OFFSHORE CAMPUSES AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Integrated Studies Project

submitted to Dr. Gloria Filax

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts – Integrated Studies

Athabasca, Alberta

April 2009
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ABSTRACT

Globalization is becoming a well-known phenomenon in the business world. Perhaps less known are the processes which are leading to the increasing globalization of higher education. More and more Western universities are eyeing opportunities for growth and expansion and they are organizing various kinds of off-shore structures to meet these objectives. The number of off-shore campuses of Western universities is increasing at an alarming rate. Does this growing practice increase globalization processes through higher education? This paper examines the off-shore campus, its definitions, its models, its advantages and its problems as it relates to the globalization of higher education. The paper explains the reasons Western universities operate overseas and showcases some of the concerns this process has for both the university and in the countries in which it operates. In a case study approach, the paper examines both general and specific examples of Western universities operating off-shore campuses in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The paper studies the globalizing effect these campuses have in creating a Western educational paradigm that is slowly dominating global higher education.
INTRODUCTION

The golden arches of the McDonald’s symbol holds great international recognition. In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, this iconic symbol is recognized on the plains of the African heartland, in the bustling cities of Europe, and in the quiet suburbs of North America. To some, this simple symbol of a restaurant represents globalization at its best, and to others, it represents all that is wrong with a global community. The stylized torch, the logo of New York University (NYU), a private university, may be a well-known symbol to its students, faculty and alumni, but will this simple logo become another iconic symbol of globalization as higher education follows other industries and becomes populated around the world in search of new markets and new opportunities?

Higher education is rapidly becoming the latest aspect of globalization: post-secondary institutes with shrinking funding sources and expanding expenditures search out fresh markets to attract new students and to develop innovative economic opportunities. As with much of globalization, this means Western or Northern universities setting up shop in Southern or developing nations. One such area that is seeing a rapid expansion of the much-treasured Western education includes the states that ring the Persian Gulf.

This paper examines the globalization of higher education. It will look at how the internationalization of education has changed in this era of global competitiveness. In particular, this paper will examine how American higher education has been a primary driver of globalization through its aggressive expansion into Middle East locales. This paper will look at two growing markets for the export of Western higher education: Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—examining both the drawbacks and benefits of this rapidly expanding practice. During this study, several important questions will be
posed and some conclusions will be drawn: Do Western satellite campuses in the Middle East intensify the globalizing spread of Western education and therefore Western knowledge into Middle Eastern nations? Does this spread of Western institutions undermine local forms of knowledge and create resentment towards the West within Middle Eastern countries? Or does the rise of Western institutes represent an opportunity for collaboration and understanding between two areas of the globe that have often misunderstood one another?

This paper will be broken down into three major areas of discussion. First, it will examine the current trends in higher education, as globalization becomes a driving force for many universities. In this section, the theories of globalization, and the internationalization of education will be investigated. The second section will consider the satellite or branch campuses of American and Canadian universities that have been set up in Qatar and the UAE. Here, both the problems and advantages of expanding university operations to the Middle East will be examined. The third portion of this paper will scrutinize the relationship between these branch campuses and the issue of globalization. Here, conclusions will be drawn about this relationship to determine the exact role that these institutes play in the spread of globalization of higher education. Finally, the questions posed earlier in this introduction will be addressed as this paper will look at the uneasy relationship between the Middle East and the West, and determine if higher education can be a conduit for better understanding between the two.
GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The international nature of higher education has long been present in the structures of most universities. International students and faculty have been active participants in the academic and social milieu of university campuses for decades. This combined with study tours abroad and the active social conscience of liberal faculty members, who research and speak out on international issues, has created a rich, dynamic, and necessary international component to the structure of higher education. These processes have been developed and honed throughout the past forty years and have become vital to the apparatus of a higher educational institute. With the rise of the global marketplace, and the shrinking of national borders due to communication technologies such as the Internet, internationalism has taken a new form, and higher education has not been immune to these changes. Bloom (2004) writes that international priorities have changed in this era of globalization and that education can assist in easing some of the problems incurred by globalization. He states that “education has a powerful effect on human development – weak human capabilities are the source of many of the problems policy makers are confronted with.” (p. 57) He argues that education is the primary driver of economic development around the world, and only through the spread of education to other parts of the world, will this help in alleviating the negative aspects of the global marketplace.

