Ethical Possibilities in International Student Recruitment


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To my family, my mom and brother and dad, who I always want to make proud, and who I love very much.

## Dedication

My dissertation is dedicated to my dad, Keith Alan Kirsch, who passed away as I was beginning my research process. When I found out he had passed, I had just landed on the east coast and had a long and difficult return flight to California. During a spell of winter cleaning, I had taken some photos on my phone of a letter he wrote to me when I was two and a half, and I read it again on that flight. He was a construction worker and frequently worked away from home. In the letter, he wrote of missing my mom and I, and of the books he was reading.

He wrote, "I want for you to want to learn just for the sake of knowing more. Most of the reading I do doesn't help me be a better carpenter or make more money, but the way it makes me feel inside is so wonderful. I want you to have a love of learning. Of all the gifts I could give you that would be the best."

I think he would be proud of this accomplishment, and I dedicate my dissertation to him.

**Abstract**

This study explores how international education professionals at public universities in the United States understand ethical international student recruitment. Decreasing federal and state support for public universities has contributed to some U.S. institutions regarding international students as a source of additional revenue, as they often pay substantially higher tuition than domestic students. While practitioners serving and recruiting these students may understand the life-changing decision students and their families make to study in a country outside their own, economics has a mediating factor in recruitment motivations. A social cartography developed out of the Ethical Internationalism of Higher Education (EIHE) study is used to map ethical dilemmas international student recruiters face in their work, making evident the tension between the student's best interests and institutional financial imperatives. Recruiters who work in a neoliberal-liberal tension zone are guided by a self-perceived ethic of care that was exemplified by personal commitments to information sharing and consultation with trusted colleagues, navigating a contentious higher education environment by developing a set of personal and professional ethics that guided their daily actions.

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**Chapter 1**

Internationalization and globalization of higher education have come to mean the same thing for the university recruitment professionals that sell it and the international students that buy it: Western education is worth top dollar.  The forces of economic globalization have caused a shift in the dominant focus of internationalization to activities that produce an economic gain for institutions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006; Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010).  An increasing number of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States seek to recruit international students under the guise of desirable internationalization activities. Yet, is a lack of an ethical framework available to university professionals who do this work.  Ethical considerations may go by the wayside when "dominant instrumental motivations in promoting internationalisation are related to profitability" (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2018, p. 68).

Such profit incentives may drive institutions eager to enroll increasing numbers of international students to lower admission qualifications – grade point average and English language scores – in order to admit larger volumes of students, to the detriment of institutional academic quality (Benzie, 2010; McCrohon & Nyland, 2018).  Moreover, the focus on economic drivers of internationalization, wherein U.S. education is promoted as the key to employment success in students' home countries, can serve to perpetuate global inequalities and hierarchies when only the wealthiest international students can afford high tuition rates charged by U.S. universities.  In this paper, I argue that further articulation of an ethical framework of internationalization is needed to shed light on practices of international student recruitment within U.S. HEIs.

International student recruitment can be fiscally generative for U.S. HEIs. Scholars argue that many internationalization activities focus primarily on this "big

business of recruitment" (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011, p. 15) rather than internationalization as a driving force that leads to "peace and mutual understanding" (p. 16) through the scholarly exchange of ideas on an international level.  A recent study found that what "counts" as internationalization is frequently framed in quantifiable figures, including numbers of international students, research partnerships, and student mobility (Buckner & Stein, 2019).

In the 2018-19 academic year, over one million international students studied in the U.S. (IIE, 2019), generating over $41 billion in revenue (NAFSA, 2019a).  Another source estimates that the direct economic benefit of international students in the United States is over $50 billion per year (Startz, 2017).  When leading international education organizations, like NAFSA, focus so overtly on the financial aspects of internationalization, they set a tone for professionals in the field.  NAFSA (2019a) demonstrates this tone through its International Student Economic Value tool that makes accessible state data of the "economic contributions of international students and their families to the U.S. economy" (para. 2).

Despite historical successes in the recruitment of international students to U.S. HEIs, new international student enrollment has declined for the third year in a row (IIE, 2019).  Before this decrease, the application and enrollment rate of international students at U.S. universities had not experienced a decline since 2003 (IIE, 2019).  Overall, the United States has experienced a downward shift in the worldwide share of international students despite an overt and persistent focus of U.S. institutions to attract and retain them (Redden, 2018).  This downturn may be due in part to rising nationalistic tendencies and international students' experiences with racism and changing immigration policies.

These trends are similar to the historical declines in international student numbers in the aftermath of 9/11 (Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2006).

The reduction in international student tuition revenue has led to panic and has forced some public universities to close programs and lay off faculty and staff (Saul, 2018).  The decrease in numbers has caused institutions to reexamine their international student recruitment strategies, which creates an opportunity to reimagine these practices in a critical and ethical light.  As Khoo, Taylor, and Andreotti (2016) write, "crises present particular opportunities to analyze and comprehend what is at stake" (p. 86) for higher education and internationalization.  While institutions that view international students as "cash cows" (Cantwell, 2015, p. 521) may not be interested in implementing recruitment strategies that ethically consider student needs over financial gain, international student recruitment in the U.S. is at a crossroads. This has created the opportunity for contemporary practices to be critically examined by practitioners in the field, informed by emerging conceptions of ethical internationalization.

A logical starting point for understanding ethics in international student recruitment is to review the extant literature on such recruitment.  The literature on international student recruitment is primarily written for two audiences, practitioners and scholars (Weller, 2012).  The literature related to recruitment methods and results is primarily directed toward an audience of practitioners and frequently frames international students as an economic benefit to institutions.  Subjects explored in this literature include recruitment and retention strategies (García & Villarreal, 2014), examination of emerging markets (Choudaha, 2017), analysis of student mobility trends to inform future recruitment (Beech, 2018), push and pull factors related to how international students decide where to study (McMahon, 1992; Nicholls, 2018), how to effectively market an

institution (Onk & Joseph, 2017), and the best methodologies for attracting and recruiting international students (Bohman, 2014; Jennings, 2017). The majority of this literature focuses on institutions in the Global North: Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Scholars reference Australia is frequently as a "best practice" example of successful international student recruitment (Adams, Leventhal, & Connelly, 2012) due to its successful recruitment strategies over the past two decades. For example, in Australia's largest research universities, international students often comprise 30% or more of the student body (Johnstone & Proctor, 2018). Though Australia's best practices are primarily mechanistic in the "how-to" recruit, retain, and market to international students, Australia does operate under governmental oversight, laws, and regulations that apply to institutions that recruit and host international students. These regulatory mechanisms at the governmental level enable ethical considerations to be inherent in country-wide international education strategies (Adams et al., 2012).

Replicating Australia's example becomes difficult in the context of the United States, where there are no centralized regulations or national policies related to the recruitment of international students (Sá & Sabzalieva, 2018), guidelines for their care upon arrival, or clear pathways to employment or citizenship. This absence of national oversight of international student recruitment practices makes it more difficult for the ethical treatment of international students to be consistently considered by U.S. institutions and practitioners.

In sum, practitioner-focused literature, while occasionally offering critiques of the growing consumer-driven focus of internationalization, is written using predominately market-based language, construing universities as competitors providing a service,

education as a commodity, and students as individual consumers with an awareness of what they are purchasing. This market-focused body of literature is often critiqued by scholars concerned about the ethics of what may be called 'neoliberal internationalization' (Garson, 2016; Khoo et al., 2016).

Literature related to a critical examination of internationalization practices is more philosophically and theoretically based and typically aimed at a scholarly audience. In this body of literature, there are critiques of the neoliberal and economic framing of internationalization and motivations for international student recruitment (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Stein & Andreotti, 2016), commentary on the instrumental uses of international students as cultural resources (Lee & Rice, 2007) within internationalization at home initiatives (Robson, Almeida, & Schartner, 2018), and the emerging field of ethical internationalization scholarship (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2018; Haapakoski & Stein, 2018; Khoo et al., 2016; Stein, Andreotti, & Suša, 2016).

This last body of literature outlines the ethical dimensions of internationalization and critiques the debilitating influences of economic gain, host campus climate, and neocolonial activities (Lee & Rice, 2007). Critical international scholars typically work from a decolonial lens and examine international student recruitment as perpetuating colonial flows of Western knowledge from the Global North to the Global South (Garson, 2012; Gyamera & Burke, 2018; Khoo et al., 2016; Stein & Andreotti, 2016), while still recognizing students' desires for Western education and the individual value of such an education (Phan, 2017).

Like many fields, there is often a gap between everyday practices in institutions and scholarship emanating from research institutions. However, recent movements in the field have attempted to link the two by highlighting the work of internationalization

scholar-practitioners (Streitwieser & Ogden, 2016).  Streitwieser and Ogden's summary of contributed chapters in their edited volume demonstrates the scholarly benefit of considering practical implications for research.  In this study, I seek to draw upon the arguments of Streitwieser and Ogden (2016) to create a discourse that goes beyond literature that simply recommends the best way to recruit international students or critiques of the practice in general.  This theory-to-practice orientation is designed to open opportunities for discussion and new ways of thinking about international student recruitment that could facilitate more equitable and fair recruitment practices in U.S. HEIs.  As the field of international education continues to grow and shift, this study seeks to make both discursive and practical contributions to the understanding of international student recruitment.

Additionally, this study takes Freire's (2000) idea of *praxis* as a key to understanding how practice can inform theory.  Human beings have the power to embody praxis by acting together to critically reflect upon their reality and transform it through further action and critical reflection.  This reflection occurs through a dialogue among parties to critically unpack and understand the social structures and ideologies that shape and control their daily lives and practices (Freire, 2000).  The action dimension of praxis is a concerted effort aimed at impacting those structures and ideologies that oppress some sectors of society (Freire, 2000).  These structures and ideologies prevent those who are oppressed from achieving full participation as members of society and fulfillment as human beings (Freire & Macedo, 1996).

Scholarly praxis stems from the critical reflection and subsequent transformation of actions, which is central to the desire to transform how internationalization is conducted at this point in time (Khoo et al., 2016).  Scholarly praxis is the end goal of

many scholars writing on ethical internationalization, and a goal I seek to accomplish. My research asked international educators to think critically and reflect on their work in international student recruitment and engaged the study participants in "making sense of the data" (Hebert & Abdi, 2013, p. 49). This "research as praxis" (Lather, 1986 as cited in Hebert & Abdi, 2013, p. 50) enabled participants to think about change possibilities by "encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their particular situations" (Lather, 1986 as cited in Hebert & Abdi, 2013, p. 50). Throughout my research, I sought to exemplify a reflective practitioner and create an opportunity for reflection among my research participants. This reflection is critical, particularly when examining the neoliberal framing of international student recruitment in higher education, to bring about a shift toward ethical practices of international student recruitment.

My aspirations for this study also build upon Chrystal George Mwangi et al.'s (2018) work. In their recent review of international education literature, George Mwangi et al. (2018) found that critical scholarship often fails to provide recommendations on how to engage in "specific actions that would lessen negative outcomes related to the internationalization of higher education on individuals" (p. 9). If an article did offer recommendations on how to "increase global engagement and equity, recommendations were often broad and vague, lacking tangible next steps for future researchers and practitioners" (George Mwangi et al., 2018, p. 1110). If internationalization in its current conceptualization is genuinely in need of reassessment, this should be expounded by considering practitioners, utilizing their voices, and creating relevant implications for practice. A theoretical framework of ethical leadership (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) can be used to examine how international student recruitment is practiced at U.S. universities. Furthermore, ethical leadership empowers practitioners to critically reflect on how

internationalization activities are enacted at their institutions, particularly during this downward shift in international student numbers.

The purpose of this study is to examine international educators' understanding of ethical internationalization and practices of ethical internationalization. Such an understanding garners themes that can enable international educators to interrogate international student recruitment practices at their institutions. The inspiration for this study came from questions I asked myself through my experience as an international recruitment and marketing coordinator. Each day I was faced with recruitment tasks, but often asked myself the following questions:

- How do ethics play a role in recruitment?

- Is recruitment unethical if there is a significant difference between the cost of education and wages in the international student's home country?

- What recruitment practices could be considered ethical or unethical?

- Can ethics even be considered when the driving force for recruitment is financial? Do universities have an obligation to the international students they recruit, beyond motivating them to apply?

I sought to explore these questions in the context of higher education in the United States and through the lens of international educators like myself, who, on a daily basis, grapple with questions of ethics and institutional financial viability.

**Local Setting and Broader Context**

I worked in international student recruitment for eight years at a public university in northern California and observed international students portrayed primarily through an economic lens. At my institution, the diversity that international students brought to campus was approached in a superficial or tokenistic manner, mentioned as an

afterthought, where fees were considered foremost (Stein & Andreotti, 2016).  Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) critique the frequent economic framing of international students and posit that "activities more related to the concept of globalization (higher education as a tradable commodity) are increasingly executed under the flag of internationalization" (p. 17).  While I was unsure if ethical internationalization exists in practice, I align myself at a minimum with Beck (2009), in that "the desire for ethical practice comes out of a wish to avoid harm and promote well-being" (p. 308).

International student migration, however, is not a uniquely U.S. or 21st-century phenomenon.  Migration for education has occurred since the 12th century (Altbach, 1998; Guruz, 2011; Haskins, 1957).  Currently, over half of the world's internationally mobile students study in five English speaking countries – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States (IIE, 2019; UNESCO, 2018).  The two largest sending regions are Asia (China, India, and South Korea) – primarily westward, and fee-paying – and Europe, under the auspices of European Union member agreements. These two regions account for nearly 50% of outbound mobility in 2016 (UNESCO, 2018).  Drivers for international student mobility include educational opportunities or lack thereof in students' home countries, financial aspects such as the ability to pay for tuition outside of the home country, and the quality of education both at home and abroad (UNESCO, 2018).  Institutions in receiving countries seek to recruit internationally mobile students as a revenue source and to diversify their student body (UNESCO, 2018).

In the U.S., students have been migrating to institutions of higher education for over a century.  However, the U.S. began its most recent focus on international student recruitment in the mid-2000s, when the global financial crisis and budget cuts in higher

education "shifted institutional motivations to search for self-funded international students" (Choudaha, 2018, p. 8).  The budget crisis in the U.S. aligned with growth in sending countries' scholarship schemes, including Saudi Arabia with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) and Brazil with the Brazilian Scientific Mobility Program (BSMP), as well as expanding upper-middle-class Chinese families, who provided a "much-needed boost" (Choudaha, 2018, p. 8) to international student enrollment at U.S. universities.  Between 2006 and 2013, international student enrollment grew by 44% (Choudaha, 2018).

In what Choudaha (2017) categorizes as the "Third Wave" of international student mobility, from 2013-2020, U.S. universities are experiencing a slowdown and subsequent decline in international student enrollments.  The largest sending country to the U.S., China, is sending fewer students abroad due to the Chinese government's focus on rapidly expanding domestic higher education opportunities, and on creating world-class universities that recruit top students (Li, 2016).  Changes or removals of the aforementioned countries' scholarship programs have stymied the flow of international students to U.S. institutions.  Anti-immigration rhetoric in the U.S. combined with welcoming immigration policies in other countries in the Global North may be contributing to shifts in where international students are choosing to apply (Lee & Metcalfe, 2017; Redden, 2018).  Students are selecting more appealing academic options in other English-speaking destinations, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada (IIE, 2018; O'Connor, 2018).  In countries such as Australia and Canada, international students experience an additional benefit from favorable post-graduation work visa opportunities. Outside of these, other countries, including those not previously top destinations for international students, have begun enacting policies to increase their

share of worldwide international students, recognizing the benefits they bring – primarily economic (Chankseliani, 2018; IIE, 2018; UNESCO, 2018).

**Statement of Study Purpose**

As mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to understand how international educators realize the ethical considerations of international student recruitment. The ultimate goal of the study was to conceptualize ethical principles that can be used in combination with an ethical educational leadership paradigm to solve ethical dilemmas that are faced by international student recruiters. Additionally, the study sought to understand how international educators view their work, and if their understanding counters economic and cultural resource discourses in the internationalization literature. The rationale for this study was that practical discourse around recruitment focuses primarily on the economic aspects of recruitment. At the same time, critical discourses often lack practical applications for international education practitioners. To this end, I sought to draw upon the experiential knowledge of international educators. This study asked international educators to reflect on ethical considerations in their work to conceptualize a framework that addresses critiques of contemporary practice while incorporating a conceptualization of ethics that is applicable to practice.

**Definitions**

The terms and definitions used in this study and review of the literature follow.

**International student**. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) defines *international students* as "students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin" (para. 1). These students are also referred to as *internationally mobile students*.

**Internationalization**. The term *internationalization* is contested in the literature.  Jane Knight's (2004) definition of internationalization is the most cited – at the time of writing, over 2,000 articles have cited her original definition.  Knight (2014) has subsequently updated the definition to: internationalization is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions (primarily teaching/learning, research, service) or delivery of higher education" (p. 77).  While Knight (2014) contends that this definition focuses on the process and is not prescriptive, it is operationalized in several ways by professional organizations and scholars.  For the purpose of this study, I use Knight's (2014) definition, as it is the most widely used and understood in both the literature and among practitioners.

**Global North/South**. I will use the terms *Global North* and *Global South*, while also acknowledging their potentially contested meanings and limitations.  Following World War II and the decolonization of European colonies, multiple terms have been used to split the world into two (e.g., developed/developing, West/non-West).  Although these terms "are meant to loosely distinguish the northern and southern hemispheres, affluent and marginal nations and communities obviously do not line up neatly within this geographical frame" (Mohanty, 2003, as cited in Stein, 2017).  Global North/South dichotomies can be problematic within discussions of international student recruitment when the largest sending countries to the U.S. are middle- and high-income countries that may not be part of historical colonial legacies (IIE, 2019).  Phan (2017), for example, seeks to move beyond this dichotomy and the positioning of Asia, a region that sends high numbers of international students to the U.S., as "'victimised' colonised 'special' Asia" (p. 31), instead arguing that Asia has been actively engaged in legitimizing and reproducing the desire for Western education.

**Sending/receiving countries**. *Receiving countries* are traditionally receiving countries for student mobility. These include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. *Sending countries* are countries that traditionally send large numbers of students to the receiving countries for study abroad, but can also include any country where students leave to obtain education from another country.

**Knowledge economy**. The two terms *knowledge economy* and *knowledge capitalism* can be traced back to a series of reports in the late 1990s by OECD and the World Bank (Olssen & Peters, 2005). The knowledge economy is information-based, and the system of consumption and production is based on intellectual capital. Universities are seen as "competitive knowledge corporations within the knowledge economy" (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 337). They are "increasingly important for the international competitiveness of the nation-states through their central tasks of generation, application and dissemination of knowledge and training high skilled labor force" (Nokkala, 2006, p. 177).

**Human capital**. Human capital theory conceives the laborer as a capitalist who invests in themselves and their future through the "acquisition of knowledge and skills that have economic value" (Schultz, 1961, p. 3). Knowledge can be acquired through education and migration. Developing human capital is a crucial goal of the knowledge economy.

**Neoliberalism in higher education**. Neoliberalism in higher education has shared elements of: "declining public funding, developing and commercializing new technologies for national economic competitiveness, preparing entrepreneurial graduates with high levels of 'human capital,' and the use of private-sector logics in institutional management" (Nokkala, 2006). I follow Shahjahan (2014) in understanding *neoliberal*

*higher education* as "the theoretical and practical restructuring of higher education according to neoliberal logics" (p. 221).  Neoliberal HE includes the marketization and emphasis on human capital development in higher education, along with

> the logic that assumes and justifies these material structures.  According to this logic, society should construct and produce self-enterprising individuals solely interested in enhancing their human capital.  Economic rationality operates as the overarching frame for understanding, evaluating and governing social life (Shahjahan, 2014, p. 222).

The neoliberal pattern, according to Marginson and Rhoades (2002), positions education as a private good that is owned by and benefits an individual, though it is also essential to the national knowledge economy, creating ideas rather than goods.

**Commodification**. *Commodification* stems from neoliberal market mechanisms that have encouraged universities to "commodify teaching and learning and 'sell' it in the international educational marketplace" (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005, p. 38).  This understanding is based on the assumption that higher education has become too complex for governments to sustain and fund.  As a result, "market competition within and between universities will create more efficient and effective institutions" (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005, p. 39).  State funding has thus declined, and universities commodify their outputs.  Commodification "also implies that education processes and knowledge can be 'captured' and 'packaged' in order to be bought or sold under market conditions across national boundaries" (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005, p. 40).

**Instrumentalism**.  I will refer to the use of international students as instruments to demonstrate how international students are used as representatives of their culture for domestic student consumption.  More broadly, "instrumentalists consider higher

education to be one means to maximize profit, ensure economic growth and sustainable development, or to transmit desirable ideologies of governments, transnational corporations, interest groups or supranational regimes" (Stier, 2004, p. 90). Instrumental references to international students are a further expression of neoliberalism in higher education.

**Global imaginary**. I follow Kamola (2014) in understanding *global imaginary* to mean "a set of commonly shared understandings and practices that render the great diversity of social life as already constituting a single, coherent, 'global' whole" (p. 516). This dominant global imaginary, Stein and Andreotti (2017) argue, stems from the neoliberalization of higher education. A dominant modern/colonial global imaginary is created, wherein both the neoliberal university as well as its critical responses operate, preventing the imaging of alternatives. When the dominant imaginary is critiqued and found problematic, often "our proposals for alternatives (in order to be intelligible) tend to, paradoxically, remain within it" (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016, p. 774).

**Critical internationalization**. *Critical internationalization* brings into focus uneven power distributions between traditionally receiving countries for student mobility and traditionally sending countries. Critical internationalization studies problematize and complicate "the overwhelmingly positive and often depoliticized nature of mainstream approaches" (Stein, 2017, p. 5) to internationalization.

**Ethical internationalization**. The term *ethical internationalization* originated from a four-year research project conducted from 2012 to 2016, Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education (EIHE). EIHE scholars examined "ethical issues arising from internationalization processes in higher education" (Andreotti, 2012, para. 2). Ethical internationalization seeks to move beyond the dominant global imaginary and find

alternative ways of imagining internationalization outside of the bounds of the dominant

neoliberal framework.  I will explore the concept of ethical internationalization in depth

in Chapter 2.

**Conceptual Framework**

I will use Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) paradigm for ethical educational

leadership as a lens through which to view study data.  First, however, a discussion of

"ethics" is necessary.  Ethics can be conceptualized in two ways.  The first way of

understanding ethics is as a mode of philosophical inquiry.  The second relates to an idea

of ethics in practice.  Ethical practices are viewed as practices that are morally 'good' by

those that enact the practices (Hutchings, 2018).  I will address both conceptualizations in

the paragraphs below.

Ethics as a mode of philosophical inquiry prescribes duties of justice according to

association (Mollendorf, 2002; Rawls, 1999).  My understanding of traditional ethics as it

relates to international student recruitment is as follows.  I primarily use the work of

Enslin and Hedge (2008) to understand principles of justice as they apply to actors, such

as universities and students, who are brought into association during internationalization

practices.  Pogge (1989, as cited in Enslin & Hedge, 2008) states that duties of justice are

assigned to those who create systems that perpetuate inequality.  International students

are "othered" or turned into "outsiders" if they are unable to pay high tuition charged by

U.S. institutions, and thus suffer inequality compared to students who can afford these

fees and subsequently access education (Enslin & Hedge, 2008).

Applying classical ethics to international education, higher education can be said

to bring actors into association, such as international students, academics, and

universities.  Duties of justice (Rawls, 1999) arise when activities, like academic

exchanges, enrollment in institutions outside of a student's home country, and partnerships, bring people into association (Mollendorf, 2002). According to Pogge, if universities are recruiting and enrolling international students, they have duties of justice to these students by way of association (Enslin & Hedge, 2008). These duties include "alleviating the effects of unequal, unjust institutions such as educational opportunities" (Enslin & Hedge, p. 109). Universities who benefit from an unequal global order then have a responsibility to students from the world's poorest countries, whom they treat as "outsiders," as they are unable to pay high tuition fees assessed by these institutions (Enslin & Hedge, 2008). In such cases, ethics as a philosophical mode of inquiry can be used to understand the associations between universities and international students, and the responsibilities and duties of justice that follow, within international student recruitment activities in the U.S.

For Stein, Andreotti, and Suša (2019), the "ethical imperative to consider…commitments to social accountability and service to the (global) public good" (p. 37) conflicts with the "economic imperative for universities to capitalize on the financial opportunities afforded by internationalization" (p. 37). They ask if scholars and practitioners can have conversations about ethics from within these contexts, where institutions must be aware of and attend to financial obligations. However, the goal in examining ethical shortcomings is to begin conversations that "challenge dominant assumptions about what is possible and consider that there are other possibilities that are viable but lie beyond what is currently imaginable" (Stein et al., 2019, p. 37). In my study, I sought to understand what duties universities owe international students and how those duties inform how universities should practice international student recruitment and represent themselves internationally. However, I was cognizant of the fact that ethics as

a method of philosophical inquiry is primarily a Western construct.  Using ethics in this way may serve to reinforce existing problems noted by critical and ethical scholars discussed later, in Chapter 2.

As I sought to develop professional, ethical principles for international student recruitment professionals, I used the understanding of ethics as morally good (Hutchings, 2018). In line with a "best practices" approach, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) describe a paradigm for ethical educational leadership that can be applied to professionals working in international student recruitment.  The paradigm

> expects its leaders to formulate and examine their own professional code of ethics in light of individual personal codes of ethics, as well as standards set forth by the profession, and then calls on them to place students at the center of the ethical decision-making process (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 27).

In educational leadership, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) "believe that if there is a moral imperative for the profession, it is to serve the 'best interests of the student'" (p. 25).  The best interests of the student are further defined as the "three Rs – rights, responsibility, and respect" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 27) that "are key to making ethical decisions that are in a student's best interests and, in turn, to fulfilling one's professional obligations as educational leaders" (p. 27).

Beyond the "best interests of the student" as a guiding goal for ethical educational leadership, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) assert that there may be a disconnect between practitioners' code of ethics and codes of ethics set by professional groups, as often practitioners are not aware of or impacted by formalized ethical codes.  In my study, I asked participants if they are familiar with or guided by professional ethical codes.  I will provide a review of these extant professional guidelines, as well as explore the literature

on ethics and the intersection with ethical internationalization in depth in the following

chapter.

**Significance**

Examining international student recruitment practices utilizing a paradigm of

ethical educational leadership allows for the opening up of new thinking about

recruitment practices, as well as the questioning of underlying motivations.  Much of the

research conducted on critical and ethical internationalization is based on a theoretical

response to contemporary discourse in the field.  In this study, I seek to build upon

existing ethical and critical internationalization research, but aim to focus on the context

of international education practice in the United States, as the majority of research in

ethical internationalization has been conducted in Europe (Guion Akdağ & Swanson,

2018; Khoo, 2011; Khoo, Haapakoski, Hellstén, & Malone, 2018), Canada (Stein, 2016),

the United Kingdom (Tannock, 2013), and Australia (Chowdhury & Phan, 2014; Ziguras,

2016), or focuses solely on theory.

In this study, I will seek to interrogate a normalized version of internationalization

that contains "social and political values toward economic rationales that reproduce

market expansionism" (Rhoads & Szele'nyi, 2011, in Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p.

361).  I will examine how pressures that international student recruiters bear under the

neoliberal framing of international student recruitment are mediated by how they

understand their work, as both an educator and a recruiter.  Finally, I will utilize an

ethical educational leadership framework to answer questions left unanswered by the

literature I have reviewed in contexts that have yet to be explored.

**Research Questions**

A series of essential questions in the study of international student recruitment remain unexplored, including ethical internationalization in a U.S. context, the role of international student recruitment in ethical internationalization, and implications and recommendations for international recruitment practices following this research.  These gaps in existing literature led me to my research questions, situated in the research site of public, teaching-focused universities in the United States.

1.  Within the current context of internationalization, how do international educators understand their work?

2.  What ethical dilemmas do international educators face in their work?

3.  What principles do international educators use to resolve the ethical dilemmas they face?

In summary, this study seeks to address several needs.  The changing landscape of international student mobility to U.S. HEIs creates an opportunity to reflect on current practices of international student recruitment, to discover how ethics are enacted in practice, and if guidelines and a theoretical framework can be established to champion more ethical internationalization activities.  A movement from theory to practice is necessary to advance the conversation and enable practitioners to engage critically with their work.  To understand the current landscape of thought around international student recruitment, I will review literature that addresses the framing of international students as economic and cultural capital, in addition to current ethical internationalization scholarship.

**Chapter 2**

To understand how an ethical framing of internationalization can counter economic and cultural resource discourses, I will analyze three distinct bodies of internationalization literature.  In this chapter, I will begin by providing an overview of the history of international student recruitment in the United States.  International student mobility was first construed as creating opportunities for mutual scholarly and cultural exchange, then shifted to the understanding of international students as cultural ambassadors (O'Mara, 2012), and finally as fee-paying students that bring financial benefits to the universities they attend (García & Villarreal, 2014; George Mwangi, 2013).  Scholars focused on the economic rationale for international student recruitment are concerned with the motivations of international students to study abroad (Lee et al., 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Nicholls, 2018) and of the institutions that recruit them (Hegarty, 2014), and recruitment and retention practices in the U.S. and in competitor countries (Adams et al., 2012; Beech, 2018; Onk & Joseph, 2017).  This section concludes with a review of neoliberalism in higher education, demonstrating that economic rationales for international student recruitment can be viewed through a dominant neoliberal frame (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008; Kamola, 2014; Shahjahan, 2014).

The second body of literature that will be reviewed is literature that provides alternative rationales for international recruitment.  Specifically, international students are often portrayed as instruments of culture that can help promote global understanding among domestic students in U.S. HEIs.  Such framing of international students as agents of culture is frequently found in internationalization at home (IaH) literature.  My review of IaH literature will reveal that proponents of IaH view international students as a beneficial resource on campus (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016; Knight, 2012), but also

further perpetuate the dominant neoliberal social imaginary by utilizing international student presence to build the social capital of domestic students (Robson et al., 2018).

The third body of literature reviewed in this chapter contrasts the neoliberal and instrumental framing of international students through the emerging field of ethical internationalization.  Ethical internationalization has been conceptualized by authors with a variety of purposes – to examine the rights of international students (Marginson, 2012; Marginson, 2013; Tannock, 2013), unveil linkages between international student recruitment and racism (Stein & Andreotti, 2016), and uncover dominant institutional motivations for international student recruitment (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).  Ethical internationalization challenges the idea that the flow of knowledge comes from Western countries to developing countries (Herbert & Abdi, 2013), and scholars attempt to address inequalities and "ethical dilemmas" (Garson, 2016, p. 31) present in current conversations surrounding internationalization.

In this chapter, I will explore connections between these three bodies of literature and demonstrate how the neoliberal framing of international students is both pervasive and contested within the literature.  The review of literature will also identify a lack of empirical studies on ethical internationalization in the U.S. and a lack of studies utilizing international student recruitment practitioners' experiences and perspectives.  To situate these bodies of literature, the following section will provide historical context on the history of international student recruitment in the United States.

### History of International Student Recruitment in the United States

International student migration is not a new phenomenon (García & Villarreal, 2014).  Founded in the 5th century, Nalanda University, located in Northeastern India, is often considered the world's first international residential university with 10,000

international students from China, Tibet, and Central Asia at its peak (Pinkney, 2015).  In the 12th century, students throughout Europe migrated to Bologna and Paris to study in newly established medieval universities (Altbach, 1998; Guruz, 2011; Haskins, 1957).  The next wave of international student mobility occurred in the mid-19th century, when international students flocked to German universities, as German scholarship was considered cutting-edge and rigorous (Altbach, 1998).  Upon the return of these U.S. academics to the United States after their study in Germany, U.S. institutions sought to follow German universities in establishing centers of academic excellence to attract scholars and students (Thelin, 2019).

Following World War II, the U.S. government allocated federal funding toward universities for scientific research.  During this time, higher education became seen as both "a public good – beneficial to the nation's economy, protective of its national defense, opening up new avenues of knowledge, and able to realize equality of educational opportunity" (Lazerson, 1998, p. 65) as well as a private good, where "everyone who possessed it substantially improved their access to higher income, status and security" (p. 65).  This re-positioning of higher education led to the first phase of international student mobility in the U.S., where students began migrating steadily to the U.S. in response to U.S. universities' substantial federal funding and academic rigor (Thelin, 2019).  During this time, the Fulbright Program was established to promote peace and understanding through international exchange, and "represented the first formal U.S. commitment to increasing cross-border student mobility" (Adams et al., 2012, p. 408).  NAFSA, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, was also founded at this time.  In this phase, targeted recruitment was not practiced.  Instead, the

focus was placed on academic exchange and individual relationships (Adams et al., 2012).

The second phase of international student recruitment occurred in the mid-1960s to late-2000s. When economic investigations demonstrated that investment in primary education led to the highest rates of return on investment over time (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018), the World Bank subsequently focused mainly on "primary and secondary education, while pressuring developing nations to limit (sometimes withdraw) public support for higher education" (Collins & Rhoads, 2008, p. 179). The increased investment and focus on primary and secondary education that occurred in the 1980s in countries outside of the United States led to divestment in higher education in these countries, while at the same time creating a large cohort of students moving through primary and secondary education. This affected international student mobility, leading students who sought to obtain tertiary degrees to seek higher education abroad. The change in international student mobility occurred concurrently with the U.S. government's divestment in higher education domestically, contributing to both the desire on the part of U.S. HEIs to recruit internationally mobile students and the motivation of those students to look beyond their home countries for educational opportunities.

U.S. HEIs experienced a dramatic increase in the numbers of international students during this period, along with a shift in perception of how international students were viewed. According to O'Mara (2012), this shift began in the 1970s when "leaders considered foreign students not merely future presidents but future CEOs as well" (p. 601). The increase in international student numbers led to a higher profile for NAFSA and other professional organizations that provided guidance for educators working with

the newly increased population of international students.  This period also saw a shift in university strategies, to include an explicit focus on international student recruitment. The "large numbers of fee-paying students had awakened an awareness on some campuses of the revenue potential of international students" (Adams et al., 2012, p. 409) as international students' tuition and fees were unregulated and much higher than domestic students' tuition.

While some public institutions link international and out-of-state recruitment efforts, as students who fall outside of the "in-state resident" category may pay the same tuition rate, in general, international students are prohibited from federal financial aid, grants, and other forms of financial support that may be available to domestic students. At many institutions, international students do not have a pathway to becoming in-state residents, while out-of-state students may have this opportunity.  For many U.S. HEIs, international students are a revenue opportunity, and recruitment is practiced to avail of this opportunity.

As a result, international students became viewed as a source of income, particularly when coupled with declines in governmental funding (Adnett, 2010; Bolsmann & Miller, 2008).  EducationUSA advising centers emerged in countries around the world to promote the U.S. as a study destination and to advise international students on university application and visa processes.  The importance of education as a tradable commodity was further facilitated through the World Trade Organization (WTO), which allowed services, like education, to be negotiated.  Higher education became the U.S.'s fifth-largest exportable service following protection from the WTO (Kamola, 2014).  Subsequently, recruitment activities focused on educational fairs and small group visits, modeled after industrial trade shows.  This recruitment approach

resulted in some significant flows of international students to specific institutions,

[but] it was not accompanied by any substantial modification of U.S. admissions

practice on the institution side and rarely was tied to any ongoing service level at

the point of origin of the international student (Adams et al., 2012, p. 409).

Due to visa concerns and policies following the September 11, 2001, terrorist

attacks in the United States, a significant decline in the number of international students

enrolling in U.S. institutions occurred in 2004 (Lee et al., 2006; Marginson & van der

Wende, 2006).  Post-9/11, visa regulations were tightened substantially for international

students, who consequently felt unwelcomed by the U.S. populace and discriminated

against by the U.S. government (Lee et al., 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007).  The decline in

international student enrollment was coupled with a decline in domestic high school

graduate enrollment, which posed financial challenges for public universities facing

budget cuts from state governments (Oliff, Palacios, Johnson, & Leachman, 2013).

In light of declining federal and state support for public institutions in the U.S.

(Oliff et al., 2013), international student tuition is viewed by many administrators at U.S.

HEIs as an appealing way to generate additional revenue.  Today, international students

generate $41 billion in yearly revenue for the U.S., and $6.8 billion in revenue in

California alone (NAFSA, 2019a).  The U.S. now enrolls one-quarter of the world's

international students (Project Atlas, 2017).  Though these students bring a multitude of

benefits to U.S. campuses, the prevailing discursive portrayal within international student

recruitment is related to profitability.

**Contemporary Issues: Competition for International Students**

In the U.S., the dominant narrative about international students relates to their role

as revenue generators for institutions.  This "source of revenue" (Hegarty, 2014, p. 223)

is "crucial to the existence of numerous academic programs" (p. 223), and "with the majority of international students paying full tuition the importance of their presence in American academic life cannot be underscored" (p. 225).  Going one step beyond economic rationales for recruiting international students, literature and practitioners also consider another benefit international students bring to U.S. campuses: diversity.  However, this "benefit" is frequently framed in terms of benefits to host country nationals, where the presence of international students serves to prepare domestic graduates for future successful global employment (García & Villarreal, 2014).  García and Villarreal (2014) argued that if the U.S. government works to support institutions in recruiting and retaining international students, this will "help ensure that postsecondary institutions graduate citizens who function effectively within a global society while being accepting of diversity" (García & Villarreal, 2014, p. 134).  These economic arguments imply that "universities in the U.S. must do more than they have done in the past to attract tuition-paying international students" (Hegarty, 2014, p. 230), and warn that as all of the "competitor" countries have federal governments that are desirous and supportive of enrolling international students, the U.S.'s lack of a cohesive strategy could "prove very detrimental to the economy" (p. 230).

