

## **A Critical Discourse Analysis of the University of Ottawa's Internationalization Strategy Report from a Third World Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This paper offers a critical analysis of the Internationalization Strategy Report of the University of Ottawa, according to the Third World Approach to International Law (TWAIL) methodology. This article argues that the Strategy silences global unevenness, avoids any pedagogical discussion, and reproduces the neoliberal rationality about globalization in its discourse. Also, the liberal multiculturalism evoked in the Strategy hinders the incorporation of marginal cultural narratives, and it is driven by the promotion of economic assets for the university. As the internationalization of the curriculum is not prioritized, the Strategy Report does not consider the reproduction of developed countries' academic canons and the obstacles to the incorporation of knowledge produced in Third World countries, which indicates no concern with the prevalence of a neocolonial bias. Alternatives to balance this situation are offered, such as administrative recommendations, the strengthening of the public debate, and the attention to diversity as a criterion for research funding.

*Keywords: critical discourse analysis, globalization, internationalization of high education institutions, TWAIL*

Delivered in May 2017, the University of Ottawa's Internalization Strategy Report represents an important effort towards an encompassing comprehension of globalization and the role played by higher education institutions in contemporary global society. The Strategy Report also discusses the specific positions of Canada and its comparative advantage and how Canadian universities are exploring opportunities to promote a proper internationalization policy. Besides this contextual analysis, the Report conducts a deep literature review regarding internationalization of higher education institutions and applies empirical methods—semi-structured interviews and focus groups—in order to select the best theoretical approach and methodologies to grasp professors', staff, and students' perceptions as well as current practices on the topic.

Due to the Strategy Report's length, conceptual depth, and the variety of recommendations, the Strategy Report is one of the most encompassing documents about internationalization produced by a Canadian university. Internationalization strategies of Canadian universities, such as the Western University (2014), the University of Alberta (2016), the University of Manitoba (2015), and the University of Calgary (2013), vary from 22 to 32 pages and have the appearance of a marketing piece. Meanwhile, the uOttawa's report presents a policy-oriented academic report with 53 pages that are complemented by five pages of a shorter version that focuses on the article's key elements. The Strategy Report introduces a total of 41 recommendations in six areas of relevance, such as: Organizational Structure and Governance; International Student Recruitment; Student Services; diversity and inclusion; Study Abroad and Outbound Mobility; Research, Knowledge Mobilization and Partnerships; and Internationalization of the

Curriculum. Those recommendations are still supplemented by 11 more suggestions that the University should adopt to build a more comprehensive approach to internationalization. Those recommendations are the current binding core of the internationalization policy adopted by the University, which can be considered the norm that regulates the issue so far.

From a critical analysis of the Strategy's discourse, this article brings up some criticism(s) on how the Strategy Report fails to address the circulation of knowledge and the reproduction of canons within a multiculturalist discourse, and how the global unevenness keeps framing researching and teaching-learning processes. This reading emerges from a specific positionality: it is rooted in the point of view of an insider, an international student at the University of Ottawa from a Latin American country. Such a positionality is referenced in the Third World Approach to International Law (TWAIL) and its correlations with decolonial theory, where criticism on the globalization (the role of Third World nations in the international setting, and the ambiguities of the international legal system) also serve as methodological and theoretical inspiration.

We argue that the Strategy is mostly economic-centred and that this is assumed in a contradictory way by the Strategy. Moreover, the text lacks any pedagogical debate and the participation of the international students in the decision-making process. The Strategy Report's multicultural discourse reinforces Western market rationality by not being inclusive of marginal knowledge and cultures. The text is silent towards global inequalities and does not consider the unfair circulation of knowledge and the replication of Western canons to international students. In order to balance this situation, we introduce some directions, such as administrative recommendations towards the diversification of courses, the strengthening of the public debate, and attention to diversity as a criterion for research funding.

This work aims at filling a gap both in the discussion about internationalization of education and in the application of TWAIL methodology. Although the literature in Education has been extensively focusing on the impact of neoliberalism, the rising of economic rationality in educational policy (Apple, 2005; Ball, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Parker, 2017; Sattler, 2012) and its relation to internationalization strategies (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Cover, 2016), too little has been said about its consequences for the circulation of knowledge and the reproduction of global unevenness from a Third World perspective. The debate is mostly based on the perspectives of scholars from the countries of destination, and it has been centred on the fact that internationalization is seen as a neoliberal trend necessary to increase the revenue of educational institutions at all levels in compensation to the decline of public funding.

