

# International Students

## Understanding the Motives for Higher Education as Development Aid

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### Presentation today

1. Presenter's background
2. Background to the study
3. What's driving aid-funded HE (orthodox and heterodox views)
4. Cultural Identity factors
5. Case Study – Indonesia Scholarship Program
6. Research Design
7. Your feedback / questions

## 1. Presenter's background

- 18 years + in aid sector
- Worked in international higher education (University of Melbourne; Monash)
- Background in career development and international students
- Completing PhD on Cultural Identity in the context of aid-funded Higher Education



## 2. Background to the Study

- Rising demand for higher education
- Aid donors elect to fund HE scholarships to students from developing countries
- Mandatory return of students to home country to contribute to development
- Understanding motives for HE as Development Aid – many contested ideas
- Students experience changes to cultural identity (CI) – implications for home-country development
- Study morphed from the practical to theoretical

## Australian Aid Program

- The Australian aid program is managed by AusAID and aims to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest
- Total aid program 2010-11 \$4.3 billion
- HE Scholarships \$125 m pa



- 1000 Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) are awarded each year in 31 countries @ approx \$130K ea



## No ideas are formed in a vacuum

- The study is informed by the literature on:
  - development studies
  - international student experience
  - international education including mobility

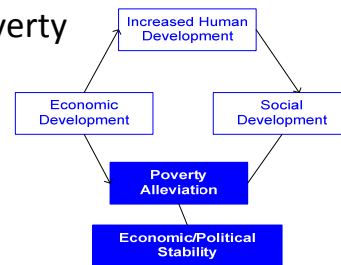
Also understanding there is a macro context based on political-economy literature

## 3. Let's look at what the scholars say about what's driving aid-funded Higher Education

- Orthodox – scholarship program is about poverty alleviation through building capacity for socio-economic development
- Heterodox – aid-funded education - nothing to do with poverty alleviation

## Mainstream ideas about Development and aid-funded higher education

- Building human capital is assumed to enhance both economic and social development and subsequently poverty alleviation



- Poverty alleviation = stability

## What the critics say

- Trickle down does not necessarily translate into socio-economic development
- Aid-funded education is driven by Australian national interest (it's got nothing to do with poverty alleviation)
- Aid benefits elites in city centres with minimal benefits to rural areas
- Australian education is a problem in terms of relevance offshore and access to technology
- Australia stands to gain network and even retain talent to benefit its own economy

## 4. Cultural Identity factors – research issue

- **CI changes related to HE sojourn**
  - Acculturation
  - Re-acculturation (reverse “culture shock”)
  - Transformation (cultural hybridity)
- **The Australian aid-funded HE Program assumes students will successfully re-orient and contribute to home country development**
- **Implications for home country development, given CI are currently not taken into account**

## Some Definitions

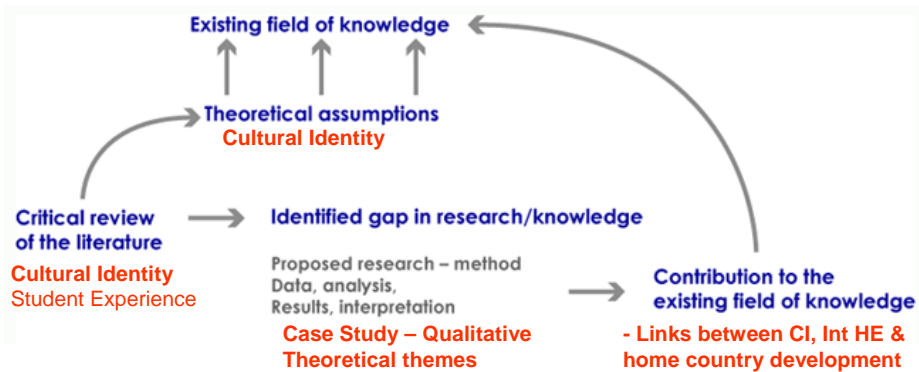
- *Cultural identity* is the symbol of one’s essential experience of oneself as it incorporates the worldview, value system attitudes and beliefs of a group with which such elements are shared (Adler, 1977)
- *Acculturation* – adjustment to a foreign culture (Martin, 1984).
- *Re-acculturation* - adjustment to the home culture, following a period of acculturation (Marks, 1987).
- *Cultural hybridity* – ‘third place’ – third place culture involves multiple cultural realities (Hall & Gay, 1996; Cannon, 1999, Keohne, 2005)

## Cultural Identity



How does CI affect the experience of awardees – during and after their experience in Australia?

