
*(Assignment B: Preliminary analysis of an educational initiative)*

by

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*This paper was written in fulfillment of course Assignment B which although not required to complete as an auditing student, I completed as an exercise in the critical analysis of internationalization and global education initiatives.*
Andreotti (2012) developed the acronym HEADS UP (hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, depoliticization, uncomplicated solutions, and paternalism) as a tool with which to critically foster and practice our ability to engage with the “complexity, plurality, inequality and uncertainty of our inter-dependent lives in a finite planet” (p. 1) and move away from “naive hope towards skeptical optimism and ethical solidarities” and ultimately “start conversations” (p. 2). Andreotti suggests using HEADS UP to start conversations about local/global initiatives (documentaries, campaigns, teaching resources, etc) that may inadvertently reproduce seven problematic historical patterns of thinking and relationships” (p. 2). In this paper I present the pedagogical insights gained from applying HEADS UP to analyze the section, “Professional Development”, in Teeken’s (2013) reflective handbook on the internationalization of higher education, *Global education: A narrative*. I engage HEADS UP as a method to critically question and deconstruct the short reflections on the internationalization of higher education provided in the section. Overall, I use Andreotti’s (2012) HEADS UP tool and the questions she provides which assist in identifying the “reproduction of the patterns in the checklist” and “awareness of and challenges to those patterns”, to create and organize my analysis into broader questions critiquing the internationalization of higher education. I ask the reader to bear in mind that often times, many and even all of the HEADS UP terms can be applied to each of the reflections and that a variety of broad critical questions can arise from an application of the model, but I have chosen to focus in on the questions that prominently arose from my analysis and instinctually resonated with my own experiences as a racialized graduate student and staff member within a leading Canadian research institution with an explicitly international and community engagement mission.

This analysis of Teeken’s (2013) section “Professional Development”, is grounded in the critical/post-critical perspective that internationalization of higher education, and its multiplicity of definitions, is interdependently born, fostered, and complicit within Eurocentrism’s obsession with the Orient and globalization’s burgeoning trends such as ‘academic capitalism’, ‘global citizenship’, ‘international education’, and ‘international development’ (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Hoffman, 2012; Zemach-Bersin, 2007; Mazrui, 2003; Metcalf and Slaughter, 2011; Andreotti et al., 2010). Thus, unlike Teeken’s (2013) “festive” celebratory approach to internationalization (p. 9), I utilize an “anti-colonial lens” which interprets the internationalization of higher education as “a form of neo-colonialism that maintains patters of dependency and reinforces the superiority of Anglo-American scholarship” (Wai Lo, 2011, p. 210). I focus in on the missing views and voices which when included, speak to the hegemony-sustaining contradictions in ‘internationalising’ rhetoric and the intricate and often oppressive impacts of the internationalization of higher education.

**Q: Professionalization or CV development through ‘the exotic Other’?**
In “Digging my way to China”, Knight (in Teekens, 2013) discusses her jolting experiences with the unknown and exotic other in China during her graduate participation in the Canadian delegation of educators and doctors in China (p. 87). Knight proceeds to centre her international experiences around her learnings citing her presence in China during times of political turmoil, and her recognizable impact on the people as the “first Westerners that rural villagers had ever met”. Although admitting that she and other delegates had not been well prepared for such ‘internationalization’ in regards to the impact her values and emotions would undergo, and indicating that ‘self-awareness’ is pivotal for such international endeavours, she cites her experience in China as what prepared her for subsequent work for international education organizations. Thus despite portraying knowledge of historical events which took place in China, Knight still portrays an ethnocentric approach to her physical presence in China, unquestioning of her right and role in relation to witnessing critical events and inserting her presence into lives which had not been provided the choice of meeting her.

In “It’s totally naturel!”, Watts (in Teekens, 2013) presents a highly depoliticized approach to the internationalization of higher education (p. 90). In her reflection, internationalization is presented as a way for students from “overseas to take up unique academic opportunities, enjoy new experiences, have fun, make new friends and learn about other cultures whilst at the same time stepping outside of their comfort zone and learning about themselves and their home country”. Watt’s reflection disregards entrenched power inequalities and fails to acknowledge her own position of power and privilege over others, such as the colleagues in other “partner organisations”. The term French term ‘naturel’, forefronts the question, “for whom is internationalization of higher education naturel?” If one approaches it from a Euro/ Westerncentric perspective of market exchanges and academic capitalism, than yes, it would seem naturel, but it may be less so for universities in the Global South which may have a greater need to focus on local knowledges and challenges.

