Alluvial Zones of Decolonizing Internationalization of Higher Education

Gloria Y. Lin
University of British Columbia
gloria.lin@ubc.ca

Abstract

Universities play a critical role in the "alluvial mixing" of Indigenous and Western knowledges, but at the same time they are reluctant to dismantle structures that support their ongoing epistemic ignorance, epistemic biases, and epistemic dominance and are resistant to dismantle hierarchies that maintain the status quo (Marker, 2019). Decolonization and internationalization of higher education do not exist in separate realities but exist in alluvial third spaces that are often turbulent, contested, and contradictory. This article encourages researchers, faculty, and staff to rethink assumptions about long-standing, deeply-rooted policies, practices, and structures of international student recruitment and enrolment that are characterized by dominating neocolonial values and priorities, and to reimagine the practice of recruiting international students and competing in the global international student market by centering *primacy of place* where "land is not a soulless commodity" to be exploited and profited (Marker, 2019).

Introduction

I would like to begin by acknowledging the privilege of and the responsibilities that come with living and working on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of xʷməθkʷəy’əm, Sḵwx_wú7mesh Úxwumixw, səl’ilw’ətaʔɬ, q’íc’əy’, kʷikʷəƛ̓əm, Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen Peoples as a first-generation Taiwanese immigrant settler. In this article, I look to Lummi scholar Dr. Michael Marker's concepts of alluvial zones of paradigm change, epistemic biases, epistemic power, and primacy of place to illustrate how the monolithic and ethnocentric framing of international student recruitment and enrolment of international students are rooted in false universalism (Rizvi, 2007) and western supremacy (Johnstone & Lee, 2022; Stein & Andreotti, 2016). I will encourage researchers, faculty, and staff to rethink assumptions about long-standing, deeply rooted policies, practices, and structures of international student recruitment and enrolment that are characterized by dominating neocolonial values and priorities. I will also explore the contradictions between internationalizing and decolonizing higher education and the possibilities of an alluvial zone of decolonizing internationalization of higher education.

I would like to begin in storytelling to provide context for my theoretical reasoning for this paper, and thus illustrate the contemporary dynamics of colonialism and imperialism in internationalization of higher education. I am mindful that "words are medicine that can heal or injure" (Johnston, 1990, as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 19) and that my partial narrative may be read and interpreted differently by others. This partial narrative resonates with Ellsworth's (1992) "pedagogy of the unknowable," which sees each person's partial narrative as "selfinterested and predicated on the exclusion of the voices of others," and that the meaning of an individual's experience "is never self-evident or complete" (p. 110). I also consider stories as opportunities for further self-reflection and consideration as well as engagement with others. They are pathways for the mind to speak to the heart. I exclude place and personal identifiers to provide anonymity to the people involved in the story. In honouring Dr. Michael Marker's lifetime work on decolonizing and Indigenizing institutions through Indigenous knowledge systems, I call this story "Alluvial Zones of Decolonizing Internationalization of Higher Education." Borrowing the term "alluvium" from geology, Marker (2019) suggests universities can be "a third space" or "collaborative space" where an alluvial mixing of Indigenous and western knoweldges happen to create new epistemic landforms just like the shifting, mixing, and fusing of sediments in a transforming river delta. He explains that this space is a collaborative zone, similar to Bhabha's (2004) third space, where "an alluvium of mixing … swirls both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems around each other creating new epistemic landforms" (Marker, 2019, p. 503). In this "third space" or "collaborative zone," Indigenous and western knoweldges can mix and fuse yet retain distinct qualities or suspend and remain separate while sharing the collaborative space. It is also the most elusive and difficult space, where transformation and paradigm shifts are most likely to take place.

Alluvial Zones of Decolonizing Internationalization of Higher Education

Not too long ago I attended a gathering of Indigenous graduate students presenting and celebrating their academic and research achievements. Listening deeply to Indigenous graduate students sharing their life stories, their community stories, and their research stories, my mind, body, heart, and spirit were full. It was almost towards the end of the gathering, during a coffee break, that I met one attendee. We began with a brief introduction, and I found out the attendee was a dean in a university. As our conversation evolved, I started telling them about my research interest in figuring out what decolonizing internationalization of higher education meant. The dean looked at me puzzled and asked, "What do you mean by internationalization of higher education? Do you mean the recruitment of international students?" Their questions, once again, confirmed for me that the recruitment of international students has become the key feature of internationalization of higher education (Guo & Guo, 2017). I responded, "Yes recruitment of international students is often being understood as internationalization of higher education, but I intended to challenge how this perception of international students as a source of revenue and referring to them as cash cows is not in accord with universities' efforts in reconciliation and decolonization." I continued by telling them about how universities are role models for public education and about the trend of public schools also relying on international student fees as a source of income. The dean was not aware of fee-paying international students at the K-12 level and seemed surprised by my sharing. The dean then asked, "Well, do you have any answers? Because that [recruitment of international students] is never going to go away." I answered, "No, I don't have any answers yet. It is such a complex question…" As I walked away from the conversation, I began to reflect on a conversation I had with another attendee, an Indigenous scholar earlier that day. When I told them about my research interest, they listened carefully, looked at me with intention and said: "Whatever you are telling me, Gloria, does not do anything for me nor my people. It does not benefit my community." I paused and took a deep-thinking breath. While I tried to offer an answer about how the profit-seeking neocolonial and capitalist orientation of recruiting international students was paradoxical to decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts in universities and was perpetuating colonialism based on Western supremacy, in the back of my mind, there was a siren going off screaming: how is my research relevant to Indigenous communities that these universities reside on?