## Conceptual Framework



- CI is psychologically (personality), sociologically (social networks, class), politically (national) driven
- CI is mediated by inter-cultural relations (home and host country relations)
- Many factors influencing CI ► personality, family, previous cross-cultural experience, religion, sexuality, gender, language, history, politics, power dynamics, mobility, globalisation

## **CI and Acculturation (adjustment to a foreign culture)**

- Contested findings regarding compatriot, other internationals and host country relations
- Predictive models – individual personality traits, anticipating changes to reduce uncertainties (eg cultural learning)
- Expectation (acculturation and re-entry)
- Importance of agency – self belief in negotiating acculturation (skills)
- Cultural differences – particularly individualism vs collectivism



## CI and Re-acculturation

- Reverse 'culture shock'
- Findings contested – co-nationals, other internationals, host country nationals
- Expectation – often there are false expectations at re-entry stage (sojourners do not anticipate change)
- Integrated – positive home and host-relationships can assist the process of re-acculturation and positive CI
- Practical interventions – Re-entry assistance programs (cultural learning)

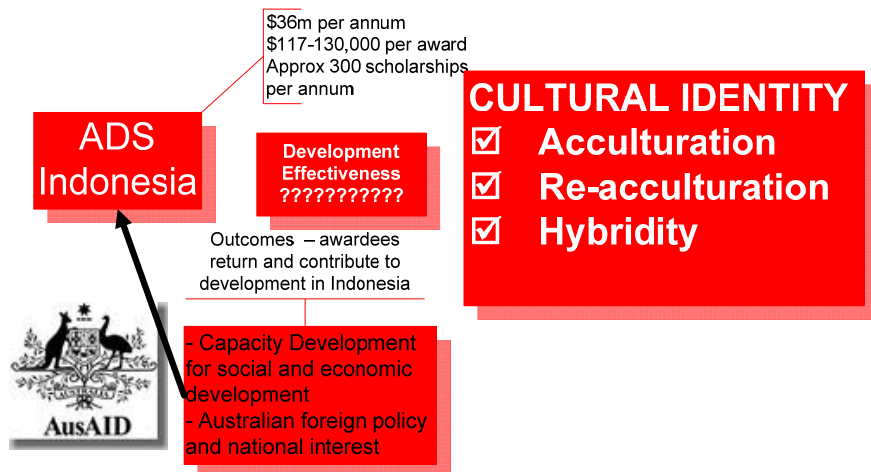
## CI factors and re-acculturation

Studies	Factors	Home Nationals	Other Internats	Host Nationals	Cult Hybridity	Acculturation	Re-Acculturation
Sussman	Expectations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yamazaki	Intercultural Learning						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gallahorn	Expectations						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rohlrch & Martin	Re-entry			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cox	Alienated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ward & Searle	Expectations Cult Distance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Church		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cannon	Third Culture				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ward & Kennedy	Expections Psycho Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Szkeclerek	Expectations Intercultural Learning						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brabant	Gender						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## What about Cultural Hybridity (inter-cultural worldview)

- 'Third Place' – culture involves multiple cultural realities (Hall & Gay, 1996; Cannon, 1999; Keohne, 2005)
- Hybridity is discussed in the CI literature on acculturation and re-acculturation

## 5. Case Study – ADS Indonesia



## 6. Research Design

- Case Study – rich narratives (Yin, 1994; Stake, 2000)
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Qualitative methods
- Unique and non-comparative findings
- Interpretative approach
- Constructivist
- Not seeking to test hypotheses or generate new theory (Merriam, 1998).



### Student Perspective

- The case study is primarily informed by the graduates of the Program
- Returned post-graduate ADS awardees

## Likely practical contributions from the study

- Close gaps in understanding about development effectiveness of ADS Program - credibility issue, improve practice and programming
- Generate recommendations to deal with issues arising from CI changes and home country development
- Generate recommendations to improve international student experience (eg Monash) in lieu of issues relating to CI

## Who can benefit from the study?

- Higher education managers and scholars
- Aid practitioners and scholars
- Recipient countries for aid-funded HE
- Aid agencies (bilateral and multilateral)
- Philanthropic organisations that fund HE
- Higher education institutes (eg Monash)
- Scholarship Awardees

## Summing Up

- Contested ideas around the beneficiaries of aid-funded HE education
- CI has been identified as an important issue
- CI requires further exploration, particularly in the context of aid-funded HE – contribution to knowledge as well as practice
- We need to know – public policy reasons, HE institutions

**Thank you**

**Questions ?  
Your ideas for the study?**