

**Research Space**

Conference paper

**Internationalisation in universities: to what extent do institutional boundaries delineate a researcher's identity? A critical view'**

**Castaldi, J.**

*Internationalisation in universities:  
to what extent do institutional boundaries  
delineate a researcher's identity?*  
*A critical view*

*Jacopo Castaldi*

*Canterbury Christ Church University*

# Overview of the presentation

- Definition of key concepts
- The UK Higher Education context
- PhD researchers and identities
  - identity selection “at source”
  - institutional discourse – a case study
- Internationalisation and the “*value*” it brings – a critical view
- Internationalisation and the *Value* it brings – the way out

# Definition of key concepts

- **Identity:**

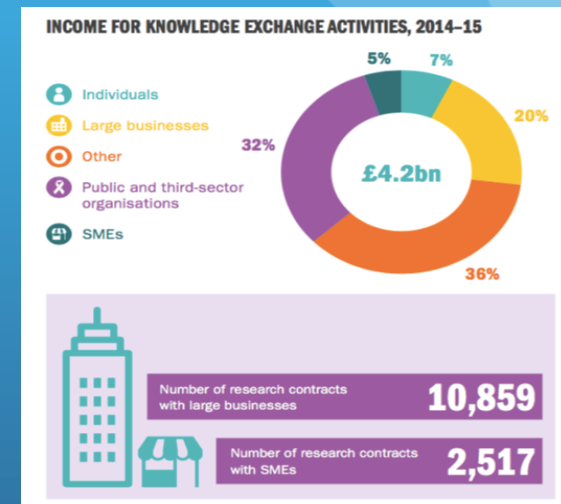
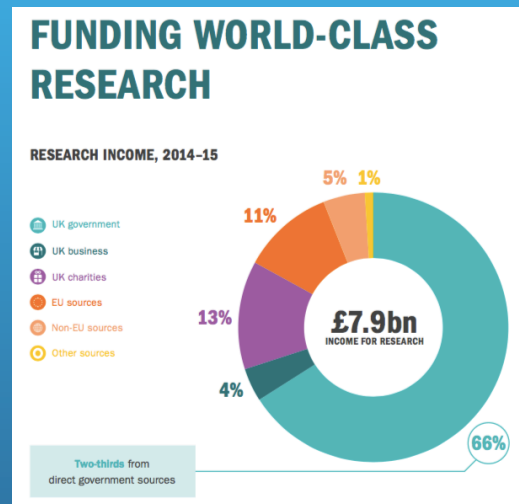
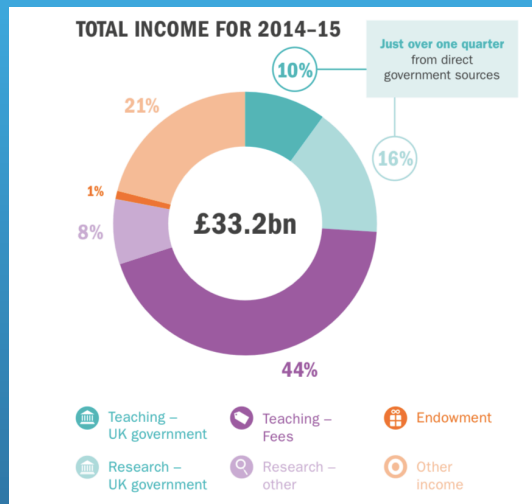
1. “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others” (Cambridge online dictionary)
2. “individual identity is constructed from social resources [...] and, far from being unitary and pre-existent, the individual is a fragmented and ambiguous construction, dependent on context and relationships with others for its self-definition and meaning” (Ainsworth & Hardy 2005: 237)

- **Critical:** an *explanatory critique* aims “not only to identify false beliefs and the practices they inform but *why* those false beliefs are held” and to conceive alternatives that can alleviate or overcome social wrongs (Sayer 2009: 770)

- **Neoliberalism:** “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (Harvey 2005: 2)

# The UK Higher Education context

- UK universities as institutions within the neo-liberal paradigm



Data taken from *University Funding Explained* (2016)

- Academics (and their work) as *commodities* (Hall 1979; Kauppinen 2014)

# The UK Higher Education context

## Arts and Humanities Research Council Funding Assessment Criteria (2018: 29-30)

- the quality of the research process outlined, including: research agenda, participants, sustainability and appropriateness of methods to foster interactions
- the level of genuine collaboration proposed across boundaries and the value that this will add to the development of research in that area
- the significance and importance of the thematic area to be explored
- the extent to which the proposed activities will generate genuine and productive interaction across boundaries (e.g. disciplinary, conceptual, theoretical, methodological and/or international), including the potential for them to lead to advances in knowledge and understanding in the fields concerned and/or new high quality cross-disciplinary research projects
- the level of involvement from different organisations and interaction between participants (creative techniques for fostering interactions are welcomed).