The "Alluvial Zones of Decolonizing Internationalization of Higher Education" describes the "epistemic power of the colonizing West," where universities are resistant to examine the structure, practices, and assumptions that operate in the academy and to challenge conventional hierarchies that maintain the status quo (Marker, 2019, p. 503). Marker (2019) explains that "universities are in increasingly paradoxical positions as they ostensibly invite Indigenous expression, but resist the undoing of hierarchies that maintain hegemonic equilibrium" (p. 502). The dean's response signals how recruitment of international students has become a conventional practice and structure of higher education that seeks to serve and maintain western capitalist hegemony. The response also signals the lack of awareness of internationalization happening in other contexts as seen in the recruitment of international students and reliance on international student revenues, which is not only limited to higher education but is also aggressively happening to K-12 education. Universities are role models for K-12 education, and faculties of education train new educators and researchers, also providing experienced educators and researchers opportunities to expand and deepen their knowledge and skills. Thus, it is more critical and timelier for universities to take initiative to reimagine the practice of recruiting international students and competing in the global international student market. The Indigenous scholar that I spoke with was not surprised by the neocolonial orientation in recruitment and enrolment of international students in universities but questioned the relevancy of my research to local Indigenous communities.

In the following sections, I will use the themes that emerged from the story, specifically the normalization and neocolonial orientation of international student recruitment, as a guide to explore institutional inertia, universalism, and white supremacy of internationalization of higher education, and the possibilities of alluvial zone for decolonizing international education.

Internationalization of higher education

With the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2016, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC) and Calls to Action affirmed in 2016, and the ongoing discoveries of unmarked graves at Indian Residential Schools across Canada since 2021, a growing number of universities across Canada are engaging in various institutional reforms in response to the TRC report. However, they have not widely engaged with decolonizing processes needed to challenge the colonial structures in higher education (Kerr et al., 2022). Not only do Canadian post-secondary institutions struggle to engage with Indigenous communities and knowledge systems ethically, they also struggle with transforming an institutional culture that still excludes and marginalizes Indigenous intellectuals and knowledge systems (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). By defining inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization as three major visions for institutional Indigenization, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) point out that when it comes to institutional practice, academic institutions have rhetorically presented their visions toward Indigenous reconciliation, which requires a transformation of decision-making processes and power sharing, but have largely carried out Indigenous inclusion, which is merely increasing the number of Indigenous people on campus without committing to major systemic changes. Ahmed (2012) describes this state of immobility as institutional inertia, which means the lack of an institutional will to change. Internationalization of higher education can be said to be stuck in this institutional inertia.

Internationalization of higher education is a key feature of Canadian universities; however, what it means is highly contested and neither value-neutral nor objective (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020). In their analysis of the internationalization, decolonization and Indigenization of higher education, Beck and Pidgeon (2020) lay out how Canadian institutional internationalization policies and provincial documents frame international education as a key economic priority to "maximize economic opportunities for Canada" and to attract and compete for "the best and brightest international students" (p. 388). Referring to Stier's (2004) analysis of internationalization, Beck and Pidgeon (2020) reveal how conceptions of internationalization are framed as "being good for everyone," because of the discourse of promoting global citizenship and intercultural and international knowledge. Canadian scholar Jane Knight (2004) is often quoted for her definition of internationalization of higher education as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 11). In her earlier work, Knight (2000) also identifies three main rationales for having international students at Canadian institutions: "to integrate domestic and international students in and out of the classroom, to increase the institutions 'profiles and contacts in target countries, and third, to generate revenue for the institution" (p. 53). While these definitions recognize the relationship between countries, the diversity of cultures within the nation, and the global scope of the internationalization process, they do not offer a critical lens on the complexity of internationalization in research or practice. Further, these definitions echo neoliberalism and new forms of imperialism (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020). To address this oversight, in a study for the European Parliament on the future of internationalization of higher education in Europe, de Wit and Hunter (2015) modify Knight's definition of internationalization with considerations for inclusive education for all (less elitist) and quality education for all (less economically driven) in terms of mobility, curriculum, and learning outcomes. The modifications are italicized below:

> the *intentional* process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society* (p. 3).

