

Capacity-Building, Internationalisation or Postcolonial Education? Space and Place in Development Aid Funded PhD Training (0143)

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**Panel: Mobilities, Silences and Social Change: Charting New Agendas in Higher Education**

Increased transnational mobility of postgraduates is one way in which globalisation manifest itself into research and Higher Education. The tendency has increased interest in the flow and direction of transnational postgraduate mobility from researchers and policy makers worldwide (Unesco 2010, MOORE 2010, Horizon 2020, Jacob and Meek 2013, Shields 2014). Less researched is how transnational postgraduate mobility impacts on internationalisation of receiving institutions and in the context of this paper, on supervision practices. Accordingly, despite the rich literature on international mobility patterns of individuals, educational development is under-theorised in terms of exploring the pre-assumed relationship between transnational postgraduate mobility and internationalisation of supervision practices (Manathunga 2006).

Notwithstanding the strong tendency of transnational student mobility from the global south to the global north, and the increased engagement from the university sector into development aid funded PhD-programs (Lynn and Meek 2014), supervision practices appear to be particularly under – theorised from postcolonial perspectives (Manathunga 2014). This paper makes a contribution to this research gap by exploring the complexities of supervision of Swedish development aid funded postgraduate students from Tanzania and Mozambique, who have undertaken PhD studies in Swedish universities. Accordingly, the article makes a contribution

to research into internationalisation of educational development by situating postgraduate supervision within a larger intersecting grid of 'postcolonial knowledge relations' (Mohanty 2003) in an increasingly competitive global research economy. In this context, the research presented here is inspired by theories into 'place/ space relations' (Lefebvre 1991, Massey 1999). From this perspective PhD supervision does not simply *take place* but is produced through, and produces, that place (Ibid). While theories on place relations are frequent in other fields in social science, such as sociology, political science and human geography, it is under-theorised in international and comparative Education (Larsen and Beech 1914) thus indicating the contribution of this research to field.

#### *Aim and research questions*

The aim of this paper is to explore *what* place/space relations (Lefebvre 1991) are articulated and produced in supervision of development aid funded PhD postgraduates from Tanzania and Mozambique. Integral to this is exploring *what* these place/space representations produce in terms of internationalisation of supervision in Swedish universities. A central focus is also exploring how supervision of these particular scholars resonates and/or oppose with larger 'postcolonial knowledge relations' (Mohanty 2003).

The research questions are:

- a) How are place/space relations represented in supervision in Sweden?
- b) What do representations of place/space produce in terms of internationalisation of Swedish PhD supervision? More specifically if and how is the prior research knowledge of these scholars

recognised and valued, are there experiences of inclusion/ exclusion? If and how are the mobility trajectories of these scholars acknowledged and valued ?

### *Previous research and theoretical framework*

The paper will draw on previous research into ‘intercultural education’ (Manathunga 2006), student –supervisor interactions (Delamont, Atkinson and Parry 2000) postcolonial postgraduate supervision (Kenway and Bullen 2003, Manathunga 2014). Accordingly, the research presented in this paper will be situated within a broader framework of research into gender relations in Higher Education (Morley 2005) intersectional gender relations in Higher Education (Leathwood and Read 2009, Hey 2010) and postcolonial relations in higher education (Mirza 2009). The theoretical concepts used in the analysis derive from the field of place/space relations (LeFebvre 1991, Massey 1995) and gender research into the field of body-spaces (Puwar 2004).

### *Method and sample*

The sample consists of PhD graduates and candidates funded by Swedish development aid to research capacity building in Mozambique and Tanzania during the period 1990-2013. The total data set consists of 291 individuals (159 in Mozambique and 132 in Tanzania). A web-based questionnaire has been sent to all 291 traced individuals. This sample is analysed from a cross-sectional retro-perspective approach (Neuman 1991:25-27). From the sample, 38 PhD graduates have been strategically selected for in-depth interviews. The individual interviews were conducted as ‘mobility biographies’ particularly designed to map and explore researchers’ trajectories over time, space and place (Kenway & Fahey 2011). A mixed methods approach has been applied to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data collected. The methodological

approach has made it possible to map general patterns/tendencies as well as lived experiences of academic mobility (Allwood 2004). Furthermore, a mix method approach is used here to triangulate the findings as well as validate the results (Ibid).

### *Preliminary results*

Generally, the results from the survey indicate mostly positive experiences from supervision in Sweden among the sampled PhD graduates. In the interviews, which discerned more detailed information on the topic, the material conditions linked to the supervision situation were emphasised, especially time and the material conditions for research were brought forward as important factors. Furthermore, our analysis shows that recognition of 'space' (i.e students mobility trajectories, previous knowledge and current research interests) where crucial for constructing a positive experience of supervision in Sweden and vice versa.

Despite the policy rhetoric of these programs (Gov doc: 2010; 2014), i.e. partnerships based on equal terms in the research relations, our results show that the hierarchical conditions for research partnerships which are inherent in the premises of the model of capacity building is reinforced and sometimes amplified in the Swedish supervision contact zone revealing that in practice, internationalisation is multi-layered and conditioned. From this perspective these transnational PhD students are at the same time welcomed as objects of capacity building and excluded from the subject position of international knowledge producing subjects. Accordingly, internationalisation is constructed as separated from capacity building at the same time as capacity building is reinforcing the view of Swedish academia as international.

### *Policy implications*

The paper bring added value since it focus on a group of postgraduate students which often have been excluded from research into internationalisation of HE; development aid funded scholars from the African continent. In this context, this research is relevant for policy in the field of internationalisation of HE as well development aid.