

# Geographies of internationalisation

Hanne Kirstine Adriansen

Since the 1990s, internationalisation has been an important agenda in Danish higher education (HE), as reflected, for instance, in policies aimed at increasing student and staff mobility (UFM, 2014). Internationalisation is regarded as a tool for enhancing the quality of education, research, and service to society (de Wit, 2015), yet we have no clear knowledge regarding how internationalisation affects ways of thinking about quality, relevance, and learning within Danish HE. Thus, the aim of this project is to study how the internationalisation of HE produces new understandings of pedagogies, students, and knowledges - and which understandings of quality and relevance are promoted through different internationalisation instruments. We focus on six common instruments of internationalisation in Danish HE: outgoing student mobility, incoming student mobility, English as a medium of instruction, international specialisation, international staff, and internationalisation at home. With a novel analytical approach, the project uses spatial and mobility theories to tease out implicit understandings of geographies of internationalisation; i.e. what come to be seen as the 'right' ways of teaching, 'good' students, and 'legitimate' knowledge, and how these ideas travel. Inherent in the word *inter-national* is a focus on geography; this begs the question how geography can improve the quality of HE: how can the integration of a 'non-national' dimension or the mobility between countries enhance the relevance and quality of education? In seeking answers to these questions, a spatial approach is useful as it can help move beyond the binaries of national/international, home/abroad, local/global (Larsen, 2016); it can unfold geographical differences (Brooks et al., 2012) and stress how ideas about quality and relevance move across countries and become hegemonic in HE policy and practice – or fail to do so (Gulson & Symes, 2007).

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in a teacher training college, a faculty of science, and a faculty of arts, we explore how 'knowledges', 'students', and 'pedagogies' are perceived and (re)shaped in the contextualised practices of internationalisation of HE. Through its five work packages, this multi-disciplinary project will examine the following research questions across different HE institutions and educational programs:

- RQ 1: How do different instruments of internationalisation create global hierarchies through the promotion of certain types of knowledge, student, and pedagogy?
- RQ 2: Which notions of quality and relevance are produced through the various instruments of internationalisation in different Danish HE institutions and educational programs?
- RQ 3: How can a spatial approach to internationalisation inform debates on the quality and relevance of international HE?

### **Theoretical and analytical approach: Spatial and mobility theories in education**

Internationalisation can potentially open the world of education by including a diversity of perspectives; yet, it can also close the world through ‘Westernisation’ or ‘anglicisation’ of education and curriculum (Leask, 2015). Hence, there are inevitable geographical dimensions to internationalisation of HE. Spatial and mobility theories highlight such geographical dimensions (Larsen & Beech, 2014).

In the 1990s, a spatial turn emerged in the social sciences and the humanities, whereby scholars from these fields became interested in spatial dimensions of different phenomena (Warf & Arias, 2008). This was followed by the mobility turn (Sheller & Urry, 2006), which added perspectives on mobility to spatial theories. A number of education researchers have used spatial and mobility perspectives in their studies of education: from the micro level in the classroom (Fenwick et al. 2011), to a macro level on internationalisation (Larsen, 2016). In a parallel development, human geographers have become increasingly interested in the field of education (Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Waters 2017). Thus, spatial studies of education are found both amongst educationalists and geographers.

We combine a number of approaches and concepts from these fields. ‘Geographies of science’ (Livingstone; 2010; Meusbürger et al., 2010) can help us understand the localness of scientific knowledge, which is important for understanding what relevance means in different parts of HE. This spatial approach examines local aspects of global knowledge and education. It does not reify the local or imply a static notion of knowledge.

On the contrary, ‘geographies of science’ studies the world as interconnected through flows and networks instead of binaries. While some has challenged academics to put an end to Western/Eurocentric domination in international HE curricula (Haigh, 2002), we use ‘geographies of science’ to question what an international HE curriculum looks like. A central concept and method for studying this is ‘mapping the curriculum’ (Tange & Millar, 2016).