Moreover, internationalization is rarely considered and included in documents related to institutional efforts in decolonizing or Indigenizing the academy or challenging the eurocentrism of global higher education (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020; Buckner et al., 2020). Research shows that increasing international student enrolment has become a dominant manifestation of internationalization of higher education (Guo & Guo, 2017; Stein & Andreotti, 2016) and that university internationalization strategies often focus on strengthening international student recruitment, increasing international student enrolment and revenue, and competing in the global market of international education (Tamtik & Guenter, 2020). In a study on what internationalization means to international undergraduate students, Guo and Guo (2017) identify three persisting problems, including the marketization of internationalization, the lack of internationalization of curriculum, and the gaps between the internationalization policy and the experience of international students. This dominant manifestation in internationalization of higher education needs to be examined further, because it contributes to the global imaginary rooted in universalism (Rizvi, 2007) and western supremacy (Stein & Andreotti, 2016), which will be discussed in the next section.

Addressing the Universalism and White Supremacy of Internationalization of Higher Education

While de Wit and Hunter's (2015) definition of internationalization seems to be more inclusive than Knight's (2004), a number of scholars have raised critical concerns that through neoliberal globalization, internationalization of higher education is a new form of imperialism, which reproduces colonial patterns of international mobility and promotes the universalization of western values and knowledge (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020; Johnstone & Lee, 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2016). Rizvi (2007) points out that there is a wide belief about the "false universalism" of globalization, and not enough effort has been made in historicizing globalization in relation to "the hegemonic role it plays in organizing a particular way of interpreting the world" (p. 256). The dean's response in the story about recruiting international students reflects false universalism of globalization. The emphasis on recruiting international students has taken precedence in the internationalization of higher education, primarily due to the practice being firmly embedded in conventional institutional structures, making it difficult for institutions to see beyond economic or financial considerations. Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains that "[w]hen the word globalization is substituted for the word imperialism, or when the prefix 'post' is attached to colonial, we are no longer talking simply about historical formations which are still lingering in our consciousness" (p. 24). She asserts that in the "reframed discourse of globalization," the power and persistence of colonialism continues to thrive under the expansion of knowledge, economic opportunities and "the market" (p. 88).

Beck and Pidgeon (2020) make a deep connection between internationalization and imperialism and explain how international students from the Global South become objects of educational assistance and development, and Canada takes on the identity of "benevolent" helper. I link Beck and Pidgeon's (2020) concept of Canada taking on the identity of 'benevolent helper' to Dei's

(2006) theorizing of colonialism and imperialism. In his work on anti-colonialism, Dei (2006) discusses that stories of colonialism depict the colonizer as "an innocent, benevolent and [imperial] saviour" and that … "[t]his historical relationship of the colonizer and colonized continues to inform contemporary subject identity formation and knowledge production. It shapes and informs identities by recreating colonial ideologies and mythologies" (p. 3). In this sense, colonialism continually sustains hierarchies and systems of power and continually constructs the dominant images of the colonizer and the colonized that reinforce "the colonizers' sense of reason, authority and control" (Dei, 2006, p. 3). I relate Dei (2006)'s ideas on colonialism and imperialism to the notion of colonization of the mind. Referring to Nandy (1983) and Smith (1999), Rhee (2009) points out that education has worked historically to reproduce the "colonization of the educated mind" (p. 58) and that education "has perpetuated the continuation of the hierarchy between Western superiority and dependency of the colonized in relation to epistemology, subjectivity, culture, and economy" (p. 57). Thus, the old power relations between the colonizer and the colonized continue to maintain cultural hegemony or cultural imperialism, which is evident in the following study.

In their critical analysis on international education policy in Canada, building on Stoler and McGranahan (2007), Johnstone and Lee (2020) contend that education has become a site of imperial formation to preserve white supremacy, to systemically recruit and relocate and promote governmental and nongovernmental agents, and to reconfigure spaces and populations. Johnstone and Lee (2020) further note that education was used as a key governing technology to enforce cultural imperialism by subjugating Indigenous peoples as colonial subjects in order to enslave, displace, and eradicate them all to uphold white supremacy and settler colonialism. They assert that similar politics of cultural imperialism yet with distinctly different forms of governance and tactics are used in the project of internationalizing Canadian education. They discuss how obtaining a western education is believed to offer "upward mobility" for both students and their families in the global knowledge economy; in other words, through international education, the "imaginative promise of obtaining whiteness" is fulfilled, which further reify white supremacy and privilege English language and western education (Johnstone & Lee, 2020, p. 14). Whiteness is being used as "a location of structural advantage and race privilege," and "[I]ndigenous and international students especially racialized ones are framed and inferiorized as others (Johnstone & Lee, 2020, p. 5). They conclude that international education is framed as "'benevolent provision' of high standard education services," like how colonial education was framed as "the empire's generosity to save savages," but western hegemony is maintained and economic benefits from international education services are accumulated by the service providers, primarily western nations (Johnstone & Lee, 2020, p. 8). In other words, in this neoliberal global order, capitalism and colonialism are central to imperial formation of white dominance through international education. From privileging western education and English as a preferred global language to branding and capitalizing Canada's education for nation building and economic prosperity, subjugating racialized non-English speaking as inferior others reinforce white superiority and hegemony of western education.

