



Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitics? The roles of university elites in the internationalisation of Indonesian higher education

Zulfa Sakhiyya

To cite this article: Zulfa Sakhiyya (2022): Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitics? The roles of university elites in the internationalisation of Indonesian higher education, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, DOI: [10.1080/14767724.2022.2115339](https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2022.2115339)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2022.2115339>



Published online: 23 Aug 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitics? The roles of university elites in the internationalisation of Indonesian higher education

Zulfa Sakhiyya 

Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This article examines the roles of university elites in enhancing internationalisation agenda in Indonesian higher education. This is done by exploring the relationship between internationalisation and cosmopolitanism. Drawing from two stages of field studies of the internationalisation of Indonesian universities, interviews with key correspondents in the sector, and an analysis of related documents, I argue that there is a tension between the way the university elites see themselves as the agents of cosmopolitan culture and the way they are positioned as intermediaries of global interest and agenda. Cosmopolitan culture that appears to be symbolic, universal, and democratic as represented by the university elites belies the instrumental purpose of internationalisation that yokes higher education into the global marketplace. A shift from mere cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitics would equip the university elites with the analytical tools of global geopolitics regarding the internationalisation of higher education.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 November 2021
Accepted 17 August 2022

KEYWORDS

University elites;
internationalisation; higher
education; cosmopolitanism;
cosmopolitics; Indonesia

Introduction

Internationalisation of higher education has been the subject of much criticism, yet it is the most influential reform in the higher education field (Altbach and Knight 2007; Huang, Crăciun, and de Wit 2022; Knight 2013; Rumbley, Altbach, and Reisberg 2015). From universities in the Global South aspiring to become ‘world class’ universities, to Western ivy league universities seeking to maintain and enhance their relative positioning in the global university ranking (Lim 2018; Tadaki and Tremewan 2013). Internationalisation is often translated into student and staff mobility, collaborative research, joint degree, and other collaborative ventures (Knight 2012). It has been assumed to be progressive, positive, and has been presented as part of the solution for modern higher education given the shrinking state budget (Altbach and Knight 2007; Tran and Marginson 2018).

Hiding behind the notion of global citizenship and international collaboration, many programmes are, in practice, narrowly instrumental and economic in their structure and function (Tadaki and Tremewan 2013). Furthermore, Kehm and Teichler have cautioned that internationalisation ‘tends to be treated as a highly normative topic with strong political undercurrents’ (2007, 262). This normalisation of global competition and ranking neglects the fact that ‘global competition is not a level playing field where each university has an equal opportunity to win’ (Marginson and Sawir 2006, 349). The unequal relation amongst nation-states and universities is one critical sign that internationalisation has posed a problem in higher education. This unequal relationship is rooted in the geopolitical landscape of nation-states which impacts on the global competitiveness

of its universities. For example, American universities have a dominant position that comes from American power as a global hegemon, public and private investment in the higher education sector, as well as the global role of English in the academic world (Marginson 2008).

Equally important, Knight (2013) has noticed the tendency to commodify education through the internationalisation processes. Sakhiyya and Rata (2019) observe this commodification of knowledge through internationalisation and encapsulate the shift of knowledge from 'priceless to priced'. Brewer and Leask (2012) critique the increased hegemony of Western knowledge and values within internationalisation processes. In addition, Singh (2010) and Sakhiyya (2011) have noted the uncritical importation of internationalisation from developed to developing countries. Internationalisation also plays a role in the brain drain of the home countries (Marginson 2008; Tikly 2001; Yang and Huang 2002). The practice of world ranking used to justify internationalisation perpetuates the 'ranking race' (Lim 2018; Morrissey 2015; Ordorika and Lloyd 2015). This strengthens the idea that ranking has become an end in itself, rather than a contributor to developing global capacity in knowledge building and exchange.

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted these internationalisation processes. More importantly, it has shown that the market orientation that has defined university's internationalisation is frail and unsustainable. Loss of international student revenue due to strict mobility and international traffic restrictions have posed an unprecedented crisis and increased precarity (Jayasuriya 2021). Perrotta (2021) argues that the pandemic has redefined what counts as mobility since virtual mobility of students and staff has changed the previous physical mobility. Virtual mobility and online education are considered to be an option that is relatively cheaper, inclusive, and sustainable (Yang and Huang 2021).

Internationalisation of higher education, therefore, needs to be redefined and reimagined as the neoliberal structure has proven to be unsustainable. Thanks to the pandemic, it has opened a transformative potential to the internationalisation processes that can turn crisis into opportunities (Yang and Huang 2021). However, it is not enough to consider processes alone as though they exist by themselves without any agency. More specifically, key actors that envision and run the university reforms are rarely addressed in the internationalisation processes of higher education, especially the role of university elites in mediating the local-global interplay: the elites with cosmopolitan culture and disposition.

To explore the relationship between internationalisation and cosmopolitanism, this paper begins with the landscape of Indonesian internationalisation of higher education and contemporary reforms. Despite the wealth of scholarship exploring internationalisation as an institutional priority, the transformative potential, and the politics of university elite as key actors capable of reframing internationalisation agenda has been under-researched. The second section highlights the roles of the university elites with their internationalisation vision and cosmopolitan disposition. In the methodology section, I explain the data collection process and thematic analysis in approaching the data. The emerging themes are then explained in the discussion section by problematising the tension between the university elite's cosmopolitan disposition with their position as the intermediaries of global agenda through university internationalisation. This is the point where cosmopolitanism cannot address the need to understand the unequal landscape of university internationalisation. This paper proposes the importance of cosmopolitics to equip the university elite with the analytical tools of global geopolitics regarding the internationalisation of higher education.

