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Activity, structures and connections: A framework for researching teaching practices in international HE

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Abstract

The paper presents the ontological and epistemological reflections motivating the author's conceptualisation of international higher education as a global practice-scape (Tange 2021). At the centre of this theory-building is the single actor, whose particular teaching practices shape and are shaping the macro-level changes commonly associated with the globalisation of higher education and research. This creates a challenge for the educational sociologist, who requires a framework that can simultaneously facilitate a need to ground any observations in empirical studies of specific agents' action and interaction, and establish linkages between such activity at the individual level and events in other institutional settings, national systems and policy/geographical scales. A second challenge is 'methodological nationalism' as an empirical inquiry into lecturer experiences with international higher education can easily result in the foregrounding of 'national difference', encouraging informants to rely on a binary distinction between a 'default culture', embodied by those native to a particular national and linguistic field, and deviance ascribed to international students and staff. As a solution, the paper proposes a 'practice ontology', suggesting that lecturers' practical understandings be treated as the focal point when examining the phenomenon of 'international education'. The author's

approach has been inspired by the practice theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Theodore Schatzki and John Dewey. Hence, it is recommended that an investigation of social practice include considerations relating to 1) the setting in which action is performed; 2) the specific activities that agents undertake; and 3) the implicit or explicit norms that guide actors' evaluation of their own and other agents' performance. The working paper brings together the practice theorists' understanding of social practice as habituated action with an acceptance of international HE as an activity connecting individual performances with action unfolding in other settings. To do so, the paper presents a framework consisting of three elements: activity, structures and connections. Activity can be defined as concrete 'doings & sayings' (Schatzki 2002) and includes teaching practices such as course design, multicultural teamwork and academic literacy. Structures are the normative understandings that actors use to navigate within a specific institutional, national or international field and involve disciplinary orientation, academic mobility and Englishisation. Finally, connections highlight the linkages between the specific performances undertaken by teachers in the classroom and developments in other sites and scales. Hence, the single lecturer's enactment of international HE within a particular site is read in the light of linkages connecting him/her to other geographies and/or policy-levels, enabling the educational sociologist to document empirically how teaching practices shape and are shaped by macro-level globalisation.

Keywords: global higher education, international teaching, practice theory, grounded research

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Taking stock

2020 already stands out as a landmark year in the history of global higher education, with internationalisation efforts disrupted around the world. In spring 2020, COVID-19 resulted in the closure of Australian borders to fee-paying, Chinese students, creating a financially difficult situation for universities that had increasingly come to rely on revenue generated through international student recruitment. Other popular destinations hit by the COVID 19 crisis were the United States and Britain, where universities now fear a drop in overseas applicants as a consequence of tighter Visa rules, ineffective government handling of the pandemic and reports of discrimination against Asian students (Lau 2020). One may speculate if indeed COVID-19 will change conditions in the global knowledge economy for good, redirecting the flow of Asian student migrants from English-speaking countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia to 'educational hubs' located in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea or Mainland China (Baker 2020). Meanwhile in Europe, 2020 was marked by several events that underlined the urgency of engaging with the impact of neo-nationalism on academic mobility within the European Higher Education Area. On December 24th a 'Brexit deal' was announced by the British government and European Union, which included British withdrawal from the Erasmus agreement, which for decades has been a European flagship programme, promoting student and teacher mobility (Adams 2020). A different kind of withdrawal is under way in Denmark where in autumn 2020, politicians from several parties, including the governing Social Democrats, expressed concerns over the continuous increase in EU citizens claiming student grants. Sector organisations and experts anticipate an intervention similar to the policy change of 2018 when the political demand that a ceiling be put on international student recruitment resulted in the closure of several English-medium programmes and implementation of a Danish language requirement for others (Tange/Jæger, 2021). In the Netherlands, fears of a populist backlash have already caused several universities to limit their number of English-medium courses, while the critical observer may wonder if a push for 'de-internationalisation' could happen in Sweden and Finland, which are characterised by a similar combination of political neo-nationalism and universities pursuing an internationalist agenda (van der Wende 2020). In short, 2020 is a strange year to be publishing a

book on the teaching of international HE, and yet, perhaps, there is no better time to be taking stock.

In 2016, when the monograph *Teaching practices in a global learning environment* was planned, few educational researchers probably imagined that four years later the global project of international higher education was to be disrupted so severely. For more than twenty-five years, observers of global higher education had witnessed a massive expansion in universities' international activities. Arguably, the development had been driven by the ever-growing population of academic migrants seeking study and work opportunities abroad. But universities increasingly sought to establish themselves as players in a global academic field, documenting their prowess through international benchmarks such as institutional rankings, size of non-native staff/student population, a catalogue of 'international' courses, participation in transnational projects such as Erasmus+ or Horizon 2020, and English-medium publishing and teaching. The concern with institutions' 'global' mission is evident in literature from the 2010s and reflects an understanding of internationalisation as a strategic goal that is set at the managerial level of an institution and promoted by a professional team composed of specially appointed directors for international relations, International Office staff and educational consultants (eg. Hudzik 2015, Leask 2015). However, as pointed out by Jane Knight (2017), the transformation that made higher education 'international', has been ongoing for more than thirty years and may have started in a rather 'ad hoc' and decentered fashion. An example of such 'bottom-up internationalisation' is given in this interview comment from a Danish lecturer acting as coordinator for student exchange within a Humanities programme:

> We started in '88 by joining some of the first Erasmus programmes… It was a network-based organisation then rather than bilateral agreements. And that we developed throughout the 1990s, and that I think is probably what gave us a really good start because in addition to exchanging students within the network… we also hosted annual seminars for the students. You know, summer schools, mid-term, three or four days where each of us brought 2-3 students and then we taught them together… So

> slowly it grew, and today we have, I believe, agreements with 23-24 European universities through Socrates.

The efforts invested by individual academics in the promotion of student exchange and bilateral agreements paid off in the 2000s when the university was selected as 'host' to an Erasmus Mundus course within this specific discipline. At this point, international education had become a strategic goal, and academic staff could enlist the support of International Office staff, administrative services and language consultants. Yet we should bear in mind that professionalisation often came at a relatively late stage at which point the most eager internationalists among the lecturers had already formed an opinion as to what it might take to become a 'good' international educator.

To the current author, 'taking stock' means reflecting on international higher education, as this has been created, experienced, interpreted and transformed by university teachers between 2000 and 2016. At the time when I started working on the monograph *Teaching Practices*, I felt a need to impose some kind of order on the varied body of material accumulated since 2007 when I started my empirical research. By 2016, this collection amounted to more than 1000 pages of interview transcripts; a document corpus containing course curricula, reading lists, lecturer CVs, institutional policy papers and webpage texts; news items from Danish and international media; reports produced by national and supernational organisations; and a comprehensive bibliography of research dedicated to international higher education. From the beginning, the central concern in my empirical work had been to collect lecturer experiences of the type cited previously, and my principal motivation for writing a monograph was to produce a teacher's story of internationalisation to match the student narratives presented by Marginson and Sawir in *Ideas for International Education* (2011). Yet it became apparent that 'taking stock' requested an engagement with the specific challenges arising from my position as a Danish educational researcher working in a field dominated by scholars based in and writing about the situation in English-speaking countries. Two questions seemed particularly urgent:

- *Language*: Did the fact that most of the lecturers interviewed were using English as a second language mean that conclusions based on their observations could not be applied to the situation of native speakers teaching in institutions that were traditionally English-speaking?
- *Location*: Did the choice of research sites, which were mainly Danish institutions of higher education, limit the validity of my findings, given that Denmark is a relatively small player in global higher education?

While acknowledging such limitations, it is important to mention that there are also advantages connected to my linguistic and geographic position. First, the understanding of internationalisation as a profound change to the way lecturers perform education is very evident in the Danish interview data. A possible reason is that most informants experienced a shift from teaching in their native speech to the use of English for all classroom communications, which drew their attention to the fact that there could be no 'business as usual' once their courses were opened to non-native learners. Second, the make-up of the international student population is different in Denmark, which has predominantly attracted academic migrants from the Nordic countries and Europe (Wilken/Dahlberg 2016). One may expect this to influence the categories employed by lecturers when asked to describe the student cohort encountered in an international class. Hence, the Danish material can provide a basis for comparative studies, enabling researchers to check whether the Danes rely on national or cultural stereotypes similar to those reported in Australian and British literature. Based on such work, one can determine to what extent the image of Chinese 'deficit learners' characteristic of Australian and British research arises from issues specific to this national group, and to what extent it should be read as an example of the 'Othering' behavior commonly found in comments made by lecturers about students perceived as 'foreign'. A final lesson relates to the nature of academic knowledge. There is a tendency among postcolonial scholars to classify certain types of knowledge as 'Eurocentric', but such claims are not always supported by empirical documentation. By examining the contents of international courses in non-English-speaking Europe, we can put the challenge of 'Eurocentricity' to the test, asking the lecturers if by 'international' they mean material produced in English (ie. language), authors or texts recognised internationally (ie. disciplinary

canons) or the national and/or institutional affiliation of academic knowledge producers (ie. geography)? Informants' responses allow us to establish if the teachers recognise Europe as the default centre of knowledge production, or whether we might instead be dealing with alternative processes such as Americanisation or Westernisation.

