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Ethics, power, internationalisation and the postcolonial: A Foucauldian discourse analysis of policy documents in two Scottish universities

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Ethics, power, internationalisation and the postcolonial: A Foucauldian discourse analysis of policy documents in two Scottish universities

This paper provides a critical discussion of internationalisation in Higher Education (HE), and exemplifies a process of uncovering the investments in power and ideology through the partial analysis of four strategic internationalisation documents at two Scottish Higher Education institutions, as part of an ongoing international study into the ethics of internationalisation (EIHE)¹. A Foucauldian discursive analytical approach is employed in analysing the policy documents. It reveals the relationships between power and knowledge in the constitution of regimes of truth within internationalisation, while serving to interrogate the dynamics of the affective and ethical in the comprising of such relationships and imaginaries. A critical postcolonial theorisation works in tandem with a Foucauldian approach in uncovering the relations of power discursively at work and the discursive effects of power in institutional terms. Four key themes are identified within the documents and critically discussed. The discussions serve to demonstrate that a lack of critical engagement with internationalisation discourses in Higher Education has the effect of reifying a dominant view and suppressing the emergence of alternative discourses. A critical postcolonial lens facilitates interpretability of power dynamics through and beyond internationalisation in Higher Education to consider the ethical effects of such power in its investments in global inequality, injustice and oppression within the global modernist imaginary.

Keywords: internationalisation, critical internationalisation, Higher Education, Scottish universities, Foucault, postcolonial, decolonial, Foucauldian discourse analysis

Introduction

Intensification of internationalisation of Higher Education (HE) institutions worldwide has continued unabated over the last few decades (Swanson 2013), with the increasing installation of private interests and neoliberal governance logic within the corporate university (Andreotti and Stein 2016; Swanson and Pashby 2016). In this sense, the human capital value of education has been recontextualised as a private good which is tied to a market-oriented commodification of knowledge within universities, underpinned by a repositioning of universities as entrepreneurial enterprises. While Knight (2004, p11) defined the internationalisation of HE as ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education’, this more popular definition escapes the politico-economic nature of internationalisation within ongoing globalising competition, which has largely co-opted the public spaces of universities on a global scale. Consequently, it

¹ Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education in Times of Crises (EIHE) is a 23 institution, 11 country comparative study that was funded by the Academy of Finland (2012 – 2016); International PI: Dr Vanessa Andreotti; Scotland PI: Dr Dalene Swanson: <http://eihe.blogspot.co.uk/>

does not capture the varied and conflicting ideologies and investments that surround the ways in which internationalisation discourses are operationalised, ways that require a more fluid and ongoing negotiation of its meaning (Robson and Turner 2007).

Later commentary sees Knight (2010, p14) arguing that ‘internationalisation has become a catch-all phrase used to describe anything and everything remotely linked to the global, intercultural and international dimensions of higher education and is thus losing its way’, although how it might be ‘losing its way’ may presume a coherently and universally-understood starting point for interpretation. Such commentary belies the perceived neutrality of internationalisation, or reinforces a notion of a positive purpose for HE underpinning internationalisation mandates that have now ‘been lost’ by being increasingly held to a plurality of interpretations. Knight (2013) and De Wit and Hunter (2014) call for increased reflection, claiming that internationalisation in HE is at a turning point, a time when important changes are taking place. Nonetheless, consideration of how we might reflect, to what purposes we may reflect, and who controls the discourse, seldom comes into discussions about internationalisation agendas in HE from more dominant apolitical perspectives.

It is evident that within dominant institutional discourses, the value and extent of the internationalisation of HE is defined in terms of scale. The use of vast data sets analysed through extensive computerised systems to reveal significant patterns or trends has become common, and is often associated with ever-increasing surveillance and monitoring systems. This ‘big data’ often becomes the means by which internationalisation strategies and policies are framed but also evaluated as successful or not. For example, between 2011 and 2012 the UK provided HE services for 425,256 international students (HESA 2014) and, before Brexit, academic mobility had been projected to increase by 3.7% annually until 2200 (BIS 2013). The UK hosted 15% of the world’s 3.4 million international students in 2009, an increase of 5% in 2002 to 368,968 in 2009 (Choudaha and Chang 2012). However, 2012/13 admissions saw an unpredicted decrease in numbers (HESA 2014), which is commonly presented as being of concern to many education providers whose dominant instrumental motivations in promoting internationalisation are related to profitability. This has been exacerbated by anxiety over potential detrimental effects of the Brexit outcome to revenues, as a large proportion of university funding is dependent on sustaining an increasing upward trend.

