Surfacing 'Southern' perspectives on student engagement with internationalisation: doctoral theses as alternative forms of knowledge.

FOR CONSIDERATION FOR SPECIAL ISSUE: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONALISATION

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Abstract

This paper explores how knowledge represented in doctoral theses exploring internationalisation may be constructed as a source of 'Southern' knowledge on international education. The paper aims to surface some of the ways in which the knowledge generated by doctoral students could illustrate new perspectives on internationalisation, particularly in terms of knowledge building for the students' own country contexts. The research conducted a search of all UK doctoral theses in the EThOS repository of the British Library, focusing on theses where students had engaged with internationalisation. The search generated a data set of theses written in the decade 2008 to 2018 which were then thematically analysed. In addition to questioning whether thesis knowledge constitutes powerful or empowering knowledge for the student and the Southern cultures they come from, the research indicates that the doctoral theses both reproduced Western knowledge but also generated some new perspectives on methodological and thematic constructions of internationalisation. The paper highlights hierarchies of knowledge, and questions whether postcolonial encounters through the PhD can generate knowledge that builds Southern perspectives on internationalisation.

Keywords: student engagement with internationalisation; southern knowledge; doctoral knowledge

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'Contemporary universities are powerful institutions, interlinked on a global scale; but they embed a narrow knowledge system that reflects and reproduces social inequalities on a global scale' (Connell, 2017).

Introduction and background

Universities have engaged with international students throughout their histories and international students' presence in British universities has been significant with regards to the development of university policy. However, attitudes to international students and the knowledge they bring have often been at best ambivalent and at worst tinged by racism and other prejudices along the lines of class and gender (Perraton, 2014). In the UK, colonial relationships with 'Commonwealth' countries such as India often formed the basis of early international student mobility, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the cultural hegemonies inherent in these historical relationships continue to influence contemporary attitudes to internationalisation (Perraton, 2014). Negative stereotypes of international students continue to be prevalent, particularly for students from East Asia who are often described as 'silent', both literally and figuratively, in western universities (Singh, 2009; Hsieh 2007).

Alongside these cultural attitudes, there is a significant devaluation of non-western theoretical knowledge by the Western academy and knowledge generated by postgraduate international, and particularly Asian, students studying in western universities, is not generally characterised as significant or powerful knowledge (Singh and Meng 2013). Research indicates that there is a tendency to exoticise international students through concentration on the superficialities of culture rather than focusing on any theoretical knowledge that international students can bring (Holliday 2010; Holliday and Aboshiha 2009; Mayuzumi et al. 2007). Cultural descriptions can serve as political acts, and 'dominant neo-essentialist theories of culture' can generate essentialised constructions that stand in the way of knowledge co-construction across cultural boundaries (Holliday 2010, 259).

As marketisation and neoliberalism have intensified in global higher education, the Global North has engaged in a competitive frenzy, or what Naidoo calls a 'competition fetish' (Naidoo 2016, 1) and the inequalities that were historically inherent in international higher education have prevailed. Knowledge is at the centre of this neoliberal tide as 'the neoliberal policy regime produces its own knowledge base, in a closed loop that does not allow other kinds of knowledge to enter policy debate' (Connell 2013, 109). In addition to this, resources for higher education have remained scarce in the Global South and universities in less-privileged countries and regions have often been reliant on international aid and development assistance (Vavrus and Pekol, 2015). This has frequently come in the form of direct donor assistance often to fund doctoral scholarships. Flows of students and capital across global higher education remain uneven, however (Vavrus and Pekol, 2015), and it is ironic that the scarce scholarship funding for doctoral students from the Global South results in the generation of knowledge that sometimes itself remains marginalised.