Tranaeus (in Teekens, 2013), is one of the few practitioners who recalls ever wondering the contradicting motives behind internationalization, such as profit-making or the development of cross-cultural understanding. However, although he at least reflects on this point, there is a failure to note that often ‘motives’ are complicatedly intermeshed because of embedded hegemonic power relations. An administrator or faculty member may hope to implement social justice policies, but remain entangled in a web of institutional market-driven goals and hegemonic relations. Finally, Traneaus cites that some people engage internationalization work to form “part of a larger cause”. The ‘cause’ remains undefined, but nonetheless linked to neoliberal salvationist charity frameworks, which call for privileged peoples, those in so-called ‘developed’ groups, classes, global regions, to save the less fortunate upon a shared ground of common humanity.
Knight, Watts, and Traneaus all reflect on a type of professional development grounded in depoliticized, salvationist and uncomplicated engagements with the ‘Other’. Thus their reflections and reflected upon activities align with the technicist instrumentalist and at best liberal humanist root narrative of development and education, which as Andreottii (forthcoming) explains frame “social engineering as economic rationalization decided by experts” (p. 7) and “as human progress decided by national representatives” (p. 8). According to these root narratives, educational gains are defined in terms of ‘professional development’, as a “way to maximise the performance of individuals in global markets driven by services and innovation, in order to improve their employability or entrepreneurial capacity with a view to contribute to their country’s competitiveness in global economies” and “engagements with other cultures are defined in relation to national interests, such as the protection of national labor markets, the expansion of consumer markets, and the perceived threat of unwanted immigration, creating a need for controlled and market oriented internationalization based on nationally defined objectives” (pp. 7-8). Therefore, internationalization projects are embedded within and controlled by supranational and national institutions such as UNESCO, NUFFIC, and the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) and those which become ‘internationalization professionals’ join the ranks of power and privilege holders, the donors and dispensers of ‘knowledge’, knowledge that is based on Euro/Westerncentric ontologies and epistemologies.

**Q: Whose knowledge is valued? (decline of the academic guru/ local knowledges or Euro/Western?)**

In her reflection, “Internationalization of higher education: A privilege”, Egron-Polak (in Teekens, 2013) begins by sharing her personal connection with internationalization (p. 85). She links her passionate involvement with internationalization to her family’s experiences with forced inter-European migration. Living as an ‘outsider’ taught Eva about the importance of “learning and appreciating these differences” and that “international cooperation for capacity building in higher education, international education, internationalization of research (or whatever specific focus we choose to promote collaboration among students, scholars and university leaders)” have major lasting impacts on the individuals and institutions that participate. Egron-Polak includes a pivotal statement in her reflection, internationalization is “a perpetual voyage of discovery (at times also physically gruelling, frustrating and disappointing) and self-questioning”. However, overall Egron-Polak’s discourse on the value of ‘internationalization’ for appreciating and overcoming difference is ethnocentric, depoliticized, uncomplicated, and hegemonic. As secretary-general and executive director of the International Association of Universities and a member of UNESCO, Egron-Polak’s words on internationalization have a palpable impact, and her reflection title, illustrates this. The reflection lacks a pivotal questioning of larger root narratives and of her personal positioning and privilege as a White able-bodied immigrant settler woman that transits freely across
borders. Thus stating that internationalization can be a ‘fix all’ to oppressive realities that marginalized bodies in distinct contexts around the world experience is highly uncomplicated and centred on her own experiences. As Pashby (in Andreotti el al., 2010) highlights, there are many glaring connections between the hegemonic rhetorics of neoliberal multiculturalism, global citizenship education, and internationalization. Within Canada’s ‘multicultural’ society and education system, ‘differences’ are only accepted up until they become voices of dissent that counter the normatives of nationhood. There is no recognition (as is also the case with the other reflections in Teeken’s handbook) on the fundamentally contested nature of nationhood, citizenship, globalization and therefore internationalization as well, thus internationalization is espoused as a utopia, one that displaces any actual individual or collective grassroots agency that is ‘unmonitored’ by state or global institutions. Bunjun (2011; citing Bannerji, 2002; Carty, 1999; Ahmed, 2000; Thobani, 2007) explains that “Europeanness is represented as whiteness which translates into Canadianess” which promotes a certain notion of nationhood, state formation, and internationalization ultimately rooted in entitlement and often internalized and unrecognized mechanisms of neocolonization (p. 31). True to Egron-Polak’s title, it is this ‘privileged’ access to the nation and its institutions that becomes embodied and espoused as the ‘knowledge power’ of internationalization.