Scholars argue that for U.S. institutions to remain competitive and to continue to receive the twofold benefits of increased revenue and diversity, immigration policy should be adjusted to ease current visa restrictions that make it difficult for international students to obtain entry to the U.S. (García & Villarreal, 2014).  Policies should also be adjusted to allow international students to remain in the U.S. longer to work, not for their benefit, but for prolonged exposure to the U.S. work environment that will ensure that upon returning home, international students will be a "great source of good-will for the

United States…and [this] goodwill built up from their years in the United States could prove very beneficial for the U.S. both economically and politically" (Hegarty, 2014, p. 231).  Scholars make recommendations for the establishment of international student support centers at universities (García & Villarreal, 2014) to ensure international students are "well-received and assimilated quickly into college life to improve retention and ensure adequate classroom performance" (Hegarty, 2014, p. 231).  Problematically, scholars liken these international student support centers to centers designed to provide support for underrepresented students (García & Villarreal, 2014) without recognizing that they are not designed to meet the unique needs of international students.  Typical campus notions of diversity and multiculturalism do not usually consider international student populations.  Instead, the rationale for their care returns quickly to competitive arguments: "if organizations do not take care of their customers, someone else will" (Hegarty, 2014, p. 232).  This puts the onus on those making decisions around recruitment and marketing at U.S. HEIs to ensure their institution is promoted accurately and has the infrastructure to support the students they recruit.

To explore if international students are really "cash cows" (Cantwell, 2015, p. 521), Cantwell sought to understand if increased international student enrollment had a net effect on institutions' tuition revenue.  The study investigated the relationship between new international undergraduate enrollment and institutional revenue from the years 2000-2009.  Findings indicated that research and doctoral universities had net gains in revenue through the enrollment of new international undergraduate students, but the sampled bachelor and master institutions did not (Cantwell, 2015).  The institutions that received revenue gains were able to attract large numbers of international students, but for HEIs that do not have "the visibility, prestige, or programmatic offerings to attract

large numbers of students from abroad" (Cantwell, 2015, p. 522), recruitment efforts may not yield positive results.

Conversely, George Mwangi (2013) found a "positive relationship between total institutional revenue and international student enrollment" (p. 71) in a study examining state-level panel data of 50 states from 1990-2010.  The study found that decreased state appropriations to higher education resulted in the higher enrollment of international students, leading to increased tuition revenue that would fill the allocated budget gap. The study also found that as overall tuition revenue decreased, enrollment of international students increased (George Mwangi, 2013).  George Mwangi (2013) concluded with policy implications: that "states should support the revenue-building opportunity of international student enrollment through policy" (p. 73).  George Mwangi (2013) noted that states should also set tuition at a level that would generate revenue and is "both competitive internationally and still higher than the real costs of the degree program for domestic students" (George Mwangi, 2013, p. 74).  Additionally, George Mwangi (2013) stated that policymakers "do not have to support international students at the expense of state residents" (p. 74) but should not restrict the percentage of international student enrollments that would subsequently "restrict institutions from reaping the financial and other benefits of enrolling international students" (p. 74).

Taken together, Cantwell (2015) and George Mwangi (2013) present somewhat different pictures of actual revenue generated by international students, though they both used the same database – the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) – for their data collection, in addition to similar variables and statistical analyses.  When administrators decide to recruit international students actively, the rationale is primarily fiscally-driven, though, given

these two contradictory studies, the potential impact may need to be more closely examined.

**The role of agents in recruitment**.  Agencies are for-profit, private companies that contract with universities worldwide to recruit international students in exchange for a commission paid by the university.  This incentivized relationship between agencies and universities has led to a question of ethics: if an agency receives a commission when they send a student to a partner institution, what mechanisms are in place to ensure the agency is helping the student find the best-fit school, rather than putting their self-interests first?

Agencies have been a problematic facet of international student recruitment in the U.S. context, as they are illegal in domestic student recruitment "due to the ethics of incentivised recruitment, although it should be noted that at present this does not extend to universities recruiting international students into the USA" (ICEF Monitor 2012, as cited in Beech, 2018, p. 618).  While the use of agencies is not as widespread in the United States as in Australia and the U.K. (Nikula & Kivistö, 2018) due to the stance from some professional organizations that international students and domestic students should be considered the same in light of the commission quandary, their use has become more accepted following the 2013 NACAC decision to lift their ban on commission-based agencies in international student recruitment.  Subsequently, the growth of institutional use of agents corresponds with the timeline outlined above, increasing as U.S. universities began focusing on the revenue-generating opportunities found in differential international student tuition.

Scholars have identified both benefits and challenges of working with recruitment agencies.  Agents are seen as a cost-effective way of having representation in a specific

country without hiring local staff or spending to send university staff on expensive international recruitment trips (Huang, Raimo, & Humfrey 2016).  They are considered trusted partners that can provide regional insights and assist with access to local networks, including high schools (Nikula & Kivistö, 2018).  However, critical ethical issues arise when there are not effective monitoring mechanisms in place on the part of the institution.  Unethical agencies may mislead students, conduct document fraud, or otherwise manipulate the application process (Huang et al., 2016; Nikula & Kivistö, 2018) driven by a desire for commission without placing either the institutions' or the student's interests first.  To mitigate the potential for these unethical behaviors, institutions and recruiters should carefully monitor and vet agency.  This can include monitoring student data, communicating with recruited students and soliciting student feedback, engaging in regular contact with agency partners, auditing agency produced marketing materials, peer review, and consultation when entering into a new agency relationship, and mystery shopping (Nikula & Kivistö, 2019).  Unfortunately, institutions in the U.S. do not have regulatory frameworks in place to monitor agency behavior; the closest approximation is the contractual agreement signed by the institution and agency, though studies have shown that institutions lack confidence that agencies read or understand provisions in the contract related to conduct (Huang et al., 2016). International student recruiters demonstrate a perceived lack of control or power over their agency relationships and an inability to prevent unethical practices (Huang et al., 2016).  The desire on the part of the institution to increase international student tuition revenue may lead to their increased use of agencies, potentially to the detriment of the international student experience if the student does not receive adequate service from the

agency, or if the agency misleads students into entering an educational context for which they were not prepared.

The scholarship mentioned above described the history and contemporary issues related to the recruitment of international students by institutions in the Global North. However, international students are not sitting idly by waiting to be solicited. Instead, international students themselves have documented motivations and strategies for enrolling in institutions outside of their home countries.  The subsequent analysis will discuss literature related to international student motivations for studying abroad.

**International student motivations for U.S. education**. The reasons why students choose to study internationally are often characterized as "push and pull factors" (Altbach, 2004; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; McMahon, 1992).  *Push factors* include a lack of capacity at home institutions, the perception of superiority of overseas institutions over home country institutions, and the unavailability of desired study programs in the home country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).  *Pull factors* include the promise of increased social mobility or academic prestige at universities overseas (Lee et al., 2006), the reputation of the host country and host institution, reputable alumni, and institutional linkages (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).  Academic rankings and the prestige that comes with earning a degree at a university in the United States are economic pull factors (Lee et al., 2006). Not all international students in the U.S. are studying at academically ranked institutions. However, attending an un-ranked U.S. institution is still seen as preferential by some, as the student would gain cultural and social capital by studying in a U.S. context (García & Villarreal, 2014).

Nicholls' (2018) recent study sought to understand the specific push and pull factors that influence international students' decisions when choosing where to

study.  International students make three decisions when deciding where to study in the U.S.: which country, which state, and which institution (Nicholls, 2018).  Pull factors and their relative importance at each decision level were examined.  The site of inquiry was Michigan State University (MSU).  Enrolled international students were randomly surveyed to understand why they chose the U.S., Michigan, and MSU as their study destination, along with factors influencing their decision.  The typical response to why students chose the U.S. was related to the expected quality of a U.S. education, followed by opportunities for research.  Expected quality ranked highly on the level of importance (Nicholls, 2018).  These trends were more or less replicated in responses to why students chose Michigan and MSU.  The author argued that the findings confirmed the importance for U.S. universities to highlight three factors in their recruiting efforts: levels of safety and security, affordability, and "the overall quality of a U.S. education, [including] the more specific reputation/rankings of the university and its individual departments and programs" (Nicholls, 2018, p. 616).  International students are likened to "young consumers" (Nicholls, 2018, p. 616) who are brand aware.  Similarly, countries, states, and institutions can be considered brands, and "awareness, perceptions and images thereof are therefore absolutely critical" (Nicholls, 2018, p. 616).  Like previous studies (McMahon, 1992), Nicholls (2018) found that predominately economic motivations for selecting university study outside of students' home countries prevailed.

*Rankings*. As Nicholls (2018) found, reputation and ranking of an institution have an impact on international student decision making.  An institution's focus on internationalization, with the recruitment of international students being one component, is seen to positively correlate with an institution's reputation (Delgado-Márquez, Escudero-Torres & Hurtado-Torres, 2013).  Thus, if an institution effectively markets

itself and increases international student numbers (considered as an indicator of successful internationalization), the institutional reputation grows, subsequently increasing the desire for that institution among international students.  Global university rankings are a concrete indicator of reputation and cement the idea of a world university market (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007).

Prospective students in the top sending market of international students to the U.S., China, are mainly concerned with rankings, with the belief that a university's ranking provides evidence of quality and allows for ease of career attainment upon returning to their home country (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013).  Beyond China, "the perceived quality of instruction abroad and the perceived value of host institutions are key criteria for international students when selecting their country of destination" (OECD, 2018, p. 223), and top destinations for international students include a high number of top-ranked higher education institutions.  Delgado-Márquez et al.'s (2013) study on the positive relationship between the internationalization of higher education on universities' reputation supported "the arguments of scholars who suggest that enhancement of the international profile and reputation is one of the most important justifications for the internationalization of higher education institutions" (p. 630).  Notably, the authors acknowledged limitations to their study, in that utilizing dominant measures of ranking may perpetuate the status quo (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013).

Internationalization, reputation, and rankings appear to have a conflated effect. Therefore, unranked U.S. institutions have also realized the benefit of utilizing the language of rankings in international student recruitment practices.  Community colleges, two-year institutions that provide transfer pathways to four-year institutions, have begun

actively recruiting international students, advertising themselves as pathways to ranked U.S. institutions (Jennings, 2017).  To enroll large numbers of international students and the prime motivators of revenue generation and increased diversity, community colleges "capitalize" on their competitive factors, such as comparatively lower fees, transfer pathways, location, and professionalized recruitment (Bohman, 2014; Jennings, 2017). The portrayal of international students as "young consumers" (Nicholls, 2018) and U.S. HEIs' subsequent competition for these students can be understood through the tenets of neoliberalism, discussed next.

### Neoliberalism

Scholars argue that one of the reasons why international students are portrayed as either customers or commodities is that U.S. higher education is highly influenced by neoliberal economic models.  Neoliberal economic thinking introduced in the U.S. in the 1980s gave "primary importance to capitalist markets as the provider of all social wealth" (Harvey, 2005).  Higher education became reconceptualized as a private good, and not a good that the government should provide, a shift from the nationalist university of the Cold War era (O'Mara, 2012).  In the 1990s, a knowledge-based economy emerged, converting U.S. universities into "important sites for training the highly skilled workers needed to fuel a 'global knowledge economy'" (Kamola, 2014, p. 527).  Federal and state governments began withdrawing funding from universities and colleges, resulting in a movement toward the marketization of education and higher tuition, including a concentrated move toward international student recruitment.  Education became viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold.

These market forces have altered the language that represents and evaluates human behavior, away from civic discourses and toward a language of commercialism

(Giroux, 2002).  This has led to a structural transformation of U.S. universities that has remade institutions from "apparatuses for producing national imaginaries into ones highly productive of global imaginaries" (Kamola, 2014, p. 524).  Giroux (2002) cautioned that when neoliberal values define a society, "the relationship between a critical education, public morality and civic responsibility as conditions for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens are sacrificed all too willingly to the interest of financial capital and the logic of profit-making" (p. 427).

Neoliberalism has become dominant in both practice and thought, emphasizing financial and market processes in capitalist countries participating in the global economy (Harvey, 2005).  Neoliberal economic models have reconfigured universities to produce people that are "productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives" (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 248).  Neoliberal reforms have led to significant cuts in funding to public HE, which has, in turn, led to a focus on private revenue generation (Shahjahan, 2014).  Stier (2004) cautions,

> If internationalization is seen as a means to decrease global disparity, prevent exploitation, 'brain drain' and cultural imperialism, and work to resolve social and global problems, economic incentives should not be allowed to exercise hegemonic influences on higher education, but other 'higher' ends need to be allowed to co-exist and flourish. (p. 95)

Scholars and practitioners echo Stier's (2004) concern.  In the International Association of Universities (IAU) Internationalization survey, "the number one risk identified…was the commodification and commercialization of education programs" (Knight, 2012, p. 29).  Educators are concerned with how commercialization will change the incentives for institutions to internationalize.  A shifting emphasis on the "buying and

selling of education across borders" (Knight, 2012, p. 29) has led to the de-prioritization of non-profit rationales.  According to Garson (2016), neoliberalism has impacted internationalization specifically as "financial gain often supersedes concerns about the public good" (p. 24).  The commoditization of higher education (HE) and internationalization are thoroughly discussed in the existing literature. The following section will focus primarily on one aspect of this – international student recruitment as the mechanism for how economic, neoliberal, and human capital forces emerge in internationalization.

**Neoliberalism and International Student Recruitment**

Giroux (2002) and others have claimed that corporate culture has consumed higher education.  Such a culture can be found in a variety of day-to-day activities, including international student recruitment.  Under the neoliberal imaginary, international students are desirable as a product (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008; Deschamps & Lee, 2015; Rhee & Sagaria, 2004) but are also constructed discursively as consumers (Brown & Jones, 2013; McCrohon & Nyland, 2018) with consumer rights and attendant concerns for customer satisfaction.  Knowledge is positioned as capital (Adnett, 2010), and the corporate university (Giroux, 2002) abides by values of profit, control (Dear, 2018; Marginson, 2012) and efficiency (Giroux, 2002).  Policy at the level of the university (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008) and nation-state (Lomer, 2014) operates under the dominant neoliberal social imaginary, where international students are valued primarily for the economic gains they bestow upon universities (Lomer, 2014).  Broader theoretical issues related to neoliberalism and education are described in the paragraphs below.

**Knowledge as capital**.  In the neoliberal imaginary, knowledge is capital. International student mobility is intricately tied to the global flows of knowledge capital

when international students leave their home countries to seek education abroad (Knight, 2012).  The growing trade imbalance has raised two concerns in the context of desiring to reduce global income inequality: "the increasing significance of a country's human capital stock for its economic development and the possibility of a brain drain from developing countries" (Adnett, 2010, p. 626).  A country's international competitiveness and growth potential are frequently viewed as being determined by the educational attainment of the country's workforce (Adnett, 2010).  International students are selected both academically and socially, and a disproportionate ratio of students from the political and economic elite in sending countries can "import" foreign education, further exacerbating income inequalities (Adnett, 2010; Kim, 2011).

A global hierarchy of higher education, most frequently placing U.S. HE at the top, acts as a pull factor for international students seeking to increase their "global positional competition" (Kim, 2011, p. 111) and cultural capital (Nash, 1990) in the world economy.  Adnett (2010) found that the "increasing tendency for less developed economies to 'import' HE threatens the growth of their own HE system" (p. 629), and their subsequent growth potential will be limited.  The net "exporters" of education receive twofold benefits: tuition revenues, and contributions to human capital when international students stay on after graduation as skilled workers, resulting in "brain drain" from their home countries.  The attainment of knowledge is viewed as increasing an individual's global cultural capital, not about "higher learning, but about gaining a better foothold in the job market" (Giroux, 2002, p. 435).

**Corporate university**. Scholars claim that neoliberal policies have diminished the public good of universities and aligned them with corporate entities (Giroux, 2002; Stiglitz, 1999).  Entrepreneurialism has infiltrated internationalization activities, with

some institutions decreasing focus on traditional internationalization activities, such as exchange and mobility partnerships, and increasing focus on international student recruitment and financially lucrative partnerships (Deschamps & Lee, 2015).  Pathway programs, where international students first study English and preparatory courses before enrolling in university, privilege a consumerist view of education, "valorizing neoliberal ideas of flexibility and employment mobility" (McCartney & Metcalfe, 2018, p. 2) by appealing to international students as an "entry point for an aspirational global citizenship" (p. 2).  To understand the emphasis on revenue generation through unregulated student tuition from a Canadian perspective, McCartney and Metcalfe (2018) studied admission pathway programs at public Canadian HEIs.  The recruitment of international students into these pre-admission pathway programs contributed to "public higher education's continued existence within the neoliberal paradigm (through access to unregulated international student tuition revenues) [and] its demise as a public institution (by relying on external, private spending)" (McCartney & Metcalfe, 2018, p. 7).  This overtly economic rationale is echoed in policy discourse as well.

**Policy**. Lomer's (2014) study explored how international students are represented in policy discourse in the United Kingdom.  The study found that international students are represented in primarily economic terms, revealing three key assumptions: education is a marketplace, the primary value of an international student is financial, and students are independent consumers (Lomer, 2014).  This understanding stems from the dominant neoliberal imaginary and serves to oversimplify interactions between international students and host countries (Lomer, 2014).

In Lomer's (2014) analysis, the benefits international students bring to the U.K., including cultural and pedagogic diversity and intellectual capital, are made unintelligible

in national policy discourse, which is predominately market-based.  Reframing these "benefits" through market-based language serves to "other" the international student for the benefit of the U.K.  However, Lomer (2014) concluded that international students "are not merely vectors of money; they are people, with backgrounds, aspirations, family ties, feelings, and futures. An ethical policy discourse would represent and respect these dimensions of students as well, even if higher education is a global marketplace" (p. 282).

To understand if international student recruitment contributed to increasing or reducing global inequality, Adnett (2010) examined how the outflow of recruited students encouraged or discouraged the economic development of their home country.  Adnett (2010) found that the "increasing internationalisation of education is one factor contributing to the unequal division of benefits across countries" (p. 633).  While Adnett (2010) offers an alternative policy solution that recommends moving away from imposing Western educational systems on the Global South, he goes on to suggest that HEIs in the Global South can increase their quality by working with institutions in the Global North.  This deficit thinking is common throughout the history of colonialism: that Western educational systems are the holders of knowledge.  Further, Adnett's policy suggestions remained couched in the language of the market, as neoliberalism "limits the vocabulary and imagery available" (Giroux, 2002, p. 429) to make recommendations outside of a commercialized space.

Within neoliberal economic environments, education is a tool for enhancing personal social capital, and students may be viewed by institutions as revenue sources to sustain their bottom line. This section on neoliberalism concludes with a discussion on

how international students, in particular, may be viewed as both customers of a product (degrees) and a source of capital by host institutions.

**International students as commodities/capital**.  Neoliberal understandings of international students frame them as customers and universities as competitive providers of service, where economics guides international student recruitment strategies, and the benefits international students bring are viewed in terms of fees (Deschamps & Lee, 2015).  In this regard, international students are considered as commodities or as capital (Lomer, 2014).  This discursive portrayal is pervasive in policy, recruitment strategies (James-MacEachern, 2018), and how media portrays international students (Rhee & Sagaria, 2004).

Bolsmann and Miller (2008) conceptualized international student recruitment as "internationalisation that engages with the processes of globalisation that are primarily economic and competitive" (p. 77).  To understand the rationale for international student recruitment in the United Kingdom, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with senior international officers at four universities.  They found that the dominant rationale for international student recruitment was primarily economic and market-oriented, expressed within the discourse of globalization.  International offices, in particular, focused on "marketing and recruitment without necessarily having a view which takes into account the effect of the large-scale presence of international students on a particular program" (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008, p. 86).  Instead, they were concerned primarily with financial benefits, and not on aspects of students' experiences on campuses.  In a similar study, Deschamps and Lee (2015) interviewed senior international officers from 30 international offices in U.S. public HEIs.  They found that the primary form of internationalization at the surveyed HEIs was international student recruitment, and

international students were overwhelmingly described in terms of their financial

value.  While international students may receive life-changing educational experiences

and bring diversity to campus, the dominant rationale for their recruitment is economic.

**International students as a customer**.  Nevertheless, international students have

demonstrated awareness of their power as consumers and their contributions to the local

and HE economy (Brown & Jones, 2013), and in some studies, have developed the

expectation of successful outcomes regardless of effort (McCrohon & Nyland,

2018).  Though institutions often focus primarily on the financial aspect of international

students, when the students themselves view university study as a product, they can

choose to take their business elsewhere when faced with difficulties on campus.  These

difficulties can include not being given passing grades or broader campus experiences of

discrimination and tokenism (Brown & Jones, 2013; McCrohon & Nyland, 2018). In this

regard, encounters with racism and bias could harm international student retention and

future recruitment, as positive word-of-mouth endorsement is considered a vital

recruitment tool (Brown & Jones, 2013).  Moreover, the positioning of international

students as customer subsequently leads to requirements of quality assurance, and

potentially a decline in academic quality, when faculty are encouraged to pass students

regardless of skill (McCrohon & Nyland, 2018).

The previous section reviewed the literature on the economics of international

students in U.S. HEIs. There is clear evidence that international students are considered

part of a larger economic development agenda for both institutions and their host

communities. Finances, however, are not the only reason why U.S. HEIs recruit

international students.  Narratives of global understanding (often articulated through

"internationalization at home" [IaH] strategies) portray international students as cultural

agents, who are purported to help U.S. domestic students better understand the world. The following section outlines the literature on IaH and the portrayal of international students as cultural agents.

### International Students as Cultural Agents

This section examines the role of international students as instrumental agents of "culture." Some recent studies portray international students as representatives of their home countries or "cultures" for domestic student consumption. For domestic students who are unable or unwilling to partake in study abroad experiences, the presence of international students on campuses is an important aspect of internationalization at home (IaH).

A key argument in internationalization literature is that in increased numbers of international students in classrooms with domestic students can develop in domestic students an "appreciation for global diversity" (Buckner & Stein, 2019, p. 12). However, without an operationalization of "appreciation," this approach can "implicitly frame the global 'other' as an object of knowledge, cultural capital, and personal development for the local subject, rather than an equal partner in a reciprocal engagement" (Buckner & Stein, 2019, p. 12). Such positioning may force international students to be "locked into the status of 'outsider,' either unwilling or unable to engage with the dominant majority" (Leask & Carroll, 2011, p. 648).

Proponents of IaH cite the benefits of the strategy, but underlying motivations continue to be driven from within a neoliberal social imaginary, where knowledge is instrumentalized and considered part of an individual's human capital development (Watkins & Smith, 2018). IaH positions domestic students to reap most of these benefits in developing intercultural sensitivity and global citizenship through their interactions

with international students, skills that can be used later in the knowledge economy.  These market-driven ideologies run the risk of usurping holistic ideals around intercultural and global learning (Garson, 2016).

**Internationalization at Home (IaH)**

Some HEIs view successful internationalization as being associated with an increased market share of international students, a "worrying but perhaps inevitable trend" (Robson et al., 2018, p. 21).  Robson et al. (2018), acknowledging this trend, call for an alternative viewing of internationalization, with greater emphasis placed on "ethical, social and cultural goals" (Robson et al., 2018, p. 20).  Knight (2012) further argued that "student mobility is seen as the 'face' of internationalization and at times is mistakenly used interchangeably with the term" (p. 21). Internationalization at home is thus presented as an alternative option to the focus on international student recruitment and mobility (Robson et al., 2018).  According to Knight (2012), domestic student participation in study abroad programs in North America is "frustratingly low" (p. 23), and Baldassar and McKenzie (2016) also found that benefits accrued from study abroad and international programs are "partial and uneven" (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016, p. 10).  Baldassar and McKenzie (2016) argued that IaH leads to more "widespread benefits" (p. 10), such as the development of intercultural competencies (Jon, 2013; Soria & Troisi, 2014).

IaH, defined as "any on-campus, internationally related activity" (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016, p. 3) places emphasis on campus-based strategies, including integrating international and intercultural dimensions into the curriculum and the "integration of foreign students and scholars into campus life and activities" (Knight, 2012, p. 23).  These campus-based experiences can "help students live in a more interconnected

and culturally diverse world" (Knight, 2012, p. 23), develop an increased understanding of global issues, and greater intercultural understanding and skills (Jon, 2013).  However, this skill development is aimed primarily at domestic students, who benefit from exposure to international students.  International and domestic student engagement is key to IaH efforts and outcomes, but studies do not point to clear outcomes for both international and domestic students, despite purposeful coordination of engagement activities (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016).  International students are still portrayed discursively as a method to facilitate the desirable goal of IaH within an institution's strategic internationalization plan or as those who hold the responsibility for educating domestic students about the world outside of the host country.

**Reciprocity of learning**.  Mestenhauser (2011) recommended the implementation of policy, including "the establishment of special programs that would facilitate and sustain contact" (p. 153) and help build relationships between domestic and international students.  In line with this recommendation, Yefanova, Montgomery, Woodruff, Johnstone, and Kappler's (2017) study on purposeful facilitation of international and domestic student interaction demonstrated that faculty and administration could indeed facilitate interactions that are reciprocal and do not assume an instrumental role for international students.  The reality of U.S. HEIs is that domestic and international students will interact at some point in time.  However, Garson (2016) cautioned that "without careful and intentional curricula and pedagogy to promote learning across difference, we may actually be producing graduates with more biases and stereotypes than when they entered our institutions" (p. 21).  Similarly, Harrison's (2015) study found that domestic students resist intercultural group work and avoid contact with international students on their campuses.  This lack of meaningful contact leads to

unequal distribution of access and benefits of IaH, if benefits accrue at all in such circumstances.

**Xenophobia and racism on U.S. campuses**. Although IaH intends to promote broad international and intercultural understanding on campuses, U.S. campuses have also been the site of xenophobic and racist actions against international students. A final consideration relevant to how international students are constructed as consumers, commodities, or cultural agents relates to campus culture itself. During the broad initiative for U.S. HEIs to recruit more and more international students, campus climate outcomes for these students have not been adequately addressed. International students who experience prejudice and racist behavior may "adopt new skills and behaviors until they appear to be so 'like us'[1] that they are almost invisible, thereby precluding the opportunities inherent in diverse campuses and classrooms" (Leask & Carroll, 2011, p. 648), including the perceived benefits touted by proponents of IaH. To understand the effect of campus climate on enrollment, Lee and Rice (2007), for example, explored declining numbers of international students enrolled at U.S. universities through a study of international student experiences. The authors pointed to changing drivers in international education that position international students as consumers or customers, but without any consideration of their experiences after enrollment.

The authors stated that if the definition of internationalization considers students as "central players in intercultural exchange and diplomacy between nations" (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 385), then their experiences must be taken into consideration. For example, results revealed problematic discriminatory experiences faced by international

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[1] Here, Leask and Carroll (2011) use "like us" to refer to the domestic population of the host or receiving country where the international student is studying.

students of color.  Data were analyzed using a neo-racism conceptual framework, with an overall goal of "bettering their [international student] experiences and ensuring their continued enrollment" (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 383).

For many U.S. campuses, the proportion of international students on campus serves as a marker of internationalization.  Lee and Rice (2007) argued that international student experiences rather than the number of international students "should be considered first if internationalization is truly the goal" (p. 405).  Following this, Brown and Jones (2013) insisted that "it is the ethical duty of higher education institutions to work to protect the international students they have worked so hard to recruit" (p. 1017).

The framing of international students as consumers of a product, as instruments of revenue generation, and the on-campus experiences of international students with neo-racism have led some international education scholars to question the "ethical duty" (Brown & Jones, 2013, p. 1017) that institutions and the U.S. higher education sector have toward international students and internationalization.  These considerations are framed in the work of scholars who are critical of neoliberal and instrumental approaches to internationalization as well as nascent scholarship on ethical internationalization.

## Critical and Ethical Internationalization

### Critical Approaches

Critical internationalization scholarship critiques the apolitical study and neoliberal focus of internationalization and brings into focus uneven power distributions between traditionally receiving countries for student mobility and traditionally sending countries.  Scholars call for reflection on the "why and wherefore" (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011, p. 3) of internationalization rather than a focus on quantity: more exchange relationships, more degree mobility, more recruitment.  Vavrus and Pekol (2015) wrote

that much scholarship on internationalization accepts "dominant neoliberal discourses about the role of HE as a means of ensuring economic competitiveness as its point of departure" (p. 6).  Both the purposeful recruitment of international students as a means of revenue generation as well as the use of international students as a method to develop interculturally competent domestic students to serve in a knowledge economy operate within this dominant neoliberal framework. Critical internationalization studies problematize and complicate "the overwhelmingly positive and often depoliticized nature of mainstream approaches" (Stein, 2017, p. 5).

Critical scholars seek to trouble "internationalization" and call for a reassessment of the term (Knight, 2014) as well as a reaffirmation of the "core role of universities: to help understand the world and to improve our dealing with it" (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011, pp. 16-17).  Under the auspices of internationalization, activities traditionally related to globalization and marketization are increasingly conducted (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011).  For Knight (2014), the critical question is "whether internationalisation has evolved from what has been traditionally considered a process based on the values of cooperation, partnership, exchange, mutual benefits, and capacity building to one that is increasingly characterised by competition, commercialisation, self-interest, and status building" (p. 76).

However, Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) state that scholars and practitioners can no longer assume certain types of mobility are "good" (like exchange and study abroad) and others are "bad" (like recruitment).  Some scholars believe that internationalization should be reoriented toward the values of collaboration and cooperation for mutual academic benefits, and away from "the realities of competition, commercialization and self-interest status building" (Knight, 2014, p. 78).

**The Internationalization Divide**

In recent literature, a movement toward the identification of a dichotomous classification of beneficial and harmful internationalization activities becomes apparent, with cross-border mobility and higher education's focus on the economic facets being on the negative side.  Knight (2014), for example, characterizes a divide between internationalization at home and activities classified as "cross-border."  When universities seek revenue via student mobility as the overarching goal of internationalization, this can lead to lowered academic standards, visa factories, diploma mills, and the commercialization of international academic and accreditation services (Knight, 2014).  International academic mobility can also lead to the eroding of national cultural identities, with "native" cultures becoming homogenized and Westernized (Knight, 2014).  Other scholars view examples of unethical activities when professional organizations fail to engage in "discussion of the financial burdens (or exploitations) associated with various forms of internationalization" (Buckner & Stein, 2019, p. 11), ignoring inequalities that favor Western education.

Internationalization is considered beneficial through activities such as bilateral cultural and scientific agreements that provide students, faculty, researchers and the local community with "intercultural experiences, deeper insights into international issues, questioning of values, shifts in cultural and personal identities, and deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness of the world" (Knight, 2014, p. 83).  Other scholars recommend practices that acknowledge global inequalities and engage with power imbalances as examples of ethical practices, along with activities that include challenging and broadening students' world views and internationalization for "reciprocal or transformative outcomes" (Bucker & Stein, 2019, p. 10).

In a study conducted in Canada, Beck (2012) identified equitable internationalization practices.  These included the recognition of "local needs, values, practices, and identities of those who arrive in Canada to learn" (Beck, 2012, p. 139), opening up the duality of fixed ideas of global and local that Beck finds problematic with Knight's (2008) definition of internationalization.  Beck (2012) argued that this current working definition of internationalization, as an infusion of international and intercultural dimensions in the learning, teaching and research areas of a university (Knight, 2008), assumes a one-way flow of international elements, as well as a problematic delineation of local and global.  Defining internationalization in terms of an *eduscape*, Beck (2012) "situates the university in a larger flow of internationalizing forces and elements rather than seeing it as a point where activity begins and ends" (p. 142).  Along with other scholars recognizing the uneven flow of education from the Global North to the Global South (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015), Beck (2012) also makes mention of "colonial antecedents of international education" (p. 139), pointing to how power relations began through colonizing processes and are now exacerbated through economic and cultural flows.

**Decolonizing Internationalization**

To examine these colonizing processes and how internationalization contributes to perpetuating the modern/colonial global imaginary, Stein (2017) conducted a meta-synthesis of critical approaches to internationalization using social cartography, which maps diverse perspectives about an issue of shared concern (in this case, internationalization) within a given scholarly community.  In this argument, European colonization persists into the current manifestation of internationalization, creating a racial hierarchy of humanity, where European and White descendent peoples are represented as masters of universal reason with the rest of the world lagging behind

(Stein, 2017).  This hierarchy is used to account for the ongoing economic disparities between the Global North and South.

Operating under these assumptions, the history of international student recruitment can be revisited.  In the 20th century, the focus of higher education was on service to the nation-state, and international activities included individual mobility, research exchange, and the export of European educational systems (Thelin, 2019).  Following World War II came the concept of international development, which presumes that "human progress is unilinear and universal, and that the West is the most advanced and thus uniquely suited to lead the rest of humanity by sharing its knowledge and technology with 'less developed' or 'underdeveloped' regions" (Stein, 2017, p. 7).  International development activities involved sending faculty to institutions in the Global South, and elite international students studied at universities in the Global North (O'Mara, 2012).  In this way, "Western nations positioned themselves as benevolently imparting international students with knowledge and expertise, so that the students might lead their home countries on the path toward modernization" (Stein, 2017, p. 7), avowing the West's responsibility for colonialism.  International students were thought of instrumentally: as a way to spread capitalist economic models, Western power, and market reach, much in the way they are treated in current conceptualizations of internationalization at home (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016; Robson et al., 2018).

Today, internationalization is framed as a response to globalization (Childress, 2010), and uneven patterns of mobility between the Global North and Global South persist.  This divide can explain why students from the Global South are underrepresented in U.S. HEIs, as students from middle- and upper-income countries, like China, India, and South Korea, form the largest populations of international students

studying in the U.S. and other countries in the Global North (IIE, 2019).  To this extent, international student mobility has less to do with historical colonialism and more to do with U.S. HEIs focusing recruitment efforts in countries where students can afford the high tuition fees charged to international students.  This focus is an example of the relationship between neoliberalization and internationalization, where internationalization in the Global North is a means to generate revenue and reproduce epistemic hegemony (Stein, 2017).  Critical approaches to internationalization point to the deleterious consequences of neoliberalism but vary in how they address the "issue of international students" (Stein, 2017, p. 12).

**A Typology of Critiques of Internationalization**

Stein (2017) categorizes critiques of internationalization into *soft*, *radical*, and *liminal*, and within these critiques, the international student is portrayed in different ways.  The critiques share a common thread, in that "all three approaches assert the dangers of neoliberalism and share a general consensus that internationalization is often 'far less innocent' than Knight's oft-cited definition would suggest" (Stein, 2017, p. 12).  The international student is used as a locus for understanding the different types of approaches, as the majority of internationalization efforts center around student mobility (Stein, 2017).

**Soft critiques of internationalization**.  *Soft critiques* of internationalization "assume that it is possible to achieve a better balance and greater understanding between local and global interests and populations in order to broadly share the benefits of higher education" (Stein, 2017, p. 14).  While these critiques identify shortcomings in a neoliberal approach to internationalization, they align with narratives about higher education's role in expansive and sustainable national economic

growth that will contribute to broad benefits beyond local interests (Stein, 2017).  Soft critiques of international student recruitment would be concerned with brain drain, but argue that "brain return" (Marginson, 2006) can provide benefits when students study in the Global North then return home with their new, "better" knowledge.  These critiques also recognize racism international students experience on campuses (Lee & Rice, 2007), the need to provide adequate support for international students after their recruitment, and international student rights and responsibilities (Marginson, 2012).  Knight's (2014) call for a reimagining of internationalization that hearkens back to its glory days of bilateral and reciprocal partnerships could fall under this soft critique category.

**Radical critiques of internationalization**.  *Radical critiques* of internationalization are "oriented by the idea that universities not only tacitly reproduce but also actively contribute to the reproduction of global inequality and harm" (Stein, 2017, p. 14).  Thus, internationalization extends the economic power and cultural/political hegemony of Western nations (Stein, 2017).  Authors who level radical critiques at internationalization are concerned that international students are financial and symbolic resources for nations from the Global North to procure.  As tuition at HEIs in the Global North is costly, only the wealthy international students can afford to pay the price, further reproducing inequality in home countries.  Guion Akdağ and Swanson's (2017) study of Scottish university policy documents falls under this radical critique category.  The authors sought to provide insights into the power dynamics of internationalization and used critical postcolonial perspectives to critique internationalization discourses in relation to ethics and power (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017).

Guion Akdağ and Swanson (2017) selected four public strategy documents related to internationalization, and identified four common themes, using Foucauldian discourse analysis. The first theme was a reification of numbers and forms of measurements, revealing trends toward "datafication and quantification of internationalisation discourses" (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017, p. 74), hearkening back to the neoliberal and economic views that large numbers of international students equate to successful internationalization (Bucker & Stein, 2019). This history of data and the scientizing of reality is frequently seen in colonialism (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017). Further, the authors identified the creation of "truth" or "best practice" from the focus on numbers (number of countries institutions are working with, percentage growth in international students), where internationalization is seen as successful due to increased international student numbers (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017). The analysis highlights Foucault's work on truth and governmentality, where truth is produced through the interplay of power and knowledge through discourse (Allan, 2009), and governmentality is "understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior" (Foucault, 1997, p. 82).