The Indonesian internationalisation of higher education

Indonesia is not an exception to the internationalisation trend and processes. Recent decades have witnessed new reform agendas in Indonesia, and internationalisation has become one of the main constitutive features for the reconfiguration of contemporary Indonesian higher education (Sakhiyya and Rata 2019). It is embedded in institutional and national value systems in the

forms of vision, mission and strategic planning of the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as universities. Its associated terms in the policy documents and discourses are, to name a few, ‘world class universities’, ‘international recognition’, and ‘global outlook’.

The government, in this case, the regulatory body for Indonesia’s higher education, the Ministry of Education and Culture, regularly holds national meetings to assemble university leaders to ensure that internationalisation is ongoing. Therefore, although there is no written central government policy on internationalisation (Sakhiyya 2021), the national meetings exert a sense of peer pressure amongst university leaders about their institutional vision. The peer pressure within a discursive environment has effectively created a culture of conformity to reform universities’ orientation and movement.

In the name of internationalisation, the ‘price’ of knowledge as indicated by soaring university tuition demonstrates the ways in which the Indonesian universities have been behaving increasingly as businesses with all the accompanying discourse of ‘management’, ‘accountability’, and ‘performance’ (Sakhiyya and Rata 2019). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2017), due to the increase of college tuition fees, education has the highest inflation rate in Indonesia which reaches 0.52%. Universities could now engage in business research and training and other income-generating activities, and were allowed to increase tuition fees and student intake, which in turn led to an increase in tuition revenue (Rakhmani 2019). Budget allocation for the higher education sector is increased from 40.3 trillion in 2018 to 41.2 trillion in 2019 to boost research productivity and to carry out go-international programmes such as campus cooperation, postgraduate scholarship abroad, as well as staff and student mobility programmes. Internationalisation has changed the overall landscape of university given the changing nature of teaching and research which was previously embedded in the notions of democratic, cultural, and moral values to corporate ethos, such as efficiency, competitiveness, effectiveness, and individualism.

The pressure on local academics to publish in international reputable journals as one key performance indicator for promotion and doctoral degree main requirement is for the university and nation to be recognised as a ‘player’ in the market (Sakhiyya and Rata 2019). There has also been a changing compass in quality assurance as universities race to be internationally accredited, rather than just passing the national accreditation. While the international accreditation may serve as part of the university marketing strategy, the budget allocated for the international accreditation is large. It is, therefore, not an overstatement if Royono and Rahwidiati comment on this phenomenon: ‘Ask the managers of any university in Indonesia about their vision for their institution and an almost automatic response would be to become a world-class university’ (2013, 180).

University elites: internationalisation vision and cosmopolitan disposition

This article focuses on the agency that acts within the structure of Indonesian higher education. Structures can be constraining, but they are not the only determinants. It is the agents that make choices and decisions that can shape and reshape higher education structures and policies (Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Tadaki and Tremewan 2013). Marginson and Rhoades define agency as ‘the ability of people individually and collectively to take action (*exercise agency*), at the global, national, and local levels’ (2002, 289) (*italics added*).

This paper re-inserts the issue of class to the higher education literature to demonstrate how cosmopolitanism works and is promoted globally through seemingly neutral and beneficial internationalisation discourses. I argue that there is a tension between the way the local agents see themselves as the actors of cosmopolitan culture and the way they are actually positioned as intermediaries of global interest and agenda. Cosmopolitan culture that appears to be symbolic, universal and democratic as represented by the university elites belies the instrumental purpose of internationalisation that yokes higher education into the global marketplace. Not only does this serve capitalism but also class reproduction within the Indonesian context.

In the Indonesian context, it is the university elite, i.e. the university administrators and higher education technocrats at the Ministry of Education and Culture who play significant roles in translating global forces and re-shaping global discourses (in this case, internationalisation), as well as influencing national policies and institutional practices. This focus on human agency is significant in understanding the roles of the local agents in mediating the local-global interplay which renders internationalisation agenda up and running in Indonesian higher education. The distinctive cosmopolitan nature of the university elite which is ascribed and described by internationalisation discourses can be subsumed under the notion of ‘cosmopolitanism’. Cosmopolitanism itself entails active agency which denotes ‘a capacity both to make and pursue [internationalisation] claims and to have such claims made and pursued in relation to oneself’ (Held 2010, 70).

The university elite represents themselves as agents of a culture that appears benign, universal, democratic and symbolic. This is a culture in which anyone can be included. However, they are actually representatives or agents of the global market. They might think they are representing a universal cosmopolitan culture, but in fact they are representing global interests. My interviews and observations reveal that they show little insight into this.