Belyavina furthers Egron-Polak’s seemingly unaware, hegemonic reflective analysis of internationalization with her own which is also ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized, uncomplicated, and salvationist. In her reflection, Belyavina reduces relations and engagement with others to ‘factual’ geopolitical knowledge. The reflection presents a false idea that to contribute you must possess ‘cross-border’ knowledge, when more harm can be done when one leaves one country without a sound questioning and understanding of the multitude of tensions and contested/ invisibilized histories within one’s place of residence and birth. This is connected to the hegemonic idea of being entitled to avoid an analysis of issues ‘at home’ because of a need to aid and “contribute to the world beyond our boundaries”. It is an uncomplicated view of human and ecological relations to think that one can only come to ‘contribute’ and gain ‘knowledge’ through the other which facilitates appropriative and tokenistic patterns of knowledge creation and proliferation. Finally, although one cannot say whether Belyavina intended to reflect on the “American pedagogue” as the leader of internationalization, the Western man was positioned as the ‘provider’ of knowledge, and even more problematically as someone needed to enlighten other countries and peoples of education governance through comparisons. Cross-cultural relationships and knowledge exchanges are reduced to depoliticized encounters between an institutional technocrat and ‘the Other’, without question to the balance of power.

Neither Egron-Polak, nor Belyavina question, the overall hegemonic and ethnocentric origins and manifestations of the concepts internationalization is premised upon, yet they laud internationalization as
transformative. No directions for how this transformation can be worked towards are provided and instead further “simplistic notions of transformative learning” (Tarce, in Andreotti et al., 2010, p. 16) are advanced. Although internationalization professionals will often cite the possible adverse consequences of international or global education such as brain drain, the marginalization of local knowledges, international students being treated as products, etc., and indicate a need for more ‘critical’ questioning, awareness and action, this rarely actually transforms into critical analysis and transformative behaviours, nor self-reflexive critique of one’s role in proliferating the latter. Rather, these ‘salutations to the problematics’ become part and parcel of the nonperformative rhetorical skill of neoliberal institutions and technocrats. Affirmations of ‘attempts’ at reciprocity, respect, diversity create a nonperformative play. Ahmed (2006) states that “speech acts involve acts of naming: the institution… is… “given” attributes, qualities, and even a character”, yet these “speech acts” do not actually “do what they say” (p. 104). I see internationalization as a transnational institution of its own with individuals and universities seeking professional development and market profitability as experts of the institution, as the nonperformative actors. Thus internationalization and its ‘professionals’ are akin to the university ‘diversity’ administration who are illustrated by Ahmed (2006) as creating documents which commit the institution to a sort of equality and diversity action, creating the illusion that the university supports the action, despite the action never being performed. Thus internationalization reports and often student and administration centred narratives become “fetishized” and further entrench the master colonial narratives unrestrictedly driving the transnational institution. Two other problematic aspects of the nonperformative texts of institutions is that they divert attention from challenging issues such as racism and rape with ‘feel good inclusive’ terms such as diversity.