Guion Akdağ and Swanson's (2017) second theme relates to the use of "we," which they identified as a form of interpellation, described as a way of bringing the reader into the author's frame of thinking about the role of internationalization, without explicitly stating motivations. The authors posit that the use of "we" in strategy documents creates power for the institutions by using discourse to interpellate individuals into social positions as subjects (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017), a Foucauldian concept related to productive power (Allan, 2009). The institution authoring the document is seen by the authors through their discursive analysis as a homogenous institution through the

use of "we," and international students are inviting to purchase their knowledge to then be part of the "we" (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017).  The international student in this discursive representation is regarded as a customer, desirous of the cultural capital that will be bestowed upon them through their education (Brown & Jones, 2013).

The third theme identified related to agricultural and building metaphors, with language such as "to build on…to grow…to nurture…" (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017, p. 76).  The authors drew links with development language and ideologies (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017), with the positioning of development as an extension of colonialism (Stein, 2017).  The underpinnings of growth and development language are assumptions that economic development will provide benefit, and the international student, through discourse and constructions of power, is put into a position of accepting the "truth" of this discourse (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017).  Similarly, the final theme included postcolonial assumptions, drawing again back to Foucault's assessment that "it is in discourse that power and knowledge mesh together" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100, in Allan, 2009).  Examples of "othering" are highlighted in institutional plans, as well as neoliberal language that defines education as something to sell (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017).

The authors concluded that their analysis, while only concerned with two institutions, provided "a valuable view on how [higher education] global imaginaries are located and perpetuated through internationalisation rhetoric that aligns with corporate strategy" (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017, p. 78-79).  More importantly, their research served to highlight that internationalization is rife with colonial underpinnings.  This revealing produces the necessity for an examination of both the term, the process, and the players involved in the reimagining of internationalization.

**Liminal critiques of internationalization**.  To begin to dive into this reimagining, *liminal critiques* of internationalization emphasizes the historical processes of internationalization and seek to imagine what alternatives could exist if the current methods are not acceptable and the field is in need of a new way forward.  Liminality is defined as "the in-between time and place in the process of transformation" (Rutherford & Pickup, 2015, p. 706) and allows for the recognition of "often invisible social and cultural phenomena, such as events and actions, over time" (p. 706).  The liminal space "within dominant discourses opens up directions and options for unforeseen, generative trajectories into sustainable practices of internationalisation" (Ilieva, Beck, & Waterstone, 2014, p. 883).  Stein (2017) uses *liminal* in relation to internationalization to "indicate a commitment to examining and inhabiting the limits/edges of justice in existing ethical and political frameworks, critiques, subjectivities, and economic and political relations" (p. 17).

As discussed above, the *radical* critique of internationalization is concerned that the "internationalization of higher education is often a pretense for extending Western nations' economic power and/or cultural and political hegemony" (Stein, 2017, p. 15). The *liminal* approach "expresses concern that many existing internationalization programs, partnerships, and community engagements naturalize and uncritically expand colonial and capitalist modes of schooling, knowledge production, and social, political, and economic organization" (Stein, 2017, p. 18), subsequently contributing to the active invalidation and devaluation of other ways of knowing.  This foreclosure of alternative opportunities, as well as the "contradictions and even impossibilities of dismantling existing systems" (Stein, 2017, p. 18), is key to the liminal approach.  This designates a difference between the radical approach, which attends to "stratification within and

between the North and South" (p. 19) but does not necessarily acknowledge that the critiques offered are operating within the structures that were built by this stratification.

Liminal critiques of internationalization lead to questions about the feasibility of justice within a system where Western knowledge is both dominant and desired.  In such circumstances, a radical re-imagining of higher education may be needed but is not likely for those currently operating in the boundaries of its structures.  For those who include a wide variety of international education professionals, questions of how to engage ethically remain.  The following section will review nascent literature on "ethical internationalization" and highlight a recent promising project that seeks to identify the dimensions of the term.

**Ethical Internationalization**

In recognizing historical issues of economic dominance and power, and to examine the "less celebratory elements of internationalization" (Stein et al., 2016, p. 2), the field of ethical internationalization has emerged.  Ethical internationalization has begun to reframe international education as global education, challenging the idea that the flow of knowledge comes solely from Western countries to developing countries (Herbert & Abdi, 2013).  Additionally, scholars are attempting to address inequalities and "ethical dilemmas" (Garson, 2016, p. 31), such as the "increasing influence of neoliberal agendas on the conscience, capability and context of higher education in addressing global education" (Garson, 2012, p. 3) present in current conversations surrounding internationalization.

A four-year research project conducted from 2012 to 2016, Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education (EIHE), examined "ethical issues arising from internationalization processes in higher education" (Andreotti, 2012, para. 2).  The

research project involved 20 universities around the world, most noticeably missing institutions in the United States, one of the largest receiving countries for international students.  EIHE sought to address concerns that

> current financial crises are driving new functionalist and market-driven policies in higher education that reduce the scope of epistemic possibilities and severely compromise the public role of the university as a critic and conscience of society and a generator of innovative ideas upon which alternative futures depend (EIHE, n.d., para. 4).

The project aimed to illuminate dominant neoliberal market imperatives that create the conditions where "exploitative and profit-seeking modes of unethical internationalization are intensified, while resources and commitment towards sites for potentially ethical alternatives are curtailed" (EIHE, n.d., para. 4).  Those involved in the project shared a commitment to addressing the "complexities of global interdependence, including pressing questions of inequality and representation; and an imperative to pluralize knowledge in order to pluralize possibilities for the future" (EIHE, n.d., para. 4).

Researchers from this project sought to understand discursive practices that affirm and construct "global imaginaries" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 225), defined as organizing structures of global thinking that both legitimizes and perpetuates Western knowledge.  Khoo et al. (2016) wrote that current internationalization practices are "oriented toward processes and targets, but seem to lack an anchoring in substantive higher education norms or ethical commitments" (p. 86), and that the "values, meanings, purposes and identity of higher education are held hostage to economic crises, austerity measures and the reconstruction of the student as consumer and of teaching, curriculum and teachers as employees and objects for quality control" (p. 87).

Stemming from the EIHE project, Stein and Andreotti (2016) concerned themselves with identifying linkages between an increasing focus on international student recruitment and international students' encounters with racism in order to advance issues of ethical international student recruitment.  Stein and Andreotti (2016) shed light on how HE policy and practice frames international students.  They found that international students were frequently portrayed as moneymakers, and strictly a way for institutions to receive economic gains (Stein & Andreotti, 2016).  Under the dominant global imaginary, Western education has universal worth, so international students who are seeking "superior opportunities" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 231) are invited to purchase them.  Students who can study overseas are usually from wealthy backgrounds, are learning in the "best" Western contexts, and in bringing that knowledge back home, continue to perpetuate the dominant global imaginary in their home countries.

By identifying this linkage, Stein and Andreotti (2016) sought to "take apart normalized notions of…opportunity structures…to denounce systems of power and domination, including the transnational capitalist class" (Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, & Monzó, 2017, p. 236).  Global cultural capital is developed and perpetuated, as students and families originally holding economic and social capital learn to navigate Western educational systems, then bring those unseen skills to negotiate the dominant global educational system home (Apple, 2004).

Primarily analyzing language in Canadian policies, strategic plans, and media representations, Stein and Andreotti (2016) extrapolated their findings to the West.  They could have benefited for a more in-depth discussion and comparative analysis with other Western defined countries to identify similar strains of thought and policy (Stein & Andreotti, 2016).  To continue this work, Haapakoski and Pashby (2017) analyzed the

effects of the dominant neoliberal global imaginary on international student recruitment in a European context.

A critical discourse analysis on European policy for increasing international student numbers demonstrated that while civic rationales for recruiting students are sometimes present, they are often mediated by neoliberalism (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).  The researchers used a heuristic of social cartography to analyze findings of the study to create a map of understanding discursive orientations of internationalization and diversity (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).  The social cartography employed in this study was developed through the EIHE project and is used as both a device for data analysis as well as a "reflexive tool for considering implications of overlapping and contradictory conceptualisations of internationalisation for ethical approaches to policy and practice" (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p. 365).

A summary of the heuristic is necessary here, as I seek to contribute to the field of ethical internationalization by expressing my data through this framework.  The majority of current work in ethical internationalization utilizes this heuristic to understand the dominant neoliberal social imaginary, the conceptions of higher education institutions within this imaginary, and how discourses of internationalization can be mapped to understand where these discourses overlap or leave areas unarticulated (Andreotti, Stein, Pashby, & Nicolson, 2016; Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017; Khoo et al., 2018; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Stein et al. 2016; Stein, 2017).

**EIHE social cartographies**. The social cartographies developed by the researchers in the EIHE project all operate under the assumption that the modern global imaginary informs the possibilities and limitations within and throughout the framework (Andreotti et al., 2016).  Researchers identified four historical imaginaries of the

university.  These are not static categories as they may appear from Figure 1, and there

are often overlaps between the four.  The imaginaries are Scholastic, Classical, Civic, and

Corporate (Andreotti et al., 2016).



**Corporate imaginary of HE**
Post-state financial capitalism, state divestment in HE
**Civic imaginary of HE**
WW2/cold war, state investment in massification of HE
**Classical imaginary of HE**
European Enlightenment
**Scholastic imaginary of HE**

(dynamic & contested, but enduring)
MODERN/COLONIAL GLOBAL IMAGINARY
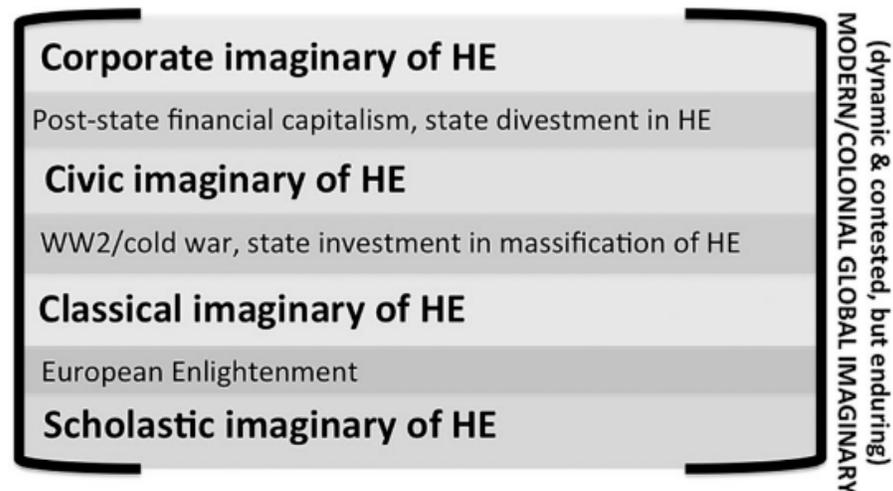
*Figure 1.* EIHE mapping of university imaginaries.  Reprinted from "Social
cartographies as performative devices in research on higher education" by Andreotti, V.
et al., 2016, *Higher Education Research and Development, 35*(1), p. 89.

The *scholastic imaginary* "combined the interests of the Roman Catholic Church

and secular powers by training both professionals and clergy" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p.

89).  The *classical imaginary* views the university as a training site for the elite to

facilitate entry into governance and leadership in nation-states in Europe.  This model

was later exported to the Americas through colonialism.  The emphasis here is on

technical skills and secular knowledge, as well as the knowledge that would eventually

contribute to nation-building (Andreotti et al., 2016).  The *civic imaginary* views the

university as a training site for a nation-state's citizenship for entry into professional

labor.  This imaginary emphasizes expansion and access to higher education and seeks to

develop knowledge in the service of national security and economic growth.  In

internationalization, this model is evident after the Cold War when international students

were understood in terms of soft power (O'Mara, 2012), and is evident in the present day

through internationalization at home strategies. Here, knowledge is measured by its use-

value, in terms of its usefulness in meeting particular human needs. In the *corporate*

*imaginary*, the university's focus is on training graduates to be "social and economic

entrepreneurs and on strengthening the university-industry partnerships" (Andreotti et al.,

2016, p. 89). Knowledge is measured by its exchange-value, and the corporatization of

the university can be understood within this imaginary. The prevailing orientations today

move between the civic and corporate imaginaries.

Following the identification of these imaginaries, discursive orientations are

mapped to "tease out and articulate the ways that imaginaries of higher education are

iterated" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 90). These discursive orientations are identified in

Figure 2. Again, the orientations are not static categories but often overlap, as indicated

by the interfaces along the outsides of the diagram. Social cartography is used to

"identify the three primary discursive orientations at the current nexus of the civic and

corporate imaginaries of the university: neoliberal, liberal, and critical" (Andreotti et al.,

2016, p. 90). The four areas of interface are neoliberal-liberal, neoliberal-critical, liberal-

critical, and neoliberal-liberal-critical.
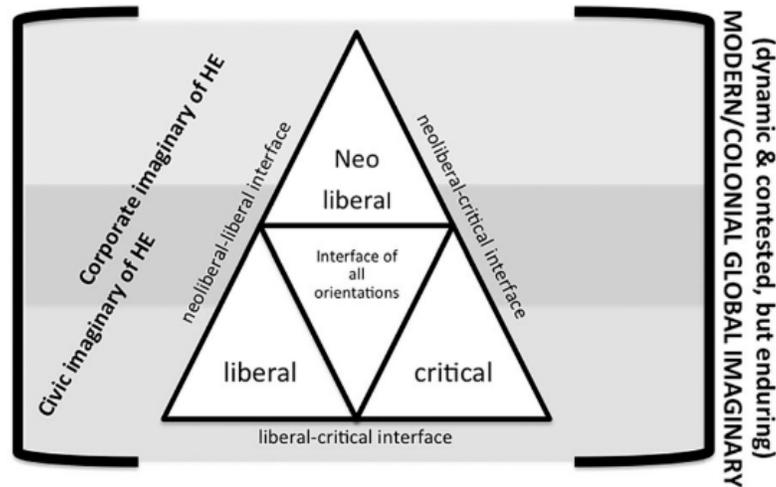
*Figure 2.* Discursive orientations in the corporate/civic imaginary of higher education.  Reprinted from "Social cartographies as performative devices in research on higher education" by Andreotti, V. et al., 2016, *Higher Education Research and Development, 35*(1), p. 91.

The *neoliberal orientation* is reflective of the corporate imaginary and is made apparent through discussions on the commodification of internationalization, the positioning of international students as consumers, and higher education as a product to be purchased. Knowledge is evaluated in terms of its exchange-value, and rankings are indicators of success (Andreotti et al., 2016).  Income generation is key, as well as the growth of universities' reputations.  International student recruitment is commonly understood through this framework.

The *liberal orientation* gives rise to the civic imaginary, where education is viewed as a public good, necessary for personal development and good citizenship (Andreotti et al., 2016).  In this orientation, equity, inclusion, and access are promoted within existing frameworks.  Similarly based in the civic imaginary in recognizing the need to include more diverse voices is the *critical orientation*, which "highlights capitalist exploitation, processes of racialization and colonialism and other forms of oppression at work in seemingly benevolent and normalized patterns of thinking and

behaviour" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 91). The critical orientation, while not common in the literature or practice, seeks to move beyond existing frameworks and homogenous narratives, and calls for the university to take accountability toward empowering marginalized populations and in its role in relation to the public good (Andreotti et al., 2016).

In many cases, discourses in the literature and the context of university rationales and actions within international student recruitment overlap within these framings. Haapakoski and Pashby (2017) provide examples of these intersections. For the *neoliberal-liberal interface*, accreditation is given as an example – the aim is to enhance the university for economic benefit by attracting more students through the promotion of the received accreditation, but also to increase and certify academic quality (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017). The *neoliberal-critical interface* would be the recruitment of international students through scholarships or grants to increase the diversity of the international student population, making the institution appear more accessible but, in reality, serving as a marketing activity to promote a positive image of the institution (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017). The *liberal-critical interface* "would recognise the barriers for participation but drive change more on a personal than systemic level" (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p. 367), and the fourth interface would represent activities that appeal to the three main orientations.

From these understandings, the EIHE project then mapped articulations of internationalization according to the social cartography (Figure 3). *Internationalization for a global knowledge economy* frames internationalization as a key element of economic growth and competitiveness, and preparing graduates to compete in a global market is the goal (Andreotti et al., 2016). Within this articulation, the universal use and

exchange value of Western knowledge are presumed (Andreotti et al., 2016). This assumption then maps on to the neoliberal discursive orientation. The focus on international student recruitment to staunch leaking university budgets is an example of this framing.

*Internationalization for the global public good* is mapped onto the liberal discursive orientation and includes expansion of social mobility and equal opportunity globally for students to access higher education (Andreotti et al., 2016). In this articulation, higher education is understood to play an important role in producing "the global public goods of democracy, prosperity and knowledge" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 94). Both the internationalization for a global knowledge economy and the global public good are understood to operate within the modern/colonial global imaginary. *Anti-oppressive internationalization* maps onto the critical discursive orientation and challenges this imaginary but remains within it. This articulation seeks to work toward social justice and suggests that "the global public good articulation's emphasis on universal inclusion is a means of depoliticizing difference and demanding conformity with Western educational standards" (Andreotti at al., 2016, p. 94).

In terms of ethical considerations, "anti-oppressive internationalization" (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016, p. 6) is put forward as an example of internationalization that could be considered ethical. Anti-oppressive internationalization is "based on a commitment to work in solidarity for systemic change toward greater social justice" (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016, p. 9), works to problematize the dominant global imaginary, and "critiques [the] global knowledge economy articulation in its uncritical support for capitalism and its presupposition that global economic competition occurs on a level playing field" (p. 9). This form of internationalization commits to supporting those harmed by

internationalization activities, and to developing students' awareness of their "complicity in harmful local and global structures" (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016, p. 9).  The Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana (UNILA) is offered as an articulation of this type of anti-oppressive internationalization and typifies the Latin American model of a university, where the university should be inserted into a community reflection on social reality and ways to transform it.  This reflection guides the university's mission and goals (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016).  In regard to recruitment, students recruited to UNILA are from remote areas of Latin America, including indigenous communities.  Instruction at UNILA is plurilingual, and the institution recognizes the need to construct programs for South America through South-South cooperation.  UNILA provides a

> powerful example of institutionalized efforts to rethink and reimagine the patterns that reproduce the dominance of the modern/colonial global imaginary, including addressing power relations, overturning the supremacy of Western knowledge, and rethinking approaches to relationality that prioritize solidarity over competition, reciprocal partnerships over top-down leadership, and substantive engagement and involvement of Indigenous and racialized students in place of tokenistic inclusion (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016, pp. 10-11).

While anti-oppressive internationalization challenges the modern dominant global imaginary, internationalization is still framed toward instrumental ends (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016).  The EIHE researchers map a fourth articulation, *relational translocalism*, outside or at the edges of the dominant global imaginary.  This articulation "replaces 'internationalization' with 'translocalism,' recognizing that interconnection and ethical obligations exceed the borders of the nation-state and the onto-epistemic grammar of

modernity" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 94).  The concept of relational translocalism is understood as a mechanism through which to engage with and challenge the borders of the dominant global imaginary as well as recognizing ones' complicity within the imaginary (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016).  This articulation requires "self-reflexive consideration of individual and institutional investments and complicities in potentially harmful patterns of engagement" (Stein, Andreotti, et al. 2016).  As the authors have put forward, as the dominant global imaginary is so pervasive, it can be difficult to imagine other possibilities for higher education, internationalization, and international student recruitment – all critiques and alternatives may merely be perpetuating this imaginary. These mappings can be viewed in Figure 3.
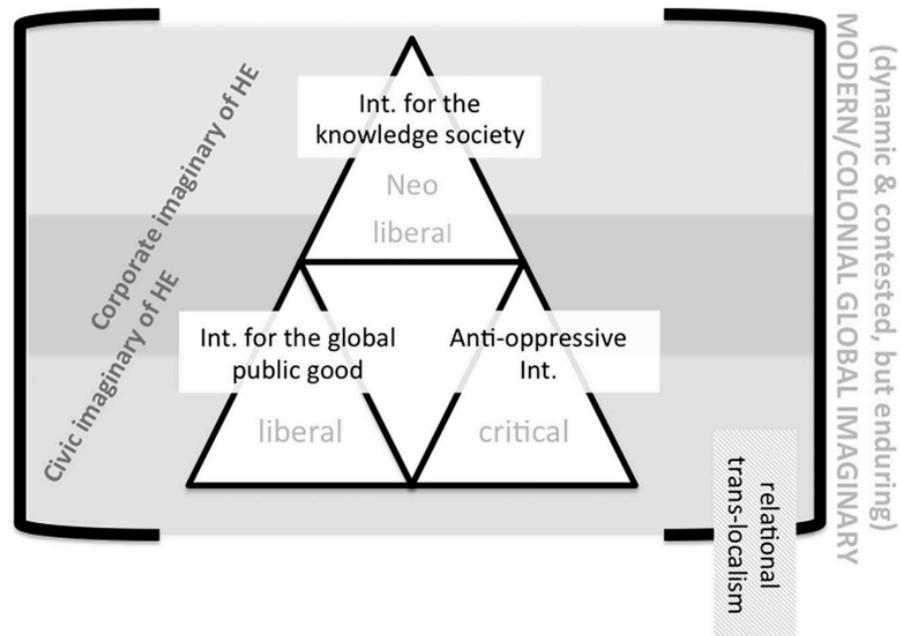


*Figure 3.* Articulations of internationalization.  Reprinted from "Social cartographies as performative devices in research on higher education" by Andreotti, V. et al., 2016*, Higher Education Research and Development, 35*(1), p. 91.

Researchers in the EIHE project used these three social cartographies to examine multiple discourses and open up opportunities for discussion and reflection without closing down possibilities.  According to Haapakoski and Pashby (2017), the social

cartographies enabled the researchers to understand dominant discourses regarding international student recruitment in university strategy documents and interviews.  In both cases, the dominant rationale for international student recruitment was neoliberal, with liberal being secondary.  This included the interface between them.  International student recruitment was viewed as a way to diversify campuses and facilitate internationalization at home, thus serving to help market the institution as welcoming and inclusive, operating under the neoliberal-liberal rationale (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).  The critical orientation was not well represented in strategy documents and interviews.  If it did appear, it was through the neoliberal-critical interface where the desire to recruit international students from "emerging economies…is connected to aspirations for further student recruitment in the same countries/areas" (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p. 376).  The dominant neoliberal discourse presented a barrier to considering the ethical implications of targeting specific markets and supporting students as a means for future recruitment.  However, the researchers hoped that the liberal and critical orientations could allow for further interrogation of unequal power relations and neoliberal hegemony (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).

**Post-post-colonial approach**.  The social cartography and the EIHE project both employed decolonial thought to move forward conversations around ethical internationalization.  Presenting an alternative view, Phan (2017) positioned traditionally sending countries as co-constructors of the dominant global imaginary, exploring the relationship between Asia and the West within international education.  Phan (2017) sought to move beyond the idea of a "hegemonic, evil West" (p. 31) and "the by default 'victimised' colonised 'special' Asia" (p. 31).  While Phan (2017) acknowledged previous scholarship that sees internationalization as a form of "Westernisation, neo-

colonialism, and neo-imperialism" (p. 18), she also argued that Asia has actively engaged in "legitimizing and reproducing elitist Western superiority for its own gain [and] is not naive and does not do any less in creating and sustaining a desire for 'Western education' and 'Western knowledge' among itself" (p. 31).  For Phan (2017), understanding Asia's role in co-constructing a global imaginary is essential, rather than working toward an imagined ideal non-Western indigenous knowledge that is frequently portrayed in a positive light.  According to Phan (2017), a drawback of decolonial scholarship is the creation of a new dichotomy: an uncritical view of non-Western knowledges, and a critical view of the West.  Rather than work along this divide, Phan (2017) sought to understand "the intersecting spaces of knowledge, where the West and Asia can be examined in their flesh and blood complexities, unchained from the usual colonial and postcolonial imprisonment mindset" (p. 3).  The complexity of motivations highlighted by Phan (2017) must be recognized in attempts to understand both sides of the international student recruitment equation: the students and the institutions involved in the process.

Critical internationalization scholarship questions the underlying motivations for internationalization and international student recruitment, as well as the uneven power distributions that shape mobility patterns (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015).  Scholars who critique internationalization believe that the strategy has lost its way (Knight, 2014), and seek to redefine the term outside of dominant neoliberal discourses (Beck, 2012).  When scholars lament the devaluation of "internationalization," they point to the commercialized and commodified aspects of higher education as the culprit, where the goal of mutual partnerships has gone by the wayside (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2014).  Attempts to decolonize internationalization focuses on how internationalization,

as it is currently understood, perpetuates a modern/colonial imaginary (Stein, 2017), though decolonial scholarship has also been critiqued for over-simplifying the narratives and complicity of the sender-receiver relationship (Phan, 2017).

Recommendations for ways forward vary.  Some scholars argue that a better balance in internationalization can be achieved (Marginson, 2006), and other scholars suggest that the discursive underpinnings of internationalization need to be revealed to understand power imbalances (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017).  To "push the bounds" of current thinking on internationalization, liminal critiques explore the possibilities of rethinking internationalization beyond a hegemonic global imaginary (Stein, 2017).  It is through this act of "border thinking" (Mignolo, 2012) that ethical internationalization emerges to challenge economic drivers of internationalization.  The structures of the global imaginary make it difficult, but also necessary to "think otherwise about the neoliberal restructuring of higher education" (Khoo et al., 2016, p. 86).  This reimagining can serve to "shape an emerging research agenda about higher education, internationalization, and ethics" (Khoo et al., 2016, p. 86). Given these emergent considerations, the following section outlines scholarship framed through classical ethics as a way of interrogating internationalization.

## Ethics + Internationalization

Scholarship on critical and ethical internationalization seeks to critique and to make known the structures in which internationalization operates.  However, classical ethics concepts are only beginning to be used as a lens to analyze internationalization activities such as international student recruitment and mobility.  This section will explore how some scholars employ ethical concepts to critique international student mobility, exploring duties of justice and association between universities and

international students, as well as how an ethic of care can aid practitioners in navigating their international student recruitment work.

In response to the increase of international students in the U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, Enslin and Hedge (2008) posit this rise is a result of the effects of globalization and the impact of the world-wide knowledge community on higher education. Moreover, they argue that corporate management styles and revenue from international student tuition have fundamentally changed the character of HEIs (Enslin & Hedge, 2008).

Ethical tensions exist between universities' avowed missions – where universities are committed to social justice and to producing graduates that make positive contributions to society – and how students are regarded, as paying customers to whom education can be sold at a premium (Enslin & Hedge, 2008).  If universities claim a commitment to global social justice and include a "concern for the other" in their missions, scholars posit that they are "ethical institutions" (Abdullah, Abd Aziz, & Mohd Ibrahim, 2017, p. 463).  Taking together the idea of the university as an ethical institution, and the assumption that their duties are global in scope, scholars argue that principles of justice then apply to the "global distribution of public good likes higher education" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 108).

In theory, globalization calls for the regulation of activities, like education, when crossing national borders. However, there is an absence of a supranational governing body to govern citizens across the globe and lack of international protocols that "specify for governments whether, how much, and how they should differentiate foreign students from citizens" (Marginson, 2012, p. 501).  Moreover, international mobility and the welfare of those crossing borders should be deemed as a matter of global public good

rather than of an insulated as a national good (Marginson, 2012).  To counter these insular conceptualizations of globalization in international education, Marginson (2012) proposes a global organization that would advocate for the interests of internationally mobile students. Such an organization has yet to emerge.

In the absence of pan-national international student advocacy, Mollendorf (2002) suggested that individuals and organizations must attend to the duties of justice.  Utilizing Pogge's (1989) argument for global justice, such duties of justice are assigned to "those who play a role in creating and sustaining a global order favoring the interests of some to the detriment of others" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 109). These actors have a duty to assist those who suffer the consequences of this inequality.  Universities can be said to treat students "from the world's poorest countries as 'outsiders,' many unable to pay the tuition fees levied by rich countries with highly developed educational systems, calculated with scant regard to students' home locations and ability to pay" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 109).  Formal laws and regulations, along with institutional discourse and practice, can also serve to "other" international students in this way (Marginson, 2012).

Under Pogge's (1989) argument, universities currently benefit from this unjust global order and compete to perpetuate it.  In the context of the U.K., a line of reasoning can be followed: if citizens of a country have contributed tax dollars to fund institutions of higher education, then international students should be expected to fully fund their education (Enslin & Hedge, 2008).  However, international students frequently spend beyond tuition – on travel, expenditures on food and lodging, and shopping – all of which benefit the local economy (Deschamps & Lee, 2015).

National sovereignty and obligations of justice are complicated because sovereign nation-states can decide how to set fees.  However, forces of globalization, as well as international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and NATO, have blurred borders, making it difficult to evaluate the justice of relations between people within nation-states (Enslin & Hedge, 2008).  Young (2007, as cited in Enslin & Hedge, 2008), surmised that the associations and interdependencies of people across borders make it "appropriate to think in terms of a global society when evaluating the justice of relations between people; so principles of justice apply to relations among persons, organizations, and state institutions in diverse reaches of global society" (p. 110).

Unfortunately, international students are caught in limbo at the nexus of competing social and economic responsibilities held by universities. To remedy this dilemma, Marginson (2012) stated that international are rights-bearing agents and recommended that sending countries' governments negotiate with receiving countries "a set of protocols concerning the rights and entitlements of mobile students" (Marginson, 2012, p. 509), potentially modeled after the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights.  These incremental agreements could construe a rights-affirming higher education space because ultimately, global student rights are "a global humanism in which every person is understood as a self-determining subject and worthy of equal respect" (Marginson, 2012, p. 511).

Beyond recommendations at the institutional level, Nussbaum (2006) wrote that the state remains accountable to those within its borders, and as such, can and will continue to regulate student fee structures, even though the power of nation-states is eroded through the monitoring and regulation of transnational organizations.  For nation-

states, like the U.S., that benefit from the marketization of higher education, it seems unlikely that international student tuition revenue would be surrendered in order to define international education as a global good.

Pushing back against the idea that states should be the authority on regulating the rights and fee structures assigned to international students, Tannock (2013) argues that educational quality should be extended beyond national borders.  If responsibility for ensuring the quality of education was on a global level, it could benefit not only international students but domestic students as well (Tannock, 2013).  This reasoning frames education as a public good.

Public goods can be described as consisting of two properties, namely nonrivalrous consumption and nonexcludability (Stiglitz, 1999).  Nonrivalrous consumption means that the use of the good by one person does not prohibit the use by another.  Nonexcludability means that it is impossible, or very difficult, to exclude an individual from using the good.  Under this definition, knowledge should be understood as a global public good, and thus the state must play a role in its provision to avoid lack of supply.  However, as discussed previously, when international students are required to pay a premium fee for higher education, this "amplifies the excludability of the knowledge" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 115).  In the sections above, I discussed the competition among institutions for fee-paying international students, and that the cycle of rankings and reputation produces a feedback loop of desire on the part of those students.  Such processes explicitly counter Stiglitz's understanding of public good because students who cannot pay cannot access education, further increasing competition among and for those that can.

In looking for alternatives, Enslin and Hedge (2008) explored "a more nuanced and just approach to classifications of 'international' students" (p. 116), while acknowledging that it is naive to think that institutions and states could "extricate [themselves] unilaterally from the competitive imperatives dictated by the current global economy" (p. 116).  Enslin and Hedge's acknowledgment of the limitations of contemporary higher education hearken back to Stein and Andreotti's (2017) idea that solutions that contest the dominant global imaginary must frequently operate from within.  As an example, Enslin and Hedge (2008) suggested that universities could create a revised approach to the differential fee structure.  Tuition could be reduced for students from countries that are falling behind in the "race for development" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 116).   Calling for a more inclusive viewpoint, Tannock (2013) argues for the inclusion of international students in conversations surrounding educational equality, because traditionally, demands for this equality of opportunity are "reserved for citizens and permanent residents of individual nation states only" (p. 456).  Due to their non-citizen status, international students occupy a "grey zone" (Tannock, 2013, p. 456) that renders them a loss of power.  Consequently, new frameworks should be considered to provide alternatives to the dominant neoliberal model of internationalization.  Tannock (2013) recommended that institutions should treat international students as equals with domestic students.  This treatment may include not charging them "drastically higher tuition fees" (Tannock, 2013, p. 457) compared to domestic students.  Institutions could also be required to ensure international students are not discriminated against in regards to "gender, race, ethnic, religious, and especially class backgrounds…[and] do not come disproportionately from wealthy, middle class and elite families" (p. 457).

Examples of varying approaches to international student fees in literature are limited. Current international student fee structures that benefit HEIs in traditionally receiving countries may cause "foreign higher education systems to gear up to provide home-grown programs to their nationals at more cost-effective rates, eventually removing the need to send them to study abroad at all" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 117). An example of this is China's new "Double-First Class" initiative that seeks to create world-class universities and disciplines in China (Sharma, 2015). Enslin and Hedge (2008) recommend that HEIs move beyond a marketized approach to internationalization and a conceptualization of international students as buyers of a commodity. Consequently, this would require the creation of a new social imaginary, one that calls for more just educational relationships with institutions from sending countries that could be "a key tool for enabling global justice" (Enslin & Hedge, 2008, p. 117). However, as international students are so firmly rooted in the global imaginary as wealth generators for Western countries, it may be difficult to enact change. The call to extend equality of educational opportunities to international students outside of national borders as a way of disrupting HEIs' preponderance for recreating existing power structures may be a difficult challenge to surpass.

**Ethics of Care**

As outlined in the above sections, the dominant global imaginary, as well as the dependence of many institutions in the U.S. on international student tuition revenue, may make it difficult to advance scholarly conceptualizations of ethical internationalization. However, professionals who do the work of international student recruitment can enact ethics in their work, and at this more granular level, may have the ability to effect change. Exploring a solution to navigating the tension between "doing the right things" in

international student recruitment, related to the economic benefits, and "doing the things right" related to student support services, Abdullah et al. (2017) propose an "ethics of care" that recognizes "the unique nature of international education as both a service export for a host country, and a life-changing experience for international students" (p. 461).

An ethics of care places a focus on relationship building, concern, and connection (Abdullah et al., 2017; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). For some scholars, care is both social and political, and through relational connectedness, the act of caring is generative and can bring about social change (Fisher & Tronto, 1990).  These facets enable a shift from the economic motivations for international student recruitment to "genuine concern over the well-being of others in the provision of services to the international student population" (Abdullah et al., 2017, p. 462).  According to Abdullah et al. (2017), the ethic of care recognizes the motivations and responsibilities of both the international student and the host institution.  The international student understands that their decision to study abroad may result in a shift or potential decrease in their rights and well-being.  Under this ethic and financial arrangement, the host institution has a responsibility of pastoral care "in exchange for the fees payable by the international students" (Abdullah et al., 2017, p. 452).  Rather than granting international students rights as Marginson (2012) argues, the ethic of care views international students as "individuals aspiring to develop their potential throughout their study experience" (Abdullah et al., 2017, p. 462).  This viewpoint is in alignment with Phan's (2017) understanding of the co-construction of the desire for Western education.  HEIs are viewed as "organizations aspiring to expand their diversity, excellence and academic scholarship through internationalization in general, and hosting international students in particular" (Abdullah et al., 2017, p. 462).

International students are desirous of this education to increase their future potential. With a full and clear understanding of each other's motivations, international students and universities can work together to ensure each party benefits from their interaction.

International student recruiters act as drivers for international student mobility on behalf of the institution and student.  If an ethic of care is to be enacted, the recruitment professional is the conduit.  They are responsible for ensuring that their relationship with the prospective international student results in satisfaction on behalf of their institution as well as the student.  While an ethical framework that uses ethics of care to guide recruitment professionals does not yet exist, extant guidelines from professional organizations do include provisions designed to protect both the university and student from unethical treatment.  These guidelines are outlined in the following section.

## Professional Guidelines

As I seek to bridge the gap between scholarship and practitioner's work, it is necessary to move beyond the scholarly discussion of ethics as they relate to international students and into a more practical space.  I will review extant guidelines from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the American International Recruitment Council (AIRC), the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), and NAFSA.  These guidelines are primarily directed at members of each professional organization, though they present an overview of the ethical concerns in the field of higher and international education in general.

### AACRAO's Ethics and Practice

AACRAO's stated goal is to "serve and advance higher education by providing leadership in academic and enrollment services" (AACRAO, 2020, para. 1).  They provide three principles of professional ethics and practice, and 19 standards stemming

from these principles. These ethical principles and standards of professional practice

apply to AACRAO members.  The ethical principles state that members shall "conduct

themselves with integrity, fairness, honesty, and respect for others" (AACRAO, 2020,

para. 3), that they shall "avoid conflicts between personal interests and professional

responsibilities" (para. 3), and finally, "dispense complete, accurate, understandable, and

truthful information and advice at all times" (para 3).   The standards ask members to

adhere to practices that guide the way they interact with their institution and students.

Related to institutional obligations, AACRAO asks members to safeguard the academic

integrity of their institutions, advance institutional interests through their practice,

promote institutional policies as they align with AACRAO standards, and use

institutional resources efficiently and effectively.