Making connections – from single themes to globalisation

The task of producing a teacher's story can be approached in different ways. At the time of my 'taking stock' in 2016, I had published a series of articles on university lecturers' perceptions of international education, using interview data as the empirical basis for exploring themes such as language usage (Tange 2012), staff-student relations (Tange/Jensen 2012), curricular contexts (Tange/Millar 2016) and academic norms (Tange 2016). A similar engagement with 'teacher experiences' can be found in British, Australian and Irish studies published in the 2010s (eg. Murray/McConachy 2018; Guerin/Green 2016, Elliot/Reynolds 2014, Sheridan 2011), which suggests a general awareness among educational researchers of the need to document the impact of internationalisation processes empirically. Characteristic of these studies is the tendency for researchers to rely on the article format, which means that they engage with single themes such as academic socialisation, multicultural teams and academic literacy rather than produce a holistic account of the diverse rules, routines and responsibilities that are attached to the role of 'international educator'. Yet thematic analyses of my empirical material made it clear that no single aspect of teaching can be read in isolation, and that I might have missed important insights by focusing so extensively on topics that could be developed within the space available in a journal article. Digging deeper into the interview data, I found myself becoming increasingly obsessed with the multi-coloured lines that appeared in the margins of my Nvivo transcripts, and which to me visualised how teaching experiences cut across the arbitrary thematic divisions I had created to produce some kind of order. Hence, an informant might relate the linguistic shift, from her native Danish into global English, to cultural change in the form of greater student diversity, which again motivated a reflection on the socio-

cultural framing of academic knowledge. An example is this observation by a Law lecturer:

> [I]t makes a great difference to work in Danish or to work in – well, it is working in English mainly, but also in German. One of the reasons why it makes such a difference is that languages not only bring with them a research tradition, but also a legal tradition. So when you start communicating in English… you automatically engage with an Anglo-American perception of law and the relationship between law and society. While if you communicate in German, you automatically engage with a Continental European perception of law. (as quoted in Tange 2021, p. 49)

The interview excerpt shows how international education can involve an engagement with different languages, academic traditions and disciplinary canons, requesting that the lecturer read the contents of her course in relation to action performed in other sites. To manage what is a rather complex form of academic knowledge production, the teacher draws on insights obtained through her participation within a global academic system. She is likely to have presented papers at international conferences, published key findings in English-medium journals, consulted canonical works authored by disciplinary authorities and, perhaps, visited prestigious research institutions in North America or Western Europe. The demand that she 'internationalises' may originate from a personal, departmental or institutional wish to promote international collaboration through the European Erasmus+ programme, which suggests that her course design and activities could be influenced by, and possibly influencing, developments in other institutional sites and policy scales. As proposed by Madge et al (2015), the knowledge practices involved in international education are shaped by global conditions of mobility, movement and connectivity, which makes it an incredibly complex phenomenon to document empirically.

Teaching practices in a global learning environment is a book project designed to 'tell the teachers' story' in a way grounded in empirical research. The aim is to offer a holistic account, which demands that the themes emerging from the data analysis be read in relation to one another, foregrounding how a single teaching experience

points in different directions and therefore requests that multiple interpretations be considered. This requires an analytical framework that acknowledges the importance of establishing connections. First, a relationship will have to be forged between the specific action taken by the individual actor in his or her classroom and pedagogic strategies that can be characterised as 'common' to international education because they recur in several interviews and/or have been identified in the research literature. Second, it is essential that any biases emerging from the researcher's position be overcome, which is here achieved through comparison, where informants' descriptions of the unique situations arising in Danish higher education are discussed in relation to conditions exposed by empirical studies of academic systems situated in other parts of the world. Finally, the reflections emerging from actors' performance of teaching at the micro-level will have to be connected to action occurring in other sites and policy-scales. This last form of interconnectivity represents a methodological challenge, requesting that the researcher develop a way to document through empirical analyses how the concrete action of individual agents is simultaneously shaped by and shaping macro-level internationalisation and globalisation. In an attempt to resolve the problem, the present author has found inspiration in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Theodore Schatzki and John Dewey, adopting 'practice' as the organising concept in the framework used to analyse and represent 'teaching experiences in a global environment'. The next section will elaborate on the ontological and epistemological reflections informing this approach.

Organising teaching practices

The conceptual framework used to represent 'international higher education' in Teaching Practices is relatively simple, building on a distinction between 'structures' and actual 'Doings & Sayings', as well as the dual interpretations of 'teaching practice' as pedagogic action and academic socialisation. Underpinning such a model are the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Theodore Schatzki and John Dewey, who share a concern with the importance of 'practice', or 'pragmatics', when investigating social reality. Similar approaches have been suggested by scholars such as Trowler (2013), who builds on the practice theoretical' paradigm proposed by Schatzki,

among others, and Biesta (2020), who argues for pragmaticism in the manner of John Dewey. Hence, I shall not claim 'practice theory' as a new perspective on educational research and theory. What my work adds is the proposition that 'practices', as complex 'constellations' of actors, action and objects (Trowler 2014, 20), can be used to establish connections between individual action and macro-level globalisation. Arguably, such an approach is new to research on Comparative and International Education, suggesting a possible answer to the question of how the multi-sited and multi-scalar processes involved in internationalisation can be documented empirically. In *Teaching Practices* the theoretical framework is visualised in the form of a 'global practice-scape' (Tange 2021, p. 169; reproduced on p. 36). However, such an organisation of social reality emerged only gradually as the result of my ambition to carry out empirical research on international education that avoided the trap of methodological nationalism. The following section will describe this reflexive journey, highlighting why the author was prompted to move from the comparative approach reminiscent of the cross-cultural tradition to the position of a practice theorist, seeking to bring out the 'practical knowledge' acted out in and informing agents' performance of 'international teaching'.

Falling into the cross-cultural trap

To the researcher specialising in international higher education it is only too easy to fall into the cross-cultural trap. Within academic disciplines such as intercultural communication and international relations, scholars have for years debated the methodological challenges arising from the tendency to take for granted 'national culture' or the 'nation state' as default starting points when investigating social phenomena that involve some form of transnational connection (eg. Holliday 2020, Beck 2007). The problem is generally known as 'methodological nationalism' and relevant to any subject that contains an international dimension, including higher education. Questions arising from 'methodological nationalism' in global HE have been addressed in articles by Robertson and Dale (2008), who highlight the problem of 'fixed' spatial units when dealing with globalisation, and Shahjahan and Kezar (2013), who warn against reducing society to something contained within a system of nation states. Yet a Google Scholar search on international higher education reveals that few authors discuss methodological nationalism, while there is a substantial

body of literature dedicated to challenges arising from the presence of international students in unfamiliar ‘national’ cultures. Marginson and Sawir (2011) refer to this as the ’cross-cultural’ approach to international HE, and it builds on an anticipated contrast between a ‘native’ system (personified by university lecturers, domestic students and administrative support staff) and ‘non-native’ learners who are identified as ‘foreign’ because they originate outside the national community acting as host. The label ‘cross-cultural’ is shared with disciplines such as Management, Psychology and Marketing, where it is associated with a research focus on national culture (sometimes combined with language and ethnicity) and a comparative method that allows for the identification of ‘difference’ between the social groups analysed and subsequent prediction of behavior. Why, then, has this approach become so popular in the study of global HE? A short reply is ‘international-ness’, for as I have discussed with reference to ‘centres of normalcy’ in international and interdisciplinary MA education (Tange 2016), nationality is frequently named as the principal identity marker when scholars examine diversity in the multicultural classroom. However, instead of accepting this premise, one should ask why it is so and thereby acknowledge the probability that we, as empirical researchers, have contributed to the foregrounding of national culture. Given that we study international and comparative education, we are likely to ask informants questions relating to ‘international-ness’ and by so doing, it is possible that we have produced a sense of national difference that is only marginal to the routines and roles involved in the actual teaching and learning. To illustrate how this may work, I shall present reflections relating to the interview study that I performed between 2007-2010.

The research project was designed in 2007 in an attempt to collect lecturers’ experiences with ‘international and/or English-medium teaching’. Prior to this I had been working as an English teacher supporting academic staff, which had left me with the impression that the language change, from Danish into English, was making more of an impact on the teachers’ communication than had hitherto been acknowledged in the literature on international education. The empirical work happened over a period of three years, involving thirty-six informants (34 lecturers, 2 administrators), representing five faculties at different Danish universities. It was planned as a language study, which is also how it is described in the mails that sent

to institutional gatekeepers to negotiate access. One example is this project description from spring 2008:

> As mentioned on the phone I am working on an interview study, which aims to uncover teachers' experiences with international and/or English-medium education. The study will provide me with an empirical foundation for assessing if the teaching is influenced by the fact that neither lecturers nor students have English as their native language. The aim is to bring out lecturers' practices – with the purpose of strengthening knowledge sharing between experienced and less experienced international educators.