As with many aspects of life in the world, inequities in education appear to be evident. Developed nations lead the world in educated population percentage, while developing
countries struggle to keep up. Altbach (2004) notes this inequity of knowledge production by stating that powerful Western universities “dominate the production and distribution of knowledge…[as]…globalisation opens access and makes it easier for students and scholars to study and work anywhere.” (p.7) Nearly always, this studying and working anywhere is done in large well-known Western universities, most notably in the United States. This in turn has exacerbated the problem of globalization in that “existing inequalities are only reinforced and new barriers [are] erected.” (p.7) Altbach (2004) adds that globalization has created “neocolonialism” in terms of higher education, with the use of English as its mitigating factor. He writes: “the place of English at the pinnacle of scientific communication gives a significant advantage to the US and the UK and to the other wealthy English-speaking countries.” (p.10) The hard numbers of international students studying in developed countries speak for themselves. According to Altbach (2004), “80% of the world’s international students come from developing countries and virtually all of them study in the North. Most of these students pursue master’s [sic], doctoral, and professional degrees. Many do not return to their country of origin.” (p.12) The significance of this cannot be underestimated: not only are Western nations gaining access to the world’s best and brightest, they are largely retaining them, thus robbing developing nations of the very professionals they need to break themselves from the cycle of poverty. As Bloom (2004) has wisely noted, “the benefits of globalization have gone disproportionately to wealthy countries” (p. 61) The continued brain drain of highly prized, educated professionals from developing countries to wealthy Western nations proves this to be true.
ECONOMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Any discussion of the globalization of higher education would not be complete without an examination of the economics of higher education. The correlation between the economics of higher education and financial globalizing forces becomes prevalent when examining the issues of productivity and efficiency. Scott (1998) also notes that universities across the West are dependent on funding from their national and/or state and provincial governments for their continued survival. “Modern systems of HE [higher education] could not exist without the patronage of the national state…and, as HE has expanded and its aggregated budget has increased, the pressure has grown for greater productivity and efficiency.” (p. 110) Scott (1998) writes that higher education investment by governments across the West represents a “comparative economic advantage” and subsequently, knowledge, and the disbursement of it, “has become the primary resource in advanced economies.” (p.110) Scott (1998) makes a further assessment that investment in higher education by governments everywhere will be central to international competitiveness. The growing expanse of international competitiveness of universities appears to have spawned the development of international cooperation between universities and the latest development of higher education, the growth of off-shore campuses by Western institutions. The 1998 research by Peter Scott predates the rise of off-shore campuses of Western post-secondary schools, but does prophesize its coming evolution.

As the world becomes a global village some ‘international’ students may be able to take courses in universities on the other side of the world without ever leaving home. (Scott, p. 118)
Continuously searching for funds in a globalized world, universities in the West have been faced head-on with the realities of the global marketplace. According to Currie and Newson (1998) universities have been forced to change their administrative ways in the face of this new global environment. Managerialism is taking hold in the way universities operate which holds significant implications in the globalization of higher education.

Managerialism at the post-secondary level involves “new ways of conceiving of and accomplishing their business: indeed, of defining its activities in terms of business rather than of education.” (p. 142) Managerialism at the university level will be clearly shown later in this paper as Western post-secondary institutions move off-shore to the oil rich lands of the Persian Gulf states in order to expand their “business” operations. The global marketplace, which emphasizes the need for capital to flow to areas of greatest market need, is now evident in the economics of higher education. Once only a hallmark of local and national government investment, higher education is another constituent in the global marketplace—a commodity that is managed, traded, and exchanged for monetary gain.

THEORIES OF GLOBALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Globalization can sometimes be difficult to accurately define. Scholte (2001) develops a simple but effective definition that “globalization refers to the processes whereby social relations become relatively delinked from territorial geography so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world in a single place.” (p.15) The author reviews the aspects of globalization as they pertain to world affairs, writing that the areas of communication, production, ecology, the military, and even our every-day thinking are interdependent and combine together to form one large global suprastate. Post
secondary education is a very important part of this new, large global entity and there are various interpretations of how this has developed. The theories behind educational globalization appear to have four major interpretations according to Spring (2008). In his extensive research for the journal *Review of Educational Research*, Spring details these four theories. The “world scholar” theory states that due to globalization, all world cultures are “slowly integrating into a single global culture.” (p. 334) The Western school structure has become the dominant educational paradigm within this global culture. The second interpretation is the “world systems” theory. The world system interpretation takes the idea of an integrated global educational paradigm, but divides the globe into two, yet unequal spheres. The first sphere is Western nations lead by the United States, Europe and Japan, and the second sphere is the remaining “poorer” Third World nations. According to Spring (2008) “world system analysts believe that the core countries are trying to legitimize their power by using aid agencies, in particular through support of education, to teach capitalist modes of thought and analysis.” (p. 335)

The third interpretation in Spring's work (2008) is similar to the idea of world systems. The “post-colonial” analysis takes the idea that Western schooling is derived from European imperialism and Christian philosophy while imposing these concepts on the remainder of the world. This third interpretation is also linked to the final interpretation called a “culturists philosophy”. While culturists recognize the imperialistic nature and spread of Western education, they also value local culture and want to use local culture as a buffer against the negative effects of globalization. (p.336)
These four interpretations of globalization and education give valuable understanding to this changing process. However for the purposes of this paper, it appears that the world scholar theory best helps to understand the current globalization of higher education. As globalization of education, and in particular higher education picks up steam, there appears to be much validity to this interpretation. Certainly the spread of Western educational institutes across the globe would lead credence to this position. Additionally, English has by and large become the language of education, and now appears to be an important factor in the idea of a dominant global educational paradigm, so much so that according to Spring (2008), English is often referred to as a “global literacy skill” and a form of “intercultural communication.” (p.351) With the spread of Western education across the globe, and English the language of instruction and curricula, there appears to be a slow melding of all international educational models into one dominant Western-style educational structure. Education is not immune to the wide reaching effects of globalization.