On another hand, TWAILers (Okafor, 2008; Gathii, 2011; Mutua, 2000) who have addressed the unfair global distribution of power, have not looked at internationalization processes in high education institutions as part of their subject of analysis. TWAIL has historically centred its attention on international law and international governance (Anghie, 2005; Gathii, 1999), world market players and financial and trade organizations (Anghie, 1999; Simons, 2012), and the enforcement of international human rights law (Mutua, 2001). When applied to education, TWAIL has been mostly restricted to legal education of international law (al Attar & Tava, 2009), therefore giving little attention to the internationalization processes within law schools and universities themselves. Nevertheless, we claim that highly internationalized universities have been fulfilling a role like those of international organizations, not only because they train the elites from Third World countries and frame most of the knowledge applied in the global governance, but also because they engage in international relations with government agencies, universities, and research teams from those countries.

In the first section, we will assess how the Strategy conceptualizes globalization, how it sees the function of knowledge in current society, and the purpose of internationalization. In the second section, we will observe how multiculturalism is mobilized as an economic asset by the Strategy. In the third section, we will discuss how the lack of consistent policy for the internationalization of the curriculum might affect the circulation of knowledge and the reproduction of a neocolonial bias. In the fourth section, based on the number of international students and the tuition fees paid, we will discuss the economic role of the student in the Strategy scheme. Finally, in the last section, we will present recommendations to enhance the circulation of knowledge and the position of students from Third World countries.

## Methodology

TWAIL is relevant to comprehending this internationalization process because it is an oppositional thinking that refuses to forget and mute the current effects of colonialism and imperialism in the global

sphere (Mutua, 2000), a concern shared with other scholars in the field, as those affiliated to the Latin American decolonial theory (Mignolo, 2003; Coronil, 2005; Lander, 2000, 2005; Silva, 2008; Gonçalves, 2012, 2015). TWAIL provides complexity to the educational setting when we articulate some of its main concepts, such as law, knowledge, and hegemony to that subject. Chimni (2006) provides a good interrelation among them when he reinforces the classic idea that domination is not only exerted by force but largely by the imposition of a worldview leading to the naturalization of the social order. In this way, normative discourses must incorporate the dimension of consensus to justify a prevalent natural order that seeks to apply values such as “rationality, neutrality, objectivity and justice.”(p.15)

Hegemony is then characterized by the idea of the naturalization of a knowledge hierarchy (judgments about facts, a worldview) that contributes to the reproduction of a determined power setting (normative and value judgments, a political program). Hegemony is not necessarily rooted in the falsification of reality, which is the core element of the traditional concept of ideology, but it calls attention to the production of an active consensus of the dominated towards the political program of the dominant as an essential part of the social order reproduction. Law, for the purpose of TWAIL, is the idea or political program around which a hegemonic set of knowledge and discourse is built. Thus, we should face the Internationalization Strategy as a normative policy for the University that encompasses a specific worldview that has a significant potential of replication since the Strategy would frame the actions of the International Office of the University on the recruitment, training, and integration of international students and the circulation of knowledge.

In this sense, it is possible to talk about a “geopolitics of knowledge” (Mignolo, 2003; Silva, 2008) or a “coloniality of knowledge” (Lander, 2000, 2005) if we refer to the circulation and rating of knowledge in the global society and its contributions to the reaffirmation of power disparities. In academia, the asymmetry of power can be noticed by a reproduction of canons (Judge, 2008) that reverberates this asymmetry internationally. The competition among different theories, methodologies, regulations, approaches, and solutions in both global and local scenarios is underpinned by the replication of colonial structures that are relevant in order to comprehend the existence of current hegemonic and marginal knowledge.

Therefore, the TWAIL methodology is linked to a goal of redistribution that faces unfair globalization by placing its origins in the colonial past. This methodology critically proposes measures to correct this unevenness by reinforcing marginal knowledge and questions the position of Third World countries in international society (Mutua, 2000). Here, when applying TWAIL methodology, we wish to convey: (1) how the Strategy perceives globalization and internationalization according to global inequalities; (2) how cultural learning, researching, and teaching-learning processes are addressed in order to deal with the circulation of knowledge and marginal cultures; (3) how this role is played by international students; and (4) how the Strategy could incorporate recommendations from the TWAIL perspective.

In this article, TWAIL’s methodological questions are materialized in the critical discourse analysis method (Van Dijk, 2001). This method provides tools for a multidisciplinary reading of official policy-driven reports through the contextualization of the document and its concepts according to social interaction, social structure, the anticipation of unintended consequences to dominated groups, and the rise of social conflicts.

## **Globalization, Knowledge, and Internationalization**

In this section, we contextualize the Report’s vision on internationalization by looking at how it perceives the functionality of knowledge within the current stages of globalization. We argue that the Report does not take the reality of an unequal global distribution of power and resources into consideration, nor addresses structural concerns related to the implications of neocolonialism in the production and circulation of knowledge.