It is in this contradiction where the fracture of cosmopolitanism lies. The fracture allows the dominance of market discourses to ‘slip through’. The political economic reality of internationalisation, which is largely market-oriented, positions the elites as the agents of global market and interests. This fracture is unfortunately loaded with the economic dominance of internationalisation. Here the elites become the agents of global processes, and in order to be the agents they need to have particular cultural dispositions. There is a tension of internationalisation as experienced by the agents – the elites might think that they are representing cosmopolitan culture, but in fact they are representing global interests. This tension runs the danger of treating internationalisation as largely a matter of instrumental economic affairs dominating over global partnership for academic excellence and intellectual engagement.

There is no linear correspondence between agential cosmopolitanism and internationalisation. In other words, internationalisation does not automatically initiate global consciousness and cosmopolitanism, but it does have a potential to produce cosmopolitan individuals (Matthews and Sidhu 2005). Internationalisation does promote and provide mobility for the actors, but it does not guarantee that the mobility will provide them with the awareness to negotiate different values and the global geopolitics. According to Tadaki and Tremewan (2013), actors involved in internationalisation need to have the political awareness of the importance of negotiating and establishing values of institutional relationships in the international network, as well as when enacting internationalisation strategies in their universities. This means that there is a blind spot in cosmopolitanism that it treats internationalisation only as a cultural matter, while neglecting the fact that it is a political-economic dealing (Kehm and Teichler 2007).

Harvey (2000) sharply critiques the exclusive meaning of cosmopolitanism and believes that it is not enough. In the higher education sector, cosmopolitan theories reduce the meaning of internationalisation into the realm of culture, worldview, and horizon wider than that of a nation-state (Latour 2004). Cosmopolitanism neglects the political economic reality of internationalisation of higher education, and thus blurring the boundaries between the symbolic and the economic instrumental sphere. My research shows that the cultural cosmopolitan disposition the university elites acquire does not necessarily equip them with the analytical tools of the global agenda of internationalisation. Consequently, the local agents become unaware that they are actually representatives of the global market.

Harvey (2000) and Latour (2004) propose a new intellectual terrain that shifts from merely the cultural realm of cosmopolitanism into ‘cosmopolitics’. It is an apposite term for cosmopolitanism.

The presence of *cosmos* in *cosmopolitics* resists the tendency of *politics* to mean the give-and-take in an exclusive human club. The presence of *politics* in *cosmopolitics* resists the tendency of *cosmos* to mean a finite list of entities that must be taken into account. *Cosmos* protects against the premature closure of *politics*, and *politics*

against the premature closure of *cosmos* ... Cosmopolitanism was a proof of tolerance; cosmopolitics ... is a cure of the malady of tolerance (Latour 2004, 454)

Although being cosmopolitan is a new ascribed identity acquired from the internationalisation process, a shift to cosmopolitics would enable these local actors to negotiate the push and pull between global pressures and local needs. This includes equipping the agents with analytical tools of international agenda through the internationalisation of higher education, and how the process positions them as the agents of global interests. Tadaki and Tremewan (2013) propose that ‘what is needed to proceed is a vision of solidarity that emerges from and is consistent with the practices that actually compose internationalisation projects, critically reflective of these politics in the making.’ (2013, 375).

Research methods

The data used in this paper are drawn from two case studies: a two-year field study (2015–2017) and a more recent study (2020–2021) of the internationalisation of Indonesian universities, interviews with key correspondents in the sector, and an analysis of related documents. For ethical purposes, I do not name the institutions, nor do I name the participants. I refer to them according to their position and institutional type to maintain at least a degree of confidentiality.

The account of the roles of the university elite is mainly drawn from the first fieldwork I undertook for this study in 2015–2017 at three universities in Indonesia. The three universities are representative of the top three clusters categorised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. I named them according to this clustering. They are category one (C1), category two (C2), and category three (C3).

The C1 University included in my study was established post-independence. It is one of the oldest and largest public higher education institutions in the country catering for around 50,000 students. It is ranked in the first category by the Ministry due to its high-profile research capacity. In terms of internationalisation, the C1 University was one of the founders of ASEAN University Network and is actively involved in the network’s development. The C2 University is a state university and was previously a teacher training college established in 1965. In 2000, it was given a wider mandate to develop a stronger research capacity. With this added research component, it was upgraded to be a state university. Compared to the C1 University, the C2 University is relatively smaller, having a student cohort of around 35,000 and a mixed orientation of research and teaching. The C3 University is a private university established in 1982 as a private teaching medical school. It was promoted to be a private university in 1999 but undertakes only a very small amount of research. It has around 20,000 students.

Those three universities have embedded internationalisation in the university vision. For example, the vision of the C1 university is ‘to be an excellent and innovative world class university’ (interview with the Rector of the C1 University, also noted from the university’s policy document). The Rector of the C2 University envisions the university ‘to be a conservation university with an international recognition’ (interview with the Rector of the C2 University, also noted from the university’s policy document). The C3 University also shares the same vision. The Rector states that the university aims ‘to be an outstanding university on the basis of technology with a global outlook’ (interview with the Rector of the C3 University, also noted from the university’s policy document). These universities set up international offices to execute their internationalisation programmes as a commitment to internationalisation.

I interviewed and observed these elites in conjunction with their roles and responsibilities pertaining to internationalisation as Rectors, Deans, Heads of International Office in three universities, and the Head of Partnership at the Ministry of Education and Culture. Their job descriptions pertaining to internationalisation are, to name a few, planning internationalisation policies, promoting global engagement, advancing international partnership, designing internationalisation programmes, coordinating, and facilitating staff/student mobility.

