

Beyond Internationalization: Lessons from Post-Development

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ABSTRACT

Despite the critiques generated in critical internationalization studies in response to the neoliberal and neocolonial orientation of internationalization of higher education, the direction of internationalization appears to be unchanged. This paper takes up the challenge of imagining internationalization otherwise by drawing from the field of post-development (PD) studies, which, it is argued, has parallels to the realities and debates on internationalization. An overview of the debates in PD and why they offer important ideas for critical internationalization studies will be followed by a discussion of how key analyses and arguments in PD can be applied to internationalization. This argument leads to the question of whether it is time to recognize an emerging post-internationalization movement, acknowledging that internationalization as we know it is in decline. The paper concludes with an exploration of a new commons in internationalization, refocusing on educational principles and values, while recognizing the complexities and contradictions inherent in seeking international education that is “in between, with and from multiple worlds.”

Keywords: internationalization of higher education, international education, post-development, critical internationalization studies, new commons

INTRODUCTION

The last three decades have seen a rapid growth in the internationalization of higher education, which needs to be understood alongside the conditions of globalization and the consequential market orientation of higher education (Darder, 2016) and colonial contexts of history, culture and power (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Internationalization is driven largely by the recruitment of income-generating

international students to higher education institutions mostly in the Global North. In Canada, for example, a decline in government funding for the postsecondary sector (CAUT, 2015) has pushed universities to become heavily dependent on international student enrollments to make up the shortfall (Crawley, 2017). Rationales citing global citizenship, intercultural and international competencies, and “advancing the knowledge economy” are used to legitimate the benefits of, and even serve as an imperative to, internationalize higher education institutions (Luke, 2010). Universities appear to be using the rhetoric of academic rationales to legitimate the dramatic rise in international activity (Hunter, 2016), which points to a narrow and simplistic interpretation of internationalization and what constitutes learning, teaching, and working in the current global context.

The reality that we are researching and publishing in the midst of a global pandemic is difficult to ignore. The end of internationalization of higher education as we know it¹ may be here sooner than anyone thought possible, and hardly as a metaphor. Over 5 million international students a year, globally, leave their home country to study on campuses in another country (OECD, 2020); these mobilities came to an abrupt halt amidst measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Online teaching and learning have become the sole mode of delivery for many postsecondary institutions in OECD member countries (and possibly elsewhere). The appeal of online and distance learning “internationally” has yet to be tested out as students and their families evaluate for themselves the value, and the now dubious social capital, of learning in a “foreign” institution from home.

It is critical that we use this enforced hiatus of international mobility as a time for reflection on what internationalization has come to mean, a time where vulnerability arising from the current situation may lead to important insights about the orientation, direction, and practices of internationalization in the larger context of climate change, planetary destruction, and the legacies of colonial violence (Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures [GTDF] Collective, 2020). Higher education institutions in Canada, on the other hand, appear to be reacting to the current situation as simply an inconvenient interruption, an economic vulnerability that threatens their sustainability, and there are signs that many are seeking to continue on the same path post-pandemic, irrespective of the new realities we are experiencing. For example, in Canada, although all non-essential travel is discouraged, the federal government has chosen this time to draw attention to its faculty mobility program, encouraging new and existing collaborations and student exchange agreements (EduCanada, 2020). The Canadian Bureau for International Education is offering webinars in international mobility risk management and design thinking workshops relating to student services (<https://cbie.ca/>). A recent review of Canadian internationalization policy revealed that the internationalization of research has “consistently fallen between the cracks of the institutional architecture of Canadian research policy” (Tamtik & Sa, 2020, p. 90). These are signs that universities are still thinking about internationalization in practice as being primarily about mobility.

¹ This phrase is borrowed from the concept “end of the world as we know it” from the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective (2020) who in turn have acknowledged Black feminist thinker Denise Ferreira da Silva, and the Dark Mountain Manifesto for its origins.