**The Internet & Globalization of Higher Education**

One of the most recognized elements to advance globalization is the use of communication technologies, such as the Internet that shrinks national borders and creates a global marketplace. Communication technologies also play a leading role in the globalization of higher education, perhaps to even a greater degree than previously thought. Urry (1998) writes that communication technologies have collapsed the traditional time-space continuum and “transcend societal control and regulation.” (p.5)
Sadak (1998) takes this further and says “the greatest contributor to rapid multi-faceted globalization which can be most directly attributed to academia is probably the Internet.” (p.102) There has been much discussion in the academic community about the benefits and problems presented by the Internet and its related communication technologies. According to Altbach and Teichler (2001), the dissemination of knowledge has been completely reshaped by the use of the Internet. With instant communication and online libraries, new scientific discoveries are happening much faster than ever before. The Internet vastly affects even the delivery of traditional educational programs. “Distance education is a central engine of academic expansion in many countries and has implications for the delivery of educational programs across international borders.” (p. 16) Despite these opportunities that the Internet brings to education, there are some serious issues with communication technologies that have hastened the globalization of higher education. According to Altbach and Teichler (2001) there are four major problems with Internet communication in education: the unequal access to the Internet internationally; the control of educational and research software by for-profit organizations in Western countries; the dominant use of English on the Internet which substantially increases the strength of Western academic powers such as the UK and the US; and the belief that the Internet accelerates the digital divide between rich and poor nations. (p. 16)

The strength of information communication technologies and the subsequent problems they bring are important considerations when understanding globalization of higher education. As Western educational institutes see a change in their economic fortunes, a
transformation in the way they are being administered, and a drastic change in information communication technology that allows for greater access around the globe, movements away from the traditional university models are becoming evident. As the global marketplace becomes a singular unitary form, universities across the West are eyeing opportunities abroad for growth and expansion, and many are setting up operations in the Middle East. The next section of this paper will deal with the increasing frequency of satellite and branch campuses of Western educational institutes in Qatar and the UAE.

**Off-shore Campuses in Qatar and UAE**

One growing component to globalization of higher education is the increasing frequency of Western universities setting up some kind of operation overseas, away from the main campus. The location of these so-called off-shore campuses vary around the world from China to Europe, to North America to the Middle East. For this study, the Persian Gulf nations of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be examined. For the most part, this paper will focus on American post-secondary institutes, but Canadian universities are also playing this new global game and they will also be discussed.

The rise of the off-shore campus is not a new practice as there have been various kinds of international cooperation among university campuses for decades. Additionally, Canadians have seen American for-profit universities operate in large Canadian cities
as both DeVry University and the University of Phoenix have satellite programs and
campuses in Calgary, Alberta and Vancouver, British Columbia. Canada not only
exports some Canadian programs overseas, but also imports private operators to offer
US baccalaureate degrees. Big-league players in the export of higher education include
the United States and the United Kingdom, while Canada and Australia play a much
lesser role. The United States is the only exporter country of higher education that does
not import any form of higher education to its own shores. According to Verbik and
Merkley (2006) this is due to the highly competitive nature of US higher education at
home, where competition for students between thousands of private and public
institutions in the country allows for very limited opportunities by any foreign provider.

**Definition of off-shore campus**

The lexicon of off-shore campuses is wide and varied as is the exact definition. Terms
such as “off-shore campus”, “branch campus”, “satellite campus”, and even “borderless
higher education” are sometimes used interchangeably. According to a study called *The
International Branch Campus—Models and Trends*, published by the British-based
Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, off-shore or branch campus is defined as
the following:

An off-shore operation of a higher education institution which fulfills the
following criteria:

- The unit should be operated by the institution or through a joint-venture
  in which the institution is a partner (some countries require foreign
  providers to partner with a local organisation) in the name of the
  foreign institution.
- Upon successful completion of the study programme, students are
  awarded a degree from the foreign institution. (Verbik & Merkley,
  2006, p. 4)
The Observatory’s definition is an encompassing one, and appears to be the standard definition used by other experts in the field such as the British Council. However, the American Council on Education (ACE) uses the term “transnational” education to define the organization of off-shore campuses. They define “transnational” education in similar terms as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), by stating that transnational education is:

All types of higher education study programs, or sets of course of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programs may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system. (Green, Eckel, Calderon, & Luu, 2007, p. 1)

Both definitions are effective in the parameters they set for what constitutes an off-shore campus. The off-shore campus of New York University in Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) appears to conform to both definitions as it operates as a joint-venture with the emir of Abu Dhabi. Students at NYU in Abu Dhabi receive the same degree as they would in New York City, and the program of study in NYUAD operates outside the national education system of the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Models of off-shore campuses

Although the definitions of what constitutes a branch campus may slightly differ, it appears there is consensus on the different types or models of branch campuses. According to Verbik and Merkley (2006), there are three major models for the
development of a branch campus. Model A is where the home institution wholly funds the branch campus. According to the authors, this represents approximately 37% of all international branch campuses. The authors also state that due to the enormous costs borne by the sponsoring institution, this model is becoming less fashionable. Two factors remain as the biggest stumbling block for setting up a branch campus of this type: the investment needed to start up and sustain the operation is sizeable, and the home institution remains solely responsible for all and any losses incurred by the operation of this model. Despite the waning numbers of this model type, DeVry University and the University of Phoenix in Canada are examples of this type of branch campus. As the institution is the sole funder, provider, and operator of the operation, this would help to explain the very high tuition students would pay to attend these types of American institutions in Canada.