In addition to the first fieldwork, I also sought how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted this process through a more recent study I carried out during 2020-2021. I interviewed university managers and Heads of International Office to find out any changes in their internationalisation framework and programmes during the pandemic.

I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis technique to identify and analyse patterns or themes emerging in the data after transcribing and coding all interviews. Guided by the research question, in these analytical processes, I focused on my respondents' roles as university leaders and administrators in enhancing the university's internationalisation agenda.

Research findings

My focus on the university elites and their institutions provides a grounded micro-context to investigate the tension of internationalisation and cosmopolitanism as experienced by the university elites. The depiction of the elites' cosmopolitan nature is drawn from interviews, observations, and other supporting data such as the university's policies and other documents. The data suggests that the university elites possess and display key cosmopolitan capitals: English proficiency, mobility, global network, and cultural reflexivity. These are the capitals that are not typically owned by ordinary academics especially in the Global South. These capitals, which they possess and develop, enable them to operate within two different cultures and function as the mediators of global forces upon the local context. Significantly, in the higher education sector, they are the product of higher education itself, a fact that places this institution into the very fabric of the class construction. Key cosmopolitan capitals are discussed further as follows.

English proficiency

English is a core cosmopolitan capital, and in Indonesia, it is still considered as a foreign language (Sakhiyya and Hapsari 2021). Although English is increasingly used as the medium of instruction in international programmes at some universities, the language is mainly spoken at schools as a compulsory subject, and in the offices of international government organisations, and international companies only. The rest of the Indonesian population speaks the national and regional languages (Sakhiyya and Martin-Anatias 2020). It is not surprising when Lamb and Coleman claim that 'English has gained its present authority and prestige in Indonesian society; it has become essential cultural capital for an information-driven global world' (2008, 192).

The postcolonial context of Indonesia amplifies the symbolic power of the English language (Tanu 2014). The vast economic inequality between the majority of Indonesians who speak regional and/or national languages and the minority with command of English reinforces the high status of English. Due to its high standing, English has become a marker of one's position in the society and in the workplace.

The role of English as an international language and its function as a social marker of privilege has created an association between English with cosmopolitanism. Tanu (2014) even argues that proficiency in English, preferably with native-speaker fluency and the 'right' accent, indicates intelligence and being part of the global citizen, as the language is one important cosmopolitan cultural capital. Command of English marks the speaker as elite. The university elites need to demonstrate this linguistic competence so that their high status is reinforced.

As an illustration, when I asked the Rector of the C2 University about the new Dean of the most internationalised faculty, the Rector commented on this person's attributes, and why the Dean deserves the position. It is mainly because of the new Dean's English proficiency, commitment to knowledge, and international network that accorded the person a structural position in the internationalisation-driven university.

First, because the new Dean speaks English very well. Secondly, the person has a bold commitment to knowledge and scholarship. Thirdly, habitat recognition. We can be a centre of excellence if we have an international community that recognises us. She is internationally recognised and affiliated to international professional associations. (Interview with the Rector of the C2 University) (my translation)

English proficiency has become the first requirement for the Dean to lead the most internationalised faculty. The other capitals, such as commitment to knowledge and networks, come after English. This illustrates the prominence of English as not only an international language, but also as a marker of privilege. The power of English and the prestige attached to it demonstrates that the Dean is skilful at engaging with other global citizens, being globally oriented, and attuned to the contemporary global realities.

Mobility

Other than English proficiency, the exclusive cosmopolitan disposition enjoyed by the university elites as part of their role in local-global mediation is mobility. Mobility is prompted not only by the increasingly global and contingent nature of economic and political systems, vis-à-vis the internationalisation of higher education, but also by the ‘social imaginaries’ of the elite (Rizvi 2009). Brooks and Waters (2011) argue that mobility and spatial movement plays its important roles in constructing cosmopolitan identities. Calhoun even refers to cosmopolitanism as ‘the class consciousness of frequent travellers’ (2002, 869). This means that the internationalisation of higher education provides the opportunity for the elites across national borders to travel overseas with an aim to expand the institution’s global network.

Because of this expectation, the university elites distinguish themselves and are distinguished by other ordinary academics as possessing cosmopolitan capitals and thus playing significant roles in global engagement. Ordinary academics do travel and thus have a certain degree of mobility, but it is for knowledge pursuit *an sich*, such as international conferences and workshops. Whereas the mobility of the university elites is aimed at expanding the global network of the institution. In addition, as mobility is part of the job of this elite class, it is usually state funded. The Head of the International Office at the C2 University spoke of the complexity and negative images associated with using the state budget for international travel as ‘it is still considered to be a luxurious stuff and leisure’.