### *Globalization and Knowledge*

Despite quoting globalization 19 times, the Report does not present a clear definition of the phenomenon. It is not difficult to grasp that the worldview expressed by the Report regarding the globalization phenomenon is economic-centred, which can be noticed by an understanding of the global landscape through the lenses of competition. The constellation of economic concepts used to frame the analysis includes

the terms “advantage,” used seven times along with the qualifiers “competitive” or “comparative” or in sentences that imply the same meaning; “human capital,” used four times; “innovation,” which appears twenty-four times; and “brand,” repeated four times.

Every time the term appears, globalization can be understood as the phenomenon that leads to the increase of competition since producers and consumers from distant localities are increasingly integrated into a global market. The porosity of national boundaries implies a faster circulation of commodities, services, and people, which entails the rise of common challenges against harmful externalities. Those externalities need to be solved from an integrated interface that must involve a diversified perspective that might emerge from a comprehensive consciousness of the global production chain and the intercultural, regulatory, technological, political, and social elements that may structure it. In other words, globalization is seen as an integrative movement based on the competitive shape of the market, and it is dialectically imbricated with the formation of global citizenship.

In the Report’s first statements, which indicate the purpose and context, it is claimed that “like other pre-eminent universities, the University of Ottawa must globally engage as a result of an increased international competition due to globalization if we want to find our rightful place in world-class universities” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 2). Consequently, globalization not only presupposes increased competition within the general market but also leads to increased competition within the high education market.

Knowledge itself is seen as a crucial part of the global economy. It is the essential component of human capital formation (uOttawa, 2017, p. 12) and the pivotal substrate for the technological innovation that characterizes the post-industrial and neoliberal economy. The Strategy then recognizes that “knowledge has become commodified and has undergone a change in status whereby societies organize themselves around knowledge production, and universities (re)define their space(s) of action and strategic alliances accordingly” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 12).

Furthermore, the labour market is also globalized, which means that the education market must deal with a higher level of international mobilization of potential students and the application of technical and academic skills in a multiple and global scenario. Hence, the Report seeks to establish the place of the University in this so-called global knowledge society, which, according to the author of the Strategy, turns knowledge into one of the main forces of production in the current stage of the industrial revolution, urging for “radical reforms to higher education systems” (Szyszlo, 2016, pp. 23-4). In this sense, the following statements introduce the actual role of the universities in this framework: “[u]niversities train a workforce with necessary skills, foster innovation for competitive advantage and economic growth, as well as act as knowledge producers and repositories for the complex challenges facing contemporary society” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 12).

We argue that the Strategy makes metonymic mistakes when reducing globalization to a competitive scenario and when reducing global knowledge society to an actual global knowledge market. These perspectives are problematic since they take into consideration only the actors that can compete in the market and the alternatives they have to maximize their position in the competition. These mistakes in Report may bring about two main worries: (1) the exclusion of the perspective of those living in the margins (i.e., those that cannot compete nor can be consumers in the market), and the knowledge they produce, and (2) the reduction of the role of the University to one of a global market player.

Alternative narratives about the globalization process will emphasize other aspects: instead of integration of markets, the lack of sovereignty and the narrowing of dependency; instead of competition, the concentration of wealth and the formation of monopolies and oligopolies; instead of integration and mobility of the labour market, the precariousness of labour; instead of a global knowledge society, the privatization of common knowledge and its enclosure in forms of intellectual property. Those narratives reach the position of most of the Third World countries and, which is more important, the majority of the population that is not part of their internationalized elites (Chimni, 2006).

Those problematic circumstances are not just externalities but intrinsic and structural consequences of globalization, since it is the globalization of the free market (Mutua, 2000, p. 35). Another critical definition of globalization is given by Santos (2002), who states that this has been “the process by which a given local condition or entity succeeds in extending its reach over the globe and, by doing so, develops the capacity to designate a rival social condition or entity as local” (Santos, 2002, p. 178).

The most adequate critique comes from Coronil (2005) though; in order to address the discursive strategy of Northern countries institutions on globalization, he proposes that those institutions no longer

enforce a contrast between the “West” and the “East,” or the “North” and the “South,” or the “developed” and the “developing,” or the “First” and the “Third World” as they used to do to delimit historical, cultural, economic, and development stage boundaries. Instead, current globalization implies the universalization of the West through the absorption and dilution of those differences—which encompasses national boundaries, regulations, and knowledge—through the Western economic rationality. That is the core of Coronil’s argument. He brings about a discursive change from *eurocentrismo*, which used to strengthen those cultural and economic hierarchies to justify the global order, to a *globocentrismo* based on the global equalization of the market discourse as a new way to reproduce the neocolonial ideology.

