cultures, molding their identities and easing the acculturation process (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.**

*Capabilities/Transformative Learning Theoretical Framework for the Exploration of the Broader Benefits of ISM and Scholarship Programs*



In both instances, there are different degrees of transformation and development of capabilities, depending on the willingness, possibilities and previous capability set to engage with disorienting dilemmas. Individuals achieve different functionings, following different ideas of a good life and influenced by their community, background, cultural ties and family, but also by the lack of social and economic opportunities or unfreedoms (Robeyns, 2005).

These findings show how the CA framework provides a useful tool to explore the implications of the ISM experiences of CONACYT scholarship awardees. Transformative learning is not restricted to the different academic practices of international education, but also incorporates personal learning in everyday life. However, this transformation is possible through the interaction with different cultures in unfamiliar settings, where the preconceived paradigms are broken. This transformation only occurs if the individual values that knowledge and considers that it will enrich their life. This framework can be useful to evaluate the long-term outcomes and contributions of outward

mobility programs in their particular contexts, linked to their national development needs and objectives. Moreover, it could contribute by helping to redefine and expand the vision and rationales of these programs, by focusing on the individual beneficiaries and the different ways in which they contribute to their societies.

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## Impacts of an International Dual Master's Degree Program on Career Outcomes for Chinese Students in the U.S.

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International dual (or double) degree (IDD) programs have emerged as an important part of the internationalization of higher education (Knight & Lee, 2012), and have been defined as “degree program[s] that [are] designed and delivered by two or more partner institutions in different countries. A student receives a qualification from each of the partner institutions” (Helms, 2014, p. 6). Scholars have discussed the benefits of IDD programs at personal, institutional and national levels (Asgary & Robbert, 2010; Chan, 2012; Culver et al., 2012; Dvorakova & Matthews, 2017; Knight & Lee, 2012; Knight, 2015; Obst & Kuder, 2012); other studies, however, have questioned their value, quality, and outcomes (Knight, 2015, 2009;

Knight & Lee, 2012).

One of the most controversial topics related to IDD programs has been the employability of the students who graduate from these programs and seek jobs in foreign countries. Although traditional Human Capital Theory (HCT) has argued that further education makes workers more productive and therefore more desirable on the job market (Becker, 2009; McMahon & Oketch, 2013; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008), Neo-Racism Theory (NRT) has shown that international students face political and social barriers when finding jobs or making career decisions in foreign countries (Arthur & Nunes, 2014; Leung & Yuen, 2012; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2014; Reynolds & Constantine,



2007). This dynamic is likely to be even more complicated when multiple degrees are involved, as is the case with IDD programs.

However, this is unclear, as little empirical research has examined the influence of IDD programs on career outcomes for international graduate students, despite the focus on enhancing employability as an important objective of studying abroad (De Wit et al., 2015; Knight & Lee, 2012; Singaravelu et al., 2005). As De Wit and Deca (2020) suggested, conducting qualitative studies on students' employability is an important research direction in this new decade. Given the deficiencies in past literature and the importance of students' career achievements, research on students' career outcomes may contribute to the general understanding and development of IDD programs. Studies on Chinese students' experiences in the US are of distinct significance, since China and the US are traditionally the largest sending and receiving countries of international students, respectively (Merola et al., 2019).

The intent of this study, therefore, is to explore the influence of a double master's degree program, co-held by Chinese and American institutions, on labor market outcomes for Chinese alumni who are working in the US currently. Specifically, this research study investigates the following: (i) How do graduates perceive the influence of attending an IDD program on their professional expectations, choices, and employability?; (ii) Are there any other factors influencing graduates' career outcomes?; (iii) Can HCT and NRT explain graduates' vocational experiences effectively? In order to answer these questions, I conducted in-depth interviews with six graduates of a Sino-American double master's degree program.

Results of the study suggest that the studied program, although stressful to some extent, offered students opportunities to study and work in the US, establish local professional networks, and improve professional and job-seeking skills. It also appears from the data that obtaining two master's degrees can enhance students' opportunities to be employed in the US, and in comparison to the Chinese degree, the US master's degree is more highly valued in the US labor market. These positive outcomes are supported by HCT, which argues that high-quality education is an investment and can improve students' productivity and employ-

ability. However, because the studied program is intensive, its overwhelming workload put great physical and mental pressure on students and left limited time to search for jobs before graduation. It appears, therefore, that attending IDD programs can be an investment that includes both benefits and costs.