The main problem with outgoing mobility deals with the image of travel itself. First is the finance issue. We all know that it is expensive to travel abroad. The second one deals with the exit permit or administrative issue. This is because when a civil servant goes abroad and it is funded by the State Budget, we need to get the exit permit from the Ministry of State Secretariat. The bureaucracy is complex and long. The third one deals with the image. Overseas travel is still considered to be luxurious stuff and leisure. So, whoever travels abroad, either the university administrators or the members of the parliament, there will be a question: ‘Why should travel abroad?’ The question appears because they use the state budget. Consequently, the direct and indirect image is negative. (Interview with the Head of the International Office at the C2 University) (my translation)

The negative image of the actors’ mobility might also be because of its ‘exclusive nature’ as it is not available for other ordinary academics. Contextualising Friedman and Friedman’s (2008, 8) argument that ‘globalizing visions are based exclusively on the experiences of the [university elite] academics’ in Indonesian higher education sector is partly a result of the exclusive nature of mobility. This suggests that although cosmopolitan culture might appear inclusive and democratic, it only includes the elites and excludes the rest.

However, the pandemic has re-defined mobility and demystified its exclusive nature into virtual mobility which is more accessible and cheaper. My interview with the Dean of C2 University provides an insight into this. The Dean made it clear that:

The pandemic has made mobility easier and cheaper, but it feels dry and tasteless. After almost two years of adapting with virtual communication, we have become comfortable with online meetings. But something is

missing with meeting on screen only, at least to me. Internationalisation takes a long road that should be sustainable. To sustain that relationship, we need to build strong friendships. Online meetings cannot fully accommodate to build this social bond. (Interview with the Dean at the C2 University) (my translation)

Before, during or after the pandemic, internationalisation may promote and provide mobility, but it does not guarantee that the mobility will provide them with the awareness to negotiate different values and to negotiate more equal global geopolitics. In other words, while internationalisation could potentially produce individuals with cultural cosmopolitan identity and capitals, it does not automatically initiate global consciousness and global geopolitics regarding the internationalisation of higher education. In Matthews and Sidhu's statement, 'cosmopolitanism and global consciousness are a source of optimistic inspiration, but they are not automatically initiated by processes of internationalisation and globalisation' (2005, 49–50). Mastering an international language and being globally mobile do not suffice.

Global network

Global networks are also a key component of cosmopolitan capitals. The university elites expand their global network through many international consortia. According to Tadaki and Tremewan (2013), international consortia are the networks where local actors of internationalisation meet and connect to establish values and international institutional relationships. In other words, it is the space where the mediation of local and global interplay occurs.

There are various kinds of international consortia usually organised according to geographical area. These include the European University Association, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, and the ASEAN Universities Network. There are also other consortia which are based on interest, such as the Worldwide Universities Network. These are the sites where internationalisation agendas are established and negotiated by the university elites. One consortium that my research participants often refer to as their international consortium is the ASEAN Universities Network (AUN). This regional consortium is geographically the closest one as Indonesia is a member of ASEAN, and thus AUN. It has become 'the prime mover and strategic alliance for the advancement of higher education in ASEAN' (AUN 2017, 6). Several Indonesian C1 universities are the founders and members of the AUN Board of Trustees, including the one under my study. It has gained currency among Indonesian universities in the way that it pushes the regionalisation agenda of higher education in the ASEAN region. For instance, it sets the regional Quality Assurance on top of the national one and establishes a regional credit transfer system among its members.

My interview with the Secretary of the International Office at the C3 university illustrates the importance of the global network. He commented on the international network and nimble networking skill of the Head of the International Office in his institution as a reason he joined the office.

I started to be actively involved in internationalisation programmes when our Head of International Office returned from Norway. In 2014, he completed his PhD in Norway where he established several international networks. He moved fast to benchmark with other universities and invited speakers/resources from the university where he studied. (Interview with the Secretary of the International Office at the C3 University) (my translation)

The interview shows that the global network of the Head of the International Office is partly obtained from his PhD study in Norway. The person acquires key cosmopolitan capitals: knowledge advancement, confidence in engaging in the globalising social arena, foreign language proficiency, and international network. In all university categories (C1, C2 and C3), cosmopolitan capitals are evident in the dispositions of the university elites' (i.e. language proficiency and networking skills) and are central to their positions. However, it is through this site of global interaction that the cosmopolitan nature and the local identity is reinforced as one of the elites.

Global outlook

Friedman and Friedman's statement that 'the globalizing visions are based exclusively on the experiences of the [university elite] academics' is vividly reflected during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on best practice sharing of internationalisation I observed in the C2 University on the 9th of August 2016. The invited speaker, the Head of International Office of a university belonged to the first category, shared his internationalisation strategy, and explained why it was considered successful. The discussion unfolding in the forum suggested the university administrators' biggest challenge was: how to make people also 'see' and share the vision of internationalisation. The speaker emphasised the importance of communicating internationalisation vision to the whole university members and society. To enable institutional change and realise the globalising vision, the speaker recommended a popular book entitled 'Our Iceberg is Melting' (Kotter, Kotter, and Rathgeber 2006) to the university administrators. The book addresses this central issue of how to enable the whole society to 'see' the vision of the top leadership through a fable. According to the FGD speaker, the fable about the penguin captured the problem of internationalisation in Indonesian higher education. This problem of not seeing the internationalisation vision for the local academics and university administrative staffs means that the 'globalising vision' is only owned by academics with global engagement experiences. Thus, the roles played by the university elites is to localise the global discourses of internationalisation to make it visible for those academics and university workers who are not part of the university leadership elites.