Professional development through internationalization as it is presented by Egron and Belyavina leaves unexamined the question of what and whose knowledges are ‘officially’ valued. Tarce (in Andreotti et al., 2010) states:

As business and engineering take the lead in increasing the international presence of research-intensive institutions through international partnerships and exchanges, it is not typically the humanities or critical social sciences that inform the ‘education of global citizenship,’ but more the accessible and pedagogically expedient developmentalist theories of learning, cultural difference and adaptation. (p. 15)

From my experience working in relation to the assessment of international service learning for one of North America’s largest public research and teaching institutions, I believe that the push for speedy project progression and quick collection of quantitative and publishable figures that contribute to the university’s ‘international and community engaged’ image, prevents critical qualitative analysis of the impacts to communities, students and the ecology. Process-grounded knowledge is not respected even
though ‘process over product’ is often touted by internationalization managers as pivotal for student learning. Student-centred learning assessments in relation to internationalization, which most professionals in the field specialize in is also highly problematic as it distracts much needed focus on the often negative and even violent effects which student intrusion into international communities can have. Nandy (2002) emphasizes what is an undeniable privileging of Western knowledges in all higher education processes. Concepts such as internationalization and diversity are rooted in this Western neocolonial knowledge framework, thus as Ahmed highlights, those who best embody the concepts are expected to “express happiness and gratitude” (Ahmed, 2009, p. 42), while they are silenced and their experiences and contributions are stolen, appropriated, packaged and managed by the institutions. The ‘professional’ in internationalization is therefore, “the inter-culturally competent trainer” who “facilitates dialogue at a meta-level (ahistorical and apolitical) to teach the ‘progressive’ lessons of ethnorelativism” (Paige, 1993; Bennet, 1993; as cited in Andreotti et al., 2010).

This academic capitalist concept of the ‘Western’ internationalization professional is in many ways replacing, colonizing, or slowly destroying the concept of the ‘academic guru’ (Altbach, 2003). Altbach (2003) theorizes that with the sweeping tide of globalization, work conditions, and academic freedoms, fell under rapid threat. Massification and accountability demands limit the “traditional autonomy of the profession” (Altbach, 2003, p. 2). With switches from block government university grants to federal investments in specific business, technology and science centred research areas, academics, faculty and students alike, have now lost the ability to engage research interests freely (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Metcalf, 2010). The negative impacts of academic capitalism and internationalization on the Global South where financial resources are more constrained, as charted by case studies, are much more severe and are grounded in an entrenchment of development dependency patterns exacerbated by the information technology boom. Global South countries engaging in internationalization begin and are always on unequal footing. They must learn English to meet Western academic (especially scientific research) standards, often with severe repercussions for educational patterns at home, contributing to the disconnection of new generations from local cultures- even if they have the freedom to choose which language to learn to meet national additional language acquisition requirements, youth and families often base their decisions on capitalist models which promote English. The latter is an example of the “epistemic violence of colonialism” (where colonialism affects the [capacity of those colonized] to know their situation of real exploitation)... the Third World ‘wants’ to be civilized/ catch up with the West” (Spivak, as discussed in Andreotti, 2006, p. 45). Global South academics are forced to conform to the policies and standardized practices of the West. Finally, within the ‘market’ of competing knowledge economies, dissident academic voices become a threat. Faculty and administration are sellable commodities who when challenging the ‘rules’ of the neocolonial game,
become dismissible. Thus these people, often ‘Othered bodies’ that do not fit the Eurocentric mold of modernism, live constantly surveillanced and threatened lives within the academy.

Q: Contested realities- What does internationalization actually mean for the transiting bodies and those that stay at home?

In, “Borderless conversation”, Edwards (in Teekens 2013, p. 88) espouses a highly depoliticized view of internationalization premised upon entitlement and privilege. She reflects that the “inestimable benefit of working in international higher education is the ongoing and borderless conversation”, without questioning for whom exactly participation in internationalization is “borderless”. There is no examination of ideological and geographic locality, or of power relations. Edwards cites “trans-border initiatives” and the ability to solve through “intellectual and logistical problems… with colleagues from all over the world, across every kind of cultural divides”, which brings to the surface critical questions she does not speak to. How is she able to cross borders so freely while others are not and what implications does this have for internationalization of higher education? Who initiated these trans-border initiatives and who benefitted the most from them? What sort of intellectual and logistical problems were encountered and were local perspectives valued and included in the process? She concludes with the statement, “The work that we do locally has global significance as a counter-weight to the steamroller of pressure to conform to rankings, to the marketplace, to commodification”, yet, excludes a discussion on the historicity, politics and power relations which enabled her to enter other localities, and how international higher education engagement, can be reciprocal, how partnerships could disrupt the entitlement of Western institutions and how communities’ and students’ diverse needs and lived realities can be supported and valued.