Model B of branch campuses according to Verbik and Merkley (2006) is where the branch campus obtains external funding to operate in an overseas market. According to the authors, 35% of branch campuses fall under this model with two distinct categories: branch campuses receive host government funds or support, or the branch campus receives external support from private organizations in the host nation. In this model, the governments and private organizations provide the bulk of funds to set up operations in the host country for two main reasons—to align national higher education goals more closely with developed educational institutions which have a track record of success in their home countries, and to provide financial and human investment that results from the internationalization of higher education. American public university,
George Mason University (GMU) is an example of a post-secondary institution that follows this model format. In 2008, GMU set up an off-shore campus in the UAE emirate of Ras al Khaymah. According to Mills (2008) “the crown prince guaranteed full financial backing to the venture, covering all operational and capital costs, as well as faculty salaries. His government even promised to pay for the $300,000 annual administrative and marketing costs the…operation incurs in Virginia.” (p.1) However, this model, as represented by GMU, is fraught with many problems. In the GMU example, the promised state-of-art facilities did not happen when the university opened the doors in September 2008. Housing for staff and students was lackluster, and as well there were serious problems bringing water and electricity to the “campus”. Most problematic was the lack of qualified students with only 164 undergraduates enrolled, with the bulk of them registered in remedial English programs. Adding to the lack of credibility to the branch campus was the lack of academic staff from the home Virginia campus as administration was forced to bring faculty in from other places. (Mills, 2008) NYU is another example of a Western university following this format with varying degrees of success. This specific institution will receive more attention later in this paper when it addresses the specific globalization of higher education by Western post-secondary institutions.

The third and final off-shore campus model discussed by Verbik and Merkley (2006) is where the branch campus has all facilities and funding provided for them by the host country. Although according to the authors, this accounts for only 28% of all off-shore campuses, this model is quickly becoming the favored model for institutions looking to
expand overseas operations. The University of Calgary with its nursing program in Qatar is one such example of this type of model. The determining characteristic of this model is the construction of state-of-art facilities that off-shore campuses will be housed in. The site is a centrally located repository for all foreign off-shore campuses—in effect creating a “mall” of post-secondary institutions, each residing side-by-side for easy access for educational consumers. Three major academic repositories exist, all in the Middle East: The Dubai Knowledge Village (KV), the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC), and Education City in Doha, Qatar. The Qatar Foundation created Education City, the first “mega-campus”, in the late 1990s for Education, Science and Community, a government funded organization founded by the wife of the Qatari Emir. According to Verbik and Merkley (2006), Cornell University received over US$750 million dollars to commence operations at Education City. The Qatari government pays all costs from construction of the Cornell portion of Education City to the salaries and administrative costs of running Cornell in Qatar. The University of Calgary also resides in Education City.

Knowledge Village in Dubai, created in 2002, was the world’s first academic “free zone” with participating institutions “exempt from tax, customs duties, [and are exempt from] restrictions on repatriation of funds as well as other regulations applying to UAE proper.” (Verbik & Merkley, 2006, p. 19) The mega-campus holding 6,000 students contains gymnasiums, retail stores, food outlets, libraries, and housing for staff and students. Building on that success, Dubai is developing the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC). According to its flashy brochure, Educating the Future, DIAC was necessitated
by the huge demand for higher education in Dubai that is projected to reach 35,000 by 2010. (www.diacedu.ae) DIAC will encompass 25 million square feet and will "provide a self-contained and holistic environment for learning excellence through the provision of individual campuses for universities, student accommodation, extensive facilities for sport and leisure and state of the art learning support services." (Educating the Future, p.7) A whole range of educational providers is present in DIAC from traditional universities, to off-shore campuses, as well as distance and e-learning education providers. Again, DIAC will offer free zone benefits such as “100 per cent ownership, one-stop shop set up procedures, freedom from corporate or income tax, and the value additions of operating out of a cluster of environment specifically designed to encourage synergies among constituents of the knowledge community." (Educating the Future, p.7) Currently, only seven universities operate in DIAC, the most notable, Middlesex University from the UK. However, US institutions are notable by their absence from DIAC that may indicate DIAC’s difficulty in attracting a big-name US client. This may turn out to be problematic for, as will be discussed later, US credentials are highly sought after as an US education is seen across the region as the “Rolex” of international education.