In the light of the previous discussion of methodological nationalism, it is worth pointing out that there is no reference to 'culture' in the e-mail correspondences preparing my initial research visits or the template interview guide used to structure the conversations with the informants. In the original version of the interview guide (included as appendix 1), questions mostly relate to language, although there is one query that may have encouraged some form of comparison: How did you experience teaching/supervising the international students? In comparison, material produced in spring 2009 suggests inspiration from the cross-cultural tradition. In e-mails sent to gatekeepers at the fourth research site, I explained how the study sought to 'uncover lecturers' practice in a *multicultural* learning environment' (emphasis added). A cross-cultural influence can also be detected in the interview guide, which in spring 2009 included a new question: 'Is there any other aspect in which international education is *different* from teaching a Danish class?' (emphasis added) Adjusting the interview guide is not unusual for scholars working in an iterative fashion and therefore continuously adding questions in order to test the insights gained from collecting and transcribing the interview data. This development is illustrated in appendix 1, which displays the four interview guides used for the investigation. If the four are compared, it can be seen that questions change several times which is a way to accommodate knowledge obtained during the interviewing process. Yet the addition of a cross-cultural dimension in 2009 represents a significant refocusing of the research, which merits some kind of explanation. One possible reason is that two years into the inquiry, the researcher's orientation had shifted from language to the

broader notion of ‘intercultural communication’, which includes culture as well as language. As a lecturer in intercultural communication, I may have been influenced by the courses I teach, although this is unlikely to have persuaded me to accept ‘national culture’ as a core concept, given that such an approach is generally discouraged by contemporary theorists within this subject area. A second possibility is that my modifications reflect the way informants ‘talked’ about international teaching in the interviews performed in 2007-8. With reference to this, it should be noted that the 2009 revision involves the most extensive reworking of the interview guide, which in addition to the comparative perspective also incorporates new questions on organisational culture and knowledge sharing. At this point, I had completed an initial, exploratory analysis of twenty interviews, which made it possible to identify asymmetries between the topics chosen by informants when asked to describe ‘international teaching’ and the themes anticipated when designing the first interview guide. Hence, it is possible that the comparative element was included in order to pick up on themes proposed in the interviews, in which case it does not represent a deliberate pursuit of a cross-cultural agenda on behalf of the researcher.

As noted by Piller (2011), the tendency to foreground national difference is common to actors’ interpretation of any international and intercultural communication and may be treated as a kind of ‘banal nationalism’ similar to that proposed by Michael Billig (1995). Even if questions refer to languages (eg. ‘native’ Danish versus ‘global’ English), it is quite natural for university teachers to engage in a more general form of cross-cultural comparison which almost inevitably leads to the construction of Us/Them distinctions based on perceived national differences. The tendency to order reality into national categories is evident when looking at the topics emerging from the thematic analysis of the interview data. Under the domain ‘Culture’ one finds ‘Diversity’, which includes the four sub-themes listed in table 1. table 1.

Table 1: Findings for the theme 'Diversity'

Diversity, consisting of 4 sub-themes	Which can be divided into	**35 informants** (36 possible), Distribution for sub-themes	**289 references** (579 for **Culture**) Distribution for sub-themes
Many forms		20	28
	Mixed	15	20
	Will not generalise	3	4
National culture		35	147
	Denmark	22	38
	France	7	13
	Spain	12	23
	China	19	40
Region		23	52
	Baltic	6	8
	Eastern Europe	11	15
	Southern Europe	11	13
	Asia	7	8
	Africa	8	12
Academic tradition		34	119
	Danish	22	46
	Anglo-American	6	9
	Eastern European	8	9
	Southern European	13	17
	Asian	7	10

Even when acknowledging that such categorisations derive from the qualitative researcher's interpretation of the data, the distribution across themes is noteworthy. Within 'Culture', 'Diversity' attracts the largest number of references, which can be explained by the frequency of comments on nationality. 35 out of the 36 informants

participating offer examples of ‘national culture’, and the only sub-theme to attract a similar degree of attention is ‘Academic tradition’, which is characterised by the same emphasis on national differences. Yet one cannot determine how teachers experience diversity by counting references alone. Accordingly, it is necessary to complement these quantitative findings with close readings of key examples that document when and how lecturers choose to comment on national culture.

The methodological nationalism involved in cross-cultural research typically takes the form of an explication of differences ascribed to specific national cultures, which prompts scholars to make predictions about human behaviour based of single dimensions such as nationality, ethnicity or language. In the interviews such an approach can be detected in statements on international students’ ‘culture’ where informants relate specific forms of action and interaction to learner nationality instead of the specific situation or individuals involved. Examples of cross-cultural comparison occurs most frequently in relation to Chinese and Spanish students and may be illustrated by two interview excerpts:

> But those big classes with 8-10 Chinese out of a class of 30-40, right, that changes some things. And what more precisely changes? Well, they could hardly speak with other [students], and they could hardly speak with me, and it was a bit difficult to work out what type of students [they were]. It did not seem as if they had come to study what was offered in that programme… [I]t was very difficult event to establish eye contact with them and – yes – communicate. But that, you can say, is a purely cultural thing. (Life Science)

> Well, one of the problems I have observed… is that there is a tendency among especially the Southern European students to cluster together in groups. Well, they arrive two or three [students] from the same university and they travel together, And they will very quickly make contact to the other Spanish students so what happens is a kind of linguistic and cultural ghettoisation, right? (Humanities)

The examples show how some lecturers ascribe learner conduct perceived to be undesirable to students' national culture. As discussed in the article 'good teachers and deviant learners' (Tange/Jensen 2012), this is a way for the teachers to maintain a self-image as successful classroom managers in the sense that it allows them to interpret any conflicts arising in the multicultural classroom as a manifestation of the cultural difference separating the native 'Us' from a non-native 'Other'. In comparison, other informants are skeptical about the idea of homogenous national cultures, noting how the performances of students from the same socio-cultural background differ because of individual variation in learning style, academic level, capability and language. A lecturer comments on his three Chinese supervisees:

> They are very individual types – he who last took his MA exam, he was so capable with language. And he actually got a [distinction]. But the one I am now [supervising] has language problems. So he really needs all sorts of help. The girl I don't know a lot about – she seems rather intelligent. The things she write about her aunt's business sounds intelligent, and she also writes really good English… [The one I now supervise], he seems intelligent enough, but has to be provoked a bit to think critically. But [the one], whom I had before, he just thought critically almost as his [default condition]… So the Chinese are very individual. (Business)

The three interview excerpts suggest that one needs to differentiate between references to national culture that reflect a cross-cultural tendency to generalise, and observations highlighting heterogeneity within national groups. Particularly the two first comments imply that reductionist interpretations can arise in response to interview questions that invite native Danish teachers to describe what to them distinguishes international and/or English-medium classes. Arguably, this means that the responsibility for producing banal nationalism could lie with the researcher, who has designed an interview study requesting explicit or implicit comparison through its foregrounding of 'international-ness'. As a consequence, a large number of the lecturers participating inevitably end up offering observations that

1. Focus on the *foreign* students. Such an outcome might have been expected, given that informants were asked to respond to questions such as 'How did you experience teaching/supervising the international students?'
2. Highlight *deviation* in the form of conduct or speech that seems different from the classes taught in Danish. Even if the original interview guide did not explicitly mention cultural difference, a comparative perspective is encouraged in the sense that the study aimed to investigate change related to the shift from Danish-medium to English-medium teaching.
3. Foreground *national culture*. Although it is not explicated, such a way of describing international students will be known to anyone familiar with cross-cultural training or literature on international education. So informants may have reproduced categories acquired through conversations with colleagues, administrators and International Office support staff.

The thirty-six interviews conducted between 2007 and 2009 left me with a profound understanding of how language influences international education, which is the key contribution of this research to the international literature. Yet the process of analysing the data drew my attention to issues related to the representation of culture, including the methodological nationalism that may have motivated some informants to exaggerate the difference between native and non-native learners. In consequence, I saw a need to consider how the phenomenon of 'international teaching' could be investigated in a manner that avoided the problem of 'banal nationalism'.

Organising practices

The understanding of 'practice' as the single organising principle in society is commonly associated with sociologists such as Theodore Schatzki and Karin Knorr Cetina, who in 2001 argued for a 'practice turn' in social theory (Schatzki et al. 2001). However, as pointed out by Reckwitz (2002, 249), practice theory represents a broad intellectual tradition that can be distinguished from previous schools of social and cultural theory by authors' insistence on the need to 'place the social "in practices"' rather than 'mental qualities' (mentalism), 'discourse' (textualism) or 'interaction'(intersubjectivism). By naming as practice theorists an array of very

different thinkers Reckwitz encourages researchers to work from a position of theoretical ‘polyphony’, assembling conceptual tools from a variety of intellectual approaches in an order to bring out the complexity and connections involved in social practice. Such inclusiveness informs Reckwitz’ own definition of practice, which combines the element of action with the normative understandings and feelings attached to human activity:

> A practice… is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of other. (Reckwitz 2002, 249)

As explained in *Teaching Practices* (Tange, 2021, p. 16), a conceptual framework inspired by practice theory is appealing to this author because it allows for theory-building grounded in empirical research. Practice theorists typically prioritise three elements which are all deemed important to my work: 1) activities involved in the actual teaching of international courses; 2) the specific disciplinary, organisational, socio-cultural and linguistic contexts in which teaching is performed; and 3) connections between individual actors and ‘the social’ (see Reckwitz 2002, Halkier/Jensen 2008, Bain/Mueller 2016). A relationship that seems particularly significant when studying global higher education is the possible extension of teaching practices beyond the physical walls of the classroom (Madge et al. 2015). To acknowledge such connectivity, I treat ‘the social’ as multi-sited and multi-scalar, linking the action performed by individuals to their engagement with collectives such as departmental teaching groups, disciplinary communities of practice, global exchange networks, and policy-making institutions such as the Danish Ministry for Science and the European Union. Reckwitz (2002) suggests that the scholar researching social practice start from a position of eclectic pragmaticism, choosing from the varied body of available theories the analytical concepts and perspectives relevant to the specific form(s) of the ‘social’ investigated. In my case, this means acquiring and developing analytical tools that can document the diverse activities

involved in internationalising education. First, however, I found it necessary to revisit earlier research in order to determine if anything had to be changed because it might inspire a particular form of knowledge construction. As discussed earlier, one possible problem is the mentioning of *difference* in the interview guides used in 2009, which may have prompted some informants to rely on a cross-cultural reading of international education. Ontologically, what is requested is a completely open stance, where in the manner of grounded theory the researcher assumes that she knows nothing about 'international', 'higher education', 'lecturing staff' and 'students'. To undertake empirical research she will have to select components that can be presumed to exist independently of the constructions emerging from the processes of data production, analysis and representation. For this purpose, I chose three core elements, which are here formulated as broad research questions:

1. *What are the **settings** of international higher education?* 'Settings' refer the places in which practices are undertaken, and may involve physical sites as well as more abstract spaces such as an institution, a community of practice or an international organisation.
2. *Who are the **actors** performing international higher education?* In my empirical work the protagonist 'making' international higher education is the university teacher, but s/he interacts with other agents such as students, administrators, colleagues or local/institutional managers.
3. *What **activities** are involved in the practice of 'international teaching'?* Activity means concrete doings such as making a Power Point presentation or explaining a theory in class. This last element is perhaps the most tricky to investigate, since it demands that the researcher leaves aside any personal experiences or expectations attached to the act of lecturing.