Within the Scottish context, the ‘big data’ view of internationalisation in HE has particular reference, aiming to raise the economic viability of HE institutions still further. In Scotland between 2013 and 2014, there were 170,800 EU and Non-EU students studying at undergraduate and postgraduate levels within HE institutions (HESA 2014). Furthermore, Scotland hosts the highest percentage of international students in the UK at 21% (Tindel et al 2013), contributing around £441m to the Scottish economy generally (Hyslop 2013). However, the current political climate with calls for another Scottish referendum operates in tandem with the potentially negative long-term economic effects of Brexit. This means that Scottish HE institutions could become economically vulnerable to the exposure of current deleterious political effects, potentially resulting in fewer international students choosing to study in Scotland. Universities are often judged on the impact of their internationalisation strategies by data-driven approaches. This approach entails looking at the proportions of international staff, students, and research papers

published with at least one co-author from another country. These data are then used to prepare ranking tables that declare the ‘World’s most international universities’ (Bothwell 2016). Scottish universities, being bound by the UK’s Research Evaluation Framework (REF) system, have joined the global HE competitive markets via these accountability and evaluation systems that pit one university against another. This obsession with numbers and measurement has become the focus of discussions and presentations on internationalisation and is a recurring theme in several universities’ policy documents.

This paper presents a critical discussion of internationalisation discourses in HE institutions, and offers a partial critical discursive analysis of strategic policy documents related to two Scottish universities. The aim of the analysis is not to target specific universities but rather to reveal how the discourses commented on are similarly widespread and are relatively common in publicly available documents, easily retrievable online, on most British universities’ websites. A Foucauldian discursive analytic methodology is applied in order to uncover the intricate relationships between power and knowledge. This methodological approach, together with critical postcolonial perspectives, work together to provide a critically reflective discussion that highlights the critical political complexity within these discourses and therefore brings attention to the affective, ethical and justice-oriented effects of power/knowledge interstices.

Discourses of internationalisation, Foucault and ‘the postcolonial’

The predominantly managerial and corporate discourses on internationalisation in HE have contributed to what has become recognised as the ongoing neoliberalisation of HE institutes (Andreotti 2013; de Sousa Santos 2014; Swanson 2013). HE has become a terrain for marketisation agendas and a means to generating more income (Swanson 2011). Higher education has become synonymous with training for ‘employability’, which may threaten what some value in universities according to their historical canonical and civic functions, notably the scope for critical debate and scientific analysis (Levidow 2002).

The discourses of internationalisation also show the structuration of the power-knowledge interrelationship (Foucault 1977). For Foucault, it is not only power that has the exclusive right to generate knowledge, but also that knowledge gives power over people. In this sense, the relationship between power and knowledge is fluid, inextricable and complex (Foucault 1972). While a Foucauldian poststructural perspective offers theoretical insight into the dynamics of power in relation to various discursive manoeuvrings in internationalisation, a critical postcolonial perspective allows for critique of internationalisation discourses by addressing ethics, more specifically ethics in relation to power, colonial discourses in the global domain, and their investments in HE institutions globally. By bringing Foucauldian perspectives together with postcolonial/decolonial concepts, attention can be given to the ethical and justice-oriented effects of power/knowledge interstices and situated (re)contextualisations within global universities. Development discourses and ongoing forms of neo-colonialism via the (inter)relationships between knowledge, power, context, and subjectivity can be analysed and discussed. Said (1978) highlights the epistemological and cultural dimensions of colonial domination, and with a notably Foucauldian influence, illuminates the tight relationship between colonial knowledge and power (Gandhi 1998, Lary 2006). In this respect, it can be argued that a productive engagement with Foucauldian thought and postcolonial and decolonial thinkers, while

grappling with the tensions between the two theoretical positions, has the potential to enable an affective and ethical encounter with issues of power, discourse, and context in relation to internationalisation and HE institutions, policies and practices.