This paper explores ways of surfacing alternative sources of knowledge on postgraduate student engagement with internationalisation. Here, the knowledge represented in doctoral theses on student engagement with internationalisation is presented as a form of 'Southern' knowledge, which Connell

(2007) defines as *'[k]nowledge generated in the colonial encounter'*. In this context, the terms 'Southern' and 'Northern' are not geographic references to states and nations but are terms which emphasise exclusion or inclusion, hegemony or partnership, between intellectuals and institutions in the North (or 'metropole') and South (or periphery) (Connell 2007, ix). In other words, Global North and Global South are ways of naming global divisions and long-standing patterns of inequalities in power, wealth and cultural influence (Connell 2007, 212). Southern knowledge refers to knowledge that is marginalised and excluded by the dominance of the Western canon of a privileged set of texts whose interpretation and reinterpretation defines a field (Connell 2007, 4). Of course the concepts of North and South are crude dichotomies, since, as Tuhiwai Smith argues, what counts as 'Western' research is based on 'an archive of knowledge and systems, rules and values' which stretch beyond the boundaries of Western science (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 44). There are also many ways of conceptualising knowledge, and in this paper, Young's (1971; 2013) concept of powerful knowledge is referenced, although there is little space to do this idea justice here. Young gets at the ways in which knowledge is socially differentiated, leaving open the possibility for hierarchies of knowledge which can be reinforced through curriculum (Young 2013).

Despite the fact that many doctoral students, particularly international students, carry out their research on internationalisation, this knowledge is rarely surfaced as a coherent body of knowledge from which the international higher education community can learn. Furthermore, the vast majority of research relating to student engagement centres on undergraduate students and does not address the specific issues experienced by postgraduate research students. Doctoral theses are consulted and quoted mainly by other doctoral students who use this knowledge to develop their own theses, which, ironically, then join this largely marginalised body of knowledge. Doctoral work and engagement, particularly by international doctoral students, is often seminal to the advancement of knowledge in the Western academy, through joint publications and support for the research of senior academics, but it is rarely given the status and acknowledgement it deserves.

This paper aims to surface some of the doctoral knowledge on postgraduate student engagement with internationalisation by carrying out an analysis of the doctoral theses contained in the British Library repository EThOS, which is a searchable open access collection of all the doctoral theses completed in UK universities, currently numbering around half a million theses. The aim of the paper is to use this under-consulted resource as a body of knowledge through which to discover how doctoral students engage with internationalisation through their own research. In addition to this, it aims to question whether doctoral thesis knowledge constitutes powerful or empowering knowledge for the student and for the Southern cultures they come from. This raises the question of whether international students engaging in doctoral research on internationalisation are reproducing the knowledge of the Western context in which they study or whether they are enabled to generate new perspectives drawing on the knowledge of their home contexts.

Doctoral student engagement with internationalisation

The existing research on student engagement is predominantly focused on undergraduate students, for example, in the USA (Pascarella &Terenzini 2005), Australia (Krause & Coates 2008) and the UK (Mann 2001). The idea of student engagement does not generally extend to the experiences and particular characteristics of postgraduate or doctoral students, let alone international doctoral students. Despite the fact that of 84,630 Postgraduate Research students studying full time in the UK in 2016/17, half of them, 42,325, were non-UK students, with 29,875 students being from beyond the EU (HESA, 2018), little literature casts international students' doctoral research as knowledge

important to the academy. What literature there is relating to doctoral education focuses mostly on a search for what a doctorate is and how students may engage with 'doctorateness' (Wellington 2013). Other notable but less common literature on doctoral student engagement considers principles and power relations in supervisory pedagogies (Singh 2009), given that doctoral supervisors are predominantly white middle class males and at least half of doctoral students in the UK are international. Furthermore, the knowledge generated by postgraduate students' involvement in research is not generally cast as student engagement in the academy.

In this paper, the case of the doctoral student is presented as a form of student engagement with internationalisation. In the UK a large number of full time doctoral students are international students and in this sense their time and commitment in engaging with their own research, most often researching aspects of their own countries, represents an aspect of student engagement with internationalisation. Most doctoral students are inwardly mobile to the North (or the metropole) and the theses they produce here represent a specific form of engagement with internationalisation.