The three components of *setting*, *actors* and *activities* constitute the founding principles in the framework presented in *Teaching Practices*. They are topics that are relatively easy to explain, which is crucial to the researcher relying on interview data as she may be required to elaborate on questions that for some reason are unclear to the informants. Equally important is the centrality of such concerns in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Theodore Schatzki and John Dewey, who are the key thinkers

guiding my conceptualisation of practice. Based on previous accounts of their work, it is tempting to conclude that the theories of Bourdieu, Schatzki and Dewey diverge as they are rarely discussed in relation to each other, except in the work of Schatzki (2002), who mainly uses such comparison to emphasise his own difference from Bourdieu. However, when searching for similarity rather than variance, one realises to what extent the three theorists' understandings of social reality complement rather than contradict each other. Hence, there is a consensus that an examination of 'the social' requires: 1) the identification of a location within which action is situated; 2) agents undertaking a 'bundle of activities' associated with the specific practice investigated; and 3) practical knowledge that enables the individual actor to assess the value of his/her performance in relation to other agents present within the site examined. To this Dewey (1910) adds the possibility of 'Learning by Doing', suggesting that experiences that clash with norms or expectations that the individual has acquired earlier, will motivate a process of reflection which may or may not result in a change of practice. Similarly, Bourdieu and Schatzki accept that habits may change in situations where actors sense they are 'losing touch' with their surroundings. Change is central when investigating a phenomenon such as 'international higher education', which can be interpreted as a profound organisational transformation arising in response to macro-level forces such as globalisation (eg. Edwards/Usher 2008).

The choice of a practice ontology composed of the three elements of setting, actors and activities has implications for the way research is carried out, requesting a design that foregrounds the actual doings and sayings performed by individual agents in the varied spaces that make up the educational environment within a specific programme, department and institution. One attempt to meet such requirements was the empirical study that Lisanne Wilken and I designed in 2011 in an attempt to apply the conceptual and methodological apparatus proposed by Pierre Bourdieu to international HE. My own involvement was as principal investigator in a sub-project motivated by the research question *How do university lecturers contribute to the creation, confirmation and evaluation of social practice in a global learning environment?* (Wilken/Tange 2011) The project focused on a select number of international MA programmes situated within one Danish university, and

the setting of social practice, at least at the programme and institutional levels, had thus been decided before the empirical work commenced. The second element of actors was a given in the sense that I was responsible for the part of the collaborative project that focused on the university lecturers. This left me with the task of defining *activities*, which involves the specific action and interaction that occur in teaching, and which, for reasons stated above, require that one thinks beyond personal experiences with and expectations tied to international HE. Looking at the interview guide produced in 2013 (enclosed as appendix 2), the questions are organised thematically. Four sections highlight the specific 'situations' of teaching, group work, project work and exams, requesting 1) a description of the activity; 2) a reflection on the teacher's role; and 3) an account of the expected learning outcome. In order to place teaching performances in relation to actors' educational programme, discipline and institution, an initial section contains queries about academic tradition, disciplinary position as well as the socio-cultural and geographic contexts that informants might consider relevant to the course in question. A final section provides an opportunity for informants to comment on other activities such as oral presentations or written assignments, thus opening up to anything that the lecturers consider relevant to the practice of international education, as enacted in their specific programme and class. The collaborative project inspiring this research suggested a normative aspect adopted from Bourdieu, which in relation the lecturers translates into a research question highlighting actors' role in 'creating', 'confirming' and 'evaluating' practices. In the interview guide, this focus is evident in the section on exams, where informants are asked: What do you require from a 'good' performance in this type of exam?

Twenty-five interviews were collected in the second study, which was conducted between 2013 and 2015. In addition to the interviews, various documents were obtained from the informants, including course reading lists, lecturer biographies, study guidelines and instructions produced to support learners new to a specific form of academic text production or exam. The written texts were disregarded when performing the first thematic analysis of the interview transcripts in 2015, but included later to acquire additional information on themes such as mobility, disciplinary networks, academic socialisation, curricular contexts and exam

preparation. An example of the relationship between themes emerging from the interview analysis and insights acquired from the written texts can be found in the article ‘Opening the mind’ (Tange/Millar 2016). Here we compare informant observations on the (perceived) socio-cultural framing of knowledge to the geographic distribution of authors included in the actual course syllabi, which confirms the impression that the contextual orientation of the programme examined is ‘American’ rather than ‘European’ or ‘global’. The second interview study became crucial to development of my analytical framework in *Teaching Practices* for three reasons. First, the interviewing started from the concrete situations suggested by the interview guide, which meant that the rather vague idea of ‘international education’ could now be documented through examples of actual teaching practices such as lecturing, teamwork, projects, written assignments and oral/written exams. When commenting on these, informants would mention adjustments they had made to accommodate the special needs they found among students registered for the course that was the focus of our conversation. Hence, change emerged as a theme because the lecturers wanted to highlight modifications to their teaching practice and not as an automatic response to questions about cross-cultural difference. Second, it was evident in the data that the classroom represented only one of several possible settings, and that the practice of international teaching also involved locations such as homework ‘cafes’, student ‘clubs’, departmental facilities and fieldwork sites. I was dealing with a ‘nested’ practice (Tange 2021, p. 19), in other words, which means that actors and action could be connected to multiple sites and scales. Arguably, this made it possible to read the individual action reported in qualitative data collected at a single institutional site in Denmark in relation to global flows and forces. Third, the Bourdieusian inspiration that had informed the design of the second interview study influenced the process of analysing the material, prompting the researcher to look for examples that might suggest that some form of normative understanding, or power. In the thematic analysis, ‘power’ is adopted as one of six overall themes (the others being asymmetries, epistemologies, field, practical knowledge and reproduction), incorporating four sub-themes: Academic conventions, capability, exams and socialisation. All involve some form of evaluation, which supports the understanding of practice as habituated action acquired, recognised and validated within specific disciplinary, institutional and national fields. Arguably, this places learners’

internalisation of local norms and routines at the centre of international HE, as suggested in my article on lecturers' role as 'transition managers' (Tange 2019).

Teaching Practices in a global learning environment offers an attempt to assemble the varied insights gained through empirical research into a holistic account of international higher education. The three organising concepts are *activities*, *structures* and *connections*, which are represented in a way that foregrounds the relationships between individual action at the micro-level and global developments such as academic mobility, international competition and 'Englishisation'. In *Teaching Practices*, I start by outlining the four structural conditions of globalisation (imagined and practical), academic disciplines, mobility and the English language, which, I argue, have become so deeply ingrained in many university teachers' habitus that informants will make apologies when describing action that deviates from these implicit or explicit norms. Part two zooms in on specific activities related to the five teaching practices of course design, academic socialisation, curricular contexts, multicultural teamwork and exams, highlighting examples of change introduced by the informants in order to support learners in transition from a different discipline, institution, educational culture, linguistic or socio-cultural environment. Part three foregrounds connections, suggesting that all themes addressed in previous chapters can be interpreted in relation to a multi-sited and multi-scalar practice scape, thus forging a link between micro and macro-level action. In the remaining parts of this working paper I explain in more detail what this analytical framework involves. However, instead of reproducing the outline of the book, I will follow the ordering of social practice that emerged from my empirical work. Accordingly, I begin with an examination of the micro-level *activities* performed by individual actors in the classroom. This is followed by a discussion of the *structures* motivating informants to privilege specific form of action, which leads to a concluding section on *connections*, which highlights the linkages between practices located in different sites and scales that shape and are shaping global higher education.

Activities: *Doing* and *sayings* in the international classroom

At the centre of a practice theoretical examination of international HE is ‘action’ – the concrete performances that actors engage in when ‘teaching’, ‘supervising’ or ‘examining’ students. In order to establish what it means to *internationalise* practices, it is necessary to clarify what more precisely we are looking at. To support this part of my work, I adopted Theodore Schatzki’s notion of ‘Doings & Sayings’, focusing the data analysis on the specific activities and speech acts that the informants presented as ‘teaching’. Schatzki (2002) defines such practical understanding as ‘knowing how to do X, knowing how to identify X-ings, and knowing how to prompt as well as respond to X-ings’ (20). Schatzki (2001, 48) treats practices as ‘organised nexuses of activity’, which means that they can involve multiple agents, artifacts and performances. As a result, one may present as ‘practices’ complex pedagogic actions such as *designing* an international course, classroom *teaching*, *compiling* an ‘international’ course syllabi, *facilitating* multicultural teamwork and preparing for various forms of assessment. The five practices are examined in detail in *Teaching Practices* so here I take the liberty of zooming on key aspects important to the question of *internationalising*.