Cultural reflexivity

Another cosmopolitan disposition is cultural reflexivity and a certain 'intellectual grandeur' as a result of high mobility (Roudometof 2005). This cosmopolitan disposition was vividly illustrated in one of my interviews with the Head of the International Office of the C1 University. The person recounts the main message he has just delivered in his speech in welcoming a group of exchange students from the United States of America a couple of hours before the interview. The speech below displays his cosmopolitan qualities: mobility (travelling to the US), English proficiency, cultural reflexivity (a cultural lesson gained from mobility), and intellectual grandeur (excellent oratory skill). The speech also displays his wit and cultural reflexivity in taking popular culture into account (choosing Tom Cruise and Angelina Jolie) to understand a concept of diversity and multiculturalism through the importance of cross-cultural experience and understanding.

Before I visited the US, I understood the country only through Hollywood movie. I thought everybody in the US was like Tom Cruise and Angelina Jolie. My first visit to the US for the first time in 2007 has changed my view. Commuting from Queens to Manhattan using Subway has given me an eye-opening experience, how diverse the American people are. In the subway, I witnessed the US is really a melting pot of ethnicity, colours and cultures. Only by visiting the country, you will understand the country (Interview with the Head of the International Office at the C1 University) (original text in English)

Intellectual grandeur is also what Roudometof (2005) argues to be key cosmopolitan disposition. In another line of interview, the Head of the International Office at the C1 University made the case that 'internationalisation is internalisation' in referring to the institutional internal improvement to make the way for internationalisation processes. This way of explaining the importance of internationalisation to an 'ordinary academic' is certainly coming from one with a cosmopolitan perspective as his comment shows:

Internationalisation is internalisation. It means internal improvement to get ready, because most of the time we forget the small but fundamental things when doing big things. For example, the lecturers are sophisticated, but the security guard does not speak English so that he could not explain where the toilet is to the foreign students. The admission office is excellent, but the finance department cannot serve the foreign students because they feel they do not belong to the international departments, so they do not feel like learning English. Acting as if it were a cosmopolitan institution, but the administrative staff has never even travelled

outside Java, let alone Singapore ... I use this definition and description in many of my presentations for best practice sharing of internationalisation in other universities. (Interview with the Head of the International Office of the C1 University)

The conflation of internationalisation with internalisation displays the ‘intellectual grandeur’ required (Roudometof 2005) to determine what counts as internationalisation within the institution and what is required to internationalise. Only those who have diverse cultural exposures have this extent of cultural sensitivity and reflexivity. These cosmopolitan individuals are believed to be globally oriented, attuned to the contemporary global realities and skilful at engaging with other global citizens.

Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitics?

The contradictory nature of cosmopolitanism has potentially located those elite intellectuals in the grey controversial area. On the one hand, they are regarded as change makers, but on the other hand, they are labelled as ‘broker’ or even ‘spy’ (Wedel 2017; Wedel et al. 2005), or the ‘*comprador bourgeoisie*’ in Marx language (Robertson 2008). In terms of cultural disposition, these are internationalists who operate as players in the global scene and thus possess the required cultural disposition. The Indonesian university elites as the local actors involved in the internationalisation process require, and at times acquire this cosmopolitan capital, that is cultural capabilities that enable one to practice cosmopolitanism (Weenink 2008). It is demonstrated through the global mobility and international partnership programmes attached to their job descriptions as Rectors, Heads of International Office, and Faculty Deans. To succeed in establishing international partnership, local actors need to have certain cosmopolitan capital to identify and relate themselves with the global society.

Tadaki and Tremewan (2013) acknowledge that ‘cosmopolitan solidarity’ is not sufficient for internationalisation practices. It is cosmopolitics – that is ‘critically reflective of these politics in the making’ – that will contribute to the emancipatory internationalisation project. My observations of the three universities demonstrate little insights on cosmopolitics. But in general, the top tier university has more institutional capacity and resources in negotiating their position and agenda in expanding international partnership. This awareness was confirmed in my interview with the Head of the International Office of the C1 university: ‘The university’s bargaining position or status is not the same. Our university’s position is a magnet in itself.’ Only a few of the local actors in my study show insights into this global political awareness or ‘cosmopolitics’. In my interview with the Head of Partnership, Directorate General of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Director General of Higher Education demonstrated his political awareness and agency in rejecting a government-to-institution partnership agreement. The self-aware description of his political agency is cited in the following:

We were once angry with Usintec ... The agent was merely a broker ... We could smell out where the business was going, then we rejected it. (Interview with the Head of Partnership, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture)

The Dean of the most internationalised faculty at C2 university shares her personal experience in engaging in international consortia, in this case, an ASEAN forum. In the global forum, she believes that all delegates ‘have an equal competence’ and thus her inferiority complex may not restrict the process of her global engagement.

I do not actually speak English very fluently. But I am determined to speak the language, as long as my interlocutors understand, then I think so far so good ... There were only two delegates from Indonesia in the ASEAN meeting, one of whom was me. The other delegate was feeling somewhat inferior. I don’t know why? I think we may not feel that way. All of the delegates including from Singapore, the Philippine, Malaysia and Thailand actually have an equal competence, but perhaps the problem is because we cannot fully articulate what we know in English. That is why I insist on speaking English. (Interview with the Dean of the most internationalised faculty in the C2 University)

The Dean's reflexivity on the internationalisation process displays a certain degree of global consciousness and awareness. It shows a shift from a mere cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitics. In a broader scale, this cosmopolitics deals with the real 'politics [of internationalisation] in the making', as Tadaki and Tremewan note the agential practices of internationalisation (2013, 375).