Student engagement itself is subject to the structures and power relations of higher education institutions and of 'the academy' more broadly. There is a hierarchy to student engagement and the position of students in the university's structures of power and influence shapes their engagement and 'student engagement is confined to what the institution allows' (Carey 2018, 13). Research is highly institutionalised and set in the fields of knowledge and the communities of the academy (Tuhiwai Smith 2012), making it challenging for doctoral students, particularly international doctoral students to participate on their own terms. Carey recasts student engagement as public participation and notes that the success of participation rests on principles of co-production and collaboration. Positive socio-constructivist environments where equal co-construction can work are thus subject to power relationships and institutional habitus (Reay et al 2001). So student engagement can only happen within the restrictive cultures and codes of the higher education institution. Trahar and Hyland (2011) note that the recognition of the influence of cultural norms and academic traditions on higher education contexts is the first step towards grappling with the dominant philosophies of HE.

Singh notes that 'while the sociocultural diversity of international students may be celebrated increased recognition needs to be given to the epistemological diversity their presence […] represents for the internationalisation of research education' (2009, 186). There is also a perceived need in the literature to question the supervisory relationship as a means of raising the profile of doctoral research, with important contributions by Lingard (2006; 2007) who calls for the internationalisation of postgraduate supervisory pedagogies as a means of 'deparochialising research education' (Singh 2009, 186). Questions about the imbalance in power relations involved in the supervisory relationship are important and ethnicity and gender are integral to these unequal relationships. Doctoral education happens at the intersection between the dominant North and the less privileged South and is constructed here as being a part of the colonial encounter (Connell 2007).

In fact, the PhD as a postcolonial encounter provides an opportunity for the generation of knowledge that could be powerful for the student and may provide a platform for the creation of Southern knowledge, here meaning knowledge that could benefit the home context of the international student. As Singh (2009) and Linguard (2006) note above, the answer may lie in the relationships and understandings between the PhD student and their supervisor. De Sousa Santos (2014) notes that moving towards epistemologies of the South could involve intercultural 'translation' between Western and non-Western conceptions and practices. This translation requires the participants to defamiliarise themselves from their respective cultural backgrounds and, applied to the PhD supervision

relationship, this would require a rethinking of the traditional relationships of dominant Western supervisor as expert and a recasting of the value and status of international doctoral student knowledge. This could reconstruct the doctoral relationship as 'community' and move towards this being an intersubjective relationship amongst experts (Young 2008). This research aims to offer a new lens on the engagement of doctoral students in the generation of Southern knowledge, exploring whether the knowledge produced around internationalisation under the supervision of the Western, here British, academy is moving towards enabling Southern perspectives to find a space.

Doctoral theses as southern knowledge

Doctoral students are a significant part of research and knowledge building in higher education and provide in many cases crucial research support, particularly in science, and are a source of joint publication for academic members of staff. They therefore contribute to the research capacity and knowledge building of institutions; unpublished theses are sometimes quoted and doctoral students publish jointly with their supervisors. In this sense their research begins to 'count', but in terms of their contribution to the UK's body of research knowledge, as far being counted by research measurement frameworks such as the UK REF at least, most of the credit goes to their more powerful supervisors who may also act as gatekeepers for the world of publishing in English, perhaps through knowing the language codes and academic practices.

Doctoral students, and for that matter early career researchers, who are part of developing academic communities find themselves disadvantaged both in terms of access to mature research communities and international grant funding, both a source of access to high status global knowledge platforms such as high impact journals (McKinley, 2017; Martinaitis, 2017). Statistics show that these challenges are not isolated to Africa or the geographic areas most associated with the Global South, but that the new EU member states such as the Baltic Regions are experiencing obstacles and barriers to access to valuable research collaborations (Martinaitis, 2017) which could enable more opportunities to have their research recognised as significant. This emphasises the suggestion that Southern knowledge does not only encompass the geographic binaries of the North and South but in Connell's view this refers to 'the center relations in the realm of knowledge' (Connell 2007, viii)**.**