As NRT argues, international students face significant barriers when working in host countries. In this study, I found that when seeking jobs and working in the US, the participants' career outcomes are affected by many other issues. In other words, simply attending the dual degree program did not guarantee that participants would obtain desirable jobs. For example, participants' experiences suggest that US immigration policies limit their career choices, forcing them to select those employers who can sponsor H-1B visas. Additionally, their job satisfaction is related closely to acculturation to US society, so racial and gender discrimination also impacted participants' perceptions of their career experiences.

Given the complexity of professional development, neither HCT nor NRT can explain international student career outcomes completely. HCT assumes that the labor market is totally free and meritocratic, while ignoring the difficulties faced by international students. NRT focuses on the obstacles related to students' nationalities and cultural backgrounds, but fails to account for whether and how high-quality education might remove these barriers. To investigate the relationship between international mobility and employability, scholars and policymakers should conduct multi-framework analysis, and more conceptual lenses – such as the push-pull model and signaling theory – should be included.

Future studies could also improve the understanding of the impacts of IDD programs on international students' career outcomes according to the following aspects. First, researchers could apply quantitative methods, involving more students and examining the variables that shape their career outcomes. Second, comparative studies could be used to compare the career outcomes of international students who return to their home countries with those who remain overseas after graduation, investigating the values of degrees obtained from other countries. Finally, scholars could apply acculturation theory to explore the interactions

between the extent of international students' cultural adoption and their career outcomes.

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# Internationalization of the Curriculum: Inclusive and Responsive Practices

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Faculty and instructors in higher education need ways to reflect on and plan how they will enhance their teaching and learning practices. These are the perspectives of an educational developer, supporting internationalization efforts at a Canadian higher education institution – moving from static policy to active practice. In this practitioner reflection, I articulate the connections between institutional policy, instructors’ motivations and goals, and students’ learning outcomes to highlight the centrality of how we internationalize the curriculum.

One key pillar of our institution’s plan for internationalization is to enhance international and cross-cultural perspectives in both content and learning. To this end, the university endeavors to support:

- building international and cross-cultural content
- generating associated learning outcomes, and
- using effective teaching strategies and assessment for students’ intercultural growth.

The intent is to support instructors in developing different ways of knowing and learning; fostering intercultural competence in students; and recognizing that the internationalization of teaching and learning is the infusion of global intercultural or international elements into curricular learning outcomes, content and learning resources, learning activities, and assessment tasks (including feedback). Creating a policy (and definition) is not sufficient, as it does not change student outcomes (Leask, 2013). To achieve the intended outcomes, the teaching and learning practice of educators needs to explicitly plan for and deliver increased equity, appreciation of difference and diversity, and inclusion within learning experiences. Instructional and assessment processes must align with those outcomes.

We use a series of linked workshops (collectively called a ‘short course’) for instructors to gain the necessary knowledge to implement and sustain change in these areas. We sought a multi-disciplinary approach of reflection, sharing, and action to help instructors describe and actualize tenets of internationalization in their teaching and learning practice (UNESCO, 2021). Without this, a small group of educators with strong internationalization backgrounds and internal motivation *might* embed internationalization in their teaching practices, however this additional structure increases the circle of capable and informed faculty.

Curriculum actualized and experienced is a challenge, in any discipline or context, regardless of the challenges inherent in internationalization. The short course was purposefully designed to emphasize the ‘how’ we teach, not the ‘what’ is taught, to achieve meaningful change in student learning. According to Deardorff (2011), internationalization is not the inclusion of an international reading in a course or simply addressing this topic in one lecture. Instead, we sought an “intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension ...to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (emphasis in original) (De Wit & Hunter, 2015, p. 3).

To achieve this enhancement, we needed inclusive curriculum design, broad understandings of what counts as legitimate knowledge and ways of knowing, appreciative interpretations of difference, and a commitment to equity and inclusion (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016). This supports both international students in new environments and supports local students in developing global competencies. This process includes making more universally designed instruction, using different assessment practices, and finding authentic ways of measuring outcome completion.