The lack of cosmopolitics data in observation and the small illustration drawn from interview excerpts demonstrate the lack of cosmopolitics possessed by the university elites. The insular nature of Indonesian academics in general and lack of institutional mobility contributes to this lack of global geopolitics (Rakhmani 2019). This insularity highlights the need to embed a cosmopolitical awareness into the university elites in particular and local academics in general to ensure the realisation of emancipatory internationalisation processes. Cosmopolitanism might be automatically attributed to the local agents of internationalisation, but not cosmopolitics. The agents deal with cosmopolitics when they equip themselves with the analytical tools of global agenda, negotiate and establish values of institutional relationships in the international network, as well as when enacting internationalisation strategies in their universities (Tadaki and Tremewan 2013). Cosmopolitics enables the university elites to play 'a transformative (rather than subservient) role for universities in regional economies and discourses of development' through the international networking and partnership (Tadaki and Tremewan 2013, 384). This is a vision where internationalisation is not 'merely the project of a western centre, but become gradually assembled from a range of cross-cultural dialogues' (Featherstone 2002, 3).

Conclusion

The discussion in this paper has focused on the agent mediating the local-global interplay: the university elites. They possess considerable cosmopolitan cultural capitals in order to 'think globally, but act locally' regarding the internationalisation mission. Without sufficient global political knowledge and awareness, these elites might think they are representing a universal cosmopolitan culture, but in fact they are representing global interests. Cosmopolitan culture that appears to be symbolic, universal, and democratic as represented by the university elites belies the instrumental purpose of internationalisation that yokes higher education into the global marketplace. I have argued that a shift from cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitics would equip these local agents with the analytical tools of global geopolitics with regard to the internationalisation of higher education.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Zulfa Sakhiyya  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4183-977X>

References

- Altbach, P. G., and J. Knight. 2007. "The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11 (3): 290–305. doi:10.1177/1028315307303542.
- AUN. 2017. *AUN Strategic Focus 2017-2021 (Issue July)*. Bangkok: AUN.
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.
- Brewer, E., and B. Leask. 2012. "Internationalization of the Curriculum." In *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, edited by D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl, and T. Adams, 277–280. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Brooks, R., and J. L. Waters. 2011. *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Calhoun, C. 2002. "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 (4): 869–897. doi:10.1215/00382876-101-4-869.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. 2017. *Potret Pendidikan Indonesia: Statistik Pendidikan 2017*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- Featherstone, M. 2002. "Cosmopolis: An Introduction." *Theory, Culture & Society* 19 (1–2): 1–16.
- Friedman, K. E., and J. Friedman. 2008. *Historical Transformations: The Anthropology of Global Systems*. UK: Altamira Press.
- Harvey, D. 2000. "Cosmopolitanism and the Banality of Geographical Evils." *Public Culture* 12 (2): 529–564.
- Held, D. 2010. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Huang, F., D. Crăciun, and H. de Wit. 2022. "Internationalization of Higher Education in a Post-Pandemic World: Challenges and Responses." *Higher Education Quarterly* 76 (2): 203–212.
- Jayasuriya, K. 2021. "COVID-19, Markets, and the Crisis of the Higher Education Regulatory State: The Case of Australia." *Globalizations* 18 (4): 584–599. doi:10.1080/14747731.2020.1815461.
- Kehm, B. M., and U. Teichler. 2007. "Research on Internationalisation in Higher Education." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11 (3): 260–273. doi:10.1177/1028315307303534.
- Kotter, J. P., J. Kotter, and H. Rathgeber. 2006. *Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding under Any Conditions*. London: Pan Macmillan.
- Knight, J. 2012. "Concepts, Rationales, and Interpretive Frameworks in the Internationalization of Higher Education." In *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, edited by D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl, and T. Adams, 27–42. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Knight, J. 2013. "The Changing Landscape of Higher Education Internationalisation – for Better or Worse?" *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 17 (3): 84–90. doi:10.1080/13603108.2012.753957.
- Lamb, M., and H. Coleman. 2008. "Literacy in English and the Transformation of Self and Society in Post-Soeharto Indonesia." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 11 (2): 189–205. doi:10.2167/beb493.0.
- Latour, B. 2004. "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck." *Common Knowledge* 10 (3): 450–462.
- Lim, M. A. 2018. "The Building of Weak Expertise: The Work of Global University Rankers." *Higher Education* 75: 415–430. doi:10.1007/s10734-017-0147-8.
- Marginson, S. 2008. "Global Field and Global Imaging: Bourdieu and Worldwide Higher Education." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29 (3): 303–315. doi:10.1080/01425690801966386.
- Marginson, S., and G. Rhoades. 2002. "Beyond National States, Markets, and Systems of Higher Education: A Glonacal Agency Heuristic." *Higher Education* 43: 281–309. doi:10.1023/A:1014699605875.
- Marginson, S., and E. Sawir. 2006. "University Leaders' Strategies in the Global Environment: A Comparative Study of Universitas Indonesia and the Australian National University." *Higher Education* 52: 343–373. doi:10.1007/s10734-004-5591-6.
- Matthews, J., and R. Sidhu. 2005. "Desperately Seeking the Global Subject: International Education, Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 3 (1): 49–66. doi:10.1080/14767720500046179.
- Morrissey, J. 2015. "Regimes of Performance: Practices of the Normalised Self in the Neoliberal University." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 36 (4): 614–634. doi:10.1080/01425692.2013.838515.
- Ordorika, I., and M. Lloyd. 2015. "International Rankings and the Contest for University Hegemony." *Journal of Education Policy* 30 (3): 385–405. doi:10.1080/02680939.2014.979247.
- Perrotta, D. 2021. "Universities and Covid-19 in Argentina: From Community Engagement to Regulation." *Studies in Higher Education* 46 (1): 30–43. doi:10.1080/03075079.2020.1859679.
- Rakhmani, I. 2021. "Reproducing Academic Insularity in a Time of Neo-Liberal Markets: The Case of Social Science Research in Indonesian State Universities." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 51 (1): 64–86.
- Rizvi, F. 2009. "Global Mobility and the Challenges of Educational Research and Policy." In *Globalization and the Study of Education (108th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education)*, edited by T. Popkewitz, and F. Rizvi, 268–289. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Robertson, S. L. 2008. "Market Multilateralism, the World Bank, and the Asymmetries of Globalizing Higher Education: Toward a Critical Political Economy Analysis." In *International Organizations and Higher Education Policy: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally?*, edited by R. Malee-Bassett, and A. Maldonado-Maldonado, 113–131. London: Routledge.
- Roudometof, V. 2005. "Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization." *Current Sociology* 53 (1): 113–135. doi:10.1177/0011392105048291.
- Royono, R., and D. Rahwidiati. 2013. "Beating the Odds: Locally Relevant Alternatives to World-Class Universities." In *Education in Indonesia*, edited by D. Suryadarma, and G. Jones, 180–202. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Rumbley, L. E., P. G. Altbach, and L. Reisberg. 2015. "Internationalization Within the Higher Education Context." In *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, edited by D. K. Deardorff, H. De Wit, J. D. Heyl, and T. Adams, 3–26. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.