I look upon our present pandemic moment as offering an opportunity for a “reset” of what internationalization has come to mean, and hope that our collective work as critical internationalization scholars can lead to substantive change in how internationalization is conceptualized, and more importantly, enacted, even if this were to mean “hospicing” (Andreotti, 2013) internationalization. In this paper I am taking up the challenge of imagining internationalization otherwise by drawing from the field of post-development (PD) studies, which I will argue has parallels to the realities of and debates on internationalization and offers important insights. International education in its contemporary form has its roots in development aid, which makes post-development studies a useful model of both critique and possibility. I will first provide an overview of PD and its contributions, and why they are relevant for critical internationalization studies. This will be followed by a brief discussion of how key analyses and arguments in PD can be applied to internationalization. I will then explore whether it would be useful, as some PD scholars have called for in PD studies, to consider a new common in internationalization and what that would entail. I ask whether it is time for post-internationalization, which would necessitate the acknowledgment that internationalization is, if not dead, then in a zombie state: “not quite dead, and yet not quite alive” (Gudynas, 2011, cited in Ziai, 2017, p. 2547).

The Call for Change

The call for an overhaul of internationalization did not just arise during the pandemic. Critiques of internationalization were emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In Canada, Maidstone (2000) was one of the first to challenge the so-called promise of internationalization at a time when there was little tolerance of critique. Over the next decade there was a greater volume of work interrogating internationalization in the context of globalization (Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010), the increasing neoliberal orientation of internationalization (Luke, 2010; Marginson, 2006; Ninnes & Hellstén, 2005), the instrumental approach to internationalizing curriculum (e.g., Beck, 2009; Mestenhauser, 1998), ideologies and rationales permeating the practices of internationalization (e.g., Stier, 2004), and concerns relating to ethics and social justice (Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010). The critiques became more mainstream when leading scholars in the field Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) declared “the end of internationalization” and Knight (2014) wondered if internationalization was suffering an identity crisis and losing its way. De Wit later clarified their assertion about the “end of internationalization” indicating that they were decrying the instrumentalism, commercialism, and lack of values, and calling for a reinvention, “a refreshment and fine tuning” (2016, p. 97) of the concept and a re-evaluation of the field. The call for revision from the field’s leading scholars seems not to have had the desired effect as a further article on the topic declared “the era of higher education internationalisation ... might either be finished or, at least, be on life support” (Altbach & de Wit, 2018). The reasons cited, however, for the end of “unlimited growth of internationalisation of all kinds” relate mostly to the rise of nationalism and xenophobia influencing policies on mobility and education rather than a recognition of the limitations of internationalization itself. A concern for social

responsibility emerged with the revision of Knight's (2004) influential definition of internationalization to include the aspiration of making a "meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit & Hunter, 2015, p. 3). Brandenburg et al. (2019) observed that the lack of attention to social responsibility in internationalization has led to an "imbalance" that needs to be corrected. The difficulty here is in identifying what social responsibility means in the context of internationalization that operates within colonial systems and structures, and with policies and practices that limit such international study to only those who can afford it. Who will take up social responsibility, for whom, and to what ends?

A more radical line of critique has emerged more recently under the banner of critical internationalization studies "an area of study that problematizes the overwhelmingly positive and depoliticized approaches to internationalization in higher education" (Stein, 2019). Scholars who identify with this area of studies are more likely to have espoused commitments to social responsibility, provide a comprehensive critique of internationalization (e.g., Khoo, 2011; Stein et al. 2016; Shahjahan et al. 2017), make visible the complexities, tensions, and paradoxes of internationalization (Stein, 2019), and argue for "imagining and acting otherwise" (e.g., Andreotti et al, 2016, p. 13). Andreotti et al. (2016) use social cartographies to map the various layers of complexity operating in internationalization, and illustrate the effectiveness of such an analysis in calling for change. The cartographies demonstrate the potential limits and harms of practicing internationalization within a "modern/colonial" structure. Stein (2019) summarizes the state of the field of critical internationalization studies as being at an impasse, and argues that there are limitations to the impact that critiques of internationalization can have within the context of urgent global challenges such as ongoing colonial violence, ecological unsustainability of the current socioeconomic systems, and more. She presents two social cartographies, revisions of earlier work, that lay bare the "complexities, uncertainties and complicities" in internationalization, and offers new possibilities for critical international studies in working with and through them. In discussing orientations to critical internationalization studies, she refers to "internationalization otherwise" explaining:

The emphasis is thus not on achieving any particular shift in policy or practice but rather on a form of internationalization that might prepare us to surrender our learned sense of superiority and separation, and affirm our radical interdependence with and responsibility to each other and the earth itself (p. 10).

