Chapter 13
A Global American University:
How Midwest University Exports Education to the Periphery

Heather Sweeney
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9106-4389
University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

Edwin Nii Bonney
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3537-7188
University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

ABSTRACT

Today's higher education institutions are engaged in fierce competition over research dollars, attracting students, and reputation. And the institutions of the Global North have begun to demonstrate a proactive desire to drive the academic exchange occurring on the global stage via the creation of strategic partnerships abroad. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the role played by American universities in the internationalization of higher education as national systems of education respond to globalization. Through a discourse analysis, the authors apply world systems theory to the analysis of a single U.S. institution with several American institutions abroad in multiple periphery societies and ask the following questions: How do U.S. higher education institutions define global education? And in what ways do U.S. higher education institutions contribute to the countries they operate in?

INTRODUCTION

It is most appropriate to begin with a clear understanding of what is meant by the term globalization and by the term internationalization when discussing the higher education landscape of today. Throughout this chapter, the term globalization refers to the culmination of an increasingly integrated world economy, the rapid developments in both information and communication technology, and the emergence of a global network facilitated by the dominance of the English language across most of our knowledge communities (Altbach, 2007; De Wit, 2011). This particular definition of globalization acknowledges

the broad economic, technological, and scientific realities of our 21st century world (Altbach, Reisber, & Rumbley, 2009). While often used interchangeably, globalization and internationalization are not one in the same but rather entwined (De Wit, 2011). Internationalization is the strategy used by societies, governments, and institutions to navigate globalization. This strategy is most visible in the policies and programs implemented in response to the distinctive demands of globalization (Altbach, 2006; Altbach, Reisber, & Rumbley, 2009; De Wit, 2011). One such challenge facing higher education institutions today is the need to prepare graduates to successfully engage in a globalized society. A challenge which has led many higher education institutions to incorporate an international, intercultural, or global dimension in the purpose, functions or delivery of programs (Altbach, Reisber, & Rumbley, 2009; Knight, 2003). As the authors seek to build an understanding of how the higher education landscape has responded to globalization, it is the process of internationalization, its many components, and its application which will be at the center of the discussion.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role played by American universities in the internationalization of higher education as national systems of education respond to globalization. Through a discourse analysis, the authors apply world systems theory to the analysis of a typical liberal arts university located in the Midwestern region of the U.S. with several campuses abroad in multiple periphery societies. By focusing on a single American institution, the authors can engage in an in-depth examination of the pervasiveness of hegemonic discourse occurring across the individual universities of each periphery locality.

The chapter will begin with an overview of the historical development of U.S. institutions abroad. Following this overview is an introduction to the university and the institutions approach to global education, then the authors present the world systems theory framework and a review of methods. Following the methodology, the authors review the data collected via promotional videos, institutional websites, and institutional documents such as mission statements, course catalogs, organizational structuring, and vision statements. The analysis asks questions about local involvement in the establishment of American institutions abroad, is this global American University U.S. centric? As a conclusion to the chapter, the authors put forth implications and discuss opportunities for further examination rooted in this chapters findings.

BACKGROUND

The internationalization of American higher education is rooted in the study abroad dabblings of 1920s U.S. faculty. A faculty member of a revered American institution would initiate a trip abroad for their students in the name of educational exploration (Bowman, 1987). Whether operating by the "wandering scholar" model or by a sense of the historical importance played by European institutions, a faculty member with students in tow, set out for those hallowed halls in search of the intellectual dialogue and academic rigor that once drew older generations of Western scholars (Edwards, 2007). Should said faculty belong to disciplines such as biology or archeology, research served as the primary motivator, as the object of study could only be observed or found outside of the U.S. Of course, there are the field specific conferences or meetings, which typically convened abroad, calling faculty to travel with students to attend and engage with peers. These fledgling programs grew with the advances in travel; with cheaper and faster international exchange came the opportunity to develop and expand programs of study abroad into the current level of undergraduate and graduate offerings (Edwards, 2007). The administrators and faculty

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