When we think about the second problem, about the role of the University as a global market player in a globalized society, it is possible to contrast the competition-based model with a democratic one. By democratic model, here, we are concerned with democracy as a finalist model committed to creating a progressive movement to include the interests and the welfare of those at the margins. This integration should take place through the expansion of the public space, imposing limits on the economic logic. From this democratic principle, the market must be an instrumental resource to achieve societal goals, in opposition to the neoliberal mindset that expands competition as the centre of the social dynamics. Therefore, the main questions that should guide a university in the global context would be: What kind of knowledge? Knowledge for whom? Knowledge for what? (Lander, 2000). It seems obvious to say that a pedagogical reflection must have been made to guide the Internationalization Strategy.

### *Internationalization*

Given those considerations, the internationalization of high education institutions is regarded as a necessary institutional response to the economic challenges imposed by globalization (uOttawa, 2017, pp. 13-4). Thus, it is a “means for universities to gain competitive advantage, enhance quality and visibility or facilitate a response to globalization” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 12), and “requires investment in human capital and bridging geographically distant actors through strategic alliances, new technologies and ‘connected brains’” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 12).

Innovation is a central figure in the Report’s internationalization narrative, which simply means that research outcomes may be appropriated by the market. This appropriation is a consequence of potentially economically valuable research. As a complex and costly activity that can drastically impact global production chains, research is the core element to value-added products that can offer a competitive advantage to highly industrialized economies moved by transnational companies. As a result, highly internationalized universities in those countries are crucial to the competitiveness of their economies if they produce human capital through teaching processes and develop research with an innovative potential to respond to the reality of the globalized economic production. As the Strategy (2017) says, “globally-engaged universities are better positioned by way of attracting and sustaining research excellence and advancing an innovation agenda” (p. 12).

A TWAIL’s alternative view to internationalization would be based on a pedagogical perspective that would take into consideration the core questions of Lander’s enquiry about whether the knowledge produced in Latin American universities leads to

greater welfare and greater happiness for the majority of the (present and future) population of the planet. ... Its contribution or not to the preservation and flourishing of a rich cultural diversity on our planet, if it contributes to the preservation of life or if, on the contrary, has it become an active agent of the threats of its destruction. (Lander, 2000, p. 26, free translation)

Thus, innovation should refer to a more comprehensive setting and be at the service of these parameters.

Interestingly, however, the Report itself seems to advance these criticisms. While basing its discourse on the economic rationality and lacking any consideration to global inequalities, it points the other way for a future more comprehensive approach to internationalization to be implemented by the University. Only in that moment, the University should

[p]rovide the foundation for transformational educational experiences that foster among students the development of a more globally aware and justice-oriented worldview; [and] [r]esist the urge to prioritize the economic benefits and rationales of internationalization above the goals transformational education when designing educational curriculum and international opportunities for students. (uOttawa, 2017, pp. 21, 45)

This statement does not explain, though, why global inequalities and a pedagogical approach have not been considered in the Report itself before.

In conclusion, it would be possible to infer that the University of Ottawa, as one of the most highly internationalized universities in North America, seems to adopt a metonymic and economic-centred narrative of globalization that takes the economic part for the whole. This approach makes the Strategy a target to the *globocentrismo* critique and, therefore, it disregards the positionality of much of the population of Third World countries, already largely marginalized. Maybe these considerations will be contemplated in future developments of the Internationalization Strategy.

### **Liberal Multiculturalism, Cultural Learning, and Networking**

In this section, we will assess how the Strategy evaluates the importance of cultural learning, research, and teaching processes. We argue that liberal multiculturalism is at the core of the cultural learning concept of the document and that it is mostly limited to a market-integrating strategy and an economic asset for the University. Also, while the Strategy promotes a friendly environment for research networking, it also contributes to the removal of cultural differences in the circulation of knowledge.

#### *Liberal Multiculturalism and Cultural Learning*

When providing a diagnosis about how different actors evaluate the internationalization process, the Strategy states that “the University of Ottawa is motivated to pursue an internationalization agenda for two primary rationales, one decidedly economic and the second, cultural” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 26). Considering cultural learning, one of the goals of the Strategy is to “provide students with exceptional experience through international and intercultural learning and research opportunities and build and sustain global consciousness to better preparing [sic] students to live and work in an increasingly complex international and intercultural environment” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 32). However, the further we go in the comprehension of the strategies developed in the Report to achieve a higher level of cultural diversity, the more we can observe how they are mostly linked to the economic necessities of the University.

We can observe that multiculturalism is regarded as an economic asset for the University in four ways. The first one is that this multiculturalism is an important factor in attracting international students to the University. In this sense, a multicultural friendly environment (uOttawa, 2017, pp. 4-5) provides the valorization of the University brand when recruiting students from the most diverse regions worldwide who may feel safe pursuing higher education without suffering negative externalities such as racism.