Given the incommensurability of theory and practice referred to earlier, this quest amounts to a paradigm change, and I turn to PD as a possible pathway to discovering such a form of internationalization, recognizing in PD scholarship both a critique and a "living beyond" possibility.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF POST-DEVELOPMENT

To appreciate the significance of PD scholarship it is necessary to set it in the context of development. The complex history and evolution of development, however, is beyond the scope of this paper except as a reference (in summary) to the factors that led to PD that are relevant to my present argument.

Development as a practice and a concept was created following the Second World War, as part of the plans for rebuilding infrastructure, institutions, and societies globally. A new understanding of “development” came into currency in conjunction with the creation of the concept of “underdevelopment” in the inaugural address of U.S. President Truman (Escobar, 1995; Esteva, 1992; Rist, 1997). This speech not only relegated over half the world’s people into the category of “underdeveloped” and “less than,” but positioned the United States, primarily, into the position of “reliev[ing] the suffering of these people” (Public Papers of the Presidents, 1949, cited in Rist, 2008, p. 71). A new form of international relations based on aid and dependence came into being and led to decades of development practices posited on improving and modernizing ‘Third World’ people of the world according to Western norms and standards of “civilization” and “progress.” As Escobar (2007) summarizes, this concept of development became “a discourse of Western origin that operated as a powerful mechanism for the cultural, social and economic production of the Third World” (p. 18–19).

The problems of development became the focus of scholarly debates in development studies, and analyses located the problems in capitalism, political factors, external factors and so on. The ground-breaking book, *The Development Dictionary* (Sachs, 1992), challenged the existence, the very idea of development itself, and launched what has become known as the post-development, or PD movement. The book began with the famous pronouncement: “The last forty years can be called the age of development. This epoch is coming to an end. The time is ripe to write its obituary” (Sachs, 1992, p. xv). Challenging the narrow conception of development solely as economic progress, 17 scholars, many of them from the Global South, contributed chapters discussing and challenging the core ideas of development, offering what Escobar (Esteva & Escobar, 2017) later called “a radical problematization of development” (p. 2560).

Informed by ideas from post-structuralism, feminist theory, cultural studies, and environmental studies, and most importantly, the lived experiences of peoples who were framed as the ‘object’ of development, PD scholars were able to present a radically different view of how development operates. Rather than seeking to improve development practices, they called out the consequences of their uncritical application: “Our essays on the central concepts in the development discourse intend to expose some of the *unconscious structures* that set boundaries on the thinking of our epoch” (Sachs, 2010, p. xix emphasis added). Since the publication of this book there has been a robust debate and discussion on the merits of and even relevance today of PD. What follows is a summary of the contributions and the critiques of PD, with a view to applying relevant points to the case of internationalization.

One of the more important contributions PD scholars have made is to name development as a Western ideology and construct, which resulted in non-Western, non-industrialized societies being labelled as backwards and in need of development. This in turn immediately devalued people's knowledges, their ways of being, and their ways of life, and created new forms of exclusion (Esteva, 1992; Rist, 2008; Shiva, 1992). Development was cast in economic terms and habits of consumption and the acquisition of material goods valorized in the Global North became universalized as the standard that must be attained by all peoples. This resulted in what Rist (2008) calls "a cult of growth" (p.242) that is based in an unrealistic view of planetary resources, and a denigration of peoples' cultural and wisdom heritages. PD suggested that within development discourse, "More than an institution, the market is viewed as a constitutive component of the human condition" (Berthoud, 2010, p. 79). The economic ideology that informs development casts nature and the planet as a resource leading to an exploitive and extractive relationship between humans and nature (Shiva, 1992). The relationship of development to the disastrous consequences of climate change and environmental collapse cannot be over emphasized. PD scholars have been at the forefront of naming, challenging, and denouncing development's harms on peoples everywhere (Ziai, 2017).

Development has spawned a vast development industry, and produced legions of development experts largely from the Global North, who have contributed to the hierarchical ordering of knowledge and knowledge systems that privilege Western science and technology and "expert knowledge" over local, cultural, 'unscientific' knowledge (Shiva, 1992). U.S.-dominated international institutions have enormous influence on how development aid is conceived of, delivered, and monitored. PD scholars conclude that development, more recently aided by globalization, is a neocolonial, even imperial project, arguing, "[T]he new empire thus operates not so much through conquest, but through the imposition of norms (free-markets, US style democracy and cultural notions of consumption and so forth)" (Escobar, 2007, p. 28).