Using the concept of a "global imaginary," Stein and de Andreotti (2016) illustrate the superiority and universality of western education in which international students are thought to benefit from gaining "the universal worth of Western education" and that international students are understood to be on "the universal path to human progress" (p. 231, 234). They explain that the dominant global imaginary of international student recruitment in higher education frames international students as: (1) cash, sources of income and intellectual capital supporting the prosperity of Western university and nation-state; (2) competition, undesirable and/or inferior participants competing for social mobility and economic prospects through educational and job opportunities; and (3) charity, recipients of Western benevolence, development assistance and universal knowledge. They suggest that the ethics of internationalization needs to be discussed and acted upon urgently in higher education because the current internationalization efforts have "potential for exploitation and racist treatment of international students" and perpetuation of "a global education market dominated by Western institutions and intellectual traditions" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 237). International students are also thought to be competitors for university spots and future job opportunities and as threatening outsiders when they return to their home countries with superior western knowledge and therefore become future competitors with the west (Stein & de Andreotti, 2016).

Building on Stein and de Andreotti (2016)'s global imaginary, I argue that the host society of international students has also been subjected to the same superior western subjectivities reinforced by "the epistemic power of the colonizing west" (Marker, 2019, p. 503). In order for international students to be seen as "cash cows" by the host society, the host society must also view itself as subjects of desire, entangled in a play of power and domination. Bringing decolonization perspectives into this analysis, Smith (1999) asserts that "colonization [i]s a 'shared culture' for those who have been colonized and for those who have colonized" (p. 45). In other words, both the host society and international students share a language and knowledge of colonization. A 'shared culture' signals colonial relationality between the colonized and the colonizers, so decolonization efforts must also be a shared endeavour, as suggested by Papaschase Cree scholar Dwayne Donald. Speaking to decolonizing educational philosophies in Canada, Donald (2012) proposes ethical relationality as a decolonizing philosophy and asserts that decolonization needs must be a shared endeavour between the colonized and the colonizers, because colonialism is a "shared condition." Donald (2012) explains, "[t]he process of decolonizing in Canada, on a broad scale and especially in educational contexts, can only occur when Aboriginal peoples and Canadians face each other across deeply learned divides, revisit and deconstruct their shared past, and engage carefully with the realization that their present and future is similarly tied together" (p. 102).

I find Smith and Donald each provide ways for institutions to understand the colonial relationality that exists between host institutions and international students in long-standing global relations that continue to privilege western knowledge and education systems. Understanding a "shared condition" between the host institutions and international students can open up a collaborative alluvial third space, where decolonizing efforts are part of internationalizing efforts and opportunities are created for international students to understand

Indigenous priorities in Canadian context. Particularly, in a time when six in ten international students, who work during or after their studies, ultimately become permanent residents within ten years of receiving their first study permit (Crossman et al., 2022), universities have a responsibility to ensure respectful and equitable approaches to decolonization to support international students as either temporary residents or future Canadian citizens. Marker (2018) explains, “because Indigenous experience is invaded by histories of colonization, it is necessary to understand the contrasting Aboriginal and Settler ontologies of landscape and ways of being in places” (p. 454). Universities then play a key role in making sure international students who wish to become future Canadian citizens are aware of the historical and ongoing systemic and societal inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians and become part of the reconciliation efforts.

Contradictions of Internationalization of Higher Education

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE), a network of deans, directors, and chairs of faculties, colleges, schools, and departments of education from across Canada, developed the Accord on the Internationalization of Education to articulate a set of shared beliefs and principles for guiding internationalization practices in Canadian universities. The framework for the Accord on Internationalization is built on several accords, including the General Accord (2006), the Accord on Initial Teacher Education (2006), the Accord on Indigenous Education (2010), and the Accord on Educational Research (2010). It promotes five principles: (1) economic and social justice and equity across contexts and sites of educational practice; (2) reciprocity as the foundation for engaging in internationalization activities; (3) global sustainability; (4) intercultural awareness, ethical engagement, understanding and respect; and (5) equity of access to education, regardless of socio-economic status or financial circumstances (ACDE 2016, p. 7-8). As mentioned previously, of particular concern is the economic focus of internationalization, which takes place through the recruitment of international students. The Accord recognizes that the impact of such profit-driven practices of internationalization can be exploitative and exclusionary and names these risks as (neo)colonization and systemic exclusion. In recognition of these risks, the Accord supports: (1) relational rather than profit driven activities for internationalization; (2) inclusive experiences for international students, where their knowledges are seen as an asset to all rather than as a barrier to learning; (3) internationalization of curriculum based on economic, social, and global justice; and, (4) long-term sustainable institutional commitment to internationalization activities. The Accord also advocates for Indigenous ways of knowing in different contexts as “a principle of social justice” and as “a way to make connections between local and global issues, especially issues related to Aboriginal peoples in Canada” (p. 9). Finally, the Accord cautions institutions to be mindful of the issue of privilege and to examine how policies and practices can exclude certain populations from accessing educational opportunities.