Through her reflection, “My journey in international education”, (in Teekens, 2013, p. 91) Lieva speaks about her professional development through and opinions on international student mobility. She also states that in her experiences, “research collaborations knew no national boundaries” and that “university research was no longer confined to a select few- it had become a fundamental driver of economic growth internationally”. Overall these statements capture a depoliticized approach to internationalization similar to Edwards, despite her caution for “Policy-makers and educators need to think very carefully about the unintended consequences their policies may have”. Lieva ponders the problematic of Western nations such as England influencing international education policies, but leaves the neocolonial and capitalist root narrative of internationalization unchallenged failing to recognize the role her own ‘economics’ background had in positioning her as a field professional. The “tightening” of immigration policies is not the main problematic of the international student impact, but rather the experiences of marginalization international and domestic students can face as a result of the proliferation of academic capitalist facets.
Boef reaches another oppressive manifestation of academic capitalism through internationalization, that of the populations of the international or domestic born minority students as “study subjects” of a very Eurocentric Dutch based conceptualization of multiculturalism and internationalization. In his reflection, “When does internationalization start?” (in Teekens, 2013, p. 92), Boef expresses an ethnocentric form of entitlement to being an internationalization professional, an ‘expert of the Other’ and does not question the neocolonial roots of a Latin American Studies program structured for ‘internationalization’.

Overall the depoliticized and ethnocentric reflections by Edwards, Lieve, and Boef spotlight the myriad of ways in which internationalization is misunderstood and misrepresented as a neutral project and perhaps intentionally so to shirk the responsibility of acknowledging any possible complicitness and guilt in relation to the proliferation of a neocolonial project. Internationalization breeds highly contested realities for international and home country visibly racialized students, realities which are usually unaddressed by field professionals whose career development hinges on increasing the number of international students attending their employer universities, acquiring international fees (usually two, sometimes even three times the domestic students fees), increasing programs which promote the universities’ ‘international and community engagement’ image, and producing quantitative figures on the international popularity and research profits of the universities. The very term ‘international’ in relation to students and curricula, highlights the oppressive disparities internationalization glosses over. ‘Global and international’ citizens have the freedom to traverse borders and access resources those who are not can not. This creates a form of ‘internationalization peer pressure’ tempting and co-opting youth into pursuing ‘international’ careers. But, “the ability to become a global citizen is dependent on the extent to which an individual is able to attain international knowledge through pre-approved and closely monitored educational channels” based in ‘privileged Western nations’ (Zemach-Bersin, 2007, p. 21). The reality is not all students can afford an international education, nor access scholarships to go abroad and even those who can, the monies they receive may still not be enough to afford them proper living conditions. Then there are youth whose citizen status is precarious or denied within the nations they inhabit, and those who may have ‘secure’ citizenship, but have been systemically forced into marginal spaces or into competition with others who are ‘state recognized’ as marginalized. In the American case, Zemach-Bersin (2007) cites an astounding overrepresentation of white students in study abroad programs, while Black and Hispanic students are nearly invisible. Aside from financial capital, international students “add to the intellectual capital” of Western countries (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 382). However, their contributions are often undervalued, while they suffer tokenization and often undergo gruelling immigration processes. Exploring the issue of declining enrolment, Lee and Rice (2007) theorize the international student experience in relation to the conceptual framework of neo-racism; the experiences of international
students of color vary greatly from those who are white. However, in my experience the growing enrolment does not equate a decrease in experiences of racism. Post 9/11 and during my trajectory as an undergraduate student, I witnessed on multiple occasions the labelling of Arab students as terrorists, yet although doing very little to defend students against Islamaphobia and discriminatory stereotyping, Canadian universities have profited immensely from Saudi Arabian students, who have been funded through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program since 2007 to study English in Canada and pursue science, technology, or business fields. Eight years later, I continue to hear horrific accounts of international students’ needs not being met by universities. I believe that in many ways neo-racism, has exacerbated biological racism over the years. Growing numbers of international students are beginning to speak back to the institution’s neocolonial agenda and fight against the discrimination, stigmatization and racism that they face, by not only publicizing their experiences, but also the lack of critical learning in relation to real Indigenous historical and contemporary realities. International and domestic racialized students are bringing to the forefront of the internationalization discussion the unpreparedness and lack of self-reflexivity of internationalization professionals and academic advisors, the misinterpretations and assumptions that they have about each other through analysis of the intersectional facets of oppression, how they can become allies of Indigenous peoples, but most importantly, how it is that historically marginalized bodies of color continue to bear the burden of undoing the antagonistic rifts and violations enacted by the hostility of institutions working on neocolonial agendas.