In summary, these critiques of development make visible the complexity and multiple levels of power relations and justify the call for their dismantling. This is a significant contribution as the development discourse was widely perceived to be unassailable since it was posited on the claim that it benefits everyone (Ziai, 2017). As Ziai (2017) analyzes, the PD critique shows "how the promise of betterment functions as a mechanism of legitimation" where even learning from the mistakes of development "lead only to a reformulation of the promise" (p. 2551).

Beyond the critique, PD scholars seek to recognize that communities, especially those of the Global South, can determine their own theories of change and act on them (Ziai, 2007). This means breaking free from a monocultural approach to "development" solutions and recognizing the diversity of peoples and the multiple pathways they choose by which to live well (rather than 'develop'). PD scholars recognize the leadership of grassroots and social movements, arguing for the importance of people being able to direct their own lives (Esteva, 2014; Shiva, 2016; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997; Esteva & Prakash, 1998). The rise of the degrowth movement (Latouche, 1993 Escobar, 2015), and the emergence of alternatives to development such as *décroissance* (Ziai, 2017), *buen vivir* (Escobar, 2015; Thomson,

2011), *swaraj* (Demaria & Kothari, 2017), are examples offered of how people are experimenting with ways of living beyond development. As with any experiment, these alternatives themselves offer no neat solutions, nor are they beyond critique. The act of living-beyond development is not unitary; the process, recognizing the multiple pathways to living well, is improvisational and open-ended and may entail occupying liminal spaces. Entering such a ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1990) involves a dynamic interplay between competing discourses. “A new situation may demand ...that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 216), and this is the possibility that PD offers.

PD is not without its critics (Ziai, 2016). Since this paper is not an evaluation of PD, but rather, an exploration of what it offers as a theoretical and analytical lens for internationalization, I will not go into the details of the debate but summarize some of the key critiques of PD to inform a more considered uptake of PD for internationalization. Indeed, we should be cautious about taking an uncritical approach to PD itself.

The most commonly asserted critique of PD is that of its presumed universality - rejecting development based on an essentialized and overgeneralized view of development, hence overlooking the many successes and the diversity of development strategies and interventions (e.g., Corbridge, 1998; Kiely, 1999; Pieterse, 1998; Storey, 2000). PD scholars do acknowledge the validity of this criticism but point out that showing the reality or specifics is not the focus of their work; rather, theirs is a political argument that seeks to problematize the privileging of an epistemological position (Escobar, 2007; Esteva & Escobar, 2017). Along with these views is the objection that PD, by focusing on discourse, overlooks the material realities of poverty and capitalism. Escobar (2007) counters this critique, arguing that discourse is indeed material where “modernity and capitalism are simultaneously systems of discourse and practice” (p. 22). He is emphatic that PD does not mean abandoning the hungry, the displaced, and the dispossessed; rather, that these problems cannot be solved by an imposition of ideologies and practices constructed by the Global North (Esteva et al., 2013).

Another critique of PD is that non-Western communities are romanticized and essentialized as “having it right”, and that there is no accounting for the diversity among and within them. Kiely (1999), for example, referred to PD as “the last resort of the noble savage,” arguing that “the marginalized in the South were interested in access to development, not its rejection” (cited in Ziai, 2017, p. 2548). A related argument holds that there are contradictions inherent in criticizing consumerism from a position of sufficiency and even affluence, to those who are lacking basic life needs. Esteva (2014) dismisses the “noble savage” argument with evidence that his views are always informed by the experiences and the examples set by “ordinary people” such as the Zapatistas who are already living successfully beyond development. The polarized nature of this debate misses the complex realities of the diverse communities that are categorized under a universalist label of ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’, each with singular needs and aspirations. The key point from PD that is applicable to my current argument is not what pathway communities choose

(development vs PD) but that they have agency in being able to *determine* their direction.