Reasons for off-shore campuses & Emerging trends

Why do Western educational institutes develop branch campuses? According to the 2007 American Council on Education (ACE) report, there are four main reasons Western post-secondary schools operate off-shore campuses. First, US schools in particular, are looking to expand and diversify their revenues. Secondly, overseas campuses are a way of either enhancing their current reputations or keeping up with
competitors who already have overseas operations. Thirdly, off-shore campuses enhance the internationalization of the home university. Finally, overseas operations “advance a service mission” where higher education may play a role in nation-building as seen in Qatar or in the UAE. (Green, Eckel, Calderon, & Luu, 2007)

Additionally, the ACE sees some revealing trends concerning off-shore campuses. To date, three major trends have developed. First, there is an enormous global demand for higher education. According to Scott (1999) there will be 97 million students in higher educational institutes by 2010. This staggering demand must be met, and Western universities are trying to position themselves to attract the lion share of these students. Secondly, there is a strong appeal for Western education in most countries, most notably in the Middle East. Waterbury (2003) writes that there has been a failure by higher education institutions in the Middle East to provide proper education and training for its people, an ideal position for Western universities to exploit. Most citizens of the Middle East are very familiar with “American” education. “They know that it [American education] has not only helped make the United States the economic and military superpower it is, but that it has produced the scientific, business, and educational leadership for many other countries.” (p. 66) The growing middle class in the Middle East and Arab world see the values and benefits associated with strong Western credentials. “They are fully aware of the technological and information revolution sweeping the world, and they do not want their children to be left behind. For this market, the word ‘American’ is to education what “Swiss” is to watches.” (p. 66)
The third trend in the development of off-shore campuses is that strong favorable government policies, again particularly in the UAE and Qatar, allow Western universities to operate unregulated. The free-zone examples of the UAE, and the massive endowments provided by the Qatari government are good examples. The final trend that is developing is that English-language instruction is becoming vital for international business. Middle Eastern countries that wish to remain competitive must provide for post-secondary instruction in English, for this is one way of ensuring competitive advantage in a global marketplace. This, in turn appeals to local students who are able to remain in their birth countries and contribute effectively to growing their own economies. (Green, Eckel, Calderon, & Luu, 2007)

CASE STUDIES OF OFF-SHORE CAMPUSES

There are two specific examples of Western post-secondary institutions setting up off-shore campuses in the Middle East that will be showcased in this paper, one Canadian and the other American. The University of Calgary in Doha, Qatar and New York University in Abu Dhabi, UAE, are two examples of many in the region, but both offer interesting parallels and observable differences in their off-shore campus structure.

The University of Calgary officially launched its off-shore campus in May, 2007 with a ten-year commitment. What is unique about this off-shore campus is the primary focus of its curriculum. Having only one discipline, which is highly unusual for off-shore campuses, allows for a high-level of quality control, a top issue when dealing with any
off-shore campus. University of Calgary-Qatar (UC-Q) has partnered with Qatar’s Hamed Medical Corporation “to offer world-class clinical nursing education to educate nurses for clinical specialties and to develop a sustainable nursing workforce.” (Nursing School officially launches in Doha, 2007) Citing a growing need for professional nurses in Qatar, Dr. Latifa Al-Houty, director of the nursing program says the nation is striving “for excellence in both education and health…and in this context, excellence in nursing education becomes a necessity.” (Nursing School officially launches in Doha, 2007) The University of Calgary-Qatar partnership is deemed to be the largest overseas program done by a Canadian university to this point. (www.wcmprod1.ucalgary.ca) The University also claims that as promised by other off-shore campuses, the program will remain as competitive and retain the same standards that exist at their home campus in Calgary.

According to the University of Calgary website, enrolment for the 2008 fall term has increased. There are 96 students, of which 19 are Qatari students in the second year of classes. (University of Calgary-Qatar Enrolment up for 2008 Term, 2008) The relatively small numbers in the program indicates a go-slow approach as the University tries to attract qualified students. Seemingly, many Western universities are facing similar challenges: entering into agreements with wealthy sponsors is one thing, but finding qualified applicants and eventually graduating them is entirely another. The University of Calgary-Qatar is looking at ways to expand the agreement to include upgrading and other educational opportunities that can be used to enhance the original agreement.
The other Western university to open an off-shore campus in the Middle East that will be highlighted in this paper is a private university, New York University (NYU). In October 2007, NYU announced the creation of New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) that according to the press release from NYU “will be the first comprehensive liberal arts campus established abroad by a major U.S. research university.” (NYU to Open Campus in Abu Dhabi- Press Release, 2007) The government of Abu Dhabi has promised to provide funding, land, and will completely provide for the construction, development, maintenance and operation of NYUAD. (NYU to Open Campus in Abu Dhabi- Press Release, 2007) The creation of NYUAD is a part of the strategic plan of NYU as it attempts to effectively redefine its operational structure. According to Krieger (2008) the president of NYU, John Sexton, has plans to use NYUAD as one of two “nodes” in a global network of NYU with the home base of New York providing the other. The plans of NYUAD are ambitious, perhaps the most ambitious of any off-shore campus around the world. According to the press release at the announcement of the plans, NYUAD is planning to have a student body of 2000 when fully operational and hopes to attract students from not only the Middle East, but from Europe, South Asia, and Central Asia. Applicants will be chosen according to their academic qualifications and will not be discriminated on basis of “race, religion, sex, nationality, or sexual orientation.” This could present potential problems in an area in which religion, race, sex and sexual orientation are delicate subjects. Perhaps more problematic are plans to have all courses and programs fully co-educational and all taught in English. As other off-shore campuses have struggled to find qualified students with strong enough
university-entrance English skills and a culture that largely segregates the genders, these potential problems could significantly impact the operation of NYUAD. So massive are the plans for NYUAD and so outside the conventional operations of existing off-shore campuses, “Marcello-Suarez-Orozco, a professor of globalization and education at NYU [says] ‘[t]his is not just study abroad on steroids. This is really upping the ante. It will be a complete game-changer for higher education as we know it.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008)