The Internationalization Short Course (ISC) brings together a community of practitioners, including graduate students, faculty, sessional lecturers, and staff who are interested in developing teaching practices that go beyond inclusive intentions to using culturally responsive pedagogy to meet the diverse needs of students, including, but not limited to, race, gender, nationalities and intersecting identities. This type of course is not unique. Schuerholz-Lehr et al. (2007) described this as an emerging model of internationalization in Canada. Traditionally, we asked participants to read, reflect, discuss, re-orient, and plan to take action (Leask, 2013). Some of the topics/themes addressed during the three modules of this short course included how elements of identity (including values and belief systems, diverse knowledge systems, and intercultural competence) impact the way we teach and interact with students. Additionally, we discussed and applied strategies for inclusive facilitation (Gradel & Edson, 2009). The short course was designed to align with Dimitrov & Haque's (2016) three levels of intercultural teaching competencies: foundational/personal, facilitation, and curriculum design.

In all ISC cohorts, participants were asked to complete a pre/post-self-assessment survey and participant course evaluation survey. In the first two iterations of the ISC, participants overall reported leaving the course feeling empowered and hopeful in their ability to lead anti-oppressive and inclusive education. According to Guskey's (2002) five critical levels of professional development, we now know that participants enjoyed the course, and felt like they had gained knowledge and skills. This meant that we had only reached level two of five. Therefore, our next step was to see how we might get participants to share their successes and use the new knowledge (levels three and four of Guskey's [2002] levels of professional development).

Pre-pandemic, the course was offered in-person over four half-days (10 hours). With the realities of remote learning, the course transitioned to an online course with four 1-hour synchronous meetings and three modules of asynchronous work of approximately 2 hours each. We embraced "the possibilities of disruption" facing internationalization globally (Leask, 2020) and found ways for participants to implement an action and to share their work with their teaching com-

munity. In the remote version, participants were offered three project choices and then asked to share these with a colleague (they could either write about or record the interview). They might discuss:

- Implementing discursive strategies for inclusive and active learning,
- Embedding the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and specific targets into teaching, or
- Developing a Collaborative Online International Learning project.

While we were not able to explicitly measure Guskey's (2002) fifth level of shifting student learning outcomes, we were able to reconvene past participants after one year, and anecdotally hear about how students who experienced internationalization had greater motivation to complete course assignments.

Our institution has defined graduate attributes which cut across disciplinary cultures, albeit, as expected, certain competencies are more emphasized in specific fields (Leask, 2013). For a student to meet these graduate attributes, we strive to find alignment with other campus initiatives such as student mobility, Indigenization, and education for sustainable development. This helps different institutional units work towards common attributes and collectively map evidence of student mastery (Blair, 2017). As described in Table 1, in the future, we would like to better understand the impact on student learning, such as through pre/post student surveys, focus groups, or explicitly observed interactions between instructors and students. Additionally, incentivizing and rewarding faculty participation needs to become part of the curriculum renewal cycle and tenure process (Jung, 2020).

**Table 1.**

*Iterations, Intentions, and Impact*

Cohort	2019 In-Person	2020 Remote Online	Future
<b>Action</b>	Offer four 2.5 hour workshops as a short course.	Offer four 1 hour synchronous web sessions with approximately 2 hours of asynchronous work between each.	Continue synchronous/asynchronous model. Perhaps one in-person meeting at the start or end.
<b>Purpose</b>	Build confidence in participants (and facilitator).	Plan to implement action.	Implement action and reflect.
<b>Impact</b>	Shared experiences within the group. Built small community.	Shared experiences with external departments and colleagues. Built larger community.	Move into praxis more quickly. Reflect on and adapt to student impact.

In conclusion, higher education institutions and their faculty need support in sharing, reflecting, and acting on their teaching. The role of an educational developer is to offer support moving from theory to practice by emphasizing the links between policy, disciplinary expertise, and impact on student learning. The confluence of these ideas is the ‘how’ of internationalizing the curriculum.

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# Staff Engaged: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Implement Internationalization at Home

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The rise of nationalistic movements, Brexit, anti-immigration tensions, restraints of academic freedom, climate change and the global COVID-19 pandemic are but a few current examples affecting and shaping the Internationalization of Higher Education (IoHE). Due to these, among other, factors, a shift from internationalization abroad (mobility of students, academics, staff, and programs) toward a more ethical and qualitative approach presented by the concept of internationalization at home (IaH) is today “more urgent than ever” (de Wit & Altbach, 2020, p. 44).

The contemporary definition describes IaH as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments” (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 69). IaH aspires to make internationalization endeavors more inclusive and provide the benefits that arise from internationalization to all students, irrespective of whether or not they choose to study abroad (Almeida, 2018; Beelen & Jones, 2015).