Designing an international course is the first practice addressed and in many ways the most significant. Interestingly enough the question of *how to do* an international programme is rarely touched upon in the literature, except in the form of teachers’ descriptions on modifications made in order to resolve a specific issue observed in an international class. Yet my empirical work made it clear that there is no standard way of internationalising a course.

A number of important considerations have to be made before the teacher's actual entry into the international classroom:

1. What is the purpose of offering international education?
2. What forms of education are involved?
3. Is the programme designed for undergraduate or postgraduate learners?
4. Is the programme targeting subject specialists or generalists? (Tange 2021, 92)

Particularly question 3 and 4 are important as they respond to my realisation that there is no single form of international HE, which challenges the 'one-size-fits-all' solutions proposed by educational consultants such as Carroll (2015) and Hudzik (2015). Judging from the descriptions found in the Danish material, international teaching represents a complex practice which demands that lecturers accommodate in their modules students with very divergent expectations and academic levels. A Philosophy teacher observes on his class:

> [T]here is a fair group among the international students, who have only had Philosophy for a year or maybe no Philosophy at all… But who may yet be interested in a specific course which we have and offer, and because our study regulations allow free topic modules… it is formally an option students can use. And of course this leads to the problem that in [class] we have, at least as a starting point, experienced, Danish Philosophy students, who have had a foundation course for two years and are now in their third or fourth year of Philosophy; on the other side are international students, who have no qualifications or only very few, basic qualifications, and that is a pedagogic challenge. (as quoted in Tange 2021, 94)

The teacher's comment reflects conditions unique to the Danish system of HE where an MA degree has traditionally been understood as five years' subject specialisation, which means that postgraduate classes build on knowledge established during students' undergraduate years. When these modules are opened to mobile students,

the lecturer may have to engage with the simultaneous presence of novice and advanced learners, which makes it difficult to strike a compromise that can satisfy both groups. In the interview material, the problem is recognised across disciplines and institutions, which foregrounds the need to explicate what is the expected academic level and adjust entrance requirements accordingly. At the same time, the observation from Philosophy draws attention to two key elements in course design: Academic socialisation and progression. Academic socialisation describes the process in which learners new to a discipline, institution or educational culture learn the 'rules of the game' from experienced peers or teachers. This is essential to successful international education and cannot be reduced to a question of assimilating non-natives. Instead teachers must recognise how practical knowledge is tied to specific institutional approaches to teaching (eg. problem-based learning at Aalborg University), conventions within a specific discipline (eg. writing the essay in a 'political science' style), and, in the case of Master students, the types of scientific knowledge included in undergraduate courses. The last topic relates to the second element of progression. A university course represents a learning process where students gradually develop a more nuanced and 'deep' way of thinking about their discipline (Meyer/Land 2005). Taylor (2007) envisions higher education as a series of 'transformative gateway[s]', which 'leads to the understanding of new and conceptually more difficult ideas' (87). All university programmes involve 'leaps' that enable students to progress, but not all courses necessarily involve the same conceptual 'steps'. Hence, learners recruited for a Master class from a different institution, BA programme or academic culture may come across as 'weaker', simply because they lack informal or formal knowledge expected by their new teachers.

The second practice of *classroom teaching* foregrounds the rules and routines associated with participating in higher education. As Bourdieu demonstrates in *Homo Academicus* (1988) and *Academic Discourse* (Bourdieu et al. 1994), there are conventions within an academic system that guide actors' ways of performing and evaluating action. These norms are particular to institutional, disciplinary and educational cultures, and often constitute tacit knowledge. The presence of a more diverse student cohort in the classroom may draw teachers' attention to system roles

and routines, prompting them to reflect on their own position as seen in the example of this social scientist ‘dressing up’ for international teaching:

> One of the things I think about, this may sound a bit ridiculous, but that is actually the way I dress. I try to dress a bit more formally when it is a group of international or mixed Danish and foreign students. Exactly because they generally find it hard to accept this, or at least some of them, this role of authority. That it is different… You can distinguish between two extremes. One is that you have the teacher who will tell [you] everything that you need to do, and who is the absolute authority. And then you are the one who tries to learn. And then you have the one who tries to teach by – well, the teacher role that [goes], well, I am one with the students. And that, I believe, is simply hypocritical, for we are not like that. So I am prepared, I try to dress differently to say, well, I am different. I am an authority but you can exercise that authority in different ways.

In the descriptions of classroom teaching, three key themes can be identified: Teacher/learner roles, silence vs. participation and critical thinking. In previous research these have been discussed in relation to a domestic teacher/international student distinction, which means that the dissonance noted by the lecturers is explained with reference to student nationality and language. I will argue for the need to dig deeper, looking for teacher reflections that may help foreground the implicit norms guiding informants’ understanding and evaluation of practices. The themes of teacher roles and participation/silence, for instance, connect in the way that lecturers working in Danish HE generally agree that they prefer a student-centred approach where learners actively engage in debates with peers and the teacher. Any silence in the classroom challenges this norm of ‘good’ teaching, prompting lecturers to look for alternative explanations such as students’ academic or linguistic capability, since this will allow them to preserve a self-image as successful classroom communicators. This can fuel ‘deficit discourses’, where teachers interpret student silence as symptomatic of the uncritical ‘rote-learning’ commonly ascribed to students from Asian backgrounds. As a result, student groups from particular socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds are categorised as ‘uncritical’ or ‘silent’ learners, from whom

the teachers will expect weak performances in academic assignments and exams. Yet it needs to be stressed that reflective practitioners are rarely content with such stereotyping, pointing to a possible need for them to perform the role as teacher differently in order to encourage participation from 'silent' learners.

The theme of 'silence' is connected to the third practice of *compiling course syllabi*. For the geographical and socio-cultural framing of academic disciplines matters when trying to establish why some students find it difficult to engage in classroom discussions. The realisation that the world may be represented unevenly in international HE has prompted authors to suggest that we attend to the problem of 'Western' or 'Eurocentric' domination in scientific knowledge production (Haigh 2009, Rizvi 2007). But such framing of the problem is motivated by debates on postcolonialism in Britain and Australia rather than empirical investigations of teachers' practice, and it is urgent that this criticism be assessed in relation to the knowledge geographies emerging from course lecturers' socio-cultural and spatial framing of their discipline. An analysis of international course syllabi reveals how lecturers favour knowledge produced in the 'West' or 'Global North', which they justify by describing this as 'more relevant' to an international student cohort than material originating outside Western Europe and North American. A Business teacher comments on his reading list: 'We only have international articles. Well, I use five journals, approximately. And they are top journals. Which means I have nothing called *South African Journal of Finance*, right. It will be *Journal of Finance, Journal of Finance and Economics* that I choose from'. The quote is interesting as it shows how the interviewee ranks journals and geographies, dismissing the possibility of a valid South African publication. A similar marginalisation of non-Western literature characterises most disciplines and programmes examined, which means that the postcolonial charge of a 'Northern' or 'Western' hegemony holds true. As regards the accusation of 'Eurocentricity', this seems more problematic. Based on a quantitative mapping of course syllabi from five Danish and two British programmes, I conclude in the book that international educators generally privilege knowledge produced in United States and other English-speaking countries at the expense of any other region, including non-English-speaking Europe (Tange 2021, 122-26). The reflections provided in the Danish interviews offer one explanation for this. Several

informants thus question the relevance of using Danish case studies in disciplines such as Agricultural Science and Business Studies, stressing how in a mixed international class one must rely on material that is recognised around the world. A Business lecturer observes on his choice of reading:

> So there's only books on mostly US… [Y]ou can say, I think it is an advantage because… I mean there are some standard books and somehow I think it is also good for [students] if they go somewhere else, and they say, we have had this course with this book and then also if they go abroad… some people will say 'Ah, this is what you did' and then it is kind of standardised what is their background.

In *Teaching Practices*, I introduce two approaches to internationalising course syllabi: *recontextualisation* and *upscaling*. *Recontextualisation* involves a reframing of scientific knowledge from a Danish/other national context to one that is assumed to be accessible to a global audience. The example given is the replacement of news items from a Danish media site with stories taken from *The Guardian* or *The New York Times* (Tange 2021, 120). British and American media are not necessarily global in orientation, but they are assumed to be read by many students, and teachers will treat them as 'international' rather than 'national'. *Upscaling* represents a more conscious strategy for internationalising. Informants from Law, History, Agriculture and Social Science describe how as part of internationalising they have widened the scope of their courses, shifting from a local/national scale to one that is international. Such change may lead to the development of new courses with names such as 'European' history, 'international' law or 'global' journalism.

Multicultural teamwork represents one of the most common teaching practices in international HE. In the interviews, lecturers describe how students prefer to socialise with peers from a similar linguistic and socio-cultural background, proposing as their solution to this problem multicultural teamwork, which demands that native and international students work together on a shared task. However, what is clear from the literature is that teachers' attempts to further intercultural dialogue by placing learners in diverse groups will backfire if students find that they are made

responsible for peers perceived to be ‘weak’ in terms of linguistic and academic ability (eg Harrison/Peacock 2010, Kimmel/Volet 2012). When allowed to set their own teams, learners generally follow a principle of social homophily (McPherson et al. 2001), forming groups that are homogeneous with regard to language, nationality, discipline and academic ability. As a result, group formation in international classes is characterised by a native-non-native distinction similar to the one described by this social scientist:

> I really think that there is a tendency to some kind of division, and of course I consider that extremely unfortunate. So we started by the first semester by simply creating groups administratively in order to force the Danes to fraternise and concretely work together with the foreigners. But soon it turned out, even after the first semester, they split up. So there were some purely Danish groups, and then there were some purely non-Danish groups.