PROBLEMS OF OFF-SHORE CAMPUSES AND THEIR LINK TO GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

As off-shore campuses become more and more popular and more institutions consider this option, what are some of the issues surrounding such an endeavor? And as more universities consider this option, what is the link between off-shore campuses and the ever increasing globalization of higher education? As with any foray into the international realm, there are a myriad of issues and topics that must be carefully considered before making such an enormous investment of time and effort. Despite the mammoth financial incentive by wealthy emirs of the Middle East to set up shop, opening an off-shore campus is fraught with problems and cultural issues that must be carefully examined. It may be tempting to think that without the worry of financial considerations, off-shore campuses have little to concern themselves with, but as with some of the problems that have already been mentioned, there are a stack of troubling
issues facing the development of the off-shore campus. What is most concerning is that these issues seem to have culture as a predominate theme.

PROBLEMS WITH OFF-SHORE CAMPUSES

Ghabra and Arnold (2007) co-authored a revealing report in which they reviewed many of the issues surrounding “American-Style” education of which the off-shore campus is a primary constituent. They identify six major problems connected with post-secondary institutes operating in the Middle East. The first issue is that the region is lacking any existing comprehensive liberal arts curriculum. Other than NYU, no other off-shore provider is offering liberal arts, instead focusing on technical, science-related or business degrees. The authors fear that this is creating an environment where students are not evaluating issues on a holistic level, but rather they are learning only technical and topic-specific information. However, while this is a valid point by the authors, one must ask the question whether it is possible to delink the concepts of a liberal arts education and a Westernized education as a whole, for some see a liberal arts education a Euro-Western philosophical tradition that is being imposed on other parts of the world. Secondly, unlike most parts of North America, there is no equal access to education in the Middle East. In the UAE, no student loan program exists, nor do endowment programs for students who are academically gifted but financially incapable. Universities, especially the private elite ones from the US, are enormously expensive and are out of reach for all but the wealthy and “only the rich will be able to study at these institutions, creating a social class in itself.” (p. 71) The third issue identified by Ghabra and Arnold (2007), and noted by others, especially the media, is the limited academic freedom for faculty. Education is tightly centralized in the region and despite
the promises for complete independence and control by the off-shore campus, doubts remain about the veracity of these promises. Books, library material, and certain websites are regularly banned in the region due to their alleged inappropriateness. “Some faculty members elect not to include certain materials because they are afraid of offending someone.” (p. 15) The Danish cartoon episode in 2005, and the subsequent dismissal of a faculty member who discussed the issue in a university class is one example of this limited academic freedom. “Faculty members often do not have the means or the motivation to defend their right to academic freedom. Without academic freedom, knowledge is an early casualty.” (p. 15)

The fourth issue confronting schools and universities from the West is that by and large, Arab students are not taught to think for themselves, thus creating problems when enrolled in a Western university. According to Ghabra and Arnold (2007) students that come from Arab schools “tend to be accustomed to learning through lectures and memorization and an authoritarian style of education. They feel their opinion can be held against them and prefer professors who communicated their ideas in lectures.” (p.15) This issue relates back to the lack of holistic education in the region. Synthesizing and analyzing information, so essential in Western universities, are lacking in the region for the tendency is to concentrate solely on technical or business-related skills. Learning through discourse and the development of critical decision-making skills lie at the heart of post-secondary education and if students are ill-prepared from their secondary school preparation in achieving these skills, then the universities that demonstrate this style of learning will not be successful themselves. The fifth issue for off-shore campuses is the
high faculty workload and low morale of faculty. Faculties in the region suffer from burn-out due to the high teaching load as added administrative responsibilities are tacked on.