Secondly, the diversification in the recruitment of students, once an unavoidable requisite for cultural diversity, leads to the diversification of funding sources. Thus, the extension of the pool of countries in the University portfolio reduces its economic dependence (uOttawa, 2017, p. 37). Thus, the University may be safer in case of economic crises or any diplomatic event that might hamper the stability of international students’ flow. Henceforth, the Strategy suggests a bigger emphasis on going beyond the current source countries, namely China, India, and Francophone countries, to reach other developing economies, such as Vietnam, Mexico, or the UAE (uOttawa, 2017, p. 4).

The third aspect is that language training and cultural adaptation can also be a source of revenue, mainly regarding students from neither English- or French-speaking countries, mostly in Latin America and Asia (uOttawa, 2017, p. 4). Cultural acclimatization can then be commodified by the introduction of new requirements and the consequent offer of cultural services. The University could mobilize its regulatory powers over education, “possibly with the adoption of a first-year preparatory year to help acclimatize international students who may require language and cultural adaptation assistance” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 4), to raise a demand for the University’s language preparation and training institute (OLBI) services (uOttawa, 2017, p. 4).

Another market opportunity is provided by labelling and certifying the multicultural knowledge acquired by students: “[d]evelop a cross-cultural competency certificate, global citizenship designation, or the like, for students to compliment [sic] their degree programs” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 20). Surprisingly, no pedagogical study, theoretical background, or empirical necessity is quoted to support either enterprise. The economic logic that looks for creating new markets is the one that sustains those proposals.

Finally, in fourth place, cultural diversification is one of the underpinnings for human capital in

global markets and a facilitating element for fostering global networks that make high-impact research possible (i.e., to produce innovation). Considering human capital development, the Report states that the “[i]nternationalization should benefit our students in the long run through enhanced global competency, personal, cross-cultural capabilities and employability skills” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 33).

For the reasons above and by focusing on the “production of globally minded leaders ... intercultural competency and job-preparedness for students” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 19), cultural diversification becomes instrumental. That is to say that it may lose different insights that varied cultures can bring on issues as environment, sexuality, spirituality, sociability, property, knowledge, politics, and community that are not related or that may be completely in opposition to the market logic but that should still have a place at the University.

### *Liberal Multiculturalism and Research Networking*

As the internationalization is enforced by a decentralized model based on the establishment of professors, researchers, and alumni global networks (uOttawa, 2017, p. 15), multiculturalism is a catalyst to this process. Multiculturalism removes cultural barriers and allows a common dialogue with the interchange of common languages, expectations, and objectives that make the constitution of connexions easier in the current state of fragmented, sometimes discontinuous, and globally dispersed flow of people, information and knowledge.

However, when applied to global research chains, it favours the circulation of knowledge by positioning highly culturally diverse universities in the centre of the chain insofar as they can mobilize resources from different local contexts and distribute them globally. As the Strategy (2017) says, “with a culturally diverse campus and significant research partnerships in countries around the world that facilitate international research and learning opportunities, the University of Ottawa is well-placed to offer globally-engaged higher education” (p. 10).

From a Third World perspective, this situation leads to some risks associated with the application of this multiculturalism to research networking. Firstly, globally engaged universities think of themselves as competitive actors in the international education market, which is assessed according to international academic standards. Those standards might be selective regarding the type of research they may favour in the global market by discarding the original insights from the Third World as irrelevant, inadequate, or not solid enough. Global universities may also be selective depending on the kind (governmental or private) and on the amount of funding local Third World universities afford to access the catalyst role of those global universities to make visible their local research.

Secondly, as this multiculturalism is based on silenced asymmetric power relationships across the various levels of the research chain; researchers from the Third World may have to adapt to language, subjects, formal and informal standards, and expectations of global universities in order to obtain visibility and access those international research networks. In this sense, local scholars move away from the local reality to publish globally, mainly in the social sciences (Hanafi, 2011).

Consequently, while multiculturalism indeed means the presence of international students and researchers to meet the expectations of globally engaged universities, it does not address the global hierarchies of universities and knowledge, which contributes to the reinforcement of those same hierarchies. Thus, paradoxically, liberal multiculturalism would imply a standardization process that fosters the pasteurization of cultural differences. Multiculturalism itself is insufficient to address global inequalities, and it performs the reproduction of the global universities’ localism if we apply the Santos (2002) criticism on globalization.