Connell (2007) uses scholarship from Africa, Iran, Latin America and India to disrupt the dominance of 'Northern' knowledge (from Europe and North America). She aims to challenge the hegemony of 'metropolitan' Northern theory by making Southern texts 'central to the intellectual project' (Nye, Amazan and Charteris 2017, 82). This has echoes with other theories that aim to upturn the inequalities inherent in knowledge circulation such as Chen's (2010) concept of Asia as method which aims to deconstruct the West as centre and Tuhiwai Smith's book on Decolonising Methodologies (2012). However, it is important to note that Southern theory is not without its critics and the ambitious task of covering social theory on a world scale generates questions about contradictions inherent in who has the 'right' to introduce the South (Lundstrom 2009). Other oppositions have noted that Southern theory's critical approaches to research have failed to address the needs of local communities and thus failed in its 'emancipatory goals' (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 188).

Suffice to say, the generation, spread and use of knowledge has embedded forms of inequalities and hierarchies. Connell notes that 'a universal form of knowledge cannot be based on the experience of a privileged minority alone' (2011, 1372) but it is the case that some forms of knowledge are valued more than others. Connell notes that 'only knowledge produced on a planetary scale is adequate to support the self-understanding of societies now forcibly being reshaped on a planetary scale' (2007,

vii). Despite the fact that the greatest global issues we are facing need to be approached collectively, the huge knowledge base present in the Global South (Becker, 2017) still struggles to find its voice.

In the case of the doctoral encounter, this paper raises the question of whether the PhD can offer a space for knowledge that builds Southern perspectives. Currently, the knowledge produced by doctoral students is rarely constructed as a body of knowledge but it may be the case that Southern perspectives are present in existing doctoral theses. The aim of this paper is to begin to explore this. Previous research is limited in this area but a notable exception to this is Singh and Meng's (2013) research which suggests that the knowledge generated by Chinese research students could make an original contribution to knowledge relating to Chinese languages and theories. Their paper uses a similar methodology to the research that underpins this paper (see below) by analysing a smaller number (n=15) of doctoral theses supported by interviews. They note, crucially for the argument of this paper: 'It might be assumed, naively or otherwise, that the theoretical knowledge of international students from non-western or non-English speaking countries would automatically be used alongside relevant western theories. However, this is not the case' (Singh and Meng 2013, 910). This research aims to construct doctoral theses as a particular form of knowledge, one that comes into existence in the colonial encounter, sometimes keeping to the restricted codes of colonialised knowledge but also sometimes presenting critique and deconstruction of dominant forms of knowledge.

The research

A growing number of countries are developing and improving access to their doctoral research repositories (Australia, Canada, China, South Africa and USA to name but a few) and this huge comparative and open access data set could provide a means by which 'Southern' knowledge might be surfaced. The research carried out in the colonial encounter of the doctoral thesis could illuminate the knowledge generated by doctoral students on a range of topics including student engagement with internationalisation. The research carried out for this paper conducted a systematic search of the UK doctoral theses in the EThOS repository of the British Library, focusing on those researching student engagement with internationalisation. EThOS electronically houses all of the doctoral theses written by students in UK universities and currently contains electronic (or scanned versions) of almost half a million doctoral theses. The main unit of analysis in this initial study was the abstract of the theses.

The research fell into three phases (see Appendix 1 for a table presenting the three phases).

1. Firstly, a search for theses written in the decade 2008 to 2018 focusing on student engagement with internationalisation was carried out. Pre-search activity identified the range of search and possible topics and strategies. Two main search strings were then used: 'student engagement in higher education' which generated 58 items and 'internationalis(z)ation in higher education' which generated 322 theses. A 'Post-colonial knowledge' category was initially included but dropped as theses were found to be not directly relevant to HE. Use of US spelling (internationalization vs internationalisation) generated different numbers of items and variations on the search strings were tested before the final data set was downloaded.