PD scholars acknowledge that some gains have been made with, for example, participatory models of development that are more orientated to realizing social justice objectives. However, they assert that “alternative development,” which is an improvement on early models of development, still lies within the frame of development and based in the premise that people are underdeveloped, and thus needing development (Esteva & Escobar, 2017). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), although a positive step in shedding the paternalistic orientation of development, are constructed to sustain and maintain development, and thus, an oxymoron (Demaria & Kothari, 2017). In more recent times, however, PD scholars, Esteva in particular, have shown a greater openness to SDG-oriented thinking if it is a step towards a paradigm change (Esteva & Escobar, 2017).

Despite PD scholars’ rebuttals of critique, the limits of PD must be recognized. Many communities, both in the Global South and Global North, cannot afford the luxury of “living beyond” development as they struggle for basic survival. The dismissal of efforts to address these conditions as harmful development is not useful. Innovative responses to address conditions and problems of poverty, food insecurity, livelihoods, education, health and community well-being through collaborative efforts are creating material change for many. These outcomes illustrate that PD, which is posited on well-being, can, paradoxically, include such multiplicity.

PD’s call for a paradigm change indicates that the declaration on the death of development was never only about a critique of development. “The end of development should not be seen as an end to the search for new possibilities of change...It should only mean that the binary, the mechanistic, the reductionist, the inhumane and the ultimately self-destructive approach to change is over” (Rahnema 1997, p. 391). Seeking paradigmatic change is not just an academic exercise: the process of change itself is difficult and messy, and entails improvisation, a learning by doing, failures along the way, and an understanding that the outcomes are unknowable.

A CASE FOR POST-INTERNATIONALIZATION

What Esteva observes about development, that it is “no longer an unquestionable category” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017, p. 2560), can be applicable to internationalization, recognizing that a critique, a radical critique, already exists. In development, the resistance and critique emerged from some of the communities impacted by the harms of development as well as academics, whereas in internationalization, the critique is largely generated by scholars within critical internationalization studies.

First, a note on my use of the word “post,” commonly understood to mean “after” or “later than,” but contested in how it is applied. PD scholars are clear in their application in “post-development” to mean what follows “after development.” My use of the word ‘post’ in a notion of post-internationalization, follows Battiste’s

(2004) description of post-colonialism, which recognizes that colonialism is still ongoing. She states,

it represents more an aspiration, a hope, not yet achieved. It constructs a strategy that responds to the experience of colonization and imperialism. As a critique, it is about rethinking the conceptual, institutional, cultural, legal and other boundaries that are taken for granted and assumed universal but act as structural barriers to many (para 2).

Similarly, I am suggesting that the “post” in “post-internationalization” recognizes that higher education internationalization is still ongoing, that it is a critique and also represents aspiration and hope for what comes “after.” Similar to PD, post-internationalization is not an alternative internationalization, but an alternative *to* internationalization, a site for resistance and action, and a “search for new possibilities for change” (Rahnema, 1997).

One of the more important applications of the PD analysis to internationalization is to bring attention to historical contexts in which international education, as it was then known, was created. Centuries of European expansion resulted in the export of European education to the colonies, including models for universities, and these influences are still evident in education systems, programs and structures worldwide, and shape current global relations (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Willinsky, 1998). European norms, structures, and ideas set the standard for what constituted knowledge, and the terms by which educational activity “between nations” would play out. Many of the educated classes of colonized peoples were brought to the “superior” European universities to be “properly” educated. The well-known Minute on Indian Education delivered by Lord Macaulay reflects the thinking of the day:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (Macaulay, 1835, cited in Thirumalai, 2003)

De Wit (2002) names this as an era of “academic imperialism” (p. 8) but dismisses any connection with contemporary forms of internationalization. Development projects in education promoted the inflow of international students from the Global South and visits of faculty to universities in the Global South, reproducing colonial patterns of international mobility, the universalization of Western values and knowledge, and reifying students from the South as objects of development (Schendel & McCowan, 2015). The PD critique supports and adds

weight to the critical internationalization scholars' interrogation of the colonial power relations and power structures in which internationalization is embedded.

Another parallel between development and internationalization is the economic dimension. Development is conceptualized in economic terms and notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, the literature is clear that internationalization is big business. To borrow Berthoud's (2010) analysis of development, "the market is viewed as a constitutive component" of internationalization in practice. One of the biggest challenges is the impossibility of extricating internationalization from within this economic model in which the university itself is structured, from its roots in the "global colonial imaginary" (Andreotti et al., 2016) and the competitive and hierarchical system known as the global knowledge economy.