Following the mobility turn, geographers, historians, and anthropologists have studied ‘mobility of knowledge’, especially in regard to HE (Jöns et al. 2017). We use this approach to study how knowledge, pedagogies, and notions of what it means to be a good student travel, for instance through and with international students and staff. The concept ‘the becoming of students’ (Simidan 2002) is used to capture specificities of what it means to be a good student in different programs at different HE institutions and in different countries. Furthermore, we combine this with the concept ‘the cultural production of an academic’ (Adriansen et al. 2016) to examine what happens when students move across settings and countries and encounter new notions of ‘how to be good’. ‘Geographical imaginaries’ (Salazar, 2012; Thompson, 2017) is an important concept that can capture the historical and political influences on students’ motives for choosing a certain part of the world to travel to. This historical perspective is essential to understand how students and staff perceive their own history, the world, and the (educational) history of the places they travel (Koh, 2017). In continuation of mobility of knowledge, there has been a focus on the ‘mobility of policy’ (Geddie, 2014). We use this approach to examine how notions of quality and relevance move, based on the idea that both concepts are discursive constructs that receive their meaning in the discursive construction of actions linked to them (Saarinen, 2017).

We combine the above-mentioned macro perspective with a micro perspective in which we study social interaction in the classroom and other educational spaces. Every situation of social interaction (e.g. participation in a certain educational space) can be said to have both a macro- and a micro context (the historical, cultural and political contexts and the context of the given social interaction). By combining interactional analysis with context analysis (Blommaert & Dong, 2010), it is possible to uncover how greater structures are

manifested in interaction, and thus understand how contextual factors of participation (and communicative factors) lead to evaluation of what are considered valid contributions in terms of privileged knowledge and student/teacher behaviour, as well as where certain discourses and languages are legitimate and hegemonic. Thereby, we can study how internationalisation affects the everyday life of students and staff in HE.

### **State of the art: ‘a spatial approach to internationalisation of HE’ and our contribution**

As a field of research, internationalisation of HE has generated a large number of publications e.g. about its rationale (Altbach, 2010; de Wit, 1999; Teichler, 2004) and its future (Altbach & de Wit, 2018; Knight, 2014). There are also numerous reports targeting practitioners and policymakers (de Wit, 1999; Kehm 2011; Knight & de Wit, 1999). Philip Altbach, Hans de Wit, and Jane Knight are amongst the most prominent and well-cited scholars in the field. However, none of them apply spatial approaches to their studies of HE internationalisation.

Research of HE internationalisation that have used spatial and mobility approaches include studies of staff and student mobility focusing on their motives for going abroad (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Findlay et al., 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2011; Jöns, 2011) including imaginative geographies (Kölbel, 2018); global university rankings (Jöns & Hoyler, 2013); curriculum practices (Tange & Millar, 2016); universities’ practices for attracting international students (Mosneaga & Agergaard, 2012); mobility, place and affect in transnational teacher education (Anderson et al., 2018), and our own study of international research collaboration with particular focus on African and Danish universities (Adriansen, Madsen & Jensen, 2016). In a Scandinavian context, a number of studies are important despite not employing a spatial approach. These include studies of paradoxical discourses of transnational student mobility, linguistic diversity, and cross-cultural exchange (Fabricius et al., 2017); the link between English language and rank/quality (Hultgren, 2014); epistemological knowledge encounters among international students in Denmark (Wadsholt, 2014); Eastern European students accumulating Western educational capital (Wilken & Dahlberg, 2017); and opportunities and challenges of multilingual and multicultural learning spaces (Lauridsen, 2016).

We build on these studies to apply a spatial approach to deliver a more nuanced and theoretically informed study of practices and discourses of internationalisation and their potentially uneven geographies. We add to existing studies of language practices in a Scandinavian context by not seeing English as interesting in itself (as the language of teaching in international HE), but as a catalyst (Torres-Olave, 2012) making visible issues such as language policies, language ideologies, and pedagogical practices that may otherwise be taken for granted. Moreover, the proposed research is novel in its study and comparison of six different instruments of internationalisation, not seen in other research projects. In addition, the inclusion of three different types of HE institution offering different educational programs is unique and allows comparison of instruments across disciplines. This broad perspective holds potential for practitioners who seek critical, research-based information about instruments of internationalisation, including their opportunities and pitfalls.

### **Project design and organisation, personnel and international collaboration**

The project will be based at the Danish School of Education (DPU), Aarhus University (AU). Associate Professor Hanne Kirstine Adriansen (HKA) is principal investigator, Thilde Juul-Wiese (TJW) is her PhD student, both at DPU. Associate Professor Lene Møller Madsen (LMM) and postdoctoral fellow Camilla Falk Rønne Nissen (CFRN) are at the Department for Science Education, University of Copenhagen (UoC). Two internationally recognised scholars are affiliated: Johanna Waters (JW), reader in geography, University College London, UK and Taina Saarinen (TS), head of department, Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. As such, it is a multi-disciplinary project with academics from human geography (23 months), linguistics (26 months), and anthropology (36 months), who all have experience in the field of international HE.