Foucault, power and method

This paper contributes to a partial analysis of an ongoing study in which regimes of power related to discourses on internationalisation are examined. It does so by attempting to deconstruct a system of meaning-making constituted historically and discursively in order to examine how and why some categories of argumentation have come to be accepted and taken as true in the context of HE. In order to narrow the field of internationalisation and its activities, which spread across the globe, the research this paper partially reflects on explores four publicly available strategy documents specifically related to internationalisation within two Scottish institutes of HE. The analyses attempt to uncover the relationships between power and knowledge, while revealing the ways in which power is invested in internationalisation discourses. It does so while also interrogating the dynamics of the affective and ethical in the constituting of such relationships. The intention is not to compare documents from these two Scottish universities but to consider how these documents can be viewed through a Foucauldian lens, looking at how this particular context and these documents produce a range of realisations of power. A set of key themes that emerge from all four documents will be discussed in how they assist in constituting what is accepted as the prevailing order of things related to internationalisation in HE. It nevertheless needs to be understood that many characteristics of internationalisation reflect not only the order of things within internationalisation in HE, but also represent the order of things in many significant ways of wider ideological and social discourses within which internationalisation has become invested, or for which internationalisation *is* the investment. A colonial understanding from a perspective of postcolonial ethics also brings in considerations of power, but speaks further to geopolitical conditions and how people are ranked in the world. Rankings of people geopolitically, and the obsession with rankings (Hazelkorn 2011) within HE institutions are intricately interrelated, and the ways in which they colonise the imaginary of the global university can be viewed as an inheritance of modernism.

Foucault (1977) first introduces the concept of ‘regime of truth’ when discussing the formation of a corpus of knowledge, techniques and scientific discourses of a new penal system in the 1800 to 1900s. This regime of truth becomes a crucial element in power relations as it refers to context or field’s producing this ‘truth’ and becomes a tactical element in power relations. It is the analysis of strategy documents here which seeks to identify what elements might be understood as ‘regimes of truth’ within the discourses of internationalisation in Scottish HE. Before the document analysis, a discussion on how Foucault’s work is applied and how this analysis is placed within a framework of postcolonial ethics ensues.

Methodological approach: Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

As noted by Ball (2013), Foucault used the term discourse in different ways in his work. His main concern was to address the structures and constitutive rules that comprise a discourse rather than the texts and utterances produced within it. A distinguishing characteristic of Foucauldian discourse analysis is the stress on power relationships. These are expressed through language, identities and practices, and the

relationship between language and power. This approach may be employed to analyse how the social world, expressed through language, is affected by various sources of power. In order to try and comprehend how we make sense of the world, this form of discourse analysis involves considering different ideologies and politics and studying relationships at both an institutional and personal level. Furthermore, it enables an examination of the way in which power is structured through discourse and through what we may refer to as positioning strategies.

Carrabine (2001) argues that discourse/power/knowledge are an interconnected triad, and uses Foucault's genealogy as a methodological lens to undertake discourse analysis to enable us to see how discourse is infused with power/knowledge and also produces power/knowledge networks. Foucault (1972) construes discourse in several ways. For Foucault, it is 'the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements' (p. 80). Discourse conceived as an assemblage of related statements that produce meaning and effect, and in which power circulates (Carrabine 2001), is at play in the analysis of documents. Discourses effect a powerful constitution of 'truth' and moderate what can or cannot be made to become 'true'. This analysis seeks to understand how the discourses in policy documents construct a version of internationalisation, and in the process how the discourse defines and establishes what can come to be understood as 'truth' at a point in time. Discourse and the powerful interplay between competing discourses have effect on how a concept such as internationalisation comes to be understood. In order 'to understand discourse we have to see it as intermeshed with power/knowledge where knowledge both constitutes and is constituted through discourse as an effect of power. If our study of discourse is to be more than a study of language, it must look also at the social context and social relations within which power and knowledge are distributed' (Carrabine *ibid*, p.208). In these terms, internationalisation discourses need to be understood as clearly situated within a particular context, whether political, geographical, temporal, socio-historical, cultural, or otherwise.