### **Internationalization of the Curriculum**

Researching and teaching-learning processes are frequently bound together in the Report when it talks about the general impact of internationalization on the institutional practices of the University. However, beyond the different goals they represent for the role of highly internationalized universities in the global knowledge society—innovation and human capital development respectively—the Strategy seems to pay different levels of attention to each one, for it seeks to “place research at the center of that model” (President’s Committee on International Policy [Key Elements], n.d., p. 2). In this section, we are going to investigate the effects of a deficient teaching-learning policy to international students from Third World

countries, warning against the reproduction of a neocolonial bias.

The draft that summarizes the key elements of the Strategy positions “research as ‘the University’s unifying international stance.’ ... It is suggested that research can serve as a *transformative* force in our pursuit of internationalization” (Key Elements, n.d., p. 3). The Strategy implies that efforts are being made to “actively recruit the best students from around the world” (Key Elements, n.d., p. 4) and claims that the “support for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows is essential to fostering innovative research with the next generation of scholars and practitioners. Investing in graduate research through internationalization strategies is central to preparing our students for cutting-edge scholarship” (uOttawa, 2017, p. 39). While having clear plans for international students as key players in conducting research and producing innovation, who count on the support of the University to get funding for international data collection and for mobilizing international networks (uOttawa, 2017, p., 39), those students are not targeted by a specific policy related to teaching-learning processes.

It is true that the Strategy (2017) somewhat recognizes the importance of the teaching-learning process by stating that “globally-engaged learning for students often begins with the exposure they receive in their classes. This exposure can include course curriculum, readings and activities that ensure international education” (p. 39). Internationalization of the curriculum means “mainstream integration of international topics, perspectives and content within the curriculum, across university faculties, programs and departments” (p. 20). And it should be increased by “[e]nhanc[ing] opportunities for double degrees, international opportunities, etc. as part of course options” (p. 46). Professors are the ones responsible for addressing internationalization at home, whose efforts are considered in terms of building networks, working internationally, or conducting international research, which should be encouraged by “course allowances or release from other (administrative) obligations” (p. 20). We argue that those steps are not enough given to the considerable presence of international students on campus.

For TWAIL, the internationalization of the curriculum would entail a reasonable presence of knowledge related to Third World countries’ reality, preferably produced by scholars from those countries, whenever relevant to courses attended by international students. By an international fair standard, both the source of knowledge and the students should reach compatible proportions to avoid neocolonialism. Otherwise, international students may be exposed to the hegemonic Western canons reproduced in courses, which would prevent a real global dialogue in class. This formulation is where the TWAIL criticism of the hegemony of the knowledge, institutions, methodologies, and approaches from the West takes place. A Third World approach urges the University to avoid a process of universalization that presupposes forgetting the knowledge produced in Third World countries, mainly when most students in class are from those countries.

International students in different levels may be conditioned by a neocolonial bias in different ways. International Ph.D. students are more likely to pursue a marginal approach and avoid neocolonialism due to the individual and research-intensive nature of their work. Masters and undergrad students are more vulnerable to absorb and respond positively to the hegemonic neocolonial content of courses, naturalizing the canons, and accepting that the assimilation of Western standards corresponds not only to the expectations of professors but even to expectations from their countries’ professional, economic, and academic elites. In the end, this assimilation would fit the students’ own expectations when coming to a highly internationalized university, re-enacting the hegemony from an active consensus that situates those Western canons as the global, cutting-edge knowledge to be unquestionably followed. We consider that the lack of discussion about neocolonial bias in teaching-learning process in the internationalization of the curriculum is a remarkable flaw in the Report, and it is a consequence of the lack of an encompassing pedagogical approach to internationalization.

### **The Economic Role of International Students**

We argue that the different emphasis given to research and teaching-learning processes reflects the economic roles played by different categories of international students. When addressing the issue of international student recruitment, the Report (2017) assumes that it “has long been the top priority for university administrators working on internationalization due to the financial benefits that it brings to the university” (p.18). Moreover, the strategy of attracting foreign students merges with the strategy to compete in the global education market. They both articulate the production of innovation to create competitive advantages, which is linked to the enhancement of the University’s brand and the attraction

of new international students. These students are perceived as consumers whose revenue helps to perpetuate a circle of economic sustainability in favour of the University.

In 2018, foreigners represented 16.9% of all enrolled students, 29.7% of the graduate students, and 14.4% of the undergrad students (uOttawa, 2018). We observe that the biggest portion of foreign students, 37%, was found within Engineering. These students represented 25.5% of the undergrad and the majority of 70.6% of the graduate students (uOttawa-Faculty of Engineering, 2018). At the Faculty of Law, despite the reduced percentage of 3% of undergrad international students, foreign students represented 35% of the graduate students (uOttawa-Faculty of Law, 2018). As a matter of comparison, at the Faculty of Science, 16% of the undergrad students are international, and 32% of the graduate are foreign (uOttawa-Faculty of Science, 2018). Those three courses count on the biggest concentration of international students in the graduate courses at the University.