Although most higher education institutions (HEIs) acknowledge the importance of IaH, in practice, IaH remains simply rhetoric at many HEIs (Marinoni, 2019). The reluctance of HEIs to implement IaH reflects the complexity of this task. As Killick and Foster (2021) state, “embedding global literacy in the mainstream curriculum is probably the most challenging process... and this may be why, it remains the most neglected area of internationalization” (p. 14). Moreover, this process requires a comprehensive IaH strategy supported both by top-down and bottom-up approaches (Van Gaalen & Gielesen, 2016) and the involvement and cooperation of several stakeholders (Beelen, 2018). However, the paucity of such cooperation and connection among stakeholders is often described as one of the frequent obstacles experienced by

HEIs impeding IaH advancement.

This article offers a possible way forward for HEIs struggling to implement a comprehensive IaH strategy by describing how Appreciative Inquiry can be used as a method for enabling stakeholder participation in an organization-wide process to build a strategic, co-created vision for IaH.

## Method and Design

This study was conducted at the School of Health and Welfare (HHJ), Jönköping University, Sweden. At HHJ, the ongoing pandemic crisis served as an accelerator to speed up the shift toward more inclusive internationalisation, and, as a result, IaH received institutional priority as one of the strategic goals for the 2021-2024 period. To make the design of the implementation process genuinely inclusive and to increase the chances for a sustainable shift toward the IaH mindset, all employees were invited to take part in an IaH virtual Appreciative Inquiry (AI) summit called: *A path for everyone: Internationalisation at Home*. AI is known as an inclusive, collaborative whole-system approach, which focuses on identifying strengths and opening unexplored and innovative perspectives (Reed, 2007). AI was developed initially in response to the critique of traditional problem-driven action research that being inadequate for instigating change (Clouder & King, 2016). The participatory approach in AI provides the opportunity for changes from a bottom-up perspective (Magnussen et al., 2019) and builds on the idea that every organization has something that works well. By asking unconditionally positive questions, organizations can explore these life-giving forces (the ‘positive core’) that can lead to effective and sustainable change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). In higher education specifically, AI can foster creativity and innovation and be a powerful force for

transformation (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2020).

As IaH does not happen in a vacuum and is affected and affects the surrounding society, external stakeholders from Jönköping's municipality and region, together with International Officers and students' representatives, were invited to participate, in order to diversify the audience and augment the discussion. The summit's main purpose was twofold: to introduce a broad concept of IaH to all staff and stakeholders, and to engage staff in a discussion about IaH and beyond.

At the beginning of the virtual IaH summit, the IaH concept was comprehensively presented. The first two stages of the AI 4-D cycle (Discovery and Dream phase) were then facilitated. The topics covered in the summit were the following: spotting what gives life to internationalization at HHJ, identifying the best IaH practices to enhance IaH activities and mindset for HHJ's leadership, identifying core factors of internationalization at HHJ, and imagining images of the IaH future, thus identifying future possibilities.

The whole event was held on Zoom, and data was collected through Padlet and Microsoft forms. Approximately 70 participants attended. Qualitative content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) was used to make meaning of all the gathered data. The results were later compiled in a report which included, among other things, twenty-two actionable ideas that could lead HHJ to the IaH ideal identified by staff (namely, "internationalization permeating all activities at HHJ"). The staff had an opportunity to vote for three ideas that they would like to see implemented and developed over the upcoming years. Staff could also identify whether they would like to be involved and play an active part in such a development.

## Results

In total, 173 votes (58 persons) came in, which corresponded to 40 percent of the HHJ staff body. The six ideas that received most of the attention were the following: continuous competence development within IaH; moving from a few enthusiasts to the involvement of the whole system; increasing the cooperation within HHJ; organizing workshops with participants from different countries; internationalizing learning outcomes; and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to take part in either physical or virtual exchange.

## Conclusion

The next step will be to work further with these ideas and make action plans to ensure their implementation. AI helped establish the common ground for the IaH concept at HHJ. It helped to create ownership of IaH among all participants, triggered interest for talking about internationalization, and, most importantly, increased the scope of staff involvement in internationalization beyond a small core of staff members that are already passionate about it. Many participants appreciated the positive approach and the unusual call to see things through an appreciative lens, with some reporting that they were "getting back sparkle" to continue their work with internationalization. The IaH summit was the first step in a long journey toward inclusive internationalization that is accessible and beneficial for all HHJ students and staff.