Higher education institutions are complicit in creating the demand by intentional international recruitment, but it is also true that one of the main drivers of international mobility is the students and their families themselves. The analysis afforded by PD scholarship serves to demonstrate how this happens when Western knowledge, norms, ways of life, and consumption, set the gold standard for, in this case, education. In the preface of the second edition of *The Development Dictionary*, Sachs (2010) observes that this "demand" for all things Western is also based in a quest for equity and recognition: "Behind the craving for skyscrapers and shopping malls, gigawatts and growth rates, there is also the desire for recognition and equity at work" (p. viii). He continues, "Countries in general do not aspire to become more 'Indian', more 'Brazilian' or for that matter more 'Islamic'; instead, assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, they long to achieve industrial modernity" (Sachs, 2010, p. ix). Similarly, international student mobility becomes situated in the complex entanglements among globalization, the commodification of higher education, and the desire for social and cultural capital (Dixon, 2006).

PD scholarship points to the importance of discourse analysis in the critique of development. In internationalization studies, this work has been accomplished by the analysis of ideologies (Stier, 2004; 2010), and a comprehensive mapping of orientations to internationalization through social cartography (Andreotti et al. 2016; Stein et al., 2019; Stein, 2019). I return to an argument I advanced some years ago (Beck, 2007) that internationalization practices have been constructed around definitions, and the definitions have served to legitimize anything and everything related to the notion of "international." Although the influential Knight (2004) definition has been revised to include "comprehensive internationalization" (Hudzic, 2011) and social responsibility (de Wit & Hunter, 2015), the definitions foreclose a wider, relational focus on education itself. The discursive shift from the term "international education" to "internationalization" has had the effect of directing the focus from an educational relationship between peoples, to a "process" of integrating an international, intercultural, global dimension to higher education. Although the definition appears to promote the diversification of higher education institutions, this means little more than the presence of students from elsewhere in mostly Western institutions that reflect what some have named a "One-World world" (Escobar, 2015, p. 462). In their social cartographies of internationalization, Andreotti et al. (2016) map four articulations of internationalization: internationalization for the knowledge

society, for the global public good, anti-oppressive internationalization, all within the modern/colonial imaginary, and a fourth that attempts to break with the modern/colonial imaginary. “[R]elational trans-localism” as they name it, “recogniz[es] that interconnection and ethical obligations exceed the borders of the nation state and the onto-epistemic grammar of modernity” (p. 11). The move to break with old frameworks, and the emphasis on relationships, interconnections and community mirrors transition discourses that support the hope and possibility inherent in PD, and in my argument, to a post-internationalization that is motivated by and grounded in epistemic decolonization.

A New Commons

A recurring theme of PD scholars is the call to create and inhabit a new commons, as the alternative to development, “‘how *to be*’ beyond development” (Esteva, in Esteva & Escobar, 2017, p. 2560, emphasis in original). The term “commons” is to be distinguished from the conventional historical meaning of the word that originated in Europe, referring to land set aside for public use and jointly owned and managed by the community around it, and limited by enclosures imposed by the ruling class (Wall, 2014). Commons and commoning in the current era still maintain the idea of access and community ownership, but are in opposition to set enclosures, and have evolved in resistance to economic development, industrial society, and state-dominated projects. The commons highlights and celebrates what “common people” are doing and accomplishing to create a new way of life (Esteva & Prakash, 2014, p. xvii): “[c]ommoning, the commons movement, is not an alternative economy, but an alternative to the economic society” (p. xviii).

Esteva (2014) characterizes the new commons, or the “social commons” as being “very diverse” (p. i155) and includes Indigenous communities who are reclaiming and revitalizing their traditional commons, and Western individuals adopting practices from traditional commons or creating new forms of community, and shared commons which are social and natural spaces needed for human survival. He continues, “social commons are social relationships...establishing norms of behaviour, mutual obligations, and specific forms of social organization” (p. i155). They are not resources, not defined by ownership, and are based in people’s lived reality:

commons, at least certain kinds of commons, is already the cell of the new society. As usual such a new society is emerging in the womb of the old one and is often hidden and distorted by the mentality of the latter. One of the most important and urgent challenges we face today is to clean our gaze, in order to be able to clearly identify the novelty of this sociological creation of ordinary folks, who all over the planet are forging the new society through a new kind of revolution, a silent and almost invisible revolution. (Esteva, 2014, p, i147)