**Q: Professional development through internationalization of higher education or professionalizing neocolonial practices?**

In her reflection, “The next generation: A lifetime in international education”, Humphries (in Teekens, 2013, p. 89) manifests some of the major *hegemonic, ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized* and *salvationist* concerns of anti-neocolonialists in relation to internationalization. Her focus on the “outcomes” is representative of a neoliberal language and approach to learning. The denial of spaces and due time to discuss theories, history, concepts, imperialistic practices, ones’ role, etc., is precisely what makes ‘internationalization’ a neocolonial practice. Humphries cites “advocacy” as a major part of her professional work, however, she contradicts the core concept of being an ‘advocate’ by stating that in relation to advocacy, “numbers tend to dominate” and conflating the entire experience of working with people to the questions, “What is the economic impact?” Hence, we see a masterful and hegemony sustaining employment of a term such as ‘advocacy’; instead of publicly supporting a particular cause or policy implementation or partaking in the fight for greater social justice, allyship and coalition building, Humphries is advocating for economic development, for capitalist enterprise, at no cost to her own privilege, no personal sacrifice, no questioning of the modernist framework and its oppressive implications for endogenous perspectives. Humphries’ reflection exposes internationalization’s motive
(especially in the case of Canada’s internationalization projects being so closely linked with foreign trade
and development schemes (Trilokekar, 2009)), as being primordially concerned with the neocolonial
imperative of power and progress, “How are other countries doing, and how do we compare?”

Gielmettie (in Teekens, 2013) reinforces the hegemony and ethnocentrism of internationalization.
In her reflection, “Internationalization is open to many interruptions” (p. 93), Gielmettie reinforces that
ultimately being a professional in such a field is about “convincing people, facing resistance, being
persistent”. Humphries and Gielmettie’s reflections reveal that internationalization’s ‘pro-difference’
stance is one that toots differences as enriching, as long as they leave hegemonic and neocolonial
interests and relations unchallenged. Humphries and Gielmettie empathize with the ‘needs’ of Others, the
‘less’ developed, the Global South, as if these Others need speaking for and saving. Gielmettie and
Teekens, also exemplify how the rhetorics of diversity and inclusion can be deployed by neocolonial
representatives to continue to sustain imbalances of power. Humphries cites one of her professional
purposes as “getting people together and giving them the experiences that can make them better human
beings and prepare them to contribute to making a better world”. However, as Escobar (2005; 1995;
1992) and Sierra and Fallon (2013) highlight, there is much more that could be learned from communities
of peoples, many of which are located in the Global South, which are attempting to live their lives
according to paradigms that promote holistic forms of development that seek social justice, common
good, and respect for biodiversity. But of course internationalization has no time, nor space for
knowledges unaligned with neocolonial enterprise. Internationalization is about national interests,
accumulating power with which to negotiate in the international arena; creating citizens with enough
international knowledge to keep protecting national interests, or as Zemach-Bersin (2007) emphasizes, the
interests of superpower nations like the US which promote the internationalization of higher education as
a counter measure to ‘terrorisms’ believed more feasible through the expansion of globalization.