While there may be concerns with using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis as a method given the modernist critique that it is somewhat vague with no clearly defined methodological structure for applying Foucault's concepts (Burr 2003; Garrity 2010), this lack of prescription on interpretation may also, especially from poststructural perspectives, be viewed as its strength. Ball (2013) further notes that Foucault can be misused and misread by educational researchers, but Foucault (1974) himself noted that his methods were available for interpretation and use as the researcher deemed appropriate. Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a possible method for application to this internationalisation study, but CDA arguably tends to critical realist positionings (Breeze 2011), whereas Foucault resists supplanting one regime of truth with another, and offers a stronger focus on excluded discourse and the effects of power. This latter orientation, we might argue, enables a dialectic with postcolonial and decolonial thought in that it transcends the relativist poststructural position in providing credence to the assertion that such effects of power do occur. It asserts not only that they have potential for occurring, but claim an interest in *how* they might occur through particular discourses and strategies. Postcolonial considerations address the ethics of such effects and the possible affective consequences of such discourses and practices in how they converse with contemporary global imaginaries in ways that carry material and embodied implications for people's lives and wellbeing. The intention of this paper, however, is not to trace the material effects and affective consequences, but to consider some key themes emerging from policy documents on

Scottish HE internationalisation in how these may act as signposts to the way in which internationalisation discourses concomitantly construe and are construed by particular effects of power.

Postcolonial and decolonial ethics

An interpretation of the contemporary learning context of HE may also require some deliberation about whose knowledge should be legitimated and available for study, whose knowledge is foregrounded as being superior, and why this has come to be. Within the study of mainstream international relations, colonialism has come to be associated with the imperial expansion of Europe into the rest of the world during the last five centuries (Osterhammel 2005). Colonialism, by this definition, is the practice of ruling nations as colonies, implementing policies that enable a country to develop trade for its own benefits, with the colonialists exerting their control and influence over their colonies. Postcolonialism may be argued is a study of the effects of past colonialism on cultures and societies, bringing in an initial awareness of the social, psychological and cultural inferiority enforced by having been in a colonised state. Colonialism imitates, on a geopolitical scale, the Marxian dynamic of class conflict whereby the hegemony of one group over another refers to the power of the ruling class to convince other classes and marginalised cultural groups that their interests are the interests of all, often through economic and political control and perhaps more coercively and insidiously through Education. Despite decolonisation that occurred after World War II, neo-colonialism (Sartre 2001) references the influence that former colonial powers continue to exact with respect to existing and past international economic arrangements with their former protectorates and continue to maintain colonial control in a variety of ways, other than through direct governance. Critically, colonialism also refers more broadly to the colonisation of the mind (Fanon 1952), a form of psychopathological and epistemic violence (Spivak, Landry and MacLean 1996; Mignolo 2002). This may be one of the more subtle and lasting manifestations of colonialism, which has the intention of taking possession collectively of minds by way of indoctrination (Swanson 2011).

Postcolonial theory can be considered an ethical lens for understanding the current process of internationalisation and a way of interpreting contemporary learning contexts. Critical postcolonialism further allows for a more intellectual, critical and theoretical critique of internationalisation discourse, bringing into play issues of power and ethics. International students who enter a new educational system seek a way into advantage and social acceptance. In reality, many who enter these institutions may remain outside the mainstream by having been 'othered'. Said (1978) discusses 'othering' as the act of highlighting the perceived weaknesses of marginalised groups as a way of emphasising the purported strength of those in positions of power. International students may respond to this in a variety of ways including 'withdrawing, rebelling, finding an alternative identity, or even initiating action for positive change' (Fox 2008, p14). In fact, according to Nichols (2010), Said firmly established Foucault as a central figure in postcolonial theory, referencing Foucault and Gramsci as the main inspirations for his own work. In Said's conceptualisation of 'orientalism', he critically draws attention to how the dominant gaze focuses on the Other of the East from the perspective of the West, although this reductionist form of othering does happen the other way via Occidentalism, contributing to the maintenance of oppositions and essentialist binaries. With Britain as an example of a colonising power with widespread

global impact, the discussion of empire-building through 'othering' may be revealed within the context of international education on a global scale, and is particularly relevant in its correspondence with international students, often from common wealth or developing countries attending British universities and studying in English. This empire-building may stand in opposition to building a global community where equality is a central value. Non-Western people and their capabilities are not seen as a vital contribution to the global community. The effect of this othering means that all except one's own culture are regarded as valueless and insignificant. It becomes a dominant mode of organisation and of a 'gaze' on the other that carries with it a set of incontestable values as assumptions about reality. These assumptions form the basis of judgements that are made about the other in ways that come to be understood as truths and that render the other inferior, silencing her/his voice. Colonialism is one example of the powers of othering, and in this sense, postcolonialism can be understood as the critique of colonialism rather than referencing a period *after* colonialism (Swanson and Pashby 2016).