In the context of deepening divides in society and growing inequities associated with economic globalization, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how higher

education, set in a globalized system, can carry out its mandate of serving society (Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010). International education itself is limited in access to a very small number of people given the “for-profit” nature of the “edubusiness” (Luke, 2010) that is internationalization. Resistance to and critique of internationalization of higher education is limited to a small number of academics, and as argued by Stein (2019), “consumption and instrumentalization of critique represents a furthering of colonial relations” (p. 5). In this context, is commoning even possible for the internationalization of higher education? What does it mean to “clean our gaze,” and who are the “ordinary folks” connected to international higher education in this rarefied environment of academia? And finally, what can a new kind of revolution look like for post-internationalization?

The complexity of this condition points to the difficulty of freeing development from what Rist (2008) calls the “cult of growth” (p. 242), and likewise to free internationalization from its economic orientation and its domination by institutions in the Global North. PD scholars see the call for a new commons not only as an act of resistance against unbridled growth but a movement towards “living beyond development” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017). According to Latouche, who is associated with *décroissance*, the French degrowth movement, this requires us to “decolonize our imaginary” (Latouche, 2004, cited in Rist, 2008, p. 243). In what follows, I identify some possibilities where PD scholarship discussed so far can lead us to clean our gaze and begin the decolonization of the imaginaries in which internationalization is embedded. This could lead to a conversation on a new commons in post-internationalization, recognizing the complexities and contradictions inherent in seeking to go beyond the status quo.

In this quest for new beginnings, I have been energized by a retrospective conversation between Esteva and Escobar (2017), two of the most prominent figures in PD, on the 25th anniversary of the book that established the idea and the field. Referring to a discussion that took place among the core authors of the book about “being” beyond development, Esteva recalls Ivan Illich asking him what one word he would use to express what lies beyond development. Esteva’s answer was “hospitality” (p. 2560). For Esteva, hospitality means being able to “hospitably embrace the thousand different ways of thinking, being, living and experiencing the world that characterise reality” (p. 2561). The argument could be made that hosting international students on campuses of the Global North, creating research partnerships, and supporting the capacity building of higher education institutions in the Global South constitute hospitality. However, the analyses from PD and critical internationalization scholars cited earlier make it clear that this is hardly the notion of hospitality that Esteva is talking about. The very structure of the international university, the Western-dominated programs, norms and standards, the recruitment of students from elsewhere that amounts to brain drain, and in general, the construction of institutions and peoples elsewhere as being in need of the dominant form of internationalization, are all the antithesis of hospitality. Drawing from the Zapatistas, Esteva describes hospitality as the “One No and Many Yeses” position (p. 2562), a pluriverse, “a world in which many worlds can be embraced” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017, p. 2562), a common and resounding “no” to development, and an

acknowledgment that there are many possibilities for being and living beyond development.

A recognition of the need to accommodate and include many worlds has led to several alternatives to development. Escobar (2015) sees degrowth and PD as part of a larger movement of transition discourses that seek paradigmatic transformation of the systems that frame current social, economic, and planetary conditions. While degrowth has been associated with the Global North, the Global South has seen the rise of other transition discourses as a response to ecological, social, and economic crises that are part of the dominant social models and systems (Escobar, 2015), and within PD they include such movements as *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2011). Transition discourses aim to provide a pathway towards preserving a pluriversal way of life in resistance to globalization as a universalization of the modern condition. Esteva has articulated this as a communal dimension, a reorganization of society “on the basis of the strength of the *comunalidad* (the fact of being communal) ... a way of being that constitutes the meaning of autonomous existence” (Esteva, 2012, cited in Escobar, 2015, p. 459).

These transitioning processes themselves are not unproblematic and as stated earlier, not all communities are able to, or even aspire to participate in such an experiment in the face of crippling poverty, precarious conditions and uncertainty. What is useful, however, is the idea of a transition process itself that remains open-ended, and initiated and led by a community aspiring to challenge their life circumstances and inequities.