The project is based on ethnographic fieldwork (Mills & Morton, 2013), predominantly using qualitative methods such as participant observations (Madden, 2017), qualitative interviews (Kvale, 1996), and document and discourse analysis (Rapley, 2008).

## References

- Adriansen, H. K. (2012). Timeline interviews: A tool for conducting life history research. *Qualitative studies* 3(1) 40-55.
- Adriansen, H. K., Madsen, L.M. & Jensen, S. (eds.) (2016). *Higher education and capacity building in Africa: The geographies and power of knowledge under changing conditions*. London: Routledge. Routledge Studies in African Development.
- Adriansen, H. K., Mehmood-Ul-Hassan, M. & Mbow, C. (2016). Producing scientific knowledge in Africa today: auto-ethnographic insights from a climate change researcher. In: H. K. Adriansen, L. M. Madsen & S. Jensen (Eds.), *Higher Education and Capacity Building in Africa: The geography and power of knowledge under changing conditions* (pp. 124-146). London: Routledge. Routledge Studies in African Development.
- Altbach, P. G. (2010). Globalisation and the university: Myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management* 10(1) 3-25.
- Altbach, P., & de Wit, H. (2018). Are We Facing a Fundamental Challenge to Higher Education Internationalization? *International Higher Education* 2(93) 2-4.
- Anderson, V., Young, S., Blanch, K., & Smith, L. (2018). Mobility, place and affect in transnational teacher education graduates' accounts of their first year teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 69, 11-20.
- Beelen J. and Jones E. (2015) Redefining Internationalization at Home. In: Curaj A., Matei L., Pricopie R., Salmi J., Scott P. (eds.) *The European Higher Education Area*, pp. 59-72. Cham: Springer.
- Blommaert, J. and Dong, J. (2010). *Ethnographic fieldwork. A beginner's guide*. Multilingual matters.
- Brooks, R. and J. Waters (2011). *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Brooks, R., Fuller, A., and Waters, J. L. (eds.) (2012). *Changing spaces of education: new perspectives on the nature of learning*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- de Wit, H. (1999). Changing Rationales for the Internationalization of Higher Education. *International Higher Education* 15 2-3.

- de Wit, H., Hunter, F., Howard, L., & Egron-Polak, E. (2015). *Internationalisation of higher education study. Report for the European parliament's committee on culture and education*. Brussels: European Union.
- Fabricius, A. H., Mortensen, J. and H. Haberland (2017). The lure of internationalization: paradoxical discourses of transnational student mobility, linguistic diversity and cross-cultural exchange. *Higher Education* 73(4) 577–595.
- Fenwick, T., Edwards, R., and Sawchuk, P. (2011). *Emerging approaches to educational research: Tracing the socio-material*. Routledge.
- Findlay, A. M., King, R., Stam, A. and Ruiz-Gelices, E. (2006). Ever reluctant Europeans: the changing geographies of UK students studying and working abroad. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 13(4) 291-318.
- Geddie, K. (2015). Policy mobilities in the race for talent: Competitive state strategies in international student mobility. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 40(2) 235-248.
- Gonzalez, C. R., Mesanza, R. B. and Mariel, P. (2011). The determinants of international student mobility flows: an empirical study on the Erasmus program. *Higher Education* 62(4) 413-430.
- Gulson K. and Symes, C, (eds.) (2007). *Spatial Theories of Education: Policy and Geography Matters*. Routledge, New York.
- Haigh, M. H. (2002). Internationalisation of the Curriculum: designing inclusive education for a small world. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 26(1) 49-66.
- Holloway, S.L. and Jöns, H. (2012). Geographies of education and learning. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37(4) 482-88.
- Hultgren, A. K. (2014). English language use at the internationalised universities of Northern Europe: Is there a correlation between Englishisation and world rank? *Multilingua* 3/4 391-414.
- Jöns, H. (2011). Transnational academic mobility and gender. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 9(2) 183-209.
- Jöns, H. and Hoyler, M (2013). Global geographies of higher education: The perspective of world university rankings. *Geoforum* 46 45-59
- Jöns, H., Meusburger, P., & Heffernan, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Mobilities of knowledge*. Springer.