In reference to internationalisation discourses, the effects of power in the production, maintenance and dominance of specific knowledge forms has particular relevance to internationalisation discourses in HE. Arguably, this is because the exchange relation on which internationalisation strategic initiatives are based exacts a form of suppression of knowing in the international student. This takes place in order for the branded institution to effectively 'sell' the knowledge and cache of knowledge ownership. Scottish HE internationalisation strategic statements are replete with branding discourses that sell perceived superiority of knowledge and experience to international others. Such relations of exchange may be considered as acts of epistemic violence, contributing to a form of epistemic genocide to global local others. Pluralities of knowing are diminished in favour of a Western dominant canon and its set of scientific norms. Such 'right' to be the Knowers and deliverers of Knowledge is underwritten historically in part through the branded celebration of Scottish universities aligned with Scotland's ancient history as well as their overtures, in many instances, to the Scottish Enlightenment.

Discussions on postcolonial ethics assist in interpreting signposts of power at play in internationalisation discourses. The partial analysis that follows concerns itself predominantly with a Foucauldian reading of key themes, themes that emerge from policy discourses and strategic vision statements. Nevertheless, the effects of power through the deployment of discursive positioning strategies are addressed through postcolonial ethics. This provides a critical commentary on the conditions of a world structured in accordance with 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1977). In effect, it is evident that regimes of truth are structured and embedded within internationalisation discourses.

Analysis and Discussion

This section commentates on a partial exploration of four publicly available strategy documents specifically related to internationalisation within two Scottish institutes of HE. All four documents relate to an internationalisation strategy typically of five-year duration, covering a period across the four documents from 2013 to 2019. We have anonymised the data in order not to reveal to which institution each document belongs. The four documents are publicly available on each universities' website and include two

international strategy documents (one from each institution), and a strategic plan, with the analysis focussing on the section on internationalisation and an internationalisation update. Although this paper looks at only four documents, similar discourse and language can be found in many university strategy documents available online not only in Scotland but across the UK. Four key themes are identified and discussed below.

Theme 1: Numbers and measurement

Common to all four documents is the predominance and reification of number and measurement. It reveals the trend towards datafication and quantification of internationalisation discourses, by way of evidencing these Scottish universities' positions in comparative competition with UK and international contexts. Some examples are '11,200 students in 150 countries', 'top in Scotland and 5th in the UK', 'student numbers grew by 10%', 'representing an investment of £35 million', 'top 10% of UK institutions', 'a record intake' and 'over 71% of overseas students'. It can be clearly seen that internationalisation is numerically framed with variety and quantity conflated with the concept of quality.

As noted by Kitchin (2014), there is a long history of governments, businesses, science and citizens producing and utilising data and census strategies in order to monitor, regulate, profit from and create the world according to a particular scientised reality. It has also been part of the bureaucratisation process witnessed in strategies of colonisation. Whilst previously difficult, timely and costly to generate and then analyse, data has lost none of its value, but the production of what is commonly known as 'Big Data' has now become a deluge of information, resulting in a data revolution, reshaping how knowledge is produced, business is conducted and governance is enacted.

Foucault (2007) points out how data can be found in accounts of the history of the use of statistics to know and govern people, with Beer (2016) further proposing that the way these data are framed in particular rationalising discourses needs careful examination, as does the discourse, terminology and rhetoric that surrounds it. This is essential in order to understand the social implications of those data. Returning to Foucault's regimes of truth, what becomes accepted as truth is an effect of power and discursive manoeuvres. Beer (ibid) applies this similarly to Big Data as imagined programmes and conceptual formations begin to translate into regimes of truth, which then solidify into practices. Beer (2016, p5) further asserts 'that is not just the evaluations that come from the applications of Big Data themselves, but that the concept of Big Data as a programmatic mode of reasoning also brings with it the values and norms that provide the means for evaluating and judging'. The discourses of internationalisation view internationalisation as a successful strategy dependent on the rapid growth of international student numbers and the number of countries in which the university has a presence. Internationalisation strategy as being undergirded by the assumption that its success is dependent almost exclusively on increased international student numbers, activities and partnerships becomes an uncontested regime of truth that informs the acceptance of such as 'best practice'.