Despite this accord and other policies, research and recent news reports indicate that international students continue to experience multiple forms of exclusion including high tuition fees, racism, and discrimination (Buckner et al., 2022; Calder et al., 2016; Guo & Guo, 2017) and are at risk of financial precarity, mental stress, drug abuse, and suicide (Hendry & Shingler, 2021; Keung, 2021; Tavares, 2021); yet, they are largely "not considered… as an equity-seeking group in institutional policy documents" (Tamtik & Guenter, 2020, p. 52) and equity in tuition is almost nonexistent (Buckner et al., 2022). According to a study on where international students fit in universities' equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies, Buckner, Chan, and Kim (2022) show that international student recruitment is often promoted along the lines of diversity, which is often represented in numbers. Their data indicates that in 2020/2021, international students accounted for 27% of all undergraduates at UBC as well as at University of Toronto, but international students were largely invisible in EDI initiatives at both universities. This could be due to the assumption that international students are more economically privileged than the underrepresented domestic students that EDI initiatives traditionally target (Buckner et al., 2022). Furthermore, international student tuition fees range from 3.5 times to 9.3 times higher than domestic student tuition fees among University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen Polytechnic, University of Toronto, York University, and Toronto Metropolitan University in 2020/2021(Buckner et al., 2022). Buckner, Chan, and Kim (2022) reveal that different underlying logics are drawn on to address different aspects of university operations targeting different audiences, so the increasing gap between domestic and international student tuition makes it unlikely for international students to be considered in tuition policies and other EDI initiatives. One question to further consider is how tuition collected on stolen lands such as UBC campus is being utilized?

In the case of UBC, Vantage College was built exclusively to offer customized pathway programs to assist international students transitioning into UBC in their second year. Part of Vantage College's current location used to be a beloved garden, the Orchard Garden, which was a student-led teaching and learning space and a student-led food production space for the Faculty of Land and Food Systems (Ostertag, 2015). It provided fresh produce to a student volunteer-run Agora Café, offering healthy food options at a low cost to students. It supported hands-on, land-based learning opportunities for over 1,000 education students between 2010 and 2014 (Ostertag, 2015). However, the garden was destroyed to make space for building Vantage College. The college cost UBC more than $127 million to build and grew from 185 students in 2014 to 432 students in 2019. Vantage College exclusively accepts applications from international students, affording them the privilege to apply and enroll. In exchange for this privilege, these students pay more than $80,000 a year for tuition, accommodation, health coverage, and other fees (UBC Vantage College, 2023). Such exclusive educational opportunities priced at a premium and offered only to a specific population exclude students who need similar support to transition from high school to university studies. These high-priced programs create binaries between wealthier international students and the rest of the student body, as well as economic hierarchies among students. The Canadian Federation of Students criticize UBC for setting the wrong priorities and using the college to alleviate funding shortfalls, stating that these politics reflect backward thinking (CBC News, 2014). Moreover, Orchard Commons, a student residence at UBC, was originally built to house a cohort of 1,000 international students attending Vantage College, but when the college realized it was not going to meet the target enrollment, Orchard Commons then became available to other UBC students (Dolski, 2016). It goes without saying that Vantage College contradicts the values and principles of internationalization as outlined in the Accord on the Internationalization of Education. It is profit-driven and excludes anyone from these exclusive educational opportunities who cannot afford the high program fees (international or not) for this high-status educational opportunity. It contributes to the expansion of free market capitalism and consumerism as characterized by neoliberal capitalism (Stein & Andreotti, 2016).

Reflecting on Internationalization of Higher Education Through Professor Marker's Alluvial Zones of Paradigm Change