Ghabra and Arnold (2007) note that administration is “not transparent and noninclusive” and policies are arbitrarily imposed. The authors believe that American branch universities tend to have this problem less but they warn, “the extent to which they can keep their independence from the encroachment of local customs is yet to be seen.” (p.16) The final issues confronting American campuses in the region is their lack of contact with the local community. Universities in the area do not play significant roles in the community as they do in North America, and they contribute no significant research and development into local social issues. The authors note the “fortress mentality” that exists in the UAE and Qatar as institutions “limit community service to the occasional student initiative.” (p.16)

**Criticism of off-shore campuses**

One of the biggest criticisms of the off-shore campus in the Middle East is the idea that American education has been sold to the highest bidder. Often the real financial details of the deal are never publically disclosed, creating an era of distrust among some. According to the PBS series NOW, the Qatar Foundation made “gifts” totaling $750 million to entice the Cornell medical school to develop its off-shore campus in Doha. When PBS producers asked Dr. James Reardon-Anderson, Dean of Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar whether or not American schools were selling out and auctioning their names off to whoever can pay the most, Reardon-
Anderson responded tersely by saying, “I would say that criticism is probably made by people who don’t know anything about the finances or the operation.” Additionally when pressed to disclose exactly how much the Qatar Foundation offered Georgetown University to expand their operations to Doha, Reardon-Anderson dodged the question and simply stated: “it’s a risk free undertaking for Georgetown. Georgetown does benefit in some ways from the engagement.” (Branaccio, 2008). This lack of transparency regarding the deal or its negotiations is not exclusive to Georgetown. Krieger (2008) writes that the NYU deal with the Abu Dhabi government was also conducted secretly and that there was only a “veneer of serious faculty consultation.” On the criticism that universities are selling themselves to the highest bidder, Krieger (2008) notes that the director-general of the Abu Dhabi campus of the Sorbonne openly admits what most people are thinking. “It’s a pity, but I must say that we are only in Abu Dhabi because Abu Dhabi proposed to pay for all our expenses. If we got the same offer from Doha or Cairo, we probably would have said yes, too.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008)

Others see moral and ethical issues when Western education is delivered in a very different part of the world. The UAE’s record on academic freedom and human rights has often been considered suspect. Despite the fact that the UAE is offering a “free-zone” of autonomy, this autonomy does not exist off-campus where homosexuality is illegal, “and those found guilty of drug use, prostitution, or adultery can be sentenced to flogging.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008) The serious questions of human rights and the UAE’s relationship to Israel are also causing serious concerns for those opposed to off-shore campuses. Israelis are barred from entry into the country and this is
particularly problematic for many in the academic community. NYU professor Sylvain Caplain says: “This is not just an abstract question of human rights. Israelis are gigantic figures in academic life and if we held conferences in certain disciplines, it would be an embarrassment not to be able to have Israeli participation.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008) Additionally, Abu Dhabi as well as the whole of the UAE has come under fire from human rights organizations for their mistreatment of their foreign laborers from India and Pakistan. Finally, critics complain that Western universities, the supposed purveyors of liberal ideals and moral and ethical principles are so easily entering into financial agreements with principal participants who do not share the same ethical philosophies or global outlook. Some universities have not taken to the siren call of Persian Gulf money, therefore not compromising their principles. The University of Connecticut backed out of negotiations with DIAC when it realized the UAE’s “restriction against Israelis and homosexuals would violate the school’s nondiscrimination clause.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008)

**OFF-SHORE CAMPUSES & GLOBALIZATION**

The issue of off-shore campuses is a very important factor in the globalization of higher education and a strong link is beginning to develop. As universities grow and expand and open their overseas operations, many are likening this to the growth and expansion of a multinational corporation. Critics of the NYUAD plan tend to agree for they see that “NYU is behaving exactly like a corporation that is entering its mergers-and-acquisitions phase,’ says Andrew Ross who specializes in labor and globalization. “To a lot of faculty, it just feels cheap, like we are just another brand being bought in a worldwide shopping spree, like Gucci.” (Krieger, The Emir of NYU, 2008) As earlier stated, NYU is
intent on developing its “global network” and all universities operating as off-shore campuses are modeling some form of their own global networks. This is an opportunity to give their universities a “global brand” as Underhill (2008) notes. In a world with a proliferation of global brands such as Google, Starbucks, and Mercedes and their ubiquitous logos advertised on nearly everything, can NYU, UC-Q, and Georgetown be far behind?

Has this proliferation of Western off-shore campuses intensified the globalizing spread of Western higher education? By examining the raw numbers, the answer is yes, for the “number of branch campuses worldwide has nearly quadrupled in just a few years from 24 in 2002 to 82 in 2006.” (A Mini NYU, 2007) This empirical evidence suggests that the Western universities are expanding at an alarming rate as they push rapidly into overseas markets. Much like its cousin in the field of international business, education is developing its own form of neocolonialism. Noted globalization author and professor, Philip Altbach in a 2007 testimony to Congress on globalization and the university stated:

We are now in an era of power and influence. Politics and ideology have taken a subordinate role to profits and market-driven policies. Now, multinational corporations, media conglomerates, and even a few leading universities can be seen as the new neo-colonist—seeking to dominate not for ideological or political reasons but rather for commercial gain. (The Globalization of R&D and Innovation: The University Response: Hearing before the House Committee on Science and Technology, 110th Cong)