# PhD researchers and identities – selection *at source*

- *Merit*, i.e. previous achievements based on the existing educational system
- Originality of the proposed research
- Potential *impact* of the proposed research
- Ability to self-fund through the process (with the exception of scholarship-funded PhDs)

# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

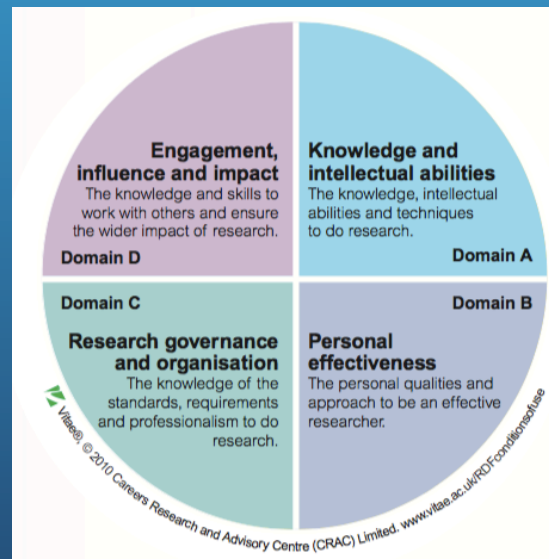
A publication by the The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (main accrediting body for HE in the UK) clearly states how things have changed in the last few years (QAA 2015: 4):

“Whereas until the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the primary purpose of acquiring a doctorate in the UK was for entry to the academic profession, now this is just one of many options for doctoral graduates, who enter diverse jobs across all sectors, bringing their research skills to bear in their own professional context”



# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

- Case study: the Vitae Research Development Statement (CRAC: 2010)
  - Lexicon borrowed from the neoliberal discourse that has been used in the Irish HE context: *knowledge-based society/economy, high capacity for innovation, human capital, innovative, competitive, enterprise, graduate premium, skills agenda* (Holborow 2013: 236-238)



# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

## Researcher Development Statement

**The UK is committed to enhancing the higher-level capabilities of the UK workforce including the development of world-class researchers. Researchers are critical to economic success, addressing major global challenges, and building a leading knowledge economy.**

The Researcher Development Statement (RDS) sets out the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers appropriate for a wide range of careers.

The RDS is for policy makers and research organisations which provide personal, professional and career development for researchers in higher education.

The Researcher Development Statement is derived from the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), a major new approach to researcher development, which aims to enhance our capacity to build the UK workforce, develop world-class researchers and build our research base.

The RDS and RDF will contribute to researcher training and development in the UK by providing a strategic statement (RDS) and operational framework (RDF) to support the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers<sup>1</sup>, the QAA Code of practice for research degree programmes<sup>2</sup> and the 'Roberts'<sup>3</sup> recommendations for postgraduate researchers and research staff.

The RDS is structured in four domains encompassing the knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research. Within each of the domains are three sub-domains and associated descriptors, which describe different aspects of being a researcher.

The Researcher Development Statement is an evolution of the Research Councils' Joint Skills Statement (JSS)<sup>4</sup> and replaces the JSS as the key reference statement for the development of postgraduate researchers' skills and attributes and researchers employed in higher education. All the skills and attributes of the JSS have been incorporated into the RDS and their distribution is identified in the table below. A two-way mapping of the RDS and the JSS is available on the RDF section of the Vitae website.

For more information and to comment on the Researcher Development Framework and associated Statement go to [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

## Domain B: Personal effectiveness

This domain contains the personal qualities, career and self-management skills required to take ownership for and engage in professional development.

Sub-domain	Sub-domain summary
<b>1. Personal qualities</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enthusiasm</li> <li>2. Perseverance</li> <li>3. Integrity</li> <li>4. Self-confidence</li> <li>5. Self-reflection</li> <li>6. Responsibility</li> </ol>	<b>Attitude:</b> Approaches research with enthusiasm, passion and confidence Is resilient and perseveres in the face of obstacles Is self-reflective; <b>seeks ways to improve performance</b> and strives for research excellence Is pro-active, independent, self-reliant and takes responsibility for self and others Shows integrity
<b>2. Self-management</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparation and prioritisation</li> <li>2. Commitment to research</li> <li>3. Time management</li> <li>4. Responsiveness to change</li> <li>5. Work-life balance</li> </ol>	<b>Behaviour:</b> Anticipates and responds to directions and trends in research Plans, prioritises and conducts research in proactive way Delivers research projects and results on time and effectively Develops awareness of, and helps to achieve, work-life balance for self and colleagues  <b>Attitude:</b> Has a strategic approach to research Has focus, commitment and ambition Is flexible and responsive to change
<b>3. Professional and career development</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Career management</li> <li>2. Continuing professional development</li> <li>3. Responsiveness to opportunities</li> <li>4. Networking</li> <li>5. Reputation and esteem</li> </ol>	<b>Knowledge of:</b> Career and employment opportunities inside and outside academia  <b>Behaviour:</b> Takes ownership of and manages professional development <b>Shows commitment to continuing professional development and enhancing employability</b> <b>Maintains and develops relevant skills set and experience in preparation for a wide range of opportunities within and outside academia</b> Actively networks for professional and career purposes and seeks to enhance research reputation and esteem

# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

## Domain C: Research governance and organisation

This domain relates to the knowledge of the standards, requirements and professional conduct that are needed for the effective management of research.

Sub-domain	Sub-domain summary
<b>1. Professional conduct</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health and safety</li> <li>2. Ethics and principles and sustainability</li> <li>3. Legal requirements</li> <li>4. IPR and copyright</li> <li>5. Respect and confidentiality</li> <li>6. Attribution and co-authorship</li> <li>7. Appropriate practice</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge of:</b></p> <p>Health and safety issues, confidentiality and ethical requirements of his/her research field</p> <p>The legal requirements and regulations relating to the area of research and the research environment</p> <p>The principles of intellectual property rights (IPR) and copyright issues, as they relate to research, its commercialisation and dissemination</p> <p>Organisational and professional requirements and environmental impact of research</p> <p>The concept of corporate social responsibility</p> <p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Respects, acknowledges and attributes the contribution of others</p> <p>Seeks to protect, where appropriate, the intellectual assets arising from research and to maximise the wider value of research findings</p> <p>Acts with professional integrity in all aspects of research governance</p> <p>Uses institutional/organisational resources responsibly and appropriately</p> <p>Seeks ways of working in a sustainable manner</p> <p><b>Attitude:</b></p> <p>Respects, upholds and meets professional standards and requirements</p>
<b>2. Research management</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research strategy</li> <li>2. Project planning and delivery</li> <li>3. Risk management</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge of:</b></p> <p>The contribution of research to the health of disciplines and institutional missions</p> <p>Project management tools and techniques</p> <p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Applies appropriate project management tools and techniques</p> <p>Sets goals and plans and manages resources to deliver results</p> <p>Effectively assesses and manages risks</p> <p>Evaluates the effectiveness of research projects</p>
<b>3. Finance, funding and resources</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Income and funding generation</li> <li>2. Financial management</li> <li>3. Infrastructure and resources</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge of:</b></p> <p>The requirement for research income generation and financial management</p> <p>Mechanisms for funding, the range of funding sources and the processes for making applications</p> <p>Local administrative systems, reporting procedures and infrastructure processes</p> <p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Responsibly manages finances, resources and infrastructures related to research</p>

# PhD researchers and identities – the *institutional discourse*

## Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact

This domain relates to the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to engage with, influence and impact on the academic, social, cultural, economic and broader society

Sub-domain	Sub-domain summary
<b>1. Working with others</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collegiality</li> <li>2. Team working</li> <li>3. People management</li> <li>4. Supervision</li> <li>5. Mentoring</li> <li>6. Influence and leadership</li> <li>7. Collaboration</li> <li>8. Equality and diversity</li> </ol>	<p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Actively works in an inclusive, respectful and constructive way with colleagues, stakeholders and research users</p> <p>Recognises and acknowledges the contribution of others and own part in team success</p> <p>Builds relationships in academic and commercial contexts; approachable and interacts constructively with others; manages expectations and resolves conflict</p> <p>Supervises, mentors and develops the potential of less experienced researchers and colleagues through support and advice</p> <p>Leads, motivates and influences where appropriate; persuades through listening and convincing discussion</p> <p>Builds and sustains collaborative relationships and works pro-actively to create and develop knowledge with a range of stakeholders, including researchers, funders and users of research</p> <p><b>Attitude:</b></p> <p>Respects the inclusive and collegial manner in which researchers conduct relationships within and beyond academia</p> <p>Recognises the potential for working in sustained partnerships with a range of stakeholders to generate new ideas, insights and maximise the potential for wider societal and economic impact</p> <p>Respects individual difference and diversity</p>
<b>2. Communication and dissemination</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication methods</li> <li>2. Communication media</li> <li>3. Publication</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge of:</b></p> <p>Appropriate communication and dissemination mechanisms for different audiences</p> <p>The importance of engaging in the processes of publication and dissemination of research results and impacts</p> <p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Communicates effectively in both written and oral modes with a range of audiences formally and informally through a variety of different techniques and media</p> <p>Actively engages in publication and dissemination of research results and impacts</p>
<b>3. Engagement and impact</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teaching</li> <li>2. Public engagement</li> <li>3. Enterprise</li> <li>4. Policy</li> <li>5. Society and culture</li> <li>6. Global citizenship</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge of:</b></p> <p>Global, organisational, cultural, economic, and environmental contexts, and the wider impact of research</p> <p>The social and ethical implications of research, and public attitudes to these issues</p> <p>The range of mechanisms to support knowledge transfer and maximise the impact of research in academic, economic and societal contexts</p> <p><b>Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Engages with and shares research through research-informed and student-focused teaching</p> <p>Contributes to increasing public awareness, engagement and understanding of research and associated impacts</p> <p>Identifies innovative trends, ideas and applications; is enterprising and entrepreneurial within and beyond academia</p> <p>Works collaboratively with all stakeholders to create, develop and exchange research knowledge to influence and benefit policy development, society and the economy; seeks new outlets and promotes the application of research in innovative ways</p> <p>Appreciates and works with diversity and difference in research and education</p> <p><b>Attitude:</b></p> <p>Values the contribution of research to teaching and teaching to research</p> <p>Recognises the importance of accountability of research with regard to social and economic impacts, internationalisation and global citizenship</p>