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## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

# Methodological Nationalism and American National Identity in Higher Education Research

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As institutions of higher education participate in internationalization, scholars have a responsibility to challenge the assumption that nations should be the natural unit of analysis in research. Higher education is an industry that increasingly relies on international partnerships and transnational organizations, and is subject to decreasing financial support from national governments (Altbach, 2016). However, despite increasing global interdependence, universities continue to identify and serve their students and communities along primarily national lines (Buckner, 2019; Friedman, 2018). Understanding and challenging the concept of methodological nationalism provides a conceptual framework through which it might be possible to create more innovative and inclusive internationalization policies and practices.

This paper examines the concept of methodological nationalism and aims to understand how its application in higher education research reinforces national

identity in the United States context.

## Methodological Nationalism in American Higher Education

Higher education research contributes to the construction of national identity through methodological nationalism (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013). Methodological nationalism describes an assumption that social processes occur within nation-state boundaries and that those nations reinforce unequal power relationships (Beck, 2007; Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013; Vasilev, 2019). Such a myopic focus can lead to a tendency to attribute the rise of the modern world and all its features to the existence of nation-states (Chernilo, 2011). It can also be highly problematic, in terms of equity, as scholars who engage in methodological nationalism, without challenging it, tend to automatically privilege national identity and national interests (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013). Methodological nationalism is not exclusive to

higher education research, but its presence in the field of higher education sometimes influences policies that contribute to national identity construction (Buckner, 2019; Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013). Furthermore, Stein (2016) asserts that the national container, i.e. the nation-state to which scholars' imaginations are often limited, prevents higher education researchers from considering ethical problems in internationalization beyond the national level. Tannock (2007) supports a similar view, arguing that scholars' limited imaginations with regards to the national boundary undermine the potential for academic collaborations that transcend national boundaries and benefit the global community, rather than only citizens of one nation.

The United States serves as a relevant case by which to understand how methodological nationalism can reinforce national identity, due to the country's hegemonic position in the context of higher education systems across the globe (Marginson, 2016) and the tendency of the American higher education system to resist outside ideas (Tight, 2014). The United States is also a prototypical example of what Stein and Andreotti (2016) have described as the tendency to describe one's national characteristics as in opposition to the global "other".

Some examples of how higher education as a field of study broadly employs methodological nationalism in the construction of American identity include: instances in which research funding is directly tied to national higher education policies, even for the most elite institutions (Marginson, 2017), or when US-based higher education academic organizations aim to have international membership, but consider all non-US-focused research to be "international" (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013). These examples demonstrate Shahjahan & Kezar's (2013) assertion that methodological nationalism reinforces unequal power relationships, because US academic researchers assume that the United States should be the national boundary for the field of higher education.

The tension between increasing globalization and the rise of nationalism in the United States also makes American identity a pertinent case by which to explore higher education's role in constructing national identity. Marginson (2017) argues that the United States has challenged assumptions that the nation-state has been

undermined by globalization because of the rise in nationalism after September 11th, 2001, and the election of Donald Trump in 2016.

It is also possible to observe an institutional commitment to national identity in the American context. For example, research on American identity in higher education shows that educational practices like student mobility and foreign language education play a role in students' encounters with their national identity (Batterton & Horner, 2016; Turnbull, 2017; Zhao, 2019). Faculty at American universities tend to practice methodological nationalism in their research and teaching practices in ways that reinforce national identity.

### Going Beyond Methodological Nationalism - Areas for Future Research

There are several areas for future research that may challenge methodological nationalism in innovative ways. One such gap in the current research is faculty perceptions of and experiences with national identity. Although some studies have examined how researchers approach national identity in the activity of research itself, little research has been conducted on faculty members' perception of their responsibility toward constructing national identity. This research could illuminate the factors that influence a researcher to prioritize national identity over global interests, as some of the current literature suggests (Buckner, 2019; Friedman, 2018; Tannock, 2007). These studies might also explore critical approaches to understanding societal power structures that are replicated within a university setting.

Another area of research could examine the USA's participation (or lack thereof) in transnational harmonization or cooperation processes in higher education, through the lens of national identity. The literature may benefit from an examination of which American identity qualities, i.e., values of American liberalism, ethnoculturalism (Schildkraut, 2014), Whiteness (Cabrera, 2018), and colonization (Ken, 2010), play a role in US history of transnational cooperation in higher education. Considering the history of transnational cooperation through a critical lens may provide new insights to scholars and practitioners towards the practice of inclusive internationalization.