Post-internationalization can be a transitional discourse that aims to reorganize the global or international dimension of higher education, and to provide a pathway to recognizing a pluriverse, a world in which multiple worlds, multiple ways of being and knowing through our global connections can be included. For one, identifying the “multiple worlds” in education will be a challenge given that much of the world’s formal educational systems are a colonial legacy (Willinsky, 1998). This task should not, however, be abandoned as if “there is no alternative”.

One of the key principles of degrowth is disentangling from the economic dimension which remains a major challenge for post-internationalization. Although PD scholarship does not reflect a material analysis and a consideration of the financial implications (including losses) of moving beyond development, this is an area of critical importance for a post-internationalization [PI] framework. Could PI mean taking the mobility, the international student recruitment, the study abroad, for example, out of internationalization? What might breaking the financial dependency on the internationalization enterprise open up? Interrogating the dependency on international student revenues is then a significant aspect of a transition movement, and one that in the current context of post-secondary financing appears to be an insurmountable barrier.

What educational principles and approaches can inform the start of a transition movement? For one, the move back to the term ‘international education’ could signal the move away from resource generation to educational principles and values. One possibility under an education agenda would be exploring ways in which educational partnerships can serve societal needs and address social problems. Under the current internationalization framework partnerships are most often initiated by universities in

the Global North to align with their agenda of “internationalization”. Universities in the Global North could shift the focus of international engagement away from their own agenda by, for example, inviting community members from the Global South to lead multi-stakeholder partnerships in the service of a new commons, and assigning more resources and recognition to these partnerships.

Can academics support the growth of an international education commons?

Research is an element of the degrowth movement bringing together academics and activists (Escobar, 2015), and based in local community activities. This example is illustrative of the elements of PD that lend themselves well to a post-internationalization project and the creation of a new commons that is based in a vision of communal, relational, and pluriversal forms of education that engages both the Global South and North in coalitions and collectives. These ideas have already been taken up by scholars who have been prominent in the recent radical critiques of internationalization. Convened within an arts/research/ecology collective called *Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures (GTDF)*, this group of Indigenous peoples, academics, activists, and community members in Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Canada, collaborating across the Global South and Global North, are working towards an alternative future and “a different mode of (co-) existence” (GTDF, 2020). The GTDF collective are demonstrating how academics can participate in the creation of such commons.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this paper I have briefly outlined how internationalization of higher education continues to grow in problematic and unsustainable ways despite scholarship that identifies the incommensurabilities. I have described in summary the calls for change. I then drew parallels with the field of development studies, and discussed PD, a body of scholarship that grew in resistance to development, following a declaration from its leading scholars on the death of development. I argued that PD offered a rich and relevant body of scholarship that could be applied to internationalization, leading into making a case for post-internationalization. I illustrated how a critique that paralleled PD was already in progress within critical internationalization studies and that it is time to name a post-internationalization movement that, in parallel with PD, offers ways to move beyond internationalization. My proposal for a new commons for post-internationalization is just that: a proposal. My thinking has been informed by leading PD scholars, who continue to provoke and inspire on matters that are of great importance to well-being and for life itself. However, PD and the idea of a new commons are not without their limitations and the ideas need further analysis, discussion, and application. Accordingly, efforts to create a new commons for internationalization should recognize the contradictions, limitations and challenges that are bound to be present in including and living with many worlds.

I close this phase of my inquiry with a call for reflection and action drawn from Esteva and Escobar. As Escobar remarks, “[W]e all need to make serious efforts at *vivir entre mundos*, to live in-between, with and from multiple worlds, as we attempt the re-communalisation of our daily existence” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017, p. 2568).

Esteva (Esteva & Escobar, 2017) suggests that people studying development, and who are concerned and wish to make a difference, can accompany and support those who are creating a life beyond development. Returning to Stein's (2019) notion of internationalization otherwise as "affirm[ing] our radical interdependence with and responsibility to each other and the earth itself" (p. 10), I see a new commons for international education as one possible expression of internationalization otherwise, and a responsibility that we carry as scholars in the field of internationalization studies.

I am inviting critical internationalization scholars to join the conversation in advancing a post-internationalization movement and in creating a new commons that is marked by the hospitality of a "Thousand Yeses" and a living "between and with multiple worlds" (Esteva & Escobar, 2017). The way ahead is unknown, and the challenge of becoming independent of the current economic model may be insurmountable. But the alternative, to continue with the status quo, is untenable.

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