The focus on numbers provides further evidence of the ongoing neoliberalisation of education. This is a genuflection to the language of economic instrumentality and capitalist relations of knowledge production. Brown (2015, p68) states 'Neoliberalism

does not merely privatize—turn over to the market for individual production and consumption—what was formerly publicly supported and valued. Rather, it formulates everything, everywhere, in terms of capital investment and appreciation, including and especially humans themselves'. Education, in neoliberal terms, is framed as being an economic exchange relation that is focused overwhelmingly on increasing one's earning potential (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). In such an educational world, educational experiences become objects or commodities to be bought in a competitive market and bring with it an expected return on investment that justifies both individual and state expenditures (Saunders and Ramirez 2016).

Theme 2: Coercive use of 'we'

Across the four documents, the personal pronoun 'we' is used on 53 occasions. Some examples include 'We continue...', 'We have [several] partners...', 'We give them the edge they need to stay ahead...', 'We continue to develop...', 'We have a number of partners...', 'We are building...', 'We are delighted...', 'We offer...' and 'We have world-leading expertise...'. The use of 'we' interpellates (Althusser 1971), referencing the recruitment of ideology, the subject into a way of thinking about the role and function of internationalisation. While Althusser argues that we are born into specific roles society creates, interpellation reflects the nuanced and coercive nature of this socialisation, and can be both overt and covert. Interpellation takes place through religion, politics and the education system. The process of interpellation is more effective when it is imperceptible, when individuals accept cultural notions as though they are obvious or natural, and gives the suggestion of plurality - that every author brings explicit values to their own text. The acceptance also infers an accommodation of inferiority of the 'the other' as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1990). Althusser (1971) claimed there are different 'apparatuses' of the State that ensure interpellation, for example, repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) which would include the army, police or prisons and also Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which maintain power through force but more subtly through ideology. To provide an often-quoted example to illustrate how interpellation functions in the context of ideology, Althusser (ibid) used the example of a policeman who shouts, "Hey, you there!", claiming at least one person will turn around in order to answer, most probably the person to whom the call was addressed.

The coercive use of 'we' interpellates individuals into social positions as subjects and it is in this way that ideology functions to validate the hegemonic codes of social relations and knowledge. Foucault (1977: 8) in Friedland and Boden (1994:87) argued that discourse is language in relation to power, where 'the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge', and where the play of signs defines the anchorage of power. Foucault notes that language and discourse interpellates individuals into social positions as subjects, which he views as controlled externally by institutions and discourse, whereas Althusser sees the controls as both external (ISAs) and internal through interpellated self-discipline. The internationalisation discourses that place a particular emphasis on 'we' throughout the policy documents and strategic vision statements, interpellate the reading subject into an ideology of institutional colonialism, where the reader / international other (for whom many of the policy documents are designed as advertisement) is expected to capitulate their understanding of the world and ways of knowing to that of the Scottish HE institution that speaks with one homogenising institutional voice, distinct only from

another institution with which it is competing. The international student can buy the state of ‘competitive superior knowing’ and ‘club membership’, through the promise of institutional belonging structured through a relation of exchange premised on social, cultural and symbolic institutional capital (Bourdieu, 1990).

Theme 3: ‘Agricultural’ and ‘building’ metaphors

Metaphors have a key role in communication and provide ‘the key to the realities in which their users live and work’ (Krippendorf 2009, p. 9). Indeed, the Panopticon was a metaphor which enabled Foucault to explore the relationship between the power-knowledge concept and the prison as a system of social control.