There is also concern that with off-shore campuses in places like the Middle East, Western knowledge and its overpowering cultural mores will undermine local knowledge
and undercut local customs. Western education, and in particular US higher education is not entirely altruistic in spreading their educational philosophies around the world. Tannock (2007) concurs when he writes that US higher education, like other social institutions in the US, is “structurally” and “culturally” dedicated to promoting and advancing American interests. They see their form of education as being “both a natural and desirable state of affairs in the world.” (p. 259) Such a belief has to come at a cost for local communities. NYU’s insistence that all classes will be fully co-educational, despite customs that dictate the sexes be segregated for educational purposes, is one example. Lewin (2008) also reports on problems in localizing curriculum and the inadequacies of transposing American ideals and problems to the world of the wealthy Persian Gulf. One such example was in a Western off-shore campus in Education City in Doha. The Math class dealt with a problem detailing how much money would a boy make in his after-school job shoveling snow. “The snow was not the problem, since Qatars had seen snow on television…what was fundamentally unfamiliar was the concept of an after-school job.” (Lewin, In Oil-Rich Mideast, Shades of the Ivy League, 2008) The level at which local customs and knowledge will be subservient to the demands of Western educational masters have yet to be fully measured, but it is easy to see how already the demands and the power of Western influence takes shape.

As the globalizing spread of US higher education continues across the Middle East and around the world, is there a resentment building toward yet another expansion of US imperialism? Oddly enough, the answer may be no, or perhaps more accurately, not yet. As noted earlier in this paper, Western education, and in particular US education is
highly prized in the Muslim world. Despite their opposition to most of American foreign policy, American education remains very well respected. Waterbury (2003) writes that there is a long tradition of Arab families sending their best and brightest to be educated in the US, noting that “even radical Islamists are not shy about sending their children to be educated in the United States.” (p.61) In the PBS documentary *Education City*, a profile of the Qatari megamall of education, students interviewed called their American education “the best education” anywhere around. Ghabra and Arnold (2007) concur with this assessment when they state: “American-style education is widely accepted as being the best form of higher education possible for young men and women in the Arab world.” (p.1) The authors note that the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent tightening of visa restrictions for Arab students, along with the keen desire for American higher education, are crucial reasons for the influx of Western universities into the region. For many Arabs, off-shore campuses are the best of both worlds: they can remain at home while still getting a valued American or Western education. This is echoed by a comment by Arab student Jinane Tabra who told PBS producers:

“I think you can be against American policies, and you can be against a lot of the policies coming out of the west towards the Arab world right now. But by accepting an American education, and by equipping yourself with an American education, you’re opening doors to negotiations and dialogues in the future that can help to resolve issues. (Branaccio, 2008)

This idea of creating a dialogue between the West and Middle East through education is an opinion that is also shared by others. Mark Wessel, Dean of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University and David Skorton, President of Cornell University are two such people who share this belief.
Skorton in his testimony to Congress on the globalization of higher education testified that although globalization of higher education has created some problems, the bigger picture must be examined. He goes on to say that “a new national plan to build capacity at home and abroad...is essential to establish strong and economically vibrant nations and to ensuring world peace.” (The Globalization of R&D and Innovation: The University Response: Hearing before the House Committee on Science and Technology, 110th Cong) Wessel, in his testimony, makes clear that globalization of higher education is a positive step forward and is beneficial to all citizens, regardless of location. He states: “there are no domestic policy issues any longer. The interconnectedness of economies, societies, and the welfare of individuals cannot and should not be undone. Understanding the ways in which this interconnectedness will change our view of how good policy is made is critical.” (The Globalization of R&D and Innovation: The University Response: Hearing before the House Committee on Science and Technology, 110th Cong) Both university officials, with campuses and investments already completed overseas, see globalization of higher education as a conduit to better international understanding, a position that despite their involvement is highly debatable and is yet to be fully understood.

CONCLUSION

With the proliferation of off-shore campuses growing rapidly in the past ten years, it is clear that off-shore campuses are making an impact on the globalization of higher education. It is the degree of that impact that remains the open question. Universities across the West are now looking overseas to expand operations and increase
expenditures. This is in keeping with the very business nature of globalization. The degree to which they will be successful will depend on many factors, some of which were discussed in this paper: financial, social, cultural, and economic. Some universities have seen opportunities and have aggressively exploited them, like New York University, while others have taken a slower, more measured approach, such as the University of Calgary. There is no doubt that this new arm of the university structure, the off-shore campus, is likely to stay in some form or another. Our world is too inter-connected and too small in this era of globalization of higher education NOT to be global in scope. Modern technology has changed the face of higher education, as it has with most industries, and this alone will only accelerate globalization in the future. However, as this paper discusses, there are inherent problems for globalization and higher education and these problems cannot be simply ignored. If off-shore campuses are here to stay, we must pay careful attention to the issue of globalization and how it affects the countries that are being populated with these campuses. Perhaps Dr. Philip G. Altbach, professor at Boston College said this best in his 2007 concluding remarks to Congress when speaking on the topic “Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World”:

The challenge is to recognize the complexities and nuances of the global education context—an academic world fraught with inequalities in which market and commercial forces increasingly dominate. The traditional domination of the North over the South remains largely intact. The task of ameliorating inequalities in the context of mass higher education is not an easy one. Yet it is important to ensure that globalization does not turn into the neocolonialism of the 21st century. (The Globalization of R&D and Innovation: The University Response: Hearing before the House Committee on Science and Technology, 110th Cong)
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