Professor Marker's (2019) concepts of alluvial zones of paradigm change, epistemic biases, epistemic power, and primacy of place are helpful in thinking through decolonizing internationalization of higher education. The alluvial zone is a collaborative third space that is elusive, difficult, and contested, because ontological and epistemic collisions must happen to allow deeper understanding of the different layers of reality that do not exist apart from each other but in a relational reality. Silos definitely exist across departments, services, offices and so on, but Professor Marker's ideas encourage further consideration of how to renew relationships and move forward together. For example, at the institutional level, internationalization and Indigenous education are often competing against each other for institutional and government resources. In a study on bridging the gaps between internationalization and Indigenization of higher education, Beck and Pidgeon (2020), one working in the field of internationalization and another one working in Indigenous education, reveal that the internationalization agenda is often prioritized over Indigenous education. They conclude that "Indigenization often lacks the profile, resources, and organizational support that internationalization enjoys" and is often marginalized by an economic agenda (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020, p. 385), whereas tokenism and marginalization of Indigenous values and perspectives is observed in internationalization. As Beck and Pidgeon (2020) elucidate, the profit-seeking neocolonial orientation of internationalization does not support institutional efforts in decolonization and Indigenization, and they urge universities to undertake decolonizing strategies in conjunction with Indigenization. Indigenization, according to Pidgeon (2016), is about fostering understanding among non-Aboriginal peoples, enabling a genuine appreciation of the contributions made by Indigenous peoples throughout past, present, and future, and promoting active engagement in decolonization. Indigenization requires a systemic transformation of "centring Indigenous knowledges and ways of being across institutional policies and practices" (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020). As Beck and Pidgeon (2020) poignantly propose, decolonization and Indigenization of higher education require challenging the imperial agenda and neocolonial influence over internationalization through Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) 4Rs, as enacted in Pidgeon's (2016) Indigenous Wholistic Framework: (1) *respect* for different ways of knowing and being that would push us beyond "us-them" differentiation; (2) *responsibility* to land and peoples that would lead us to understand whose territories we are working within and what protocols need to be respected; (3) *reciprocal* relationships that would go beyond "give-and-take"; and (4) *relevant* policies, programs, and services that would shift away from profit-driven to a genuine wholistic and relevant educational experiences for both domestic and international students (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020). Beck and

Pidgeon (2020) conclude that colonialism must be examined in internationalization, and lessons from Indigenization are helpful "to move internationalization from operating as a tool of the oppressor to a tool of decolonization" (p. 396).

What Beck and Pidgeon (2020) suggest corresponds with Marker (2019)'s alluvial zones of paradigm change, epistemic biases, and epistemic power. If universities are evolving to acknowledge and challenge institutional settler colonialism by supporting and implementing Indigenous priorities and nurturing "a paradigm shift recognizing the sacredness of places" (p. 501), then faculty, staff and students engaging in internationalization of higher education must also (1) challenge their own epistemic biases, (2) rethink assumptions about long-standing, deeply-rooted policies, practices, and structures of international student recruitment and enrolment that are characterized by dominating neocolonial values and priorities; and (3) "rethink assumptions about place, human experience, and consider alternate possibilities for culture and life connected to a primordially expanded consciousness" (Marker, 2019, p. 501). The relationality between land, people, and non-humans is of utmost importance because this profit-driven case of internationalization of higher education does not consider the ontologies and epistemologies of place (Marker, 2018; Marker 2019) but instead reinforces that the idea of primacy of place (Marker, 2019) is about human uses, educational consumptions, and capitalistic gains. This analysis resonates with the Indigenous scholar's reaction to the neocolonial orientation of international education in the story shared earlier. In his paper on landscapes as methodology of inquiry in the Coast Salish territory, Marker (2018) describes that the ecological relationships between humans, animals, plants, and geologic forms are interconnected and interrelated to the physical experience of "being on the land" (p. 453). Landscape, as Marker (2018) explains, offers pathways to understand "both ecological minds and the dis-placing methods and mechanisms of colonizing forces" (p. 454). Land is not *a soulless commodity* (Marker, 2019), but a living relative (Cajete, 1993; Kerr & Ferguson, 2021), a conception that challenges the western ontological understanding of land as property to be owned, exploited, and profited from. The relationship between land and humans is then based on reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility. Particularly, as more institutions take up the practice of acknowledging the history of colonization by recognizing the traditional and unceded territories of the local Indigenous nations, along with the inextricable relationship between Indigenous people, the land, and nature, one crucial consideration arises. When making decisions, such as destroying the Orchard Garden to make space for Vantage College, it is imperative to consult the nations that have a historical relationship and governance of the land. Vantage College is an example of a contested space as universities try to figure out how to decolonize its practices and norms that often carry on business-as-usual.

Concluding Thoughts: Decolonizing and Internationalizing Higher Education – An Alluvial Third Space?

Looking to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to action (2015), Indigenous access to education is key. Marker (2019) asks the questions: "What forms might Indigenous access take, and what would it mean to decolonize and then Indigenize university education?" (p. 501). As a scholar working in higher education, I cannot help but notice the contradictions between decolonization of higher education and internationalization of higher education. Do certain departments, practices, and structures get exempted from decolonization? Do they exist in separate realities? The story shared by Beck and Pidgeon (2020) where they found themselves competing with each other for institutional and government resources and witnessed how internationalization agenda was prioritized over Indigenous education is one of many examples of where university practices, cultures, and structures continue to be dominated by neocolonial priorities and uphold conventional hierarchies to maintain hegemonic power relations.

