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Decolonizing Graduate Careers

KFPE Online Workshop Series , 19th April 2023

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Source: vojtech-bruzek-mCjA1I8SIS8-unsplash

Check-in

Please answer the following questions in the chat:

- In which country are you at the moment?
- What was your motivation to attend this workshop?

Agenda

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- Input
  - Points of departure
  - Decolonial strategic framework
    - De-mythologize
    - De-silence
    - De-colonize
- Conversation Café in break-out rooms
- Plenary session
- Check-out

Points of departure

international
graduate school
north-south

- Foci: sustainable development, transformation, and innovation
- Founded within the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme (2001-2012)
- Support for PhD candidates in their acquisition of skills and knowledge in inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration and research settings
- An inter-university PhD graduate school: Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Zurich
- IGS North-South Certificate of Specialization in Sustainable Development
- 347 students have completed or are completing the IGS North-South (or NCCR North-South) programme (264 Alumni and 83 active members, November 2022)

IGS North-South Tracer Studies

The baseline of the tracer studies sought to compare global mobility and graduate careers of alumni over time and the capacity development and career building of PhD graduates

- 2012: emphasized the programme's aim to strengthen research capacity
- 2017: concentrated on international student mobility, spaces for transformative learning, and inequalities in higher education
- 2022: focus on decolonizing graduate careers, in response to corresponding calls for critical self-reflection in academia

Decolonial strategic framework

- In search of a reflective approach towards decolonizing higher education

Olivia U. Rutazibwa (2019): "decolonial strategic framework"
        1. de-mythologize
        2. de-silence
        3. de-colonize

➢ Lens to decolonize colonial structures, practices in HE

Rutazibwa OU. 2019. On babies and bathwater. Decolonizing International Development Studies. *In:* Jonge de S, Icaza R, Rutazibwa OU, editors. *Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning* London: Routledge, pp 159-180.

De-mythologize

"A de-mythologized understanding of the world provides at the same time an invitation to revisit our sources of knowledge, as well as the rational for our knowledge production in the first place." (Rutazibwa 2019: 167)

- Challenging the ontologies that currently dominate people's understanding of the world
- Reflecting point of origin: stop seeing Eurocentric narratives as universal narratives and instead strive to de- and re-centre them by acknowledging other points of origin

De-mythologize

- Challenging "brain gain/brain drain" and suggesting "brain circulation" → moving away from Eurocentric perspectives that represent Europe as a more desirable place to stay and work following PhD completion

- Why did alumni study in their country of origin?
- Why did alumni study outside their country of origin?
- Why do alumni move back or stay in their home countries?
- What are structural barriers allowing or blocking mobility?

Source: IGS North-South Tracer Study 2022

De-mythologize

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Findings from the tracer study 2022:

- Many alumni from the global South completed PhD in Switzerland or other Northern countries, no alumni from the global North graduated in the global South → studying at northern University remains popular for students from the South
- Most of the alumni wished to stay or return to country of origin after graduation, or move to a third country → contributing to development of country of origin is an important reason and becoming more important
- There are still structural barriers to towards free movement → without funding it is hard for southern Students to study in the global North

Source: IGS North-South Tracer Study 2022

De-silence

"Who is invited around the expert table and who systemically not?" (Rutazibwa 2019: 168)

- Long tradition of de-colonial, post-colonial and feminist theorists
- *Who* is heard and *what* is heard within higher education?
- Reflection of dominating knowledge production: white, northern/european, male

Source: IGS North-South Tracer Study 2022

De-silence

- How alumni of different social positions and identities, who are producing different kinds of knowledge
  - consider themselves to be perceived
  - experience power structures
  - are influenced by the dominating knowledge production

- Access and barriers to the global scientific community in terms of research and publication

Source: IGS North-South Tracer Study 2022

De-silence

- Clear differences between global South and Northern & gender in terms of experiencing power structures and the accomplishment of their knowledge production
- Discrimination: publication procedures, institutional structures, fieldwork, expectations & social interactions
- The survey results show that Northern male alumni were least likely to feel discriminated against based on their social identity
- The most common barriers to accessing the global scientific community are lack of funding, time, and networks for alumni from the South

Source: IGS North-South Tracer Study 2022

De-colonize

"Why are we producing knowledge?" (Rutazibwa 2019: 171)
  ➤ Concentrates on the structure itself, normativity

- Decolonization = not readymade solution, process of recognition, reflection, and understanding (several authors)
- IGS North-South: analyse & reflect structures and aims
  ➤ Access for full/associated members
  ➤ Course structure, course offer, Summer School course
  ➤ Limitation in higher education system, funding schemes → inequality
  ➤ Online courses, changes in course offer and curricula/rules/regulations
  ➤ Northern resource persons reduce their role in Summer School
  ➤ accepting new and different forms of knowledge production, ensure space

Conversation Café

- Hear everyone contributing
- Everyone has a say
- Quality of listening and talking
- **First round:** Share what you think, feel, or do (1min/Pers) in the context of what was presented
- **Second round:** Share thoughts after having listened to everybody (1min/Pers)
- **Third round:** share takeaways and reflect on experience from the Conversation Café (through chat)
- **Now**: we go to break out rooms