2. Secondly, irrelevant items were excluded from the analysis. Only theses that were related to internationalisation and research that was conducted by all students (international or UK) either in an international context or about internationalisation in HE in the UK were considered. Internationalisation at school-level topics were also excluded. The final data set consisted of 94 doctoral theses. A separate set of 78 abstracts selected using a specific adjacent word search rather than a fuzzy keyword search (e.g. 'internationalisation higher

education') was also carried out independently by the EThOS team at the British Library and these results were downloaded into a spreadsheet. This was done in order to triangulate the results of the larger search and the data set was found to be overlapping and consistent.

3. Thirdly, the data was analysed using a categorisation and coding approach and coding focused on titles; countries in which research was conducted; researched topics, issues related to the main research topics (based on vocabulary used by researchers in their abstracts); any literature mentioned in the abstract; research methods. There was also a closer analysis of particular theses' titles, abstracts and some main theses where clarification was sought.

A systematic literature search was also carried out in order to explore the related research fields and four search strings were used: internationalisation of higher education; student engagement in internationalisation; southern knowledge; and postcolonial knowledge in international higher education. A library of the literature in these areas was constructed using Mendeley and this consisted of around 120 items of research literature.

Here doctoral theses were cast as secondary data and analysed as a coherent data set. Distinctive from traditional research review, secondary data analysis and the reanalysis of existing qualitative or quantitative data relies on the analysis and synthesis of data from existing published sources leading to the emergence of new analyses and findings (Howell-Major and Savin Baden, 2011). The use of open access repositories of digital data and research on secondary data sources is an approach which is becoming more prevalent as these data sets grow and become more accessible to all (Watermeyer and Montgomery, 2018). Secondary data analysis, also known as meta-analysis (Glass, 1976) is now viewed as its own form of empiricism, and it follows a systematic approach using rigorous evaluative steps (Johnstone 2014). As data from large scale primary quantitative and qualitative studies face requirements to be accessible online beyond the immediate research teams, secondary research approaches aiming to exploit the rich existing data sets have begun to be more widespread (Howell-Major and Savin Baden 2011). The use of open access data sets are appropriate for secondary analysis but this does raise some ethical issues of informed consent. In order to mitigate these as much as possible ethical approval was sought and gained from the Department of Education at the University of Bath.

Findings

Patterns emerged from the analysis of the doctoral theses and the most prominent of these were the geographies of student engagement with internationalisation; methodologies and theory; and constructions of internationalisation, the latter being drawn from the analysis of the topics and themes that emerged from the data. Appendix 2 shows the list of nodes that were formed from the data analysis and Appendix 3 shows the map constructed from the emerging themes and topics.

The geographies of student engagement with internationalisation

The geographic and spatial locations of research in the context of international higher education are complex and influenced by hierarchies, power and class (Donnelly 2015); international education in particular is becoming more *'spatially differentiated'* (Waters 2006, 1050). Despite the advance of technology and online connectedness, the geopolitical context of knowledge is influential and the place where knowledge is generated will not only shape knowledge but influence and restrict it (Connell 2007). In the case of the findings of this research, a geography of the knowledge represented in the doctoral theses emerged. As the doctorates were all carried out in UK universities, it is unsurprising to find that a large number of these focused on internationalisation in UK Higher

Education. Of the 94 theses analysed, 34 of them investigated internationalisation in the UK or international students in the UK. Much of this research was carried out by international students themselves and covered international students' experiences in UK higher education.

Where the theses were written by international students, they also often carried out research on their own higher education systems, with a broad spread of the theses over different continents and across 38 different countries of the globe; the theses examined internationalisation of higher education in African countries, the Americas and Australia, across the Asian continent and Europe. These examples included a Thai doctoral student focusing on policy implementation in internationalising Thai higher education, a Pakistani student researching structured peer mentoring in higher education in Pakistan and a Hong Kong student looking at Mainland Chinese higher education students' adjustment to living in Hong Kong. The UK students' theses also tended to focus on their own country's system with two examples of theses written by UK students centring on the development of UK higher education internationalisation policy and integrated internationalism in UK higher education. A small proportion of the theses took a comparative angle, but all of these compared their own higher education systems with one or (rarely) two others. Only on rare occasions did the theses explore the higher education systems of international contexts different from the doctoral candidate's own national context, and in these examples, it tended to be an international doctoral student exploring the UK context.