Finally, as Humphries and Gielmettie disclose, internationalization is about numbers- capitalist
wealth. Thus professional development hinges on the ability to convince institutions, private investors,
and students that aggressive intrusions into other cultures and countries is ok. In the Canadian context the
latter is blatantly obvious. There have been massive capitalist gains in the terrain of Canadian higher
education shrouded in internationalization terminology. From 1997, when the Canada Foundation for
Innovation (CFI) emerged to become one of the most influential organizational bodies in Canadian
research, promoting the institutionalization of entrepreneurial behavior in higher education by requiring
matching funds to be raised (increasing ties between institutions and the private sector) and that recipient
institutions develop strategic research plans, which resulted in mass managerialhirings in administrative
research branches (Metcalf, 2010), to the establishment of the Canadian International Institute for
Extractive Industries and Development (CIIEID) headquartered at the University of British Columbia
(UBC), and governed and operated by UBC, Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the École Polytechnique de Montreal (EPDM), Canadian higher education has last massive levels of autonomy due to academic capitalism. The folding of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) under the Foreign Affairs and Trade Department of Canada and the funding of the CIIEID with $24.6 million from the Canadian government and private mining corporation monies, is a prime example of the complicitness of national and institutional interests in capitalist profit-making from neocolonialist projects in the Global South. Students at UBC have been denied answers to questions on funding transparency and governance in relation to the institution, have been dictated ‘sustainable community engagement’ rhetoric, and pitted against each other (there are many South American students within UBC’s mining department from various regional and class backgrounds- some overwhelmed and struggling to unpack their lived realities back home as a result of neocolonialism, whilst working through often entrenched level of internalized colonization, while others continue to champion Western development enterprises), all while CIIEID continues on with its targeted projects for Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.

Towards some sort of conclusion on ‘professional development’ and internationalization

Overall, all of the authors reflecting in Teeken’s (2013) section, “Professional Development”, present uncomplicated and ethnocentric reflections on internationalization and band-aid salvationist solutions for local and global issues. The reflections in the “Professional Development” section highlight a tendency in international development, service learning, and volunteerism work for those who participate in such endeavours to focus on the self, the self professional development, without any critical self reflection or reflexivity. In other words, learnings about others (other people, communities, countries, etc) are only expressed and valued through one’s gains from the process, rather a completely open approach to being taught, a gift that is unquantifiable (Kuokkanen, 2007; Biesta, 2013). Also prevalent in most of the reflections is a championing of internationalization’s multiculturalist aspects; the supposed appreciation for difference. But, there is no awareness of ‘perspectives’ that have been historically silenced for this ‘multi-culti-inter-nationalisation’, nor is there any self-reflexive admission that the latter implies that ‘Others’ have to conform to preset and hegemonic conceptions of citizenship and nationhood. Differences are great, as long as hegemonic relations are left unchallenged. Not a single author takes any responsibility for their complicitness in processes of neocolonialism as internationalization professionals. Dobson (2006; as cited in Andreotti, 2006) proposes that actions undertaken by those involved with internationalization schemes should be “framed around political obligation for doing justice and the source of this obligation should be a recognition of complicity or “causal responsibility” in transnational harm” (p. 42). The development of an internationalization professional is constituted by a naïve and colonized belief that people can ‘internationalise’ themselves as they please, without restrictions. As we learn from Spivak (as cited in Andreotti, 2006), the reproduction of this ideology is rooted in class culture
(relation to capitalism) as much as it is in geographic positioning referring to an “elite global professional class (consisting of people in or coming from the First and the Third Worlds) marked by access to the internet and a culture of managerialism and of international non-governmental organisations involved in development and human rights” (p. 45). Thus this conglomerate of neocolonialist elites and internationalists move to ‘develop and save the Others’. As an alternative to these salvationist tendencies, I turn to Kuokkanen’s (2007) attention shift and call “for the responsibilities of the dominant, instead of focusing on the special needs of the “other”” (p. 128). Although the reflections in Teeken’s collection on the internationalization of higher education are just ‘commentaries’ on the lived experiences of international education specialists/ experts, they nonetheless carry the power of the locality (Alcoff, 1991) of those that share them, and thus have epistemic repercussions, therefore, there is critical need to deconstruct and make connections between the workings of such reflections. As Sierra and Fallon (2013) stress, reflections on any processes linked to or led by higher education institutions, should conceptually problematize and foster discussion on the dominant tendencies and ways in which universities reproduce the status quo, “invisibilizing alternative perspectives and insights that could reshape and empower research on notions of community development and sustainability with new imaginings that question the cultural-political-economic space defined by Euro centred notions of modernity” (pp. 235-236).

References