The observation is interesting for two reasons. First, we see how students will group in native and non-native clusters when free to do so, which suggests that teacher involvement is necessary if learners are to experience working in diverse teams. Second, we may read this as a manifestation of a bias peculiar to Danish higher education. Several Danish lecturers point to the possible existence of a ‘national’ tradition for teamwork developed through primary and secondary education, which leads them to conclude that the non-native students have a disadvantage when asked to engage in this specific activity. There is little evidence to support the argument that Danes are more capable team workers, given that collaborative learning is encouraged in educational cultures around the world. Yet it motivates some lecturers to position international students as ‘inexperienced’, which draws attention to the importance of framing multicultural teamwork as an activity that enables all learners to contribute as equals.

To establish an even platform one should be wary of the positioning that happens when students engage in teamwork. Students will distinguish between peer types considered to be ‘undesirable’ (eg dominant, silent or freeriding students) and those

deemed ‘capable’ (eg. academically gifted, ‘natural’ leaders or socially gifted). A special category is that of the ‘inexperienced’ group worker, who may be invited into a team but is treated as a novice in need of instruction from more ‘experienced’ members. Non-natives are often placed in this position, which limits their influence on decision-making in the groups. To counter such marginalisation I suggest in *Teaching Practices* that a ‘capabilities’ approach be adopted. Instead of highlighting socio-cultural and lingustic diversity, lectures may choose to foreground the resources available in a diverse team, defining group assignments that demand the use of various forms of socio-cultural, disciplinary, linguistic, technical and intercultural knowledge. The idea of a ‘capabilities’ approach was inspired by a History teacher who here motivates her criteria for team formation:

> [W]ell, I have put you together so that there is someone who likes to draw, there is someone who likes IT, and there is someone who likes History. And the reason I am doing this, is because you will need to make these chronologies and maps, and therefore you need someone who can draw. And you have to upload some things to a First Class conference, so therefore you need someone who can support the others or the group in working out how this will function. And then, of course, since this is a History class, it is good also to have someone who likes the history involved. (as quoted in Tange 2021, 143)

The fifth practice of *academic assessment*, or exams, is relatively unexplored in the literature on international HE. This can be explained by tendency among researchers to highlight the question of ‘international-ness’, or cultural difference, which may have drawn attention away from the normative understandings that teachers rely on when assessing student performances. A key element in academic socialisation is the mastery of the particular forms of evaluation used within a programme, institution or discipline. In higher education such practical knowledge is typically established during the early years of an undergraduate course, which means that teachers in MA programmes will expect learners to be familiar with the rules governing academic writing and speech. Lecturers may therefore react strongly when encountering individuals who challenge their norms by writing essays in a ‘journalistic’ style or

treating an oral exam as an informal chat between friends. Add to this the ‘deficit discourses’ commonly used to justify why international students fail, and it becomes clear why we have to engage with the challenge of academic assessment in international HE.

In *Teaching Practices*, I adopt from theories on academic literacy (Lea/Street 2006) the understanding of exams as a social practice. The implication is that academic speech and writing require a practical understanding of the implicit and explicit rules governing teachers’ evaluation, but because such norms are shaped within specific institutional, disciplinary and national environments, all students new to their programme will require guidance to crack the code. To establish how assessment is dealt with in international HE I did two things. First, I went through all interview data, identifying what forms of evaluation the informants described in our conversations. Through this work I established that at least 17 performance types were used, some of which consisted of several subtypes, as in the example of written papers, which can be divided into ‘theoretical’, ‘case exercise’, ‘calculations’, ‘statistics’, ‘lab report’ and ‘literature synopsis’ (Tange 2021, 152). No students will need to master all formats, as there are important differences between the needs of a biologist and a political scientist. Yet it shows that the lecturers have no shared vocabulary when describing exams, which creates a challenge for learners moving into a new discipline, institution or national system. An informant from Humanities observes on the vague language used about academic assignments in her programme:

> There are also our exam forms. Which we take for granted because they are embedded in our curriculum… But this means that there are some of our foreign [students] who for the first time have to complete these 12 times 3 lessons by writing a free, independent home assignment, which we still use quite a lot in [this department]. Where they come, pull themselves together and ask: What is a free assignment? (as quoted in Tange 2021, 153)

Second, I examined the interview material with a view to identifying solutions to the exam challenge. This highlighted two strategies adopted by the teachers: First, there

is the possibility to de-select certain exam formats because they are expected to challenge international students. In Danish HE an example is the oral exam, which Danish students will know from high school, but which is an unfamiliar and rather intimidating format for many non-natives. An alternative action is to adopt a strategy of *formative assessment*, which can involve a series of short texts collected in a portfolio or the submission of ungraded mid-term or 'mock' essays. Here students are given the opportunity to hand in written work during a course, which means that they can receive feedback on contents, style and language. When preparing their final assignment, learners can use the teacher's critique to correct any major mistakes, thus aligning their academic writing with the evaluation criteria used by the teacher. In this way, any difference between learners old and new to an academic system is evened out, which means that all students can be given a fair chance.

Structures: Enacting the global in the local

The normative understandings that enable actors to distinguish 'good' from 'poor' performances suggest that practices are not independent activities but organised actions that connect the individual agent to some form of social or collective order. Bourdieu uses the concept of field to identify the arena in which 'the social' is played out, arguing that within each field the position of actors will be determined by their status, resources and disposition (Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992, Bourdieu 1977). In Bourdieu's terminology, resources are referred to as 'capital' and will in the academic world involve *cultural capital*, eg. an actor's affiliation with a prestigious research institution, recognition within one's discipline and publications in top-ranking journals; and *social capital*, which can be obtained through personal and professionals networks (Bourdieu 1986). Most university lecturers participate in the competition for recognition within their disciplinary and institutional field and are therefore predisposed towards choosing actions considered prestigious by their peers. This means that the specific practices observed in the international classroom constitutes structured action, shaped by and shaping developments within national and international academia. *Teaching Practices* foregrounds four such conditions: Globalisation, disciplinary orientation, academic mobility and 'Englishisation'.

Globalisation is an umbrella term, which incorporates a series of changes to the way that higher education is understood and imagined around the world. Arguably, it is the single most significant difference between the 'national' academic system described by Bourdieu in *Homo Academicus* and the 'international' universities of 2020, involving a radical restructuring of the field within which institutions and individuals navigate in their pursuit of prestige, visibility and resources. At the institutional level, it is clear from the literature that most universities today strive for 'internationalisation', accepting that higher education and research must be performed in a global rather than national setting (Knight 2017). Characteristic of university mission statements in the 2010s is a commitment to expanding international activities such as student exchange, recruitment of non-native students/staff, scholars' participation in transnational projects, and attraction of research funding from big organisations such as the OECD and the European Union. Such prioritisation reflects the value attached to a strong global profile, which can be converted into a top position on lists such as *THE* and ARWU/Shanghai. The reasons behind institutions' ambition to engage in global competition vary as they depend on the amount of political and economic support provided for higher education and research within a specific national and/or supernational system. However, based on the literature review conducted for *Teaching Practices*, it is possible to identity the two dominant motives: academic capitalism, or the prospect of financial gain, and ethical internationalism, or an ideological concern with the promotion of global citizenship. These two understandings affect the interpretations of international HE expressed by academic staff, as seen in these comments by British-based lecturers:

> [I]f you ask my head of department, what more can the university do, is to get us more international students because they bring in more money. The department is always in need of money, so therefore they have to bring more of them in for us. Give us an opportunity to sell our wares abroad more easily.

> [T]his course wouldn't be the same if the make-up of students was not international. Because that internationalism in class works for the

> internationalism that's part of the curriculum we are trying to develop. And that it's really them challenging each other or bring in perspectives, sharing perspectives, is what really makes the course dynamic. (as quoted in Tange 2021, 92-93)

A similar difference between a financial and an ideological motivation for international HE can be detected in the Danish interviews. One group of informants express what can be characterised as an 'academic capitalism' discourse, insisting that internationalisation has been initiated by the management without any consultation of academic staff and implemented in a top-down manner, requesting that all courses within a discipline, faculty or department be opened to international students. In Denmark top-down internationalisation typically includes a strategic decision to establish English as the default medium of instruction, which may happen either in an attempt to strengthen the institution's global standing or boost numbers by recruiting non-natives for less popular courses. In contrast, 'ethical internationalism' is expressed by lecturers, who have themselves chosen to partake in international HE because they see this as an opportunity to develop new courses, engage with a diverse student cohort or add an international perspective to their discipline. Informants from this group are frequently drivers of internationalisation within their organisation, assuming responsibility for everything from negotiating exchange agreements to the promotion of an internationalist agenda within their department, faculty or university. A lecturer observes:

> I returned to the section after working abroad and found it annoying that there was nothing . . .. because I'd actually rather teach in English than Danish. So to me it was not really an experience of how I got into this. It was rather [a question of] why it was not already there? So I have been one of those who have pushed to have these courses established and spoken in favour of us offering English medium courses.