All four documents use phrases such as ‘sustainable international growth’, ‘to grow the academic base’, ‘growth through ...’ ‘economic development and growth’, ‘sustainable partnerships’, ‘opportunities in the pipeline’, ‘we are building significant achievements’, ‘continue to grow and develop’, ‘building sustainable partnerships’, ‘to grow numbers’, ‘to build on and strengthen...’, ‘to nurture our relationships’, ‘to thrive in...work environments’, ‘to embed internationalisation’, ‘to cement the role’, and ‘[Our strategy] spans activities’, ‘to build...’. Similar to scientific discourse, it can be seen that the discourse on internationalisation in these Scottish HE documents uses several agricultural metaphors. Salmond (1982) described this as the ‘knowledge is a landscape’ metaphor, with examples such as those where we divide knowledge into *separate fields*, we define *areas* of study, *draw boundaries*, and where some *fields are productive* whereas others are *fruitless*.

The metaphors noted above describe in a similar fashion internationalisation, in terms of the need to grow, to develop, to nurture, to thrive, to be sustainable. Additionally, there are several metaphors related to construction such as to build, to cement relationships, to span, to be in the pipeline. A study of semantics helps to show the relationship between words and how meaning is constructed. Salmond’s (1982) take on semantics shows that ‘knowledge is a landscape’ and ‘intellectual activity is a journey’. Nederveen Pieterse (2010:28) extends consciousness of how these metaphors operate ideologically within their linguistic performances in noting that ‘the general conception of knowledge and social theory itself tends to be structured in terms of spatial or organic metaphors and of (linear) motion in space. Knowledge itself ‘develops’. Developmentalism ‘grows’ out of these semantics of space/time’.

Economic growth coming from mass production is a key tenant of developmentalism. The hypothesis is that trade on an international level brings nations together but developmentalism views this differently. A country with high-tech technology developing links with a country with low-tech technology will not redress the balance as the one nation becomes richer whereas the other becomes poorer, (Reinert 2010). The developmental state bases its ideology on an ability to get out of poverty and promote sustained, economic development, which in turn allows the ruling elite to keep power. However, the developmentalist paradigm began to decline in the late 1970s, with one reason given as a lack of cohesion due to the difficulty of applying one theory of development to all contexts. In the Global South, failures of development policies matched with a stalemate in development thinking and this resistance is an ‘affirmation of autonomy and an expression of cultural resistance to western ethnocentrism’ (Nederveen Pieterse 2010). Kothari (1998, p143 in Nederveen Pieterse,

2010) notes that ‘where colonialism left off, development took over’, with development becoming part of the neo-colonial discourse. Indeed, the rise of post-development theory holds that the practice of development reflects Western-Northern hegemony over the rest of the world.

Post-development literature is influenced in part by Foucault and through the need to deconstruct power structures. Brigg (2002) engages with Foucault’s conceptualisation of power as one way of advancing post-development, and uses Foucault’s distinction between sovereign power and biopower to understand differences in the operation of power between colonial and developmental eras, which highlight several problems in the post-development approach. The agricultural and building metaphors infuse the four documents on internationalisation, demonstrating what has become a regime of truth. A model of compliance forces the reader to accept an ideological position as these documents shape the dominant view of what internationalisation is now and what it must be in the future, with the intention of co-opting students as empty pages, waiting to be written upon.

What underpins the language of growth and development is the ideological assumptions of the benefits provided by economic development and modernist progressivism. These benefits are what these Scottish universities claim to offer. The international student candidate or potential international partner is interpellated into the position of accepting such ‘benefits’ as a regime of truth and capitulating to a view of the world where anything other than progressivist modernism and economic development is deemed inferior. It could be argued that these metaphors underscore discursive manoeuvrings that are invested in celebratory discourses of institutional hubris based on the presumptions of societal advancement and the presuppositions of superiority based on a history of empire.

As can be seen in the next and final theme, the development paradigm can also be described as postcolonial.

Theme 4: Postcolonial assumptions

It could be possible to address ethics without evoking the postcolonial but as discussed above, postcolonial ethics unhinges the effects of power within the internationalisation discourses. Foucault claimed that colonial discourses are where power and knowledge mesh together. Colonial discourses become successful because ‘they enable some colonisers to feel important, superior, noble and benign’ (McLeod 2010) and there is clear evidence of this in the four documents under investigation. The Scottish universities project pride of history and their link to the Scottish Enlightenment, a period in Scottish history for which patriotic Scots take credit for inventing the modern world.