- Kehm, B. M. (2011). Research on Internationalisation in Higher Education. International HE con-gress.  
[http://www.uyk2011.org/kitap/pages/uyk2011\\_s\\_0231\\_0239.pdf](http://www.uyk2011.org/kitap/pages/uyk2011_s_0231_0239.pdf)
- Knight J. (2014). Is Internationalisation of Higher Education Having an Identity Crisis? In: Maldonado-Maldonado A., Bassett R. (eds) *The Forefront of International Higher Education. Higher Education Dynamics*, Vol 42. Springer, Dordrecht.
- Knight, J., and de Wit, H. (Eds.). (1999). *Quality and internationalization in higher education*. Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Koh, S. Y. (2017). *Race, Education, and Citizenship: Mobile Malaysians, British Colonial Legacies, and a Culture of Migration*. USA: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews – an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks
- Kölbel, A. (2018). Imaginative geographies of international student mobility. *Social & Cultural Geography*, A-head of print.
- Laihonen, P. and Szabó, T. P. (2018). Studying the visual and material dimensions of education and learning. Editors of Special Issue. *Linguistics and Education* 44 1-86.
- Larsen, M. A. and Beech, J. (2014). Spatial theorizing in comparative and international education research. *Comparative Education Review* 58(2) 191-214.
- Larsen, M. A. (2016). *Internationalization of higher education: An analysis through spatial, network, and mobilities theories*. USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lauridsen, K. M. (2016). IntlUni - the opportunities and challenges of the multilingual and multicultural learning space in the international university. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4(2) 349-354.
- Leask, B. (2015). *Internationalizing the curriculum*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Livingstone, D. N. (2010). *Putting science in its place: geographies of scientific knowledge*. University of Chicago Press.
- Madden, R. (2017). *Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography*. USA: Sage.
- Meusburger, P., Livingstone, D., and Jöns, H. (Eds.). (2010). *Geographies of science*. Springer Verlag.
- Mills, D., and Morton, M. (2013). *Ethnography in education*. USA: Sage.

- Mosneaga, A. and Agergaard, J. (2012). Agents of internationalisation? Danish universities' practices for attracting international students. *Globalisation. Societies and Education* 10(4) 519-538.
- Rapley, T. (2008). *Doing conversation, discourse and document analysis*. Sage.
- Saarinen, T. (2007). Quality on the move: Discursive construction of higher education policy from the perspective of quality. University of Jyväskylä.
- Salazar, N. B. (2012). Tourism imaginaries: A conceptual approach. *Annals of Tourism research*, 39(2), 863-882.
- Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and planning A*, 38(2), 207-226.
- Simandan, D. (2002). On what it takes to be a good geographer. *Area*, 34(3), 284-293.
- Tange, H. and Millar, S. (2016). Opening the mind? Geographies of knowledge and curricular practices. *Higher Education* 72(5) 573-87.
- Teichler, U. (2004). The changing debate on internationalisation of higher education. *Higher education*, 48(1), 5-26.
- Thompson, M. (2017). Migration decision-making: a geographical imaginations approach. *Area*, 49(1), 77-84.
- Torres-Olave, B. (2012). Imaginative geographies: identity, difference, and English as the language of instruction in a Mexican university program. *Higher Education* 63(3) 317-335.
- UVM, Undervisningsministeriet (2009). Praktikophold i udlandet: En guide med anbefalinger til videregående uddannelsesinstitutioner. Styrelsen for Videregående Uddannelser. <https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2010/filer-2010/praktikophold-i-udlandet.pdf>
- UFM, Undervisnings- og Forskningsministeriet (2014). Internationalisering og kvalitet i uddannelserne – inspiration fra det europæiske uddannelsessamarbejde. Styrelsen for Videregående Uddannelser. <https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2014/filer-2014/internationalisering-og-kvalitet-i-uddannelser-1.pdf>
- Wadsholt, T. K. (2014). Exploring interepistemological encounters in international HE at the intersection of ideologies of neoliberalism and ethical globalization. Abstract fra SRHE 2014, Newport in South Wales, United Kingdom, Storbritannien.

- Warf, B., and Arias, S. (Eds.). (2008). *The spatial turn: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Waters, J. L. (2017). Education unbound? Enlivening debates with a mobilities perspective on learning. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(3) 279-298.
- Wilken, L., and Dahlberg, M. G. (2017). Between international student mobility and work migration: Experiences of students from EU's newer member states in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43(8) 1347-1361.