- Sakhiyya, Z. 2011. "Interrogating Identity: The International Standard School in Indonesia." *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 19 (3): 345–365.
- Sakhiyya, Z. 2021. "Problematizing Policy: A Semantic History of the Word 'Policy' in the Indonesian Language." *Critical Policy Studies*, 1–16. doi:10.1080/19460171.2021.1974504.
- Sakhiyya, Z., and C. T. Hapsari. 2021. "Critical Literacies in Indonesia." In *The Handbook of Critical Literacies*, edited by J. Zacher Pandya, R. A. Mora, J. H. Alford, N. A. Golden, and R. S. de Roock, 169–176. New York: Routledge.
- Sakhiyya, Z., and N. Martin-Anatias. 2020. "Reviving the Language at Risk: A Social Semiotic Analysis of the Linguistic Landscape of Three Cities in Indonesia." *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1–18. doi:10.1080/14790718.2020.1850737.
- Sakhiyya, Z., and E. Rata. 2019. "From 'priceless' to 'priced': The Value of Knowledge in Higher Education." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 17 (3): 285–295. doi:10.1080/14767724.2019.1583089.
- Singh, M. 2010. "Re-orienting Internationalisation in African Higher Education." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 8 (2): 269–282. doi:10.1080/14767721003780439.
- Tadaki, M., and C. Tremewan. 2013. "Reimagining Internationalization in Higher Education: International Consortia as a Transformative Space?" *Studies in Higher Education* 38 (3): 367–387. doi:10.1080/03075079.2013.773219.
- Tanu, D. 2014. "Becoming "International": The Cultural Reproduction of the Local Elite at an International School in Indonesia." *South East Asia Research* 22 (4): 579–596. doi:10.5367/sear.2014.0237.
- Tikly, L. 2001. "Globalisation and Education in the Postcolonial World: Towards a Conceptual Framework." *Comparative Education* 37 (2): 151–171. doi:10.1080/03050060124481.
- Tran, L., and S. Marginson. 2018. *Internationalisation in Vietnamese Higher Education*. Singapore: Springer.
- Wedel, J. R. 2017. "From Power Elites to Influence Elites: Resetting Elite Studies for the 21st Century." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34 (5–6): 153–178. doi:10.1177/0263276417715311.
- Weenink, D. 2008. "Cosmopolitanism as a Form of Capital: Parents Preparing their Children for a Globalizing World." *Sociology* 42 (6): 1089–1106. doi:10.1177/0038038508096935.
- Wedel, J. R., C. Shore, G. Feldman, and S. Lathrop. 2005. "Toward an Anthropology of Public Policy." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 600 (1): 30–51.
- Yang, R. 2002. "University Internationalisation: Its Meanings, Rationales and Implications." *Intercultural Education* 13 (1): 81–95. doi:10.1080/14675980120112968.
- Yang, B., and C. Huang. 2021. "Turn Crisis Into Opportunity in Response to COVID-19: Experience from a Chinese University and Future Prospects." *Studies in Higher Education* 46 (1): 121–132. doi:10.1080/03075079.2020.1859687.