# Internationalisation and the “*value*” it brings – a critical view

- Extra funding for the universities - international fees are approximately three times higher than domestic ones – international students accounted for 42% of the UK postgraduate student population in 2017 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2017)
- Opportunity to form (convert?) individuals from less neoliberal (from a cultural, not necessarily economical, point of view) countries through institutional discourses
- Issues of linguistic and cultural imperialism (although opposing patterns can emerge, e.g. Holliday 2017)

# Internationalisation and the *Value* it brings – the way out

- Two socio-philosophical conceptions as the basis for change:
  - Critical Realism (Roy Bhaskar) – i.e. the idea that things exist apart from our experience and knowledge of them and that the social world “depends upon human action for its existence and is ‘socially constructed’” (Fairclough, 2010: 4)
  - Wabi-Sabi – “nothing lasts, nothing is finished, nothing is perfect”
- How can internationalisation be “used” to foster this change?
  - Introduce pedagogies of cultural biography and storytelling (Caruana, 2014)
  - Encourage the dynamic intercultural relationship between institution and researchers (Holliday, 2017: 214)
  - Critically engage with institutional discourses and suggest changes from within that promote resistance to Western-originated neoliberal ideologies and practices

# Conclusion

- UK higher educational provision works within a neoliberal paradigm and to a great extent, it fosters it
- The range of available identities within this context are limited in two ways: through selection “at source” and through institutional discourses
- The context, however, also creates space for opposition and resistance thanks to dynamic intercultural exchanges
- Notwithstanding serious issues connected to access to education (both from a domestic and international point of view), internationalisation can provide the intercultural force to challenge the dominant neoliberal discourse and conceive alternatives that can eventually also address the issue of access to education



Grazie!

The image features a blue gradient background that transitions from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. A large, white question mark is centered on the page. The question mark is composed of a curved hook at the top and a solid circular dot at the bottom. The overall design is simple and minimalist, with rounded corners on the blue background.

# References

Ainsworth, S. and Hardy, C., 2004. Critical discourse analysis and identity: Why bother?. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 1(2), pp.225-259.

Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2018. *Research Funding Guide*

Careers Research and Advisory Centre, 2010. *Vitae Research Development Statement*.

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/researcher-development-statement-rds-vitae.pdf>

(accessed on 21/01/2018)

Caruana, V., 2014. Re-thinking global citizenship in higher education: From cosmopolitanism and international mobility to cosmopolitanisation, resilience and resilient thinking. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 68(1), pp.85-104.

Fairclough, N., 2010. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.

Hall, B.L., 1979. Knowledge as a commodity and participatory research. *Prospects*, 9(4), pp.393-408.

Harvey, D., 2005: *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# References - continued

Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2017. Cheltenham, HESA.

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/11-01-2018/sfr247-higher-education-student-statistics/location> (accessed on 18/01/2018)

Holborow, M., 2013. Applied linguistics in the neoliberal university: Ideological keywords and social agency. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(2), pp.229-257.

Holliday, A., 2017. PhD students, interculturality, reflexivity, community and internationalisation. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38(3), pp.206-218.

Kauppinen, I., 2014. Different meanings of 'knowledge as commodity' in the context of higher education. *Critical Sociology*, 40(3), pp.393-409.

Sayer, A., 2009. Who's afraid of critical social science?. *Current Sociology*, 57(6), pp.767-786.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2015. *Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degree*. Gloucester

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctoral-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf> (accessed on 18/01/2018)

Universities UK, 2016. *University Funding Explained*. London

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/university-funding-explained.pdf> (accessed on 18/01/2018)