In this paper, I attempt to answer the question that was posed to me by an Indigenous scholar on the relevance of decolonizing internationalization of higher education, particularly when internationalization is often understood as recruitment of international students. I relate the Indigenous scholar's question to Marker (2019)'s concept of the alluvial zone of paradigm shift that pushes for the deep self-examination of institutional epistemic biases, ignorance, and dominance that would facilitate ontological equity of recognizing how place is central to Indigenous ways of knowing and university education, university culture, university practices, and university structures. Marker (2019) concludes that "institutions must do more than perfunctorily tolerate Indigenous intellectual expression" (p. 510), but rather engage in contested and contradictory spaces of settler colonialism while supporting Indigenous intellectual priorities. These institutional spaces would become alluvial zones of paradigm change that disperse the hegemonic settler resistance. Then, perhaps universities could reimagine alluvial third spaces that are not dominated by neocolonial priorities. This alluvial third space also has great implications for K-12 education because universities set examples for the public education system. Many people are largely uninformed about the recruitment of international students in K-12 education. In many ways, K-12 education is following the footsteps of higher education in internationalization and has become increasingly dependent on international student revenue. Research shows that the market-driven approach of competing for international students between school districts is creating financial instabilities and promoting financial inequalities among school districts (Fallon & Poole, 2014; Kuehn, 2018; Kuehn &Vaitekonytė, 2019), as well as inequities in relation to geographical location, race/ethnicity, and social class (Fallon & Poole, 2014).

As I think about the conversation I had with the dean in the story I shared in the beginning of this paper and relate it to Unangaxˆ scholar Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor" (2012), I wonder if my paper is yet another settler move to innocence, which is defined as a strategy or positioning that a settler takes on to remove guilt of having land, power, or privilege without having to change anything of themself. To Tuck and Yang, decolonization must be about repatriation of Indigenous land and life. This aligns with the critical feedback from the Indigenous scholar in the story, where the scholar critiqued that my research does not benefit their community, which is responsible for stewardship of the land, generating profits for the institution through international student recruitment. Although I am not sure I have an answer to this important reflection, I wonder how, without engaging in "decolonizing of the mind" with the dean (who very much believed in the conventional practice of international student recruitment is here to stay), it is even possible to begin talking about repatriation of Indigenous land and life? I hope my engagement with alluvial zones of decolonizing internationalization of higher education in this paper shows my attempt at challenge "the denial of relationality" (Donald, 2012, p. 102), which is about the colonial frontier thinking that Indigenous people and settler Canadians live separate realities. Decolonization and internationalization of higher education do not exist in separate realities but exist in an alluvial third space that is often turbulent, contested, and contradictory. This alluvial third space can serve as an "ethical space" (Donald, 2012) among Indigenous people, settler Canadians and international students, fostering a collective reimagination of future interactions and engagements guided by ethical terms. The risks identified in the Accord on the Internationalization of Education, particularly social and economic colonization, systemic exclusion, and exploitation, do not simply negatively affect international students; these neo-colonial social relations and representations also shape the host nation and the host institution's collective existence. Without engaging in the ontological shift on the primacy of place, it would be difficult to recognize the disconnections, violence, and divisions within ourselves and across communities. Marker (2019) shares that universities are slow in changing their ethos. The ontological equity of recognizing that place is not a soulless commodity is not easy to accomplish when there is a lack of relational awareness of institutional epistemic biases, ignorance, and dominance of settler colonialism. The dean will continue to play their part in supporting recruitment of international students, and more institutional systems and structures like Vantage college will continue to be erected to serve neocolonial priorities on stolen lands. The Indigenous scholar and their community will continue to face colonial oppression while institutions continue to claim to be working toward reconciliation, decolonization and internationalization in higher education.

Acknowledgements

This paper would not have been possible without the insights and steadfast support from Dr. Hartej Gill (University of British Columbia). Her knowledge and enthusiasm were crucial in refining my ideas and addressing the complex questions related to decolonization. I am also grateful for the guidance from Dr. Amy Parent (Simon Fraser University) on Indigenous storytelling and Dr. Jeannie Kerr (Simon Fraser University) on ethical relationality, both of which significantly enriched the discussion on institutional epistemic biases and ignorance. Special thanks to the anonymous peer reviewers for their valuable suggestions, enhancing the paper's research approach and organizational structure.

References

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.

Archibald, J. (2008). *Indigenous Storywork*. UBC Press.

Beck, K., & Pidgeon, M. (2020). Across the divide: Critical conversations on decolonization, indigenization and internationalization. In M. Tamtik, R. D. Trilokekar, & G. A. Jones (Eds.), *International education as public policy in Canada* (pp. 384-406). Mcgill-Queen's University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18sqz9q.22

Buckner, E., Chan, E., & Kim, E. G. (2022). Equity, diversity, and inclusion on Canadian universities: Where do international students fit in? *Comparative and International Education, 51*(1), 39-56. https://doi.org/10.5206/cieeci.v51i1.14613

Buckner, E., Clerk, S., Marroquin, A., & Zhang, Y. (2020). Strategic benefits, symbolic commitments: How Canadian colleges and universities frame internationalization. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 50(4),* 20-36. https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.188827

Cajete, G. (1993). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of Indigenous education*. Kivaki Press.