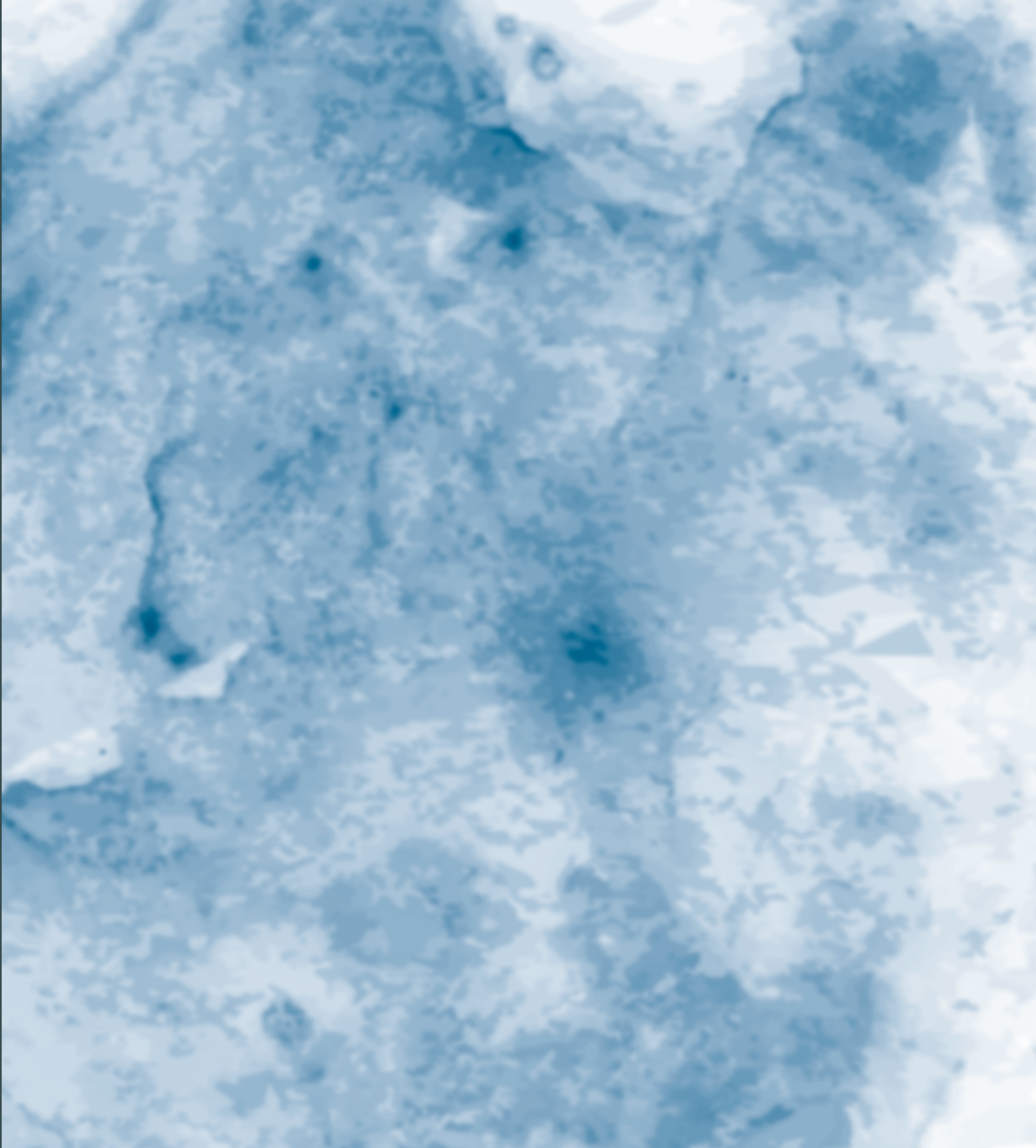
## Conclusion

The discussion of American national interest vs. global goodwill continues to be urgent, as the world races to manage the COVID-19 crisis, the United States experiences a shift in political power, and universities continue to prioritize internationalization. Scholars and practitioners therefore need to understand how their participation in the construction of American identity impacts students' experiences and the production of research. Understanding how centering the nation state as the only relevant unit of analysis can both reinforce unequal social power and exclude social processes that occur outside of those boundaries is key to the achievement of this goal. This area of study can therefore contribute to more responsible scholarly and educational practices, moving forward.

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