Related to working with students, the standards ask members to protect the

privacy of students and maintain the confidentiality of records, promote broad and equal

access to higher education, adhere to principles of nondiscrimination and equality, help

students to become responsible citizens, and provide students with accurate information

regarding admissions, costs, and financial aid.  Two standards mention international

students.  Members are required to recruit "distinct student populations" (AACRAO,

2020, para. 5), including international students, "only when appropriate institutional

resources and commitment to serve those populations are in place" (para 5).  This

standard asks institutions to think beyond the benefits international students might

contribute to campuses, bringing their interests to the forefront.  Members are also asked

to "avoid practices in the recruitment and enrollment of international students that would

not be ethical in the recruitment or enrollment of domestic students" (AACRAO, 2020,

para. 5).  This echoes previously discussed scholars' recommendations to consider how

international students are treated differently than domestic students in the recruitment process.  Regarding professional practice, members are encouraged to "remain knowledgeable of current principles and practices of the profession" (AACRAO, 2020, para. 5) and encourage professional development and contribute to the advancement of the profession.  Members are also asked to ensure that third-party contractors or providers adhere to the AACRAO principles. Though, as conferred earlier in this section, this may be difficult to implement in practice due to the difficulty of controlling and monitoring recruitment agents.

**AIRC's Institutional Best Practices**

AIRC, the American International Recruitment Council, "works to safeguard the interests of both international students and enrolling institutions through the promotion of ethical, standards-based international recruitment strategies" (AIRC, 2020).  AIRC provides certification services to recruitment agencies.  Institutions in the U.S. can become members to network and access professional resources.  Standards for AIRC certification are comprehensive, requiring agencies to conduct a self-study, an on-site review, extensive background checks, and a review by AIRC's board.  For institutional members, AIRC provides best practice guidelines, where an institution's adherence to the guidelines "signifies its commitment to engaging in marketing, recruitment and student support practices that are truthful, ethical and transparent and which meet with the highest levels of professionalism" (AIRC, 2020, para. 1).  The four guidelines are as follows.  Guideline 1, a Commitment to Proper Student Support Services, "ensures that suitable support for international students is available throughout the application process, once on campus, and during their entire academic career" (AIRC, 2020, para. 3) including providing proper training, staffing, and support along with up-to-date

knowledge about U.S. federal regulations.  This guideline is similar to AACRAO's

requirement for recruiting distinct populations only when institutions can serve them.

AIRC's Guideline 2, Accuracy in Marketing Information, requires institutions to market

their offerings "professionally and accurately, and maintain the integrity and reputation of

their particular academic institution as well as of the U.S. education sector" (AIRC, 2020,

para. 4).  This guideline serves to prevent unethical or inaccurate marketing.  The third

guideline, Transparent Student Recruitment Practices, asks institutions to provide proper

training and information to the agencies they work with so "prospective students may

make informed decisions about institutional choice, thereby ensuring better alignment

between their expectations and actual experiences" (AIRC, 2020, para. 6), serving to

ensure the information provided to international students through agency partners is

relevant and accurate.  Guideline 4, Engaged and Strategic Agent Management, requires

AIRC institutional members to work closely with their agency partners to establish

procedures that ensure a sustainable working relationship and adherence to AIRC

guidelines.

Overall, AIRC's guidelines for their institutional members include essential

provisions to guide transparent and ethical international student recruitment, though

requirements for agency certification are much more comprehensive and stringent.  AIRC

does not have a process for ensuring institutional members abide by best practices, while

agencies are required to submit annual reports and collect feedback from both students

and institutional partners.  With a lack of enforcement of practices, it remains unclear if

members abide by set guidelines.

**NACAC's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice**

NACAC's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (CEPP) are guidelines for college admission and counseling professionals.  NACAC views "promoting ethical admission practices" (NACAC, 2019, p. 1) as the cornerstone of the organization's work, and states that the CEPP protects the interests of both students and institutions, guided by "principles of honesty, integrity, transparency, equity, fairness, and respect for students and fellow professionals" (NACAC, 2019, p. 1).  The CEPP is made up of two sections – an "ethical core of college admission" and "the responsible practice of college admission."  The ethical core is made up of three sections, the first of which is truthfulness and transparency, where professionals are required to provide students and high school counselors with complete, truthful information that allows them to make informed decisions regarding where they choose to attend college. This requires HEIs to ensure all representation of the institution is accurate and transparent, that "translations will fully and accurately reflect the meaning of the text in the original language" (NACAC, 2019, p. 2), and that all information provided to aid in a student's college admission decision is relevant, complete, and transparent.

The second part of the ethical core is professional conduct.  NACAC (2019) states that "advocating for the best interests of students in the admission process is the primary ethical concern of our profession" (p. 3), and thus students should receive counseling that they can trust.  Professionals are required to maintain "high standards of individual and institutional professional conduct" (NACAC, 2019, p. 3), including avoiding conflicts of interest.  The third and final section of the ethical core is respecting students' confidentiality, primarily focusing on not asking students or their secondary schools to reveal information regarding competitor institutions where they may also be applying.

Related to international students, NACAC includes a special section on working with recruitment agents, to ensure NACAC members only engage with agencies that provide accurate and transparent information about the institutions they are representing as well as all costs associated with agency services.  NACAC also states that agencies must not provide fraudulent academic or immigration documentation and cannot engage in the commission-based recruiting of U.S. citizens.  This represents a shift from previous guidelines that prohibited the use of recruitment agents by member institutions, following pushback from many members that attributed benefits from their relationships with agency partners.

**NAFSA's Statement of Ethical Principles**

NAFSA's Statement of Ethical Principles is in place to guide both providers and participants in international education and exchange. NAFSA states that their principles are designed to help professionals navigate conflict when faced with competing responsibilities, to inspire international educators to "infuse ethical principles and practices" (NAFSA, 2019b, para. 4) in their daily work, to provide guidance for managerial decision-making, to make clear "embedded ethical obligations in international higher education settings" (para. 4) and to deepen conversations on ethical professional practices in international education.  NAFSA's ethical principles are educational success; integrity; compliance with the law; accountability; quality; excellence, diversity, equity, and inclusion; transparency; access; sustainability; and responsiveness.  Echoing themes in the previously reviewed ethical guidelines and best practices from other organizations, NAFSA's guidelines include a commitment to students and their interests first and foremost, personal and professional accountability and integrity that leads to trust, professional development and a commitment to training and adherence to standards of the

profession.  One of NAFSA's principles is "access," which asks members to do their "utmost to guarantee that international education is available to all who desire it and can benefit from it" (NAFSA, 2019b, para. 13) when "planning, developing, pricing, and implementing" programs (para. 13).  As previously discussed, differential tuition costs may both inhibit international students from participating in education in the U.S., as well as serve as a driving motivator for institutions to practice international student recruitment.  However, NAFSA's inclusion of this principle is an indication of an awareness of the intersection between ethical responsibility and barriers for access.

The principles, best practices, and ethical guidelines from professional associations as reviewed provide an ethical baseline that, if a practitioner considers them in their daily work, can serve to protect the best interests of the students and the institutions that serve them.  However, as subsequently discussed in Chapter 4, not all practitioners reference guidelines regularly.  Moreover, these professional organizations inherently embody exclusionary neoliberal tendencies, as often membership occurs through the payment of fees, either at the institutional or individual level.  If a practitioner does not have access to membership, they may not have access to the guidelines or resources provided by the professional organization.  Even if they do have access, often, the membership organization does not have accountability measures in place to ensure members are uploading guidelines.  The best practices, as outlined above, may not be having the desired impact on all practitioners in the field due to issues of access.

### Shapiro and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigms

Bringing together broader philosophical conceptualizations of ethics and the ethical guidelines recommended by professional organizations, Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) multiple ethical paradigms

> expects its leaders to formulate and examine their own professional code of ethics in light of individual personal codes of ethics, as well as standards set forth by the profession, and then calls on them to place students at the center of the ethical decision-making process.

Shapiro and Stefkovich outlined four paradigms of ethics: justice, critique, care, and the profession. They state a multidimensional fashion is the best way to view complex ethical dilemmas, where educators review their responses to the dilemma through each paradigm to determine the best course of action.  This multi-paradigmatic approach enables educators to ask in-depth questions and work through complex and challenging ethical dilemmas.

The *ethic of justice*, according to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) provides a foundation for legal principles and ideals, and accordingly, within this ethic, educators should ask questions related to "equity and equality; the fairness of rules, laws, and policies; whether laws are absolute, and if exceptions are to be made, under what circumstances; and the rights of individuals versus the greater good of the community" (p. 12).  This ethic is primarily concerned about whether there exists a law, right, or policy that relates to a specific instance; if so, should it be enforced, and if there is not, should one be created.

Moving beyond the purely analytical and rational approach of the justice paradigm, scholars operating within *the ethic of critique* question "both the laws

themselves and the process used to determine if the laws are just" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 13). This ethic requires professionals to consider "concepts such as power, culture, language, and even justice" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 13) and has roots in critical theory and pedagogy.

Moving along the ethical continuum, leaders working from within the framework of an *ethic of care* may consider how their decisions and actions will impact students and their families. In the past, educational leaders were trained to lead following both military and business models. This emphasized hierarchy, which led to the creation of standard business practices, policies, and procedures, in alignment with the ethic of justice (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). The ethic of care, on the other hand, requires "leaders to consider multiple voices in the decision-making process" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 18).

Lastly, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) conceptualize *the ethic of the profession*. Professional ethics, as an ethical paradigm, includes the ethic of justice, critique, and care, along with "professional judgment and decision making" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 22) that requires leaders to develop their own ethical codes. This ethic is more encompassing than the ethical codes set by state and professional associations, such as the ones outlined above, due to their perceived inability to be responsive to the daily ethical dilemmas and challenges that educational leaders face. Shapiro and Stefkovich conceptualize their multiple ethical paradigms as a toolkit from which the educational leader can access. This conceptualization enables the educator to view ethical dilemmas from multiple angles, through multiple paradigms, drawing on their own personal and professional experiences to help guide their decisions.

However, it remains unclear if international student recruitment professionals conceptualize ethics in their day-to-day work.  While ethical toolkits and guidance from professional organizations exist, there is a lack of clarity as to whether practitioners are accessing tools that may help them navigate ethical dilemmas, or conscientiously abiding by guidelines from membership organizations.  The lack of implementable, practical recommendations from scholars writing on ethical internationalization, and the lack of research that includes the perspective of the international education practitioner, leads to a gap in the literature and the need for this study.

## The Gap in Literature and Need for Study

The literature, as reviewed, indicates several gaps, pointing to the need for the current study.  The research employed under the EIHE project did not have participation from institutions from the United States.  I seek to remedy this by situating my study in the context of higher education in the U.S.  Ethical guidelines from professional associations may not be regularly accessed, if practitioners are even aware of these guidelines to begin with.  The majority of research in ethical internationalization is theory-based, and while scholars have made significant strides expanding conversations about new directions internationalization can take, they usually stop short of offering practical recommendations for reform and reimagining.  Moreover, the voices of international student recruiters are often excluded from these conversations, though they are on the frontlines of ethical decision-making. If scholars provide recommendations, they may not be implementable or applicable, as scholars frequently are not operating from the vantage point of practice.  In reality, gaps between theory and practice may always be present.  Scholars who are imagining alternative ways of doing internationalization work, including international student recruitment, may be limited by

the existing structures of higher education.  In this study, I sought to bridge the divide between theory and practice and expand the scholarship by working with practitioners to understand how they view ethical international student recruitment practices in their work.

I also sought to use a framework of ethical educational leadership to understand how international student recruitment practices can be reframed.  Employing ethics to explicitly examine international student recruitment practices had not been undertaken before this study.  The social cartography developed by EIHE scholars (Andreotti et al., 2016) was also used as a tool to organize findings on ethical internationalization and understand the imaginaries of internationalization in which recruiters are working.  Data from this study contributes to the ongoing mapping of discourse and currents of thought around internationalization.

This study takes a scholar-practitioner approach informed by Streitwieser and Ogden (2016), who state that international higher education scholar-practitioners "are collaborative educators who engage with the research process and use and disseminate their knowledge in the form of concepts, procedures, processes, and skills for the benefit of those who are engaged in international education" (p. 32).  A drawback of this approach is the positionality of my study participants as "insiders."  In using only their perspectives, the voices of the international students and partners outside of U.S. HEIs are missed.  However, as practitioners and senior international officers (SIOs), these participants are in a position to bring about change.  This study may serve as an impetus for participants to interrogate and potentially alter their current practices.

While I have provided recommendations for practitioners in Chapter 5, I have also attended to Stein's (2019) caution of seeking to immediately instrumentalize

scholarship: "Why is it that we often cling so firmly to the imperative that our scholarship be immediately instrumentalizable?  Might there be value in critiques that require us to grapple with deeply rooted problems without clear or simple answers?" (p. 6).  Stein (2016) asserts that when the depths of the problems are uncovered, "it is common to promptly begin the search for concepts and plans of action" (p. 15) that will provide hope that change is possible.  In the context of a dissertation study, a finalized product is the outcome.  I did my best to attend to the complexities of operating from privilege.  I considered my position as a student schooled in traditional Western thought, equipped with the opportunity to undertake a doctoral program with the freedom to consider issues of ethical internationalization.  I weighed decolonial perspectives in Western scholarship and acknowledged the dominant discourses of predominantly Western ethical considerations.  This insight has allowed me to contribute to the conversation around ethical internationalization.  Or, at minimum, to offer the opportunity for international educators to engage with the idea that there may be alternative ways of thinking about international student recruitment in a U.S. context.

Through my research, I aimed to identify ethical dilemmas within international student recruitment and the principles educators use to address these dilemmas.  Recruitment can be understood as part of a "natural process" of bringing students to an institution of higher education, but the U.S. HEI process has gone beyond student mobility and into revenue generation by way of a dominant neoliberal framework.  Through conversations with leaders who are involved in the international student recruitment process, I sought to understand where international educators perceive their influence regarding ethical decision-making, and where they

perceive ethical dilemmas.  My research questions were as follows, situated in the research site of public universities in the United States.

1. Within the current context of internationalization, how do international educators understand their work?

2. What ethical dilemmas do international educators face in their work?

3. What principles do international educators use to resolve the ethical dilemmas they face?

## Chapter 3

The previous two chapters have demonstrated a need for a re-envisioning of internationalization in higher education in the United States (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2014).  A lack of ethical guidelines for international educators practicing international student recruitment creates a problematic tension, where financial motivations have taken over as the dominant rationale for international student recruitment (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2018; Stein et al., 2019), and students' experiences upon arrival fall short of expectations (Lee & Rice, 2007).  Because the practices of international student recruitment require examination and reflection (Stein & Andreotti, 2016), I designed a study that sought to understand how recruiters conceptualize ethics in their work.  This chapter will present the methodology and framework I used to explore ethical possibilities within international student recruitment.

### Research Questions

To understand how international educators conceptualize ethical considerations in international student recruitment in the context of U.S. higher education, my research questions were as follows:

1.  Within the current context of internationalization, how do international educators understand their work?

2.  What ethical dilemmas do international educators face in their work?

3.  What principles do international educators use to resolve the ethical dilemmas they face?

### Overview

To answer these questions, I used a mixed-methods approach, combining a modified Delphi survey and qualitative interviews with thematic and social cartographic

analysis.  I used the modified Delphi Method to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data.  My modified Delphi Method included individual interviews with participants after the three Delphi rounds to garner more robust qualitative data.  The quantitative portion of the Delphi Method enabled the narrowing of responses and revealed commonalities, while the qualitative items and interview portion allowed for divergent responses in the data and a more profound articulation of ethical practices in international student recruitment.

The use of social cartography developed through the Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education (EIHE) (2013) project facilitated the articulation of a map consisting of qualitative data gathered from participants.  The use of the social cartography enabled these data to be captured and mapped in an intelligible way that located the ethical practices identified by participants within existing conceptualizations of internationalization.  The goal of the study was to develop a framework of ethical international student recruitment that is applicable to practice.  To aid in the attainment of this goal, I used an epistemological framework of critical realism.

**Epistemology**

Critical realism (CR), as a philosophical framework for social science research, "helps researchers to explain social events and suggest practical policy recommendations to address social problems" (Fletcher, 2016, p. 181).  Adopting a CR position appealed to me as a scholar-practitioner in the field, as it combines two perspectives, ontological realism and epistemological constructivism.  Ontological realism is "the belief that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions and theories" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 979).  Epistemological constructivism is the notion that "our understanding of this world is inevitably our construction, rather than a purely objective perception of reality,

and no such construction can claim absolute truth" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 979). CR treats the world as "theory-laden, but not theory-determined" (Fletcher, 2016, p. 182), and allows for the analysis and explanation of root causes, making it "useful for analyzing social problems and suggesting solutions for social change" (p. 182). Much of the current research in ethical internationalization is theory-based, and while scholars offer interpretations of ethical and unethical internationalization practices, the mechanisms behind these examples are not explored. CR offers a way of critiquing social conditions, but also for making concrete policy recommendations and recommendations for action on social problems (Fletcher, 2016). In this way, my study contributes to scholarship by problematizing the ethical issues related to international student recruitment, while offering recommendations for practice that can disrupt this predominately economically-focused trajectory that may not adequately consider the international students that are recruited.

**Research Method**

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, a gap is often present within practices at U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) and scholarship written for an academic audience. Streitwieser and Ogden (2011) highlighted disagreements among scholars about the utility of practical implications for studies but argued for the importance of such implications. However, a recent study highlighted that within international education literature, scholars critical of internationalization practices often offer broad recommendations for a reassessment of the field, but do not provide practical, implementable examples of how to enact change (George Mwangi et al., 2018). In recognition of this gap, I sought to employ a theory-to-practice orientation to make practical contributions and recommendations for the field of international education.

Bringing international education practitioners into a single research site can be difficult, due to geographical, time, and other constraints (i.e., there may be only one international recruiter in any particular HEI).  Recently, the Delphi Method has gained popularity among doctoral students conducting qualitative research (Avella, 2016), and provides a mechanism to overcome these difficulties.  In the field of international education, Darla Deardorff (2006) used the Delphi Method to determine a definition for intercultural communication, along with the development of appropriate assessment methods of intercultural competence.  Deardorff (2006) used experts in the field of intercultural communication to generate an agreed-upon definition of intercultural competence, then validated this with a sample of higher education administrators.  Following a similar design, I used the Delphi Method to generate understandings of ethical dilemmas and the ethical principles used to resolve those dilemmas, working with international educators who were responsible for international student recruitment.

In Deardorff's (2006) study, the Delphi was conducted with scholars who had previously published on the concept of intercultural communication in order to reach consensus on a definition of the term, as well as indicators of intercultural competence. Practitioners then verified that the definition and indicator list was in line with their understanding of the concept.  In my study, I solicited practitioners to participate in the Delphi rounds, as the scholars writing on ethical internationalization are not typically practicing international student recruitment in the U.S.  My goal was to understand the current landscape of international student recruitment at U.S. HEIs and to ask international educators to engage with the question of ethics within the practice, and, thus, sought their perspectives.

I chose the Delphi Method because my research attempted to capture insights from "identified experts" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 244).  In my study, I engaged geographically dispersed higher education professionals working in international education.  The Delphi Method allowed for "all members to contribute equally without dominance by a few" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 244).  The design of the study enabled participants to be in conversation with one another in order to reach a consensus on facets of ethical international student recruitment.

**Research Participants and Procedures**

The basic design of the Delphi Method involves "assembling groups of experts without concern for geography, and who then reply to several 'rounds' involving response to a specific question or questions through email" (Linstone & Turoff, 2002, as cited in Avella, 2016, p. 306).  The rounds repeat themselves to develop consensus from the range of responses.  However, consensus does not have to be the overall goal.  The Delphi Method can also be used to define issues or concepts and identify best practices (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014; Green, 2014).  The key purpose for using a Delphi Method is for the "collection of informed judgment on issues that are largely unexplored, difficult to define, highly context and expertise specific, or future-oriented" (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014, p. 3).  The EIHE project explored the topic of ethical internationalization to some extent, but there was a lack of empirical studies to accompany heuristic models.  The use of practitioner voices through the Delphi Method illuminated what this concept could look like in practice.

In Delphi studies, the researcher plays the role of planner and facilitator, and Avella (2016) states that in this light, researcher bias is minimal, as they are primarily coordinating and recording the panels.  The researcher is responsible for "identifying the

discipline, number, and content of groups, and establishing the method and procedures of communication" (Avella, 2016, p. 307).  In selecting participants for the study, the researcher asks, "Which groups have a professional interest in achieving the study purpose?" (Avella, 2016, p. 307).  As the Delphi Method surveys participants individually, this can "facilitate a 'dialogue' between experts from diverse geographical locations while preserving anonymity" (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014, p. 3).  Anonymity is beneficial as it allows participants to express their opinions freely, and for multiple voices to be heard, mitigating power relationships (Avella, 2016; Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014).

For my study, I convened international educators working in the field of international student recruitment, including senior international officers (SIOs) whose purview contains international student recruitment.  The Delphi Method requires the researcher to establish a minimal qualification threshold for participation on the panel (Avella, 2016).  Participant invitation should include "those measurable characteristics that each participant group would acknowledge as those defining expertise, while still attempting to recruit a broad range of individual perspectives within those criteria" (Avella, 2016, p. 307).  Guidelines are established in advance as the researcher must not be the primary judge of participant experience.  Accordingly, to participate in my study, the practitioners must have met the following criteria: 1) they were working at a public institution of higher education in the U.S.; 2) they had worked in the field of international education for more than five years; 3) they had responsibility for international student recruitment in their purview, and 4) they had been involved in actively recruiting international students for over three years.

**Participant recruitment**. I will next outline the methods I used to recruit participants for my study.  After obtaining approval from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I commenced participant recruitment for my study.  I first posted a request for participation on two NAFSA Network community message boards: Recruitment, Advising, Marketing and Admissions; and International Student Advising.  I also intended to post an invitation to participate in a Facebook group called Globe Trotters United, which is made up of international student recruiters.  Before I could do so, a member of the Facebook group reposted my NAFSA post in the group, so I thanked them and provided a bit more context in the comments section.  In response to one of my NAFSA posts, a NAFSA member recommended I post the request in the NAFSA Research Connections group.  I did so, along with the Leading Internationalization and the Internationalizing Teaching and Learning groups.  Additionally, I sent my recruitment message to members of study state consortia in the United States via a Google Group email listserv.  I also disseminated an email to institutions in California that were part of the Study California consortium via the Study California newsletter.

In the recruitment posts and emails, I included the participation requirements as outlined above.  I provided some background of the study – that the study would have three rounds: Round 1 would ask for detailed responses to open-ended questions about international student recruitment and participants' work; Round 2 would be a summary of all participant responses and allow for participant commentary, and Round 3 would involve ranking responses and determining consensus.  I indicated that the participants would remain anonymous to all other participants (besides myself), and any identifying remarks would be anonymized.  I also indicated that in-depth, detailed responses from

experts in the field were vital for my study and that I understood the request for participation was a big ask considering how busy international educators are in their professional lives. I offered a $5 Amazon gift card after each round to thank participants for participating. I provided a link to the survey tool and communicated that the deadline to submit responses for Round 1 was two weeks following the date of the post.

My goal was to recruit 20-30 participants. At the two-week mark, several people had accessed the survey (39), but only 11 had filled out and submitted the Round 1 survey. Due to the lower than expected response rate, I chose to extend the deadline by an additional week. I reposted the request for participation in the Globe Trotters United Facebook group as well as on the Recruitment, Advising, Marketing, and Admissions NAFSA Network message boards. The American International Recruitment Council (AIRC) staff also circulated my request for participation to recipients of their newsletter. Following three weeks of the open recruitment period, in total, I received 52 responses to my survey, and 13 completed, submitted responses.

**Questionnaires**. Following Deardorff's (2006) study methodology, I employed a questionnaire that I sent out to international educators responsible for international student recruitment to the U.S. In the recruitment emails and message board posts, I described the requirements to participate in the study and supplied a link to the survey where participants were required to validate participation requirements. Upon completion of this step, the initial questions were displayed to participants. Participants remained anonymous to each other per the design of the Delphi study, though I received all responses.

The first round of the Delphi sought to understand how international educators practice international student recruitment within their institutions, and how they

understood ethical or equitable international student recruitment.  This questionnaire was open-ended, and the goal was to identify international student recruitment practices and how they were understood in terms of ethical responsibilities.

*Survey tool*.  I used Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool, to develop my Round 1 and subsequent surveys. University of Minnesota students can access Qualtrics to conduct research, and the powerful tool proved useful and easy to use in developing the surveys for this study.  The first page of the survey was the Information Sheet for Research, as required by the IRB. The sheet provided information on the study, the study methodology, the questions that would be asked, and the length of time the survey was estimated to take. I also included information about the next steps and an estimate of the time required for each next step.  I included information about participant compensation as well, in the form of a $5 Amazon gift card after participation in each round.  I informed participants about the confidentiality of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, and included contact information for myself, my advisor, and the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP).  Finally, participants were required to consent to participate.  If they did, they were taken to the screening page that queried the following: "Do you work at a public institution of higher education in the U.S.?";  "Have you worked in the field of international education for more than five years?";  "Do you have responsibility for international student recruitment in your purview?" and, "Has your institution been actively recruiting students for over three years?"  If respondents answered "yes" to all four of these questions, they were taken to the next page of the survey.

Once participants provided consent and indicated they met all of the study requirements for participation, I asked them to provide their name and email

address.  Next, I asked four questions that would form the basis of the subsequent Delphi

rounds and interviews.  The questions were as follows:

      1. What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international students?

      2. What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment

methods?

      3. What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?

      4. When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve

these dilemmas?

      I also asked if participants were aware of, or followed, any professional guidelines

related to international student recruitment.  If so, I asked them to explain.  I also asked if

they would be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview, though I ended up asking

this again after Round 3 and used those responses to schedule interviews in person and

over Zoom.

      In analyzing the responses to this first round, I recognized the importance of being

cognizant of my participants' held beliefs regarding how they viewed the role of *ethics* in

international student recruitment.  Practitioners could read "ethics" and in turn, only share

positive or beneficial aspects of recruiting practices.  On the other hand, they could view

this as an opportunity to share negatively held beliefs.  The key to mitigating these threats

was to guarantee anonymity, so participants could openly share their practices and

perspectives.  I ensured that unless participants elected to be made known at the end of

the study, identifying details were kept confidential and responses anonymized.

      **Rounds 2 and 3 questionnaires**. According to Brady (2015), "the second wave

or round in Delphi studies allows participants to provide feedback on all responses from

Round 1" (p. 3).  The data from the previous round must be analyzed to develop the

questionnaire for the next round, and the "analysis is conducted iteratively throughout the course of the study" (Brady, 2015, p. 3).  I allotted one week to summarize responses from Round 1, then sent out the Round 2 survey.  Participants had two weeks to respond, and I sent out a reminder email after one week. I received a 100% response rate at the end of the two weeks.

I derived the categories provided to participants in Round 2 from the responses in Round 1.  I also assigned a Likert-type scale to each category.  I asked participants to review the question and the scale categories and provide their feedback on each category. I also provided an area for participants to provide commentary regarding their choices, or to go into more detail regarding their responses.

The third round involved accepting or rejecting the data collected and analyzed in Round 2.  Data from the third round was analyzed quantitatively and ranked according to the Likert-type scale that was provided in Round 2.  In my email invitation to Round 3, I included a link to the Round 3 survey as well as each participant's responses from Round 2 for their reference.  For each question, I displayed the categories received in Round 2 and included the summary of the results of the Likert-type exercise.  The categories were displayed as an interactive tool to sort the categories easily.  I also asked participants to expand on their reasoning behind their rank ordering.

I concluded the Round 3 questionnaire by posing one last question to participants: "after reviewing colleagues' responses to the previous questions, do you have anything additional you would like to add related to ethical considerations in international student recruitment?"  This line of questioning was intended to collect additional thoughts that may have arose while participants completed the final survey.

Despite the rather lengthy Round 3 questionnaire, 12 of the 13 participants completed and submitted the survey.  The participant who did not submit the survey communicated technical issues upon submission and was unsuccessful in completing Round 3 of the study.  To garner a more robust qualitative data, after Round 3, I invited respondents to participate in an interview to delve deeper into topics that arose during the Delphi rounds.

**Interviews**.  Following three rounds of the Delphi study, I sent an invitation to participants to partake in a one-hour interview.  Eight of the 13 participants responded, and I ended up interviewing seven.  I conducted four interviews in person, and three interviews over Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform provided by the University of Minnesota.  Interviews ranged from approximately 40 minutes to just over an hour in length.

Before the interview sessions, I requested permission to record the interview using a transcription service called Temi.  Upon verbal approval, I reminded participants of the requirements for participation in the study.  This reminder was intended for participants to understand the profile of the respondents and how the categories were developed.  I then read each of the 13 categories that were developed in response to Question 4, which was, "When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?" and asked participants to provide comments regarding each category.  To close, I asked, "If there were one or two things that recruiters should know about ethics, what would they be?" which allowed participants to provide a closing summary of their thoughts.  Throughout the interview, I tried not to share my opinions, though I did have specific questions related to certain categories and inserted those when appropriate.  Occasionally, participants asked clarifying questions, and there were

moments when I shared anecdotes to keep the conversation progressing.  At times, upon the conclusion of the interviews, I engaged in a more candid conversation with participants.  However, I tried to remove my perspectives from the formal interview portion of our conversation to refrain from influencing participant responses.

**Data Analysis**

In Chapter 4, I will summarize participant responses related to ethical principles in international student recruitment by extracting common themes and commentary.  To do this, I first created a codebook in a spreadsheet.  Maxwell (2012) recommended three categories that a researcher can use during the data analysis process: organizational categories, which are used to sort data; substantive, which are descriptive and do not necessarily lead into theory but are broader than the original data; and theoretical, where data is placed in a general or abstract framework.  I used all three categories in my coding.

The codes I used during the first round of coding stemmed from the thirteen principles that were developed from responses in Round 1.  I also inductively coded themes that I immediately noticed (substantive categories), including personal ethics, career progression and leadership, and responsibility to the institution.  Organizational categories allowed me to sort the data in subsequent rounds easily.  These included categories such as "ROI or finances" and "agents," and a column that indicated if the participant quote confirmed or refuted the principle.  I read the transcripts and listened through each interview to ensure the transcript software (Temi) captured the interview accurately.  While reading and listening, I reviewed each participant transcript, and bolded sections that I felt were meaningful pieces of data.  Next, I went through each transcript and inserted the quotes I had selected into the spreadsheet that housed my

codebook.  I did an initial coding, indicating which principle the quotation aligned with, as well if it fell into the other categories I created.

Once I sorted participant quotes into principles, I reviewed each ethical principle one at a time.  Sometimes participant quotes exemplified more than one principle, so I kept those linkages in mind to not be boxed in unnecessarily and subsequently ended up merging or eliminating principles, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.  Maxwell (2012) refers to, and I recognize, the importance of "connecting strategies" for contextualizing and identifying relationships among the data, and in my discussion that follows, I will indicate overlaps between principles and data.  For each principle, I then went through a process of "open coding," which involved "reading the data and developing [my] own coding categories, based on what data (including the participants' terms and categories) seem most important" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 41).  The goal was to flesh out the principles beyond the one or two sentences that were shared with participants during the Delphi studies and resulted in the list of ethical principles in Chapter 4.

**Analytical Framework for Qualitative Data**

I used the social cartography developed through the EIHE (Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education) (2013) project as an analytical framework through which to link participant responses back to conceptualizations of internationalization of higher education.  The EIHE social cartography was used to create a map of overlapping and distinct understandings of ethical international student recruitment dilemmas present in the data and provided an understanding of differences within and between the discursive orientations.  Aligning with Haapakoski and Pashby's (2017) social cartography framework, I intended to "make intelligible the overlaps and conflations…found in the various conceptualisations of internationalisation as one way to

direct conversations about research and about day to day practice in HE in the context of

the rush to internationalise" (p. 365).  In this way, the heuristic was "both an

interpretative device for analysis of the sets of data in this research and a reflexive tool

for considering implications of overlapping and contradictory conceptualisations of

internationalisation for ethical approaches to policy and practice" (Haapakoski & Pashby,

2017, p. 365).  The cartography is displayed in Figure 4.
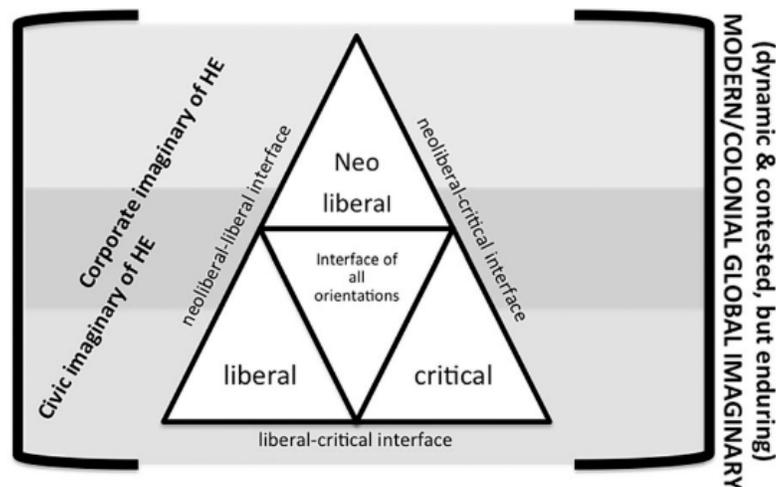


*Figure 4.* Discursive orientations in the corporate/civic imaginary of higher education.
Reprinted from "Social cartographies as performative devices in research on higher
education" by Andreotti, V., Stein, S., Pashby, K., & Nicolson, M., 2016, *Higher
Education Research and Development, 35*(1), p. 91.

As discussed in Chapter 2, this heuristic organizes three key discursive

configurations present in the internationalization of higher education, which give rise to

four interfaces.  The *neoliberal* discursive orientation views education in terms of

commodities, the *liberal* discursive orientation views education as a public good, and the

*critical* discursive calls for the university to include marginalized voices and recognize its

responsibility to empower those who have traditionally been harmed by exploitative

processes.  Rationales for international student recruitment overlap within the discursive

orientations and are mapped accordingly.

The use of the social cartography extended the work of EIHE scholars by mapping EIHE conceptualizations of internationalization of higher education onto participant responses about their daily work.  As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, economic rationales for international student recruitment dominate, and it was unclear if ethical considerations were present in practice.  The Delphi rounds developed consensus around how international educators understand their work, as well as how they resolve ethical dilemmas they encounter.  The dilemmas they faced exhibited characteristics of the four discursive orientations represented in the social cartography and were mapped accordingly.  The use of the heuristic to map responses enabled me to highlight the dominant discursive orientations as well as illuminate less dominant orientations.  In my study, the mapping of responses provided insight into the distribution of dominant discourses and linkages between those discourses.  I sought to understand how practices of ethical internationalization could reshape ideas and practices of international student recruitment, and the heuristic served to "make visible the spaces where discourses are missing" (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p. 367), enabling further discussion of potential alternatives.  For this study, social cartography helped to illuminate the structures of internationalization in which recruiters were working, allowing for a better understanding of the ethical considerations they embraced.

**Potential Ethical and Validity Threats**

The Delphi Method is designed to reduce researcher bias and common validity threats.  Consideration of researcher positionality was most relevant in the analysis of data.  My professional and academic experiences in international student recruitment and the context of those experiences have led me to develop personal conceptions of ethical and unethical international student recruitment practices.  However, I aimed to be guided

by my theoretical framework, previous scholarship, and the data I collected.  This allowed me to form conclusions while remaining reflective of how my own experience guided me throughout data selection and data analysis.  I utilized a methods journal to document my research decisions throughout the study.  This was beneficial as there was a time delay between Delphi rounds.  Through the journaling process, I documented decisions transparently for inclusion in the final write-up.  According to Brady (2015), such explicit documentation strengthens the rigor of studies.  In this way, the trustworthiness of the study was improved, as readers are able to follow the logic of decisions at each step and stage of the study (Brady, 2015).  I documented "major decision rules, protocols, justification for changes in protocols, and corresponding dates for each major step and decision undertaken in the study" (Brady, 2015, p. 5) to bring transparency to my thought processes. Many of these decisions are described in the paragraphs above.

An additional advantage of the Delphi Method is built-in respondent validation (Maxwell, 2012).  The three rounds of the Delphi allowed participants to extend and revise data.  I was also careful not to let my bias exert influence on participant selection. Panel membership is crucial to the validity of the Delphi Method.  The solicitation of practitioner participants from professional networks and establishing participant qualification criteria in advance of selection helped with recruiting participants who could adequately reflect on ethical challenges in the field.

The Delphi Method is useful for "pursuing complex topics where there is no clear causal relationship and the subjective judgment of experts could generate breakthroughs" (Avella, 2016, p. 318).  In the following chapter, I will demonstrate how the Delphi Method was used to bring together practitioner voices to assess international student

recruitment practices in the United States.  Moreover, the Delphi Method was used to inform both practice and theory by identifying ethical recruitment practices, or the possibility of these practices, within ethical internationalization.  The social cartography developed by the EIHE project informed data analysis and conclusions put forth, to understand how practices of ethical internationalization can reshape international student recruitment.  Further, theoretical constructs related to ethics of professions and the participants' words themselves as inductive themes helped develop a nuanced understanding of ethics for both theory and practice.

**Limitations**

This study provided quantitative propensity and ranking data as well as qualitative context on a series of practices that I have described as "ethical principles for international recruitment."  The study, however, was limited by the small sample size for the Delphi study.  The magnitude of this limitation was unknown because, in the literature, the Delphi methodology does not have an agreed-upon number of participants.  There is literature that states that participant numbers can range from 10 to 100 (Avella, 2016).  My study included 13 initial experts, which was at the low end of the range, yet acceptable.  In consultation with my advisor and a preliminary review of results, it appeared that I had enough data gathered via the multi-round study to continue with my lower number of participants.

