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Introduction to the Critical Internationalization Studies Review

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Introduction to the Critical Internationalization Studies Review

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As founding members of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network (CISN) Newsletter's editorial team, it is with great pleasure that we publish this first issue of the *Critical Internationalization Studies Review*, a periodical publication that collates content published in the CISN Newsletter in 2021. When we began brainstorming the CISN Newsletter in mid-to-late 2020 along with Dr. Tiffany Viggiano, another founding co-editor, we had no idea what to expect from the network or its subscribers. With the desire to foster critical conversations and collaborations and to operate as a counterspace to the neoliberal academy, we only knew that we needed to do things differently from more normative academic publication spaces. In this regard, we considered fundamental questions that pushed us to challenge and critique the epistemic hierarchies that inform many current academic publication spaces, consider issues of power in the publication process, and confront the complexities that come from bringing together diverse theoretical approaches in the same academic space. These questions included, but were not limited to:

- How do we define critical in the context of an informal academic publication?
- In what context would a submission be considered not critical enough for inclusion in this space?
- How do we approach the continued privileging of English as the language of publication in academic spaces?

Over the course of the past year, the CISN membership has grown substantially, and the content that we have had the pleasure of publishing has challenged our thinking, required us to approach our work in new ways, and brought complexity into the academic space that we curate. We have been especially pleased with the contributions of graduate students and early-career scholars, including ourselves, who seem to have found a comfortable space within the CISN. Moving forward, we continue to apply a critical lens both inwardly and outwardly so as to confront the neoliberal forces within the academy and create new spaces for internationalization studies.

In this first compilation, our readers will find essays of the same three types that the CISN publishes through its newsletter. First, 'critical voices' are brief opinion pieces on current topics or

events related to the internationalization of education written from a critical perspective. Some of these essays are also critiques and opinions about the future of our field. Second, ‘research briefs’ are essays intended to summarize recent research aligned with the objectives of the CISN with the twofold purpose of communicating this research to a broader audience and highlighting the work of scholars within the Network. Lastly, ‘practice briefs’ are texts intended to bridge research and practice; these contributions communicate ideas about how to apply recent and ongoing research in critical internationalization studies, connecting it to the work that practitioners do in the field.

Eight critical voices are included in this first issue of the *Critical Internationalization Studies Review*. These essays can be grouped into three broad themes that collectively show 1) the hegemonic practices of international education and the challenging tensions of navigating them; 2) the role of religion and spirituality in perpetuating or addressing current inequities within internationalization; and 3) the complicity of internationalization in climate disaster.

Regarding the former, Shazia Nawaz Awan (2022) explains how a Western hegemonic portrayal of the process of internationalization of higher education is being exported and adopted globally. She calls instead for the implementation of internationalization as a process that is counter-hegemonic to the currently prevalent education system. Then, Roger Anderson challenges us to think how the common use of the term “foreign language” is misleading and promotes otherness. In his essay, Anderson (2022) suggests the adoption of a more inclusive term such as “world languages.” Finally, through an innovative collective writing exercise, Abu Arif, Punita Lumb, Milad Moheballi, and Anushay Irfan Khan (2022)—four doctoral students—reflect on the inherent tensions and complexities of centering their work around decolonization. Their essay is a reflection of the CISN’s goal to sit with unsettling and uncomfortable ideas in hopes to gesture to a higher education otherwise (Stein et al., 2020).

On the second topic related to understanding how spirituality and religion impacts internationalization, Edwards (2022) shows how Christian culture dominates not just the global landscape but also the academic world. From a different perspective, Kalyani Unkule (2022) uses her essay to present her book, *Internationalising the University: A Spiritual Approach*, and to call for internationalization practitioners to respond with ways in which the Majority World can enter an “intercultural dialogue and understanding... rather than continue as an accessory to the hegemonic enterprise of knowledge creation” (p. 6). In response to Unkule’s call, Punita Lumb (2022) highlights how a spiritual dimension can be applied to internationalization in practice in co-curricular spaces. Similarly, Yuka Jibiki (2022) responds to Unkule’s essay by highlighting and exemplifying the utility of Shosin—or beginner’s mind—for international educators.

Lastly, building upon their talk to the CISN, Nikula and van Gaalen (2022) write an essay posing critical questions that remain under-researched regarding the intersection of international education practice/policy and the climate crisis. A key aspect of aspiring to an ever-growing internationalization must be an acknowledgement of the toll that it has on the planet’s finite resources and its complicity in our current climate catastrophe.

Another important part of the CISN Newsletter are the practice and research briefs that explore critical research in a way that can transform practice. This issue presents two briefs related to the same topic. Both Raby (2022) and Unangst and Barone (2022) make a case for the valuable internationalization work being conducted at Technical and Vocational institutions such as the US’s community colleges and other global equivalents. Hegemonic international education

practices happen both between and within countries as power disparities are not exclusive to the Nation-State. We hope you enjoy reading this first (of hopefully many) issue of the CISR. Most importantly, we hope the arguments presented here, thanks to their brief and assertive nature, can help us in our collective journey towards a different international education; an otherwise future that is more equitable for the diverse populations we serve, more respectful of the different ways of being and knowing that we so prominently highlight as cornerstones of our global endeavors but that oftentimes get neglected in our daily practice, which is inevitably embedded in the current neoliberal and (neo)colonial academe. We also invite our readers to engage with the works of the many members of the CISN. Besides reading these short essays, we invite you to enroll in the complimentary Critical Internationalization Studies Masterclass—an open-access online library of 16 video lectures from educators across the globe that address different dimensions of international education (<https://criticalinternationalization.thinkific.com>). Just as with this new publication, the goal in crafting these videos is to facilitate interesting and challenging conversations and to center historically marginalized peoples and knowledges. We also invite anyone interested in contributing to these critical conversations to submit an essay to be featured first in the CISN Newsletter and then in an upcoming issue of the *Critical Internationalization Studies Review*. Instructions for how to submit are found at the end of this publication.

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