In some ways the theses provide a rich picture of the spread of research in internationalisation across so many different countries. However, the geographical contexts and directions of the theses analysed here are indicative of the uneven circulation of knowledge and the limitations of internationalisation. The predominance of inward focus on the UK experience of internationalisation in the UK doctoral theses, combined with the fact that international students tended to focus on their own higher education systems, both point to the fact that engagement with internationalisation in this example shows 'a pattern of quasi-globalisation' (Connell 2007, 218). Whilst international students have come to the UK to research internationalisation, the focus is narrow and either relates to the UK or to their own country. Connell notes that 'Social scientists working in the periphery have a strong orientation to the world centres of their disciplines in the metropole' (2007, 217) and the tendency for Northern knowledge to dominate is persistent. Whilst it is the case that scholars from the periphery have agency (Connell 2007, 217)), the structures of institutions such as universities and the cultures of 'the doctorate' and supervisory pedagogies remain influential.

Methodologies and theory

The research developed categories relating to the methodologies and theories used in the doctoral theses. The methodologies were almost exclusively qualitative or mixed methods approaches (see Appendix 2). Whilst the search only focused on the abstracts of the theses and thus did not present a nuanced view of the approaches to methodology and their underpinning philosophies, the predominantly qualitative approach suggests an emic perspective. This is consistent with the tendency for the theses to interrogate students' own higher education systems. There were, however, signs of innovation in the methodologies of the theses with examples of creative uses of mixed methodologies. For example, one thesis collected two datasets: a cross-sectional dataset comprised of 147 students and a longitudinal dataset comprised of 66 students and the data was collected over a two year period over four semesters. The outcomes of that thesis noted the significance of understanding student satisfaction longitudinally and gave an insight into students' growth trajectories. Other data sets were impressively large and spanned a number of institutions with one example presenting an analysis of

staff and students co-creating curricula in seven universities, involving 17 examples of practice across 14 disciplines.

In terms of the theoretical positions taken by the theses, it was particularly interesting to see the predominance of Western theory used by the international students as a lens on their non-western educational contexts. It was also the case that those exploring the UK context used dominant western theory and theorists. This did not emerge strongly from the search of the abstracts (see Appendix 2) with only a small number of the theses' abstracts mentioning theory and theorists (Bourdieu being the most commonly referenced theorist). However, as part of an examination of the main theses in the third phase of the analysis it was seen that a sample of the theses supported this suggestion, with many theses relying on concepts commonly associated with Western theory such as social capital, global citizenship or communities of practice. This requires further and more detailed exploration which is not within the scope of this paper.

The limitations in the use of Western theory could be an inhibiting factor in the 'research imagination' (Appadurai 2001) with regards to understandings of internationalisation of higher education. Connell would name this as a gesture of exclusion, where theorists from the colonised world are rarely cited in metropolitan texts and are not considered a part of the dialogue of theory (Connell 2007, 46). Epstein and Boden note that 'the contemporary global transformation of higher education leaves little room for comfort regarding the prospects for [such] a new research imagination developing from within universities' (2006, 224). The doctoral students' imaginaries of internationalisation in this study are providing insights into engagement with internationalisation but their visions of what internationalisation could be may be constrained by the emphasis on Northern theory and narrowed conceptions of approaches to methodology.