Upon suggestion from a committee member, I conducted follow-up interviews to legitimize quantitative claims further and provide participants the opportunity to expand on themes found in the Delphi study.  The interviews were an enlightening addition to the Delphi Method and allowed for sequential analysis of data.  Qualitative data helped to develop and generate additional insights into written answers for future Delphi studies

and provided contextual clues to help collapse and elucidate ethical principles that mattered most to participants.

A second limitation to the study centered on requesting participants to complete a ranking exercise in Round 3. The Delphi is usually used to generate consensus. I argue that it did, based on the mean, median, and standard deviation statistics for the top and bottom extremes of the rankings in Questions 2, 3, and 4. However, the middle section was frequently "muddy," and ranking made it challenging to know just how important specific principles were. Ranking data does not allow for researchers to know if ranks 1-5 are approximately equally important or if only the top two ranks carry importance. Subsequent interviews with several participants regarding the principles, however, provided the guidance for this study that was lost in the ranking exercise. Qualitative interviews were insightful and served to reinforce and explain the ranking that came out of Round 3. Had time allowed, it would have been beneficial to discuss the data from all the questions, as only results from Question 4 were discussed during the interview. Nevertheless, this study sought to understand how international student recruitment professionals understand ethics in their work. Therefore, I chose to focus on the responses regarding ethical principles central to Question 4. I may follow up with participants on other aspects of the data for a future study.

An additional limitation to my study points to the institutions where the participants were employed. Not all participants were employed at institutions that engage recruitment agencies. This fact was drawn out in the data – typically, participants who did not work with agents moved those items concerning agencies to the bottom in ranking exercises. A cross-section of the data could be completed to remove those participants and draw out other conclusions based on data only from institutions that

work with agents if my research had a more specialized focus on recruitment agencies. In a future study, I would allow participants to choose "not applicable" next to categories that had to do with recruitment agencies so they could exclude those items from their responses.

Finally, one participant revealed during their interview that they had recently changed institutions during the time between the Delphi rounds and the interview.  I asked the participant if their responses had changed based on their new context at a private institution.  The participant indicated that they would respond based on their previous public university context.  Upon reviewing the transcript interview data, I did not find their answers to be influenced by their current private institutional context. Therefore, I chose to include their comments in my results.

In summary, the Delphi Method was selected to explore how professionals in the field of international student recruitment understand ethics in their work.  The Delphi Method was chosen to garner insights from expert practitioners in the field, and the iterative process enabled consensus building around ethical dilemmas and principles. Interviews were conducted to identify themes further and highlight the depth of thought behind the ethical principles identified during the Delphi rounds.  Finally, social cartography was used for data analysis to link participant responses back to identified conceptualizations of internationalization in higher education.  Next, I will discuss the findings of this study.

**Chapter 4**

In the preceding chapters, I outlined the literature, rationale, and methodology for this study.  This chapter will report the findings of my study.  The study consisted of three Delphi rounds that, in turn, consisted of surveys that were developed based on participant responses from the previous rounds.  Following the three Delphi rounds, I conducted a final interview with participants who consented to be interviewed.  In the pages that follow, I will describe each Delphi round, the rationale behind decisions made during each round, as well as quantitative and qualitative results.  For the interview portion, I focused on one specific question from the Delphi rounds as well as the responses it generated.

**Delphi Study: Round 1 Results**

In the paragraphs that follow, I will summarize the participant responses received in Round 1.  I will summarize participant responses to each question and discuss my rationale for groupings I made in each section.  These groupings were used to develop the Round 2 survey.

**Question 1: What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international students?**  For all of the questions in Round 1, participant responses ranged from in-depth to concise answer or phrase.  Question 1 was asked to develop the context for the subsequent study responses.  As I will discuss later in this chapter, interviews with participants revealed that both institutional context and recruitment methods that international educators use to shape what ethical dilemmas they encounter and how they respond to these dilemmas.

To develop the Round 2 questionnaire from responses received in Round 1, I made a list of all of the strategies and activities indicated by respondents.  If a respondent

indicated more than one recruitment method in their response, I broke them out as separate methods.  In the majority of instances, I used participant responses to guide the list, sometimes adding clarifying information to the category name.  For example, one participant wrote that they[2] "pay marketing partners, work with agents, travel to fairs – domestic and international, reach out to current students and alumni, reach out to traveling faculty and attend international conferences."  I broke this response out into multiple categories: "Paying marketing partners," "Direct recruitment – international fairs," "Direct recruitment – domestic fairs," "Alumni engagement," Traveling faculty," and "Attend international conferences (networking)."

I also grouped similar responses into categories.  For example, participant responses to this question included: "work directly with agents," "commissioned agencies," "agencies," and "agents."  I categorized these all as "Agents."  In another example, one participant wrote that they use "social media campaigns," two participants indicated they use "social media," one wrote "digital marketing and social media," and another wrote "digital marketing (social media, advertisements, portal listings, web site [sic])."  I categorized the social media items as "Digital marketing – social media" and also included "Digital marketing – advertisements," "Digital marketing – portal listings," and "Digital marketing – automated CRM messaging."

A complete list of categories generated from the responses to Question 1 is displayed in Table 1.

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[2] In all instances I use the pronoun "they" in both the singular and plural.

**Table 1**

*Recruitment strategies and activities*

| Category |
| --- |
| Agents |
| AIRC events |
| Alumni engagement |
| Armchair recruitment |
| Attend domestic conferences (networking) |
| Attend international conferences (networking) |
| Digital marketing – advertisements |
| Digital marketing – automated CRM messaging |
| Digital marketing – portal listings |
| Digital marketing – social media |
| Direct recruitment – domestic fairs |
| Direct recruitment – EducationUSA fairs and visits |
| Direct recruitment – high school visits, including building relationships with counselors |
| Direct recruitment – international fairs |
| Direct recruitment – private tours and school visits |
| Direct recruitment – visiting universities |
| ICEF agent fairs |
| International partnerships, including pathway and dual degree programs |
| Paying marketing partners |
| Print advertisements |
| Purchasing names |
| Traveling faculty |
| U.S. Commercial Service services |
| Virtual fairs |
| Webinars |
| Word of mouth |

In the Round 2 questionnaire, I also provided an "Other" option and a blank space for participants to list other options.

**Question 2: What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?** This question was designed to understand how participants make

decisions about the selection of recruitment methods.  I wanted to pull out constraints or motivating factors that might be driving recruitment decisions, either from participants themselves, or from their institutions or supervisors, or from general economic and political trends.

All of the participants referenced budget and return on investment (ROI) in multiple ways.  For example, in response to Question 2, one participant wrote that they consider ROI in terms of "successful conversion from inquiry to enrollment."  Another wrote that they consider "ROI, broadly defined" when selecting recruitment methods. Yet another indicated that when making decisions around recruitment, "ROI is #1.  We will spend no more than two years in a geographic location if little to no return."  Another participant stated that they "need cost-effective strategies that have tangible outcomes." Due to the focus on ROI, I included a question in the Round 2 questionnaire that asked participants, "How do you define and measure ROI?"  The responses to this question will be discussed in the Round 2 results later in this chapter.

In the Round 2 survey, I included direct quotes from participants from the Round 1 survey.  For example, one participant wrote that when selecting recruitment methods and locations, they consider "characteristics of the audience in a given location (e.g., economic factors, push/pull factors, country-level data, English ability, etc.)."  A strength of the Delphi Method is the inclusion of exact responses that allow participants to see how others have responded in an anonymized fashion (Avella, 2016), so I pulled this out as a category verbatim in the Round 2 survey.

For some categories, I extrapolated and simplified wording from participant responses. For example, one respondent wrote that they "gravitate to strategies that are rather simple, as we do not have much staff, and need to be able to have very

straightforward processes and conversations." I simplified this to "staff resources and capacity."

Two respondents indicated they take politics into account when selecting recruitment methods. One respondent wrote that "given political volatility, we generally seek out three geographic areas every two years to focus our efforts." Also concerned with the "political situation in target country [sic]," another participant wrote, "if you do not diversify your international student body than [sic] any major event, whether it be economic, political or disaster can have an extreme effect on your overall numbers." For this participant, a key consideration is how an economic or political situation in a target country may influence or inhibit the ability of students from that country to study abroad.

A complete list of categories generated from Question 2 of Round 1 (what considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?) is displayed in Table 2, below.

**Table 2**

*Considerations for selecting recruitment methods*

| Category |
| --- |
| Academic interest areas alignment |
| Branding or other long-term approaches |
| Characteristics of the audience in a given location – for example, economic factors, English language ability, push/pull factors, political situation |
| Country-level or regional trends: number of mobile students in-country, economic indicators |
| Desired outcomes |
| Effectiveness of recruitment method in a particular region/country |
| Ethics |
| Existing relationships or connections in a city, county, or region |
| Finances/cost/budget |
| Location of in-country representative |
| Partner events |
| Potential for a successful conversion from inquiry to enrollment |
| Return on investment (ROI) |
| Safety |
| Staff resources and capacity |
| Trustworthiness, credibility, and compatibility of a partner |

Again, in the Round 2 questionnaire, I also provided an option for participants to select "other" and provide more information.

**Question 3: What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?**

Questions 3 and 4, which asked participants what ethical dilemmas they face in their work and how they resolve those dilemmas, generated the bulk of data that moved the Delphi study forward and were the most germane to this study.  Grouping responses into categories was more difficult at this point, so I chose to include longer phrases and exact quotations in the Round 2 questionnaire.

Multiple participants' responses to Question 3, which asked what ethical dilemmas participants face in their work, called out recruitment agencies specifically. One participant stated that an ethical dilemma they face in their work is "agencies

keeping the best interests of students at the forefront," and another participant pointed to "working with agents that outsource to sub-agents who have little…knowledge of our institution." Also challenging for one participant was "vetting agencies that wish to recruit on our behalf for commission and ensuring that the students are not being charged and receiving the appropriate advisement."  The same participant viewed "ensuring that the agencies that we do partner with are representing our institution honestly and ethically in their practices" as an ethical dilemma as well.  Not all public institutions in the U.S. work with agencies, so I chose to categorize agency-related responses under "Working with agents," as shown below in the list of categories shared with participants in the Round 2 questionnaire.

As responses to this question were more narrative than responses to previous questions, I chose to organize them into individual themes as they overlapped.  One respondent wrote that they were "not sure this is an ethical dilemma, but diversification is always a dilemma as it is easy to keep going back to the well."  Another participant responded that "inequitable recruitment" is an ethical dilemma they encounter – "only recruiting from regions where students can pay."  These two responses are an indication that participants grapple with the results-driven nature of their positions.  I grouped these in one category: "Inequitable recruitment/diversification: only recruiting from regions where students can pay."

A complete list of categories generated from Question 3 of Round 1 is displayed in Table 3, below.

**Table 3**

*Ethical dilemmas*

| Category |
| --- |
| Budget constraints and keeping students' best interests in mind: the budget must be spent wisely, but international student tuition dollars are expected. |
| Concerns around racism or discrimination international students may experience on- or off-campus. |
| Convincing students to select your institution over others that might be more financially affordable. |
| Environmental impact of travel. |
| Inequitable recruitment/diversification: only recruiting from regions where students can pay. |
| Lack of transparency with scholarships/sponsored programs – for example, which institutions are on the approved list? |
| Messaging beyond the promotion of your institution: sharing adequate information about the U.S., including cost, cultural barriers, struggles that may be faced by international students. |
| Quality of the institution's academic programs. |
| Rankings that do not take into account individual academic programs. |
| Screening of recruitment fair attendees who do not understand the cost of attendance to institutions in the U.S. |
| Sharing the U.S. as a top destination in light of political/economic challenges as well as safety issues. |
| Support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration. |
| Truth in advertising/communications – for example, students wanting a program that the institution "kind of" has, but is not the best fit. |
| Use/administration of scholarships. |
| Whether U.S. education is really the best option for students. A U.S. university education can lead to economic success for students but is increasingly expensive and difficult to attain. |
| Working with agents: determining student satisfaction with agency services. |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are not charging students when the institution pays a commission. |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are representing the institution honestly and appropriately and have the institution's best interests in mind. |
| Working with agents: ensuring they have the student's best interest in mind. |
| Working with agents: inconsistent commission payments across institutions and agencies. |
| Working with agents: not knowing how sub-agents represent the institution. |
| Working with agents: questionable documentation. |

As with the previous questions, in Round 2, I gave the option for participants to indicate "other" and further describe.

**Question 4: When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?**

Participants also provided a range of responses for Question 4.  As with the previous question, responses were more narrative, so I organized the categories thematically.  For example, to resolve ethical dilemmas, one respondent recommended that recruiters "consult with someone you trust and whose opinion and character you respect."  This participant also stated that "professional association guidance like that produced by NAFSA, NACAC, AIRC, and others can be helpful particularly for less experienced practitioners."  Rather than include this full response as one category, I broke it into two.  A separate participant pointed to AIRC and NACAC guidelines related to ethical standards, and this enabled me to rationalize separating professional guidelines into its own category.

Similarly, one respondent wrote that "transparency is the most important principle in most cases. I try to keep as much information as possible on our web page and provide flyers or FAQs, so prospective students can have as much information as possible."  I chose to derive two categories from this response.  The first was "providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience."  The second category was "transparency and honesty about reality versus perceptions. Not selling students something that is similar to what they want; making sure applicants understand the benefits of the institution and provide a realistic view of what they will encounter when enrolling."  Providing clear information was mentioned by two participants, and

transparency and honesty were mentioned separately by three participants, warranting

two separate categories for this item.

A complete list of categories generated from Question 4 of Round 1 ("What

principles do you use to resolve ethical dilemmas?") is as follows:

**Table 4**

*Ethical principles*

| Category |
| --- |
| Agency vetting process. |
| Consulting with colleagues you trust and whose character you respect. |
| Focusing on what is best for the student: happy students will lead to more successful recruitment. |
| Following up with new students. |
| "Gut check." |
| Providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience. |
| Recognizing the tension between the duty to the institution and taxpayers as well as the duty to the international students. |
| Reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services. |
| Referencing professional association guidance (NAFSA, NACAC, AIRC). |
| Transparency and honesty about reality versus perceptions. Not selling students something that is similar to what they want; making sure applicants understand the benefits of the institution and provide a realistic view of what they will encounter when enrolling. |
| Understanding that there are cultural dimensions that affect ethical interpretations. |
| Understanding individual agency: students have the ability to make their own decisions about where, why, and how they study; but I, too, have the ability to make decisions about how I influence their decision-making process. I make every effort to do so in a way that I feel honors their own agency while attending to their potential informational disadvantage. |
| University policy and procedure with accountability and regular check-ins. |

As with the previous questions, in Round 2, I gave the option for participants to

indicate "other" and further describe any additional thoughts they had on ethical

principles of recruitment.

**Question 5: Are you aware of, or do you follow any professional guidelines**

**related to international student recruitment?** To ensure I was aware of all professional

guidelines that participants reference related to international student recruitment, I asked this question as a mechanism to check with participants.  The following organizations and guidelines were mentioned and were discussed previously in Chapter 2.

- AACRAO

- AIRC

- NACAC/IACAC

- NAFSA

The purpose of Round 1 was to develop a range of options to which participants would respond in the Round 2 survey. When the Round 1 survey closed, I sent an email to the 13 respondents, letting them know about the timeline for the rest of the study.  For Round 2, all 13 participants responded by the deadline.  Survey results from the Round 2 survey are reported below.

**Delphi Study: Round 2 Results**

In this section, I will summarize the participant responses received in Round 2. For each question, I will share the participant responses to the Likert-scale options, as well as additional commentary participants provided.

**Question 1: What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international students?**  Table 5 displays responses to Question 1, with the percentage of respondents who selected the Likert-type item presented next to each category.

**Table 5**

*Recruitment strategies and activities, ordered by frequency of use*

| Category | Frequently use | Sometimes use | Infrequently use | Do not use |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Word of mouth | 76.92% | 23.08% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Direct recruitment - international fairs | 61.54% | 23.08% | 7.69% | 7.69% |
| Armchair recruitment | 53.85% | 38.46% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| Agents | 46.15% | 23.08% | 23.08% | 7.69% |
| Digital marketing - automated CRM messaging | 46.15% | 23.08% | 7.69% | 23.08% |
| Direct recruitment - high school visits, including building relationships with counselors | 46.15% | 23.08% | 15.38% | 15.38% |
| Attend domestic conferences (networking) | 38.46% | 61.54% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Attend international conferences (networking) | 38.46% | 38.46% | 23.08% | 0.00% |
| Direct recruitment - EducationUSA fairs and visits | 38.46% | 23.08% | 30.77% | 7.69% |
| International partnerships, including pathway and dual degree programs | 38.46% | 38.46% | 7.69% | 15.38% |
| Direct recruitment - private tours and school visits | 23.08% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 30.77% |
| Other - please list | 23.08% | 0.00% | 7.69% | 69.23% |
| AIRC events | 15.38% | 15.38% | 30.77% | 38.46% |
| Digital marketing - advertisements | 15.38% | 61.54% | 15.38% | 7.69% |
| Digital marketing - portal listings | 15.38% | 15.38% | 46.15% | 23.08% |
| Digital marketing - social media | 15.38% | 53.85% | 23.08% | 7.69% |
| Direct recruitment - domestic fairs | 15.38% | 15.38% | 38.46% | 30.77% |
| Direct recruitment - visiting universities | 15.38% | 53.85% | 23.08% | 7.69% |
| U.S. Commercial Service services | 15.38% | 30.77% | 30.77% | 23.08% |

**Table 5** (continued)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Webinars | 15.38% | 38.46% | 30.77% | 15.38% |
| Alumni engagement | 7.69% | 7.69% | 69.23% | 15.38% |
| Paying marketing partners | 7.69% | 46.15% | 23.08% | 23.08% |
| Print advertisements | 7.69% | 15.38% | 38.46% | 38.46% |
| Purchasing names | 7.69% | 23.08% | 7.69% | 61.54% |
| Virtual Fairs | 7.69% | 23.08% | 30.77% | 38.46% |
| ICEF agent fairs | 0.00% | 38.46% | 7.69% | 53.85% |
| Traveling faculty | 0.00% | 15.38% | 69.23% | 15.38% |

Taken together, the data from Question 1 provides an overview of the current state of recruitment activities at participant institutions. All 13 participants either sometimes or frequently use word of mouth and participate in domestic conferences for networking purposes. Of respondents, 92.31% either frequently or sometimes participate in armchair recruitment, which is recruitment by methods other than travel, such as via a website, communications over email, and social media. These top three methods – word of mouth, armchair recruitment, and participating in domestic conferences – are some of the more cost-effective items that were included in the list of recruitment activities. Word of mouth, based primarily on alumni or enrolled international student experiences, may have no real associated cost. Similarly, armchair recruitment may only require staff time to respond to emails or to update information on the institution's website. Domestic conferences such as NAFSA offer international student recruiters opportunities to connect with many existing and potential partners in a small period, representing a cost-effective way to conduct face-to-face business at volume. Additionally, among the sample, 84.62% often participate in direct recruitment via international fairs. International fairs allow recruitment professionals to meet with many international students at once and are usually highly promoted, specifically targeting international students who have the financial means and intend to study abroad. Participation in these

fairs is a central activity in international student recruitment.  In Round 1, all participants indicated they consider their budget when determining recruitment methods, so it follows that the top methods of recruitment indicated by participants are either no or low-cost or provide an opportunity for the recruiter to meet with as many partners or students as possible in a concentrated time.

Conversely, 84.62% of participants either infrequently or do not at all use traveling faculty or alumni engagement for recruitment purposes.  While faculty who travel abroad for research purposes may seem like an avenue for potential recruitment work, they are usually not recruitment professionals, and providing training and making alterations to their travel schedule may be unwieldy.  Alumni engagement, framed by professional networks as a "cost-effective way to tap into an often-overlooked resource" (NAFSA, 2020), may require comprehensive oversight and the development of an alumni engagement program that recruitment professionals do not have time or expertise to manage.

The responses from Round 2 clarified how international student recruiters conduct international student recruitment at campuses in the U.S. and demonstrate that recruitment professionals most frequently choose low-cost and high-impact recruitment activities in line with the top consideration outlined in the next question (budget).

**Question 2: What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?**  Participants were asked to indicate how often they include recruitment considerations in their decision-making process when selecting recruitment methods.  Choices for this question were developed through the Round 1 survey. Participant responses are displayed in Table 6 below, ordered by the category "realistic/always taken into consideration."

**Table 6**

*Recruitment considerations, ordered by frequency considered*

| Category | Realistic/ always taken into consideration | Usually taken into consideration | Infrequently taken into consideration | Unrealistic/ not taken into consideration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finances/cost/budget | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Staff resources and capacity | 92.31% | 7.69% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Ethics | 84.62% | 0.00% | 15.38% | 0.00% |
| Characteristics of the audience in a given location.  Ex., economic factors, English language ability, push/pull factors, political situation | 76.92% | 7.69% | 15.38% | 0.00% |
| Country-level or regional trends: number of mobile students in country, economic indicators | 69.23% | 23.08% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| Desired outcomes | 69.23% | 23.08% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| Trustworthiness, credibility, and compatibility of partner | 69.23% | 30.77% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Existing relationships or connections in a city, county, or region | 61.54% | 30.77% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| Effectiveness of recruitment method in a particular region/country | 53.85% | 46.15% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Safety | 53.85% | 23.08% | 23.08% | 0.00% |
| Return on investment (ROI) | 46.15% | 53.85% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Academic interest areas alignment | 38.46% | 38.46% | 23.08% | 0.00% |

**Table 6** (continued)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Potential for the successful conversion from inquiry to enrollment | 38.46% | 61.54% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Branding or other long-term approaches | 23.08% | 53.85% | 23.08% | 0.00% |
| Location of in-country representative | 15.38% | 23.08% | 23.08% | 38.46% |
| Partner events | 7.69% | 61.54% | 7.69% | 23.08% |

Of the 13 participants who responded to the study, 100% always consider finances, cost, and budget.  This response is unsurprising, as all of the participants mentioned either budget or ROI in their initial responses to Question 2 in Round 1. Given participants' pervasive consideration of budget concerns, the data in this study can be contextualized with this particular lens.  International student recruitment, as it may require international travel, is an expensive venture – the same can be said for all paid recruitment activities, though the addition of overseas travel adds an extra layer of expense.  In the previous question, all participants indicated that they participate in, at minimum, one form of paid recruitment activity and are subsequently conducting a cost-benefit analysis when making recruitment decisions.  While it remains debatable if all institutions benefit financially from the recruitment of international students (Cantwell, 2015; George Mwangi, 2013), this data outlines that finances are at the forefront of recruiters' considerations.

Expanding beyond the financial considerations, participants indicated that the desired outcomes of recruitment activities, such as increased numbers of inquiries, applications, and enrolled international students, were a top concern when selecting recruitment methods.  Further demonstrating the importance of outcomes of recruitment

activities, "effectiveness of recruitment method in a particular region/country" and "return on investment" were top considerations for recruiters.  Return on investment differs from "finances, cost, and budget" in that return on investment may not be as immediate as the current fiscal year's budget when making recruitment decisions.  Notably, the effectiveness of a recruitment strategy and the eventual return on investment from the chosen strategy is always or usually taken into consideration by all participants.  Moreover, the majority of participants always or usually take the "potential for a successful conversion from inquiry to enrollment" into consideration when making recruitment decisions.  Whether considering increased enrollment or the ROI, the recruitment professionals in this study indicate that recruitment considerations are primarily driven by outcomes and are fully aware of the numbers-driven aspects of their work.

A focus on the bottom line did not diminish a focus on the ethical tensions that recruiters encounter in their work.  Ethics was also an important consideration for the majority of participants, perhaps because of the outcomes-driven environment in which they worked.  While all participants in this study shared ethical dilemmas that they face, discussed in the sections that follow, ethics were less central for two participants.  For the vast majority of participants, however, ethical considerations were central to their work.

"Ethics" were always taken into consideration by 84.62% of the participants, but there were noticeable discrepancies in how recruiters constructed ethics.  For example, participants infrequently consider "academic interest area alignment."  This consideration places student interest at the forefront of recruitment, ensuring that the institutions' programmatic offerings are indeed what the student is looking for when the recruiter is deciding which location to target or which recruitment methods to use in their

recruitment strategy.  The majority of the other recruitment considerations primarily place the recruiter's interests first (safety, existing relationships) or the institution's interests first (finances, staff resources, desired outcomes) over student interests (academic interest area alignment).  Given that the student is largely absent from the category list is an indication that participants make decisions with an eye toward successful enrollment, despite a high number of respondents who claimed they considered ethics central to their work.

Related to the financial aspects of recruitment and its ethical considerations, a high number of respondents also considered ROI as a core consideration for their work. The paragraphs below explain participant responses related to ROI and additional details provided by participants.

*Return on investment (ROI)*.  As part of this question block, I was interested in understanding how participants defined ROI.  All participants consider ROI when making recruitment decisions.  Understanding how they define this concept, either personally or at their institution, was significant in understanding how financial aspects of recruitment impact decision-making.  All participants have responsibility for decisions around international student recruitment in their purview.  If decisions are primarily weighted toward finances, how they conceptualize ROI is important.

Multiple respondents expressed the challenges they face with tracking ROI, as "ROI is not a science[,] it depends on circumstance and reason for recruitment."  While participants define ROI differently, they all mentioned tracking data points such as the number of students enrolled, the number of applications, or the number of inquiries. Most participants factor in two costs: the cost of the recruitment activity and expenditure in a specific country, and the tuition revenue from increased enrollment from that

country.  The structure of the institution dictates how tuition revenue is included in the ROI calculation.  One participant only considers the number of applications, not enrollments, when determining ROI, as the recruiter's department is responsible for increasing applications, but not for converting applications into enrolled students.

For participants who do not consider tuition revenue in their ROI calculations, they are still concerned with indicators of successful future enrollment, such as generating leads, increases in emails from students, increased visitation to university websites, otherwise described as "hard returns" (Roy & Lu, 2016), and impacting an institution's bottom line.  "Soft returns" (Roy & Lu, 2016) such as increased partnerships, brand awareness, or demonstrating solidarity with colleagues in the same university system were only mentioned by one participant when asked how they define ROI.  In general, participants demonstrated that ROI in international student recruitment is based primarily on a positive correlation between expenditure and revenue, with little or no focus on other tangible or intangible benefits, an area of concern that has been identified by other researchers (Roy & Lu, 2016).

One participant, however, was noteworthy in their shift away from enrollments or applications when conceptualizing ROI.  They wrote, "I'm hoping to come up with a holistic ROI assessment that goes well beyond the generic measure of enrollment activity vis-a-vis budget spent and instead also incorporates student satisfaction, performance, diversity, and other measures."  As discussed, for almost all participants, students were viewed as indicators of invested time – number of applicants and number of enrolled students – but for this participant, the conceptualization of ROI included student experiences on campus.  An ROI assessment that includes the international student in calculations of success would begin to move beyond the datafication of

internationalization, a trend that has been critiqued by scholars (Buckner & Stein, 2019; Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2017) contextualizing ROI as more holistic and student-centered.

Overall, institutions and the participants working at them are tasked with being stewards of a public budget, and unsurprisingly take financial considerations into account.  For these participants, the primary focus of ethical consideration is the home institution and the home society (in this case, the U.S.)  This consideration includes the institution's budget and the state that it serves.  If public monies are allocated to conduct recruitment activities, the expectation would be that those monies are returned, and at a higher rate, to provide benefit for the institution and the domestic students it enrolls. Many of the methods participants use to determine a positive return on investment are related to the successful enrollment of international students or analytics that demonstrate increased inquiries or institutional awareness following recruitment activities. Notably, some movement was made toward a more holistic approach, as demonstrated by the participant that called for an expanded view of ROI that considers the student's interests as well, incorporating "student satisfaction, performance, diversity" into calculations that have been, up to this point, primarily driven by success as defined by increases in tuition revenue.

**Question 3: What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?**  For Question 3 of Round 2, participants were asked how often they face ethical dilemmas that were supplied by the respondents in Round 1. Table 7 displays their responses, ordered by frequency faced.

**Table 7**

*Ethical dilemmas, ordered by frequency faced*

| Category | Always face | Sometimes face | Infrequently face | Never face |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Budget constraints and keeping students' best interests in mind: the budget must be spent wisely, but international student tuition dollars are expected | 46.15% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 7.69% |
| Sharing the U.S. as a top destination in light of political/economic challenges as well as safety issues | 46.15% | 30.77% | 7.69% | 15.38% |
| Support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration | 38.46% | 38.46% | 15.38% | 7.69% |
| Inequitable recruitment/diversification: only recruiting from regions where students can pay | 30.77% | 38.46% | 23.08% | 7.69% |
| Rankings that do not take into account individual academic programs | 30.77% | 23.08% | 46.15% | 0.00% |
| Screening of recruitment fair attendees who do not understand the cost of attendance to institutions in the U.S. | 23.08% | 30.77% | 30.77% | 15.38% |
| Working with agents: inconsistent commission payments across institutions and agencies | 23.08% | 7.69% | 46.15% | 23.08% |
| Use/administration of scholarships | 15.38% | 15.38% | 46.15% | 23.08% |
| Concerns around racism or discrimination international students may experience on- or off-campus | 7.69% | 23.08% | 61.54% | 7.69% |
| Lack of transparency with scholarships/sponsored programs - for example, which institutions are on the approved list? | 7.69% | 23.08% | 30.77% | 38.46% |
| Messaging beyond the promotion of your institution: sharing adequate information about the U.S., including cost, cultural barriers, struggles that may be faced by international students | 7.69% | 46.15% | 23.08% | 23.08% |

**Table 7** (continued)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whether U.S. education is really the best option for students.  A U.S. university education can lead to economic success for students but is increasingly expensive and difficult to attain. | 7.69% | 46.15% | 38.46% | 7.69% |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are representing the institution honestly and appropriately and have the institution's best interests in mind | 7.69% | 38.46% | 38.46% | 15.38% |
| Working with agents: ensuring they have the student's best interest in mind | 7.69% | 38.46% | 46.15% | 7.69% |
| Working with agents: not knowing how sub-agents represent the institution | 7.69% | 38.46% | 38.46% | 15.38% |
| Working with agents: questionable documentation | 7.69% | 15.38% | 53.85% | 23.08% |
| Convincing students to select your institution over others that might be more financially affordable | 0.00% | 46.15% | 38.46% | 15.38% |
| Environmental impact of travel | 0.00% | 15.38% | 46.15% | 38.46% |
| Quality of the institution's academic programs | 0.00% | 38.46% | 38.46% | 23.08% |
| Truth in advertising/communications - for example, students wanting a program that the institution "kind of" has, but is not the best fit | 0.00% | 15.38% | 69.23% | 15.38% |
| Working with agents: determining student satisfaction with agency services | 0.00% | 46.15% | 46.15% | 7.69% |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are not charging students when the institution pays commission | 0.00% | 23.08% | 46.15% | 30.77% |

The top ethical dilemmas that participants faced were support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration, sharing the U.S. as a top destination in light of political or economic challenges and safety issues, and budget constraints and keeping students' best interests in mind.  These ethical dilemmas demonstrate that participants are tasked with bringing international students to their campuses but are

concerned about support for these students once they arrive.  Previous scholarship has critiqued the emphasis on recruiting students to campuses where they may experience racism and discrimination (Brown & Jones, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007; Stein & Andreotti, 2016), and scholars argue that responsible recruitment involves an awareness of the support systems that address the specific needs of international students (Ryan & Carroll, 2005).  These dilemmas highlight the ethical tension recruitment professionals experience in their work: a responsibility to the institution, and a responsibility to the international student.

The ethical dilemma "inequitable recruitment/diversification – only recruiting from regions where students can pay" was frequently faced by participants.  This dilemma is in alignment with critiques from scholars writing about how current trends in internationalization serve to reproduce patterns of global inequality and exclusion (Lee et al., 2006; Vavrus & Pekol, 2015).  When recruitment is only conducted in countries where students can afford to pay, global inequity increases in two ways.  The students that can afford the price of U.S. tuition may obtain advantages in the form of career progression when they return home, further stoking in-country inequality compared to students that cannot afford to study abroad, a "rescaling of social reproduction" (Waters, J., 2006, as cited in Vavrus & Pekol, 2015, p. 12).  On a broader scale, by focusing recruitment efforts only on countries where the political and economic situation allows students to study in the U.S., students from many other countries who are financially unable to be internationally mobile are further separated due to unequal access to quality educational opportunities (Waters, J., 2006, as cited in Vavrus & Pekol, 2015, p. 12).  However, this assumes that education in the U.S. is considered "quality," an ethical dilemma that is also faced by participants.

As indicated by participants in their responses to Question 2, outcomes, including applications and enrollment, drive decisions on where to recruit.  Conducting recruitment activities in countries where students cannot afford tuition may be seen as irresponsible, as most participants in this study are employed by public institutions and are by nature required to be good stewards of the public budget.

The ethical dilemmas that participants do not frequently face were truth in advertising/communication and the consideration of the environmental impact of recruitment travel.  The ethical principles discussed next included placing a responsibility on the recruiter to be honest and transparent in sharing information about their institution.  As participants self-selected to engage in a study on ethical international student recruitment, they may already be thinking about the importance of representing their institution in an accurate way, so truth in advertising and communication is not a dilemma they encounter often.  Discussions on the environmental ramifications of long-haul travel are becoming more mainstream, and while some participants usually consider them, they may seem abstract and secondary compared to their responsibility to successfully recruit international students.

*Summary*. Following a similar trend as the previous two questions demonstrated, budget constraints and inequitable recruitment practices came out near the top of ethical dilemmas faced by participants.  Additionally, concern for the experience of international students once they arrive in the U.S. and on campuses was present in frequently encountered ethical dilemmas. Alignment with the literature in this regard is clear – scholars are concerned with the economic focus of international student recruitment (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2006; Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010), as well as the experiences of the international students that are recruited (Lee & Rice,

2007).  Specifically, recruiters located themselves as representatives of their institutions but had ethical concerns about the reception that students might receive once they arrive on campus.

In this section, participants were asked if the options presented summarized all of the ethical dilemmas and had the opportunity to provide additional comments.  Four participants felt the categories listed were sufficient, and nine added additional dilemmas they face in their work.  The additional dilemmas submitted, organized into more succinct categories, were as follows:

- The behavior of campus colleagues (witnessing or hearing of unethical behavior).

- In-country factors (ex. recruitment in countries that have human rights abuses).

- Promoting a program that might not be a "best fit" for a student (ex. an English as a Second Language program if the student already has a high IELTS/TOEFL; pre-med when medical school may be unrealistic).

- Pursing short term strategies that may not yield results but are recommended by leadership.

- Recruiting students who may not get a visa.

Taken with the list of categories developed from Round 1, these additional categories provide an in-depth understanding of the ethical dilemmas that international student recruitment professionals face.  Respondents demonstrated great concern for students upon arrival, showing that they consider their responsibility as a recruiter beyond enrollment, following through to students' on-campus experiences.  While the definition of "successful recruitment results" typically stops at increased enrollments, participants in this study pushed "success" a step further.  When asked about ethical dilemmas, participants exemplified their role as international educators performing recruitment

tasks.  For participants, "educator" is not synonymous with "salesperson."  Responsible recruitment includes a concern for the student experience post-enrollment.

**Question 4: When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?**  The final question of Round 2 asked participants to select how frequently they evoke principles provided by the group in Round 1 when seeking to resolve ethical dilemmas they encounter in their work.  Table 8 displays the categories ranked by how often they are taken into consideration.

**Table 8**

*Ethical principles, ordered by frequency considered*

| Category | Realistic/ always taken into consideration | Usually taken into consideration | Infrequently taken into consideration | Unrealistic/ not taken into consideration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience | 92.31% | 7.69% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Consulting with colleagues you trust and whose character you respect | 76.92% | 23.08% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Focusing on what is best for the student: happy students will lead to more successful recruitment | 76.92% | 23.08% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Agency vetting process | 69.23% | 23.08% | 0.00% | 7.69% |

**Table 8** (continued)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transparency and honesty about reality versus perceptions. Not selling students something similar to what they want; making sure applicants understand the benefits of the institution, and provide a realistic view of what they will encounter when enrolling. | 69.23% | 15.38% | 7.69% | 7.69% |
| Referencing professional association guidance (NAFSA, NACAC, AIRC) | 53.85% | 38.46% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| "Gut check" | 46.15% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 7.69% |
| Understanding individual agency: students can make their own decisions about where, why, and how they study, but I, too, can make decisions about how I influence their decision-making process. I make every effort to do so in a way that I feel honors their agency while attending to their potential informational disadvantage. | 46.15% | 46.15% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| University policy and procedure with accountability and regular check-ins | 38.46% | 30.77% | 7.69% | 23.08% |
| Following up with new students | 30.77% | 46.15% | 15.38% | 7.69% |

**Table 8** (continued)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognizing the tension between duty to the institution and taxpayers as well as the duty to the international students | 30.77% | 30.77% | 23.08% | 15.38% |
| Understand that there are cultural dimensions that affect ethical interpretations | 30.77% | 61.54% | 7.69% | 0.00% |
| Reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services | 23.08% | 30.77% | 46.15% | 0.00% |

There were three considerations that participants considered all or the majority of the time. These were: providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience; consulting with colleagues they trust and whose character they respect, and focusing on what is best for the student. Two of the three considerations relate to the themes above – that recruiters were interested in both bringing students to campus as well as the students' experience once they arrived. The third consideration focused on the professional collegiality and trust found among recruiters. The vast majority of participants considered the individual agency of students by recognizing that students are agentic and can make their own decisions. Despite this, the recruiter has the responsibility to recognize how they influence the student's decision-making process by understanding the cultural dimensions that may affect ethical interpretations. Additionally, recruiters can reference professional association guidance as well as depend on an agency vetting process. These considerations reinforced the standpoint of the participants that the student experience, from the first conversation to on-campus outcomes, was important. The reference to professional documents further highlighted

the collegial and professional nature of the participants, indicating this was a group that abided by professional guidelines when faced with unknown circumstances.