From the economic perspective of the international education market brought by the Report, international Ph.D. students are considered skilled workers capable of developing complex, innovative, and global research that may contribute to keeping a university in a high position in the international rankings. It is important to enhance the University's brand for international recruitment efforts in a moment of shrinking provincial budgets and declining national enrolment (uOttawa, 2017, p. 28). As such, these students are offered incentives, for example, the equalization of the tuition paid by international and Canadian Ph.D. students (uOttawa, 2019) since 2018: \$3,519.21 in both Faculties of Engineering and Law for the 2019 fall term (uOttawa, 2019c,) and \$3,287.57 at the Faculty of Science.

On the other hand, international master's degree and undergrad students represent the core of the consumers of the international education market services since they are mostly considered in their funding capacity to pay the University. Although being part of graduate programs, master's courses have more of a limited impact in producing relevant research due to the popularization of reduced-time programs that do not require a full dissertation but only a shorter research paper. This trend will possibly increase as a result of the spread of master's programs based on coursework alone. This movement, particularly in the Faculty of Law, raises the concern that master's courses are becoming extensions of undergraduate programs.

International master's students' tuition fees for newcomers beginning in fall 2019 vary: from \$9,738.40 to \$12,455.89 in engineering; \$9,900.15 in law; and \$9,655.97 in science (uOttawa, 2019d). Meanwhile, non-international students pay from \$3,873.89 to \$4,319.74, \$4,319.74, and \$3,622.08 respectively (uOttawa, 2019b). International undergrad students pay \$27,312.95 for any engineering course, \$33,125.85 in any program of Common Law, and from \$19,024.37 to \$24,176.30 in different science programs (uOttawa, 2019e). Non-international students pay from \$5,087.34 to \$5,670.08 for engineering courses, from \$9,223.99 to \$9,740.74 in different programs of Common Law, and from \$3,988.06 to \$5,178.75 at the Faculty of Science (uOttawa, 2019a). Discounts and scholarships were not considered.

This high cost may have an unavoidable impact on the attrition rates of international students. Nevertheless, the Strategy does not take high costs into consideration. When addressing the attrition rates of international students, the Strategy first highlights its consequences to the University's image, instead of considering the prevailing causes that might be preventing those students from finishing their courses and trying to offer supportive measures. The Strategy should have empathized more with human complexity than focus on a student's perceived economic value to the institution. The University's reputation and brand are prioritized. The Strategy (2017) says:

international student attrition rates of up to 40% within the first two years of study are unacceptable. The high failure rate has remained an outstanding issue for several years without serious institutional checks and balances. Corrective measures are required in order to reverse this trend and curtail further damage to the University of Ottawa's reputation. (p. 28)

In this sense, we can measure the economic impact of the internationalization process for the University. We can also understand that those same international students who are more susceptible to the replication of Western canons in the teaching-learning process—master's and undergrad students—and are the ones considered consumers and expected to contribute with higher fees. Due to the high cost, these tuition fees would mainly target students from the elite ranks of Third World countries, reinforcing the replication of Western hegemony for this specific audience. From a TWAIL perspective, if the reproduction of elites is already a problem, it is made worse when they are trained unaware of their national or

## Recommendations

An internationalization process in line with the TWAIL perspective would expose historical unfairness and engage in compensatory policies able to mitigate the geopolitical imbalance among nations. For this address, an authentic circulation of knowledge within a multicultural globalization standard requires involving cultural differences through an intensive dialogue that could allow a mutual negotiated intercultural interpretation of the complex dynamics of reality. This approach is essential to avoid locally irrelevant global designs (Silva, 2008, p. 304) that would only reinforce the power and economic disparity among nations. We will introduce measures that follow this path, some of which already have a timid reception in the Strategy and could be deeply developed in the future.

If the economic rationality (and, therefore, the market) is the in centre of the Report, an alternative model inverts that logic and recovers the centrality of the margins. The main objective of the recommendations should be to empower the margins by recognizing their knowledge and voice. And hereupon, Indigenous movements' formulations about the international legal system can be the *first* reference for building alternative relationships towards authentic multiculturalism opposed to a competitive setting. The Indigenous perspective would be able to offer social relationships rooted in "collective entitlements and the inclusion of nature as a subject of rights" (Santos & Rodríguez Garavito, 2005, p. 20). The Strategy (2007) vaguely gestures an openness to this idea when it claims "to enhance improved understanding of indigenous communities and immigrant-related realities in the Canadian context as central to improve global understanding and community engagement" (p. 39).