Constructions of internationalisation

The doctoral theses focused on a wide range of topics and themes and these represent a particular construction of internationalisation in higher education. Appendix 3 shows a map of the characterisation of internationalisation that emerged from the analysis of the theses. Six main themes emerged from the data and these were internationalisation of higher education; trends in higher education; higher education institutions; cultural interaction; knowledge positioning; and pedagogy. When considering the data set as a whole and reflecting on the picture of internationalisation that is presented by all of the theses analysed, the most complex and nuanced constructions of engagement with internationalisation were around pedagogy; higher education institutions and their interaction with policy; internationalisation strategies; and the intercultural experiences of international students and academics, UK students and staff in international contexts. The analysis of the themes emerging from the theses showed both an adherence to existing and well-explored understandings internationalisation, and the Western canon of the concept, but also some innovative, creative and critical insights into students engaging with internationalisation, perhaps showing a glimpse of Southern perspectives.

To take pedagogy as an example, the theses explored a range of different aspects of pedagogy in an internationalised context. The ideas of teaching and learning and pedagogic practices were central to this and many theses explored issues of motivation, engagement and language learning. The student experience of international higher education was a key area and there were examples of theses that reinterpreted ideas around student experience and engagement such as transition and the first year experience. However, there were also some notable examples of alternative perspectives on the student experience emerging from the theses. For example, a thesis exploring students' relationships with their university considered the intangible elements of the student experience, what the

'something about the place' was that led students to develop a sense of attachment or belonging. There were echoes of this in another thesis which discussed 'nomads in contested landscapes' which aimed to reframe student engagement and 'non-traditionality' in internationalised higher education. A third thesis in this category aimed to deconstruct concepts of student satisfaction, engagement and participation in UK higher education by highlighting that student satisfaction is a slow and incremental process and needs to be understood longitudinally. These and other examples of innovative perspectives on pedagogy demonstrated that the doctoral students were engaging with internationalisation in new and critical ways.

Conclusion

Postmodernism has aimed to challenge the grand narratives of European knowledge systems in order to open up 'new possibilities for knowledge and social practice' (Seidman 1994, 278) but Connell (2007) notes that postmodernism has often fallen into the trap of recreating its own canon. She further notes that what is needed to challenge dominant ways of thought in an unequal society is 'the view-from-below' (2007, 221). Some examples from this set of doctoral theses, which could be seen as 'the-view-from-below', suggest emerging alternative perspectives and the presentation of some new challenges to the previous narratives of internationalisation. However, it also seems that the theories and methodologies adopted by the students indicate that PhD students, particularly those from the global South, are strongly influenced into developing Northern theory and using Western lenses. This raises the complex question of whether this is because students have been encouraged into hegemonic assumptions or whether it is the case that there are agreed methodologies and theories that transcend North and South? This is beyond the scope of this paper and will be part of the next analysis of this data.

There are possibilities offered for developing Southern knowledge and perspectives in the doctoral encounter but this is dependent on the capacity of the participants, and most specifically on the dominant supervisor, being open to the work of 'mediation and negotiation' which De Sousa Santos describes as 'intercultural translation' (De Sousa Santos 2014, 222). This translation is a collective intellectual process which would involve not just individual doctoral supervisors but the whole academy in rethinking the status of doctoral knowledge. Other major theoretical issues are raised by this, as De Sousa's intercultural translations are based on the idea of the impossibility of a general theory because without this denial of universalism, intercultural translation remains a colonial kind of work no matter how post-colonial it claims to be (De Sousa Santos 2014, 227).

Despite these limitations, the research sheds light on the ways in which this largely marginalised body of knowledge can constitute different accounts, epistemologies and ontologies of student engagement with internationalisation. There are further questions to be asked of this sort of data, particularly with reference to the forms and sources of the theories used in the theses and also the sorts of questions asked. A Southern approach may ask different sorts of questions as in the case of Tuhwai's work on decolonisation of methodologies which asks about the role of social science itself in oppressing communities' knowledge (2012). The approach in this research also provides a potential model for further comparative analysis of bodies of doctoral knowledge, given that a growing number of countries are developing and improving access to their doctoral research repositories (Australia, Canada, China, South Africa and USA to name but a few). This huge comparative and open access data set could provide a means by which 'Southern' knowledge might be surfaced and research carried out in the colonial encounter of the doctoral thesis could illuminate many issues including student engagement with internationalisation.

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