Bottom-up processes tend to happen in disciplines with a strong internationalist ethos, although there are also examples of junior staff who have sought to obtain a permanent position by developing modules attractive to exchange students. In

Danish HE this form of internationalisation is typical of the period 1980 to around 2010, at which point international activities have become a strategic priority at all universities, leading to increased management involvement and control.

The second structuring condition of *disciplines* is central to any examination of academic cultures. Bourdieu observes in *Homo Academicus* (1988) how institutions are organised into disciplines which to the single academic represents a '[system] of values' or way of 'envisaging the successful man' (58). Hence, disciplines function as communities of practice, within which members share a theoretical knowledge base, a canon of sacred texts/icons, ritual gatherings, research techniques and a specific form of speech or writing. *Teaching Practices* builds on a Bourdieusian conceptualisation of disciplines as socially situated practices, adding to this an international dimension by asking what value individual actors attach to an identity as 'global' scholars and teachers? I accept that internationalisation may not affect all scientific communities in the same way, which means that one needs to consider how academic knowledge is understood within particular subject areas and departments. In relation to this, I propose that one distinguishes between areas such as Law, Public Administration, Modern Languages and English Literature, which are predominantly national in orientation, and the subjects of International Management, Development Studies, International Relations and Human Geography, which start from an understanding of geography as 'global' in scale and scope. The internationalist disciplines may prefer to focus on particular countries or regions, as seen in the quote by the Business lecturer, who dismissed including South African publications in his course syllabi (see page 31). Another example is the tendency in Development Studies or Anthropology to rely on a 'North helps South' discourse, which can leave students from Third World countries with the impression that their indigenous knowledge carries little value. However, shared by all is the consensus that actors need to internationalise their research and teaching practices. A Business lecturer describes how in her department junior academics are socialised into viewing research as an activity enacted in international settings:

> [O]ur head of department has… held some publication clinics for the young researchers – PhD students and assistant professors. Where he

> simply tells [us] about his own experiences with publishing. From the beginning you really get told that this is very important. This thing about performing internationally. For writing articles for international journals, that is part of becoming international. (as quoted in Tange 2021, 50)

Equally important is the difference between academics who perceive scientific knowledge as 'universal' and those who present their subject as context-dependent, which means that it is discussed in relation to specific socio-cultural, linguistic, geographic, natural or institutional environments. In the first group we find lecturers from disciplines such as Chemistry, Physics, Cognitive Semiotics, Statistics and Finance who claim that it makes no difference to them if they teach Danish, South African or Chinese students. For what they provide is 'universal' knowledge – scientific models, methods and concepts that are applicable around the world. In the second group are informants working with knowledge influenced by specific environmental factors. An example is the lawyer quoted previously (p. 11), who deals with material with a distinctive national tradition, and who can therefore not recycle her Danish course when changing to international teaching. Teachers from Accountancy, Biology, Agricultural Science, History and Media Studies report similar experiences, explaining in the interviews how in order to internationalise their subject they need to rethink course contents and readings. Undoubtedly, the lecturers' rethinking transforms the nature of disciplinary knowledge, shifting the focus from contents relevant to the local or national community towards something that can be generalised across a variety of contexts and scales.

Mobility provides the foundation for international HE in the sense that it is the global movement of actors, resources and ideas that prompts institutions and individuals to internationalise their practice. Every year millions of learners seek study and internship opportunities abroad, and this flow of people is possibly the single most important factor behind universities' decision to develop international HE. Yet a parallel trend can be observed among staff who increasingly perceive themselves as scholars moving in a globalised and interconnected academic field. This has prompted Kim (2010) to suggest that successful researchers need to accumulate 'transnational identity capital', which she defines as 'a mode of cosmopolitan

positioning to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations, which can facilitate free movement among diverse groups and contexts' (583-4). In *Teaching Practices* academic mobility is treated both as a social imaginary and a physical movement that requires from migrants the learning of new routines and roles. As regard the question of migration as social imaginary, I draw attention to the tendency in previous research to produce an image of scholars roaming freely within a 'flat' academic space. Such a picture has captured the imagination of many academics, who are thus encouraged to treat their research and teaching as practices that are disconnected from specific institutions, research groups and departments and can therefore be used as stakes in a global game for recognition, prestige and resources. Characteristic of such a global mindset is the importance that informants attach to their position within international projects and networks as seen in this observation from a Danish-based anthropologist:

> [S]ince I actually joined [this university], I also joined a group, which is called 'Framing the Global', which is housed at Indiana University in Bloomington. And this group is, basically, made of fellows who have been recruited all over the world to actually come together and rethink methodologies and theories around the global.

'Going abroad' to participate in a joint venture or visit a prestigious research institution is an activity many highlight in the interviews, which shows to what extent academic success has become related to an idea of international-ness. In the Danish material mobility often takes the form of short-term stays at universities in Western Europe, North America and Australia, and such action is deemed so essential to people's career that PhD fellows will feel obliged to justify a de-selection of this ritual change of environment. Parallel to the short-term 'export' of scholars, lecturers note the growing presence of non-native staff who are recruited in an attempt to strengthen the 'global' profile of a department, programme or research group. Unlike the PhD students, international recruits are expected to stay for an extended period, or indeed build a career in their new environment, which means that their performance is judged differently from that of a short-term visitor. For even if they buy into the 'flat world' image, academic migrants' status within their institution

depends on the extent to which colleagues and students are willing to accept their right to use only English or build on a global rather than a national framing of disciplinary knowledge. To some informants, movement between different institutional sites create few difficulties, but others describe situations where they have met with critique from local students and staff, which has motivated some to change their teaching practices in order to ensure a better fit with local norms and routines. In *Teaching Practices*, I name this process 'localisation', suggesting that more attention be paid to organisational socialisation when examining academics' global careers.

The fourth structuring principle is *the English language*. International higher education and research constitute an English-speaking world, in which actors' status is connected to their ability to disseminate scientific knowledge in English. In the Nordic countries, this has prompted a debate on the 'proper' balance between the national languages and English, which in 2017 motivated a group of linguists to argue for a policy of *parallel language usage* in an attempt to secure the future of Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish as media for science communication (Gregersen et al. 2017, 5). Judging from academics' linguistic practice, however, this seems to be a lost battle. When researching the topic in 2016-2017, Sharon Millar and I found that 90.2% of PhD theses submitted at the two largest Danish universities were written in English, while 88.4% of journals placed in the top category on the journal lists used for research evaluation were English-medium (Tange/Millar, forthcoming). Arguably, such linguistic domination is only possible when academics recognise English as their preferred medium for science communication, which indicates that there may be a connection between actors' ambition to position themselves as 'international' and their willingness to adopt a second language for teaching and research. To understand the dynamics at work in 'Englishisation' one may to look at non-native speakers' responses to questions about their linguistic ability. A characteristic reaction is to admit that something is 'lost in translation', but then add that the problem mainly occurs in teaching, which demands a different register than research communication. A natural scientist reflects:

> Now, I am myself happy using English and have lived for a year in the US . . . and have no problem thinking and talking in English. So I believe that part works pretty well for me, but even so, you can be more spontaneous in Danish, in a different way, and bring in nuances that many will miss in English. I myself can become really annoyed with teachers who speak poor English.

The last point is interesting for there is a tendency among the informants to mention colleagues' problems while claiming that 'English is fine with me'. This suggests that there might be social pressure in the system, which arises from the fact that all interviewees work in the dual capacity of teachers and researchers and will therefore base part of their academic identity on successes obtained within their chosen field of research. As established in the discussion on disciplines, the 'best' research is that which reaches out to a global community of practice, which is only possible if actors are willing to publish in English. So if admitting to language difficulties, an informant signals that s/he may not be able to meet the requirements of a 'global' scholar, which could have implications for those seeking a career in a highly internationalised environment. As one lecturer from Science observes: 'I do not think there's any prestige in admitting that you think your English is inadequate… I suppose nobody will want to say explicitly that they are not good enough at their job, will they?' Several examples from the data analysis can be used to support the argument that a process of 'Englishisation' is furthered by actors' association of English with scientific success and visibility. First, informants find it necessary to justify writing in languages other than English, stressing that English-medium publications count for more. Second, there is a tendency among PhD sojourners to visit English-speaking countries, which can be read as an attempt to acquire cultural capital in the form of an improved command of English. Third, many informants actively promote the use of English, which suggests that in some environments this is considered the natural choice. As one interviewee reflects: 'I think it is more difficult to teach in Danish than in English… I never write anything in Danish because my entire scientific vocabulary is English'.