The category that received the highest percentage of respondents stating that they *do not* or infrequently consider the principle when resolving ethical dilemmas was reconceptualizing the work as an exchange of goods and services (84.62%).  While previous data has revealed that budget and ROI are essential factors in recruiting and decision-making, respondents pushed back against the idea of their work as selling a product, and the conceptualization of education as a product.  Instead, as noted in the above paragraphs, ROI was mostly conceptualized as an investment of time and resources from the home state that was expected to return student enrollment in order to justify expenses.

When asked if the categories represented all the ways participants resolve ethical dilemmas, five participants felt the options were sufficient, and eight offered additional comments.  They were categorized as follows:

- Avoiding agency relationships that provide unusual or excessive incentives to agents, including purchasing unnecessary services from agents.
- Focusing on long-term objectives and reputation of the institution.
- "Golden rule" – do not be unethical just to enroll a student.
- Keeping students' best interests in mind, but being mindful of the responsibility to uphold federal regulations and ensure students are in compliance.

These additional categories provide a comprehensive overview of how participants resolve ethical dilemmas faced in their daily work.

From Round 2, trends begin to emerge.  Participants engage in low-cost and high-impact recruitment activities as their primary considerations for selecting recruitment

methods.  Both were related to finances and staff resources.  In this study, participants worked at public institutions, and their primary ethical focus was their home society and appropriate use of its resources.  To be good stewards of the budget, they use effective recruitment methods that benefit their institution.

A focus on recruitment activities that result in outcomes, including increased inquiries, applications, and enrollments, indicates that students are viewed as indicators of invested time.  However, a conceptualization of responsible or holistic recruiting could feasibly include the international student beyond quantifiable figures in calculations of return on investment. This conceptualization could include their satisfaction and experience as indicators of successful recruitment.  Participants demonstrated concern for international students during the recruitment process and following recruitment to their institution.  This concern illuminates the ethical tension between the responsibility to the institution and to the international student.  Recruiters in this study understand their role as educators, beyond brokers of an educational sale to students.  They focused on aspects of the recruitment process they could control, including sharing only honest and transparent information, and they lean on colleagues when navigating ethical gray areas.

Round 2 allowed participants to review the data provided by other participants in Round 1, provide feedback on the data, and offer additional input on categories or items for each question.  After receiving all responses to Round 2, I analyzed the results and developed the Round 3 survey, reported below.

**Round 3 Questionnaire**

Round 3 was designed to purposefully gather capstone and final information from participants.  After analyzing Round 2 results, I sent participants a link to the Round 3 survey.  In Round 3, I asked participants to review group responses from Round 2

(anonymized – I only provided response percentages) and consider their opinions in light

of these responses.  I provided the categories for each question in an interactive tool in

Qualtrics that allowed participants to rank the categories as they saw fit.  For each

participant, I attached their Round 2 response for their reference.  I gave participants two

weeks to complete Round 3.

The decision to provide the data in a format that participants could manipulate

limited the ability to determine consensus around items and is a limitation of my study.

However, it allowed for a capstone or final ranking by participants on ethical

considerations for the final survey.  While a clear consensus was unobservable with

rankings, I was still able to determine which items participants felt were important

considerations or methods (ranked at the top), and which items were not (ranked near the

bottom).

**Round 3 Results**

**Question 1: What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international**

**students?**  After reviewing the top ten most frequently used recruitment methods, eight

participants agreed with the selection, and four did not.  However, more than four

respondents provided commentary to the open-ended question, which asked if their

institution varied significantly from one or more items on the list.  In hindsight, this may

not have been an effective question for reaching consensus.  Participants in this study are

employed at institutions of different sizes and locations and with different recruitment

strategies and goals.  For example, two participants stated that they do not even use CRM

(customer relationship management) platforms as they do not have a technology

specialist employed.

When shown a list of top ten infrequently used recruitment methods, seven participants agreed with the selection, and five did not. At the top of this list was purchasing names, and one participant commented that contrarily, their "institution has great success with buying names." Others commented that "the cost for purchasing names and the return really turns off administration" that does not "understand yield from lead because they compare to domestic enrollment yields." Related to cost restrictions, one participant cited a "lack of institutional funding support" for why they do not frequently use some of the items on this list. One participant noted that, in their experience, several of the items included in the top ten infrequently used recruitment methods "have proven more reliable and with greater ROI than the top group. Of course, many of this [latter] group require the HEI to do a lot of the work, too."

Lastly, participants were asked if they use any other recruitment methods, and two items arose: "consulate and embassy visits to determine if there are any new opportunities in country," and prioritizing responsiveness to student and partner inquiries.

Institutional variance aside, themes still emerged in the Round 3 questionnaire. Concluding data from the survey indicated that participants are cognizant of the institutional budget, frequently selecting low-cost and high-impact recruitment activities such as word of mouth; direct recruitment at fairs with large, targeted audiences of students; networking opportunities both domestically and internationally, and relationship building with high school counselors and institutional partners. One participant commented that "HEIs need to be good stewards of the institution's money and resources when recruiting," and the recruitment methods that are most frequently used by participants are an indication that recruiters consider their institutional resources when making decisions around recruitment methods. Overall, the responses to Question 1 in

the three rounds of the Delphi study provided an in-depth look at international student recruitment methods currently being used by the participants.

**Question 2: What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?**  Next, participants were shown Round 2 responses to this question.  The categories were displayed in an interactive format that participants could rank order based on importance.  The results of this exercise are displayed in Table 9.

I chose to display the median of the categories to get a sense of the magnitude of importance for each particular consideration in comparison to others or when they considered multiple categories at once.  The sample size was small, and in small sample sizes, central tendency measures like the mean are susceptible to single outlier variables.  Additionally, while the mean takes into account all data points, this statistic is most useful when there is a symmetric distribution of data, which was not present in my data set.  As outliers and skewed data have a smaller effect on the median score, I chose the median to demonstrate central tendency on the relative importance of considerations.

**Table 9**

*Recruitment considerations, ordered by the median of ranked order*

| Category | Median | Standard Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Finances/cost/budget | 1 | 2.77 | 7.67 |
| Staff resources and capacity | 2 | 3.84 | 14.72 |
| Characteristics of the audience in a given location | 5 | 2.43 | 5.91 |
| Country-level or regional trends | 5 | 1.83 | 3.35 |
| Return on investment (ROI) | 6 | 3.59 | 12.91 |
| Effectiveness of recruitment method in a particular region/country | 7 | 3.25 | 10.58 |
| Ethics | 7.5 | 4.5 | 20.24 |
| Existing relationships or connections in a city, county, or region | 8 | 2.22 | 4.91 |
| Desired outcomes | 8 | 3.41 | 11.64 |
| Trustworthiness, credibility, and compatibility of the partner | 9.5 | 2.29 | 5.25 |
| Branding or other long-term approaches | 11.5 | 3.94 | 15.56 |
| Academic interest areas alignment | 12 | 4.06 | 16.52 |
| Safety | 12 | 3.56 | 12.67 |
| Potential for the successful conversion from inquiry to enrollment | 13 | 3.06 | 9.35 |
| Partner events | 14 | 2.9 | 8.39 |
| Location of in-country representative | 15 | 1.85 | 3.42 |

The categories displayed in Table 9 demonstrate a strong level of agreement among participants at the upper and lower end of the considerations. I chose to display the categories sorted by the median and also to display the standard deviation and variance to demonstrate that there was a large amount of differentiation between participants on items, but some general agreement at the top and bottom of the list. In this section, two respondents remarked that many of the categories are connected and overlapping, and are contextual when making decisions around recruitment, which can explain the close clumping of medians in the middle of the list.

As in the previous round, the majority of participants indicated that finances were their top consideration when developing recruitment strategies. Staff resources and capacity were ranked highly by participants as well, though one outlier sorted it at the bottom of the list, increasing the variance statistic. These two considerations are related to basic administration. As participants are responsible for decision-making in their offices, they must ask themselves, are there the financial and human resources necessary to conduct the recruitment activity? If so, they move onto the other considerations on the list, such as country-specific regional trends and the characteristics of potential recruits from a country. These considerations remained consistently important from Round 2 to 3. The return on investment and the effectiveness of the recruitment method were also important to participants.

Ethics, which 84.62% of participants indicated they always consider when making recruitment decisions in Round 2, had a median of 7.5 in Round 3, with a variance of 20.24 and a standard deviation of 4.5, the highest for both statistics of all of the items. These unusual statistics indicated that participants understand the term "ethics" in vastly different ways. This remains the case despite the themes that emerged from what might be considered ethical approaches to practice and may reflect the two participants who did not consider ethics as part of their decision-making. For example, "ethics" was specifically referenced in three participants' reasoning for their rank ordering of considerations. One participant wrote that "ethics, as I understand it, is not a major concern." Another participant, who ranked ethics in the tenth slot, wrote that they "think that is a major concern, but it is something that informs my work, no matter what." For this participant, ethics was woven through the entirety of their work, but they recognize it as a concern as other actors may act in an unethical manner. In this study, participants

may consider themselves ethical, but believe other practitioners may not operating with

ethics guiding their decisions.  Accordingly, a third participant wrote that they "find it

hard to believe that 100% of people are considering the ethics of their decisions at all

times…perhaps that is simply a bias of this group who chose to respond to a survey about

ethics."  The mixed results from the survey indicate that participants may doubt the

centrality of ethics in everyday decision-making, even as they referred to actions that may

be considered "ethical."  Thus, the rank-ordering, while meant to be quantitatively

summative, introduced new complexity into the study.  For this reason, additional

interviews helped clarify issues from participants and are reported in the next section.

More centrally important than ethics were issues of effectiveness and finance.

One participant wrote that a consideration in choosing recruitment methods is "the ability

to create a 'chain' of events or cascade of effects through a given method."  The

respondent went on to write,

> I think that ideally, recruitment is the creation of an ecosystem in which each
>
> component (travel, online activities, marketing, branding, partnerships, etc.)
>
> complements other components to create scalability and continuity. It's hardly
>
> strategic to simply fly around the world and keep one's fingers crossed that you
>
> meet the right student.

The centrality of finances, outcomes, and return on investment is apparent in this quote.

A clear picture of important considerations begins to emerge from this data.

International student recruitment is driven by "markets" (countries).  Once a recruitment

professional determines there are sufficient budget and staffing for recruitment activities,

they develop a strategy that identifies locations where they can conduct successful

recruitment campaigns.  A successful campaign would result in enrolled students, putting

the institution's interests at the forefront.  Ethics, while important, fall behind these

logistical and base considerations, but are also in some ways relevant (as some

participants considered their fiduciary duty to their institution and state as ethical).  By

emphasizing effectiveness and finances, however, the student remains absent from

primary considerations, though they remain present in ethical dilemmas that participants

encounter in their work, discussed next.

### Question 3: What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?

Participants were shown the list of ethical dilemmas that was developed out of Rounds 1

and 2 and were allowed to rank the dilemmas by how frequently they encounter them in

their work.  The rank-ordering exercise provided data that demonstrates how important

certain items were over others.  Infrequently encountered dilemmas filtered to the bottom.

Participants were allowed to discuss the reasoning behind their rankings.  As with

Question 2, the results are displayed in Table 10, below, and are sorted by the median

statistic.  Standard deviation and variance are included to show the variances in

responses.

**Table 10**

*Ethical dilemmas, ordered by the median of*

*ranked order*

| Category | Median | Standard Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget constraints and keeping students' best interests in mind | 1 | 0.37 | 0.14 |
| Sharing the U.S. as a top destination in light of political/economic challenges & safety issues | 2 | 1.66 | 2.74 |
| Support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration | 3 | 1.53 | 2.33 |
| Inequitable recruitment/diversification: only recruiting from regions where students can pay | 7 | 2.97 | 8.83 |

**Table 10** (continued)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Use/administration of scholarships | 8 | 2.66 | 7.08 |
| Rankings that do not take into account individual academic programs | 8 | 3.35 | 11.24 |
| Working with agents: inconsistent commission payments across institutions and agencies | 8.5 | 5.6 | 31.39 |
| Concerns around racism or discrimination international students may experience on- or off-campus | 10 | 4 | 15.97 |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are representing the institution honestly and appropriately | 10 | 4.13 | 17.08 |
| Screening of recruitment fair attendees who do not understand the cost of attendance to institutions in the U.S. | 10.5 | 3.99 | 15.89 |
| Lack of transparency with scholarships/sponsored programs | 11 | 4.57 | 20.91 |
| Whether U.S. education is really the best option for students | 12 | 4.97 | 24.72 |
| Messaging beyond the promotion of your institution | 12.5 | 2.43 | 5.91 |
| Working with agents: ensuring they have the student's best interest in mind | 14 | 4.79 | 22.91 |
| Working with agents: not knowing how sub-agents represent the institution | 15 | 4.96 | 24.58 |
| Working with agents: questionable documentation | 16 | 5.12 | 26.22 |
| Convincing students to select your institution over others that might be more financially affordable | 17 | 3.08 | 9.47 |
| Environmental impact of travel | 18 | 3.14 | 9.89 |
| Quality of the institution's academic programs | 19 | 5.81 | 33.74 |
| Truth in advertising/communications | 20 | 4.05 | 16.41 |
| Working with agents: determining student satisfaction with agency services | 21 | 4.37 | 19.08 |
| Working with agents: ensuring they are not charging students when the institution pays commission | 21.5 | 4.44 | 19.74 |

As shown in Table 10, the top three ethical dilemmas that participants most

frequently face in their work were consistent with the most frequently encountered

dilemmas identified in Round 2.  The variance and standard deviation were considerably

lower for these top three categories compared to the majority of the categories as well, indicating relative agreement that participants are encountering and processing these ethical dilemmas regularly.

Taking into account the preceding discussion around recruitment considerations, participants demonstrate concern for the international student when looking ahead to the support they will receive after they are successfully recruited.  Notably, concern for the student is absent when recruiters decide how and where to recruit.  The recruiter's perceived responsibility for the student appears to begin during the recruitment process and continue post-recruitment.  Due to the nature of their position, the recruitment professional tends not to have much involvement with students once they arrive on campus.  Participants in this study understand that doing their job successfully (enrolling students) may place the student into a situation where they may not be supported, or where what they have "sold" students may not line up with actual experiences.  Worse yet, recruitment may put students in danger.  For example, one participant wrote,

> I escalated the question of whether a U.S. education is really the best option for students because in light of endemic gun violence and other problems in the U.S. there's now a certain amount of cognitive dissonance involved in encouraging students to come here when many of us in the field know full well there are safer and still high-quality alternative options like Canada and the U.K., to name a few.

Echoing this sentiment, a second participant indicated that for them, "safety and attractiveness of a U.S. education has moved up to the primary concern" when recruiting international students.

The items that were ranked lower on the list of ethical dilemmas, aside from the agency related items, were also consistent with the least frequently faced dilemmas in

Round 2.  Two of these dilemmas are areas where the recruitment professional has complete control.  To participate in this study, participants had to confirm that they were decision-makers at their institutions.  In many cases, they have control over their marketing materials, so "truth in advertising/communications" was not a frequently experienced dilemma.  The same argument can be made for the category "convincing students to select your institution over others that might be more financially affordable."  Presenting accurate information is core to a recruitment professional's work.  Their responsibility to share only complete and truthful information, and to avoid "convincing" students to select their institution will be discussed in depth within the ethical principles interview portion of this study.  As the recruiter can control their actions, if they are operating ethically, they do not often encounter the dilemma of putting pressure on the student to decide to study at their institution.

To close this section, participants were asked if any other ethical dilemmas were not included.  Two participants offered additional commentary that echoed similar sentiments regarding the tension between the focus on international student recruitment and the support international students receive when they arrive on campus.  One wrote that they face an ethical dilemma in "trying to strike a better balance between the monies and time invested in recruitment and outreach, on the one hand, and support for enrolled students on the other."  A second participant commented that "when we have an influx of students from a certain area, I am sometimes concerned about being prepared to meet their specific needs (and not just being reactive)."  This concern relates to the third-ranked item in this round, support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration.  This participant's comment is a bit more nuanced and points to overall campus support that should be made available for international students.

Providing adequate support includes understanding the specific backgrounds, countries, and cultural contexts represented by a diverse population of international students.

       **Question 4: When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?** For the block of questions related to Question 4, participants were shown the principles international educators use to resolve ethical dilemmas developed in Rounds 1 and 2 and were allowed to rank them according to how frequently they use the principle. The results are displayed in Table 11, organized by the median ranked order.

**Table 11**

*Ethical principles, ordered by the median of ranked order*

| Category | Median | Standard Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Consulting with colleagues you trust and whose character you respect | 2 | 0.75 | 0.56 |
| Focusing on what is best for the student | 3 | 0.83 | 0.69 |
| Transparency and honesty about reality versus perceptions | 5 | 1.14 | 1.31 |
| Agency vetting process | 5 | 3.37 | 11.33 |
| Referencing professional association guidance (NAFSA, NACAC, AIRC) | 6 | 1.93 | 3.72 |
| "Gut check" | 7.5 | 3 | 8.97 |
| Understanding individual agency | 8 | 2.17 | 4.72 |
| Following up with new students | 9 | 1.92 | 3.69 |
| University policy and procedure with accountability and regular check-ins | 9 | 1.14 | 1.31 |
| Understand that there are cultural dimensions that affect ethical interpretations | 10 | 2.72 | 7.41 |
| Recognizing the tension between the duty to the institution and taxpayers as well as the duty to the international students | 11 | 2.05 | 4.22 |
| Reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services | 13 | 1.04 | 1.08 |

Compared to the previous questions, this data set had lower standard deviations overall, with a high of 3.37, meaning that participants, in general, were consistent in the degree of importance they placed on each principle. The number one ranked principle, "providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience," was ranked number one by all participants. This ethical dimension remained the most important to recruiters who expressed in previous rounds that the best way to be honest with prospective students was to provide them with as much information as possible. "Consulting with colleagues" was ranked number two by ten participants, and "focusing

on what is best for the student" was ranked third.  In Round 2, these two items had the second and third most percentage of respondents, respectively, indicating that, on average, they always consider these items when encountering ethical dilemmas.  In Round 3, the category with a median ranking of 13, "reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services," was the least likely principle to be enacted in Round 2, indicating a degree of consistency across rounds of surveys.

Participants were allowed to explain their rationale behind the rank order.  The principle "gut check" arose as an item that was not consistently accepted by participants.  One participant stated that "gut-check is paramount," and another contended, "I do not buy 'gut check' as a reasonable method of approaching ethical dilemmas, so that went immediately to the bottom."  These disagreements indicate that recruiters have different levels of confidence in "reading" ethical dilemmas on their own without external guidance.

The category "recognizing there are cultural dimensions that affect ethical interpretations" was ranked higher by two of the participants.  One wrote, "this is something we often talk about among ourselves and sometimes have to explain to the administration who thinks of ethics only in terms of how Americans perceive them."  The second commented that they "moved up the issue of cultural dimension to ethical issues, as this has been a bone of contention on campus that tends to have a slippery slope if not handled methodically."  In both cases, participants indicated that ethical recruitment might be a two-way street that requires both an adherence to the needs of the institution and an awareness that ethics are interpreted differently worldwide.

The category "understanding individual agency" had a median ranking of 8, demonstrating that participants do not frequently employ this principle.  One participant

stated that "while I think that makes for an interesting philosophical debate, it's not something I've ever really pondered, at least not directly, with respect to my work." Expanding on this concept, a second participant wrote,

> Ultimately, I think it is the responsibility of the institution and its representatives to provide clear, honest, and thorough information on the institution; it is the responsibility of prospective students and families to evaluate that information and make an informed decision.  Provided that I am doing my due diligence in making my information clear, accurate, realistic, transparent, etc., I feel that I am adequately honoring the agency of students and parents to make their own informed decisions.  I will never obscure information or lie to enroll a student, but I also cannot guarantee that every student's decision to select my university will be the best one for them.  I can try to make sure they are aware of what they are choosing, however.

This participant's response reinforced the idea that transparency and openness are ethical principles that recruiters use when interacting with students.  This participant, as did others in previous rounds, perceived themselves as a purveyor of information rather than a person who provides limited or inaccurate information in order to increase enrollment in the university.

In the data related to recruitment considerations and ethical dilemmas, it was apparent that financial considerations are at the forefront of decisions around recruitment strategies, and concern for the student is at the forefront of the ethical dilemmas that recruiters face.  The principle "recognizing the tension between the duty to the institution and taxpayers as well as the duty to the international student," which could potentially assist international education professionals in navigating the student-related dilemmas

they frequently encounter, had a median ranking of 11 in Round 3, signifying that this is not an area that recruitment professionals think overtly about.  However, this principle will be further discussed in the interview results section and remains an important guidepost for recruiters navigating their ethical responsibilities both to the institutions and students they serve.

Finally, participants were asked if they have any other principles they employ when faced with ethical dilemmas in their work that were not covered in Question 4. Two participants offered additional comments.  One urged international educators to "never be pressured into a snap decision.  Always take the requisite time to consider before making a promise/decision," and a second noted the necessity of "balancing ethics with university expectations."  These comments reinforced the above conceptualizations of ethics that revolved around ideas of transparency for students and balance between student and institutional considerations.

**Summary of Delphi Results**

The Delphi process is iterative, so the final round of Delphi surveys reflects ongoing reactions from research participants.  In this section, a review of the four major Delphi questions is provided as both a summation of the Delphi study itself and as an overview for the follow-up questions that were asked in interviews.  Question 1 revealed recruitment strategies that were potentially unique to the research participants, who all worked in state institutions.  The most frequent recruitment strategies used, according to participants, were free or low-cost strategies such as word of mouth and armchair recruiting, and high-impact practices such as direct recruitment at international fairs or during high school visits.  Participants also rely heavily on networking, both internationally and domestically.  These top recruitment strategies indicate that

participants in this study are concerned with return on investment of both time and budget.

Question 2 asked what considerations are most relevant to recruitment. The top two ranked considerations were related to resources at the institution, i.e., the finances of the institution and staff capacity to recruit. The next two considerations were related to local factors, i.e., considerations in the particular location of the recruited student or within the prospective student's region.

Question 3 asked about ethical dilemmas that recruiters face. The top three dilemmas that challenged participants were attempting to balance students' best interests with the budget constraints at the institution. Budget constraints may influence recruiters to push for student applications even if the institution may not be the best fit for the student – thus creating an ethical dilemma for participants. Likewise, recruiters reported a dilemma that institutional support was lacking on campus for international students, yet at once, participants were recruiting students to apply. Finally, recruiters reported that they faced ethical dilemmas when recruiting students to study in the U.S., despite a political climate that may be unfortunate toward the students.

Finally, when asked about the ethical principles that they apply in their daily work, participants noted that honesty and transparency, and providing students with as much information as possible, was paramount. The second-ranked consideration for participants was to consult with trusted sources and colleagues when encountering ethical dilemmas. Recruiters may be deluged with advertisements, agent requests, and demanding administrators, so as an ethical practice, turn to trusted colleagues for information. The third and fourth highest-ranked considerations were to focus on "what is best" for students and to provide transparent information to students that counters

perceptions.  In general, ethical considerations that emerged from participants revolved around providing transparent information to prospective students so they can make their own choices related to application and enrollment.  The participants in this study knew they could not necessarily control the experience of students once enrolled, so they approached their work with an "ethic" of being honest about the opportunities and constraints of international study in the U.S.  These principles and considerations provided a structure for follow-up interviews, which are reported below.

**Interviews**

Typically, Delphi studies provide only quantitative data, with written responses that add an element of mixed-methods data.  This study, however, also included a round of formal interviews, which allowed the use of qualitative data in explanatory ways (Creswell & Clark, 2011).  I began with a quantitative Delphi study, which identified 13 ethical principles.  Following, I conducted interviews with seven participants to contextualize these principles.  Qualitative data obtained through the interviews allowed for explanation and interpretation of the quantitative findings.  Although in the interviews I discussed all 13 principles with each participant, I have collapsed some of the findings to develop principles that either ranked highly in the quantitative portion or that were confirmed by participants as meaningful to their work in the qualitative interview sessions.  These principles are reviewed below.

**Principle 1: Provide as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience, while being transparent and honest about reality versus perceptions**.  The principle "providing as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience" was ranked as the number one method international student recruiters use to resolve ethical dilemmas by all participants in the Delphi rounds,

and interview participants agreed with this ranking.  This principle was closely aligned was the principle "transparency and honesty about reality versus perceptions."  One participant stated that providing complete, transparent information as a way to mitigate ethical dilemmas "probably is one of the, if not *the* core consideration."  Another participant stated that this is "an important part of our doing our due diligence in trying to be ethical."  A third commented that the principle is "high on the list of things that people in positions like mine [a high-level international office administrator] or similar should be considering."

Recruiters in this study understood "transparency"  to mean it was the responsibility of recruiter to provide accurate, accessible information; the responsibility of the recruiter to not skew or provide mis- or disinformation; the responsibility of the recruiter to find the information to provide to the student if they do not have or know it; the responsibility to be aware of potential information imbalances; and the responsibility of the recruiter to be transparent and honest.  Participants used multiple ways of describing information.  For example, recruiters described transparent information as that which is "accessible," "accurate," "clear," "complete," "concise," and "contextual."  In the interviews, participants cited transparency and honesty as "bedrock values." Participants also commented that transparency results in the "right fit" or happy students, while the lack of transparency results in unhappy and unsuccessful students.  One participant went as far as to describe "radical transparency," in which the participant explicitly shares "negative" information that would not typically make it on the front page of a recruitment brochure or in initial conversations with students.

The recruiters in this study typically framed their actions as "responsibilities" they had to students.  In the paragraphs below, further detail is provided on the participants'

conceptualizations of their responsibilities. These included responsibilities related to information sharing and countering misinformation.

*Responsibility of recruiters to provide accurate, accessible, transparent information*. Participants used multiple ways of describing information.  As noted above, at various times, participants stated that information should be accessible, accurate, clear, complete, concise, and contextual.  In an attempt to reach these goals, participants often tried to imagine what a student is looking for in terms of information, and highlighted the importance of the recruiter being "accessible as much as possible to students' questions, and responsive and honest."  For one participant, the conversation can only continue once the recruiter completes the step of asking initial questions to determine if their institution is the right fit: "first off, you have to find out if they are looking for something that you have."  They continued, "you have to ask them, 'What is your ideal situation or studying in the United States?'," putting the impetus on the recruiter to dig for motivations and information from the students.

The quality and type of information were addressed in multiple ways.  Three participants referenced the importance of providing information in context, with one describing this as a "fundamental step," and the second stating that "you've got to provide that context in the marketing pieces…you don't want the student making an uninformed decision thinking that you're not the type of institution to what they're thinking."  The third participant added that "if you're going to recruit successfully and you're going to recruit ethically, you have to recognize the context of the environment." They continued to say that they believe some institutions do not do this well and that they think there is "an ethical issue when you're not saying, here's what's going to happen in

the States, here's how hard it is to get OPT (Optional Professional Training)…I think the context matters a lot. Full transparency as opposed to a few data of truth."

Further, participants acknowledged that the idea of context extends beyond clearly communicating their institutional context. Instead, the responsibility rests on the recruiter to understand the cultural contexts in which they are recruiting. Participants recognized language differences and noted that to enable students to navigate these differences and subsequent barriers, the information presented should be "as clear and concise as possible." Participants surmised that due to the different nations in which recruiters work, the way information is presented needs to cater specifically to the population. However, challenges may arise when translations occur between languages. A participant considered adding Google Translate to their institution's website but worried that this might lead international students to believe the university endorsed the translation. A second participant agreed that "ensuring the accuracy then becomes that much more difficult" when translating content, and such, this is an area to which recruiters need to attend.

Participants underscored the importance of being fully transparent regarding all aspects of the student experience in the U.S, including location, campus experience, and cost of the institution. "You have to provide that information up front. Like, what do students do around campus? What's the normal activity for them on a weekend?" One participant stated that they are a "very big believer in putting your costs right on the front of your page. You're not helping anybody by pretending that you don't have a cost…I'm a big believer in communicating things that can be challenging right away." Acknowledging the impact finances have on a student's decision to study abroad, another participant is also clear and transparent regarding their institution's costs and available

scholarships. "I never want a student to get sticker shock. That's my biggest fear. In any type of information related to how you become eligible for scholarships, that type of information needs to be very clear."

While respondents discussed the importance of providing clear and complete information, the recruiter or international office may not always have oversight over how marketing materials present an institution. In this case, reviewing materials to ensure they are accurate becomes difficult. For two participants in this study, they are responsible for their materials. One stated, "we create all the content…because we have so much autonomy to handle and create the content, we're really trying to ensure...all the information is as accurate as possible and up to date." Another participant underwent an institution-wide branding campaign, in which their office had the specific responsibility of ensuring the new brand was "accessible and relatable to international applicants." Providing input on the campaign allowed them to attend to the specific challenges of portraying a complete picture of their institution to prospective international students.

In summary, as the work of the recruiter is to provide information to international students to aid in their decision-making process, the heavy responsibility of providing the clearest and complete information possible falls on them. It may suffice to say that this is the most important part of their job, and they are failing if they do not strive to share information in a way that is transparent, honest, and accessible to the student. Participants reflected that recruiters must take an additional step to understand the motivations and cultural background of the student and must ensure that the student understands the reality of life at their institution and in the United States. These responsibilities are specific to international educators who work in radically diverse countries and cultures. The international recruitment professional is an integral

gatekeeper in the serious and life-changing decision an international student makes to study abroad, and, according to participants, they must take this responsibility seriously.

*Responsibility of recruiters to be aware of potential information imbalances.* Although participants recognize that a student may be able to make decisions about where to study, power relations and the recruiter's responsibility to be cognizant of how these informational imbalances may affect student decision-making processes is essential. Interviewees and survey participants indicated that simply providing information may not abdicate the responsibility of the recruiter for the international student's decision, as "sometimes they [the international student] might not understand the totality of what's being presented to them." One participant stated that the information imbalance is "naturally sort of built into the process" of student recruitment, and as such, "we do have an obligation then to try and level the playing field a little bit for them." They commented that they are usually working with young students who "in many cases have never been to the U.S., know nothing about the system beyond what they're getting from maybe friends, maybe parents." The recruiter should be aware that they are potentially the main conduit of information about the experience of studying in the U.S. Moreover, in many cultural contexts, the "family is making the decision. And so, you [the recruiter] have to make sure that the information is easily understood at all levels. And very clear."

One participant understood the recruiter's role and the student's role as follows. The participant recognized that "students have that capacity to do research and make decisions and ask questions," and while the recruiter has a "duty to provide some amount of that" information, at some point the student should "research and make decisions and talk to people and use whatever sort of guiding heuristics or something that they can use to make the decisions that they need to make." A different participant agreed, stating that

they view themselves as "conduits of information."  They view their role as making sure students have accurate information so they can make an informed decision, but they are not there to convince the student – "you will convince yourself."

In general, participants felt that recruiters have a responsibility to provide students with as much information as possible in an accessible format, but students also have the responsibility to do additional research when needed.  According to participants, recruiters should be cognizant of the student's context and should never force students into making a decision.

***Responsibility of recruiter to not skew or provide mis- or disinformation***. Participants identified that a recruiter must not purposefully provide inaccurate information while noting that there can be a continuum of information that is provided to students: "There's maybe perfect accuracy on the one hand and then there's maybe fudging things a little on the other, and then there's outright…misinformation, disinformation, and this broad spectrum."  One participant cautioned that if a recruiter is on the road presenting inaccurate information, "a student can come back and sue the institution," with another participant commented that "the worst thing is when you have students showing up saying that's not what I was promised."  Advancing this idea, one participant asserted that their responsibility to not provide disinformation goes beyond their role as a recruiter.

> If we're not the right fit, I am going to tell you that. Because I do not want you to come here to find out this was not the right place for you and to have someone lie to you just so they can get you to come and spend your money.  That's not my role as an educator.  Yes, I recruit students, but I am first and foremost an educator. And I believe that students deserve that truth and honesty.

For this participant, they understand that they are employed as an international student recruitment professional and have a responsibility to their institution in the form of successfully recruiting students.  However, their role as an educator brings them beyond a role that is purely concerned with sales.  They, alongside other participants, acknowledge the level of responsibility that they have as an educator, which, in summary, relates to providing provide complete, accurate, truthful, and honest information.

Related to this sense of personal responsibility in providing the right information to students, a participant remarked that "you can't ethically in good conscience go rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, come to our school if you think that the experience the students are going to have is going to be somehow poor or compromised."  Expanding on the necessity for full transparency, a participant explained how data should be carefully presented to students in a way that does not skew the information in a way that may be beneficial to the institution but does not present information in a truly authentic way.

> I know of an institution I worked with who said, 'We have a hundred nationalities, so we have diversity,' but about 72% of the diversity was two countries.  I think that's not an extra step.  I think that's, 'Here's our pie chart.'

Participants recognized differentiation of one institution from other institutions as problematic if the mechanisms to differentiate are not beneficial toward contributing to the student's deeper understanding of an institution.  One participant stated that when they attend recruitment fairs and review other institutions' materials, "everyone's talking about the same stuff," so recruiters search for ways to differentiate themselves, which may be over- or under-emphasizing certain attributes about their institution.  For example,

when you get into things like rankings that are questionable from some random website that they plaster onto their recruitment materials, that some student in East Asia sees and is like, 'Wow, they're ranked number three of institutions in the Midwest who have classes on Tuesdays.'

Along those lines, a different participant highlighted the ethical conundrum that arises in scenarios where you kind of have the program the student's interested in, but not quite, you're in that zone.  I mean, that to me is a great illustration of, how are you going to portray that, then?  Because if you yourself know that maybe it's not a perfect fit, are you explicit about that, or are you sort of putting that to the side?

One participant cautioned against "marketing yourself as something in order to try and gain a student."  Their "belief is if you're trying to do that type of thing, you're never going to yield that student."  They gave an example of a problematic response from a recruiter speaking with a student who is looking for a finance program, where the recruiter states, "Well, we have accounting.  That's pretty much the same thing."  The participant tied this back to performance pressures that recruiters may experience on the road: "So even if you think, I'm going to get one more inquiry card today, okay.  You've chosen a very short-term metric that's going to be successful, versus having an honest conversation" that might have the students' best interests in mind.  Also pointing to the value of focusing on broader goals, another participant expressed hope that "people are being ethical, and ultimately it's better for institutions if you have a longer-term view about that and recognize that providing students with complete information is a better upfront decision."  Echoing this sentiment, a third participant stated that "it's really in the best interest of the institution for that student to have as much information as possible in making a decision."

According to one participant, this open transparency ensures "you have an informed student that doesn't have a bad experience in the first two months.  You don't want them to come in shocked."  The participant honed in on the importance of recruiting students who are the "right fit," that are looking for the sort of experience that their institution offers, with the goal of "getting the students that are going to be happy when they first arrive on campus."  Transparency is a mitigating agent for students' expectations.

*Radical transparency*.  The concepts of transparency and honesty move into a personal responsibility of the international student recruitment professional to be aware of their motivations and how information is portrayed to students.  Honesty about the experience at a recruiter's institution can involve presenting information that is both positive and negative, and not intentionally obscuring information that may deter an international student from selecting to study at a recruiter's institution.

This idea of "radical transparency" arose in participant interviews.  I define this as transparency to the point of sharing information that is traditionally perceived as negatively impacting an international student's decision to study at a particular institution.  As successful international student recruitment activities result in enrolled international students, "radical transparency" may be contrary to this goal if a recruiter shares information that influences a student's decision in a negative way.  In this study, participants believed that they should not be the gatekeepers that decide what information a student should or should not receive – they are responsible for sharing all information, good or bad.  This might mean "being tough on students or giving them news they don't want to hear." Another participant stated, when making decisions related to sharing information,

There are many decisions that I make that will lead to some unhappy students

sometimes. And I can still go home and sleep at night feeling like I made the

decision that ultimately is best for that student, whether they knew it or not.

Participants cited the increase in institutions' presence on social media and availability of information that is not solely authored by the institutions as mechanisms through which a student can create a full, 360-degree view of an institution, "even negative stuff." According to one participant, students "should be, for bad or good…looking up all the different facets of ways you can understand the university. Maybe even you tell prospective students they need to do that themselves. That might be a way to be really transparent."

The idea that recruiters could, or should, specifically point students to information that may paint their institution in a less than ideal light is an expansion on the responsibility of a recruiter to provide complete information to students, as complete, accurate information may not traditionally include challenges and difficulties the international student might face once they arrive on campus. Another participant commented that they don't monitor social media for content other than content that is violent or sexual. Otherwise, they let students post what they want to post. According to one participant, "there's a lot of truth out there on social media. And I think that's healthy…The audience is students, the parents, they're not stupid. They're much more sophisticated than they were 10 years ago." This participant views complete, radical transparency as a core value in how they represent their institution.

We tell students, you're not going to be in class at noon to two with the [domestic]

students or the undergraduate students. We're very clear about it. That probably

discourages some people because…for some people there's this dream of the American university experience through movies and stuff like that.