A good example of how to deepen into this alternative model is brought about by the McMaster University "Model for Global Engagement," quoted in the Report, which is driven by the following values: cooperation for peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit; international demand for the University's expertise in research, education, and learning; the civic mission of the University, embodying and enabling global citizenship; and critical social awareness, which implies the prioritization of equity, justice, and environmental stewardship. (uOttawa, 2017, p. 23)

This statement considers international students not as consumers or qualified workers, but mainly as collective actors that play determined roles in the social reproduction in their native countries, in the host country, and globally, and whose academic training should be linked to the study of the complex historical demands for independence, development, cultural, and environmental preservation that come from Third World countries marginalized populations. Therefore, the Strategy should be recentralized according to a pedagogical reflection on the impacts of internationalization to the production and circulation of knowledge, ideally according to a generous pedagogy able to consider the vulnerable position of most of the world's population vis-à-vis the power of transnational companies and other global economic players. Thus, the relationship between knowledge and economy would be reoriented, and then the latter would be attached to material means in order to produce content(s) that could meet multiple local needs beyond the global market and its neocolonial structure.

Secondly, the Strategy should consult students and professors from Third World countries not only to confront problems that should be better addressed, but to count on their active contribution to the decision-making process for elaborating a comprehensive internationalization. This approach could lead to the internationalization of the curriculum, the reduction of the attrition rates, the mapping of research opportunities, and the improvement of recruitment to overcome the elite reproduction. Additionally, this approach could lead representatives of marginal cultures to participate in high-quality research and teaching processes. Moreover, a comprehensive internationalization should also credit the participation of professors', staff and students' unions and associations as relevant collective actors for the Strategy.

More pragmatically, it is necessary that the knowledge produced in Third World countries could circulate in parallel to the circulation of people. We point out that a big change can be made by encouraging incentives for professors to include Third World scholarships in their courses, mainly when the subject affects Third World countries, and the classes are attended by a significant number of students from those countries. These incentives could take the shape of administrative recommendations from the Faculties and should come along with the raising of a broad debate on neocolonialism at the University.

Regarding research, we suggest that scholarship grants should consider evaluating the presence of a globally diverse literature encompassing Third World scholarship when assessing projects for funding

at the University whenever suitable to the subject. This measure would have an immediate impact on the circulation of knowledge as it contributes to enhancing the quality of research since it could favour the presence of data and arguments not usual to the current academic context. Ultimately, the diversity of sources benefits high-quality science.

That being said, the adoption of a pedagogical approach to internationalization instead of an economic one, a participatory model of policy-making, the stimulation of the public debate about neocolonial bias in the academy, the enactment of administrative recommendations that could foster the adoption of scholarship from Third World countries whenever applicable for courses, and the concern toward the presence of a diversified literature for research funding are viable measures to balance the current global inequality in internationalization processes of high education institutions.

## Conclusion

This article analyzed the discourse of the Internationalization Strategy of the University of Ottawa with respect to (1) how the market-centred perception of globalization, which is not concerned with global disparities nor the positions of marginal populations, impacts the manner in which the University and the knowledge are addressed as to underpin the internationalization process; (2) how liberal multiculturalism can be instrumentally mobilized as an economic asset in at least four different dimensions: to attract international students, diversify the pool of source countries, open new market opportunities, and develop human capital; and how the application of this multiculturalism to research networking could paradoxically lead to the narrowing of diversity through standardization. We also argued that (3) the Strategy does not approach the internationalization of the curriculum satisfactorily, prescinding from any concern about the reproduction of Western cannons to international students; (4) that international students are mostly considered as skilled workers for high-quality research, in the case of Ph.D. students, or as consumers, like masters and undergrad students. We finally proposed (5) some recommendations to accompany this model in order to move a fair distribution of knowledge.

As we rooted our interpretation in the TWAIL methodology and the decolonial theory, it is possible to draw a parallel between their criticism of international law and the existing contradictions in the universities' internationalization movements. TWAIL asserts that international institutions and the human rights framework have been used to justify improper interference in the internal affairs of Third World countries opposed to Western interests as well as to affirm the universalization of Western values (Mutua, 2000, p. 36). However, TWAIL does recognize the importance of international law as a global dialogue circle to build solidarity and as an undeniable locus to denounce global injustice.

The same can be said about the internationalization of high education institutions. Although the process has been approached without a pedagogical reflection that would take into consideration the positionality of marginal peoples and knowledge, internationalization is undeniably valuable for the production and circulation of knowledge, as well as for the mutual cultural learning to face global challenges. Universities must not reproduce neocolonial practices inherent in the logic of the global market and should instead become a pillar for a counter-hegemonic globalization that could confront inequalities with the promotion of cultural diversity.

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