One of the documents states ‘our origins date back to...’ with a sense of pride and then deferring to new knowledge; ‘but today [the university] is Scotland’s international university with partnerships around the world’. The university is not promoting a traditional education but a mixture of the old and established with the new knowledge economy subsumed and homogenised. Decolonialism problematises the histories of power emerging from Europe, averring that the colonial matrix of power produced social discrimination (Quijano 2007). Decoloniality can be understood as a form of ‘epistemic disobedience’ (Mignolo, 2011:122-123), recognising the need to

eliminate the tendency to believe that Western European modes of thinking (and educating) are universal.

Two of the policy documents describe their strategies for internationalisation as an ‘ambitious plan’, with ambition in the sense of being competitive, forward-thinking and progressive. This aims to brand the university by selling the old with ‘new 21st century skills’. The neoliberal language of marketing education as a product to sell is evident with several references to branding such as ‘brand recognition’ ‘new branding guidelines’. One of aims of internationalisation strategy noted in the documents is to ‘seek markets’, but not people, where ‘the other’ becomes a pawn and an instrument of that market. Further evidence of othering occurs in the documents with statements such as ‘make them more aware of the wide range of opportunities available to them’. Here, ‘them’ refers to international students. However, although internationalisation strategies ‘gives the [institution] an opportunity to forge a reputation around the world’ only prioritised countries where students ‘have the ability to pay’ are noted as worthy of interest.

Power relations are ignored as references to culture include statements such as ‘[We are] the most internationally diversified university’, yet the assumption here is of diversity implying ‘international’, whereas in reality, it is superficial multiculturalism. The statement: ‘[This university] is a culturally rich place of learning’ rings of inclusivity, but ironically it begs the question of whose culture is heard. Power relations are ignored leading to the denial of the hidden biases of knowledge.

Conclusions

A critical discussion on the discourses of internationalisation in HE framed this paper by providing a partial document analysis. This analysis aimed to highlight four major discursive themes, therefore offering an opportunity for critical analysis and reflection on the processes of internationalisation displayed in two universities’ strategic documents as examples of internationalisation agendas in the UK, and specifically the Scottish HE context.

A Foucauldian discursive analytical approach enabled a deeper interrogation of assumptions regarding knowledge generation and diffusion, as well as the positionalities, subjectivities, and ideologies construed through internationalisation discourses in HE in Scotland. Carrabine (2001) notes the how discourse produces meaning and effect within which power circulates and effects a powerful constitution of what becomes the ‘truth’.

There are evidently implications beyond Scotland and internationalisation agendas in HE, to globalising modernist and neoliberal governance agendas in Education and society at large. Although the analysis focussed on only four documents from two universities, it provided a valuable view on how HE global imaginaries are located and perpetuated through internationalisation rhetoric that aligns with corporate strategy. It exemplifies how dominant corporatist internationalisation strategies and the ongoing neoliberalisation of HE (Swanson and Pashby 2016) are at odds, in large part, with an imaginary of the university as a place of intellectual interrogation divorced from economic instrumentality and functionalism.

This paper begins a process of revealing what knowledge is foregrounded and what alternative discourses might be excluded, therefore providing a view of how

internationalisation dictates what is possible to know, by whom, in what context, and from what dominant gaze. In other words, it begins to make explicit some of the affects and ethics of its discursive effects. The critical postcolonial and decolonial theorisation of the discursive performances operational in the strategic documents works with the Foucauldian poststructural deployment. This seeks to reveal the operations of power within discursive manoeuvrings, producing particular themes that inform hegemonic social arrangements and power relations within a modernist social domain.

It is evident that the lack of critically-oriented engagement with internationalisation discourses in the Scottish HE context exemplified by the policy documents at these two universities suppresses the emergence of alternative discourses. This may be viewed as the hegemonic ‘effect’ of the overwhelming amounts of managerial and neoliberal discourse within the policy documents. The discursive positionings intended to convey epistemic superiority are invested in the hubris of empire. Furthermore, the uncritical reliance on these assumptions support a particular relation of exchange, premised on the othering of the international student and the acceptance of their own cultural epistemic inferiority. As illuminated by Said (1978), there is a strong relationship between colonial knowledge and power (Gandhi 1998, Lary 2006) and it is this postcolonial/decolonial lens that facilitates interpretability of power dynamics. This takes us through and beyond internationalisation in HE to broader global social considerations of the ethical effects of such power in its investments in global inequality, injustice and oppression within the existing global modernist imaginary.

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