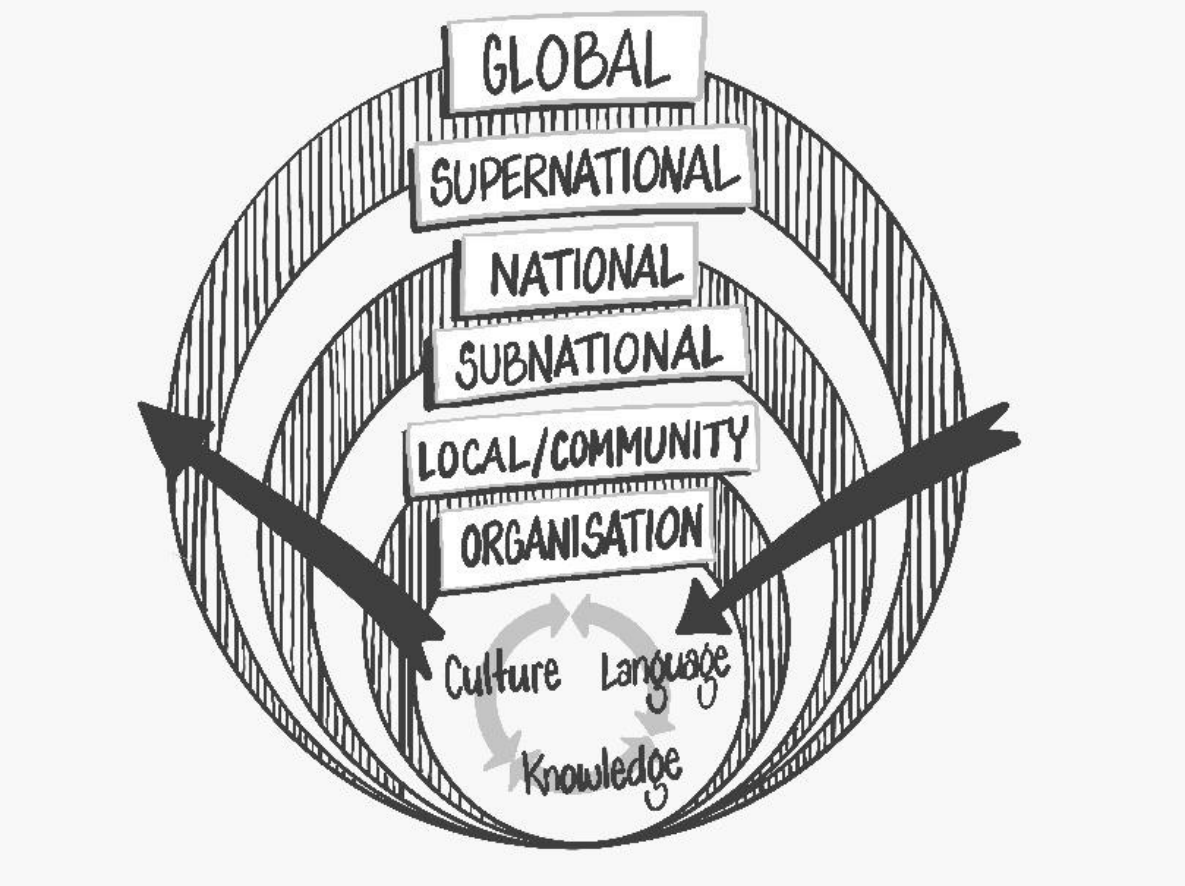
Connections: Linking the local and the global

The predominant understanding of globalisation in recent HE research builds on the concepts of *flows, scales* and *connections* (Appadurai 1996, Hannerz 1996). This seems natural, given the importance of movement manifest in relation to the conditions of mobility, internationalising academic disciplines and 'Englishisation', which all demonstrate how contemporary academics perceive their practice as 'nested', extending beyond the walls of the institution in which they happen to be working right here and right now. To produce an image of higher education as a multi-sited and multi-scalar reality, the Swedish researchers Per-Anders Forstorp and Ulf Mellström (2013, 336) suggest that a sixth dimension, eduscape, be added to Arjun Appadurai's theory of global scapes:

> [T]he transnational flow of ideas and people in regard to research and higher education and where nodes of knowledge centres, peripheries and positional dynamics shift over time but are connected through modern communication technologies and different epistemic, ethnic and learning communities. (336)

On a similar note, Robertson and Dale (2015, 155) propose that 'global HE' be represented as an *ensemble* that come together through the linkages produced when individuals and institutions engage with actors and action positioned in other academic locations. To such multi-sitedness, I should like to add the notion of internationalisation as activity unfolding in a three-dimensional space involving scales as well as sites, building on the conceptualisation of internationalisation as a *glonacal agency heuristic* suggested by Simon Marginson and Gary Rhoades (2002). In *Teaching Practices*, I thus suggest that the global practice-scape that constitutes international higher education be visualised in the form of the model reproduced below:

Model 1: A global practice-scape



Model reproduced from Tange 2021, 169

The model is a simplified representation of the form of 'globalisation' manifest in the specific practices uncovered through my work collecting 'teachers' stories'. At the centre, I place the actual activities that constitute classroom performance. In the visualisation, they are represented through the key domains of 'Culture', 'Language' and 'Knowledge' which were the organising themes emerging from the initial stage of my empirical work, the interview study described in the section on 'falling into the cross-cultural trap'. The domains were brought into the final model because they are central to the way that educational scholars approach international HE and because they together embrace the multiple practices brought forth in my later research. The specific activities are framed by 'Organisation' in order to underline how teaching involves a relationship with collectives such as the teaching group, department, research school, faculty and institution. This framing is important if seeking a deeper understanding of the transition learning required when agents enter a new university

setting. Otherwise we risk reproducing the picture of academia as a ‘flat world’ where people roam freely without having to consider the ‘fit’ of their learning and teaching styles to particular organizational cultures. Yet ‘organisation’ is only one of the multiple scapes and spaces that shape and are shaped by the individual teacher’s practice. As the chapter on ‘structures’ demonstrated, people connect with peers, ideas and institutions situated in other parts of the world, bringing, for instance, the specific conceptualisation of a discipline encountered during a short-term visit to Harvard University into their representation of scientific knowledge in a classroom somewhere in Scandinavia. Similarly, what occurs at the individual and institutional levels is linked to developments at the supernational and global scales, with schemes such as the European Erasmus+ and international ranking lists building on and promoting specific ways of enacting ‘the international’. A final element in my visualisation is the two arrows linking the local/individual actor level to ‘the global’. Given that this part of my working paper is dedicated to ‘connections’, I should like to end by expanding on these linkages, offering two examples of interaction between the single actors and ‘global HE’.

Example one illustrates the arrow pointing from the individual action at the centre of the model towards the global. The arrow is meant to depict a form of internationalisation that starts with the particular choices that an individual teacher makes in relation to his/her course, class or discipline. On page 31, I quoted the Business lecturer who insisted that his course readings would not include a *South African Journal of Finance*. While acknowledging that his selection is shaped by structural conditions in the field of academic knowledge production, I should like to argue that at the end of the day we are dealing with an individual choice that reflects the personal preference of a specific agent. This I support by two observations: One, there nothing in the interview material indicating that actors such as course coordinators, programme conveners or colleagues intervene with the teacher’s practice in a way that might persuade him to de-select a South African publication. Two, any objections reported relate to students objecting to the domination of North America and Western European literature, and even if some informants acknowledge that such protests are legitimate, many will justify their readings with reference to disciplinary traditions and canons. The individual actors’ decision to

include or exclude particular writings when compiling a course syllabi has implications for practice in other parts of the system. First, the teachers signal to students what is worth reading, and the texts chosen by the lecturers are likely to be used later in student papers, MA theses, and, perhaps, a PhD application. This leads to the second point, the circulation of academic knowledge. Texts that are downloaded and cited by students and staff obtain visibility, which will increase their impact, possibly moving such publications upwards in the national and international lists used to evaluate research. These lists influence the decision-making of students and researchers located in other institutional and national settings, prompting them to rely on a similar distinction between journals that are 'worthy' and those that can be ignored. Over time, this will result in a particular construction of the world where case studies appearing in *Journal of Finance* become associated with 'global' knowledge that may be taught around the world, while anything published in African, Latin American or Asian journals is read as context-specific and deemed relevant only to readers positioned in those parts of the world.

Example two illustrates the arrow pointing from the global to the local/individual levels in the model. The arrow suggests that developments initiating at the global and supernational scales will impact individual teachers' performance of 'the global' in the classroom. I mentioned on p.38 how a junior academic might use internationalisation as a stepping stone for building a career within a disciplinary environment that is predominantly national in orientation. This becomes a possibility because of the centrality attached to movement within the field of higher education and research. Hence, the attraction of mobile academics is commonly accepted as a benchmark that distinguishes the successful university from less worthy competitors. Such benchmarking is the product of a combination of factors, including the marketisation of HE in educational systems such as the Australian, British and American, the attempts made to measure 'internationalisation' quantitatively in ranking schemes such as Times Higher Education and QS Global, and the ideological promotion of student/staff migration by international organisations such as the European Union. The 'mobility fetish' (Robertson 2010, 61) cultivated by the EU, OECD, UNESCO and other 'global' institutions may spread downwards to national systems, persuading policy-makers that academic movement is good

because it can be used to improve a country's stake in the global battle for talent and knowledge. This will again lead to the formulation of national strategies that highlight the benefits attached to international recruitment, which directly or indirectly encourages institutions to partake in various forms of international HE. When supported by key players such as the Ministry of Science and Education, such strategic commitment to migration is likely to become a priority within the higher education sector, motivating the inclusion of an international dimension in institutional mission statements. At this point internationalising becomes a possible action for the junior scholar, who found her career to be at risk because of a disciplinary specialisation not recognised by other teachers in her programme. She knows that within her faculty there is a limited supply of English-medium courses, which means that her part of the organisation has not been able to accommodate the growing number of exchange students accepted by the university. So she develops an international module, which, because of the global outlook she provides on her discipline, becomes popular with the exchange students, putting her in a strong position as she is now the only person in her teaching group actively supporting the management strategy of internationalisation. As a result, her opportunities, as a single teacher acting within a specific department at a university somewhere in Denmark, become linked to developments at the global level. Yet we should see this teacher, not as a passive dupe being pushed by, but as an active agent engaging with and thereby constructing globalisation. Hence, the teacher is at the centre of activity, regardless of where we start in the multi-sited and multi-scalar practice-scape that to this author constitutes global higher education.

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