This participant was employed at university with name recognition, and I asked them if they felt this influenced how willing they are to share information that may dissuade international students from attending.  They replied that they "think it's probably true that we get away with a lot because of the brand, but I think the reason we're so transparent is also the brand."

One participant stated that they believe there is space for sharing negative aspects of an institution

in the interest of transparency and being honest with the people that we're ultimately trying to sell something to… I think oftentimes in international education, people hate to think of it as selling something, but that's really what it is, in my opinion. So, I think we should be honest.

This participant commented that while what students may consider a "negative" attribute may vary, they believe it is important to provide all information for their consideration to aid in the student's decision-making process.  The participant expanded on this idea by illustrating an experiencing of a consumer buying a product.  The salesperson may say, "this is the best item in every single way and you're not going to be dissatisfied as all," which would ring false to a "discerning consumer" who is "also thinking about their commission and what they're getting out of this and, is that truly a representation of the product that is on sale here?"  For this participant, transparency and honesty are an inherent requirement of the sales process.  This transparent process is engineered to prevent dissatisfaction and to provide the student with a complete picture of the education and experience they are purchasing.

Multiple participants stated that they are always transparent and honest about the culture of their campus, remarking that they don't want to give international students false perceptions of the campus experience.  For example, one participant would never state that "'Yeah, we've got all this diversity!  We've got all these students from all over the place!' when [our] international student population is less than 1% and most of [our] students are actually Caucasian, rural, gun-toting."  They surmised that in some cases, full transparency may actually endear students to them – students may find them more trustworthy because they aren't trying to paint a flawless picture of their institution. Once that trust is created, "that's all they [the student] needed to make that decision" to attend their university.  In this participant's view, radical transparency can be used as a recruitment tool.  A different participant saw value in being transparent regarding revealing their role as a recruiter paid by their institution, but that they also tell students that they are "coming here to help you. To help each and every one of you figure out your path.  If that's to us, fantastic…if that's not, that's okay."  For these participants, their role as an educator that educates international students on their options enhances, and at times supersedes, their role as a recruiter.

*__Responsibility of recruiters to find information if they do not have it__*.  The final consideration for participants related to transparency and providing complete information was the responsibility of recruiters to find information that was not readily available to them. Participants noted that as they have worked in the field for some time, they had grown more confident in telling students when they were not sure of an answer.  Another participant echoed this sentiment, noting that learning how to not answer a question in the moment comes with experience in the field.  They stated that a young employee might say to a student that their institution has a particular program, as "when you're in the

throes of this conversation, it's easy to just say, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah' versus 'No' or 'I'll get back to you.'  The 'I'll get back to you' is often the right recourse."  A different participant agreed, suggesting that "perhaps the best answer is, 'I don't know the answer to that.'"  The desire to quickly share information, even if it is not completely accurate, may be due in part to the pressure to recruit students, "because of the heat of the moment and the desire to get these outcomes, you might be like, yeah, I'm willing to fudge."  One participant acknowledged the desire to appear like an expert when working with students, and that it takes courage to realize that they do not have all the answers.  However, they stated that for recruiters to "really to be able to best serve the students, you have to be flexible and open to getting the information if you don't know it.  And just being really honest."

Overall, throughout the interviews, the importance of providing accurate, accessible, complete, contextual information was repeatedly highlighted.  Respondents caution against skewing information or misrepresenting the institution.  Recruitment professionals are the frontline representatives of the university – they are on the ground representing their institution, and they are charged with recruiting international students to study on their campuses.  Beyond the simple act of recruitment, broader ethical themes related to duty and responsibility to the student arose, with a focus on the responsibilities ascribed to the recruiter's role in sharing this information.  One participant impassionedly stated,

> It's a gift and a privilege that we get to be part of that journey with them.  And
> that's sacred.  The families have probably saved their entire life for their child to
> get an education and I am not going to steer them down the wrong path.

**Principle 2: Consulting with colleagues you trust and whose character you respect**. The second principle for resolving ethical dilemmas was recruiters consulting with colleagues they trust and whose character they respect.  I asked interview participants to expand on this principle and comment on how they enact this in practice. Colleagues are a useful resource to navigate ethical "gray areas" or to serve as a "reality check," according to one participant.  How participants relied on their colleagues is outlined below.

*Consulting with colleagues to navigate ethical dilemmas*.  Participants described their relationships with colleagues as essential for providing a check and balance mechanism in their work.  In this way, the social aspect of information gathering was used by participants to weigh options when faced with an ethical conundrum.  One participant commented that colleagues serve as "crucial reality checks because sometimes someone will say something and make you realize, wait, I was off the mark a little bit about this and this, that or the other way.  You can't do that on your own."  Another reaches out to colleagues when they encounter something that feels ethically "off."  As a way of checking their initial gut reaction, the participant will bring their dilemma to a colleague for input.  Participants use this additional feedback in conjunction with their own ethical benchmarks, as well as best practices in the field, described next, to navigate complicated areas of work.

*Sharing best practices and examples of issues*.  Due to the nature of the work of international educators, many participants use listservs and forums to communicate with colleagues.  One participant stated, "There's…Network NAFSA, which is very helpful, and a few other listservs that we're a part of where if I need a response on an issue, I always have people to reach."  Participants share dilemmas they may be encountering

along with questions and best practices, as well as information from official sources that "might shape what type of international students might be available in coming years." They point to the importance of subscribing to listservs to see what issues colleagues are experiencing in the chance that they may encounter those same issues in the future.

   ***Collaborative nature of international education***.  Participants remarked on the collaborative, open nature of the field of international education, and the willingness of colleagues to provide guidance and input.  One participant commented that the collegial nature was one of the first attributes that stood out to them when they entered the field. This participant acknowledged the reality that there is such a large amount of information in the field of international education, and no one practitioner can be an expert in all areas.  For them, colleagues became a trusted resource to fill knowledge gaps.  Another participant said they are "always willing to give a helping hand," and that if they don't have the answer, they'll refer their colleague to someone more experienced to assist.

   Overall, participants agreed that this principle is an important way of navigating ethical dilemmas.  One stated that they "think using peers is definitely, in the top, very important to get the right context of how you're going to be transparent to the students in the long run."  However, as noted, some participants stressed the importance for professionals to have an ethical baseline through which to evaluate and assess information from colleagues.

   For participants in this study, consulting with trusted colleagues was an essential method for resolving ethical dilemmas.  The collegiality of international education is a crucial facet of the field, allowing recruitment professionals to stay abreast of emerging trends, and more importantly, enabling them to build a network of colleagues doing similar work.  This network becomes a resource and sounding board.

**Principle 3: Agency vetting process**.  Not all of the interview participants worked with recruitment agencies, though all had at some point in their careers.  They were each able to provide commentary on the agency vetting process and agencies in general.  Agencies have been, and continue to be, a somewhat controversial topic within U.S. higher education.  Scholars write of the ethical dilemmas inherent in the financial arrangement between universities and agents (Beech, 2018) when successful enrollment results in universities paying agencies a portion of students' tuition.  While this study did not dive deeply into the subject of recruitment agencies, the agency vetting process arose through the Delphi rounds from participant responses and fell somewhat in the middle of the ranked principles in Round 3.  Discussions with interview participants included conversations around the vetting process but veered into general comments about recruitment agents.  I will include those comments to provide an overview of how participants work with agents, in addition to their perspectives on the role of agency management in ethical practices of international student recruitment.

One participant surmised that "a lot of people are signing agents hoping that they'll send students right away," then discussed the level of control that an institution needs to maintain to ensure their overseas partner is accurately representing their institution.  Another participant remarked that they believed a "well-vetted and well-managed agent relationship can extend the reach of the university, while hopefully, in an ideal world, following the values and the things that we try to keep in mind when working with students."  However, in their experience, not many schools do this well.  In their opinion,

> some schools do it terribly and are just willing to sign on any agent that promises them anything.  Anything.  And I mean, I think that's an issue ethically, that if

you're going to try to extend your brand and bring that into the process, then you owe it to the people to whom your brand is being extended to make sure that that's managed.

The vetting process varied widely among participants.  One participant requires their potential partner agencies to undergo a formal university process that involves multiple steps and committee approvals.  Other participants require letters of recommendation and certifications, along with references from institutions in the same state.  Other participants stated that their universities have the agency send them a student first, so they can ask the student about their experience.  Some participants visit their partners or have their partners visit at least once a year, to build relationships, maintain constant communication, and for training purposes.

Two participants identified the vetting process as a mechanism by which to uncover if an agency is more focused on the commission rather than the student's best interest, with one participant emphasizing,

If they're [the agency] really screaming about the commission, it's like, well sorry, I'm not going to have an unhappy agent that's always telling me he wants more money.  So, in terms of that, that's an easy reason not to even sign with them to begin with or get rid of them quickly.

Participants continued to remark that the vetting process and how agencies respond to questions can help recruiters understand how the future working relationship will progress.

If it feels like they're sending one student to 15 different schools, whether they fit or not, I think you can kind of tell that in the long run, they're not going to be a very strong supporter of your program because they're just going for the money.

The second participant commented that the vetting process is designed to help them "get some sense of what this third party is doing on our behalf" but acknowledged that there's no way they will fully understand how the agency is running their business overseas.  However, the participant's goal is to "ensure those organizations do have a sense of service, that helping their customers is more important than making a buck." The participant acknowledged that making money is an essential component of running a successful agency, but they hope the agencies are "tying that to something useful and helpful if there are ways that we can help students more efficiently."  Along those lines, to understand the context from which an agency might be operating from, one participant gave an example that one student will not necessarily make a significant financial or operational difference at a university.  However, for an agency, it might mean making payroll or not, so the economic pressures to recruit might be higher, along with "the pressures to fudge or skew."

The agency vetting and oversight process relates to Principle 1, providing as much (accurate, accessible, complete, etc.) information as possible, but also relates to how recruiters choose their partners.  One participant remarked on the challenge of controlling how agencies are representing their institution, stating that "it's arguably the central challenge at its most core, getting that accurate information out" when "complicated…by all the third parties and the partnerships."  They asked rhetorically of institutions, "can you control what's happening, and to what extent are you trying to do so?"  A different participant requests feedback from their partner agencies, asking, "how are you presenting the information differently than how we present the information?" to understand how cultural nuances affect how their partners portray their institution. However, they also ensure the agencies are representing their institution "within the

guidelines…we also work from within.  Because that is the last thing I need to find out, is that they've said something that's not accurate."

One participant provided an example of how agencies may "arguably approach their work advising students more ethically than an individual university employee might," as they can provide a selection of programmatic options from a menu of their partner institutions.  In contrast, the individual university employee might be "working within this box here and I'd like to get you to my school."  However, they went on to say that the compensation and commission model is tied into ethics on both the university and agency side.  In the "nonprofit world…compensation isn't tied to that individual enrollment outcome," while in the agency world, it usually is.  Thus, as international recruiters know that their livelihood is not tied to the successful conversion of a prospective student to an enrolled student, they "should be able to kind of have the courage in [their] ethical convictions and just say, no, I'm not going to fudge this.  Even in the least."

In general, the necessity of agency oversight and control emerged from participant responses and is therefore presented as an ethical principle of international recruiting. One participant summarized the role of oversight and control in agency and institutional relationships as follows:

> I think that where schools sometimes stumble is seeing agents as a way of stretching extremely thin resources further and not having the resources to actually back up those relationships in a way that does justice to what they think they should be doing.

**Principle 4: Balancing the interests of the institution and taxpayers and the duty to international students**.  In discussions around this principle, finances arose as a

key point.  Participants acknowledged that their core responsibility was to the citizens of their states and to produce some return on the investment of taxpayers.  Participants were aware of the financial burdens associated with recruitment for international students, but also recognized the political limitations of state institutions in extending aid to these students.

At participants' institutions, international students typically pay a higher fee than domestic students.  In effect, some participants felt that such fees afford international students more access to services provided by the university.  One participant remarked that "the fact that students are paying more in tuition…gets forgotten by some components of the university," and as these students have paid more money, "they should be given a little more accommodation [in terms of academic and cultural support] than domestic students."  This participant suggested that international students are paying fees "above and beyond the U.S. taxpayer," so they should be able to obtain unique services, designed for international students, in relation to those fees.  However, a different participant noted that in reality, the relationship between international student fees and their right to specialized services is more complicated.

There's this sort of simple, well we charge in-state students this because they're taxpayers and we charge out-of-state students this because they're not.  And that's true, on a real-time basis.  But in fact…there's decades and decades of taxpayers who are no longer with us that have funded the social equity of the institution.  And that matters and should matter.  The international community, just by definition, cannot have done so.

Beyond the linkage between fees and services, at one participant's campus, fees do not play a role in determining the level of service: "every student has the same rights

on campus.  So, it doesn't matter if you're international or local…every student has the same access."  This quote acknowledged that all students are viewed the same under campus policies, but did not acknowledge that specialized services and support may be needed to ensure an equitable campus experience for international students.

Although participants believed all students have an equal right to access services on campus, recruiters in this study also strongly considered the careful use of taxpayer resources in their work as paramount.  A participant commented that if public universities and their staff members are responsible to taxpayers, which in their case, they are, they would evaluate their ethical decision-making based on that responsibility.  A different participant agreed, stating that public institutions "first and foremost" have an obligation to taxpayers.  Citing responsibility to taxpayers and responsible use of public funds, one participant "has a very clear conscious about how much we're spending, [and] how it's been approved following state guidelines."  A different participant stated that if taxpayer money is used in a way "that is fiscally responsible and that is contributing to the goals of the university and its mission…then I think you're doing your due diligence in your part as being a servant of taxpayers."

The use of university funds for scholarships for international students was a point of tension for interviewees.  A participant stated that "at the end of the day, the institution serves the taxpayers…I would never argue for a bigger scholarship for an international student than I would for [an in-state] student because I have to be cognizant of that fact."  Also referencing scholarships, a different participant said that they are honest with international students about the lack of scholarships for students that are not in-state residents, as their institution is public and designed to serve the state taxpayers.  This

response aligned with Principle 1, above, in that recruitment professionals are responsible for sharing all information about finances, costs, and scholarships transparently.

The conceptualization of international students as beneficial to the campus beyond the fees they pay to a public institution was also discussed by two participants in this section and has long been discussed in the internationalization at home (IaH) literature (Baldassar & McKenzie, 2016; Knight, 2012).  One participant stated that international students are considered important and welcomed on campus because "some people view them as service to taxpayers who can't study abroad."  Another participant argued that the idea that "it's good for everyone when we bring international students in, not just because of the money but because they enrich student's experience" is "just rhetoric."  They stated that "we do it because that's the ideal and we do it because we don't want to think that the chief impetus for us is the revenue piece, but in fact, it is a, if not the major driver."

The "balance" described by recruiters, in this case, was instructive for advocates of international students.  In Principle 1, recruiters considered honesty in the recruitment process as ethical and have relied on colleagues for making ethical decisions in the field (Principle 2) and as vetting mechanisms for partners (Principle 3).  In this principle, however, recruiters identified their allegiance and responsibility to the state that employs them as a balancing factor for their work.  This responsibility to the state potentially limits the degree of advocacy that recruiters employ on behalf of students.

**Principle 5: Ethical frameworks are culturally informed**.  Throughout the interviews, participants recognized that working in international student recruitment requires working in different cultural contexts, as well as the "constant struggle to square our ethical policies or ethical frameworks with those of other cultures that may not

align." Through their time in the field, one participant has seen more "openness to recognizing students in the systems from which the families do have different cultural value concerns" than the U.S. and felt that these different values "don't necessarily negate moral values or ethical truths, but they provide different interpretations and different circumstances." A different participant noted that it is crucial to give students the "cultural benefit of the doubt" in terms of stepping back to understand their actions from their unique cultural perspective, rather than judge their actions from a viewpoint that is biased to the U.S., as they believe "99% of people are trying their best to be good." "Good," in this context, may mean that the international student is not acting maliciously or with the intent to harm another actor, but is operating from their ethical vantage point that may be summarily judged by another as "bad" from their perspective. For this participant, "intention is very important," as well as the fact that "nobody can understand all cultural competencies."

As recruiters are frequently traveling in-country to recruit students, two participants cited the importance of being aware of what ethically may or may not be appropriate in each new cultural context. One participant referenced restrictions from public universities on accepting gifts, which may be an essential aspect of the cultural context a recruiter is operating from in particular settings. Another participant cautioned, "You have to be very aware and mindful of, well, what are the cultural differences?" They went on to say that part of the responsibility of the recruiter is to "make sure, before you go into a market and you're working with certain populations, that you've really tried to understand those [cultural] nuances" while acknowledging that understanding those nuances takes time and training, and may never truly be fully comprehended.

Understanding cultural differences is ethically vital for international student recruiters as it requires them to not only be both aware, but to be respectful of, these differences. This understanding enables recruiters to be mindful of how they are judging the actions of partners and students, as well as cognizant of both how they are presenting information and how students and their families may be receiving information based on their cultural contexts. For example, an action that may be ethically "wrong," according to an individual from one cultural background, may be morally justified in another.

**Principle 6: Recruiting is more than an exchange of goods and services**. The converse of this principle, "reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services," ranked near or at the bottom of the list in the final Delphi round. The comments during the interviews supported this ranking, leading to the development of Principle 6, which urges international educators to understand their work beyond a "sales job." Some participants felt that the transactional nature of international student recruitment must be acknowledged, even if it's uncomfortable, and the fact that recruitment may feel like "sales" doesn't necessarily dilute the quality or value of education. Looking beyond sales, participants pointed to their role as educators, in that their responsibilities are more value-driven than finance-driven, and that in reconceptualizing the work as an exchange of goods and services, "you're taking away all those factors of what education provides."

One participant stated that they "like to think that there's some other responsibilities that people are thinking about beyond selling their product and getting a check." Agreeing, another participant said that "it's more than just exchange of goods and services." One participant added that viewing the work of international student recruiters in this way is "very reductionist." This participant stated that they believe most

recruiters in the field do not like to look at recruitment as an exchange of goods and services, and they often joke that "we could have all gone into like investment banking, but we're here for some kind of values-driven reason." Also referencing colleagues beyond themselves, a respondent wasn't surprised that this original principle was at the bottom of the list, because "I doubt many of us look at things in those terms." They continued to say, "I think at least nonprofit public university space, you'd be hard-pressed to find many, if any, people that'd be like, 'Oh yeah, that's basically what we're doing.' I think it's headier than that for most people." One participant affirmed that "I promised myself that when I went into the field of higher education, I would never allow another international student to feel like a dollar sign. They are important, and they are valued." For this participant, they recognized the conceptualization of education as a product to be sold and an international student's tuition as revenue to be sought and were determined to not feed into this dominant trope.

However, some participants acknowledged that the financial aspect of the field could not be denied. One participant argued that keeping economics in mind "doesn't dilute the value of education. It doesn't change the quality of education. It just makes you [the recruiter] responsible" to their institution and their charge to recruit students. One pragmatic participant stated bluntly, "It's a sales job. At the end of the day, your university closes if you don't have students enrolled" but also argued that a focus on the financial aspect of international student recruitment could be a useful tool in conversations with stakeholders at the institution "in order to advocate for what you need to do your job," including budget and resources. Affirming this viewpoint, a participant asserted that "the idea that there's not an ROI or transaction on what we're doing is just blindly naïve."

The relationship between recruiters and students is nuanced, and participants also expressed hesitancy to frame their job as a simple exchange of goods and services. One participant stated,

> The minute you refer to what this office does is importing and exporting, students get very offended.  They are not an item to be passed around.  And this goes back to what I said before, is they never should feel like they're a dollar sign.  Sure, you are a paying customer, but that's not all you are to me.  You are a person, and you are valued.  And I feel honored to be able to be part of that journey that you're on.

**Final thoughts**. As a closing question, I asked each participant, "What are one or two things you would tell international educators about ethics?"  This question was asked to allow participants to center on one or two pieces that they felt were important. Responses varied widely, but respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing ethics as "the bottom line."  One respondent stated that "ethics, in my opinion, is a framework for how you make your decisions."  With this in mind, the following six principles that emerged from this study are designed to assist international educators responsible for international student recruitment to engage in ethical decision-making when they encounter dilemmas in their work.

## Ethical Principles for International Student Recruiters

This study was an explanatory mixed-method study.  Round 1 of the Delphi portion of the study began with four questions. I asked international student recruitment experts how they do their work, what they consider when making recruitment strategy decisions, what typical ethical dilemmas they face, and what principles they use to resolve those dilemmas.  Data was collected, collated, and shared with the 13 participants in Round 2, where they were allowed to provide more detail regarding how they make

strategic decisions, the frequency that they encounter ethical dilemmas, and how often they employ ethical principles to resolve those dilemmas. Round 3 offered participants a chance to participate in a ranking exercise that made clear the importance of certain considerations and the relative unimportance of others. The interview portion of the study further developed specific themes that arose in the Delphi study.

In this study, participants most often design their international student recruitment strategies around low-cost and high-impact recruitment activities. These activities are driven by the desire for outcomes, such as increased inquiries, applications for admission, and eventual enrollment. A holistic or responsible recruitment strategy could consider the student when an institution calculates the return on investment, using indicators like student success or satisfaction. While participants in this study usually do not factor in considerations for the international student when making decisions around their recruitment strategies, they express concern for the student's experience during and post-recruitment. They also understand that as the front-line representatives of their institution, they have a responsibility to provide complete, honest, and transparent information to international students, balanced by their role as good stewards of the public budget. Additionally, while recruitment success may result in increased enrollment and tuition dollars to their institution, participants do not see themselves as salespeople, but as educators who should at the very least provide the most accurate information possible, and radically transparent, culturally-sensitive, context-driven information in the best-case scenario. Participants view ethical work as being honest about both the positive and negative aspects of study in the United States.

The six Ethical Principles for International Student Recruiters provide a framework through which international student recruiters can view their work. This

framework aims to mitigate the financial and institutional pressures participants may feel to recruit international students.  Each principle is presented along with sub-principles that were derived from the quantitative and qualitative data from this study.

- Principle 1: Provide as much information as possible about the institution, cost, and experience, while being transparent and honest about reality versus perceptions.

    o Recruiters are responsible for providing accurate, accessible, clear, complete, concise, contextual, and culturally relevant information.

    o Recruiters are responsible for being aware of potential information imbalances.

    o Recruiters are responsible for ensuring they are not skewing or providing mis- or disinformation.

    o Recruiters are responsible for being transparent and honest.  When recruiters are honest and transparent, this results in informed students whose expectations are met.

    o Radical transparency – not hiding, or openly discussing the challenging or even negative aspects of the institution, cost, or experience, is recommended.

    o Recruiters are responsible for finding information that is requested if they do not have it.

- Principle 2: Recruiters should consult with colleagues they trust and whose character they respect.

    o Recruiters should consult with colleagues to navigate ethical dilemmas.

- Recruiters should share best practices and examples of issues they encounter in their work.

- Recruiters should maintain a willingness to collaborate, and both provide and welcome guidance and input as they progress in their careers.

- Recruiters should maintain their own ethical bearing and think critically about their role as an international student recruiter in conjunction with consulting with colleagues.

- Principle 3: Recruiters should use a robust agency vetting process.

  This principle applies to institutions that work with agents.

  - Recruiters should develop and adhere to a strict agency vetting process.

  - Recruiters should seek to understand how the agency is working on their behalf, and if the principles outlined here are being enacted by agents and representatives in-country.

  - Recruiters should maintain constant communication and oversight in all agency relationships.

- Principle 4: Recruiters must responsibly balance the interests of the institution and taxpayers and the duty to the international students they recruit.

  - Recruiters that work at public institutions, where their recruitment budget stems from public dollars, should recognize the duty to taxpayers inherent in their position.

  - However, recruiters should also recognize the responsibility their institutions have to international students that they recruit.

- Principle 5: Ethical frameworks are culturally informed.

- o  Working in international student recruitment requires working in different cultural contexts.  International student recruiters have a responsibility to be aware of the ethical frameworks within those cultural contexts.

- Principle 6: Recruiting is more than an exchange of goods and services.

  - o  International student recruiters are educators.  As such, the responsibility of a recruiter includes meeting organizational goals, but a service mentality is essential.  Students should be valued while conducting work.

This study provided a look into the considerations that recruiters believe are critical ethical considerations in their work.  This chapter provided an overview and data-informed list of principles for recruiters in practice.  These principles were first identified in a Delphi study, then validated through in-depth interviews with seven of the research participants.  The following chapter will turn to the implications of the study as they relate to theory and practice, along with recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 5

The final chapter of my dissertation, Chapter 5, will include implications for theory, recommendations and guidelines for practice, broader impacts on the field of international education, and recommendations for further study.  Chapters 1 and 2 provided the rationale for the study of ethical international student recruitment, including the increased focus of Western institutions on recruitment activities that generate revenue and the lack of research on and ethical guidelines for international educators who perform this work.  Chapter 3 outlined the study's framework and methodology, and Chapter 4 described the results of the Delphi study and subsequent interviews.  I will use this chapter to bring together the literature reviewed and the results of the study.

**Implications for Theory**

I will first begin with a discussion regarding how participant-identified ethical dilemmas and principles map onto the Typology of Critiques of Internationalization discussed in Chapter 2.  Following, I will use the social cartography developed through the EIHE (Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education) (2013) project as an analytical framework to map the ethical dilemmas and internationalization contexts identified by international educators during the Delphi rounds.  This mapping will enable the identification of the driving orientations behind the dilemmas, as well as the dominant discourses that underlie them.  After the discussion on social cartography, I will discuss how the paradigms of the "ethic of care" and the "ethic of the profession" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) can serve international student recruiters in developing an ethical framework to address frequently faced ethical dilemmas and guide recruiters' work.

**Typology of critiques of internationalization**.  As discussed in Chapter 2, Stein (2017) categorizes critiques of internationalization into three typologies: soft, radical, and

liminal.  Next, I'll discuss how the participant responses from this study map onto the three critiques.  In this study, soft critiques were most apparent, though radical critiques were also mentioned.  I will also discuss how liminal critiques may push forward ethical possibilities in international student recruitment.

*Soft critique*.  The majority of participant responses, if they were at all critical, operated within the soft critique typology.  This typology identifies shortcomings of a neoliberal approach to education but still aligns with the conceptualization of higher education as a mechanism for economic growth.  Education is valued and viewed as public good and democratization of access is key (Stein, 2017).  Participants in this study viewed inequitable recruitment and only recruiting from countries where students are able to pay high tuition prices as an ethical dilemma, which aligns with the soft critique typology.  Additionally, participants struggled with the racism students may experience on campus, and they also acknowledged the need to provide additional support mechanisms for international students.  A concern for the student experience as well as equal opportunities for access all fall within the soft critique of internationalization.  The assumption that the U.S. experience is worthwhile, and therefore should be more accessible, continues to place the U.S. at the top of a global hierarchy, where the knowledge gained at a U.S. institution can lead to economic and social success once a student returns home.

The soft critique emphasizes the importance of equal access and opportunity to higher education in the U.S.  Within this typology, critiques remain at the surface rather than moving a layer deeper, into critiquing how power structures within global systems are set up to preserve and maintain themselves.  For example, while a concern for international students as a "vulnerable population with insufficient protections" (Stein,

2017, p. 14) is included in this typology, it stops short of recommending an alteration to differential tuition fees charged to international students.

The ethical dilemmas identified by participants in this study most frequently fall within this typology.  As recruiters, participants have a limited sphere of control. Participants were concerned with the experience of the international student once they arrive on campus as well as promoting the U.S. as a study destination only to students that could afford the high tuition costs.  They did not demonstrate an awareness of how recruitment may feed into latent global power structures.  Accepting the reality that U.S. education is desirous and their charge from leadership to recruit increasing numbers of students, recruiters in this study critique recruitment when it does not consider the lived experiences of international students when they arrive on campus.

*Radical critiques*. Radical critiques of internationalization, on the other hand, are more political in nature.  These critiques are "oriented by the idea that universities not only tacitly reproduce but also actively contribute to the reproduction of global inequality and harm" (Stein, 2017, p. 14).  These critiques problematize higher education's role in maintaining the hegemony of Western education and knowledge.  They position universities as sites of possibility to push back against how they contribute to global stratification.  Radical critiques identify and analyze historical and root causes of oppression that may subjugate students in harmful internationalization practices.  Those who are most harmed by practices are called to generate proposals to reorient harmful practices.

These critiques take the concern over differential tuition a step further, into understanding how differential opportunities play out within a specific country where recruitment activities are occurring.  Already, recruitment occurs most frequently in

countries where students can afford costly tuition fees, an ethical dilemma recognized by participants.  In-country, only the wealthiest international students and their families can shoulder the burden of high tuition fees.  Less wealthy students simply cannot access this education and inequality is exacerbated.  While participants did not specifically name this problematic widening of in-country inequality, they recognize that they are targeting their recruitment efforts in countries that have a large enough population of wealthy students who can purchase a U.S. education and view this as problematic.  Radical critiques question both the focus of recruitment in countries where students can afford tuition, as well as the role of recruitment in further perpetuating the socioeconomic gap within the country where they are conducting recruitment.

A response to these critiques could include a careful look at differential tuition.  If international educators truly were concerned over access and understanding their sphere of control as limited by existing power structures, targeted aid or grant programs could be explored to aid in mitigating the lack of diversity and inequitable recruitment.  Depending on the institutional structure, these scholarships could be created in-office or at the university level.  However, they may be viewed as problematic by state taxpayers when considering existing inequality of access for domestic students.  Participants in this study recognized their duty to the taxpayer first, as well as the charge to generate a return on investment of taxpayer dollars.  If administrators understand the role of recruitment in perpetuating global inequalities and knowing that they are unable to alter university tuition rates, this could be one actionable step toward resolving this ethical dilemma.

Outside of the university tuition structures, aid and grant programs for international students do exist through the U.S. Department of State, including the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD).  These programs fund tuition, room,

board, and living expenses for international students from specified countries that are not frequently targeted for recruitment.  They are designed to expose "future leaders" (World Learning, 2020, para. 1) to the U.S. educational system, to both "share their culture, and explore U.S. culture and values" (para. 1).  While these programs may represent movement toward more equitable recruitment practices, they more accurately exemplify a reversal of the post-Cold War move from "aid to trade," where internationalization began as an exchange of education but is now income-based.  The motivation behind these programs is to expose international students, who may become leaders in their own countries in the future, to the U.S. culture and values, cultivating "students' comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the U.S." (World Learning, 2020, para. 7).  These programs still represent a classification of U.S. knowledge and values as worthy of export.  While students participating in U.S. Department of State funded programs, radical critiques would call out the problematic underlying motivation to further extend Western nations' cultural and political power.

*Liminal critiques*. Examples of liminal critiques of internationalization were not found in the ethical dilemmas and ethical principles identified by participants in this study, but they can be extrapolated in conjunction with literature from the concerns that were identified.  In liminal critiques, the potential harms of internationalization are understood as normalized within the existing dominant global imaginary (Stein, 2017).  Existing programs and partnerships "naturalize and uncritically expand colonial and capitalist modes of schooling, knowledge production, and social, political, and economic organization" (Stein, 2017, p. 18).  The liminal critique questions whether or not alternative ways of understanding higher education and internationalization can exist within current embedded structures.

In this study, participants' fiduciary responsibility to the institution was key touch point for frequently encountered ethical dilemmas. They recognized their responsibility to the institution first and foremost. In this way, recruiters are unable to untangle themselves from the responsibility to do their work within existing university financial structures. Instead, they rely on ethical principles to guide their professional practice.

The very term "recruiter" implies that the work they do is in the institution's interest. While participants felt somewhat ethically responsible for students' experiences on campus, in many cases their interaction with the international student ends when they arrive in the U.S. Their pastoral care is undertaken by a separate international student "advisor." Although the reimagining of higher education that liminal critiques may call for may not be easily actionable, "immediate harm reduction measures" (Stein, 2017, p. 18) can be sought and enacted through ethical principles and ways of doing work. The participants in this study identified the Six Ethical Principles as ways they are able to live and act responsibly within their ascribed job responsibilities and duties.

Additionally, liminal critiques call for the consideration of how international student recruitment practices reproduce "differential life changes both locally and within international students' home countries" (Stein, 2017, p. 18). Both the reasons for recruitment on the part of the institution and the motivation for U.S. education on the part of the international student must be examined. Participants in this study emphasized the responsibility of the recruiter to provide clear, complete information. They stated that recruiters should strive to understand the underlying motivations of international students to study abroad in order to determine if their institution was the right fit. I offered the idea of radical transparency as one way that recruiters could mitigate the "sales" aspect of their position. By working against traditional marketing that only emphasizes the

positive attributes of an institution, being radically transparent about the drawbacks of a

U.S. or Western education is one way a recruiter can effect change within their locus of

control.

This discussion demonstrates that scholarly critiques of internationalization are, or

can be, present in practice. Soft critiques were present among participant understandings

of ethical dilemmas and principles, and participants began to enter into the realm of

radical critiques as well when considering the inequitable nature of recruitment practices.

Liminal critiques of internationalization attend to the difficult nature of breaking the

bounds of the traditional understanding of role of internationalization at U.S. HEIs.

These critiques can also offer a way forward by illuminating areas of action within the

international educator's area realm of control.

To further demonstrate the ethical tension point demonstrated by participants

between their responsibility to the institution they serve and their responsibility to the

international student they recruit, I'll next use social cartography to map of ethical

dilemmas encountered by participants in this study.

**Social cartography**. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, scholars have called for a

reimagining of internationalization that moves away from the dominant motivations that

are related to profitability (Guion Akdağ & Swanson, 2018). Scholars worry that the

positioning of university education as a product to be sold and the student as a consumer

of that product has led to a problematic shift in the role of the university. This

positioning is to the detriment of institutional academic quality (Benzie, 2010; McCrohon

& Nyland, 2018) and the international student experience (Marginson, 2012). The

neoliberal higher education environment, stimulated by reduced state funding for higher

education, has created an environment in which recruitment of full fee-paying

international students is required for institutional viability. To make evident the influence of neoliberalism on internationalization, social cartography was used by EIHE project participants "as heuristic representational tools to interpret data with a view to better strategize resistance to neoliberalism in their own institutions" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 95).

In the EIHE project, the heuristic identified three discursive configurations and four interfaces that are present in the internationalization of higher education. Data from this study demonstrates how international student recruiters, as workers, appear to be located at the neoliberal-liberal interface in higher education. Similarly, this tension between the civic and corporate imaginaries of the university is what initially drove researchers to engage in the EIHE project. The project was "motivated by shared concerns that financial imperatives were driving unethical internationalization practices and undermining the potential for ethical engagements in higher education" (Andreotti et al., 2016, p. 85). This concern appears to be warranted according to the results of this study. The ethical dilemmas recruiters identified most frequently related to the tension recruiters felt to produce results for the university (value for taxpayer's investment). This was evidenced by how participants selected recruitment methods and their concern for the student experience during and post-recruitment. In this study, recruiters sat at the nexus of the business interests of their institutions and a desire for international students to benefit from the global public good their institutions sought to pursue.

***Social cartography of ethical dilemmas***. Social cartographic methods are not necessarily replicable. Instead, they are meant to create "a situated map that emphasizes particular tensions and defamiliarizes what is taken for granted" (Suša, 2016, as cited in Stein, 2017, p. 10), and allow for "deepened analysis" (p. 10) of the defined issue. In this

study, the social cartography is situated in the current historical moment of a downturn in international student enrollment at institutions in the U.S.  This moment allows the fundamental motivations for recruitment to be questioned.  It presents an opportunity to potentially re-shift the way recruitment strategies are constructed.

Though a purely critical representation of international student recruitment practice was not present, participants stated that they considered ethics in their daily work.  Participants suggested that they are working against competing interests. These interests can be made more evident in the mapping between the neoliberal and liberal interfaces – between their obligation to the institution and taxpayers and responsibility to the international students they are working to recruit.  Although scholars in the EIHE project call for a more systematic dismantling of the current dominant global imaginary that places neoliberal conceptualizations of the university at the top (evidenced by the neoliberal discursive orientation's location at the top of the pyramid in the social cartography), professionals in this study present more concern for areas where they have direct control and influence.  These areas are the recruitment process, and the information recruiters provide to aid in the student's understanding of their future choices and consequences.

For example, the three ethical dilemmas that participants identified as most frequently challenging in their daily work were "budget constraints and keeping students' best interests in mind," "sharing the U.S. as a top destination in light of political/economic challenges and safety issues," and "support (or lack thereof) for international students from university administration."  These dilemmas exist along the neoliberal-liberal interface as recruiters express concern for the student's experience, safety, and support, but these concerns are mediated by their charge to recruit.  For the

international recruiter, return on investment arose as a critical element of their work.  The investment of time and resources from the institution, taxpayers, and state is expected to result in student enrollment to justify the expenses.  However, the participants in this study rejected the idea that they are only beholden to the sale of educational experiences and the goal of increased revenue (a neoliberal approach).  Instead, they understand themselves as international educators (a liberal approach) that have responsibility for the international student in their purview.  While the concerns of individual students were not often central to recruiting strategies, a positive educational experience for these students was often at the center of recruiters' ethical dilemmas.