Calder, M. J., Richter, M. S., Mao, Y., Kovacs Burns, K., Mogale, R. S., & Danko, M. (2016). International students attending Canadian universities: their experiences with housing, finances, and other issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 46*(2), 92–110. https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v46i2.184585

CBC News. (2014, November 7). UBC's vantage college: Canadians need not apply. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ubc-s-vantage-college-canadians-need-not-apply-1.2826142

Crossman, E., Choi, Y., Lu, Y., & Hou, F. (2022). *International students as a source of labour supply: A summary of recent trends*. Statistics Canada. https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202200300001-eng

de Wit, H., & Hunter, F. (2015). The future of internationalization of higher education in Europe. *International Higher Education, 83*, 2-3. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2015.83.9073

Dei, G. J. S. (2006). Introduction: Mapping the terrain - Towards a new politics of resistance. In G.J.S. Dei, & A. Kempf. (Eds.). *Anti-colonialism and education: The politics of resistance (pp. 1-24)*. Sense Publishers.

Donald, D. (2012). Forts, colonial frontier logics, and Aboriginal-Canadian relations: Imagining decolonizing educational philosophies in Canadian contexts. In A. A. Abdi (Ed.), *Decolonizing philosophies of education* (pp. 91–111). Sense Publishers.

Ellsworth, E. (1992). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 90-119). Routledge.

Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative, 14* (3), 218-227. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1177180118785382

Guo, Y., & Guo, S. (2017). Internationalization of Canadian higher education: Discrepancies between policies and international student experiences. Studies in Higher Education, 42 (5), 851-868. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293874

Dolski, M. (2016, August 26). New UBC residence reflects adjusted expectations for Vantage College. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/new-ubc-residence-reflects-adjusted-expectations/article31585947/

Fallon, G., & Poole, W. (2014). The emergence of a market-driven funding mechanism in K-12 education in British Columbia: Creeping privatization and the eclipse of equity. *Journal of Educational Policy, 29* (3), 302-322. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.820354

Johnstone, M., & Lee, E. (2020). Education as a site for imperial project to preserve whiteness supremacy from the colonial era to the present: A critical analysis of international education policy in Canada. *Whiteness and Education, 7*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2020.1784038

Kerr, J., & Ferguson (2021). Ethical relationality and Indigenous storywork principles as methodology: Addressing settler-colonial divides in inner-city educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 27*(6), 706-715. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420971864

Kerr, J., Malcolm, M., & Swan, K. (2022). Navigating colonial space: A case study of an Indigenous student-led decolonial movement in Canadian higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, 22*(16), 217-231. https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v22i16.5615

Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The four R's: Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education,* 30(3), 1–15. http://www.jstor.org/stable /24397980.

Knight, J. (2000). *Process and promise: The AUCC report on internationalization at Canadian universities*. Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 8*(1): 5–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832

Kuehn, L., & Vaitekonyte, J. (2019). BCTF Research Report – International students, tuition revenue and inequity continues to grow (ED602775). ERIC. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED602775.pdf

Kuehn, L. (2018). BCTF Research Report - International student tuition income increases and inequality grows (ED592581). ERIC. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592581.pdf

Marker, M. (2018). There is no place of nature; there is only the nature of place: Animate landscapes as methodology for inquiry in the Coast Salish territory. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *31*(6), 453-464. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2018.1430391

Marker, M. (2019). Indigenous knowledges, universities, and alluvial zones of paradigm change. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, *40*(4), 500-513. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2017.1393398

Ostertag, J. K. (2015). *School gardening, teaching, and a pedagogy of enclosures: Threads of an arts-based métissage* [Doctoral thesis, The University of British Columbia]. https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166199

Pidgeon, M. (2016). More than a checklist: Meaningful Indigenous inclusion in higher education. *Social Inclusion, 4*(1), 77-91. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v4i1.436

Rhee, J. (2009). International education, the new imperialism, and technologies of the self: Branding the globally educated elite. *Multicultural Education Review, 1*, 55-82. https://doi.org/10.1080/23770031.2009.11102863

Rizvi, F. (2007). Postcolonialism and globalization in education. *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies,7,* 256-263. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708607303606

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. University of Otago Press.

Stein, S., & Andreotti, V. (2016). Cash, competition, or charity: International students and the global imaginary. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education Research, 72*(2), 225–39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9949-8

Stier, J. (2004). Taking a critical stance toward international ideologies in higher education: Idealism, instrumentalism and educationalism. *Globalisation, Societies & Education, 2* (1), 83-97.

Tamtik, M., & Guenter, M. (2020). Policy analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion strategies in Canadian universities—How far have we come? *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 49*(3), 41–56. https://doi.org/10.7202/1066634ar

The University of British Columbia (2020). UBC Vantage College Annual Report: First Edition September 2014-2020. https://vantagecollege.ubc.ca/reports

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1*(1), 1–40. https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n38.04

UBC Vantage College (2023). Planning your finances. https://vantagecollege.ubc.ca/program-fees-0