International student recruiters are bound by the very definition of their work.  For participants in this study, successful recruitment is determined by increases in quantifiable figures, including numbers of international student inquiries, applications, and enrollments.  A full reconceptualization would need to take place, with different goals in mind, to allow recruiters to move into considering ethical dilemmas that fall along other interfaces in the social cartography.  Some of these dilemmas have been explored in literature, and map onto the critical discursive orientation, demonstrated in Figure 5.  These critical ethical dilemmas could include, for example, the need for international education practitioners to recognize the role of Western universities in perpetuating global inequalities, the need to facilitate the participation of students facing systemic barriers, and the need to accommodate international students from globally and socio-economically diverse backgrounds.  While these are worthy dilemmas, they were not expressed by participants as areas they encounter or even think about in their daily work.  Participants in the study did not identify themselves as change agents or purveyors of social justice and did not demonstrate a level of concern for embedded power

structures.  The closest participants came to acknowledging power structures was to make mention of concern for inequitable recruitment and diversification, which falls along the neoliberal-liberal-critical interface.  According to participants, inequitable recruitment is a result of only recruiting from regions where students are assumed to be able to pay.

Ethical internationalization does not mean that international student recruiters only encounter ethical dilemmas that fall squarely in the critical interface.  While scholars argue that international student recruitment can exacerbate or reproduce inequality within home nations when only wealthy international students can afford U.S. tuition (Lee et al., 2006; Rhee & Sagaria, 2004), other scholars identify linkages between international student recruitment and colonialism (Stein & Andreotti, 2016).  However, these do not represent the only ways that ethics can be understood within practices of international student recruitment.

The recruitment professionals in this study identified the challenges they most frequently face as existing at the intersection of the neoliberal and liberal interfaces.  The ethical principles that they employ in response to these dilemmas can aid in propelling forward how ethical recruitment is conceptualized and conducted at U.S. universities.  In practice, participants do not view themselves as responsible for bringing about a fundamental shift in the role the university plays in society.  They are not necessarily concerned with how this change could reduce their institution's role in replicating global inequality.  While some participants self-identified as decision-makers at their institutions, their radius of control over institutional policies and management was limited.  Instead, participant concern was placed on levers they could influence.  These included how recruiters ethically present information to students, how they ethically

conduct their work (including checkpoints with colleagues and professional association guidance), and how they ethically choose partners to work with (agency vetting).

These responsible recruitment practices that participants envisioned could result in more ethical recruitment on a smaller scale.  Scholars have bemoaned internationalization practices that are driven by "processes and targets" (Khoo et al., 2016, p. 86), as did some of the participants in this study.  Using ethical frameworks at the recruitment level, recruiters could move beyond quantifiable measures of success by orienting recruitment strategies to goals that exist outside the dominant agenda of increasing tuition and exposure of their institution's domestic students to diverse populations.  Participants in this study demonstrated that they are considering the ethical implications of their work.  Placing ethics at the forefront of decision-making could be a progression in the way international student recruitment is performed at public universities in the U.S.

In this study, the area most firmly situated in the neoliberal interface was how international educators developed recruitment strategies.  In this case, a movement toward the neoliberal-liberal interface, in which the international student is considered alongside institutional interests could be viewed as incremental ethical progress.  One participant in the study mentioned that they hoped to come up with "a holistic ROI assessment that goes well beyond the generic measure of enrollment activity vis-a-vis budget spent and instead also incorporates student satisfaction, performance, diversity, and other measures."  This holistic ROI assessment could move toward placing more balanced ethical considerations at the forefront.

Participants in this study identified that as universities are seeking to enroll international students, they have a responsibility to these students.  Further, participants

recognize that universities should begin to reassess their recruitment strategies in light of balancing the responsibility to the home society and the responsibility to the students they bring into the society.  If the recruiter cannot work beyond the constraints of the dominant global imaginary, they could begin to move along an ethical continuum to ensure that their goals are in alignment with supporting the students they have worked so hard to recruit.  In recognizing their responsibility to international students, recruiters aimed to ensure they are providing all information necessary for the student to make a life-changing decision.  Including radically transparent information, ethics moves from a theoretical concept to an actionable step that recruiters can take.

*Social cartography of the discursive orientations present in participant-identified ethical dilemmas*. The social cartographic mapping of the ethical dilemmas generated from the Delphi study is displayed in Figure 5, below.
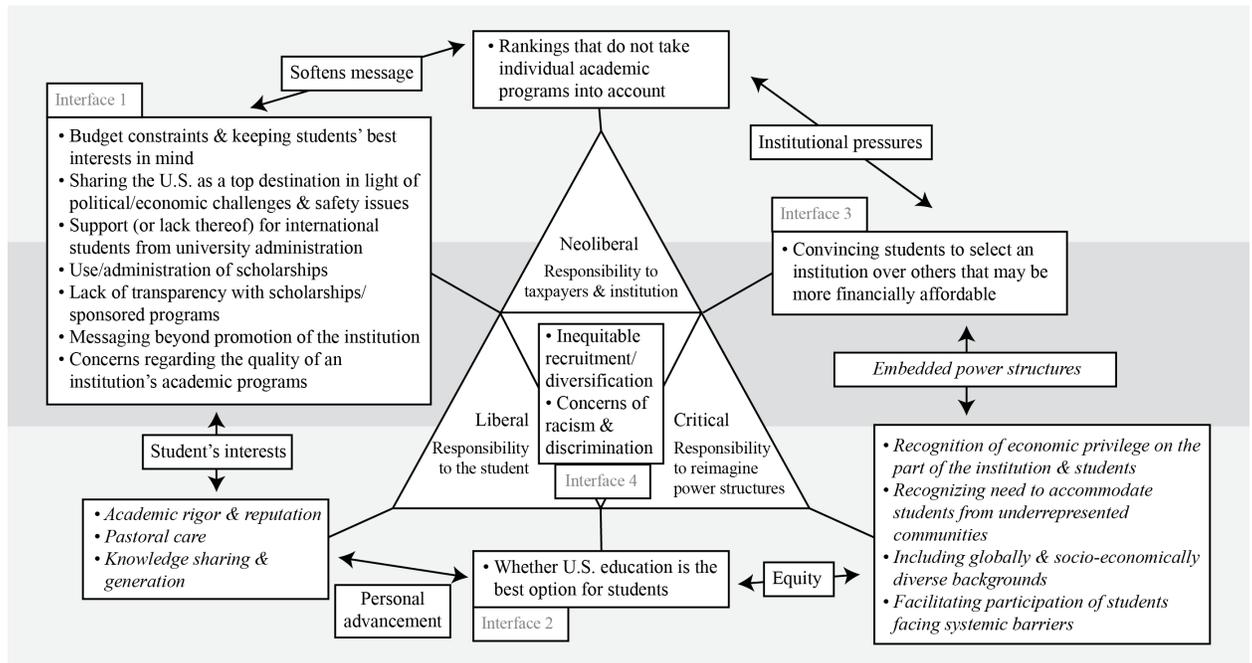


*Figure 5*. Social cartography of the discursive orientations present in participant-identified ethical dilemmas.

As described in Chapter 3, the social cartography is used to articulate the interfaces between the three discursive orientations and how these interfaces are present in the data.  The italicized items are presented as dilemmas that were not present in the data but are examples of how they might appear within the discursive orientations, had they been discussed by participants.  The critical imaginary resides in the world of scholarship but, according to responses in this study, appears to be not always applicable in the day-to-day lives of international educators.  Participants did not express encountering ethical dilemmas that were purely critical.  Therefore, the critical examples demonstrated above are drawn from previous EIHE scholars' work (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017).

As previously discussed, "by working to make intelligible where neoliberalism is compatible with or at odds with liberal and critical orientations" (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017, p. 362) the heuristic is used "to articulate some potential barriers to and possibilities for ethical internationalization" (p. 362).  The heuristic highlights tensions between orientations to visually identify and display an emphasis on the interface between the neoliberal and liberal orientations. This heuristic be used as "both an interpretative device for analysis of the sets of data in this research and a reflexive tool for considering implications of overlapping and contradictory conceptualisations of internationalisation for ethical approaches to policy and practice" (p. 365).  By mapping internationalization, recruitment, and its ethical dilemmas this way, international student recruitment professionals can reflect on how dominant discursive orientations influence their daily work.  Expanded on in the next section, this can prompt recruiters to reflect on their own ethical framework.

In summary, the discursive orientations apparent in the identification of ethical dilemmas international educators face, and the principles they use to resolve them, are similar to what other scholars have found through the EIHE project.  These are often dominantly reflected via neoliberal-liberal conceptualizations and their relevant foci.  The critical orientation (while mediated by the neoliberal-liberal orientation) did make a limited appearance in interviews, particularly when participants thought critically about the consequences of recruiting international students to institutions that may not be financially viable for those students and their families (see also Vavrus & Pekol, 2015).  Additionally, the critical orientation was demonstrated in instances when participants critically reflected on students' understanding of the future benefits they may obtain if they choose to study at a U.S. institution versus the real value of a U.S. education.  These critical reflections, however, were less visible in the quantitative and qualitative data from this study.

Despite the limited critical reflection on their work described above, participants acknowledged that the neoliberal orientation of higher education in the United States was not one they could easily escape from in their professional duties.  Overall, participants in this study acknowledge that a return on investment (ROI) is a crucial element when conducting international student recruitment work.  This emphasis on ROI is a result of work objectives that are focused on bringing increased numbers of international student recruitment to their institutions.  Participants knew they could not divorce themselves from the economic motivations of their work.

Regardless of the influences of ROI, participants ranked "reconceptualizing work as an exchange of goods and services" low on the list of methods they use to resolve ethical dilemmas. This low ranking points to their awareness of and discomfort with

framing their work entirely in capitalistic terms.  Faced with managing ethical dilemmas, recruiters balanced providing complete and accurate information about the institution to the student and keeping the best interest of the students top of mind.  This balancing act appeared to be the way that recruiters operated within a system that they admitted does not put the needs of the students first.  Professionals are grappling with the tension demonstrated in the social cartography between the neoliberal and liberal discursive motivations, as demonstrated by recruiters negotiating ethical dilemmas by incorporating the transparency principle in practice.  In a liberal higher education tradition, student merit, and the inclusion of students' experience into the perceived "public good" of higher education would be the messaging that recruiters received from their supervisors. In a neoliberal environment, participants faced pressures to recruit more fee-paying students regardless of whether students would thrive in the higher education environment. To further understand the mechanisms through which international educators can work through these tensions and develop the ability to use the ethical principles discussed in this study in their daily work, I move to a discussion of the *ethics of the profession* and how it intersects with an ethic of care.  I will also share a recommendation for international educators to develop their own unique personal and professional ethical framework.

**Ethics of the profession**.  Principles of ethical recruitment can also be framed through the lens of ethics of the profession.  In this section, I will expand on Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) paradigm for ethical educational leadership to include a practice of ethical decision-making in international student recruitment.

The results from my study align with more widespread professional conversations about student-centered education.  A principle for ethical decision-making that rose to the

top of importance for all participants was the responsibility of recruiters to provide honest and clear information to the international student to enable them to make the decision that is best for their unique situation.  Educators in this study perceived their work as ethical and part of a broader professional trend toward student-centeredness.  They communicated that students were at the center of importance when making decisions that could impact them in addition to guiding students as much as possible when making such decisions.

Participants' desire to consult with trusted colleagues and professional organization guidance also aligned with Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) emphasis on the ethics of the profession.  The authors recommend that practitioners "take the time to locate the formal codes of the profession and the standards of the field" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 7), which is a practice outlined by participants.  Although participants more frequently relied on the guidance of trusted colleagues for making ethical decisions, references to professional organizations were present in the corpus of ethical strategies outlined by these recruiters.

**Summary of Shapiro and Stefkovich's Conceptualizations of Ethics and Research Findings**

**The ethic of justice**.  Shapiro and Stefkovich outlined four paradigms of ethics: justice, critique, care, and the profession. The ethic of justice is primarily concerned with questions about laws, rights, or policies.  In this study, recruiters do not necessarily conceptualize ethics in a just or critical way, as often they do not have enough institutional power to affect change in these spaces.  To a greater degree, participants appear to struggle with ethical tensions in areas they can exert some level of control over and carve out ethical spaces with ethics of care and in their profession.  The areas they

can influence includes the recruitment process and how they design recruitment strategies, and their concern extends to how international students are treated during and post-recruitment.

Participant's understanding of their responsibility, however, does not extend completely to how third-parties, such as agents, treat international students.  They may consider their sphere of ethical influence too far removed.  Participants exhibited an ethic of care, with their focus on providing transparent information to international students, as well as the ethic of the profession, with a focus on seeking advice from trusted colleagues and referencing professional association guidance.

Literature related to the duties of justice and an association between universities and international students was explored in Chapter 2.  Duties of justice are ascribed when two entities come into association with one another – for example, when an international student is recruited and subsequently enrolls at a U.S. university.  Under the liberal understanding of education, education is considered a public good.  However, non-residents at many public universities (in this case, the non-residents are international students) are charged differential tuition rates.  Additionally, participants recognized that international student recruitment as fundamentally tied to a neoliberal understanding of education as a product to be sold.  This demonstrates that participants in this study do not view education as a public good, but as one that is privately acquired.  Following this logic, the responsibility of the university to the international student becomes questionable.

In this study, participants shared a fundamental ethical obligation to the taxpayer rather than the international student.  Additionally, even if participants were concerned about the financial burden of tuition or the quality of academics, they may not be able to

exert a degree of influence on tuition and academic programming.  In the study, one of the top ethical dilemmas for participants was related to the lack of support for international students from university administration.  This concern demonstrates that participants do not feel they can exert influence at the level needed to ensure the students they recruit are adequately supported once they arrive on campus.  If participants are not able to impact the level of support students receive, they may feel completely unequipped to tackle other ethical quandaries identified by scholars, such as differential tuition rates (Enslin & Hedge, 2008; Tannock, 2013) or their rights and entitlements outside their home nation-state (Marginson, 2012).  In this regard, participants in this study did not frequently evoke the ethic of justice.

**The ethic of critique**.  The same follows for the ethic of critique, which is based on critical theory and is concerned with questions related to power.  This ethic drove the literature on critical and ethical internationalization that was reviewed in Chapter 4. Scholarship on critical internationalization illuminates uneven power distributions between sending and receiving countries and critiques the dominant global imaginary that places Western higher education at the top of a global hierarchy of knowledge (Adnett, 2010; Kim, 2011; Stein, 2017).  International student recruitment activities at many U.S. institutions feed into these latent power structures, with the international student recruiter acting as the executor and perpetrator of maintaining ingrained global inequalities. Scholars call out international student recruitment as unethical when hegemonic impacts are not considered, whether that be the eroding of national cultural identities (Knight, 2014) or when universities fail to discuss the financial "exploitations" that are associated with recruitment (Buckner & Stein, 2019).  Education, at a premium cost, flows unevenly from the Global North to the Global South (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015) and may also

continue power imbalances that began in colonial processes (Beck, 2012).  For example, focusing recruitment efforts on countries where students can afford high tuition fees more often results in a disproportionate number of those students studying on U.S. campuses.

The ethic of critique is similar to critical orientation in the EIHE social cartography.  Participants in this study expressed concern over limiting the recruitment of students to countries where they can afford tuition.  Nevertheless, recruiters' primary responsibility is first and foremost to their institution and, at public universities, to the taxpayer.  In effect, participants' work precludes them from elevating this concern into the realm of action.  Critical ethicists state that "discourse should be a beginning leading to some kind of action – preferably political" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 14).  In this study, international student recruiters did not believe they were in a position to effect a fundamental change that addresses the concerns of many critical scholars.

More frequently, the ethical principles that participants considered applicable to their work were related to care for students and providing a perceived sense of fairness to students when the recruiter identifies as both an educator and a representative of the U.S. higher education system.  These principles are informed by Shapiro and Stefkovich in their notions of the ethic of care and the ethic of the profession and are expanded on below.

**The ethic of care**. Shapiro and Stefkovich emphasize trust, empowerment, and social responsibility within the ethic of care.  As it relates to education, the ethic of care places the student and their needs at the center of decision-making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).  The ethic of care emphasizes the importance of not making students feel like "pawns," or according to participants in this study, as commodities to be bought and sold.  In short, the ethics of care are relational, and participants expressed a strong

desire to engage in honest relationships with students.  One participant in the study, for example, demonstrated an ethic of care when they stated, "I promised myself that when I went into the field of higher education, I would never allow another international student to feel like a dollar sign.  They are important, and they are valued."

Barth (1990, as cited in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) discusses the importance for leaders to develop an understanding of cultures and diversity, "with a special emphasis on learning how to listen, observe, and respond to others" (p. 18).  Similarly, in the study, participants spoke of the importance of understanding what a student is looking for in an educational experience, including the responsibility of the recruiter to ask probing questions to determine the student's motivations.  As international student recruiters are working in an international context with students from diverse backgrounds, they also reported an obligation to research and prepare to work with students from different cultural backgrounds.  This obligation was reflected in the principle "ethical frameworks are culturally informed," heeding Barth's call for leaders to employ an ethic of care to understand specific cultural contexts.

**The ethic of the profession**.  Finally, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) discuss the emergence of the *ethic of the profession* as it relates to educational leadership in the primary and secondary educational contexts.  Although the authors' work was in the field of schools, there are clear alignments with the work conducted by international student recruiters in leadership positions.

As previously discussed, professional organizations in the field of international education offer guidelines and codes of practice.  Yet, these guidelines may be "somewhat removed from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas…educational leaders face" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 21).  This

separation was evidenced by comments from study participants around their usage of professional guidelines such as those from NAFSA and NACAC.  Participants primarily use these resources when encountering an issue, or they are often applied to set up initial enrollment practices and standards.  Still, they are not used as a way of maintaining the principles of their daily work.  While these guidelines may embody "the highest moral ideals of the profession" (Nash, 1996, as cited in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 22), they may not be utilized or even recognized regularly by practitioners.  Thus, Shapiro and Stefkovich recommend a broader paradigm for professional ethics, which is exemplified by the way participants in this study resolve the ethical dilemmas they face in their work.  Their concept of the ethics of the profession as a paradigm is as follows. The ethics of profession

> includes ethical principles and codes of ethics embodied in the justice paradigm, but is much broader, taking into account other paradigms, as well as professional judgment and decision making.  We recognize professional ethics as a dynamic process requiring administrators to develop their own personal and professional codes (p. 22).

This includes giving educational leaders the opportunity, time, and space to develop their own personal and professional code of ethics, based on their own experiences as well as standards of the field.  This understanding was demonstrated by one participant who stated, "it's important to have your own kind of ethical framework and compass" when making decisions that impact the students and institutions they serve.

How personal moral codes intersect with professional practice arose from participant interviews and commentary.  Respondents spoke of "shared ideals" amongst trusted colleagues, the requirement to have "courage in [their] own ethical convictions,"

an "ethical obligation to set the tone and to model for your team and then model externally," and the concept of being able to "rest your head at night" after making an ethically challenging decision.  One respondent stated that "a lot of that [their work] comes from just who I am as an individual.  And how would that have informed my practice with students."  As participants reported on how they draw on ethical guidance in their work, they alluded to practices that were informed by autonomy, relational interactions with students, and open information about the possibilities and limitations of study in the United States.

When describing the difference between personal and professional ethics, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) noted there are four typical "clashes" between and among personal and professional ethics: 1) between an individual's code of ethics and professional code of ethics, 2) within professional code of ethics (if an individual is trained in two or more professions), 3) among educational leaders, and 4) between an individual's code of ethics and practices of the professional community.  However, research participants characterized personal and professional ethics much more fluidly.

Concerning the first intersection and potential site of tension between an individual's code of ethics and the utility of professional guidelines in daily work, one participant stated that professional guidelines authored by professional associations do not "supersede what I could call our own personal moral judgment or just good [common] sense."  Yet these same participants often turned to guidelines when they ran into an issue that they could not resolve on their own.

Similarly, participants did not characterize the differences between personal and professional ethics as a "clash," but as one that was often co-constructed.  One of the principles that guide how participants resolve ethical dilemmas was "consulting with

colleagues you trust and whose character you respect." Only in cases when participants had professional disagreements with colleagues, were "clashes" present. For example, one participant said they "don't bother to share a problem with them [their colleagues] because I know we're coming from different philosophical viewpoints." Two other participants in the study gave examples of witnessing decisions being made by colleagues that went against their personal and professional ethical guidelines and training in the field of international education. In response to this and due to their position and responsibility as a leader, the participant spoke up and took action to change the course of the decision. These examples demonstrate the importance of having ones' own ethical bearing, having an understanding of the best practices of the field, relying on trusted colleagues, and standing up to others when needed as professional ethics.

**Summary**

In summary, this study of ethical dilemmas encountered by, and ethical principles enacted by, international recruiters informed internationalization and ethical leadership theories in several ways. For internationalization theory, there is a strong assumption that international recruiters operate under constant neoliberal pressure to recruit and enroll ever higher numbers of fee-paying international students in U.S. higher education institutions. Participants identified that these pressures indeed exist and that a recruiter is frequently required to work under policies that drive recruitment for economic purposes.

However, the participants of this study attempted to carve out space within such environments that they felt were ethical, primarily focusing on communication and transparency about higher education in the U.S. with prospective students. At times participant actions could be described as "critical," especially as they began to understand and question the neoliberal policies or demands of their home institutions. However,

most recruiters accepted what they understood as a fiduciary responsibility to their home institution and tried to balance this responsibility with accurate communication with recruits.  In many ways, these conversations focused more on the "liberal" aspects of the benefits and drawbacks of holistic education in the U.S., rather than either neoliberal discussions about skills and mobility that could be gained, or critical discussions about the social justice shortcomings of U.S. higher education institutions.

Participants also informed the above-reviewed framing of personal and professional ethics.  Within Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) four paradigms of ethical leadership, participants appeared to rely mainly on the ethics of care and personal ethics when making ethical decisions on a daily basis.  When confronted with challenging scenarios, they more likely relied on trusted colleagues to help resolve issues rather than professional guidelines, though these guidelines were used as reference points when needed.  Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) identified clashes that frequently occur between personal and professional ethical considerations, but participants in this study appeared to view personal and professional ethics as intertwined.  Rather than clashes that occurred between personal and professional ethics, the ethics of recruiters in this study appeared to be driven by personal ethics of care toward students and relational advisement with colleagues.  Clashes only occurred among colleagues who disagreed on approaches, but in such cases, professional ethical guidelines and information were utilized as backstops.

Data from this study indicate that the participants were neither hypercritical of the current higher education environment in the United States (oftentimes understanding the financial circumstances that drive this environment) nor were they uncritical cheerleaders of recruiting students for the sake of institutional profit.  Rather, participants appeared to understand their position in the university and viewed themselves as educators and

communicators with prospective students.  They were aware of the pressures to recruit but also were guided by a self-perceived ethic of care that was exemplified by personal commitments to information sharing and consultation with trusted colleagues.  In this case, participants navigated a contentious higher education environment by developing a set of personal ethics that guided their daily actions.

**Implications for Practice**

International education professionals working in leadership roles in international student recruitment should take time to reflect on their moral framework, as well as on their responsibility to the students they are serving.  While it is important to acknowledge the demanding requirements of the profession, it remains imperative for new entrants and seasoned professions in the field to reflect on or discuss with colleagues the challenges of international student recruitment.  Particularly in times of increased budget pressures from institutions, this can lead to professionals developing a more robust understanding of how other professionals may work through issues they encounter.  This understanding develops informally when recruiters connect on the road or at professional conferences, but if the standard of the field were to encourage these types of conversations, it would create opportunities for reflection.  Data from this study demonstrated how reliant participants were on trusted colleagues to help wade through ethical dilemmas and weigh options for action.  Collegial conversations could be encouraged and facilitated to enable recruiters to build a network of trusted colleges to call on when encountering ethically challenging situations.

The opportunity to develop and reflect on a moral framework should extend beyond leaders working in international student recruitment, as well.  As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, scholars are concerned with the overtly economic drivers for

international student recruitment.  This was also demonstrated through the social

cartographic mapping of ethical dilemmas study participants face and the concerns that a

neoliberal orientation frequently drives the student recruitment process.  This study

confirms that while the professionals "on the ground" are thinking about the student's

interests first and foremost, HEIs still fall within the "dominant global imaginary" (Stein

& Andreotti, 2017), a predominantly neoliberal context.  The dominant global imaginary

serves as a mediating factor that influences the way international student recruiters make

decisions and navigate their work.  At the end of the day, an institution must maintain a

consistent budget, and present finance models require a degree of dependency on

international student enrollment. Participants reported that such circumstances often

mean that international students are framed in terms of numeric targets, not individual

students.

As someone who has worked in the field of international education, and after

discussion with study participants during the interview portion of this study, I see value

in presenting both the ethical dilemmas and the principles that arose from the Delphi and

interview portions of the study to educators and decision-makers who work in

international student recruitment.  While recruiters might not employ all principles

outlined in Chapter 4, being aware of their availability for an ethical toolkit is valuable.

This awareness is echoed in participant responses to the last question I asked during the

interview portion, "If there were one or two things recruiters should know related to

ethics, what would they be?"  Respondents stated that recruiters should find colleagues

"who you can and do trust and respect," that "if you're ever posed with an ethical

dilemma or just something that doesn't feel quite right, you really need to talk about that

with someone who you can trust," that the "mentality of service is more important than

organizational goals" and "focusing on helping people out is a more valuable or more important measure of our success than just getting bodies in."  As one participant summarized, "I would want them [recruiters] to realize…the decisions they're making are wrapped up in ethics."

Though I worked in international student recruitment for over eight years, it took some time for me to embody this last point: that the decisions I made related to how our institution was portrayed to students, and decisions administrators made related to recruitment, were intertwined with ethics.  I discussed my desire to act as a reflective practitioner in Chapter 1, along with my goal to give participants in this study the opportunity to reflect on their practices.  During the course of writing this dissertation, I changed positions and was no longer working as an international student recruitment professional.  However, after engaging in conversations with active professionals, I was encouraged by the findings of this study.  Participants demonstrated that they were concerned around the financially motivated underpinnings of international student recruitment, and that they strove to enact ethics where they were able, in alignment with my own concerns and actions.

As an international recruiter at an institution that began engaging in international student recruitment for the primary reason of increased revenue, I understood that my job, and the recruitment of international students, was almost purely financially motivated.  Although we welcomed students through grant and scholarship programs such as the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program and the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, our target countries for recruitment were identified by the likelihood of recruiting international students that could afford our out-of-state tuition.  While we put in place services to support our increasing body of international students, staffing and

resources went primarily in the direction of recruitment.  The care and consideration of the international student were not at the forefront of decision-making around budget and resources.

For a brief period, I served as both an international student advisor as well as an international student recruiter.  I was able to support and form friendships with the international students I recruited to campus.  I saw their challenges and successes first-hand.  I saw what a life-changing decision studying in the U.S. was for many students.  I thought about the cultural adaptation they were undergoing, and I thought about how they viewed a U.S. education as a pathway to success in their futures.  I thought about the quality of the education we were offering and wondered if it would genuinely positively impact their lives once they returned home.  I thought about the fact that many of them would be forced to return home due to immigration regulations, despite their desire to remain in the U.S. for future employment and experience.

My outlook and experiences were uniquely situated in a public institution in the U.S., and at an institution that, while it had many strengths, could also be compared in terms of finances and academics to many other institutions in the U.S.  As I gained more experience in the field and in my position, and since conducting this study, I believe that international educators must do what they can to operate in a way that is ethically responsible, at a minimum in areas that they can control.

At the time of writing, we are currently in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and most, if not all, international recruitment and exchange have ceased.  U.S. institutions are grappling with the financial implications of severe decreases in international and domestic student enrollment.  These decreases impact not only tuition, but living expenses, dining, and international student spending beyond tuition in the local

community as well.  I began this study during a downturn in international student

enrollment in the U.S. and identified this moment in time as an opportunity to engage in

reflection and adjustment of recruitment practices to steer institutions toward ethical

benchmarks.  Now, more than ever, will be a critical opportunity for universities as they

begin to reimagine and recalibrate their recruitment practices.  Unsurprisingly, a shift

away from finances has not yet occurred, as recent recommendations for virtual fairs and

digital recruitment activities are being offered by private educational companies,

representing a continuing focus on the economic aspect of internationalization.

As the pandemic is worldwide, universities in the U.S. can only exert a minimal

degree of control over international student mobility in the coming months and years.

The public health responses and travel restrictions in other countries are out of U.S.

institutions' hands.  Western countries have begun looking to their own governments for

financial support, projecting losses in the range of billions of dollars.  These are the very

governments that were responsible for reducing funding to public universities, leading

them to seek international student tuition dollars.  Following an even more severe decline

in revenue, the increased financial pressures may result in a distinct shift away from

ethical considerations that could hamper the successful recruitment of full fee-paying

international students.  Or, perhaps more hopefully, the fundamental structure of the

Western neoliberal university could be called into question.  The COVID-19 pandemic

brings into sharp focus the intertwined nature of international student recruitment, higher

education, and global economics and politics.  Acknowledging this interconnectedness,

new models of cooperation and collaboration could develop between institutions, hybrid

models of education could be adapted, and the student experience could be placed at the

forefront.  The very business model that many U.S. HEIs operate under may completely

shift, opening up opportunities for the role of internationalization within higher education.  At the very least, recruitment practices must change to adapt to the new realities of a post-COVID-19 higher education landscape.  I am hopeful they will adapt to include more ethical considerations.

To this end, while participants in this study were employed at public institutions in the United States, it would be beneficial for recruitment professionals from a wide variety of institutional contexts to consider the ethical dilemmas they encounter and how these might change with increased pressures to recruit to make up lost revenue. Recommendations for further studies are informed by these considerations in addition to the importance for practitioners to reflect on their personal and professional ethical framework as they move into the "new normal."

**Recommendations for Further Study**

I chose to conduct this study on ethics in international student recruitment in the context of public U.S. institutions due to a dearth of research on international education practitioners as well as on ethical internationalization in the U.S.  However, some participants of the study remarked that it would be beneficial to undertake a comparative study between the different institution and program types, such as private for- and non-profit institutions, pathway programs, English as a second language programs, etc.  I was interested in studying public institutions due to the historical changes in governmental and state funding and support.  I was particularly interested in how that funding and support, or lack thereof, intersects with a focus on international student recruitment to fill budget gaps.  My study sought to investigate institutions where there exists a fee differential between domestic and international students.  This representation is often compared to domestic in-state versus domestic out-of-state because out-of-state students

may pay the same fee as international students.  However, I argue that the distinction between domestic and international is important, given that international students are unable to access federal funding.

Conducting a similar study among recruitment professionals who work in pathway programs may lead to worthwhile insights.  These programs are increasing in popularity in higher education institutions, and in some cases, have replaced the English language preparation and first-year experience of international students at institutions in the United States.  Pathway programs are used as feeder mechanisms that funnel students into academic programs and tuition into universities.  Understanding the motivations of administrators at institutions who choose to work with pathway programs or open a pathway program on their campus may reveal a more neoliberal orientation than the recruitment professionals in this study.

Moving beyond U.S. borders, conducting additional research on how ethics intersects with international student recruitment in other Western countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, could serve to further flesh out the ethical principles identified in this dissertation.  Mapping how recruitment professionals in other countries identify ethics could generate a more nuanced understanding of overall ethical dilemmas and practices within Western higher education. In Australia, for example, national codes that regulate recruitment and the use of recruitment agencies exist to ensure international students have some protection from financial exploitation, though international students continue to be a source of revenue for many institutions.  Additionally, understanding how international students perceive their role within international student recruitment to the U.S. could provide valuable insights that are more in line with radical critiques of internationalization, discussed

earlier.  Giving voice to those who are potentially oppressed by internationalization systems and uncovering areas that international students perceive as ethical dilemmas could create opportunities for conversation and reflection and chart new territories for internationalization practices going forward.

Conducting this same study following the COVID-19 pandemic would be incredibly valuable as well, to understand how the role of ethics in student recruitment is affected by the extreme and debilitating financial situations at many institutions. Recruitment methods will inevitably shift to more virtual models, and motivations and considerations for selecting recruitment methods may be driven to a much higher extent by budget and ROI.  New ethical dilemmas may arise and new ethical principles may be enacted to address them.

U.S. and Western higher education are on the precipice of a drastic shift of the role of universities in the global economy.  Although there has always existed a possibility of incorporating ethics into international recruitment practices, this study has identified approaches and framings of ethics that may be most useful to recruiters.  As the dynamics of higher education and mobility continue to change, international education practitioners, thinking carefully about their ethical responsibilities and obligations, could serve as facilitators of this shift at their institutions.  In the end, calling for international educators to consider and reflect on their personal ethical framework, and how this intersects with best practices and guidelines in the field of international education, can ultimately serve as a mechanism through which to imagine new possibilities in international student recruitment.

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## Appendix 1 – Research Protocol

I sought to invite 20-30 international education practitioners to participate in the study.  Participants were recruited through NAFSA network message board, relevant Facebook groups, study state consortia listservs, and the AIRC listserv.

Potential participants were asked the following questions to identify if they met the criteria for participation in the study.

1.  Do you work at a public institution of higher education in the U.S.?

2.  Have you worked in the field of international education for more than 5 years?

3.  Do you have responsibility for international student recruitment in your purview?

4.  Have you been actively recruiting international students for over 3 years?

If the participants answered yes to the above questions, I shared the timeline, protocol, and purpose of the study.  I informed them that they would remain anonymous to each other throughout the Delphi study, but that they could choose to share their identity at the end.  Institution information was be generalized to aid in confidentiality.

**Survey**

The following questions were asked of participants in the Delphi study for Round 1:

1.  What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international students?

2.  What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?

3.  What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?

4.  When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?

5. Are you aware of, or do you follow any professional guidelines related to international student recruitment?  If yes, please explain.

Round 2 of the Delphi study reflected the data collected in the first round and include a 4-point Likert-type scale for categories under each question, below, to rank responses.  Participants were able to provide commentary on responses as well.

1. What strategies and activities do you use to recruit international students?

   - 1 = not frequently used; 4 = frequently used

2. What considerations do you take into account when selecting recruitment methods?

   - 1 = idealistic/difficult to implement; 4 = realistic/implementable

3. What ethical dilemmas (if any) do you face in your work?

   - 1 = not often faced; 4 = frequently faced

4. When encountering ethical dilemmas, what principles do you use to resolve these dilemmas?

   - 1 = idealistic/difficult to implement; 4 = realistic/implementable

Round 3 presented the data from Round 2 ranked, and provided an opportunity for participants to make edits to the ranking.  If participants made edits, they were asked why the edits were made.

**Appendix 2 – Recruitment Email/Post**

Hello!

My name is Emily Kirsch, and I am conducting a study on ethical international student recruitment for my dissertation research at the University of Minnesota, in the Leadership for Intercultural & International Education PhD program.  I'm seeking experts in the field of international education and, in particular, international student recruitment to participate in the study.  The goal of the study is to create best practices and a framework for ethical international student recruitment.

If you:

- Work at a public institution of higher education in the U.S.;

- Have worked in the field of international education for more than 5 years;

- Have responsibility for international student recruitment in your purview; and

- Have been actively recruiting international students for over 3 years

you qualify to participate in this study.

The study will have three rounds: the first will ask for your detailed responses to open-ended questions about international student recruitment and your work; the second will be a summary of all participant responses and allow for your commentary, and the third round will involve ranking responses and determining consensus.  You will remain anonymous to all participants (beside myself) and any identifying remarks will be anonymized.

In-depth, detailed responses from experts in the field are key for my study, and I know this is a big ask alongside how busy you are in your professional lives.  I

understand how valuable your time is, so I'll send a $5 Amazon gift certificate after each round to thank you for participating.

Please click here to access the survey.  The deadline to submit responses for Round 1 is September 27th.

Thank you!

Emily Kirsch

kirsc090@umn.edu

Doctoral candidate, Ph.D. in Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development

Comparative and International Development track

Leadership for Intercultural and International Education cohort

## Appendix 3 – Informed Consent

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH**

**Ethical Possibilities in International Student Recruitment**

You are invited to be in a research study on international student recruitment practices at U.S. public higher education institutions. You were selected as a possible participant because you clicked on the survey link.  We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Emily Kirsch, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership for International & Intercultural Education in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

The methodology for this study is the Delphi Method.  This method brings identified experts into conversation anonymously to provide consensus on an unexplored topic.  You will remain anonymous to all participants (beside myself) and any identifying remarks will be anonymized.

There are three rounds of the Delphi study, and a final check to confirm the data that I've gathered. You'll get a $5 Amazon gift card for each of the three rounds you respond to, to thank you for your time.  Please provide as much detail and commentary as you are able – the more information you can provide, the more robust the study will be.  I'll also ask if you are interested in being contacted for a follow-up phone or web call to expand on your responses.

This initial survey will ask you to provide detailed responses to open-ended questions about international student recruitment.  The questions will ask you to discuss your international student recruitment strategies, how you select recruitment methods, if you encounter ethical dilemmas in your work, and if you do, how you navigate those.  The initial survey will take 30 minutes to an hour, depending on how much detail you provide (please, provide as much as you are able!)

Following, your responses will be aggregated with other survey respondents for common themes and concepts.  A second survey will be sent out with a summary of participant responses (again, all responses will be anonymous, including your name and any identifying information).  You will then rank and comment on group responses.  This should take 30 minutes to an hour.

Responses will be grouped and sorted according to responses and sent out to participants for a final time. You will rank and have the opportunity to comment on group responses.  This should take 30 minutes to an hour.  Finally, I will send out results to the group for confirmation and verification of findings.  This will take 15-30 minutes.  Depending on data gathered, I will conduct follow-up interviews if needed.  These interviews may take up to one hour.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is: Emily Kirsch, kirsc090@umn.edu. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact their advisor, Christopher Johnstone, +1-612-625-2505, john4810@umn.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or go to https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

*You can print a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

○ I consent to participate in this study.
○ I do not consent to participate in this study.

→

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